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Haga Circular: Latin Americanist Anarchism, Dissident Labor, and the Uruguayan New Left, 1956-1976

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis

Committee in charge:

Professor Michael Monteón, Co-Chair
Professor Eric Van Young, Co-Chair
Professor Wendy Matsumura
Professor Matthew Vitz
Professor Carlos Waisman

2019

The dissertation of Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

For Bacci, y por un mundo más justo

EPIGRAPH

Si molesto con mi canto
A alguno que ande por ahí
Le aseguro que es un gringo
O dueño del Uruguay

-Daniel Viglietti

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I am incredibly grateful for the institutional, grammatical, and emotional guidance of my co-advisers, Prof. Michael Monteon and Prof. Eric Van Young. I feel very fortunate that they both took me on as one of their last advisees in their lifelong dedication to Latin American history. I also benefitted from the direction of Prof. Carlos Waisman, Prof. Wendy Matsumura, and Prof. Matthew Vitz, and Prof. Nancy Kwak, who have combined to offer a perfect balance for my mixed methods approach. I cannot imagine a better fit for me than the UCSD Department of History, which is held so coherently together by our Chair Prof. Pamela Radcliff. Finally, a sincere thank you to Prof. Aldo Marchesi, who offered his friendship and guidance during my cumulative year of research in Montevideo, Uruguay.

This investigation is truly a collaboration with those interlocutors who participated by sharing their time, energy, and stories. I had the privilege of sharing memorable moments with members and ex-members of the FAU and MLN-Tupamaros who inspired me to produce a text at my highest potential. Not only did they offer enriching narratives, but they also helped guide my analysis. They are Chacho, Edelweiss, Lilian, Cristina, Mari, Zelmar, Juan, Juan Carlos, Sarita, Raul, and Oscar.

Throughout my four years moving between California and the Southern Cone, I met fellow researchers and militants whose work has inspired me greatly. While their intellectual work is provocative and stimulating, their political work is a shining example of resilience,

dedication, and self-sacrifice in hopes of making a better world. Most importantly, their companionship made my partner and I feel welcome and at home. I smile when recalling the days and nights eating, chatting, sharing, strolling, and dancing with Martín, Nadia, Natalia, Nicolas C, Nicolas C, Rafael, Linda Ana Laura, Sebastian, Vasco, Natalia, Graciela, and Andrea. We are forever in-debt to Marcos and Thalita in Buenos Aires. To welcome two strangers and a dog into one's home for five weeks without asking anything in return is truly a gesture of solidarity that only can only come from such political convictions and commitments their own.

The project came together as result of over a decade of relationship-building and community organizing alongside friends and acquaintances in Southern California's peripheral neighborhoods. While spending time abroad, it was always difficult to translate our subaltern realities with the hegemonic imaginary of the *Gringolandia* that is projected abroad via mass media. I first learned of the MLN-Tupamaros and armed struggle in Uruguay from an audio clip from Costas Gavras' *State of Siege* that was included in a full-length record of the Riverside-based hardcore punk band Rogue State. The band's members were from Mexico, Uruguay, the Phillipines, and the US. Much of my analysis of race, gender, and class developed organically after sharing experiences alongside my childhood friends, including Roland, Edwin, Kevan, Josh B, Nino, Ramon, Billy, John, Alexandra, Laura, Ana, Joe, Tomas, Brent, Fritz, Laura, Romeo, Big Bryan, Eric, Marcel, and Cameron.

My experience at Pitzer College was formative in my career trajectory, especially my interest in Latin America and anarchism. I was unaware that anarchism had a place in academia until encountering Professor Dana Ward, who served as my guide and mentor throughout my time at there. Throughout this time, I was forced to reflect more deeply upon my bi-racial Chicano identity and situate it among a larger Third Worldism thanks to the guidance and

support of Lako Tongun, José Calderon, and Jamaica Kincaid. Moreover, I expanded my musical, and thus political, horizons as a DJ at KSPC, where I was lucky to share time with Erica, Aaron, and Junior. Finally, I was forever shaped by my first experiences consciously applying anarchist ideas in the group Direct Action Claremont, where I met Chris, Kendra, Amanda, Anthony, Natty, Paul, Nathan, Pilar, Daniele, Michael, Lianna, Brian, Yoatl, Claire, and Maya.

My UC San Diego graduate school experience not only allowed me to venture around the continent, but I also moved throughout California to organize alongside fellow graduate student-workers as a bargaining team representative for our TA union in during our 2014 contract campaign. The experience led me to cross paths with some of the most pleasant organizers and people, including Alborz, Jeanine, Yasmeen, Nisreen, Tanner, Justin, Pablo, Daniel, Nick, Josh, Jason, Michelle, Beezer, Jason, Robert, Beezer, and, Beazie. I must also recognize those fellow students and workers who participated in the formation of UCSD's Lumumba Zapata Collective and who dedicated countless days to planning for the 20 January 2017 strike to initiate Donald Trump's inauguration, especially Davide, Marcela, Mychal, Bernardo, Andy, Jessica B, Jessica N, Caroline, Lisa, Luke, Sam, Maria, Grant, Luca, Ezra, Aditi, Zeltzin, Ian, Seth, Patricia, and Saul. Our experiences together have helped guide the analysis of this dissertation, but most of all they helped me grow as a person. My two years as an MA student at the UCSD Latin American Studies program led me to cross paths with Teresita, Katherine, Jacqui, Esteban, Rafael. Our bond as a cohort showed me the power of uncompromising and unconditional care, support, and friendship. Also, To Caribbean, Ryan, Romeo, and Alex of the South El Monte Arts Posse and Tropics of Meta popular historiography blog. Thank you for always offering a platform for me to share my ideas with a broader audience, even though they were quite often conflicting with some

of your own. Finally, to Sky and Juan for all the help line-editing drafts of articles and grant proposals.

A heartfelt thank you to members of the Comunidade Pereira Da Silva in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil for receiving us for nine months while we completed writing our dissertations. Their resilience, creativity, and love for life left a lasting impact on the trajectory of my career. I aspire to create and maintain relationships based on care and support beyond the logic of the market and state as they have shown me to be possible during our brief time together.

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Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material as it may appear in Social History/Histoire Sociale *(York University Press, 2020). Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis, the dissertation author, was the primary researcher and author of this paper.*

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Haga Circular:
Latin Americanist Anarchism, Dissident Labor, and the Uruguayan New Left, 1956-1976

by

Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Michael Monteón, Co-Chair
Professor Eric Van Young, Co-Chair

With less than 200 militants, the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) played a key role both sparking and networking popular protagonism throughout the sixties and seventies. At their founding congress in 1956, the FAU broke from regional traditions of anarcho-syndicalism and pioneered an organizing strategy called *especifismo*, in which militants participated in and built up popular labor, student, and neighborhood organizations. The organization saw everyday people as revolutionary protagonists and sought to develop a popular counter-subjectivity by

accumulating experiences directly confronting the market and the state. Militants argued that everyday people transformed into revolutionary subjects through the regular practice of collective direct action in labor unions, student organizations, and neighborhood councils. In other words, the working class was not objectively revolutionary, but came into being as such through an extra-parliamentary strategy that incorporated the regular use of anti-legal methods.

The FAU worked in coalition with the PCU, MLN-T, and other revolutionary organizations to support a unified Left project while simultaneously challenging hegemonic strategies, tactics, and discourses. Unlike other anarchist groups worldwide, which took to individualism and counterculture in response to Marxism's popularity throughout the sixties, the FAU embraced Third Worldism and a Marxian class struggle strategy that made them a relevant force amongst popular social movements. Throughout the constitutional dictatorship epoch (1967-73), the FAU and its dissident labor movement allies controlled one-third of the nation's unions in some of the most lucrative industries, especially in the private sector. I argue that the strategies and tactics promoted by the FAU, ones in which everyday people became revolutionary protagonists, offered the largest threat to maintaining social order in Uruguay and thus spawned a military takeover of the state to dismantle and deflate a vibrant popular revolt.

INTRODUCTION

On 11 October 2017, I received Juliana Martinez at my Montevideo home in Barrio Sur. I visited her home five months prior to interview her alongside another contemporary Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) militant, a young woman who teaches in the country's public education system and who has since become a close friend. In May, I learned a rather superficial and linear narrative of her activity: When she joined; Why she joined; When she fell prisoner, etc. After our initial chat we developed an amicable relationship with one another – I often visited while she organized the FAU library and she frequently invited me to dinner at her home. On one winter Sunday, we spent the day alongside her two lifelong friends from the armed Marxist MLN-Tupamaros. We attended Montevideo's Fine Arts Museum to observe the works of Julio Mancebo, a student of the famed modernist Joaquin Torres Garcia and fellow member of the FAU's armed apparatus, Revolutionary Popular Organization – 33 (OPR-33).

The October interview was much different. She sat comfortably in my living room and spoke more about feeling rather than chronology. She spoke in depth about everyday life in the OPR-33 safe house where she lived while working at an eye glass factory – the home served as a key site for the meetings, propaganda production, and reconnaissance. Juliana gathered information about the daily routines of Sergio Molaguero, a member of a neo-fascist youth organization and son of the Seral shoe factory owner. On 12 April 1971, 308 workers at the Seral shoe factory began a campaign for union recognition after plant owner José Molaguero insisted that they appear for work on a holiday weekend. The conflict pursued for ten months until Molaguero conceded to all of the workers' demands in exchange for the liberty of his kidnapped son. The event was one of many examples of popular violence in the face of a deepening economic and political crisis between 1967 and 1973.

Juliana spent 11 years and 5 months in prison for her role in the kidnapping. Her participation came as part of the FAU's unique strategy to merge mass action in the labor movement with armed struggle. Unlike other armed political organizations throughout Latin America and the Third World, the OPR-33 did not identity as a vanguard. Instead, they saw themselves as a "technical apparatus" that could be called upon to intervene in escalating social conflicts. Juliana, one of the myriad of actors amidst a historical moment of popular revolt, humbly insisted I do not use her real name. She clarified that those she cares most about participated alongside her and that she need not be glorified as an individual. She did not see the point. Instead, she insisted that the real protagonists were Seral's workers, most of whom remain unknown to either one of us. Juliana, Seral's workers, and other everyday people like them who took on a role as historical protagonists proved so threatening to capital and the state that the Uruguayan government intervened with a military takeover to suppress them. This is a story about them.

Latin America's Southern Cone was a testing ground for neoliberal political economic restructuring during the 1970s. These experimental governments made up a region-wide network of US-supported military dictatorships eventually called Operation Condor. They relied on the use of state violence to repress popular social unrest responding to increasing social disparities, including rising unemployment, union busting, and wage cuts. But these dictatorial regimes responded to two decades of regional economic and political crisis, including escalating popular unrest in the face of devolving everyday life conditions. Although scholars unanimously represent Pinochet's Chile as the testing ground for and exporter of neoliberal political economic practice in response to Salvador Allende's socialist government, the Uruguayan military coup,

established three months prior, marked the region's first move towards neoliberal governance in response to mass worker revolt.

From December 1967 to June 1973, the half decade prior to the country's devolution into civic-military dictatorship, the Uruguayan *pueblo* (everyday people) challenged an increasingly authoritarian political framework and spiraling economic crisis through acts of solidarity, sacrifice, and disobedience. This period of *constitutional dictatorship* saw the widespread implementation of widespread reforms aimed at curbing labor unrest, including frequent press censorship, prohibition of strikes, growth of foreign direct investment, de-nationalization of industry, and militarization of urban space. The epoch's various bureaucratic authoritarian governments laid the groundwork for what eventually became an outright military dictatorship.

Uruguayan Left organizations provided a variety of different, often contrasting, strategies to confront a growing political and economic crisis. I focus on the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU), Latin America's most active anarchist organization, to broaden understandings of the Cold War-era political landscape beyond the capitalism-communism and Old Left-New Left binaries that dominate the historiography of the epoch. The FAU saw everyday people as revolutionary protagonists and sought to develop a popular counter-subjectivity by accumulating experiences directly challenging the market and the state. The organization did not see any objective revolutionary character of the working class nor vanguard political organizations. Instead, its militants argued that everyday people transformed into revolutionary subjects through the regular practice of collective direct action in labor unions, student organizations, and neighborhood councils. In other words, the working class was not objectively revolutionary, but came into being as such through an extra-parliamentary strategy that incorporated the regular use of anti-legal methods. I argue that the strategies and tactics

promoted by the FAU, ones in which everyday people became revolutionary protagonists, offered the largest threat to maintaining social order in Uruguay and thus spawned a military takeover of the state to dismantle and deflate a vibrant popular revolt.

At their founding congress in 1956, the FAU broke from regional traditions of anarcho-syndicalism and pioneered an organizing strategy called *especifismo*, in which militants participated in and built up popular labor, student, and neighborhood organizations. Advocating for direct action tactics (i.e. strikes, sabotage, property damage, public shaming, boycotts, political violence) and mutual aid, FAU militants set out to make anarchist ideas and practices hegemonic within mass organizations, specifically labor unions. They also created a small armed apparatus to expropriate money from banks, protect workers from police and strikebreakers, and kidnap employers. For the FAU, a revolutionary project required the empowerment and participation of everyday people who would fight for a new society in their own image. Popular power laid at the foundation of any revolutionary society, and as such had to be *created* over time, not *taken*. Hence the FAU's slogan: *create* popular power. A study of *especifismo* provides a new perspective on forms of resistance at the dawn of the neoliberal era. The neoliberal ideology encourages a rupture with collective identities rooted in a shared historical experience and/or common reality, and has thus required new organizing strategies for moving forward mass political projects. If Latin America's Southern Cone was the first site of neo-liberal experimentation, then *especifismo* may very well be considered a foreshadowing of contemporary leftist political strategies in response to neo-liberalism.[1]

[1] David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism* (2009) declares, "All forms of social solidarity were to be dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values," The emphasis on the hyper-individual is best captured in Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), which argues that the conclusion of the Cold War had broken humanity from the constraints of history, leaving individuals free to make their own futures by one's own merit. This new subject, an individual, is imagined as a rational actor who places economic motives at the forefront of decision-making rather than any moral obligation to a particular ideology nor responsibility to a collective or group. In the conclusion of *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America*

The FAU departed from the *reform vs. revolution* debate emblematized by the Moscow-inspired Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU) electoral strategy and the Cuba-inspired MLN-Tupamaro (MLN-T) guerrilla strategy. Uruguayan historians Jaime Yaffe and Aldo Marchesi recognize how scholars reproduce this debate by speaking monolithically about the Uruguayan labor movement and by giving too much weight to the MLN-T. While both the PCU and MLN-T were indeed hegemonic, they saw strong competition from the FAU who challenged the PCU's electoral strategy and the MLN-T's paramilitary strategy. As anarchists, the FAU saw an equal shortcoming among both political rivals for their emphasis on taking over the state. The FAU were strong proponents of coalition-building and collaboration with both the PCU and MLN-T, but they remained autonomous – they saw both rivals' strategies as inevitably leading to failure. While New Left organizations gained a reputation for refusal to dialogue and/or collaborate with political rivals, instead writing them off as reactionary or reformist, the FAU set out to debate the ideological foundations and subsequent strategies of each rival organization in the spaces where they were hegemonic, and did so with a significant amount of success and popularity among working class and student populations.

With less than 200 militants, the FAU played a key role both sparking and networking popular protagonism in workplaces, neighborhoods, and school campuses. The FAU worked in coalition with the PCU, MLN-T, and other revolutionary organizations to support a unified Left project while simultaneously challenging hegemonic strategies, tactics, and discourses. Unlike other anarchist groups worldwide, which took to individualism and counterculture in response to

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during the Cold War (2004), Greg Grandin recognizes how this process played out in Cold War Latin America, declaring: "[The] divorce between self and solidarity – two qualities that are, after all, the defining essences of liberal democracy and socialism – was the fundamental requirement of Latin America's neoliberal regimes. Democracy is now by a shade of its former substance. This is Cold War terror's most important legacy. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009; Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America during the Cold War,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 198

Marxism's popularity throughout the sixties, the FAU embraced Third Worldism and a Marxian class struggle strategy that made them a relevant force amongst popular social movements. Throughout the constitutional dictatorship epoch (1967-73), the FAU and its dissident labor movement allies controlled one-third of the nation's unions in some of the most lucrative industries, especially in the private sector. The coalition endorsed a set of tactics that echoed everyday people's organic response to the political and economic crisis – one that subverted political parties' calls to use legal institutional channels and one that outlasted the MLN-T's armed strategy. At the time of the June 1973 military takeover, unruly labor provided the largest threat to political stability and status quo social relations in the country. This dissertation situates the FAU within this climate of worker revolt.

Historiography

Argentine historian Cristian Ferrer calls anarchism a *contrapeso histórico* (historical counterweight). He declares, "For the majority of people, anarchism, as a political ideology and communitarian project, has transformed into a mystery. It is not necessarily unknown nor unknowable, but something much like a mystery. Incomprehensible. Inaudible. Unapparent." Ferrer continues, "In every city in the world, no matter how small, there is at least one person who claims to be an anarchist."[2] Benedict Anderson also recognizes that one can expect to find a small, enthusiastic group of anarchists in every urban center, while communist groups have lost relevance and popularity after the ideology's perceived failure in the post-Cold War era. He recognizes that

[2] Christian Ferrer, "Misterio y jerarquia. Sobre la inasimable del anarquismo" In *Cabezas de tormenta: ensayos sobre el ingobernable*, Anarres: Buenos Aires, 2004, pp. 66.

anarchists' inability to realize their utopian vision in the twentieth century has served as both a blessing and a curse.[3] Ferrer conveys a similar sentiment through use of a metaphor:

> Communism always seemed to be a river current that roamed uncontrollably until a natural estuary: the post-historical unifying ocean of humanity. For its critics, this river was dirty, irredeemably polluted, but even for them the current was unstoppable. Nevertheless, this river dried up, as if an overpowering sun dried it up in an instant... If we continue with the hydro-metaphors, anarchism does not correspond with the figure of the river, but instead with the geyser, as well as a flood, a downpour, an underground river, an inundation, a deluge, a breaking wave, the eye of a storm.[4]

Although scholars can hardly deny the relevance of anarchism in the trajectory of the Left throughout the twentieth century, few have ventured to provide thorough investigations of the movement after the Spanish Civil War era (1936-39), which is widely recognized as the last hoorah for the ideology.[5]Scholarship on anarchism in Cold War-era Global South is nearly non-existent.

Among the existing historiography, most works that touch significantly on the FAU focus specifically on the organization, especially its internal politics. They are especially interested in 1) the organization's ideological contributions syncretizing anarchism with Third World Marxism and 2) their unique conceptualization of armed struggle.[6] While this dissertation appropriately gives significant attention to both themes, it expands to incorporate the FAU's coalitional activity in the labor movement, a topic severely understudied in both Anglophone and

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[3] Benedict Anderson, Preface to *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940*. New York: Brill Press, 2010

[4] Christian Ferrer, "Misterio y jerarquia. Sobre la inasimable del anarquismo," In *Cabezas de tormenta: ensayos sobre el ingobernable*, Anarres: Buenos Aires, 2004, pp. 71.

[5] Most research on mid-to late-twentieth-century anarchism has been conducted by non-academics located within the movement. There are a few exceptions to this trend among scholars, such as Andrew Cornell's *Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century* (2016), which explores US anarchist militants' contributions to Civil Rights, anti-war, feminist, and environmental movements of the New Left.

[6] Texts include, Rodrigo Vescovi, *Anarquismo y acción directa en Uruguay, 1968-1973*, Barcelona: Editorial Descontrol, 2015; Daniel Agusto de Almeida Alves, "Arriba los que luchan! Sindicalismo revolucionario e luta armada. A trajectória da federaçao anarquista uruguaia: 1963-1973" [dissertation], Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2016

Hispanophone historiography. Rafael Viana da Silva's recent dissertation compares anarchist responses to Dirty War dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. While the study is unique in offering a comprehensive study of regional anarchism in the Cold War-era, it is still primarily concerned with internal debates and dynamics within the movement.[7] Many ex-militants of the FAU have contributed well-researched studies of the time period and organization. While they intersect archival research, interviews, and personal anecdote to provide rich narratives, they lack often lack analysis and thus may be better categorized as primary sources rather than historiographical contributions.[8]

The FAU rarely receives significant attention in broader national narratives of the Cold War epoch, including narratives focused on the New Left. While historians often omit the FAU from national history, they also commonly fall into misrepresenting the organization as well. Vania Markarian's important work on Uruguayan political exiles marks the FAU's intention to build coalition as part of the organization's move to Buenos Aires in 1973. The Author declares, "These former anarchists admitted that their previous disregard for mass politics and party organization had hampered the development of an effective popular mobilization against authoritarianism in Uruguay."[9] On the contrary, the FAU set out to build a mass politics from its inception in 1956 and even modified anarchist ideals to incorporate the use of a political party. One exception is Eduardo Rey Tristán's *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*

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[7] Rafael Viana da Silva, "Um anarquismo latino-americano: estudo comparativo e transnacional das experiencias na Argentina, Brasil, e Uruguai (1959-1985)," [dissertation], Seropedica: Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, 2018

[8] Raúl Oliveira and Sara Méndez, *Hugo Cores: la memoria combatiente*, Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2007; Ivonne Trías, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2008; Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002; Ivonne Trías, *Gerardo Gatti: revolucionario,* Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2008; Augusto Andrés, *Estafar un banco--que placer! Y otras historias*, Montevideo: AlterEdiciones, 2009; Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU,* Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2005

[9] Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Network*, 1967-84, London: Routledge Press, 2005, pp. 72

(2005), which explores the internal and relational politics of the Uruguayan Left. The work also presents narratives of various important labor conflicts, such as the 1968 and '69 bank workers strike, but it does not offer a deeper look into everyday people's protagonism nor their relationships to New Left organizations. Rey Tristán is one of the few "non-sectarian" historians who offers an accurate representation of the FAU likely because he thoroughly incorporates FAU documents stored at the Mechoso family home, an archive also utilized heavily in the study at hand.[10]

Latin American Anarchism

At the turn of the twentieth century anarchists played an foundational role in working class organizations and culture throughout the continent, especially in Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Brazil, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. Eugenio Tandonnet, a French utopian socialist and follower of Charles Fourier, transported anarchist thought to Uruguay's shores in 1844. He linked with recently-arrived Italian exiles who shared the experience of fighting alongside Giuseppe Girabaldi in their country of origin. River Plate historiography of anarchism primarily focuses on its European migrant origins and circulation, especially in Argentina.[11] In 1876, anarchists in Montevideo formed the country's first labor confederation, the Uruguayan Regional Federation of Workers (FORU). In May 1911, the FORU organized Montevideo's first general strike, which originated amongst disgruntled streetcar workers challenging elite notions

[10] Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya: 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005
[11] James Baer, *Immigrant Anarchists in Spain and Argentina*, Champagne: University of Illinois, 2015; Jose Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, Berkeley: University of California, 1998; Osvaldo Bayer, "The influence of Italian immigration on the Argentine anarchist movement" originally published in *Gli italioni fuori d'Italia* ed. Franco Angeli, Milan, 1983, translation by Quilian Vos, for Libcom.org, https://libcom.org/library/influence-italian-immigration-argentine-anarchist-movement-osvaldo-bayer

of progress in the city.[12] By 1911, nearly three-quarters of the country's 117,000 industrial workers belonged to the FORU.[13] Anarchists emphasized organizational decentralization and direct action tactics.

Carlos Rama and Angel Cappelletti's *Anarquismo en America Latina* (1990) dedicates a chapter to the political ideology's development in Uruguay. The chapter recognizes the ideology's strong influence in literary circles, especially playwriters and poets, on both sides of the River Plate. Moreover, the authors paint picture of frequent migration, communication, and exchange among anarchists in the River Plate beginning as far back as the ideology's arrival. Geoffroy de LaForcade's "Federative Futures" (2011) acknowledges the regional focus of the FORU and FORA (Argentina) – both working class organizations even incorporated "Regional" into their names. The author utilizes Buenos Aires, Argentina, and River Plate almost interchangeably due to the region's strong connection with Buenos Aires at its core.[14]

Scholars agree that River Plate anarchism took on a class focus rooted in labor unions. Osvaldo Bayer and Diego Abad de Santillán linked this approach to the influence of Errico Malatesta, who lived in Buenos Aires from 1885 to 1889. One Spanish historian declared, "[Malatesta] insisted on two essential points: unity of the anarchist family and rapprochement with the socialist wing, and promotion of strike movements. He said that in Argentina, due to the scarce number of workers, strikes could end victoriously; from there the anarchists could push forward and the working class, through experience, would continue forming a revolutionary consciousness."[15] Turn of the century anarchists worked in coalition with rival political

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[12] See Anton Rosenthal, "The Arrival of the Electric Streetcar and the Conflict over Progress in Early Twentieth Century Montevideo," In *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1995
[13] See Angel Cappelletti, *Anarchism in Latin America*, Oakland: AK Press, 2018
[14] Geoffroy de LaForcade, "Federative Futures: Waterways, Resistance Societies, and the Subversion of Nationalism in the Early 20th-Century Anarchism of the Río de la Plata Region," In *E.I.A.L.,* Vol. 22, No. 2, 2011
[15] Gonzalo Zaragoza Ruvira, "Errico Malatesta y el anarquismo proletario," In *Historia y Bigliografia Americanistas*, Vol. XVI, No. 3, Sevilla, 1972

organizations for the sake of strengthening the combativeness of the labor movement. According to Geoffroy de LaForcade, this "ubiquitous" and "flexible" quality "was a feature of anarchist militancy seldom considered by historians who chronicle its sectarian fortunes."[16] Anarchist's emphasis on working class militancy has deceived some historians who evaluate the ideology's impact based on its weight in working class consciousness. For example, Ruth Thompson argued that economic grievances and pragmatism proved more influential among anarchist organizations than did the ideology itself.[17]

Historians mark the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) as anarchism's last dance as a legible political force. The broader historiographical narrative of Latin American anarchism ends in 1945 Argentina, when President Juan Peron's state-centered union structure crushed anarchist and communist opposition in the labor movement. Although Argentina and Uruguay both saw an influx of Spanish anarchist exiles who migrated to both capital cities to escape civil war and fascism, the Peronist experience in Argentina is commonly cited as bookending the ideology's influence in the region. Many of these Spanish anarchist exiles in Uruguay became founding members of the FAU. But Argentina's experience with Peron and the strong influence of Marxism in Uruguay, whether the Communist Party or the MLN-Tupamaros, have cast shadow on anarchism's activity throughout the region.

Little is known about anarchism's role and contribution to Cold War-era mass politics. The New Left mobilizations globally sparked an upsurge of scholarly interest in anarchism throughout the sixties. Daniel Guerin (1965) proclaimed that state communism, not anarchism, was out of touch with the needs of everyday people in the modern world. James Joll, who

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[16] Geoffroy de LaForcade, "Federative Futures: Waterways, Resistance Societies, and the Subversion of Nationalism in the Early 20th-Century Anarchism of the Río de la Plata Region," In *E.I.A.L.,* Vol. 22, No. 2, 2011, pp. 73
[17] Ruth Thompson, "The Limitations of Ideology in the Early Argentine Labor Movement: Anarchism in Trade Unions, 1890-1920," In *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1984, pp. 98

concluded his historical monograph *The Anarchists* (1964) with an obituary to the ideology, was forced to acknowledge that anarchism lived on in the spirit of the sixties.[18] But the initial excitement around anarchism and the New Left primarily acknowledged the ideology's influence in protest and counterculture, more specifically its a broader critique of the bureaucratic nature of Soviet communism. More recent scholars like Arif Dirlik (1993) and Andrew Cornell (2016) have dedicated themselves to showing anarchism's influence on popular revolutionary and social movements, such as the Chinese Revolution and US Civil Rights.[19] Yet scholars have either failed to acknowledge anarchism beyond the Spanish Civil War or resorted to studying its more evasive *influence* because organized anarchism had indeed become nearly non-existent throughout the epoch: except for the case of Uruguay.

The work at hand borrows from a New Cold War history approach by decentering global superpowers as the primary actors in the post-WWII era Western Hemisphere. The project decenters the Global North by focusing on a small group of non-state actors who played a key protagonist role in escalating social conflict. Cold War historiography tends to reproduce a uni-directional relationship between the Imperial rivals (US and USSR) and "victims" in the Global South. As such, Global Historical accounts produced by North American scholars maintain a US-centric narrative while confining Global South populations as derivative or reactive. However, Latin American Left protagonists produced an upsurge of intellectual, strategical, and tactical innovations specific to local realities situated within a continent-wide struggle. Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spencer's edited volume *In From The Cold* (2008) has encouraged historians to move away from assessing blame for the Cold War and instead towards examining how

[18] For an in-depth exploration of anarchist historiography, see Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, London: Harper Perennial, 2008
[19] Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Andrew Cornell, *Unruly Equality: US Anarchism in the 20th Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016

people fought at local levels, or "contact zones."[20] Similarly, Hal Brands has identified the region's Cold War as a "multilayered conflict," one in that recognizes US hegemony in the Western Hemisphere but also emphasizes the role of Latin American actors throughout the epoch.[21] Jadwiga Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza (2013) insist we explore "street level" politics throughout the continent to add complexity maneuvers of the "big players."[22] Tanya Harmer has called this approach the "Latin Americanization of the Cold War." Harmer also advocates for a Global History of the Cold War, one that is interested in regional internal dynamics and how they played out beyond the continent and within it.[23]

The FAU's Latin Americanist anarchism broke from turn of the century anarchist thought and practice to remain relevant in the New Left political trends of the time. The FAU's contributions to anarchist political thought and strategy provide another example that challenges the unidirectional relationship between the Global North and South. The FAU moved forth a post-nation-state vision for a revolutionary society in an era during which decolonial and anti-imperialist struggles were saturated with calls for nationalism. While the FAU incorporated some of this nationalist discourse into their own political outlook in effort to remain relevant with the times, they were proposing something beyond the globally prescribed solution offered by the Left, that of seizing state power and transforming society from above. Whereas the postcolonial turn of the 1980s supposedly broke from the tradition of Third World nationalisms, the FAU's Latin American anarchism predates such efforts to look beyond the nation-state to resolve the contradictions, challenges, and limitations imposed by the post-colonial condition. They

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[20] Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spencer, *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounters with the Cold War*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008
[21] Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010
[22] Jadwiga Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza, *De-centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 3
[23] Tanya Harmer, "The Cold War in Latin America," In *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp 133-148

advocated for building popular power by growing participation in workplace and spatial conflicts in order to create the relationships and experiences needed in a prolonged march towards establishing a non-bureaucratic socialism, one that would forego the nation-state through the implementation of democratic federalism continent-wide.[24] Moreover, the organization embraced Third Worldism as opposed to rejecting it. As scholar Vijay Prashad has declared, "The Third World was not a place. It was a project."[25]

The FAU's unique variety of anarchism synthesized the region's class-based anarchism with Thirld Worldism. The result became a political "party" that merged traditional anarchism with New Left ideas. The FAU consisted of some ex-Communists who once collaborated with the group in coalitional political spaces, but the primary force behind the organization's political course was likely the real impact of Marxism, especially the presence of the USSR, in the Third World, something that anarchists a generation prior did not have to confront. Thus, a study of the FAU also breaks from the capitalism-communism binary that dominates Cold War historiography.

Following the trajectory other Latin American New Left organizations of the epoch, the FAU was displaced from its native Uruguay and relocated to Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1972 – the city eventually became a hub for New Left organizations from throughout the continent to

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[24] Arif Dirlik recognizes that many of the arguments moved forth by postcolonial thinkers in the eighties had long existed in academic and political circles. According to Dirlik, the term *postcolonial* "mystifies both politically and methodologically a situation that represents not the abolition but the reconfiguration of earlier forms of domination. The complicity of postcolonial in hegemony lies in postcolonialism's diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination, and in its obfuscation of its own relationship to what is but a condition of its emergence, that is, to a global capitalism that, however fragmented in appearance, serves as the structuring principle of global relations… Now that postcoloniality has been released from the fixity of Third World location, the identity of the postcolonial is no longer structural but discursive." Whereas *postcolonialism* has arisen out of the postmodern condition of global production unity, specifically deterritorialization and the disappearance of a global center of capitalism, Third Worldism developed out of an attempt to link social movements throughout the Global south. Airf Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," In *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1994

[25] Vijay Prashad,"The Third World Idea," In *The Nation*, 17 May 2007

gather over the next three years. The organization not only declared continental and Third World solidarity discursively, but militants directly participated in continental struggles. Upon exile, militants joined struggles in Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. One militant participated in a series of bank robberies alongside famous Basque anarchist Lucio Uturbia in Europe – they sent the money to the Sandinistas of Nicaragua and Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in El Salvador.

Dissident Labor

Uruguayan labor has been highly understudied in both English and Spanish language historiography, especially during the Cold War era. Rodolfo dece's "La historia de la clase obrera y los sindicatos en el siglo XX: experiencias y aportes" (2002) provides a brief, yet informative macro-level, labor history of the twentieth century. The work, produced in collaboration with the PIT-CNT, focuses primarily on the various attempts to unify the labor movement under a single confederation. The work relies primarily on secondary literature for the first half century then turns to memoirs and auto-historiography for the Cold War era.[26] While the work remains a helpful guide for understanding labor movement quantitative and qualitative turning points, it does not help us further understand everyday people's protagonism nor the *actual* functioning of state institutions. Similarly, Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker's *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay* (2005) offer a wonderful chronology of the CNT's formation and identify key tendencies and moments within it. Jackson Alexander, a foreign agent of the AFL-CIO's anti-Communist Free Trade Union Committee, ventured to various Latin American countries to collect information on dissident communists

[26] Rodolfo Porrini, "La historia de la clase obrera y los sindicatos en el siglo XX: experiencias y aportes," In *Trabajo & utopía*, No. 22, Montevideo: Instituto Cuesta Duarte, 2002, pp. 18

within the labor movement.[27] Both works have offered an important foundation for writing the work at hand.

Other scholars have offered enlivening works focused on the histories of specific unions. Susana Dominzain's edited volume *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay* (2016) shares a detailed narrative of the development of Uruguay's metalworkers's unión (UNTMRA). The union, a Communist Party stronghold, underwent a series of splits in some key industries, such as radioelectricity, where workers broke away to form an independent union with a more combative spirit. The union also saw significant radicalization by the eve of the military takeover.[28] The majority of these works were produced by historical protagonists themselves. Yamandú González Sierra, an ex-FAU militant and historian, presents a detailed history of FUNSA in *Un sindicato con historia* (1991). The book relies heavily on oral testimonies from both officers and rank-and-file to recount some of the union's key moments.[29] Ivonne Trias, another ex-FAU militant, produced two biographies of FAU-affiliated unionists Gerardo Gatti, a graphic artist, and Hugo Cores, a bank employee. The works triangulate between personal experience, archival data, and oral testimonies. They have provide substantial detail regarding the relationship between the FAU and labor unions, especially those at small and medium-sized plants.[30] Hugo Cores' unpublished *Sobre la tendencia combativa* (1983) offers a wonderful sketch of the dissident inter-local coalition, the Tendencia Combativa, but only presents brief description and profile of each union.[31] Mario

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[27] Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005
[28] Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016
[29] Yamandú González Sierra, *Un sindicato con historia,* Montevideo: CIEDUR, 1991
[30] Ivonne Trias, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008; Ivonne Trias, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008
[31] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

Tonarelli and Jorge Chagas' *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-1984* (1989) detail the June 1973 general strike and the next two years of union politics. Both union officers, they especially succeed at capturing the dialog between the state and the labor union movement in the months leading up to and after the military takeover.[32]

Finally, Carlos Mignon & Adam Fishwick (2018) recently produced a study reveals the importance of "fringe" and militant minority positions in the automobile industry in 1960s and 70s Cordoba, Argentina. The article focuses on the influence of the Maoist organizations Communist Vanguard and Revolutionary Communist Party in Peronist dominated labor unions. The authors recognize that although neither party achieved their sought after role as vanguard, Maoist ideas and practices penetrated deeply into Cordoban working class organizations. They declare:

> Maoist activists preferred to work in the sphere of practice more than of theory. In other words, giving the lead in struggle to the workers meant nothing else than maintaining that ideology would be progressively elaborated through contact with reality. In this way, violent action of the masses and the acts of insubordination preceded from the instincts of workers' resistance and not from a determined 'political line'… It was the meaning given to the ideas by their practical mobilization in the workplaces that gave them their real significance during this period. Despite the overarching dominance of Peronism in the Argentinian labour movement, the openness to diverse interpretations, as demonstrated by accounts offered by 'proleterianised' militants above, meant there was a flexibility in the use of the third and fourth tier Maoist revolutionary ideas that transcended the meaning ascribed to them by the party leadership.[33]

In other words, Argentine Maoism, like Uruguayan anarchism, set out to grow a shared practice rather than ideology, or political affiliation, among everyday people. As opposed to its

[32] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84*, Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989
[33] Carlos Mignon and Adam Fishwick, "Origins and Evolution of Maoism in Argentina, 1968-1971," In *Labor History*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 2018, pp. 469

Uruguayan counterpart, the protagonism of the Argentine working class in the years leading to military takeover are quite well documented.[34]

The study at hand borrows from a New Labor History framework to focus on everyday people rather than states, institutions, and electoral parties. The New Labor History approach coincides with a New Cold War History approach that decenters bipolar political power. Yet, the study grapples to not fall into the trap of focusing strictly on the FAU. As Geoffroy de LaForcade notes regarding early twentieth century River Plate anarchism, "The cataloguing of explicitly anarchist organizations and campaigns tends to limit our understanding of the ideology's range."[35] I begin by showing the organization's ideological and strategical contributions within the Latin American New Left milieu, but swiftly moves away to focus on conflicts between Uruguayan workers and management, including native-born management that arbitered the relationship between foreign capital and labor. The conflicts also saw significant intervention from the Uruguayan state, both as mediator via the Ministry of Labor and repressor via the police and military. While the state certainly cannot be ignored, everyday people remain central to this study.

Upon the FAU's inception in 1956, the organization set out to ignite a dissident labor movement by inserting militants into existing union structures. The first successful union battle took place in 1955, when workers at the FUNSA rubber factory went on a 52-day strike to protest four arbitrary firings and to split with their business-friendly union. In 1958, the newly-formed union occupied the plant and put it under worker control–three members of the FAU

[34] See James Brennan and Monica B. Gordillo. "Working Class Protest, Popular Revolt, and Urban Insurrection in Argentina: The 1969 Cordobazo" in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1994; James Brennan, *The Labor Wars in Cordoba, 1955-1976: Ideology, Work, and Labor Politics in an Argentine Industrial Society,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998

[35] Geoffroy de LaForcade, "Federative Futures: Waterways, Resistance Societies, and the Subversion of Nationalism in the Early 20th Century Anarchism of the Río de la Plata Region," In *E.I.A.L.,* Vol. 22, No. 2, 2011, pp. 73

were elected to key leadership positions. The campaigns established FUNSA as a point of reference for other dissident labor currents. FUNSA workers established relationships with fellow autonomous unions within the Intersindical Solidarity Commission.[36] Such unions remained autonomous from the Communist-led CUT due to conflicting positions regarding the simultaneous holding of political office and union leadership roles, and affiliation with an international labor federation. Throughout the sixties, the FAU challenged the PCU's grip of the labor movement by advocating for labor autonomy and the use of direct action, or anti-legal tactics, as opposed to courts and the Ministry of Labor for resolving workplace conflicts. Recognizing labor unions as mass organizations and thus spaces to build popular power, the FAU emphasized participation in workplace struggle as key to the formation of class consciousness.

In 1964, members of the FAU spearheaded the call to form Uruguay's first nation-wide labor confederation, the National Labor Convention (CNT). Within the confederation, the FAU aligned with other dissident unionists who challenged the Communist Party's emphasis on negotiation—the earliest evidence of the coalition came in a 1967 Plan of Action rejected by the CNT majority leadership. This alliance built upon the relationships established in the Intersindical Solidarity Commission and eventually grew to encapsulate one-third of the nation's labor unions in the *Tendencia Combativa*, which lead some of the most dramatic and combative campaigns during the half decade leading up to the dictatorship.

From July 1969 to June 1973, Tendencia-affiliated unions were responsible for 67 percent of workplace occupations, 74 percent of strikes lasting longer than three days, and 72

[36] Autonomous Meatpackers Federation, Union Obrera Textil, BAO, GAS, FOEB, AEBU, ADEOM, SUAutomovil, FOMY, ADER (radioemisoras), UECU (cinematograficos), Vendedores de Diarios y Revistas, F. Ferroviaria, COAlpargatas, APPU, FUECI, Papeleros y Cartoneros, Aceiteras, Telecomunicaciones, Vidrio, General Electric, Bakers, CMNavales, etc

percent of strikes lasting longer than ten days.[37] Tendencia-affiliated unions organized prolonged work actions that often by-passed legal channels of mediation and drew solidarity actions from fellow unions. At the time of the 27 June 1973 military coup, a majority of Uruguayan industrialists recognized the CNT as the most serious threat to national security.[38] Moreover, communications between US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest V. Siracusa and US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the dictatorship's primary concern was to repress a surging labor movement rather than confronting a waning guerrilla movement.[39] After the coup, Uruguayan Minister of Interior Walter Ravenna identified the Tendencia's influence in the CNT as warranting military intervention and labor reform. [40] Yet, the current historiography in both English and Spanish does not provide the necessary depth to understand the broader climate of labor unrest and popular revolt in the half decade leading up the 1973 civic-military government. The FAU serves as both an object of analysis and a means to access narratives from this climate of popular social upheaval.

The Uruguayan New Left

While the term "New Left" originated to describe Global North phenomenon of a polycentric Left that moved away from the Soviet Union's influence and towards analyses of

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[37] Proportions taken from a personal data set compiled from archived editions of the Communist Party daily newspaper, *El Popular*. The data set consists of 550 recorded work actions between July 1969 and June 1973. While official numbers are indeed much higher due to press censorship, the PCU paper dedicated page 5 of each edition to reporting on labor conflicts.
[38] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981
[39] US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2164 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, Subj: Defense Minister's View on Current Situation, Montevideo, 13 July 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d337
[40] US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2164 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, Subj: Defense Minister's View on Current Situation, Montevideo, 13 July 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d337

gender, race, culture, and neo-colonialism, Van Gosse defined the New Left as a "movement of movements."[41] Scholars tend to agree that the New Left spawned out of a global youth rebellion. George Katsiaficas proclaims:

> From France to Tunisia and Yugoslavia to Mexico, students broke with traditional political parties of the Left and the Right and developed new forms of organization and practice. Their unified actions and emergent aspirations were a product of centuries of centralization of the world economic system, but at the same time, they helped define new dimensions to the global culture. New values for international and interpersonal social relationships quickly spread as a result of these movements, values which went beyond what was previously considered possible or acceptable.[42]

The New Left is most commonly associated with the ethno-nationalist and countercultural youth movements that thrived during the late sixties early seventies United States. Moreover, some scholars have claimed that these counter currents spawned from middle class youths who reproduced an *en vogue,* yet vacuous, "language of dissent" made popular by political parties from above.[43]

Scholars of Latin America generally struggle when applying the term "New Left" to the continent. For example, Greg Grandin (2004) provides a definition of the Latin American New Left as those organizations who expressed "a will to act." After various country's efforts at social reform were met with state terrorism, the Cuban *foco* strategy offered a solution to foreseeable cycles of violence, or revolution and counter-revolution.[44] Johnathan Brown's recent book

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[41] See Van Gosse, "A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left," In *A Companion to Post-1945 America,* eds. Jean Christopher Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, London: Blackwell, 2002; Van Gosse, "Introduction: A Movement of Movements," In *The Movements of the New Left, 1960-1975: A Brief History with Documents*, Boston: Bedford, 2005

[42] George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, Boston: South End Press, 1987, pp. 18

[43] Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003; Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996; Forrest D. Colburn, *The Vogue of Revolution in Poor Countries*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994

[44] Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 15; Other scholars share a similar definition of the New Left. Ricardo Melgar Bao, who defined the New Left as groups that "glorified violence…and distanced themselves from the political traditions of opposition

Cuba's Revolutionary World (2017) reinforces the role of Cuba as exporter of revolutionary ideology and praxis throughout the continent. The author paints the revolutionary government as the sole counterweight to US hegemony in the region.[45] The dichotomy traces back to Regis Debray's influential text, "Latin America: The Long March" (1965), which advocated the continent-wide use of *foco* strategy to break from Communist Party vanguardism.[46]

Many have since challenged Grandin's guerrilla-centric definition of the Latin American New Left. Eric Zolov's "Expanding our Conceptual Horizons: The Shift from an Old to a New Left in Latin America" (2008) suggests that Latin American scholars consider the polycentric definition used to describe North America's New Left. He insists that Grandin's "narrow" definition of the New Left "excludes the vast sectors of largely middle-class youth that took no direct part in armed revolutionary activities, yet who were deeply impacted by the cultural and political trends of the time," and "allows no interpretative room to address the countercultural practices found on the left, practices that have been silenced by the historical process which has tended to emphasize the overriding significance of armed revolt and repression." The author further proclaims:

> Historians require a revisionist framework that encompasses the non-armed aspects of radical challenges to political and social norms—counterculture practices, new aesthetic sensibilities, trends in film, literature, theater, music, the arts, as well as the impact of Liberation Theology and links those aspects to transnational processes, without disaggregating them from the discourses and proximity of violent revolutionary movements. Rather than viewing armed struggle—the "heroic guerrilla"—as distinct from seemingly non-revolutionary, consumptive practices… we should regard these as twin facets of diverse and

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movements that came before them, whether Marxist, reformist, or pacifist," Ricardo Melgar Bao, "La memoria sumergida. Martirologio y sacralización de la violencia en las guerrillas latinoamericanas" In *Movimientos armadas en México, siglo xx*, eds. Verónica Oikión Solano and Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, Vol. 1, Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán/CIESAS, 2006, pp. 37

[45] Johnathan Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017

[46] Regis Debray, "Latin America: The Long March," In *New Left Review*, No. 33, September-October 1965

> intersecting movements that confronted state power, on one hand, and patriarchal norms, on the other.[47]

However, John Beverley's "Rethinking Armed Struggle in Latin America" (2009) argues that Cold War-era armed groups laid the foundation for contemporary Latin American politics by making it the only region in the world where socialism is seriously on the political agenda today. This is the case although the popular representation of armed struggle remains one of a "Romantic adolescence" prone to "excess, error, irresponsibility, and moral anarchy." He sees this present in both popular culture, such as the film *Amores Perros* (2001), and in the recent comments by some ex-militants, such as Beatriz Sarlo, who recently claimed that armed strategies should be abandoned not just because they were defeated, but "because they were an error."[48] Those scholars influenced by the polycentric definition of the New Left agree that the term describes a broad movement that united various social classes, political ideologies, and revolutionary strategies in an effort to move beyond orthodox analyses and definitions of the Latin American Left. According to Eric Zolov, "In Latin America during the 1960s, to be 'on the left' meant clearly more than choosing between the competing ideological strategies of an older Communist Party beholden to the Soviet Union's (comparatively) cautious approach to revolutionary transformation, and China's (via Cuba) brasher insistence on revolutionary action."[49] This diffused, and often tenuous, effort to confront the challenges presented by the free

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[47] Eric Zolov, "Expanding our Conceptual Horizons: The Shift from an Old to a New Left in Latin America," In *Contracorriente*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2008, pp. 51

[48] John Beverley, "Rethinking Armed Struggle in Latin America" in *Boundary 2*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2009, pp. 48-49; Christina Gerhart's recent book also makes a point to write against pushes against mainstream media representations of Germany's Red Army Faction and other armed Left organizations as driven by sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, Christina Gerhart, *Screening the Red Army Faction: Historical and Cultural Memory, New York:* Bloomsbury Academic, 2018

[49] Eric Zolov, "Expanding our Conceptual Horizons: The Shift from an Old to a New Left in Latin America," In *Contracorriente*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2008, pp. 52

market and state power resulted in a resignification of Left symbols, stretched political imagination, and experimentation with new thought and praxis.

Uruguay's 1968 differed significantly from other popular mobilizations and street confrontations that surfaced globally during the same epoch. Vania Markarian's *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails* (2017) explores the relationship between youth counterculture and the Uruguayan Left. The author accurately argues that Uruguay's student movements maintained close relations with traditional Left organizations, especially labor unions. Markarian claims, "The violent protests of 1968 were innovative, but the novelty arose largely from the relatively widespread use of strategies, slogans, and even forms of organization that were already present in various sectors of the Uruguayan Left (mostly in minor groups)."[50] Markarian and other recent scholars of Latin American student, guerrilla, and feminist movements show strong ties and convergence between the Old and New Left rather than tension presumed by scholarship prior. Similarly, Jeffrey Gould's "Solidarity Under Siege: The Latin American Left, 1968" (2009) identifies strong linkage between the student and labor movement. While the author acknowledges the role of the Tendencia, he, like Markarian, emphasizes the Communist Party as the primary driving force behind social upheaval. While Gould is accurate to identify the continued popularity of mass politics and vanguardism even among the New Left, he is wrong to paint the PCU as supportive of more militant strategies and tactics, especially within the CNT.

While the Uruguayan case certainly shows a closer entanglement of the Old and New Left, scholarship on the latter focuses exclusively on the MLN-Tupamaros. Many newer works also show connections between armed struggle and counterculture, but they omit the place of the

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[50] Vania Markarian, Uruguay, *1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 152

New Left in the labor movement beyond mere lip service. In this sense, they explore armed struggle solely through groups that applied the *foco* model**.**[51] Yet, unlike many of their Argentine counterparts, Uruguayan scholars have not fallen into the ideological trap of painting the New Left, especially armed struggle, as disintegrated from the working class.[52] For example, Maria Jose Moyana's *Argentina's Lost Patrol* (1995) claims that naíve young Argentines of the Montoneros and ERP blindly followed a militaristic ideology that lead to an out of control spiral and cult-like isolation.[53] Some North American sociologists even went so far to claim that middle classes resorted to armed struggle because their growing expectations that accompanied regional modernization could not be met by the structural limitations of a Third World reality.[54] Arturo C. Porzecanski's 1974 study shows that working class participation in the MLN-Tupamaros doubled between 1969 and 1972, from 17 to 34 percent. By the time of the June 1973 military takeover, the demographic distribution consisted of 29.5 percent students, 32.4 percent professionals, 32.4 percent workers, and 5.7 percent other.[55] Moreover, Argentine Pablo Possi (2009) criticizes the unidimensional category of student frequently utilized in historiography. While authors often use the term as a shorthand for "middle class," many students were

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[51] Clara Aldrighi, *La izquierda armada : ideología, ética e identidad en el MLN-Tupamaros*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2001; Arturo Porzecanski, *Uruguay's Tupamaros: The Urban Guerrilla*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1974; Aldo Marchesi, *Latin America's Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global Sixties,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018

[52] This broader critique of *foco* initially came from within the New Left itself. Samuel Farber, a Cuban anarchist exile and author of *The Politics of Che Guevara: Theory and Practice* (2016), criticizes Che and *foco* strategy for never having been interested in growing a social revolution among the working class and instead holding a technocratic interpretation of communism. Trotskyists in the United States made an abundance of pronouncements regarding the MLN-T's strategy. Martin Glaberman critiqued Regis Debray for representing *foco* as a panacea and for neglecting to find a role for urban working classes in Latin America's capitol cities. Similarly, Frank Roberts claimed that a movement without deep roots in the working class, "roots which enable it to defend itself with the threat of massive strikes, can prove an easy prey to direct governmental violence," Martin Glaberman, "Regis Debray: Revolution without a Revolution," In *Speak Out,* April 1968; Frank Roberts, "The Tupamaros: Rise and Fall," In *Socialist International*, London: Socialist Review Publishing Co., 1974

[53] Maria Jose Moyana, *Argentina's Lost Patrol: Armed Struggle, 1969-1979*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995

[54] See Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970

[55] Arturo C. Porzecanski, *Uruguay's Tupamaros: The Urban Guerrilla*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1974, pp. 29

simultaneously workers throughout the sixties.[56] Yet, the relationship between armed struggle and working class sectors continues to prove evasive . In Aldo Marchesi's (2018) recent work on transnational armed struggle in the Southern Cone region, the author admits that investigating the topic beyond the local level primarily captures the perspectives and experiences of its mobile middle-class leadership.[57]

In the case of Uruguay, the (counter)culture *versus* armed struggle debate around defining the Latin American New Left has lead scholars to give insufficient attention to the labor movement.[58] Beyond the case of Uruguay, scholars have almost entirely neglected to recognize the presence and influence of anarchism among the Latin American and global New Left. Internal Left debates certainly identify the ideology's conceptual and tactical influences throughout the epoch. In 1971, British socialist Anthony Arblaster recognized an "anarchist revival" amongst the international New Left due to its anti-authoritarian character.[59] Similarly, North American anarchist Paul Goodman claimed that anarchism, not Communism, was the underlying political ideological current of the 1968 student protests in the United States. [60] Both

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[56] Pablo Pozzi, *Por las sendas argentinas. El PRT-ERP: La guerrilla marxista,* Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2009, pp. 11

[57] Aldo Marchesi, *Latin America's Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global Sixties,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 15

[58] This is not unique to Uruguayan scholarship. Christen Ross (2002) pushes against narrative of France's 1968 that begins in May and centers student protagonists. She emphasizes the influence of decolonial struggle, especially the influx of ideas brought into France by Algerian migrants, and the important role of labor action in destabilizing the Gaullist government. She asks, "How then do we arrive…at a consensus view of 1968 as a mellow, sympathetic, poetic 'youth revolt' and lifestyle reform?," Christen Ross, *May '68 and Its Aftermath*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 8

[59] "There has been some kind of revival of anarchism. I put it as loosely at that, since while there has been a modest though appreciable revival of specifically anarchist groupings, what is of much greater importance has been the revived influence of anarchist thought and attitudes on the left generally, among many who neither call themselves anarchists nor would want to," from Anthony Arblaster, "The Relevance of Anarchism" In *The Socialist Register*, 1971, pp. 59

[60] "The wave of student protest in the advanced countries overrides national boundaries, racial differences, the ideological distinctions of fascism, corporate liberalism and communism. Needless to say, officials of the capitalist countries say that the agitators are Communists, and Communists say they are bourgeois revisionists. In my opinion, there is a totally different political philosophy underlying -- it is Anarchism," from Paul Goodman, "The Black Flag of Anarchism," In *The New York Times Magazine*, New York, 14 July 1968

writers identified a New Left tendency to synthesize Marxist and anarchist politics. Arblaster acknowledged that while anarchist organizations were few, many New Leftists first developed an affinity for the ideology and later sought to combine it with elements of Marxism and socialism. Similarly, Goodman recognized a tension in the New Left rhetoric of "participatory democracy" (i.e. anarchism) and "cadres" (i.e. Marxism). While both scholars speak to a Global North New Left, the anarchist presence in the Latin American New Left remains understudied although scholars have acknowledged the anarchist origins of the Chilean MIR and anarchist membership in the Uruguayan MLN-T.[61] The FAU's social insertion via the Tendencia was so effective that many scholars do not even recognize the presence of anarchism at all.

The FAU participated in two of Uruguay's most important spaces for the development of New Left debate and practice, *Epoca* and *El Cordinador*. The former, a New Left journal with participation from six political organizations, offered a venue for independent Left thought outside of the Communist Party organ. The journal declared support for the 1967 Organization of Latin American States (OLAS) congress verdict, which advocated for armed struggle throughout the continent Gerardo Gatti, a FAU militant and graphic artist, maintained responsibility of the organ's printshop. Yet, the FAU's understanding of armed struggle differed significantly from those conceptions popular throughout the rest of the Third World. In 1966, the FAU parted ways with *El Cordinador,* Uruguay's first armed revolutionary organization modeled on the Cuban *foco* model that eventually evolved to become the National Liberation Movement-Tupamaros (MLN-T). In mid-1969, the FAU challenged the MLN-T's armed strategy by forming the Popular Revolutionary Organization (OPR-33), an armed apparatus of roughly sixty militants

[61] Felipe Del Solar and Andrés Pérez, "El anarquismo en los orígenes del MIR y las Brigadas del Pueblo" In *Anarquistas: Presencia libertaria en Chile*, eds. Felipe del Solar and Andrés Pérez, Santiago: RIL editores, 2008, http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=4772

to confront escalating state violence. More than a guerrilla unit replicating the Cuban model, the OPR-33 operated as a "technical apparatus" with clear targets and goals to support workers in labor conflicts. From 1969 to 1974, the OPR-33 carried out eight kidnappings, two dozen robberies, and over thirty acts of significant property damage. The OPR-33 opposed assassinations and never killed a political opponent.

While many scholarly works have claimed Latin American armed Left organizations to be made up primarily of naïve young middle-class males waging a belligerent war against the state, the case at hand offers an opportunity to understand a critique and alternative to the *foco* model advanced by an organization that shared an affinity for the use of an armed struggle. The FAU's strongest presence was in Montevideo's working class neighborhoods of El Cerro and La Teja and the FUNSA rubber factory union. The organization merged a traditional labor union strategy with New Left armed tactics, but remained strictly committed to the former due to its mass political nature.

Finally, a thorough study of the FAU offers an opportunity to better understand hegemonic Uruguayan Left organizations, the PCU and MLN-Tupamaros. The FAU's critiques shine a refreshing new light on topics of armed struggle and electoral politics that move beyond those presented by their rival Old and New Left organizations themselves, who often saw themselves as the political vanguard, and the state, which used a wide brush to paint the entire Left as criminals and terrorists. While Left projects throughout the continent have made significant reforms in the past half century, they have unanimously failed to provide sustainable alternatives the market and state. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important for historians to explore critiques of the hegemonic Left that come from within the Left itself.

Sectarian rivalries aside, Jeffrey Gould accurately recognized, “The New Left provoked a virulent debate... For most rank-and-file militants, however, the debate was less important than the fight for immediate objectives (however radical); the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Left thus had to coexist, even if not in harmony.”[62]

Sources and Methods

Primary source print documents include police reports, Left publications, FAU internal communications, and memoirs from state and personal archives. I rely primarily on the publications *Epoca* (1962-67), Cartas de *FAU* (1968-71), and *Compañero* (1971-73) to explore questions of ideology and political strategy in the FAU. *Epoca* hosted founding conversations of a New Left coalition that would eventually become the *Tendencia Combativa* in the labor movement. The journal was edited by Eduardo Galeano and served as a platform for six revolutionary Left organizations, including the FAU. It was closed by the government in December 1967, and all six political organizations were illegalized, forcing them to operate underground. *Cartas de FAU*, a weekly clandestine bulletin circulated from June 1968 to March 1971, provide the best printed documentation of the organization’s public rhetoric during its three years operating clandestinely. Roughly 18,000 copies were produced during the first two years of publication. The *Cartas* aimed to recruit sympathizers with the FAU’s position by sharing frequent critiques of and alternatives to the Communist Party strategy. Some militants eventually abandoned other Leftist organizations to join the FAU after developing a familiarity with the anarchist's strategy and analysis upon encountering the documents. Distribution was risky. Anyone caught with the propaganda was subject to detention and torture. Militants located

[62] Jeffrey J. Gould, “Solidarity Under Siege: The Latin American Left, 1968,” In *American Historical Review*, Vol. 114, No. 2, 2019, pp. 370

in othe FAU's primary organizing sites, like the FUNSA factory or Graphic Artists Union, distributed up to 500 *Cartas* in their workplace. Others, who did not have the fortune of coming into daily contact with Left circles would distribute as few as three or four.[63] On 9 December 1969, members of the FAU expropriated three mimeographs from the ORBIS enterprise in Montevideo's barrio Sur – publication increased to 5,000 copies per week.[64] *Compañero* served as the propaganda organ for the FAU/ROE when the organization was legalized in 1971. The journal picks up where the *Cartas* left off as an aboveground press and continued in-depth reports of workplace conflicts waged by unions belonging to the Tendencia. Upon seizing power in June 1973, the military dictatorship finally closed the journal and imprisoned the editorial staff.[65]

I combine FAU publications with rival Communist Party (PCU) publications to reconstruct data and narratives of the labor movement. I utilize PCU daily press organ *El Popular* (1957-73) to quantify labor conflicts between May 1968 and June 1973. While the daily suffered frequent censorship and often its editors often chose to omit details of more confrontational tactics for ideological reasons, the paper dedicated at least a full page to covering labor conflicts regardless of the union's affiliation. The extensive press coverage lends an opportunity to explore both quantitative and qualitative (tactical) differences between PCU- and Tendencia-affiliated unions. Moreover, the paper also offers the opportunity to juxtapose the

[63] Ana Rosa Amoros, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017
[64] "Prólogo," In *Cartas de FAU* (Tomo I), Montevideo: Ediciónes Recortes, 2016, pp. 10
[65] I have benefited greatly from use of the Uruguayan Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of the Republic, where I have accessed archived documents and received mentorship from Professor Aldo Marchesi. There, I have accessed the personal archives of Hugo Cores (member of the FAU and General Secretary of the bank tellers union) and Hector Rodriguez (Communist Party dissident-defector and General Secretary of the Textile Worker Congress). Both provide important references to the *Tendencia Combativa*, specifically by identifying those unions who belonged to the coalition at a given historical moment. I also accessed folders with contents from FAU exiles in France, including propaganda documents smuggled from Buenos Aires to Montevideo when the organization relocated to Argentina in exile. The folders also consist of various Human Rights testimonies from members of the FAU who shared their stories with the Beltrand Russel Tribunal and Amnesty International.

Party's analysis and strategy with that of the FAU. I use the FAU-ROE bulletin *Cartas de FAU* and the ROE bi-mensual *Compañero* to offer detail of everyday people's participation in labor conflicts. The publications' editors hoped to inspire existing collective organizations to take on roles as protagonists in a struggle against capital and the state by reporting ongoing mobilizations, thus providing a counter-narrative, one that normalized struggle as part of everyday life. After the closing of *Epoca*, radical Left perspective was absent from mainstream press, leaving the PCU newspaper El Popular as the only consistent aboveground source for Left reporting. Thus, *Cartas* and *Compañero* serve as the only documentation of many of popular mobilizations taking place during these years, as the PCU refrained from covering them due to self-censorship and/or political opposition to the mobilizations due to ideological differences. [66]

Internal documents, such as member profiles, planning maps for armed operations, analyses of labor actions, to-do lists, letters, internal discipline records, union records, and more, play a critical role for reconstructing the FAU's inner culture. These documents were preserved in the personal archive collections of Juan Carlos Mechoso, Martin Ponce de Leon, Hector Rodriguez, Ricardo Vilaro, and Hugo Cores. In the case of the former, the contents were hidden in a secret compartment behind a safe house wall 14 years while FAU militants were imprisoned or in exile during the military dictatorship (1973-85).

I have interviewed 27 members of the FAU who have shared in-depth personal narratives to elaborate on the events covered in text documents. Due to the over-representation of men in the historiography of the Cold War and New Left, I intentionally sought out women

[66] The back page contained a small section called "This is the response," which consisted of short annotations of ongoing struggles compiled by Mauricio Gatti, who gathered reports from networks among labor unions. Beyond debates and activities internal to the Left, the documents contained blacklists of employers and reports about state-led repression, such as detentions and torture, Zelmar Zutra, "Prologo: Contexto en que aparecen las CARTAS," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2016, pp. 7-13

participants to represent over half my sample. Interlocutors guide me to relevant primary sources and help bring meaning to documented events by offering intimate details of personal experiences. I also rely heavily on published memoirs and personal historical research by Hugo Cores, Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, Maria Julia Alcoba, Jorge Chagas, Juan Carlos Mechoso, Ivonne Trías, Universindo Ródriguez, and Augusto Andrés. While the abundance of propaganda produced by the FAU allows for a unique look at the organization's broader analysis and strategy, it does not always capture the nuanced narratives of each workplace conflict, which were often sparked by communication between the organization and one or two workers located in the site of conflict.

Oral and written testimony has proved indispensable to completing the dissertation's final chapter about transnational state terrorism against the organization. The importance of oral testimony cannot be overstated. Alessandro Portelli's "What Makes Oral History Different" (2006) declares:

> There are no 'false' oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of philological criticism and factual verification which are required by all types of sources anyway, the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'wrong' statements are still psychologically 'true' and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts.[67]

Thus, oral testimonies allow for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of events captured in police reports, news articles, and intelligence documents from the actors' subjective viewpoints. The chapter relies primarily on declassified correspondence between the US Embassy in Uruguay and the US State Department. While the chapter departs from its predecessors by focusing on the state as actor and the militants as acted-upon, it shares testimonies from some of the few survivors of Automotores Orletti, a clandestine detention, torture, and disappearance

[67] Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" in *The Oral History Reader* ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson. New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 68

center in Buenos Aires where 34 members of the FAU/ROE were murdered. Together, we co-produce a narrative-analysis.

Conceptual Framework

While each chapter focuses on a different element particular to the FAU, such as ideology, structure, strategy, and/or micro-level protagonism, the work pivots around the organization to gain a window into how everyday people participated in a rapidly escalating social war. Between May 1968 and June 1973, everyday Uruguayans participated in a worker revolt. This study offers special attention to micro-narratives and micro-gestures in an attempt to capture the protagonism of everyday people within the framework of intra-syndical debates around strategy and tactics at the union leadership level.

North American scholar Howard Kimeldorf argues that labor history should move between union politics and everyday people's behavior. He recognizes that labor history has been tainted by the unfair assumption of workers as either revolutionaries or reformists. The author traces this binary to the positions of Vladimir Lenin, who argued that workers would follow their "proletarian instincts" if the vanguard party could at least neutralize bourgeois hegemonic thought, and Selig Perlman, who argued that workers were inherently conservative and would naturally reject all radical doctrine in the absence of Leninist agitators. Kimeldorf clarifies, "Lenin's proletarians were too stupefied by bourgeois thinking to complete the journey, while Perlman's trade unionists were too pragmatic to even begin it."[68] Thus, bread-and-butter struggles lead to polarizing different conclusions. For Leninists, every act of worker resistance, no matter how small, marked a challenge to the system itself; for Perlman, workplace demands

[68] Howard Kimeldorf, "Bringing the Unions Back in (Or Why We Need a New Old labor History)," In *Labor History*, Vol. 32, 1991, pp. 96

represented rearguard actions aimed at protecting diminishing economic opportunities in the face of a rapidly changing free market. Faced with this dichotomy, New Labor History moved away from unions to study working class identity and consciousness in everyday life, such as churches, bars, music halls, social clubs, and the home. Kimeldorf argues that a New Labor History should indeed recognize working class subjectivity beyond the union, but not veer too far estranged from unions as popular expressions of working class interests.[69] Especially throughout the Cold War era, they were key spaces for everyday people's protagonism.

This study is largely guided by early twentieth century Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, specifically what he called the *war of position*. For Gramsci, revolution in Western Europe did not only require taking state power, or what he called the *war of maneuver*. Whereas the Soviet revolution succeeded merely by claiming control over the state, in Western Europe civil society upheld liberal values of the market and state even under conditions of crisis. Thus, bourgeois ideology gained legitimacy, or hegemony, and the ruling class's ideology became the social "common sense" of everyday people. For Gramsci, the question of revolution not only revolved around taking state power but making socialist ideas counter hegemonic among the masses. Moreover, the position of counter-hegemon becomes a battleground for rival factions among the Left.

In pre-dictatorship Uruguay, the Communist Party (PCU) maintained hegemony over the labor movement but remained habitually threatened by everyday people's growing militancy and dissidence, which often disobeyed, undermined, and/or rejected PCU hegemony in at least one-third of the country's worksites. This number increased in times of crisis, when the Party had to take more aggressive positions and embrace more combative tactics in order to keep up with a

[69] Howard Kimeldorf, "Bringing the Unions Back in (Or Why We Need a New Old labor History)," In *Labor History*, Vol. **32**, 1991, pp. 91–129

growingly combative base. In turn, the FAU set out to foment antagonism with the state, capital, and institutionalized representatives of working class interest and channel laborers' discontent into an organized and prolonged plan of action for mass social transformation of the everyday. In a recent FAU text titled "Pueblo fuerte: poder popular desde el libertario" (2017), the organization declared:

> The old socialists talked about creating a new civilization; Che made it popular to speak about the *hombre nuevo*. Durruti said that we will bring about a new world in our hearts. These things all alude to values—of a new form of living, of new social relations. If history has taught us anything, it is that this is not produced from above, but it requires the creation of a new social subject—and the active participation of the subject itself is fundamental for their transformation. If the social subject does not come into contact with new social forms and relations, even if they are incipient, they will not have any other points of reference beyond those that they know and tend to reproduce.[70]

While the PCU gave precedent to the *war of maneuver* and prioritized an electoral strategy, the FAU emphasized the *war of position* and aimed make anarchist strategy and tactics the primary counter hegemonic force in the labor movement.

Building upon Gramsci, this study also borrows heavily from the analyses moved forth by Autonomous Marxist currents in Turin and Detroit. The Autonomous Marxist tradition challenges the Marxist-Leninist idea that the working class comes to fruition via affiliation with the Communist Party. Autonomists argue for a bottom-up model of organization centered around working class reality and working class struggle as the driving force of history. They argue that direct action, whether in the workplace or the social sphere, brings the working class into being by realizing a collective counter-subjectivity that exists inherently due to their class position vis-à-vis capital. The argument draws from a debate in Marxist scholarship about how the theorist

[70] "Pueblo fuerte: poder popular desde el libertario," Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2017, pp. 7

understood the category of working class as a class *in* itself or a class *for* itself.[71] In the words of E.P. Thompson:

> The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making… Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.[72]

CLR James and Raya Dunayevskaya, Detroit-based union and political organizers affiliated with the Johnson-Forest Tendency, first put forth the notion of Autonomous Marxist to describe the high degree of self-organization and wildcat strikes among workers in the automobile industry. They challenged the notion that workers fell victim to a logic of domination and could not move beyond a cycle of spontaneous action followed by reformist negotiations – and thus required leadership from an intelligentsia class (ie. The Party).[73] CLR James and Grace Lee Boggs' seminal text *Facing Reality* (1958) [74] For example, historian Martin Glaberman captured workers' mass refusal in *Wartime Strikes: The Struggle against the No-Strike Pledge in the UAW during World War II* (1980). He examines worker behavior when faced with the political demand to sacrifice time and wages for the war effort. While the workers overwhelmingly identified as patriots and supporters of the war effort, they carried out the highest number of wildcat strikes during the WWII period. Workers acted outside of their collective organizing body and acted on their own terms to *face reality*. The autonomous Marxist analysis inspired party dissidents in the face of an increasingly technocratic and authoritarian Soviet Union that became all the more visible after the 1956 invasion of Hungary. According to

[71] See Edward Andrew, "Class in Itself and Class Against Capital: Karl Marx and his Classifiers," In *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 16, No. 3, 1983
[72] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* New York: Vintage Books, 1966, pp. 9
[73] Vladimir Lenin proposed a solution to these cycles of spontaneity in *What Is to Be Done?* (1902)
[74] CLR James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Facing Reality*, Detroit: Correspondence Press, 1958

CLR James and Grace Lee Boggs, "One of the greatest achievements of the Hungarian Revolution was to destroy once and for all the legend that the working class cannot act successfully except under the leadership of a political party. If a political party had existed to lead the revolution, that political party would have led the revolution to disaster, as it has led every revolution to disaster during the last thirty years."[75] For James and Boggs, control over production means control over workers, and thus one of the modern state's key functions is to incorporate trade unions into it. While Communist-led trade unions mediated a relationship of domination between the state and labor under capitalist social relations, a transition to bureaucratic socialism thereafter results in the submission of labor to the interests of the Party.

In the sixties and seventies, Italian autonomous Marxists labelled their current as *operaismo,* or workerism. A group of academic sociologists and union organizers formed around the journals *Potere Operaio* and *Lutta Continua*. In "The Strategy of Refusal" (1966), Mario Tronti declared:

> Exploitation is born, historically, from the necessity for capital to escape from its de facto subordination to the class of worker-producers. It is in this very specific sense that capitalist exploitation, in turn, provokes workers' insubordination. The increasing organization of exploitation, its continual reorganization at the very highest levels of industry and society are, then, again responses by capital to workers' refusal to submit to this process. It is the directly political thrust of the working class that necessitates economic development on the part of capital which, starting from the point of production, reaches out to the whole of social relations. But this political vitality on the part of its adversary which is, on the one hand, indispensable to capital, is, at the same time, the most fearful threat to capital's power. We have already seen the political history of capital as a sequence of attempts by capital to withdraw from the class relationship; at a higher level we can now see it as the history of the successive attempts of the capitalist class to emancipate itself from the working class, through the medium of the various forms of capital's political domination over the working class. This is the reason why capitalist exploitation, a continuous form of the extraction of surplus value within the process of production, has been accompanied, throughout the history of capital, by the development of ever more organic forms of political dictatorship at the level of the State […]

[75] CLR James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Facing Reality*, Detroit: Correspondence Press, 1958, pp. 10

> From the very beginning the proletariat is nothing more than an immediate political interest in the abolition of every aspect of the existing order. As far as its internal development is concerned, it has no need of "institutions" in order to bring to life what it is, since it is nothing other than the life-force of that immediate destruction. It doesn't need institutions, but it does need organization… Just as there can be no classes before the workers begin to exist as a class, so there can be no revolution before the destructive will that the working class bears within itself, by the very nature of its existence, takes solid form. [76]

Moreover, such an argument should not be pigeonholed among autonomous Marxists. Alain Touraine (1985) argues for a sociological approach centered on the *study of social action,* or social movement. He declares:

> If we often feel uncomfortable with the idea of a central social movement, it is because we are still influenced by a long tradition which identifies social movements and political action, that is, organized action aiming at controlling State power… The idea of social movement interprets very powerfully the attempts of "society" to liberate itself from "power."[77]

The autonomist tradition recognizes capitalist exploitation to pervade human relations outside the factory, especially the home and urban spaces. Italian Marxists adjusted their analysis after the country experienced mass de-industrialization throughout the 1970s. The *autonomia* (or, post-workerist) movement advanced the concept of the *social factory*, which linked housework, affective, labor, cognitive labor, and globalized informal labor (especially in the Global South) with capitalist production. These arguments were most notably articulated by Marxist feminists in Italy and Detroit. In the formative text “The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community” (1972), Mariarosa della Costa and Selma James declared:

> She could refuse to produce. In this sense, she constitutes the central figure of social subversion…The starting point is not how to do housework more efficiently, but how to find a place as protagonist in the struggle, that is, not a higher productivity of domestic labor but a higher subversiveness in the struggle….It does not automatically follow that to be cut off from socialized

[76] Mario Tronti, “The Strategy of Refusal” (Thesis 12), In *Operai e Capitale*, Turin: Einaudi, 1966, pp.234-252.
[77] Alain Touraine, “An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements,” In *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter 1985, pp. 775-6

> production is to be cut off from socialized struggle: struggle, however, demands time away from housework, and at the same time it offers an alternative identity to the woman who before found it only at the level of the domestic ghetto. In the sociality of struggle women discover and exercise a power that effectively gives them a new identity. The new identity is and can only be a new degree of social power. The possibility of social struggle arises out of the socially productive character of women's work in the home.[78]

In other words, workers, whether in the factory or the home, form their own collective class identity and individual subjectivities through participation in social subversion. While the domestic sphere serves as *point zero* for labor powers' social reproduction (or, the feminized domestic labor necessary to reproduce masculinized value-producing labor power), the domestic sphere can be a space for counter-subjectivity and social subversion by breaking the public-private divide.

Similarly, Argentine philosopher Luis Rozitchner inquired about rearguard production, subjectivity, and autonomy in his timely essay "Left without Subject" (1966). Speaking directly to debates between the Old and New Left, he declared:

> All of society is not solely a producer of things, but a producer of people. The entire production system falls into crisis because its production of people, which entails the production of appropriate goods, methods, and relations (divided people, unsatisfied people, people without purpose), produces crisis. Productive forces and production forms are human forms […] Thus we must ask: Have we, militants of the Left, developed our own productive force? Or, are we located with privilege at the margin of the system of production?[79]

Rozitchner recognized that market-oriented production created not only materiality, but also social subjects. In a clear critique of reformism, he went on to accuse self-identified Leftists of succumbing to a hegemonic passiveness in the everyday while only engaging politically via elections and protests. He questioned the Left's ability to produce and reproduce counter-

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[78] Mariarosa della Costa and Selma James, "The Power of Women and The Subversion of the Community," 1972, reproduced at https://libcom.org/library/power-women-subversion-community-della-costa-selma-james
[79] Luis Rozitchner, "La izquierda sin sujeto," In *La rosa blindada*, Vol. 2, No. 9, Buenos Aires, 1966, pp. 8

subjectivities. The answer to this question lies in an analysis of the private, or the rearguard, a site where this study lends special attention.

Finally, this study rests at the intersection of mass social movements and revolutionary aspirations during a historical moment of transition from industrial to post-industrial society, or liberalism to neo-liberalism, bridged by a military dictatorship that directly attacked popular organizations. For more than a half decade prior to the country's military takeover, everyday Uruguayans embraced a unique role as protagonists challenging social domination by capital and the state. While the Soviet-influenced Left aimed to channel this protagonism into an electoral bid for control of the state, the FAU maintained an anarchist critique of state power. Instead, they sought to foment *popular power* and mass subject transformation via collective gestures of solidarity and mutual aid, primarily within organized labor, oriented towards an eventual revolutionary goal. Yet, at the moment of their protagonism not all actors were revolutionary; not all were workers, and even those who were did not solely act in response to economic conditions. Who were they? What were they doing? What was moving them to act?

The study at hand does not exist in a vacuum, but rather should be seen as a predecessor to the "new social movements" that transitioned into the twenty-first century. Sandro Mezzadra and Veronica Gago argue:

> While new struggles, movements, and practices articulated an effective critique of traditional organizations (labor unions as well as political parties), they also reactivated histories and currents of radical politics that had their origin in the 1960s and 1970s, even while emphasizing apparent programmatic differences. The issue of power was not absent from the movements' practices and discourses: however, it was mainly articulated in a 'critical' way, starting with radical challenges to any understanding of politics that centered the state as its privileged site.[80]

[80] Sandro Mezzadra and Veronica Gago, "In the wake of the plebeian revolt: Social movements, 'progressive' governments, and the politics of autonomy in Latin America," In *Anthropological Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2017, pp. 482

Borrowing from the autonomous Marxist understanding of history, if everyday people's protagonism played a key role in pushing capitalism towards neoliberalism and its accompanying violent reaction from numerous states (ie. military dictatorships and their legacy), then everyday people's protagonism will also be fundamental for moving towards an alternative.

CHAPTER 1:
ANARCHY, *PATRIA, O MUERTE*
Organized Labor, Armed Struggle, and the Origins of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation, 1956-67

In April 1958, the Union of Funsa Workers and Employees initiated a strike in response to management's arbitrary release of four workers. Management retaliated by locking workers out various times throughout the next six months. The conflict escalated on 9 October 1958 when workers responded to a lockout with a shift-long factory occupation. The day before, management suspended a supervisor at the satellite plant Incal whose team of 30 assembly line workers did not meet the daily quota. Workers responded by implementing rolling strikes, taking two-hour breaks in order to disrupt the flow of production. Management responded once more by suspending the supervisor for 48 hours and the assembly line workers for one full day. Upon returning to the plant at 6am the next morning, management notified workers of their intentions to hire a new supervisor and notified them that the colleague had been fired. Impromptu negotiations between union representatives and management failed to bring resolution to the conflict, eventually leading to a planned three-hour work stoppage to begin at 9am. Upon returning to the workplace at noon, workers were greeted by locked doors and non-operating utilities. They responded by cutting the locks and breaking in to occupy the factory.

The occupation committee consisted of Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) members Leon Duarte, Washington Perez, and seven other union delegates, who met on October 12 and decided to put the factory back into operation under workers control if the conflict was not resolved within a week. Workers were unaware that they were making history by partaking in the first experiment with autogestion in Latin America. FAU member and union officer Miguel Gromaz recalled, "We were looking for something that was spectacular. We told ourselves, 'A

peaceful strike is a long strike,' so we looked for something that would call attention, and that could catch the management off guard."[81] One worker recalls the experience: "We worked with such drive and consciousness. We didn't look at the time that we worked, the only thing we wanted to do was produce the same quantity of batteries as if it was a normal work day."[82] Strikers occupied the factory in shifts while sustaining a protest encampment in front of the Legistlative Palace. They marched repeatedly to the *Casa del Gobierno* in the city center where they often carried out acts of petty vandalism and property damage. On one occasion, women of the factory used iron rods to break through the windows, allowing a flood of protesters to rush in and take over the bottom floor.

Workers reimagined the occupied plant as more than a site of production and opened it to student activists fighting for co-governance of the University of the Republic. Over 100,000 students participated in the campaign that eventually claimed victory with the 1958 Organic Law of Education. Funsa workers demonstrated solidarity by providing fourteen company-owned delivery trucks to be used as barricades in Plaza de los 33, where students clashed with police forces while occupying the University of the Republic. The trucks were adorned with banners reading, "Workers and students united and onward!" After three days of autogestion, the management returned to settle the conflict under pressure from the Banco de Seguros. The workers gained a 33 percent daily wage increase and management reimbursed all suspended workers with back pay. The occupation built solidarity between supervisors, who had similar grievances to blue-collar workers. Gromaz recalls:

> The vast majority of workers who participated in mobilizations demonstrated wide agreement within the attitudes of the union. Without this, we would not have been able to mobilize 1,300 to 1,500 people in the street... What's more, I was always taken back that regardless of the fact that the majority of workers

[81] Yamandú Gonzalez Sierra, *Un sindicato con historia*, Tomo 2, Montevideo: CIEDUR, 1991, pp. 106
[82] Yamandú Gonzalez Sierra, *Un sindicato con historia*, Tomo 2, Montevideo: CIEDUR, 1991, pp. 106

were either Blancos or Colorados --conservatives and liberals -- they expressed a strong loyalty to the union, and on many occasions put their party divisions aside.[83]

Duarte recognized the supervisors' sentiment and reached out to them, expanding the membership base to all 2,200 plant workers and thus expanded the name to Union of Funsa Workers, Employess, and Supervisors(UOESF). In early 1961, Pedro Saenz, Funsa's anti-union owner, sold the plant to US-based Firestone contributing a new meaning to the frequent strife– the site became another one of many examples of neo-colonialism throughout Uruguay and Latin American.[84] For the next fifteen years, workers consistently elected List 1, a radical coalitional caucus with Leon Duarte as General Secretary, thus placing an anarchist at the helm of organized labor in Uruguay's largest industrial plant.[85] Upon assuming the role Duarte began to work full-time as a union organizer. No longer on the shop floor, management refused him access to the workplace; he subsequently developed a knack for sneaking into the bathrooms, where he would spend all day chatting with workers.[86] While coordination between the Uruguayan University Studient Gederation (FEUU) and Funsa workers drew excitement due to showing potential for a synthesis between strongholds of the old Left (labor) and a growing and enthusiastic New Left rooted in the student movement. While this encounter proved hopeful, FEUU Secretary General Alfredo Errandonea and Secretary of Union Relations Hugo Cores, both FAU militants, produced a 1958 report on student-worker relations in which they argued that the FEUU remained supportive of labor struggles from afar via public statements but still fell short of an

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[83] Yamandú Gonzalez Sierra, *Un sindicato con historia*, Tomo 2, Montevideo: CIEDUR, 1991, pp. 106

[84] Yamandú Gonzalez Sierra, *Un sindicato con historia*, Tomo 2, Montevideo: CIEDUR, 1991, pp. 153

[85] While the UOESF endorsed a combative position shared by members within the FAU, Leon Duarte never shared his anarchist political orientation openly. Moreover, the seventeen delegates from the Lista 1 caucus represented a mixed bag of politics. Thus, UOESF's positions were the product of a growing militancy among workers within the plant as opposed to the product of one or two anarchists steering the direction of the union; Rodolfo Porrini and Mariela Salaberry, *Leon Duarte: Conversaciones con Alberto Márquez y Hortencia Pereira*, Montevideo: Editorial Compañero, 1993, pp. 27

[86] Oscar Delgado, Interview with Author, Montevideo 20 December 2017

active relationship between themselves and the community. They suggested increased engagement with the labor movement through student attendance at union meetings, rearguard support, and coordination of strikes.[87] Through such encounters, the FAU would aim to grow a relationship between the Old and New Left.

What matters here is the FAU's position *vis a vis* fellow Left organizations and a description of its contributions in founding the country's two most important Left spaces over the next decade, *El Coordinador* (predecessor of the National Liberation Movement – Tupamaros, MLN-T) and the National Labor Confederation (CNT) While the FAU eventually declined to participate in the former due to its distance from popular movements, the organization remained committed to the latter despite remaining a minority position within it over the next two decades.

Latin Americanist Anarchism: A Break from Tradition

The Cold War era brought economic, social, and political crisis to Uruguay. The country's grazing economy—meat, wool, and hides—came to a halt after international demand plummeted at the end of the Korean War. Rural production, which remained steady at 90 percent of total exports throughout the post-war epoch, yet the total proportion of primary production for export fell from 49 percent to 26 percent from 1941 to 1961. These numbers continued to plummet throughout the sixties. The decline in exports brought crisis to a national economy which financed its large bureaucracy, welfare state, and import substitution industrial production on the earnings brought in from the rural sector. As foreign markets reoriented towards Australia

[87] Megan Strom, "Transnational Youth: The Federation of Uruguayan University Students in the Early Cold War, 1941-1958" [Dissertation], University of California San Diego, 2015, pp. 100

and New Zealand, landowners refused to invest in new technologies and agricultural stock further accelerating the decline.[88]

Over half of workers in Montevideo worked government-affiliated jobs. President Jose Batllé (1904-7; 1911-14) had used government employment as reward for patronage and in exchange for social peace. He nationalized electricity, implemented the eight-hour day and compulsory rest for every five days worked, opened higher education for women, and spread public schooling to rural areas. President Batllé's proto-populist reforms responded to growing militancy in the labor movement. In some ways, the government's own policies contributed to this combativeness, such as unrestricted immigration to political radicals from Argentina and Europe and implementation of the right to strike. According to David Struthers, "Batllé expanded the functions of the State to a position of 'neutrality above classes' and sought to maintain an equilibrium between an antagonistic organized labor movement and the increasingly more vulnerable urban industrialists by concessions to each, while conserving and strengthening the independence of the political system through its capacity to mediate." [89] He further argues that Uruguay's urban immigrant working class lacked party loyalties. Instead, they identified with anarco-syndicalism and thus forced Batllé to make concessions for the sake of integrating labor into the state infrastructure. Between 1908 and 1911, Uruguayan labor carried out over one hundred strikes accounting for over 500,000 work days lost. While Batllé famously blessed the 1911 general strike, he was forced to develop a progressive platform for his government and his Colorado Party due to anarchists' hold over the unions and their influence over worker's refusal to vote.[90] Yet anarchists would eventually lose control of the labor movement due to internal

[88] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 375
[89] David R. Struthers, "The Batlle Era and Labor in Uruguay" [MA Thesis], Austin: University of Texas, 1990, pp. 7
[90] David R. Struthers, "The Batlle Era and Labor in Uruguay" [MA Thesis], Austin: University of Texas, 1990

splits over relationships with the Soviet Union, which resulted in the formation of another confederation, the Uruguay Syndical Union (USU), in the 1920s. The tension was eventually compounded by the dictatorship of President Gabriel Terra (1931-38), who censored Left press and deported many labor leaders.

In 1942, the Communist Party spearheaded the formation of the General Union of Workers (UGT), a new labor confederation made up of its affiliated labor unions. The Party made use of Soviet financing and the symbolic importance of the Russian Revolution internationally to claim hegemony in the labor movement. In 1943, the UGT supported the Law of Wage Councils, which formed a body made up of two representatives from the executive branch, two representatives of commerce, and two representatives from labor to see forth the implementation and adjustment of the minimum wage. While the rival USU viewed this as a defeat representing the bureaucratization of labor, the UGT declared the council a victory for organized labor.[91] In 1955, Rodney Arismendi assumed the position of Party Secretary General and argued a unique position that challenged the Soviet-backed stage theory. While the latter argued that socialist revolution in the periphery first required a national bourgeoise revolution before a proletariat one, Arismendi argued that both stages could be carried out together so long as the proletariat was in command via the Communist Party in political power. He argued that such transformation could be achieved within the parameters of liberal democracy. This strategy translated into a labor movement that moved away from the FORU's direct action tactics and towards negotiating within institutions.[92]

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[91] Rodolfo Porrini, "El sindicalismo uruguayo en el proceso histórico nacional (1870-2006)" In *Bicentenario Uruguay 1811-2011,* Montevideo, 2011, http://www.1811-2011.edu.uy/B1/content/el-sindicalismo-uruguayo-en-el-proceso-hist%C3%B3rico-nacional-1870-2006?page=show

[92] Alexis Capobianco, "La concepción d Rodney Arismendi sobre las viás al socialismo," In *Hemisferio Izquierdo*, Montevideo, 21 November 2017, https://www.hemisferioizquierdo.uy/single-post/2017/11/21/La-concepci%C3%B3n-de-Rodney-Arismendi-sobre-las-v%C3%ADas-al-socialismo

By the mid-fifties, the engorged public sector paid poorly and offered many part-time or "no-show" jobs—many public employees began working two or three jobs to survive. Moreover, the bureaucratization of the urban economy created drew nearly two-thirds of the population to the nation's capital Montevideo, leaving the countryside depopulated and impoverished. From 1952 to 1967, the role of the Presidency was replaced by a National Council of Government, which consisted of nine representatives from Uruguay's two dominant political parties, the National Party (or Blanco Party) and the Colorado Party.[93]

The rural crisis reverberated in the industrial sector, causing capital flight due to an unpredictable economy and a shortage of money in circulation, and thus inflation rates as high as 136 percent per year. From 1956 to 1972, Gross National Product fell 12 percent; per capita GNP stagnated at about 500 US dollars for this duration as well. While Uruguayans enjoyed the highest per capita income of any Latin American country in 1956, real salaries dropped nearly 24 percent over the next decade.[94]. By this time, Communists controlled nearly two-thirds of the nation's unions. However, the growing state of crisis generated dramatic shifts and new possibilities for the Left.

The FAU originated under these conditions. From April 14 to May 5 1956, Uruguayan anarchists held the National Anarchist Plenary Session (PNA). The PNA responded to a call from the International Anarchist Congress held in Paris in 1949, which called for the creation of an international anarchist organization. At the time, Uruguayan anarchists participated across a range of organizations and popular fronts, including the *gremios solidarios* (solidarity unions), *Ateneo Libre Cerro-La* Teja (Cerro-La Teja Free Athenaeum), *Juventud Libertaria* (Anarchist

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[93] Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005, pp. 44-46
[94] Howard Handelman, "Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs,* Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 375

Youth), and the newspaper *Voluntad*. The solidarity unions formed in the early 50s with the intention of maintaining autonomy from the Communist Party and promoting direct action tactics in the labor movement. They did not openly identify as anarchist, but had strong participation from both native and exiled anarchists from Montevideo's working class El Cerro-La Teja neighborhoods.[95] The Athenaeum was formed in 1952, the result of growing militancy among unions and the need to organize a variety of them to coordinate labor actions. While the Athanaeum declared itself politically neutral, local anarchists used it to spread their ideas and tactics to local residents and fellow militants. The Anarchist Youth formed in the 1940s as a student organization within the FEUU. They belonged to the *tercerismo* movement, a broad Left anti-imperialist coalition that refused to align with either the US or Russia.[96] Finally, the publication *Voluntad* was established in 1938 to offer an alternative anarchist perspective to the

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[95] The El Cerro and La Teja neighborhoods became a hotbed for anarchism after the influx of Southern and Eastern European working class migrants in the first half of the twentieth century. Inhabitants included famous militants Antonio Laredo and Pedro Boadas Rivas. Antonio Laredo founded the local Modern School after the ideas of Catalan anarchist Francisco Ferrer. Laredo was deported over 10 different times from Argentina, Spain, and Uruguay. His photograph circulated to police departments throughout Southern Europe and Latin America as part of an international database of anarchist militants started after the 1898 Rome Anti-Anarchist Conference and 1904 St. Petersburgh Protocol (See Richard Bach Jansen *Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878-1934*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

El Cerro was later home to Pedro Boadas Rivas, a Catalan anarchist immigrant who arrived to Uruguay in 1926. Boadas Rivas was one of the famous anarchist expropriators – a member of the Durruti group within the CNT, which eventually laid the foundation for establishing the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) in 1927. He participated in over one hundred bombings while in Spain, primarily non-compliant bosses during labor conflicts. Upon arriving to Uruguay with two other Catalan anarchists, Boadas Rivas linked up with anarchist expropriators in the Rio de La Plata and began participating in bombing campaigns against various sites of United States presence in protest of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial. After a botched attempt to rob a casa de cambio in the center of Montevideo left three killed and three seriously wounded, Boadas Rivas was captured alongside six other anarchist expropriators, who were sentenced to jail time in Punta Carretas. In March 1931, all six anarchists escaped from Punta Carretas by way of tunnel constructed by fellow anarchists from the outside, who collectively purchased a home and coalyard across the street from the prison in August 1929, which was eventually used as the exit gate for the engineering feet. Boadas Rivas escaped to Buenos Aires but was soon extradited back to Uruguay, where he spent twenty years in prison. Upon release in 1952, he moved to El Cerro and worked there as a newspaper vendor.

[96] *Tercerismo* responded to US intervention in Korea in the early 50s, but also rejected Moscow's role in the Korean War. While students outright denounced US imperialism in Korea, the broader public shied away from such militancy due to Uruguay's unique relationship with the US military as a supplier of wool for uniforms. The ideology eventually gained more popularity throughout the Cold War as a rejection of US and Soviet interests in the Americas, Megan Strom, "Transnational Youth: The Federation of Uruguayan University Students in the Early Cold War, 1941-1958" [Dissertation], University of Calfironia San Diego, 2015, pp. 59

FORU's anarcho-syndicalism. In 1954, the paper moved away from individualism and embraced organized anarchism after a cadre of youths from the newly-formed Cerro-La Teja Libertarian Group entered its editorial board. In the mid-fifties, the paper had upwards of two thousand subscribers and two hundred sales in newspaper kiosks. Militants from these four spaces became the nexus of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation. The FAU developed a *thirdworldist* and more combative response to the growing crisis.[97]. In June 1956, Montevideo's El Cerro neighborhood became the site of a historic labor conflict in the meatpacking industry. The neighborhood drew eight thousand meatpacking workers who led a one-month caravan march from the Anglo refrigeration plant in the northwest city of Fray Bentos. [98]

On 14 April 1957, the FAU welcomed delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Uruguay to participate in the first ever American Anarchist Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay.[99] This was an effort to create the Continental Commission of Anarchist Relations), to bring together representatives throughout the hemisphere to promote pan-Americanism in opposition to both United States and Soviet imperialism. Attendees recognized the continent's shared language and historical experience of colonialism as unique globally and positioned the

[97] For detailed narrative of the FAU's founding, see Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 195-205

[98] The workers settled in El Cerro and laborers of the neighborhood's six refrigeration plants, including the nationalized Frigorifico Nacional, joined them. The strike against low-wages and gross mismanagement in the private sector, where industrialists were eventually caught evading taxes by claiming only half their sales. The strike, coordinated across firms by the Autonomous Meat Federation (FAC), lead to workers receiving a bonus of 2 kilos of meat at the end of every shift. While the FAC's call for a unified labor central did not catch hold, the federation showed its strength by coordinating nine industry-wide strikes involving the nation's most combative unions over the next two years, Rodolfo Porrini, "El sindicalismo uruguayo en el proceso histórico nacional (1870-2006)," *1811-2011*, Montevideo, 2011, pp. 3 http://www.1811-2011.edu.uy/B1/content/el-sindicalismo-uruguayo-en-el-proceso-hist%C3%B3rico-nacional-1870-2006?page=3

[99] Delegates included: Federación Libertaria de Argentina (2), Nossa Chaçara Sao Paulo (1), Agrupaçao Libertario Porto Alegre (1), Federación Anarquista Internacional de Chile (1), Asociasión Libertaria Cubana (2), Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (3). The conference also received declarations from anarchist organizations in Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the United States, "Pimera conferencia anarquista Americana: Pronunciamientos, acuerdos, recomendaciones, declaraciones: April, 1957" Montevideo: Comunidad del Sur, June 1957

region at the vanguard of a post-national identity. They critiqued small-nation nationalism as reactionary, bellicose, and "antithetical to an international culture." Instead, anarchism provided the only appropriate response to Cold War imperialism. They proclaimed, "As Americans, we denounce the subdivision of the *pueblo* in exasperated nationalisms as a key instrument for economic exploitation, political oppression, and cultural disintegration of the continent's inhabitants. As anarchists with our international character… we will fight against existing states and superstates." [100] The conclusions of the American Anarchist Conference foreshadowed a pan-American, anti-imperialist, *Ni-Washington-Ni-Moscu* (neither Washington nor Moscow) perspective that eventually became hegemonic among the Latin American New Left after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. While Uruguayan scholar Aldo Marchesi recognizes that the Cuban Revolution marked an anti-imperialist turn that was not present in the calls for an *international* working class fraternity among the early twentieth century Left, the conference provides one small case of how anarchists embedded anti-imperialist struggle as part of a humanist internationalism.[101] Moreover, before the widespread use of armed struggle throughout the continent, FAU militants Roberto Mechoso, Enrique Constela, and Pelado Larrañaga carried out the first bank robbery in Uruguay at the Banco La Caja Obrero in Paso Molino on 4 July 1958. The small sum of money was used to finance the FAU's print organ, *Lucha Libertaria.*

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[100] "Pimera conferencia anarquista Americana: Pronunciamientos, acuerdos, recomendaciones, declaraciones: April, 1957," Montevideo: Comunidad del Sur, June 1957, pp. 13-15

[101] Aldo Marchesi, "Writing the Latin American Cold War: between the "local" South and the "global" North," In *Estudios Historicos*, Vol. 30, No. 60, Rio de Janeiro, 2017; Opposition to colonialism and imperialism was common in mid-nineteenth century anarchist thought. Elise Reclus' *Nouvelle Geographie Universelle* (1876-94) provides one clear example of anti-colonial thinking in early anarchism. Federico Ferretti's recent examination of the text shows a distinction between his use of the words *colonization* and *conquest*. For Reclus, the former represented the migration of European working classes to the Global South and the potential for a global fraternity in those new encounters; the latter represented the domination and subjugation of foreign peoples to a European ruling political class. After an 1884 visit to occupied French Algeria, Reclus returned disgusted and denounced any progressives invested in upholding the colonial project. He claimed that the Algerians had the right to "get rid of us." Ferretti acknowledges that some scholars even labeled Reclus as a colonist without recognizing the nuance of his distinction between the two terms, Federico Ferretti, "The murderous civilisation': anarchist geographies, ethnography and cultural differences in the works of Élie Reclus," In *Cultural Geography,* Vol. 24, Issue 1, 2017

Yet, the 1959 Cuban Revolution would eventually impact anarchism in an unforeseeable way. Whereas anarchist organizations throughout the hemisphere questioned the revolution's legitimacy or treated it indifferently, the FAU declared critical support. In October 1960, the FAU issued a statement titled, "Why Do We Support and What Do We Defend in the Cuban Revolution," declaring:

> We, who remain committed to a libertarian socialist program and who know that the Cuban Revolution is not, at least in this moment, the type of popular revolution that we previously promoted, believe that it can constitute… the opening for a Latin American way towards socialism and freedom… For what it is today, and for what it could go on to be, we must defend the Cuban Revolution here and throughout Latin America.[102]

While the statement recognized the important reforms advanced by the revolutionary government, the FAU saw the true spirit of the revolution in common people's gestures, specifically their sacrifice and support for the guerrilla movement prior to any state-centered revolutionary project. Their involvement showed that everyday people, including non-working class sectors such as students, peasants, small shopkeepers and vendors, could take an active role in the revolutionary process. The Cuban *foco* model argued that a small guerrilla cell could advance from the countryside to seize power and make revolution in the capital. This guerrilla vanguard, rather than an urban proletariat insurrection, would ignite revolution with support from popular sectors. Although *foco* challenged the Marxist-Leninist party vanguard, it still relied the protagonism of a small group of people to act as revolutionary leaders.

The FAU's view highlighted a Cuban statement brought before the UN in which the authors refused to accept the false binary between east and west, declaring "Capitalism negates man, and communism, which its totalitarian conceptions, negates the rights of man – that is why

[102] "Por qué apoyamos apoyamos y de qué defendemos a la revolución cubana" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No. 199, October 1960 From Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, pp. 130-1

we are neither."[103] The FAU recognized this "third way" as the "vanguard" for Latin America and the world. The statement went on to draw upon lessons from the 1936 Spanish Revolution, specifically the lack of solidarity among the Latin American Left beyond declarations of sympathy. They drew parallels between the occurrences of 1936 and 1959, specifically the role of outside intervention by capitalist and communist global powers. Instead, they declared that the only way to avoid the liquidation of the Cuban Revolution to both Communist states and parties was to amplify solidarity among the Latin American non-aligned Left.

The FAU's position on Cuba drew inspiration from orthodox Marxism, populism, and democratic federalism. While they recognized that the state-centric Cuban Revolution contradicted anarchist principles, they saw it as a potential stepping stone towards stateless socialism, or what Marx referred to as communism. Moreover, the emphasis on non-alignment and positive use of the term "Third Position" showed influences from regional populism, including Peronism, which initially drew upon symbols, discourse, and strategies of turn of the century Argentine anarchism, specifically the figure of the *descamisado*. Finally, the FAU imagined Latin America's future as a democratic confederation, liberated and self-organized through participatory democracy rather than nation-state model.[104] While Cuba did not represent this vision, the revolutionary government's emphasis on pan-Latin Americanism demonstrated a shared ethos.

The FAU position on Cuba sparked internal division within the organization. Historian Eduardo Rey Tristan identifies the two competing sides of the debate as *traditionalist* versus

[103] "Por qué apoyamos apoyamos y de qué defendemos a la revolución cubana" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No. 199, October 1960 From Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, pp. 128
[104] "Por qué apoyamos apoyamos y de qué defendemos a la revolución cubana" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No. 199, October 1960 From Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 128

New Left. Throughout 1961, Lucce Fabbri and José Jorge Martínez debated the FAU's support for Cuba in the pages of *Lucha Libertaria*. Fabbri, a professor in the Faculty of Humanities and daughter of famous Italian migrant and anarchist intellectual Luigi Fabbri, represented a minority position popular among students located in anarchist collectives in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Medicine, Union Group, and Comunidad del Sur housing collective. She advanced a traditional anarchist perspective of the Cuban Revolution, which remained skeptical of any use of the state. The position critiqued Castro's affinity for state capitalism, growing totalitarianism and one-party rule, and relationship with the Soviet Union. Martínez, the elected FAU secretary, represented a majority position popular among founding members of the FAU active in the labor movement, including the Graphic Artists Union (SAG) and Union of FUNSA Workers, Employees, and Supervisors (UOESF). He argued a New Left, or Third World, position that saw the principle contradiction as one between imperialism and liberation. [105] The debate strongly resembled cotemporaneous polemics between old and new Left Marxist currents.[106]

The debate concluded in May 1962 with a strong reaffirmation of the FAU majority positiondrew strong inspiration experiences organizing among the *tercerismo* movement, an anti-imperialist position that rejected both US and USSR expansion into Latin America. The ideology gained a strong following in coalitional organizing spaces, especially the student movement. The FAU, like other supporters of *tercerismo*, opposed the Moscow-imposed prescription for revolution via stages, especially the replacement of old (foreign) oligarchy with a

[105] Some of the *traditionalist* groups' most well known militants included Lucce Fabbri (Union Group), Jorge Errandonea (School of Fine Arts), Alfredo Errondanea (Professor of Sociology), and Ruben Prieto (founder of *Comunidad del Sur*); Those in the *New Left* camp included Gerardo Gatti (CNT delegate SAG), Leon Duarte (General Secretary UOESF), Roberto Franano, Fernando O'Neill, Juan Carlos Mechoso, Alberto Mechoso, and Mauricio Gatti.

[106] "Pleno FAU adoptó importantes acuerdos. Al replantearse R. Cubana" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No 206, May 1962 From Eduardo Rey Tristan, "La renovación del anarquismo en el Uruguay: la Federación Anarquista Uruguaya entre 1956 y 1967" In *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, Vol. 30, No. 1, June 2004, pp.174

new (domestic) one and Marxist-Leninism as the sole representative of socialism Instead, the FAU emphasized the importance of building and linking a network of self-managed production firms and consumption cooperatives throughout the continent to build regional solidarity and eclipse the market and state. As such, the FAU expressed solidarity with popular liberation struggles throughout the Third World.[107] Most importantly, the FAU's position on the Cuban Revolution inspired a re-evaluation of their domestic strategy in Uruguay, such as the defense of popular organizations as the only true revolutionary protagonists, advocacy for a united (revolutionary) Left around points of unity, shared sensibility, and compromise, and a search for theoretical and ideological inspiration beyond European models.[108] These interventions established a unique mass political strategy rooted in a synthesis of traditional anarchism with *en vogue* Third Worldist thought of the era. Most importantly, the move shifted away from an anarchism rooted in European thought to incorporate a structural analysis of global politics rather than solely an analysis of a universal subject and its relationship to the market and state.

By this time, anarchist organizations throughout the continent and around the world had begun withdrawing their support for Cuba. Among the global anarchist community, initial reports of the Cuban Revolution came from Manuel Gaona Sousa, the Relations Secretary of the Cuban Libertarian Association who supported Castro and sought to cooperate with the new government. In a 1961 document titled "A Clarification and a Statement by the Cuban Libertarians," Gaona denied that any anarchists had been detained or persecuted during the first

[107] "Pleno FAU adoptó importantes acuerdos. Al replantearse R. Cubana" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No 206, May 1962 From Eduardo Rey Tristan, "La renovación del anarquismo en el Uruguay: la Federación Anarquista Uruguaya entre 1956 y 1967," In *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, Vol. 30, No. 1, June 2004, pp.175

[108] Juan Carlos Mechoso, "Continuidad histórica de una orientación revolucionaria"; José Jorge Martínez, "Trascedencia y superficialidad del año político 1962"; Gerardo Gatti, "La revolución y el burocratismo" In *Lucha Libertaria,* No. 206, May 1962, From Eduardo Rey Tristan, "La renovación del anarquismo en el Uruguay: la Federación Anarquista Uruguaya entre 1956 y 1967" In *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, Vol. 30, No. 1, June 2004, pp.176

years of the government. However, word later began circulating of the purging, imprisoning, exiling, and killing of many Cuban anarchists who had initially played key roles in the revolution as labor organizers in Havana. Moreover, the revolutionary government suppressed the anarchist press – freedom of the press and speech disappeared.[109] On the other side of the River Plate, the Argentine Anarchist Federation (FLA) published some of the first testimonies of Cuban anarchist exiles in the periodical *Reconstruir*.[110]

Tensions within the FAU over the Cuban Revolution eventually caused a schism. By late 1962, nearly all militants affiliated with traditionalist current left the confederation and reduced the organization to roughly four dozen people.[111] The two differing currents smoothly collaborated for two years after the organization's foundations, but the debate surrounding the Cuban Revolution eventually pushed existing tensions over the top.[112] The "New Left" current identified more strictly as workerist, or classist, and focused on building strength in mass organizations, especially labor unions. They saw labor unions as the best way to build popular power through establishing relationships with everyday people around material-based struggles. They advocated a strict internal structure, including a central organizing committee as opposed to

[109] A list of anarchist victims includes Augusto Sánchez (imprisoned and murdered), Rolando Tamargo, (shot), Ventura Suárez, (shot), Sebastian Aguilar Jr. (shot), Eusebio Otero (found dead in room), Raul Negrín (bruned alive), Francisco Aguirre (found dead in jail cell), Victoriano Hernández (blinded by prison torture, eventually committed suicide). Those imprisoned included Casto Moscú, Modesto Piñeiro, Floreal Barrera, Suria Linsuaín, Manuel González, José Aceña, Isidro Moscú, Norberto Torres, Sicinio Torres, José Mandado Marcos, Plácido Méndez and Luis Linsuaín, from Rafael Uzcategui, "Authoritarian Chimeras: Cuba and the Gaona Manifesta", In *Tierra y* Libertad, 2012

[110] For more on the treatment of anarchists during the years following the Cuban Revolution, see Sam Dolgoff, *The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective*, Black Rose Books, 1996; Frank Fernandez, *Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement*, See Sharp Press, 2001

[111] A handful rejoined the organización after the polemic settled down, including Zelmar Sutra and Roger Julien (Fine Arts), Washington Peréz, Robert Larrasq, Ruben Prieto, and Víctor Gutiérrez (*Comunidad del Sur*), Guillermo Reigosa Pérez, "La Federación Anarquista Uruguaya," 16 November 2010, pp. 15; Zelmar Dutra, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 13 June 2017; Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 294

[112] Workers and students in the confederation sought to find common ground in the first two years of the FAU's existence. The inter-generational relationship flourished when anarchist students and workers acted as some of the main protagonists in the 1958 student and labor conflicts.

open assembly.[113] They emphasized organization and discipline in an effort to prepare a move towards clandestine, armed struggle. The traditionalist current identified more closely with a cooperativist anarchism and sought to build alternative spaces and practices. The traditionalists sought to make cultural interventions, primarily at an aesthetic and immaterial level, and spent time building relationships with common people through community-based art projects and cooperative living experiments. They had specific concerns as students that could not be addressed by the labor-based strategy adopted by the FAU. In fact, they saw the federation's development of a more strict and disciplined internal structure as an obstruction to the student movement's autonomy and critiqued the workerist members of the FAU for pushing a party line. They were strongly pacifist and commonly dismissed their ex-comrades as anarcho-Bolsheviks or Castroists.[114]

The 1962 schism enabled each current to pave an independent path. The FAU organized a central committee around the group's veterans: Juan Carlos Mechoso, Leon Duarte, and Roberto Franano, and Mauricio and Gerardo Gatti. They focused on organizing a unified labor confederation and building an armed apparatus. The traditionalist current moved on to establish a student-worker run campus at the School of Fine Arts, including strong participation from community members via the extension program. In 1965, students and faculty launched a

[113] Traditionalists wanted to hold publicly accessible assemblies with decision-making power available to anyone present whereas New Leftists advocated for an central organizing committee of veteran members.

[114] In 1965, members of Communidad del Sur and Facultad de Bellas Artes collaborated to publish a magazine, titled *Tarea,* which circulated four editions during that year. In an article titled "Las dos FEUU," the author cites a long history of social change brought about by student militants within the FEUU, specifically the end to mandatory military service and 1958 Ley Organica de la Universidad. The author argues that prior to the early sixties, the FEUU was its own political force, free of outside influence from parties and labor unions. The student government body was anarchic in the sense that students first and foremost represented themselves and debated amongst one another regarding how to most effectively enact political change and larger social transformation. The author critiqued parties and labor unions for having created a culture of block voting within the student assemblies, which lead to a dogmatism and sectarianism rooted in outside influence rather than open debate amongst one another to provide student-specific answers to student-specific problems. The article does not mention the FAU by name, but surely such former experiences influenced the piece, "Las dos FEUU," In *Tarea*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Montevideo, 27 Julio 1965, pp. 16-19, CEDINCI Archive (Buenos Aires)

community-based art project to engage with common people outside of the university by painting the facades of houses in working class neighborhoods, such as Barrio Sur. The project, titled “Visible Sensibility” emphasized the potential for liberation through self-expression and collective labor.[115] The Comunuidad del Sur eventually grew to as many as two hundred members. Both currents maintained a distant communication by means of a handful of members who continued to operate in both sites.[116]

Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the FAU’s Latin Americanist Anarchism marked a break from the historical European migrant torchbearers of the movement in the region. At the turn of the century, Southern and Eastern European anarchist migrants brought with them a global perspective rooted in their travels. They were often forced into migrating because of forced exile or state repression but laid the foundation for a global anarchist movement of the time. Workers who moved across borders found themselves in similar exploitative conditions no matter the country of their workplace. Midcentury working-class Uruguayans were autochthonous. Many were born in Montevideo's western neighborhoods of El Cerro-La Teja or internal migrants from racialized regions in the Northwest region of the country. The "new working class" came in contact with a previous generation of mostly inactive anarchist militants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Although they borrowed from the analyses of their immigrant elders, their life experiences were situated more strictly within the realities of

[115] “Al diablo con la cultura: Bellas Artes en el Barrio Sur,” In *Tarea*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Montevideo: 26 October 1965, pp. 37-38, CEDINCI Archive (Buenos Aires); As director of Fine Arts, Jorge Errandonea organized students to replicate the project again in 1990. They chose the location of Montevideo's traditional Jewish neighborhood, Barrio Reus Norte. The street has since become one of Montevideo's landmarks.

[116] The “Visible Sensibility” project was heavily critiqued amongst the Left, including the FAU, who saw it as detached from the reality of growing forms of state repression. Augusto Andrés recalls a conversation with Marcelino Guerra, an afro-Uruguayan involved with the School of Fine Arts, who highlighted that the work done in Palermo and Barrio Sur had reached more poor people of color in a few months than the Communist Party had in the entirety of the fifties; Augusto Andrés, “Bellas Artes es hija de ‘58” [private email correspondence], received 21 June 2018

midcentury Latin America and Uruguay, and they knew little beyond their local realities aside from media representations, including the excitement of poor people globally for the success of the Cuban revolution. The FAU could not ignore that reality and thus grounded its anti-imperialist position firmly in the fervor surrounding Third World liberation struggles.

"Words Separate Us; Action Unites Us": *El Coordinador* and the National Labor Convention (CNT)

In mid-1962, four hundred sugar cane workers made their first march upon Montevideo, traveling 600 kilometers from their workplace in Bella Union (Artigas Department), the northwest corner of Uruguay. In the 1950s, sugar cane workers began organizing to challenge widespread abuse by employers under the guidance of Raul Sendíc, a young lawyer and member of the Socialist Party (PSU). The Artigas Union of Sugarcane Workers (UTAA) grabbed public attention when they began orchestrating frequent marches to Montevideo to demand rural labor reforms, specifically an 8-hour day, minimum wage, and expropriation of 30,000 hectares left by absentee landlords. After waging a regional campaign for nearly half a decade, they marched to Montevideo to gain more visibility. These marches revealed the tension between the countryside and Uruguay's predominately urban population. Authorities detained upwards of 400 people during the UTAA march of 1963.[117]

The cane workers' struggle inspired radical Left organizations in Montevideo to come together in a coalition made up of the Peasant Support Movement (MAC), Eastern Revolutionary Movement (MRO), Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), FAU, and minority factions wtihin the Communist and Socialist Parties. Meetings consisted of Left militants who

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[117] Gabriel Oyhantcabal Benelli and Matias Carambula, "Lucha por la tierra en el norte de Uruguay" In *Astrolabio: Nueva Epoca*, No. 7, Buenos Aires, Argentina: 2011, pp. 299

would become key figures of the New Left over the next fifteen years, including Raul Sendic, Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, Andres Cultelli, Hebert Mejias Collazo, José Mujica, Washington Rodríguez Belleti, Eduardo Pinela, Canario Long, Jorge Torres, Gerardo Gatti, and Vivian Trías.[118] They first gathered in late 1962 after the government implemented Prompt Security Measures (MPS) to establish a state of emergency and suspend constitutional rights. The measures prohibited work actions, banned the right to assembly, enforced curfews and press censorship, and enabled authorities to detain and interrogate members of labor unions and political organizations. Sendíc saw the urgency of forming an armed organization for worker self-defense after repeated experiences with state and paramilitary violence during UTAA marches and rallies.

The coalition initially drew inspiration from the revolutionary struggles in Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam and the Sino-Soviet debates. Its members also saw themselves as a response to the rise of neo-fascist groups that had gained traction in the midst of the economic downturn, many of whom frequently carried out physical attacks on members of Leftist organizations, especially youths.[119] The coalition recognized the imminent threat of a military coup and began to meet frequently to develop a provocative but unpopular analysis. Huidobro recalls the militants having come to the following analysis in those meetings: "Uruguay will have the same destiny as the rest of Latin America. There will be hard social conflicts, hard repressive measures, and likely coup d'etats. There is a need to prepare for self-defense, at the very least. There is a need to adapt, invent, and prepare; to think about new responses and new crossroads."[120]. Such analysis lead those in the coalition to prepare for what was seen to be an inevitable armed conflict with

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[118] Participants from the FAU included Juan Carlos Mechoso, Leon Duarte, Gerardo Gatti, and Mauricio Gatti.
[119] Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 132
[120] Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 62-64

the military. Those early meetings saw the first mention of gathering weapons from the local shooting range, and resulted in the formation of *El Coordinador*, Uruguay's first armed Left organization. The coalition operated around seven points of unity that ensured all participating organizations maintained autonomy., They declared: 1) Each organization would maintain independence in anything that did not come from coordination with other groups within the coalition; 2) Organizations could freely collaborate with one another outside of the coalition; 3) Participants must keep secret all information about membership and resources; 4) All organizations must share any information regarding security and intelligence within the coalition, but there was no obligation to share anything else; 6) Each organization would maintain their own political line and their existing affiliations with political organizations or labor unions, in which obligations to *El Coordinador* were only mandatory in cases of actions and other coordinated efforts; and 7) The acceptance of new groups to the coalition would require unanimous support and would require that such group participate in at least one military action [121] The coalition aimed to transcend Left sectarianism and united under the phrase of co-founder Raul Sendíc, who declared, "Words separate us; action unites us." One year later, Uruguay would be plagued by rumors of military takeover while sandwiched between dictatorships in Argentina and Brazil.

On 1 August 1963, *El Coordinador* carried out its first expropriation of the Swiss Rifle Club in Colonia. Members ventured 170 km Northwest in a VW van and returned with twenty 1934 shotguns, five 1908 shotguns, two 22 rifles, one Martini rifle, and 3,700 bullets.).[122] In Christmas season 1963, *El Coordinador* organized a series of expropriations under the name "Operation Manzanares," in which members robbed a series of food delivery trucks belonging to

[121] Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 106
[122] Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 83

the grocery chain Manzanares and distributed the food in Montevideo's working-class neighborhood Barrio Cerrito. Between 1963 and 1966, *El Coordinador* carried out a handful of similar actions, which they signed under the name "Hunger Commandos." Such actions gave rise to the group's reputation as "Robin Hood guerrillas."

The coalition also damaged property, particularly against US-owned private firms as a means of denouncing US intervention in Uruguay. When Uruguay broke diplomatic relations with Cuba on 18 September 1964, militants ignited bombs at Moore-McCormick Lines, ITT, Bayer, and Coca Cola, leaving some of the first references to the name Tupamaros.[123] In the first week of May 1965, militants set off bombs at US-owned firms Pepsi Cola, Coca Cola, International Harvester Company, General Electric, Colgate Palmolive, All American Cable and Western Telegraph, protesting the United States military invasion of the Dominican Republic.[124]

The new alliance challenged Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU) hegemony by introducing a new set of tactics in dialogue with rising revolutionary Left currents throughout the continent, specifically the guerrilla warfare model proven successful in Cuba. PCU leaders held key positions within labor unions and ran the only viable third-party position in electoral politics. Influenced by Marx's stage theory of history, the PCU promoted a reform-oriented platform that was standard among Moscow-linked parties worldwide. But the Party combined an electoral and syndicalist strategy after a 1955 reform congress installed Rodney Arismendi as the General Secretary. Although the PCU never gained more than 6 percent of votes throughout the fifties and sixties, the Party gained weight among organized labor primarily due to a Moscow-financed party infrastructure. Yet, the PCU claimed only 20,000 members, of which roughly 8,000 were active militants. The PCU remained committed to an electoral political strategy and negotiation

[123] Marysa Gerassi, "Uruguay's Urban Guerrillas," In *New Left Review,* No. 62, August 1970, *pp.* 25
[124] Rolando Sasso, *Tupamaros, los comienzos,* Montevideo: Fin de Siglo, 2010, pp. 230

with workplace management. The Party platform sought to gain an alliance with the land national bourgeoisie to challenge dependency on First World economies, organize the largest sectors of the working class, and increase the membership of the mass political organization FIdeL. The party was a strong opponent of both direct action and armed struggle. Similarly, in 1964, *Marcha* editor Carlos Quijano declared, "Today, here – Uruguay 1964 – with a middle class, with 250,000 public officials, with 350,000 retirees, with nationalized public services, with a weak and unorganized proletariat, with a dispersed and nonexistent peasant class: Force can only bring reaction... Objectively, there is no revolutionary possibility."[125] The PCU was the only Communist Party in Latin America to remain legal throughout the height of the Cold War era.[126] *El Coordinador* also challenged Cuban revolutionaries' initial assessment of Uruguay as a country unfit for an armed strategy. In August 1961, Ernesto Che Guevara called armed struggle "incorrect" during a speech at Montevideo's University of the Republic. Ironically, a neofascist gang fired upon him upon leaving the auditorium. Although Che escaped unscathed, Arbelio Ramirez, a history professor, laid dead on the street.[127]

But the FAU's participation in *El Coordinador* proved short-lived. Members of the organization participated in their last action, an expropriation of arms from the Armeria El Gaucho, one year after the coalition's formation.[128] Conflicts grew between organizations and lead to an eventual separation based on strategic differences. Most members of El Coordinador did not see a role for the organization in other labor union struggles beyond that of the UTAA—they looked to Mao and Che for influence and began pooling money for boots, blankets,

[125] Carlos Quijano, "Contra cualquier malón, In *Marcha*, Montevideo, circ. 1964, quoted in Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 117
[126]CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 3 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf
[127] Eleutorio Fernandez Huidobro, *El Tejedor: Hector Rodriguez*, Montevideo: Editorial TAE, 1995, pp. 240
[128] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 295

flashlights, and maps to prepare for a future guerrilla campaign from Artigas.[129] But the FAU's strategy of combining armed struggle and work action butted against the Cuba-influenced rural strategy that was popular among the majority of the coalition's members. As a small organization, the FAU had limited resources and thus could not commit to a coalition without full confidence in the shared strategy. Those who remained part of *El Coordinador* went on to form the *Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional – Tupamaros* (MLN-T). At the time of the split, neither the FAU nor MLN-T claimed more than fifty militants.[130] Yet, both organizations would become the primary threats to Communist hegemony over the Left.

The FAU retracted from the coalition but maintained weekly communication with the MLN-T, MRO, and other member organizations. They shared resources, including arms and falsified documents. The groups also continued dialogue through their participation in the independent Left journal *Epoca* (1963-67), the first Left print forum independent of party affiliation and without participation from the Communist Party. Over half a dozen Left organizations participated in the journal which sold upwards of four thousand copies per week. In 1962, the FAU stopped publishing its own independent bulletin *Lucha Libertaria* (1958-62) in turn for participating solely in *Epoca*. In 1966, Eduardo Galeano undertook the role of Chief Editor and established weekly columns from each participating political organization.[131]

The CNT People's Congress

[129] Eleutorio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Vol 1, Montevideo: TAE Press, 1988, pp. 107
[130] Andres Cultelli, *La revolucion necessaria: contribucion a la autocritica de los MLN-Tupamaros*, Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2006
[131] Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 114-16

In May 1964, conversations around a labor confederation solidified amidst another UTAA protest encampment in front of the Faculty of Medicine in Montevideo. The marchers received support daily from urban factory workers, including those from Funsa, graphic arts (SAG), and various textile plants organized under the recently formed Congreso de Obreros Textiles (COT). Daily visits and resource sharing brought FAUistas into frequent contact with Washington Rodriguez Belleti (UTAA), founding member of the MLN-Tupamaros, and Hector Rodriguez (COT), a recently expelled member of the PCU. The militants had worked together while participating in *El Coordinador*, but growing repression against the cane workers' called for a new urgency. On 14 May 1964, police attacked the UTAA encampment with tear gas and rubber bullets. With rumors of a military coup spreading, unions discussed their possibilities. While many suggested a 24 hour general strike, Leon Duarte and Hector Rodriguez advocated an indefinite general strike with workplace occupations. Moreover, they saw the need to practice coordinating strikes and occupation tactics. The networks established throughout the UTAA struggles culminated in the *Plenario General de Apoyo a los Cañeros*, which called its first 24 hour national general strike on 17 June 1964.

While the PCU leadership was initially reluctant to sacrifice their hegemonic position among the labor movement by forming a pluralist confederation, the June 17 general strike's success fired up students and laborers to move on to a new stage of struggle. A week later, sixty-five unions followed the lead of Funsa, SAG, COT, and the PCU-led Workers Central of Uruguay (CTU) to convene and discuss the formation of a convention. On 27 September 1964, the unions elected the first Representative Table of the National Workers Convention (CNT). Regarding the formation of the new convention, Gerardo Gatti declared:

> The march for land; the insufficient solidarity and, in some cases, clear sabotage through a recurrent use of the same methods that had been used by the [CTU]; the

> police repression suffered by people from UTAA having gained responses solely from longhairs and some supporting organizations; the debate that all this sparked; the growing threats to union and public freedoms; the worsening economic situation—these were all factors that incited discussions about the necessity of a convention.[132]

The convention organized a general strike and national day of action for 6 April 1965. [133]

FAU militants Leon Duarte (UOESF), Washington Perez (UOESF), Gerardo Gatti (SAG), and Hugo Cores (Uruguayan Association of Bank Employees, AEBU) saw a labor confederation as key coordinate actions between labor unions. Gatti and Duarte played a key role in shaping the CNT due to the confidence they had won over among autonomous unions throughout the past decade. [134] In El Cerro, residents frequently heckled PCU organizers with sheep noises as spite for the Party's role in squashing the 1956 meat packing house strikes.[135] While many unions remained autonomous as opposed to joining the PCU-lead initiatives to form the UGT and CTU, the anarchists' participation in the formation of the CNT showed the potential for a more pluralist labor confederation. The UOESF earned a nationwide reputation for its campaigns throughout the fifties, and Gerardo Gatti was widely known among Communists for his work as an officer in Graphic Artists Union although the union remained a PCU stronghold. Moreover, Communists felt threatened by growing discontent among workers within the CTU and the rising trend of laborers rejecting their unions.

Beginning 1961, the country's largest unions began coalescing around the PCU-specific CTU, but no more than fifty percent of organized labor remained unaffiliated with the confederation. Over two decades, labor organizers made two failed attempts to create a

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[132] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 4-5, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive
[133] Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005, pp. 61.
[134] Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, *El Tejedor: Hector Rodriguez*, Montevideo: Editorial TAE, 1995, pp. 243
[135] Oscar Delgado, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 20 December 2017

confederation under the UGT (1942) and CSU (1952).[136] Yet, autonomous unions developed strong relationships outside of an organized union central and independent of the Communist Party. Throughout the sixties, most autonomous unions continued to elect radical leadership belonging to the *Tendencia Combativa*, a dissident coalition within the CNT further explored in the next chapter.

The CNT's genealogy could be traced to three prior attempts to build nationwide labor confederations: the Uruguayan Regional Workers' Federation (FORU, 1905), the General Union of Workers (UGT, 1942), and the Union Confederation of Uruguay (CSU, 1952). For Gerardo Gatti and other members of the FAU, the FORU served as a shining example for how to network and coordinate different labor unions around a central body but played too much of an ideological function for anarcho-syndicalism, which could not sustain itself politically after facing strong state-led repression.

Contrarily, the UGT and CSU, fell short of growing worker combativeness due to their international political associations, the former was directly linked to the Soviet Union via the PCU and the latter eventually fell into the hands of the United States and the AFL-CIO after various political manuevers enacted by a small fraction of its leadership. The CSU was primarily an initiative of Uruguayan Socialist Party with Juan Acuña, Jose D'Elia, and Jorge Pereyra carrying the most weight within the confederation. However, many militants would be expelled from the PSU due to their positions as syndicalists. It also saw significant opposition from Battllista Colorados and Independent Blancos. The CSU served as an alternative to the Communist UGT and CTU centrals—it forewent the opportunity to merge with the UGT contrary to PSU desires. It was the largest labor confederation in the country throughout the

[136] Raul Ivan Acuña, *¿A donde va el sindicalismo uruguayo?,* Montevideo: ARCA, 1967, pp. 12

fifties and early sixties—in 1953, it doubled the UGT membership with 40,00 members. By 1962, the CSU claimed 80 unions among its membership. It belonged to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. In the early sixties, the confederation began to unravel after key member unions, such as AEBU, voted in Communist leadership. In 1961, the American Institute for Free Labor and Development, a subsidiary project of USAID, demanded a CSU-affiliated housing cooperative be turned over to their control. Tensions mounted when General Secretary Juan Acuña refused and numerous unions began to withdraw from the federation. Acuña retired from his position in 1965 and heeded to the CNT call for labor unity. The CSU disbanded on June 16, 1966. [137]

Having learned from the shortcomings of such sectarianism, Gatti and other FAUistas envisioned a syndicalist movement more appropriate for the historical moment, in which the labor federation was open to all political opinions and all workers. Such a project would also require that trade unions remain free from interference by national political parties, foreign governments, and religious institutions. However, within such independent and autonomous unions, there would exist various tendencies across leadership and rank-and-file levels, operating openly and mutually respecting one another. The CNT structure was meant to encourage rank-and-file participation and decision making, in which active and vibrant conversations within fields, factories, and workshops could define a political culture and strategy specific to the realities of the working class, without "electoral or reformist illusions."[138] .

In August 1965, the CNT hosted the *Congreso del Pueblo* (People's Congress), a gathering of over 1,300 delegates and 707 organizations representing almost a million people to

[137]; Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005, pp. 52-57
[138] Raul Ivan Acuña, *¿A donde va el sindicalismo uruguayo?,* Montevideo: ARCA, 1967, pp.12-16

assess the country's socioeconomic situation and devise a program to confront it. With PCU-affiliated and autonomous unions committed to participate, over two-thirds of Uruguayan workers were represented in the confederation.[139] While most attendees represented labor unions, other groups included university students, retirees, and production cooperatives, among others.While the Congress showed the Left's potential to organize, it also became a battleground for competing ideologies and strategies. The Congress selected nine officers to serve on the National Directory. While most belonged to the PCU, Gerardo Gatti and Hector Rodriguez (COT) represented a challenge to the PCU line in the CNT's highest body.[140] The CNT was divided into over twenty different Zonal Committees with delegates representing each worksite in a given geographical area of Montevideo and the interior. For example, Zone 20 consisted of Funsa, Ghiringhelli, Niboplast toy factory, and eight textile factories, including Phuasa, Hisisa, and Sadil, some of the most combative in the industry.

Patrons agreed upon six points: agrarian reform, import substitution industrialization, nationalization of foreign trade, nationalization of the banking system, progressive tax reform, and extension of the social welfare system. The congress also took on complex social issues such as education, especially wide-spread illiteracy, and transportation. Guests broke into workshops where presenters shared research on unemployment, hunger, education levels, banking systems, and international relations. One document proclaimed, "The word *crisis* is not just something used for propaganda—it is our daily reality."[141]

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[139] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 3 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf

[140] The seven other officers included including Jose D'Elia (FUECI), Wladimir Turiansky (AUTE), Luis Nadales (FOL), Enrique Pastorino (CTU), Gerardo Cuesta (UNTMRA), Alberto Ramos Ferro (AEBU), and Juan Melgarejo (COFE)

[141] Congreso del Pueblo – Mesa Organizadora, "Programa de soluciones a la crisis," Montevideo, cir. August 1965, CEIU – Hector Rodriguez Archive B1

The energy surrounding the formation of the CNT reverberated into the streets and factories. From January 1964 to March 1965, Uruguayan workers took part in 657 work actions, including stoppages, strikes, and occupations—the total man-days lost due to strikes doubled to two and a half million since the mid fifties.[142] On 7 October 1965, the government utilized MPS to flex its power to manage labor unrest while negotiating for an International Monetary Fund loan. One week later, the CNT called its first general strike followed by a series of mobilizations throughout the month. In early November the government lifted the MPS but attempted to instill them once more December 9—both *Epoca* and *El Popular* received censorship notices. Again, the CNT met the decree with widescale strikes putting a halt to various key industries for multiple days at a time. Graphic artists and journalists carried out multiple 48 hour strikes. The government retreated and called an end to MPS two weeks later.[143]

The spread of armed struggle and labor solidarity led to intensified government repression, especially torture. The United States was already running counter-revolutionary programs throughout the continent. Its Uruguay-based CIA agent Philip Agee recalled a 12 December 1965 encounter with an Uruguayan Armed Forces officer with whom he was sharing information. While visiting a military outpost, Agee heard screams from the other side of the wall. Agee cringed after realizing that his information gathering was likely responsible for capturing the victim. Upon noticing Agee's discomfort, the Uruguayan officer raised the volume of the radio to drown out the cries with the voice of the play-by-play commentary of the

[142] Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Uruguayan Armed Forces, *Subversion: Uruguayan Armed Forces Summary of Subversive Movement in Latin America, Part I,* Montevideo, 23 August 1977, pp. 211; Howard Handelman, "Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs,* Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 375

[143] Hector Rodriguez, "Cronologia," Montevideo, cir. 1965, CEIU – Hector Rodriguez Archive B1

evening's football match. Agee retired from the CIA in 1968 and eventually published *Inside the Company* (1975), a book that details his experiences in Uruguay.[144]

Plan of Action

At a practical level, perhaps the most interesting and resurgent question concerned the CNT *Plan de Lucha* (plan of action). In a document preparing for the 1966 National Union Assembly, the CNT Representative Table agreed on four elements upon which to focus on expanding CNT membership in both Montevideo and the interior, finding points of unity among campaigns in both the urban and rural and building solidarity around them, coordinating simultaneous action among the entirety of the CNT to confront the government, landed oligarchy, and industrial class; and utilizing coordinated action via the CNT, specifically its Zonal Committees, as a base to broaden participation from other social sectors.[145] Moreover, the Table recognized the growing climate of crisis and the necessity of going beyond defensive spontaneity and towards permanent and long-term action. Recognizing the CNT's diverse political makeup, the Table proclaimed that sectarian tensions would dissipate by leaving no workplace conflict isolated—in other words, unity in action.[146]

The FAU saw the CNT program as having the potential to galvanize every sector of popular Uruguayan society and turn them into revolutionary protagonists.[147] The CNT Plan of Action closely paralleled the FAU's own political program of building popular power, albeit without the strong anarchist rhetoric commonly used only within the organization. Moreover, the

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[144] Phillip Agee, *Inside the Company,* London: Penguin Press, 1975
[145] Mesa Representativa del CNT, "Material preparatorio de la asamblea nacional de sindicatos," Montevideo, 3 December 1965, pp. 2, CEIU – Hector Rodriguez Archive B1
[146] Mesa Representativa del CNT , "Material preparatorio de la asamblea nacional de sindicatos," Montevideo, 3 December 1965, pp. 7, CEIU – Hector Rodriguez Archive B1
[147] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 20 – FAU Library

anarchists left a strong footprint in the formation of constitutional Article 49, which prevented CNT officers from simultaneously holding government positions, provides the clearest example of anarchist influence in the confederation. Yet, the PCU remained hegemonic within the organization and thus became synonymous with the CNT majority.

While the CNT Plan of Action promised not to leave any conflict isolated, leadership's energy often went into institutional efforts. Whereas FAUistas interpreted the Plant of Action as a call for a strategy of tactical escalation around the use of direct action, the CNT majority consistently respected and legitimized state institutions as avenues for resolving class conflict, whether through legal codification or arbitration. Majority-aligned unions often used short-lived tactics such as 2-hour work stoppages or 24-hour strikes to flex their might to the government—the mobilizations terminated with a rally in front of Parliament and return to work the next day.

Moreover, the FAU and GAU both critiqued the Communists' "yellow reform" campaign leading up to 1966 elections. The reform, an initiative of the PCU-centered Left Liberation Front (FIdeL) electoral coalition and mass front, set out to establish an executive power alongside the President and, most importantly to the labor movement, to eliminate the institution of MPS. Similar to the FideL presidential ticket, the bill gained support from just over 5 percent of voters.[148] The PCU participated in advancing the reform simultaneously while fomenting the CNT. In *Marcha*, Hector Rodriguez declared, "They have thrown out the idea to confront reactionary reforms with popular reforms. It seems to be a way to enter into distracting games around constitutional reformism… Reformist projects isolate, confuse, and divide."[149] Similarly,

[148] The 1966 election would be the first to break from the National Council of Government. While the ballots offered options for filling the Presidency and Parliament, parties also scrambled to advance proposals for constitutional reform. With 75 percent of votes, the Blanco and Colorado "orange reform" initiative established a single-office Presidency. The election also saw President Oscar Gestido (Colorado) asume office; Marcelo Sosa Gabito, "La (im)probable reforma constitucional en el escenario político uruguayo hacia 2019: un análisis desde la trayectoria y la estabilidad política," [Thesis], University of the Republic—Social Sciences, Montevideo, 2017, pp. 25-26
[149] Quoted in Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 5 – CEIU Hugo Cores Archive

Jacinto Ferreyra (UOESF) proclaimed, "To enter into the game of struggling over one reformist project or the other is confusing to workers—it entails entering into the politicking and obstructive game of the bourgeoisie. We are not opposed to reforms in order to remain apolitical but because they do not help the process of unification."[150]

FAU militants raised concern over what they called fetishism of a "utopian strong parliament." They argued that the success of labor mobilizations should not be measured by their ability to create "sensibility" in parliament, but instead for their ability to win demands directed towards management or the state. Mass action played a key role in bringing workers together around the CNT and continued as a solidifying force in the face of multiple government attempts to make "orange" reforms In a speech at the FAU's tenth anniversary celebration, Gerardo Gatti declared:

> The conditions must be created, we say. For that we must unite all of those who live by working beyond the banners of a party. The electoral bid does not create consciousness; it confuses. It does not promote struggle; it paralyzes it behind facades. It does not aim for concrete victories; it diverts them. In the same way that it deviates, it also paralyzes, confuses and divides popular mobilization and substitutes it with a workers' program, one that plays the game of reform for and against the Constitution.[151]

Gatti drew past experiences among anarchists to warn of the dangers of orienting the labor movement towards a specific political party or ideology. He declared, "We have to evade the mistake of intending to convert unions into extensions of political parties… This is the same mistake that anarcho-syndicalists fell into when they took on the difficult task of founding the first "resistance societies" in the River Plate region."[152]

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[150] Quoted in Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 5-6, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive
[151] Gerardo Gatti, "Electoralismo y parlamentarismo: trabas para la izquierda," Montevideo, cir. 28 October 1966 http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=6470
[152] "Acción sindical y lucha armada," In *Punta Final*, No. 96, Santiago, 20 January 1970, http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=3177

Conflicting visions of the CNT went as deep as questions around nomenclature. While the autonomous unions grounding the coalition had already agreed on the use of CNT, the PCU argued for the use of Central Única de los Trabajadores Uruguayos. Thus, a debate ensued over the use of the words "convention" versus "central." Having initially drawn inspiration for the CNT name after the Spanish anarchist *Confederación Nacional de Trabajo* (National Labor Confederation), Gatti firmly rejected the use of the term "central" due to its hinting at a top down structure under Communist control. Wladamir Turiansky, a PCU-affiliated member of the Junta Nacional, recalled a conversation between himself and Enrique Pastorino, “There is a statute, there is a program, there is a declaration of principles, and thus, it is a central. But we are not going to risk the thin spectre of unity that we have over a name. It is a central, meanwhile we will call it a convention.”[153] Disputes around the initial direction of the CNT resulted in a series of street fights throughout Montevideo in its inaugural years.[154]

Yet, the FAU and PCU shared the analysis that revolution was not on the horizon. In a 1967 interview, Gerardo Gatti declared, "I emphasize that whatever direction a union takes, it will finish a conflict or struggle negotiating. Except for the case in which in which there is a complete triumph of the working class, something that is not possible at the moment, the correct route is negotiation.”[155] But the FAU critiqued the PCU for having demobilized everyday people and prevented them from sharing experiences that would make them more militant. Hugo Cores declared, "Class struggle is not only the *apocalypse* of the union, instead it is a determinant in the process of unity and liberation of workers and el pueblo. It is also what unites workers with el

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[153] from Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario,* Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 101

[154] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, “Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left,” 10 May 1968, pp. 5-7, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf

[155] Quoted in Raul Ivan Acuña, *¿A donde va el sindicalismo uruguayo?,* Montevideo: ARCA, 1967 pp. 61

pueblo, in the way that they express solidarity during conflicts."[156] Such conversations around the role of struggles for wage increases existed within the FORU at the turn of the century. The FORU generally opposed wage struggles for the reformist ends. Instead, the Federation sought to organize towards one revolutionary general strike and insurrection. However, militants like Antonio Laredo argued that workplace struggles for wage increases provided the training ground for revolutionary insurrection, specifically the use of firearms and explosives.[157]

Tensions between the PCU majority and dissident union currents were on public display on 3 June 1967, when the UOESF submitted a 2nd Plan of Action to the CNT Executive Secretariat. The document criticized the CNT majority for neglecting to devise an offensive strategy in two years since the confederation's formation. Instead, the Plan proposed that the CNT reflect on and define a set of precise, tangible, and immediate common goals for the labor movement, and to devise a strategy for winning them. While the high number of work actions, including a successful 1965 (political) general strike, proved labor's capacity to act on the offensive, the CNT's lack of orientation risked relegating the labor movement to the defensive. It critiqued CNT leadership for establishing a close relationship with the Ministry of Labor, including monthly conversations. The authors perceived the CNT's bureaucratization, including leadership's consensual participation in government-sponsored commissions whose members were without clear objective or function. While the CNT frequently published declarations, the authors raised concern that the confederation was in danger of transforming into a mediator between labor and the state. The document went on to advocate for the right to work (including redistribution of arable land and reactivation of factories under national control); living salaries,

[156] interview with Hugo Cores, In Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 389
[157] Pascual Muñoz, "Antonio Laredo" [Book presentation], Montevideo, 29 September 2017

wages, and pensions adjusted to the rapidly surging cost of living; the universal access to education; price and rent controls; and the nationalization of the banking, transportation, and meatpacking industries. The authors further suggest building up base organisms, such as committees, internal commissions, and delegate councils, and politicizing union membership against the government's increasingly frequent human rights abuses. Finally, the document concluded by advocating for the use of mass, direct action as a means of raising popular consciousness, declaring, "We must decide between politicking: redtape, mediation, "dialog," having our CNT run by management…or an offensive plan of action that foments consciousness by way of direct action."[158]

President Oscar Gestido's government increased repressive tactics in the second half of 1967 after the IMF blamed salary increases for Uruguay's 182 percent inflation rate. Moreover, the country's key industries fell into steep economic crisis after the United Kingdom banned meat imports from the region due to an outbreak of hoof and mouth disease. In August, the government prohibited the annual meeting of the Permanent Congress of Trade Union Unity of Latin America and the Caribbean from convening in Montevideo. The same month, the military responded to labor conflict by occupying Montevideo's port and mail distribution headquarters. On October 9, the government implemented MPS amidst renewed IMF conversations and a growing labor conflict among public bank employees (AEBU). The MPS forced the closure of *El Popular*, *Marcha*, and *Verdad*, a weekly bulletin published by graphic artists and journalists amidst a 114 day strike during which 200 workers lost their jobs. By the end of the month, nine

[158] "Importante documento del sindicato FUNSA sobre plan de lucha," published in *La Historieta*, Montevideo, 1974, 35-42, Mechoso Family Archive

AEBU leaders and four workers were imprisoned. [159] In November, four FAU militants studying to become teachers at Montevideo's Normal Education Institute would be detained and interrogated for affiliation with the MLN-T.[160]

Meanwhile, the UOESF Plan of Action gained little support amongst the CNT Executive Secretariat. On the evening of October 9, the CNT Executive Secretariat met to discuss suspending a CNT-wide general strike in solidarity with bank workers. After receiving news of the MPS decree, the Secretariat reconvened to call for a general strike on October 11. The strike enjoyed great success with shutdowns in some of the country's most hard-to-organize industries. The government lifted MPS two weeks later after the CNT threatened with another 24 hour general strike. Hector Rodriguez reflected on the double meaning of the strike's success in the face of an indecisive CNT leadership. He expressed confusion at the PCU leadership's hesitation to mobilize in support of AEBU, a striking union whose PCU-affiliated caucus ran the union backed by 10 thousand members in recent elections. While AEBU's leadership faced an uphill battle to achieve wage increases in the public sector, Rodriguez suggested broadening the conflict to a prolonged campaign for an increase in national minimum wage instead—such strategy followed the outline suggested in the UOESF Plan of Action. He concluded, "This has all occurred because the CNT majority does not believe that we are in a frontal attack with reactionary forces and that there is no risk of a political crisis… If we keep silent, if we don't

[159] Raul Zibechi, *De multitud a clase: formación y crisis de una comunidad obrera, Juan Lacaze (1905-2005)*, Montevideo: Ediciones IDEAS, 2006; Leandro Kierszenbaum, "Estado Peligroso y Medidas Prontos de Seguridad: Violencia Estatal Bajo Democracia, 1945-68," In *Contemporanea*, Año 3, Volumen 3, 2012, p. 107- 110

[160] Detainees included Lilian Celiberti, Elena Quinteros, Yamandu Gonzalez, and Gustavo Inzurralde; Leandro Kierszenbaum, "Estado Peligroso y Medidas Prontos de Seguridad: Violencia Estatal Bajo Democracia, 1945-68," In *Contemporanea*, Año 3, Volumen 3, 2012, pp. 107- 110

revise and correct our approach, we can fall into defeatism and demoralization without any reason to do so."[161]A similar pattern would come to reoccur over the next half decade. \

Cuba: An Ideological Victory and Symbol of Revolutionary Subjectivity

While the FAU rejected *foco* strategy and directed political labor towards the formation of the CNT, the organization remained attuned to national and continental conversations around armed struggle and continued to support Cuba.The FAU spearheaded the Committee for Solidarity with Cuba, including hosting the coalition's first meeting in the organization's local. The body drew participation from nearly all non-PCU affiliated Left organizations and maintained a strong presence in neighborhoods and factories throughout Montevideo. \

The PCU initially greeted the Cuban revolution warmly but remained opposed to implementation of an armed strategy in Uruguay. In 1963, PCU General Secretary Rodney Arismendi declared, "We are an echo of the continental revolutionary movement which is bursting forth, fighting against imperialism, with its eyes on the victorious struggle of the Cuban revolution. We are a single force… whose heart beats in the Cuba of Fidel Castro."[162] While the Party maintained allegiance to Moscow and maintained an electoral strategy, it also kept in close touch with Cuban revolutionary government. In frequent meetings between Rodney Arismendi and Fidel Castro throughout the early sixties, both leaders agreed that armed struggle was not an appropriate means for achieving revolution in Uruguay due to the country's flat geography and high urban concentration. By 1966, the PCU's position caused dissention in the party, most

[161] Hector Rodriguez, "Despues de las medidas de seguridad," In *La Historieta,* Montevideo, 1974, pp. 11-14 – Mechoso Family Archive
[162] Central Intelligence Agency, "Special Report: Cuban Subversion in Latin America," Office of Current Intelligence, Washington DC, 9 August 1963, pp. 5, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A004100090003-7.pdf

notably indicated by the growth of the Movimiento Revolucionario Oriental (MRO), pro-armed struggle current which increased ten times to over one thousand core members by the end of the year).[163] Under pressure to keep up with a growing Left alternative, the PCU advocated for other forms of political violence, such as property damage. In January 1966, the Communist Youth Union (UJC) orchestrated attacks against Pan-American Airlines headquarters and other US-owned commercial enterprises during a visit by IMF officials. Party leadership mandated that damage be restricted to stone throwing and prohibited the use of Molotov cocktails and other incendiary devices.[164] The Party eventually sent a group of UJC youths to Cuba for weapons training and established a sizeable weapons reserve

In August 1967, tensions around armed struggle spilled into the international arena when 160 delegates from nine countries participated in the first conference of the Organización Latin Americana de Solidaridad (OLAS) in Havana, Cuba. The conference set out to build a consensus around the use of armed strategy on the continent. After having trained upwards of five thousand revolutionaries in handling arms, the OLAS conference served as a litmus test for formalizing organizational support behind them. Most delegates belonged to revolutionary Left organizations unaffiliated with their country's Communist Parties. Brazil and Argentina did not send delegations out of strict allegiance to Russia, and the Venezuelan delegation was expelled shortly into the conference due to accusations of Moscow-inspired sabotage. The Uruguayan

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[163] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 6 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf

[164] Central Intelligence Agency – Intelligence Information Cable, "Plans of the Communist Party of Uruguay (PCU) to Attack United States Property," Washington DC, 25 January 1966, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000578597.pdf

delegation was headed by Rodney Arismendi (PCU) and Ariel Collazo (MRO), who attended alongside other representatives from FIdeL and PSU -affiliated organizations.[165]

The FAU sought to participate in the conference and to send militants to Cuba to train with arms, but the Cuban government rejected their offer due to their identification with anarchism. Regardless of the FAU's participation in the Committee for Solidarity with Cuba, the organization's political ideology raised suspicion. This began in October 1966, when Haydée Santamaria, the General Secretary of the OLAS organizing committee, wrote to the PCU to inquire about the FAU's presence at the conference. [166] In the end, the FAU did not send a delegate to OLAS and instead entrusted *Epoca*-related allies with advancing a position in favor of armed struggle. Regardless of being excluded from the OLAS conference, the FAU remained supportive of the effort to convene Left organizations throughout the continent around the topic of armed struggle. To celebrate the OLAS convergence and the fourteenth anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, the FAU held a speaking series in the weeks leading up to July 26, with appearances from Eduardo Galeano and Mario Benedetti, among others. The FAU advertised the rally in *Marcha*, declaring:

> Aside from our support and participation for the popular mobilizations taking place on July 26, the FAU would like to contribute to the public understanding of Latin American revolutionary experiences and, especially, take from them some conclusions that can be applied here – as they are appropriate to our reality - those of a combative orientation, without hesitations, and of an offensive struggle against the oligarchy and imperialism.[167]

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[165]Other delegates included Edmundo Súa de Netto, Alberto Caymaris (M.A. P.U.), José Díaz Chávez (Secretary General Socialist Party), Adalberto González (M.P.J.); Carlos Domingo Elichirigoity (Avanzar), Juan A. Iglesias Villar, Elbio Baldovino, and José Jorge Martínez Fontana, Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 75

[166] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 75

[167] "Acto FAU," In *Marcha*, 7 July 1967, Uruguay National Library

While the FAU clearly recognized the importance of the Cuban Revolution at a symbolic and practical level, they always made subtle references to the specificity of the Uruguayan context and insisted on studying foreign cases as means to encounter questions rather than answers.

The ten-day conference concluded with a majority vote in favor of armed struggle. The Uruguayan delegation split down the center regarding the viability of an armed strategy due to country-specific conditions and provided political theatre throughout the congress when Arismendi and Collazo would break out into frequent screaming matches over their differences.[168] Of the 24 delegations in attendance, only the PCU and Venezuelan Communist Party did not support the armed strategy. While the former split its vote, the latter outright rejected armed struggle and was banished from the conference.[169] The twenty points published at the conference conclusion generalized the foco strategy as viable throughout the continent. One point proclaimed, "Armed struggle is the fundamental line of Latin American revolution and all other forms of struggle should serve, and not impede, this fundamental line, which is armed struggle."[170]

While the FAU opposed vanguardism, whether rooted in guerrilla organizations or political parties, the organization welcomed the OLAS verdict as a victory against the PCU's reformism and the hegemony of Communist parties throughout the continent. Eager to spread the word of the widespread support for armed struggle throughout the continent, the FAU requested permission from *Epoca* Chief Editor Eduardo Galeano to use organ's press to run off over 20,000 copies of an OLAS special edition bulletin that included the first publication of Fidel

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168 CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 6 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf

169 Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 13, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

170 Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 78

Castro's closing speech circulated in Uruguay.[171] The special edition set out to fill a void left by the lack of coverage in the PCU organ, *El Popular*. The FAU saw the OLAS agreement as an ideological victory that established a continent-wide block in opposition to the electoral path towards revolution. Cuba served as a symbol of a Latin American path towards socialism via armed struggle.

But the goal of a continent-wide revolution via armed strategy soon came into question after the capture and execution of Che Guevara in Bolivia, exactly two months after the conclusion of the OLAS Conference. His death put a halt to the unbridled optimism brewing amongst the Latin American revolutionary Left just a few months prior. According to historian Aldo Marchesi, his death marked a shift towards new repertoires in armed struggle, more specifically towards urban guerrilla warfare, and a geographic relocation of the focal center of armed struggle from Central America and the Caribbean to the Southern Cone.[172] It also sparked an internal battle amongst the Left around the meaning of his life and ideas. For the FAU, Che served as a moral example due to his commitment to igniting a revolutionary protagonism in common people throughout the continent.[173] Whereas the OLAS conference concluded that it was the duty and right of Latin Americans to make the revolution, Che best embodied this ethos by taking that responsibility seriously. Che's concept of the *hombre nuevo* (or, new man), one who would embody a communitarian attitude, represented a revolutionary mass subjectivity that the FAU set out to inspire through the accumulation of experiences among the Uruguayan working class.

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[171] *Fidel Castro, OLAS, Publicación Especial de la FAU*, Montevideo, 1967; Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 26 December 2017

[172] Aldo Marchesi, "Political Violence and the Left in Latin America, 1967–1979," In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, New York: Oxford Press, 2016

[173] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 35, FAU Library

The FAU pamphlets *Rojo y Negro* (1968) dedicated significant text to an anarchist perspective of Che Guevara. In an article titled "Mijail Bakunin y Ernesto Guevara: en dos épocas una misma intransigencia revolucionaria," FAU militant Gonzalo Garcia compared Communist Party responses to Che Guevara with Marxist and social democrat critiques of Bakunin during the mid-nineteenth century. Whereas Bakunin ventured throughout Europe to participate in popular struggles, including various riots and street fights with authorities, Guevara had lead a guerrilla campaign throughout Latin America. Both embarked on a mission to spawn popular insurrection. Moreover, both saw a key role for peripheral spaces, such as Southern Europe and the Third World, and populations, such as campesinos and day laborers, in inciting revolution.[174]

The pamphlets also contained various creative writings commemorating Che, such as a poem by Idea Vilariño and song lyrics by Carlos Molina, both fellow travelers of the FAU. Idea Vilariño's poem expressed her disbelief of Che's death and insisted that he remained alive in the political work of revolutionaries throughout the continent. Carlos Molina's lyrics declared Che immortal due to the righteousness of his ideas. Upon returning to the River Plate region after a European tour, the famous anarchist *payador*, was arrested in Dorrego, Argentina at the annual Festival of Gaucho Tradition for singing a song about Che.[175]

While the PCU faced backlash for dismissing armed struggle, the Party claimed Che Guevara as a martyr. Their resignification of Che stirred controversy amongst revolutionary Left organizations, who labelled the Party as disingenuous and deceitful. The FAU responded by re-publishing a reflection from Bolivian Communist Party (PCB) member Mario Monje, who

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[174] Gonzalo Garcia, "Mijail Bakunin y Ernesto Guevara: en dos épocas una misma intransigencia revolucionaria," In *Rojo y Negro (II)*, Montevideo, December 1968, pp. 107-39 – FAU Library

[175] "Presencia del Che Guevara: poema de Idea Vilariño y versos de Carlos Molina" In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 35, FAU Library

accompanied Che in his guerrilla campaign in the Bolivian highlands. The text, originally published in the magazine *Punta Final* in February 1967, decried the PCB's neglect of the guerrilla campaign. The FAU addressed the incongruencies in the PCU's narrative of PCB participation in Che's initiative – while the PCU organ *El Popular* claimed that the PCB's Central Committee offered direct assistance to the guerrilla offensive, Monje proclaimed to have no organizational support until a few months before Che's murder.[176]

The OLAS decision sparked a closer relationship between the Cuban revolutionary government and the pro-Cuba MRO. In October 1967, the MRO began accepting Cuban money to assist in propaganda campaigns supportive of the Cuban model. The MRO utilized the funds to set up numerous clandestine guerrilla training programs in the interior and rebrand *Epoca* as an organ for the OLAS platform. The FAU, MRO, PSU, Movimiento de Acción Popular Uruguayo (MAPU), and Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) agreed to the organ's new function in November 1967.[177] The paper also pledged support to the CNT's Plan of Action and vowed to develop a political strategy merging labor militancy with armed struggle.[178] This "two foot" strategy was eventually taken up by the FAU.

On 6 December 1967 President Oscar Gestido died while in office. His nine-month reign marked an end to the National Council of Government and move towards a single-man presidency. Gestido struggled to resolve the country's growing economic crisis, which saw cost of living increases double during his presidency. Minister of Economics Amilcar Vasconcellos

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[176] In fact, the PCB had not been in contact with Che since 1965 and did not even know of his presence in the country until December 1966. All PCB-affiliated participants in the guerrilla joined based on individual conviction. The Party did declare solidarity with the campaign until 30 March 1967, when a group of less than a dozen members Communist Youth arrived, Mario Monje, "Mario Monje explica por qué su partido no apoyo al Che," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 125-44, FAU Library
[177] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 7 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf
[178] "A un año se comprueba la justeza de la línea," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 December 1968, pp. 122-3

initially cut ties with the IMF in search of a domestic economic solution. However, labor strife continued to escalate resulting in a complete rehaul of economic policy and implementation of MPS once more in October 1967. A week before his death, a CIA special report commented, "President Gestido has now surrounded himself with realist economists and the government is showing a new determination to curb Communist labor agitation."[179] Gestido's cabinet rehaul carried over when Vice President Jorge Pacheco Areco took over the nation's helm (1967-1971).

On 12 December 1967, President Pacheco Areco made his first governmental decree ordering the closure of *Epoca* and mandating the dissolution of all six organizations participating in its production. The reason, although never explicitly stated, seemed to concern a text published by the MLN-Tupamaros regarding their relationship with the police. In the "Open Letter to the Police," the MLN-T clarified a series of events that resulted in a shootout one year prior in Montevideo's El Pinar suburbs. The group assured police that they were not interested in waging war against them, but instead saw them as allies in a class war against the oligarchy. The government accused the journal of breaking constitutional law by attempting to incite treason.[180]

During the next two weeks, police forcibly closed all six organizations' locals and detained many of the groups' primary organizers during the raids. Foreseeing the possibility of a raid, Gerardo Gatti fabricated an archive of fake FAU documents to confuse authorities about the group's activities.[181] The FAU relocated meetings to *El Tropero* (The Troop), a safe house in the Montevideo neighborhood Parque Rodo rented out by writer and poet Idea Vilariño.[182] On

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[179] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "New Deal in Uruguay?" Special Report—Weekly Review, Washington DC, 1 December 1967, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000578180.pdf

[180] "El acuerdo de *Epoca,*" In *La Historieta*, Montevideo, cir. 1974, pp. 22-25, Mechoso Family Archive

[181] Augusto Andrés, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 8 July 2017

[182] Idea Vilariño met members of the FAU while attending talks and performances at the Ateneo del Cerro, where she became an anarchist sympathizer. She lived and wrote from the front room of the house, and did not know the details of who was meeting in the back room for security purposes – she was merely aware that they were members of the FAU, Zelmar Zutra, "Prologo: Contexto en que aparecen las CARTAS," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2016, pp. 12

December 26, the FAU released a clandestinely circulated communique announcing the detention of six members: Gerardo Gatti, Pedro Seré, Pedro Aurrecoechea, Julio Arizaga, Armando Cuervo, and Carlos Machado. The communique identified the government's attack as an effort to strike a blow against those groups on the Left most dedicated to "inspire and expand participation in struggle."[183] Having learned from historical examples of illegalization of anarchist and other radical Left press, specifically those of *belle epoch* era Barcelona and Buenos Aires, the FAU prepared to operate as an underground political organization.[184] The 26 December communique was the first of over one hundred clandestinely-produced editions distributed to FAU members and supporters through an underground network that would be used over the next three years. The communique also responded to Pacheco Areco's banning of the *Epoca*-affiliated organizations by announcing the commencement of the "legal dictatorship" era.[185]

In the days after the *Epoca* ban, the PCU made a series of statements in *El Popular* decrying the government's use of censorship as unconstitutional. According to the CIA, "The Communists protested the government's repressive action, but in lackluster tones that barely disguised their contentment with the misfortunes of their rivals." [186] Unaffected by the ban, the PCU became the only legal Left organization in the country.

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[183] Zelmar Dutra, "Prologo: Contexto en que aparecen las CARTAS," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2016, pp. 7

[184] "Eleven years of more or less public life. One year of more or less clandestine life. We have learned from the examples of Mikael Bakunin and Errico Malatesta, from the old anarchist workers, the martyrs of Chicago, from Sacco and Vanzetti, from Simon, from Durruti, from the comrades in the CNT and FAI, from the direct action groups, propagandists, and labor militants in the River Plate. This fight and its teaching are always present in our Organization," "Nutrirse para el combate aquí…" In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 December 1968, pp. 126-7

[185] Zelmar Dutra, "Prologo: Contexto en que aparecen las CARTAS," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2016, pp. 7-9

[186] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 7 https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A006400060003-5.pdf

Conclusion

Amidst the eventual fervor of mid-1968, an underground FAU bulletin reminded readers, "Our country is not an exception among a broader Latin American historical process to fight for national liberation."[187] The FAU's support for Cuban Revolution marked a clear break from turn of the century anarchist thought and towards a Latin American anarchism. Support for Cuba was rooted in aspirations for mass subject transportation in Uruguay and Latin America. The Cuban revolutionaries served as a moral point of reference—they challenged orthodox Marxist and liberal democratic prescriptions for social change. Their ethos and praxis of direct action followed a historical precedent of everyday people's participation in fending off foreign occupation and influence on the continent beginning with the wars of independence. While the FAU did not support the foco model, they looked towards the spirit of the Cuban revolution as inspiration for the type of mass subject transformation via direct action they sought to foment in the CNT.

The decision to support Cuba shattered relations within Uruguayan anarchist circles and moved the FAU into closer relations with the New Left organizations networked to OLAS. Thus, 1962 marked a key moment in the organization's formation. Hugo Cores declares:

> [FAU] has to be the only anarchist movement in the world that was equally influenced by anticolonial and anti-capitalist revolutions and that stood for another very important thing... that Gerardo, Duarte, and Raúl Cariboni defended the integration of the CNT alongside Communists. You have to keep in mind that they were doing this in'63, '64, '65, and '66, when the wounds of the Spanish Civil War were still fresh.[188]

[187] "La lucha aclara las cosas," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 August 1968, pp. 42
[188] Quoted in Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario,* Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 100

While anarchists worldwide declined to cooperate with Communist Parties due to tensions that spilled over after the Spanish Civil War.the FAU's insistence on coalition-building among the Left laid the groundwork for their own internal shift towards a hybrid Marxist and anarchist politics. Similarly, while the PCU remained pro-Soviet and upheld "peaceful coexistence," the Party also developed close links and collaborations with anarchist, Guevarist and Maoist groups.[189] These relationships, while riddled with tension and filled with compromise, provided an infrastructure for mass unrest that would foment over the next six years.

[189] Vania Markarian, Uruguay, *1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 161

CHAPTER 2:
DARK RED, LIGHT BLACK
Mass Politics and Marxist-Anarchist Synthesis, 1968

By early 1968, the FAU's presence was growing in both the student and labor movements. However, the organization's illegal status required the construction of a clandestine infrastructure so that militants could remain in conversation. For the moment, veteran militants met at *El Tropero* in Montevideo's Parque Rodo, but they hoped to purchase two safe houses with FAU money to not endanger the home's owner, Idea Vilariño. In March 1968, the organization decided to begin robbing banks. They considered the risk based on Alberto Mechoso's sentence for participating in the 1958 bank robbery, but they recognized the new acceptance within the left of bank robberies, with the growth of the MLN-T. A cell of six ventured to UBUR bank in La Teja, a local branch located on the class neighborhood's main boulevard where a significant number of FAU sympathizers worked as employees. Upon arrival, a surveillance team looked out for a group of loitering teenagers that frequented the street corner. The cell planned the arrival to coincide with closing hour. Prior to the bank's closure a worker knocked on the main entrance to notify the team it would be left open for them to enter. The bank tellers exited the back door leaving the security guard alone on site. The workers previously warned the militants of his hot temper, "Be careful with the feisty *Gallego*—he can make your life miserable."

Two militants entered the bank armed with iron rods. Within seconds, the duo exited calmly to the escape vehicle with the bank's entire cash deposit. The operation faced complications because of the militants' work schedules. The escape team, which consisted of two textile workers from La Aurora factory, were summoned to work an hour overtime. Upon finishing their shift they perused a nearby avenue to intercept a car. Upon stopping the first

driver, the driver entered the vehicle to find it was an automatic transmission. Bewildered by the modern setup, the militants left it and opted for another. They finally received the duo who waited nervously for an hour with bags of money in hand. But the car had many quirks. The engine went out twice and the brake required a forceful jab to stop. The escape occurred at rush hour and required frequent braking amidst bustling traffic. The militants rocked back-and-forth as Hugo Cores pressed and released the brake. Cores felt good after stealing from an industry to which he belonged. At every stop he bellowed, "*Arriba los que luchan"* (Long live those who struggle). Upon opening the bags at *El Tropero*, the militants found that the bills were worn and damaged. They spent the next days repairing the bills with cellulose tape. Cores' phrase became the FAU's rallying cry and is now used by social movements throughout the continent.[190]

In the next five years, the FAU carried out ten successful expropriations, including six banks and four private firms.[191] While the organization remained committed to a strategy rooted in organized labor, the traditional historical protagonist of the Left, their embrace of anti-legality, specifically armed struggle, moved them to the category of New Left. Scholars broadly recognize 1968 as marking an emblematic shift from Old to New Left primarily due to the events in Paris, Prague, and Chicago. Yet, as shown by Uruguayan historian Aldo Marchesi, many of the ideas and tactics that surfaced in the Global North had already been circulating throughout the Global South. [192]

In the case of Uruguay, the term "New Left" gains an added level of complexity when recognizing the PCU's preparation for armed struggle and embrace of counterculture, the MLN-

[190] For first-hand testimony of the expropriation, see Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU,* Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 245-253
[191] Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU,* Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 239
[192] Aldo Marchesi, "The May '68 That Was Not May '68: Latin America in the Global Sixties," (unpublished paper), Montevideo, 2018

T's nationalism, or the FAU's vanguardism. The year 1968 marked a turn towards political hybridity, coalition, and synthesis in which the entirety of the Left underwent significant transformation, and thus became "new." The FAU was no exception. While the FAU clearly demonstrated "a will to act," the organization shared the New Left characteristics of coalition building and hybrid politics. They experimented with a synthesis of traditional Marxist and anarchist politics which they presented publicly in a May 1968 pamphlet, titled *Rojo y Negro (I)*.

Party Anarchism, 1968, and the Uruguayan New Left

> *Since Marx and Bakunin initiated their famous debate that resulted in the division of socialism in two different tendencies, many things have happened to warrant a reevaluation of the points of view from which they departed. Of course, in the past half century of history the capitalist world has greatly changed producing a wide variety of revolutionary experiences.*
> -FAU, *Rojo y Negro (I)*, May 1968[193]

On 1 May 1968, Uruguayan students and workers marched down Montevideo's streets. The CNT denounced an inflation that had risen 137 percent in 1967, and another 64 percent by May 1968.[194] The university student union (FEUU) condemned the government's refusal to release annual budget funds to higher institutions. Finally, high school students protested price hikes in their government subsidized bus fares to and from campus. The latter had recently coalesced around the Coordinating Unit of Uruguayan High School Students (CESU), a popular organization run by the Union of Communist Youth (UJC). The annual march shared similar characteristics with those previous Mayday gatherings throughout the sixties, including sporadic

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[193] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 5, FAU Library

[194] Robert Jackson Alexander, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, pp. 69; The IMF 1969 Annual Report blamed the price surge on "the steep rise in private sector wages during the period," International Monetary Fund, "Annual Report of the Executive Directors for the Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1969," Washington DC, 1969 pp. 117 https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/ar/archive/pdf/ar1969.pdf

rock throwing at buses, a few dozen arrests, and the presence of UTAA sugarcane workers, who joined the march after caravanning from Artigas. However, the Mayday mobilizations continued for the next month, when high schoolers rejected municipal authorities' proposal to lower bus fares and instead demanded an extension of subsidized transportation to the entire population. [195]

Amidst the May fervor the FAU released the first edition of *Rojo y Negro (I)* under the editorial direction of Gerardo Gatti. The 144-page pamphlet aimed to synthesize anarchism and Marxism, and to situate the FAU among the Latin American New Left currents of epoch. The FAU recognized the working classes, specifically the labor movement organized under the CNT, as the vanguard of revolution. According to the FAU, the past decade of political struggle in Latin America proved the need for a vanguard across the continent. They drew examples from Cuba, Guatemala, Colombia, and Venezuela, where radical Left organizations developed unique relationships with popular movements and steered them *towards* embodying a revolutionary character. In all four cases, radical Left groups also steered popular movements *away* from domestic Communist Parties, whose allegiances to Moscow limited their political activity to electoral politics and reformism.[196] Whereas anarchism historically rejected the Marxist-Leninist conception of a vanguard, recent Latin American history proved its necessity. The first few pages of the pamphlet contained the following lines:

> The Latin American Left has formed itself by mechanically transferring blueprints based on conceptions that developed in very different conditions, and has almost always assimilated them without any serious critique, as if to recognize them as holding an infallible universal value… We cannot continue to justify the survival of stale dogmas that have caused costly sectarianism and have contributed to paralyzing false propositions.

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[195]Students at the Uruguayan University of Work (UTU) and Instituto Normal (Teaching School) expressed grievances regarded over-enrollment and underfunding. For a thorough description of student grievances and Mayday actions, see Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 29-34

[196] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 32, FAU Library

> […]
>
> In the vast revolutionary processes taking place in the Third world and Cuba one encounters some manifestation of a vanguard, which is proving capable of dissolving these negative attitudes that have accumulated a growing baggage of historical experiences that do not match up with the classic theoretical outlines.[197]

However, labor did not assume this role objectively, but instead *came into being* through normalizing the use of direct action tactics throughout the confederation. In other words, the successful unification of labor under CNT served as an important first step towards establishing a broad conversation, but plenty of work remained to define a common strategy and identity autonomously of those prescribed by the state's definition of what it meant to belong to a union. According to the FAU, "The dominant classes tremble at pressure from the labor and popular movements, not at elections. That is why they take repressive measures against them and their publications… They do not target reformists whose positions uphold and conserve the current system."[198] Direct action and confrontation served as means to "accumulate experiences" necessary to form a working class vanguard. Such confrontations provided key learning experiences for workers, who could only understand the logic and functioning of the class enemy by confronting it. Moreover, state repression would forge new solidarities among workers, who would act collectively and selflessly to sustain the fight, and thus undergo a process of transformation into becoming a revolutionary subject. For the FAU, revolution was not the product of a single moment, but instead a long process of social transformation. While many Left organizations, including the PCU and MLN-T, insisted on the near prospect of revolution, the FAU argued that working class activity was in a stage of *resistance* in a prolonged revolutionary process, which required working class protagonism at the vanguard and a mass infrastructure of

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[197] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 4-5, FAU Library
[198] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 25-6, FAU Library

social reproductive labor and mutual aid in the rearguard.[199] Moreover, widescale change could not be implemented from above without the collective transformation of everyday people. This position lies at the heart of the FAU's conception of *poder popular* (popular power) – or, that power must be *created*, not *taken*. This entailed a mass social transformation at the subjective level.

The pamphlet introduced the FAU’s conception of an anarchist party, or a specifically revolutionary political organization working amidst labor and popular movements: *especifismo*.[200] The anarchist party served to orient mass movements towards revolutionary means and ends. After analyzing the historical processes occurring throughout the continent, specifically the use of repression by counterrevolutionary forces, the FAU recognized the need for a “combative, disciplined, and functional” organization embedded in popular movements to “prepare the whole *pueblo* and its authentic vanguards to lead the transformation processes that

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[199] “Organización y método en el trabajo cotidiano (2),” In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 September 1968, pp. 72-73

[200] Anarchist theorist Peter Kropotkin declared, “(We) consider as a definitive mistake a program which demands full agreement among participants of all details of the ideal and, besides that, the organization of an extensive group of participants before proceeding to activity among the people,” Peter Kropotkin, *Fugitive Writings* ed. George Woodcock, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993, pp. 50; The first example of *especifista* anarchism in the River Plate was the Argentine Anarcho-Communist Federation (FACA), a group that split from the more orthodox anarcho-syndicalist Argentine Regional Workers Federation (FORA) in 1935. The FACA had strong pull in the construction worker’s union, but saw the labor movement solely as a “field of action” and instead sought to mobilize “all members of society.” The Spartacus Workers Alliance, another anarchist group that splintered from the FACA, emphasized unity of action within the labor movement and remained open to working with Marxist political parties. Like the FAU, both organization operated clandestinely. Similarly, the platform of the Argentine Workers Alliance claimed the following:

> The axis of the workers movement is not above, in the bureaucracy or party directives, but below, in the progressive march of the proletariat itself. The duty of each proletarian sector is to put its ideology, their moral commitment to struggle, and their methods in the creative bosom deep within the masses, to facilitate their understanding and grasping of the underlying problems… This is the only way that the proletarian movement will be able to make itself a moral force, to replace the bureaucratic scaffolding with a revolutionary method… This demands a program, a program of struggle, a revolutionary program for the majority of the proletariat, as we anarcho-communists have argued throughout the history of the labor movement in this country.

For more on the FACA and Spartacus Workers Alliance see Nicolas Iñigo Carrera, “Programa de Investigación sobre el Movimiento de la Sociedad Argentina: La Alianza Obrera Spartacus,” Documento de Trabajo No. 26, Buenos Aires: Pablo Editor, 1986, http://www.pimsa.secyt.gov.ar/publicaciones/DT26.pdf

are inevitable if this country wishes to save itself."[201] The anarchist party differed from both the traditional Left electoral party by rejecting parliamentarianism and legality. Moreover, it sought to challenge the conservative conception of labor unions as apolitical, or economic, organizations. The anarchists proclaimed, "Union activity alone, even with the best orientation possible, is not sufficient. The existence of a organized revolutionary political movement is a decisive factor for advancing the process of struggle in this country."[202] Whereas the labor movement already operated under the hegemony of the PCU, the anarchist party served as a counterweight to advocate for the autonomy of popular movements while ensuring they do not fall into apoliticism. To the FAU, unions provided the highest form of mass organization and democracy due to their legal status, open membership, participatory decision-making process, and heterogenous ideological make up. Because traditional parties viewed unions as arenas in which to compete for an electoral base, anarchists had to challenge them in this popular sphere to undercut their influence and promote labor movement autonomy, direct action, and class consciousness. Failure to do so voluntarily surrendered the realm of mass politics to election-oriented organizations while isolating anarchists, and anarchism, as something countercultural and disconnected.

The FAU recognized that anarchism had gained a bad reputation globally. However, rather than revise the ideology they set out to re-conceptualize it based on merging the thought and praxis of its forefathers with that of the Cuban Revolution. They saw Cuba's use of the colors red and black as a resignification of the historical anarcho-syndicalist flag:

> The old red and black flag of the anarchists. Its vital attitude. Its libertarian communism. That is its vital message. But along the way anarchism has taken up a negative meaning, one that is not valid: individualism, spontaneity, anti-

[201] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 32, FAU Library
[202] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 29, FAU Library

> organizational, community constructivism or cooperativist or sindicalist or educationalist, a sectarian ideology, an unliberating sclerosis…
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> Well, the old anarchist flag has been planted by new hands. It is the flag of the Latin American revolution – the red and black of Fidel, of Camilo (Cienfuegos), and of Che; that of July 26, of the Assault on Moncada, of the guerrilla in our continent. It is the that of the old and new causes for socialism and freedom, for anti-imperialism, and for anti-capitalism. That of forging a new man and a new society… In this way we are setting out to be one more of the little motors behind the broader popular movement that will march towards revolution in our country.[203]

The FAU's re-conception of the vanguard party also required a valid critique of the Communist Party, which claimed to represent the revolutionary working class. The take down began with a transcript of an April 1917 speech by Vladimir Lenin, in which he declared, "We have to immediately build democracy from below, via an initiative among the proper masses and with their participation in *the entirety of state life*, without "surveillance" from above, and without administrators. As an immediate practical task, we can and we should substitute the police, the administrators, and the permanent army with an armed *pueblo*."[204] The text revealed the irony of the PCU's adherence to Marxist-Leninist doctrine yet emphasis on participation in formal state politics and rejection of anti-legal methods, specifically armed struggle. The emphasis on mass action and political organization paralleled analysis and strategy of cotemporaneous Italian autonomous Marxists. Mario Tronti recalled, "Workers' struggles determine the course of capitalist development; but capitalist development will use those struggles for its own ends if no organized revolutionary process opens up, capable of changing that balance of forces."[205]

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[203] "Rojo y Negro, dos colores que marcan un camino," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 December 1968, pp. 127
[204] V. I. Lenin, "El congreso de diputados campesinos," reprinted in *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 60-2, FAU Library
[205] Mario Tronti, "Our *Operaismo*," In *New Left Review*, No. 73, Jan-Feb 2012 https://newleftreview.org/II/73/mario-tronti-our-operaismo

The FAU referenced OLAS discourse to proclaim a commitment to building Left unity via collective action. They included a text from Felix de la Uz, director of the Cuban School of Revolutionary Instruction, who emphasized a "unity in action" among the Latin American Left. The author challenged Communist Party claims that unity was required prior to action. He instead proclaimed that unity came into being via collective action. Thus, he stressed the importance of a consensus to act as opposed to bringing together broad and diverging, which could only lead to concession-making and moderation. [206] De la Uz critiqued the Argentine and Brazilian Communist Parties for relying on broad political fronts that included representation from the national bourgeoisie. Moreover, both parties argued that the masses were unprepared to take up arms and that armed struggle would only induce a military takeover of government. Instead, the Party's role was to organize the masses to prevent a coup (and maintain the status quo) while striking up political allegiances with centrist parties, whose complicity would be necessary in the case of a coup.[207] In other words, the Party subordinated the working class to the national bourgeoisie.

In a final effort to align the FAU's vision with that of the Cuban Revolution, the back cover of the pamphlet consisted of the following quote from Fidel Castro:

> …The world does not need
> Guiding countries,
> Nor guiding parties,
> Nor guiding men.
> The world and more than ever
> Our Latin American world
> Needs guiding ideas.

[206] Felix de la Uz, "Algunos problemas acerca de la unidad de acción del movimiento revolucionario en America Latina," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 105; 115, FAU Library
[207] Felix de la Uz, "Algunos problemas acerca de la unidad de acción del movimiento revolucionario en America Latina," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 123, FAU Library

The FAU's anarchist party set out to formally fuse two ideologies considered incompatible for nearly a century. While the Global North New Left organically merged anarchist and Marxist ideas and praxis, the FAU's Latin American anarchism set out to create a formal synthesis at an organizational, rather than personal, level.

Bankers Strike and June '68 Prompt Security Measures

Social tensions heightened as students continued marching key industries remained in conflict. Throughout May, ANCAP workers occupied the La Teja refinery and created a nationwide gas shortage. The visuals of street protests and gas queues inspired the Pacheco Areco government to present the Formula Lanza, a series of wage increases meant to curb the escalating mobilizations. The PCU and other moderate currents in the labor movement embraced the formula and promoted it as a triumph for workers. While the formula offered some sectors substantial gains, others suffered harsh retaliation due to their combativeness. Faced with a permanent lockout in response to a four-month strike, workers at General Electric conceded a significant pay loss for strike days and the firing of all union officers for the right to return to work.[208]

The Association of Uruguayan Bank Employees (AEBU) rejected the government's gesture and remained on strike, which initially started as a solidarity gesture with gas workers. AEBU had earned a combative reputation as early as 1962, when dissident workers pushed contract negotiations to a strike as opposed to previous practices of quick-to-settle bargaining. The long-fought contract also saw solidarity strikes with textile workers. By 1964, the AEBU

[208] Robert Alexander Jackson, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, pp. 68.

leadership moved away from its white collar identity to situate itself more closely to the labor movement. In 1968, Banca Oficial workers voted for the FAU and MLN-T-lead "1955" caucus, making Hugo Cores the President of their industry union. The "1955" caucus later won the private banking sector union elections in 1969, giving them full control over organized labor in the financial sector. The FAU viewed AEBU's recent election of Hugo Cores to serve as director of the Banca Oficial union as proof that state repression had radicalized workers rather than disempower them, and that further tactical efforts would build a tighter, more cohesive movement.[209] The newly elected caucus set out to prove it differed from the old guard and rejected the proposal because it did not meet the living wage minimum agreed upon by membership. Moreover, AEBU leadership denounced the government's proposal on moral grounds because it offered a higher percentage increase to white collar bank workers compared to other working class sectors.

On June 13, an AEBU general assembly elected to continue the work stoppage and coordinate efforts with a planned teacher's strike in early July.[210] The bank workers braved intimidation from police units, who surveyed the assembly from inside and attempted to detain union officials upon approval of the strike's extension.[211] Later that same evening, President Pacheco Areco invoked Article 168 of the new Constitution to implement Prompt Security Measures (MPS). Minister of Labor Manuel Flores Mora proclaimed, "I cannot be thankful

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[209] Cartas de FAU, 12 May 1969; Various well-known radical Left militants belonged to the "1955" caucus, including Carlos Hebert Mejias Collazo and Kimal Amir (MLN-Tupamaros); Hugo Cores (FAU); and Anibal Collazo, brother of MRO leader Ariel Collazo. Although the "1955" caucus and PCU-affiliated "Lista 3" caucus agreed on pushing for nationalization of the banking sector, the former went further by advocating universal basic income to compensate for the half decade of sacrifices imposed upon the working classes to pay for the nation's economic crisis, Rey Tristan, pp. 380-84; 391

[210] "Borradores de apuntes sobre el movimiento obrero del Uruguay, año 1968," In *La Historieta*, circa 1974, Mechoso Family Archive

[211] "El claro sentido de las medidas: hechos y opinions que lo evidencian," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 20 June 1968, pp. 16

enough for the kind disposition and seriousness of CNT leaders and leadership of other unions. But my good nature, and theirs too, has been taken advantage of by the attitude of minority groups whose ignorant proposals and whose solvent behavior have made this extraordinary regime necessary."[212] He went on to assure that the MPS targeted "isolated groups that make it impossible to dialogue with workers and encourage jungle law within the student movement, burning cars and what not."[213] Similarly, Minister of the Interior Eduardo Jiménez de Aréchaga declared, "The measures are meant to defend public order from the climate of violence unleashed in the streets that does not represent the real interests of the working class."[214] Howard Handelman and Vania Markarian both recognize the MPS as a direct response to bank workers' mobilization.[215] Police forces detained and interrogated various members of the FAU in an attempt to find AEBU leadership, who began hiding in various safehouses upon escaping detention at the assembly. Authorities laid siege on FAU strongholds, such as the School of Fine Arts and Normal Education Institution, where swarms of riot police and dogs surrounded students and demanded information. The mainstream press *El Diaro* fueled the government's hostility, declaring, "The government's undeniable obligation is to combat, and more than anything, prevent anarchy."[216] To further curb the escalating class conflict, Pacheco Areco introduced a bill for the creation of the Council on Prices, Wages, and Productivity (COPRIN), which froze wages, fixed prices, and allotted a state-sanctioned mediator to labor-management

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[212] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 16 – CEIU Hugo Cores Archive

[213] Quoted in "El claro sentido de las medidas: hechos y opinions que lo evidencian," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 20 June 1968, pp. 15; Flores Mora left his position as Minister of Labor on 1 June 1968 but served in office throughout the May '68 mobilizations.

[214] The next day, he threatened to fire all striking government employees, Quoted in "El claro sentido de las medidas: hechos y opinions que lo evidencian," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 20 June 1968, pp. 16

[215] According to Howard Handelman (1981), the Prompt Security Measures were a direct response to the prolongation of the bank worker's strike, pp. 381; Vania Markarian (2017) also recognizes that the MPS were likely a response to various strikes already underway, especially those of civil servants and bank workers.

[216] Quoted in "El claro sentido de las medidas: hechos y opinions que lo evidencian," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 20 June 1968, pp. 16

negotiations. Between June 1968 and November 1971, the government maintained MPS for all but three months.[217]

The repression exacerbated divisions within the Left about how to respond. Hours after the government announced the MSP decree, the UOESF presented the CNT Representative Table with a proposal for a general strike on June 18 and a long-term plan of action. The CNT majority approved the former in hopes that the government would retreat in the face of a one-day strike as they did in October 1967.[218] However, the Table rejected the latter under the auspices that prolonged and combative labor action would inspire a military coup. They instead suggested waging a legal struggle alongside progressive members of traditional parties in Parliament. The FAU argued that Uruguay was already under *constitutional dictatorship* in which the government utilized legal means to intervene in, demobilize, and dismantle social organizations in the interests of the national bourgeoisie, mainstream political parties, foreign enterprise, and imperialist nations.[219] On June 21, an article in *El Dia* reported on a meeting between newly-appointed Minister of Labor Julio Cesar Espinola and CNT President Jose D'Elia regarding potential wage increases for public sector workers.[220]

Opposing sectors also clashed within the FEUU regarding the urgency of a prolonged strategy and use of combative tactics. Lists of radical students from the schools of Architecture, Medicine, Humanities, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Economics, Law, and Chemistry

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[217] The Measures were retracted Between March and June 1969; Leandro Kierszenbaum, "Estado Peligroso y Medidas Prontos de Seguridad: Violencia Estatal Bajo Democracia, 1945-68," In *Contemporanea*, Year 3, Volume 3, 2012, p. 110

[218] On 9 October 1967, Gestido implemented Prompt Security Measures but cancelled the decree two weeks later in the face of a CNT general strike, Robert Alexander Jackson, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, pp. 68.

[219] "Actuar ahora, único modo de frenar la represión," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 26 June 1968, pp. 19; Uruguayan historian Alvaro Rico labels the June 13 decree as marking a shift to "conservative liberalism" and towards a long path to consolidating authority that eventually culminated in the 1973 coup, Alvaro Rico, *1968: El liberalismo conservador*, Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1989

[220] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 17, CEIU Hugo Cores Archive

coalesced around a position influenced by the FAU and other radical Left organizations. On the eve of the general strike, they submitted a letter to CNT President José D'Elia with their manifesto attached. They concluded the statement declaring, "The FEUU should return to the path of its earlier days, with the values and tactics, in order to confront the reactionary police and the 'legal dictatorship' that governs both us and the labor movement."[221]

The June 18 general strike offered an opportunity for more combative unions in the CNT to set a precedent. The UOESF initiated one-hour rotating strikes on the day before the big strike, occupying the plant the night before. The Textile Worker Congress (COT) called upon their twelve thousand members to barricade themselves inside their workplaces as a self-defense mechanism against police, who now had the green light to arrest and/or use force against strikers.[222] The general strike kicked off a monthlong effort including daily rallies and street actions by students and workers. The fervor provided a political opportunity for factory workers (textiles, rubber, electrical services) and white-collar employees (especially teachers, civil service, and bank workers) to meet one another – they discovered similar conditions in their seemingly disparate trades. Crowds frequently targeted transit by blocking routes and breaking windshields in opposition to the fee hike. FAU youths from the night school lead a campaign to paint busses with slogans in opposition to the MPS. Regardless of authorities' insistence that the state of siege corresponded to members of fringe groups on the revolutionary Left, the government violently repressed a much broader sector of the population, including rank-and-file workers. The government began firing and drafting hundreds of public sector bank workers and

[221] "Carta a la CNT," In *Rojo y Negro (II),* ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, 1 December 1968, pp. 177-90; Participating caucuses include Grupo AREA (Architecture), Grupo 58 (Medicine), Agrupación 26 (Humanities), Lista 11 (Engineering), Grupo AGU and Grupo Universitario de Izquierda (Natural Sciences), Economicas, Lista 68 (Law), Grupo Militante (Chemistry)
[222] Electrical workers in the UTE generator sector also used factory occupation as a tactic, "Asi se esta respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, Montevideo, 20 June 1968, pp. 17

civil service workers into the Armed Forces.[223] Police squadrons patrolled public banking headquarters, such as the Central Bank, Mortgage Bank, and Stock Market. On June 24, private sector bank workers held a solidarity strike to denounce state repression against those in the public sector.[224] Wives of conscripted bank workers held a sit-in and blocked traffic on the main artery Sarandi Avenue in Montevideo's Old Center.[225]

On July 2, the CNT carried out another general strike that shut down major national industries and essential services, including workers in the electrical grid, sanitation, gas and petroleum, and public banking sector. Dissident workers at the Batlle Thermoelectric Central (UTE) and the ANCAP refinery remained on strike for the next two days, while contingents of COT workers occupied nearly every textile plant in Montevideo and its periphery. On July 3, public bank employees resisted police repression when authorities entered the Central Bank in response to a work slow-down. Bank officials then closed the bank for the rest of the day. Police refused to leave the building and remained locked inside until a military squadron surrounded the building near midnight. Soldiers beat and detained workers to assure the eviction. Again, private sector workers launched a half-day strike the following day.[226]

The government gave mixed signals settling the conflict. On July 6, Central Bank President Enrique Iglesias shocked the nation by announcing the possibility of mediation between bank management and the union. The next day, the Office of the President released a statement saying, "The government will not negotiate under these circumstances."[227] Meanwhile, fifty-one bank workers from the Villa Garcia branch remained detained for nearly a week, and

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[223] Howard Handelman, pp. 381; Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 35
[224] "Así se esta respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 26 June 1968, pp. 20
[225] Image from *El Popular*, circa 1968, Montevideo, Center of Photography
[226] "Así se esta respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 July 1968, pp. 24
[227] "Confundir-disinformar, un medio más de 'hacer politíca'," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 11 July 1968, pp. 25

military forces occupied the ANCAP oil refinery in La Teja threatening workers with conscription should they strike.[228]

As everyday people demonstrated a heightened militancy, the FAU insisted on disseminating an anarchist perspective regardless of the organization's banned status. On June 20, a team of Raul Cariboni, Mauricio Gatti, Gerardo Gatti, and Elena Quinteros produced the first edition of a four-page weekly propaganda organ, titled *Cartas de FAU*. The *Cartas* began circulating underground via the FAU infrastructure to reach an audience of roughly three thousand readers. They provided macro-level analysis, but also local-level reports on popular mobilizations, workplace activities, and popular violence. True to the FAU's position supporting resistance, the editors' presented narratives of illegal activities – working now as an underground press. Yet, fearing retaliation, editors asked readers to pass their news to trustworthy peers *(haga circular)*.

On July 17, a coalition of six unions proposed the CNT Representative Table with a Plan of Action in attempt to broaden participation in the growing conflict. The plan's authors, UOESF, Union of BAO Workers, Glass Workers Federation, Health Federation (FUS), Ghiringhelli Union, and Autonomous Union of TEM Workers (SAOT), called for a two-day general strike accompanied by factory occupations and sabotage for the first two days of August. However, the CNT Representative Table approved another one-day strike for August 1.[229] Various industries launched strikes and other work actions during the last days of July in an effort to intensify the impact. Graphic artists at Garino Hermanos, Barreiro, and Impresora Uruguay occupied their plants and police detained various SAG officers in response, including Gerardo Gatti. SAG called to extend the strike to seventy-tour hours in response to the police

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[228] "La represión continuá," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 11 July 1968, pp. 27
[229] "El torno al oportunismo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 August 1968, pp. 38

harassment of their officers but the CNT Representative Table rejected the proposal. Moreover, recognizing the growing climate of repression, the CNT Representative Table called off strikes in key sectors. It was too late, labor anger had outrun the leadership. Strikers paralyzed Montevideo by shutting railways, textiles, banking (insurance, savings, mortgage, stock exchange, and private sector), utility services (electricity, gas), construction, graphic artists, transportation, health, and more. During the demonstrations, small incendiary devices were installed at various bank locations, train stations, and government buildings. Students threw rocks at US-related symbols, such as PanAm Airlines and General Electric headquarters. Clashes between strikers and strikebreakers also occurred in numerous interior cities. In Salto, workers from FOEB and SAG and smashed the windows of establishments that remained open, and workers in Fray Bentos painted strikebreaker's homes with slogans. Graphic artists in Salto sabotaged the newspaper *Diario* by changing its name to *Verdad Salteña* and inserted subversive messages throughout the edition.[230]

Regardless of the successful general strike, the CNT Representative Table remained opposed to calling for the strike's extension beginning the next day. On August 8, the six union coalition organized a day of action among themselves and other radical sectors of the labor movement. They released a joint communique critiquing the Representative Table for not having returned to discuss a strategy in the days prior to the general strike. They argued that, "We have all contributed to forming the CNT and cannot keep going with this lack of direction, especially when the working class and pueblo legitimately want so much more than simple declarations, compromised work stoppages, and public rallies that simply depend on the authorization of the government and police."[231] Yet, health service workers (FUS) walked out for a half day strike,

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[230] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 August 1968, pp. 40-1
[231] "Propusieron plan de lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 August 1968, pp. 46

workers at TEM, Funsa, Ghiringhelli, and nearly every textile factory occupied their plants. Some sites had already been sustaining occupations for weeks. For example, workers at Campomar (COT) and BAO had been occupying their factories since the beginning of June and July respectively.[232] In some worksites, the mobilizations had begun achieving notable gains against the MPS. At the printing press Garino Hermanos, graphic artists successfully pressured management into breaking the wage freeze after having stopped work 24 times since the June 13 decree.[233]

The FAU and other revolutionary Left organizations remained targets of government repression. On August 9, police raided the University of the Republic and Faculty of Agronomy, Architecture, Fine Arts, Economics, and Medicine in search of UTE director Ulysses Pereira Reverbel, who was kidnapped four days prior in one of the MLN-T's first high profile actions.[234] The MLN-T released their captive the next day to avoid even more repression but students kept holding protests against police invasions and government interfering with the University system. One week later, the Ministry of the Interior coordinated house raids of numerous FAU militants and sympathizers.[235] On August 12, police shot UJC militant and Faculty of Odontology student Liber Arce. High school and university students demonstrated against the killing over the next month, often throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails, building barricades, and burning cars and storefronts. They utilized the centrally located Instituto Alfredo Vazquez Acevedo (IAVA), Faculties of Chemistry and Medicine, and National Trade School (UTU) as gathering points and organizing centers. The CNT called for a Day of Action on August 16, which consisted primarily

[232] "Propusieron plan de lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 August 1968, pp. 45-46
[233] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 August 1968, pp. 47
[234] Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 37; While all five faculties became associated with the MLN-T, they also had sizeable groupings of militants belonging to the FAU and GAU. The School of Fine Arts remained affiliated with strands of anarchism.
[235] "Hay ahora más dificultades para difundir esta carta," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 12 August 1968, pp. 43

of walkouts during the last hour of the work day. However, workers in textiles, health services, FUNSA, and BAO occupied their factories while graphic artists at the newspaper *Diario* went on strike through the weekend.[236] In El Cerro, refrigeration plant workers launched a month long occupation of *Frigorifico Nacional*. Local high school students successfully warded off police evictions, even though a FAU militant from the Faculty of Medicine was hospitalized with severe head injuries. [237] Some laborers clearly won the confrontation. Rubber workers at the Funsa and Ghiringhelli factories achieved a cost of living wage increase.[238]

The promising demonstrations of combativeness and successful wage gains inspired the COT to re-submit the 17 July Plan of Action for the CNT Representative Table to approve in their late August meeting. The reformed proposal called for mass demonstrations and factory occupations on September 4 followed by the launch of an indefinite general strike the next day. COT's proposal gave new life to the 17 July Plan which had been delayed, but never fully rejected, by the CNT Table. However, the Table, including the COT representative, voted unanimously in favor of a new proposal to hold rallies on September 5 instead. One representative was quoted declaring, "There are paths being paved at the level of Congress."[239] The September 5 day of action again sparked intense confrontations with police, and spawned two clear nuclei of social unrest: the Faculty of Medicine and El Cerro. The former, a home of nearly a dozen FAU-related students and staff members, served as a gathering point for sieges on the Legislative Palace due its close proximity to the structure. It also hosted a first aid room to service injured students during battles with police. In El Cerro, a contingent of teachers, students, and workers from BAO, Funsa, Alpargatas, health services, and *Frigorifico Nacional* barricaded

[236] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 19 August 1968, pp. 50
[237] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 2 September 1968, pp. 60
[238] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 2 September 1968, pp. 60
[239] "Así se retrocedió," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 9 September 1968, pp. 64-5

the bridge connecting the neighborhood with the city center.[240] The FAU labeled the decision to call of the strike as traitorous, and declared:

> We are not opposed to negotiations, but they must be carried out above principled foundations that maintain the highest level of mobilization and conflict possible by the working class because only this guarantees and preserves its protagonist and vanguard role… Three months have passed in which we have confronted an unprecedented reactionary offensive. In this time span we have seen many brief work stoppages, sometimes even for just minutes, that did not cause them to stop enforcing union sanctions. There has been isolated strikes that, without having been surrounded by a broader plan of action, continue to be difficult to understand in their context. There are sectors that proclaim tiredness and bewilderment with a more complete struggle and whose objectives are tangled up, one way or another, with mediation, contact, and negotiation.[241]

The CNT Executive Board offered a different analysis of the situation. They insisted that the labor movement was not equipped to take on the executive orders alone and instead needed to continue pushing for solutions in Congress while building a broader coalition with the Uruguayan Chamber of Commerce, Catholic Church, and Masonic Lodge. The Board also saw the need to find foreign support in the International Red Cross and United Nations. They announced the position publicly at football match between CA Cerro and FC Rampla Juniors, where they also invited audience members to a fundraising rally the following week.

As the CNT retreated state repression continued to escalate.[242] On September 20, police shot and killed Faculty of Economics student Hugo de los Santos and UTU student Susana Pintos, both UJC militants, during a student and worker demonstration. The government took advantage of the murders to close all school campuses in Montevideo until October 15. The

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[240] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 9 September 1968, pp. 65; Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 5

[241] "Negociar sin lucha es traición," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 9 September 1968, pp. 62-3

[242] Beyond Street confrontation, authorities also detained and tortured militants and fellow travelers of organizations. In one case, ex-FAU member Leo Gerner was detained and tortured in efforts to retain information about the organization. Gerner, an employee of the Medical Union, ex-officer of the Nocturnal School Student Union, and member of the Uruguayan Health Federation (FUS), quit the organization over two years prior to his detention due to health issues, "Los anarquistas no hablan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 28 October 1968, pp. 94

government also ordered the close of the CNT and AEBU locals. Military forces surrounded the school and union buildings to prevent them from being used as organizing spaces.[243] By the end of September, sixty-five bankers were detained and conscripted into the military. Union officers, primarily from AEBU, testified to having experienced home raids, physical violence during interrogations, and threats to their family members.[244]

Regardless of the heightened state repression, workers continued to utilize combative tactics throughout Montevideo. The CNT called a general strike on September 24. In the days prior, state Savings Bank workers climbed to the second story to drop plastic bags filled with water onto the heads of businessmen who gathered there to inaugurate a statue to national hero Jose Artigas. The action sparked a mobilization from city police, but workers clocked out and walked by them without detention upon their arrival. On the eve of the strike, private bank workers held a half day work stoppage and entered the public Mortgage Bank to distribute fliers and chant slogans. Workers at Banco Italo Americano occupied their workplace and denied management access. On September 24, various police chiefs awoke to Molotov cocktail explosions in their front yards.[245] Workers at the Apolo paint factory in La Teja experimented with occupying their plants for the first time after voting a reform caucus to power in their autonomous union. The occupation lasted into mid-October and they funded the effort by organizing numerous "tolls" to collect contributions from passing drivers.[246]

By late October, student mobilizations had fizzled out. Uruguayan historian Vania Markarian has recognized the lull to reflect the "cycles of protest" historically associated with

[243] The government never referenced the guerrilla organization MLN-T as reason behind the protests, Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 39-40, 60; "El objetivo es desmoralizar al pueblo" In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 September 1968, pp. 76
[244] "El objetivo es desmoralizar al pueblo" In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 September 1968, pp. 75-6
[245] "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 September 1968, pp. 76-7
[246] "Los coches pagaban peaje," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 7 October 1968, pp. 82

the academic year, in which tensions always peak in May roughly a month and a half after the school year commenced but eventually die out by exam season in October. She goes on to argue that both student and labor organizations transitioned towards new forms resistance after the events of mid-1968.[247] During the month-long closure of school campuses, militants continued meeting in union locals to devise new strategies and tactics amidst a growing climate of state repression. The government also took note of its own weaknesses and remedied them with an increase in military and communications equipment, which they purchased from the US government. Between May 1968 and January 1972, the government more than doubled Montevideo Police's riot control inventory to include eleven armed vehicles, five SUVs with chicken wire protection, three water cannons, forty four passenger buses, one cattle truck (to transport seventeen riot control horses of the total 160 guard animals available), 2009 helmets (including 270 with plastic facemasks), 87 plastic shields, 30 riot shields, 380 gas masks, and 99 gas guns. In Montevideo alone, upwards of 3,500 riot police were available for mobilization.[248] Militants agreed that the current political situation warranted the use of popular violence. During the suspension of classes, the *Comandos de Autodefensa del Pueblo* (People's Self-Defense Commandos, CAP), a FAU-MLN-T coalition, carried out three bombings at banks and government officials' homes.[249]

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[247] Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017, pp. 41-42

[248]USAID Chief Public Safety Advisor Charles C. Guzmán, "Police Riot Control Readiness – Uruguay," Washington DC, 19 September 1972, available online via Udelar: http://www.geipar.udelar.edu.uy/index.php/2016/08/27/ips-14-1-riot-control-uruguay-1967-72/

[249] Targets included the home of an executive cabinet member, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Banco Mercantil del Rio de la Plata (Salto), "3 explosiones," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 14 October 1968, pp. 90; CAP cells struck again in late January by burning four locals of the Colorado Party throughout Montevideo. They also exploded bombs at the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Relations, and Metropolitan Guard Headquarters. The CAP left behind fliers claiming the attacks and declaring solidarity with the workers facing police repression and BAO and Bataioli, and workers facing unemployment at Frigorifico Nacional, Nervion, Vidplan, and various textile plants. The statement ended declaring, "We will do it like in 1952: We will put up a new 38th Parallel," "Asi se esta respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 3 February 1969, pp. 166

While Markarian accurately identifies Spring 1968 as marking a strategic and tactical shift among student organizations, workers, accompanied by student allies, continued clashing with state forces in Montevideo's streets into early 1969. Although street skirmishes were less frequent, they were often sparked by workplace-specific grievances and came in spirts of three to four days. On November 12, construction workers utilized building materials to erect barricades and block traffic in front of Plazoleta El Guacho to protest the sizeable, yet inadequate, 25 percent pay raise offered by the Executive branch. Two days later, health service workers (FUS) burned debris to barricade seven main intersections in the city center in response to the government's rejection of their demands. Police used water cannons and tear gas to break up protesters, who threw stones and Molotov cocktails at the portal of the Ministry of Public Health. The Sub-Secretary of Public Health looked on as his car went up in flames. On November 15, students marched in opposition to government interference in university elections, leaving the windows of eighteen banks shattered.[250] In mid-December, bank tellers occupied the Banco Comercial to protest the firing of three union officials. Police evicted the occupation two days later by utilizing a large tube to spray gas into the building through a broken window. Although the workers cleared the premises, they initiated a two-week long strike that remained isolated and without CNT support. In the interior, packing workers at Frigorifico Tacuarembo protested a visit from President Pacheco Areco by occupying the factory and refusing him entrance. Police detained dozens, including a priest, for distributing fliers denouncing his visit.[251]

[250] "Asi se esta respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 18 November 1968, pp. 110
[251] Workers at the Riplan (wool factory) and Ipusa (textile plant) occupied in protest of layoffs; Radio workers (ADER) denounced the firing of various union officers; Metalworkers at the TEM factory implemented slowdown strikes to pressure a salary increase, "Así se está respondiendo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 16 December 1968, pp. 133-4

Beyond deliberating strategies for popular violence, the FAU also experimented with creative mediums to reach out to Montevideo's poor neighborhoods. They aimed to boost working class morale after the difficult losses throughout the year. On 22 December 1968, members of the FAU organized redistribution action in Barrio Cerrito while workers gathered to celebrate the Christmas season with their families. Since 1962, the neighborhood had been the site of various redistribution actions, during which members of El Coordinador hijacked food supply trucks *en route* to Manzanares, a small grocery chain present in working class neighborhoods throughout the city. After splitting with El Coordinador, the FAU signed off redistributive actions under the name Comandos de Hambre.[252] The neighborhood primarily housed workers who were employed in the area's numerous factories, such as Primera Hilandería Uruguaya de Algodón SA (PHUASA) and Industria Nacional Laminadora SA (INLASA). On holidays and days off, workers gathered at the union-affiliated sporting and social centers interspersed throughout the industrial-residential landscape, like the COT local, which had a membership of upwards of seven thousand workers from the neighborhood. Residents suffered a rough year of numerous lost campaigns resulting in over one hundred local workers passing through jail The FAU saw the gathering as an opportunity to expropriate and redistribute fancy foods amongst the families. Residents of Cerrito were accustomed to meeting representatives of the Blancos and Colorados on Calle Timbués to receive rice, cooking oil, spaghetti, and yerba mate. However, the FAU sought to boost morale by changing the dynamic. A female member of the FAU phoned in an order of twelve roasted chickens, three stuffed turkeys, five kilos of piglet, over one thousand mixed sandwiches, five kilos of homemade cookies, and a dozen bottles of wine from Confitería Lyon D'Or, a high class restaurant located in the city's center. To avoid

[252] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nación agredida,* Montevideo, 1978, pp. 295

suspicion of such a extravagant order, the militant instructed the restaurant to deliver the food to a jockey club adjacent to the famous Hipodromo de Maroñas, where the working class district terminated.

Upon arriving at the delivery location, five members of the FAU, including two students from the Preparatorios Nocturno de IAVA and three FUNSA workers, were waiting for the truck on the sidewalk. Three of them entered into the delivery truck and instructed the delivery on how to arrive to the new delivery location. The delivery boy was scared and non-compliant, insisting that he had a wife and children, and fearing for his life. He could hardly handle the vehicle due to his trembling. After the militants made numerous attempts to explain the new plan and assure the driver that his safety was not at risk, Cosmo, a burly worker from the FUNSA factory, presented him the following ultimatum: "You are going to shut your mouth or I'm going to give you a kick in the ass!" The delivery boy pulled himself together and chauffeured the militants to the arranged location, on Calle Timbués and Saravia. The militants were greeted by a few hundred people. They used delivery trays to improvise tables and everyone present received a meal, including the delivery boy. Andrés recalled, “Why do we have to bring the poor the same food that they eat every single day? They should get to know the delicacies of the rich!” [253]

In late December 1968, the CNT majority’s strategy to court progressive congressmen proved a failure. Uruguayan Congress formalized the COPRIN to regulate private sector wages and prices, and rule on the legality of strikes.[254] The body consisted of five government officials, two labor representatives, and two business representatives. The body kept wage increase at seventy percent for 1968 although cost of living had risen more than two hundred percent since

[253], Augusto Andrés, “El norte también existe,” [personal email correspondence], 2018, pp. 9-15
[254] Strikes were prohibited in "essential services,” "COPRIN: Restricción al derecho de huelga," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 24 June 1970, Uruguay National Library

1967. Similarly, the body ruled to allow only a sixteen percent wage increase in 1969. Within the first six months of its implementation, the CNT Representative Table recognized, “Every resolution of the COPRIN has been a resolution against the people, authorizing increases in prices, limiting increases in wages, in clear redistribution of income in favor of the dominant classes.”[255] Furthermore, in an effort to drag on conflicts and usurp union resources, management frequently missed arranged meetings but suffered no consequences on behalf of the state.[256]

Dissident Labor: The *Tendencia Combativa*

The shortcomings of bureaucratic processes spawned a coalition of unions under the direction of the FAU, Grupos de Acción Unificadora (GAU), Acción Sindical Uruguaya (ASU), 22 de Diciembre, and Fuerza Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores (FRT). The illegalization of the six *Epoca* organizations sought to break up the growing popularity of revolutionary Left thought and strategy, but the groups’ social insertion in labor and student movements enabled the relationships to be sustained. The ASU was perhaps the most interesting fit within the coalition. As the Uruguayan national branch of the *Confederación Latinamericana Sindical Cristiana* (CLASC), the ASU shared a strong anti-communism with the FAU and other New Left organizations. In its 1952 founding Congress in Santiago, Chile, the CLASC set out to form a Christian humanist union to combat Marxist anti-humanist, and anti-Catholic, dogma. Moreover, they shared a similar critique of Communist beuraucracy, arguing "Unionism is a way in which workers can take their destiny into their own hands and transform all of society. [257] These groups found themselves sharing strategy, tactics, and a similar critique of the Communist Party. They

[255] Robert Jackson Alexander, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, pp. 69
[256] "Rausa no se presentó al Coprin" In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 14 June 1970, Uruguay National Library
[257] See Jorge Maureira Lagos, *Ideologia sindical cirstiana para America Latina*, Santiago: Editorial Juridica de Chile, 1968, pp. 64-72

came together to form a dissident current within the CNT, called the *Tendencia Combativa* (the Tendencia). According to Hugo Cores, member organizations of the Tendencia came together around three points: 1) to fight bureaucratization within the CNT; 2) to challenge manipulation by political parties; and 3) to maintain independence at an international level.[258]

The FAU and GAU carried most weight within the coalition. The GAU officially formed in April 1969, but existed informally after the illegalization of MAPU, a social Christian organization with strong influence in COT, AEBU, Association of Electrical Workers (AUTE), Teachers Association of Uruguay (FUM), and the FEUU, especially the Faculty of Engineering.[259] The FAU had a special connection to Hector Rodriguez, the GAU's most high-profile unionist and COT on the CNT Executive Secretariat, via Raúl Cariboni, his half-brother. Rodriguez was expelled from the Communist Party in 1951 after being accusations of "derailment" and "cult of personality." After his departure, textile worker membership in the Party dropped from 517 to 19.[260] The textile industry remained one of the most lucrative national industries throughout the sixties, employing upwards of 25 thousand workers during high season—80 percent of its workforce women. The Tendencia's commitment to apoliticism was especially attractive to feminized industries. Maria Julia Alcoba, a COT officer and SADIL factory employee, recalls the union as women's gateway into politics. While parties remained dominated by male counterparts, women in textiles, nursing, and meatpacking identified foremost with their unions before any political party, regardless of how they voted in elections.[261] Rodriguez and the GAU continued to challenge the PCU around interpretation of

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[258] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 3-4 – CEIU Hugo Cores Archive
[259] Aside from Hector Rodriguez, the GAU's most notable militants included Victor Bacchetta (SAG), Martin Ponce de Leon (AUTE), Carlos Fassano (AEBU), and Ricardo Vilaro (FUM).
[260] Diego Castro, "Héctor Rodríguez, Tejedor de un tradición negada," In *Zur*, Montevideo, 13 August 2018
[261] Maria Julia Alcoba, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 October 2018; For more on women in the textile industry, see Maria Julia Alcoba, *Las mujeres ¿dónde estaban?,* Montevideo: Primero de Mayo, 2014

the CNT Plan of Action. While the GAU did not set out to spark revolution nor take state power, they advocated for a plan of escalation towards an indefinite general strike for the freedom of political prisoners, nationalization of key industries, and an end to freeze wages and use the MPS.

As state repression heightened throughout the sixties, two clearly opposing currents became evident within the CNT. The majority line, represented primarily by the PCU and Christian Democratic Party with 397 delegates, sought to organize, unify, and structure the working classes and organize them behind progressive political candidates. The minority position, represented by the Tendencia Combativa with 150 delegates, sought to confront the everyday conditions of the political and economic crisis through direct action tactics, specifically by coordinating labor actions across industries.[262] Victor Bachetta, student movement leader and GAU militant, explains, "The Tendencia Combativa came about as a necessary agreement of common action between distinct groups within the union movement that had substantial disagreements with the majority politics of the CNT advanced by militants belonging to the Communist Party."[263]

UOESF, AEBU, SAG, COT, FOEB, FUS, Bao, and UTAA were the largest unions affiliated with the Tendencia—each claimed membership numbers in the thousands. AEBU and COT were the first and third most represented unions on the CNT Representative Table with 63 and 45 delegates respectively. Lists also considerable clout, and sometimes won out, in other large industries and factories, including the Federación de Asociaciones Viales del Uruguay (laboratories), SIMA, List 69 in Federación Uruguaya de Magisterio (FUM), List 30 in Press,

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[262] "Plan de Lucha 1969," reprinted in Eduardo Rey Tristan, pp. 375
[263] from Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario,* Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 115

List Dignidad Obrera in Ferroviarios, List 36 in SUANP, Sindicato de Personales de Panaderias (Cerro), List October 8 in ANCAP (La Teja refinery), List 3 in SUNCA, Batlle Thermoelectric Central in AUTE, and List December 9 in Supermarkets.[264] Lists developed around only one or two militants. For example, FAU militant Gustavo Inzaurralde began agitating in the student association at the Normal Institute for Teachers Instituto Normal, a public academy made up of primarily lower middle class students seeking careers in public education. Many students, whose primary and secondary education took place in clergy-led Catholic schools, were attracted to the Institute because it served as a pipeline to placing teachers in underserved schools. The student union was divided into two caucuses, List 5, representing the PCU, and List 3, representing a hodgepodge of oppositional currents spearheaded by students who identified with social Christianity and liberation theology. Inzaurralde moved forth the FAU's positions within List 3, where he attracted many affiliates to anarchism due to a shared ethos of service, vocation, and sacrifice. Some of those recruited via List 3 became key members of the FAU, including Elena Quinteros, Yamandu Gonzalez, Hugo Casariego, Lilián Celiberti, and Sara Mendez.[265]

Similar to the experience in the textile industry, some of the most important Tendencia-affiliated unions formed after splits with their PCU-majority leadership. Throughout the fifties and sixties, the PCU-led *Unión Nacional de Trabajadores del Metal y Ramas Afines* (UNTMRA), the metalworkers confederation, gained a poor reputation due to its frequent disciplining and/or purging of dissident caucuses. For examples, Trotskyist factions existed in UNTMRA-affiliated factories such as INLASA and Nervión until the fifties but gave up on

[264] The Tendencia had other strongholds in the interior aside from UTAA, such as the Plenario Intergremial in Mercedes, the Sindicato de Frutas y Verduras in Salto, and the AEBU lista 1955 in Paysandu, from Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 112-114
[265] Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 106

organizing after being frequently chased out of worksites and reprimanded by union leadership for distributing dissident propaganda. In June 1966, Javier Uslenghi, a Trotskyist worker from the Bridge Factory, publicly denounced UNTMRA in *Epoca* for having demobilized workers in preference of negotiations with management.[266] Similarly, members of the Social Catholic Accion Sindical Uruguaya (ASU) spearheaded the formation of the Sindicato Autonomo de Obreros de General Electric (SAOGE) in 1958. The SAOGE spent the duration of the sixties in conflict with management and repeatedly used occupation and street confrontation to ward off police and strikebreakers. In 1961, the FAU publication *Lucha Libertaria* recognized SAOGE, Bao, Federación Obrera de la Carne, and UOESF among the nation's most militant unions.[267] Many autonomous unions resulted from schisms in reaction to PCU management of the CTU. For example, the Sindicato Autonomo de Obreros de TEM (SAOT) formed in July 1963 after membership voted 245 to 61 to disaffiliate from the PCU-lead UNTMRA. SAOT moved towards the radical Left after suffering a loss during a 1961 strike, during which workers became disenchanted with the UNTMRA and PCU-lead CTU after receiving little support for the work action. The ASU had a strong influence in decision to disaffiliate. By 1964, SAOT allied with the SAOGE to form the *Mesa Ejecutiva de Radioelectricidad* (Executive Table of Radioelectricity), which eventually welcomed participation from fellow autonomous metalworker unions at SIAM-Sarratosa y Castells-Ferrosmalt, Regusci y Voulminot, Phillips, Radesca, Galileo, Warner's Delne, APSA, and Famesa.[268]

[266] Susana Dominzain et.al., *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 160-1
[267] Ghringhelli, a tire factory under the elected leadership of Trotskyist militant Hugo Bianchi, maintained independence from the Radioelectricity Table but played a strong role in the Tendencia Combativa; Susana Dominzain et.al., *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 164-5
[268] Susana Dominzain et.al., *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 167-72

The Tendencia gained a stronghold in small, newly-formed union locals such as Seral, CICCSA, and, Manzanares (supermarkets), Divino, Portland, ATMA, and BP Color. All would wage dramatic and important conflicts between 1970 and 1973. Minority, but nonethelesss influential, cadres of Tendencia-linked militants also existed within PCU-lead unions, such as leatherworkers, shipbuilders, various agricultural workers, chemical Workers, UNTMRA, sweet factory workers, newspaper vendors, and utilities workers (UTE and gas).[269] Throughout the mid-sixties, PCU leadership often struggled to call an end to strikes because workers disobeyed their orders and refused to work until winning their demands. In May 1968, a CIA special report on the Uruguayan Left recognized, "Workers have on occasion accused the PCU of putting the party's safety and interests over those of the unions."[270]

Although not all member organizations within the Tendencia oriented themselves towards revolution, the FAU viewed the coalition as necessary to link together organizations with shared principles and tactics. The FAU recognized the limitations of unions due to their open membership and mass character. Such an eclectic membership base inevitably stripped unions of any outright revolutionary potential, but the democratic structure of unions allowed an opportunity to form caucuses around shared values and to fight to win a majority of membership's support. In a communique titled "Sindicato y tendencia," the FAU declared:

> The union cannot serve as a sufficient base to construct a revolutionary movement. That is why, if we are going to advance a line of combative action among the masses, aside from participating in a union, we must come together to form a tendency… Participation in the tendency requires the acceptance of a set of principles that can be shared among companions who hold different ideological backgrounds, which also clearly entails certain exclusions (such as reformists, for examples) that are essential if we are going to achieve the minimum basis for operational coherence.[271]

[269] from Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario*, pp. 112-114
[270] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Weekly Summary Special Report: The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1968, pp. 7
[271] "Sindicatos y tendencia," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 27 April 1970, Mechoso Family Archive

The wide-ranging coalition of blue collar, white collar, and peasant workers enabled a unique and broad-reaching network that embodied the ethos of "solidarity unionism." The coalition's diverse and multisectoral makeup required creative and innovative approaches to strategy and tactics. Many described the coalition as representative of a return to "old school"-style unionism due to its preference for direct action tactics. But the nineteenth century anarchist influence can be seen not only in the use of direct action, but also in the bringing together of a multisectoral alliance. [272] Reflecting on the Tendencia, FAU-ROE militants Ivonne Triás and Universindo Rodriguez explain:

> The Tendencia was, in the first place, a movement with all of the creativity and dynamism of any other movement, and with all of its difficulties and challenges. Its methods can be characterized by a trust in street mobilizations and the pressure of "direct action" to achieve a solution for the problems of everyday people. The Tendencia's limitations and contradictions are not enough to affirm that it was a phenomenon alien nor marginal to the Uruguayan labor movement, such as an import from the outside. It instead expressed a popular reaction that encompassed labor and student unions, as well as sectors of cultural producers, characterized by rebellion against the growing authoritarianism in Uruguayan society.[273]

Perhaps the largest wedge between the CNT majority and Tendencia Combativa manifested in the division of union leadership in the public versus private sector. The majority line overwhelmingly controlled public sector unions, such as COFE, ANCAP, AUTE, AFE, FUM and ADEOM. Tendencia discourse frequently commented on the need to coordinate struggles in the private sector (or, industrial production) with mass action in the public sector (mostly white collar administrative work). Such unity showed sporadic signs of potential primarily due to autonomous action of militant fractions in blue collar public industries of AFE, AUTE, and ANCAP. In 1972, teachers (FUM) waged a 64-day strike against an education

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[272] The best historical example of such practice can be found in turn of the century Spain, where the anarcho-syndicalist CNT organized peasants of Aragon, factory workers in Catalonia, and street peddlers in Barcelona.
[273] Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario*, pp. 114

reform bill drawing solidarity from all sectors in the CNT. But ADEOM and COFE frequently mobilized around partial strikes and rallies.

Finally, the strong relationship between Uruguay's private sector and foreign investment placed Tendencia-affiliated unions on the frontlines of resistance to imperialism. US-based capital owned 80 of the country's largest firms, including Portland Cement, Funsa, Coca-Cola, General Electric, Ciccsa (papermill), Bayer, Chase Manhattan, and Citibank. Other large foreign-owned firms organized under the Tendencia included National Beverage Factory (German), and appliance firms TEM, Phillips, and Ferrosmalt (Dutch). Moreover, foreign firms owned much of the textile and wool industry, including Hart, Sadil, and Fibratex – they often labeled their final products as "Made in England" or "Made in USA."[274] Combined with the Tendencia's strong presence AFE, Regusci Voulminot, and the meat packing industry, the coalition controlled the country's most lucrative national industries and export infrastructure.[275]

Conclusion

Regardless of the CNT's rejection of the July 17 Plan of Action many labor unions continued to utilize radical tactics, such as street confrontations and occupations throughout the year. During the second half of 1968, multiple week factory occupations took place in at least a half dozen factories, including General Electric, Ghiringhelli, FUNSA, Frigorifico Nacional, and TEM. Textile workers at the Campomar factory in Juan Lacaze occupied their plant for over fifty days beginning mid-June. Graphic artists, including those at mainstream press organs, maintained daily two-hour work stoppages for three months. Workers at over two dozen

[274] "80 empresas claves controlan los yanquis en el Uruguay," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 11 January 1972, Uruguay National Library; Maria Julia Alcoba, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 October 2018
[275] Regusci Voulminot was the largest private-owned floating dock in all of Latin America.

worksites occupied their plants multiple times, including BAO soaps, Alpargatas, National Beverages (FOEB), Inca Paints, Health Services (FUS), and various textile mills (COT). The AEBU strike ended in a stalemate and would be reignited again the following year. Although these unions differed greatly in their political orientation, their shared tactics and analysis thrusted them into a dissident coalition within the CNT, the Tendencia Combativa.

The Tendencia's diverse political makeup represented a "movement of movements." While the Uruguayan New Left did not approach questions of race and gender in the same way as their Global North counterparts, the struggles of UTAA's racialized sugarcane workers and COT's overwhelmingly female base showed an embrace of minoritized categories and "peripheral" workforces. The Tendencia remained committed to building a combative union movement around workforces historically pushed to labor's margins globally and thus moved beyond the Communist strategy of focusing on labor's most advanced industrial sectors. Moreover, in an effort to build solidarity amongst other everyday people, Tendencia-affiliated unions emphasized flexibility in their tactics. During the 1968 AEBU strikes, certain sectors remained on post to ensure the processing of paychecks, retirement, and social security.[276]

The FAU and Tendencia Combativa declared the governments' austerity politics as their primary grievance. They recognized the state sanction wage and salary freeze as a direct attack on workers' rights because it further entrenched class disparities and illegalized labor's efforts to maintain a decent standing of living as cost of living and inflation surged. In other words, it reversed the labor movement's bread and butter gains of the past decade and enabled an extreme transfer of wealth into the hands of the owning class. By the time of the July 17 Plan of Action, workers had accumulated nearly three months of experiences with small scale direct action, such

[276] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 47, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

as partial strikes, slow hand strikes, and protest. Some normalized sabotage and factory occupations, and many more had their first experiences confronting police. For the FAU, these experiences served as a foundation upon which to build towards more militant forms of escalation, such as an indefinite general strike. But such a goal required planning and coordination to unite around a common and combative strategy against both the politics of austerity and MPS. The FAU frequently denounced the labor movement's tendency to rely on spontaneity, or reactiveness, which could only lead to the isolation of more combative unions without a clear proactive role for the rest of the labor movement. On 29 July 1968, they declared:

> It is necessary to coordinate activity from a general level and to break away from the old routines, often done without conscience, of isolationist unionism. Now, fighting alone will only bring about defeat. We are all faced with the wage freezes and politics of repression. No one can escape from either. And there are not unions that are more, or less, important than others.[277]

The rejection of the July 17 Plan of Action and subsequent failure of the bank worker's strike proved that point.

The willingness to disobey laws and break social norms of civility demonstrated a broader sentiment of empowerment and high morale. Small factions of workers had begun setting off minor explosives causing property damage at the residences of strike breakers and management.[278] Workers and students frequently utilized company and campus materials to barricade streets, block traffic, and collect tolls. The bank workers' strike and solidarity that accompanied it demonstrated that amidst heightened levels of state repression, including military

[277] "!A resistir! 6 sindicatos llaman a la lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 29 Julio 1968, pp. 33

[278] For example, a coalition of FAU and MLN-T bank workers linked up to launch bombing and petty vandalism campaigns directed towards scabs and management. Attacks were recorded at the Banco de Londres, Banco 18, Banco Roxlo, the Stock Exchange, and television broadcasting station, Chanel 4. The small faction, called Comandos de Autodefensa del Pueblo (CAP) , carried out the actions independently and even against the will of the majority of the workers, who, regardless of demonstrating an intense labor militancy and willingness to struggle, sought to remain autonomous from political organizations, whether parties or clandestine armed groups, Eduardo Rey Tristan, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 391

conscription and physical violence, workers maintained tenacity and morale remained high. Regardless of the FAU's attempt at synthesis, their texts make a strong distinction between the Marxist "objective conditions" and workers' subjective willingness to fight. In some cases, workers risked salary cuts, job security, physical harm, and even imprisonment. In such cases, certain struggles took on a greater meaning to both the individual actors and the social imaginary in which moving the field of play to negotiations and/or falling short of winning demands resulted in collective demoralization and disempowerment.[279]

The FAU distinguished its position from that of the government and reformist Left currents in the labor movements by emphasizing its advocacy for struggle and opposition to discourse and dialogue.[280] They accused the Left of relying too much on words rather than experience, declaring:

> There is too much discourse in this country and they are all relatively the same. Confronting the oligarchy and bosses, and facing the closure of one's workplace that cannot (well, they say cannot) continue in operation, illustrates more than a thousand discourses about 'economic crisis'… You think a sugarcane worker from Artigas does not understand what is a *latifundio*? Or that a worker at FUNSA does not know what are the 'forces of order?[281]

The FAU called bluff on the governments' intentions to overturn its austerity measures. They insisted the calls for dialogue were disingenuous and recognized their irony amidst an uneven playing field. Instead, they saw the calls for dialogue as a means for the government to buy time and offer illusions of possible solutions while waiting for the mobilizations to fizzle out. Moreover, they saw direct confrontation as a means to strengthen organizations and formulate a shared working class interest on its own terms rather than "depending on illusions created from

[279] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 22, FAU Library
[280] "Hay que optar: acumular debilidad o fortalecerse luchando," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 Julio 1968, pp. 26
[281] "Hay una sola respuesta," In *Rojo y Negro (I)*, ed. Gerardo Gatti, Montevideo, May 1968, pp. 20, FAU Library

above that appear so favorable that many would long to return to 'normalcy'." They recognized the futility of dialogue with authorities, proclaiming:

> When the possibilities of making concessions to the oligarchy have run out; when they try in whatever way possible to uphold the privileges of large landowners and speculators tied to imperialism, embodied by the IMF, they replace… wage increases with freezes, and dialogue with repression. This is because the actual structures have reached their critical point and their possibilities have been worn thin. They are dead. And, therefore, now, they try to maintain the dead body afoot, artificially, although it is being propped up with bayonets.[282]

The FAU recognized that the Pacheco Areco government, PCU, and US-funded yellow union block all emphasized the importance of dialogue. This left the anarchists and other direct action-minded organizations as a punching bag for both sides of the political spectrum. While the CNT coalition commenced on delicate grounds, the PCU's reaction to the mid-1968 proved the confederation's fragility.[283] The 5 August 1968 edition of *Cartas de FAU* provides the best summary of the organization's position, which they maintained over the next five years. The anarchists responded to the one-day general strike on August 1, declaring:

> The legal dictatorship imposed by the oligarchy does not target the vacuous parliament, but instead targets radical sectors, such as workers and their unions. This is true even amongst workers and organizations that do not play with words, where no one has ever proposed a "revolutionary" general strike. Yet, this [revolutionary general strike] is indeed something discussed among those same reformist who promote the theory of the Apocolypse, that a revolution will follow after a military coup, in order to justify retreating now instead of facing up to the current reality of legal dictatorship. Through such opportunism reformists can cover up their weaknesses. But the more combative sectors of the working class will not be fooled, they will not fall into the trap into which many intellectual circles fall when they confuse the Uruguayan reality with some other thesis, whether poorly or accurately applied, from Russian, Chinese, or German theorists.

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[282] "Hay que optar: acumular debilidad o fortalecerse luchando," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 Julio 1968, pp. 25

[283] On November 14, the Frente Izquierda (FIdeL) transmitted a statement via PCU organ *El Popular* and other mainstream media sources, such as *El Pais, El Dia, Acción, BP, Color,* and various radio news channels. The declaration declared, "They implement methods that were employed last century by anarchist groups. [These methods] are condemned… eroneous, and totally intolerable for the development of the labor movement… They lead to isolation and facilate repression from the dominant… They are doing them a favor," [Untitled section], In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 18 November 1968, pp. 109

> Such confusion has caused some to identify a union strategy based on the progressive escalation of struggle, such as drawn out strikes, occupations, and street actions culminating in a general strike politically oriented against the MPS, carceral system, conscription of workers, freezing of wages, and regulation of labor—a union strategy of resistance—with a plan for revolution
> […]
> This moment requires us to articulate actions destined to spark a prolonged resistance head on. No one considers that the popular and labor actions taking place now… are aimed at the immediate seizing of power. A work stoppage, sit-in, or even general strike, in this moment, does not have any other "program" beyond defending the integrity of our unions, our salaries, our work, and our limited vestiges of freedoms. The conditions are indeed there for this, but only if we act in an organized and serious manner."[284]

Regardless of differences of differences concerning strategy, Uruguay's 1968 marked a five-year span during which, according to PCU General Secretary Rodney Arismendi, the country had the highest relative index of strikes, general strikes, and demonstrations of anywhere in the capitalist world.[285]

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[284] "El torno al oportunismo," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 5 August 1968, pp. 39-40
[285] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nación agredida,* Montevideo, 1978, pp. 13

CHAPTER 3:
ALEJANDRA AND THE EAGLE
Mass Front and Armed Struggle, 1969

In March 1969, Gerardo Gatti visited Augusto Andrés and Edelweiss Zahn in their newly-settled Barrio Pocitos apartment. Andrés, a staff worker at the Faculty of Medicine and FAU veteran, was one of a dozen members preparing to launch the organization's armed wing. Gatti took great interest in chatting with Zahn, who he had only met one time before. She was relatively unknown amongst political circles, although some members of the FAU recognized her as the daughter of a meatpacker from El Cerro. After over an hour of conversation, Gatti proposed that the couple take in Hebert Mejías Collazo and America Garcia, two ex-members of the MLN-Tupamaros who recently cut ties with the organization due to political differences.[286] Mejías and Garcia went clandestine in December 1966 after participating in a botched robbery at the FUNSA factory. The couple parted with the MLN-T due to strategical ad ideological differences. Mejías, who worked professionally as a bank teller before going clandestine, developed close ties with the FAU by way of Hugo Cores.

By mid-1969, the FAU had nearly solidified plans to form its own armed apparatus after over three years of internal conversation on the topic, which were primarily influenced by a thorough studies of historical and contemporary conceptions of urban guerrilla strategy and the lessons learned from the organization's four year stint in *El Coordinador.* Mejías held skills in firearms and explosives, which he learned during multiple trips to Cuba in the early sixties. He also offered expertise in counterfeiting documents, such as national identification cards, passports, checks, and even money. Gatti saw all of these skills as useful for building and maintaining an armed apparatus within the FAU, and thus courted Mejías.

[286] Augusto Andrés, "Recorder es volver a querer" (presentation), Montevideo, 2014

On 27 April 1969, Uruguayan media outlets reported news of an accidental explosion at a Tupamaro safe house in Montevideo's Barrio Manga. The explosion left Daniel and Carlos Betancourt, age 3 and 5 respectively, hospitalized with severe burns. The children, who belonged to Juan Carlos Mechoso and Guirnalda Betancour, were playing nearby as Hebert Mejías and America Garcia offered a bomb-making tutorial. Mechoso, a member of the FAU directorate, fled from his father in-law's home to lead an underground life for the next three years while being wanted by authorities. Mejías and Garcia, who had had been living clandestinely for three years, drew neighbor's attention with their shambled clothes and charred flesh as they flagged a taxi on the nearby ring road. They sought medical attention from a trusted doctor in the Tupamaro network. Daniel Betancourt, who arrived home minutes after the explosion, found his daughter amidst a panic attack as she huddled over her burned children. He transported his daughter and two grandchildren to Pereira Rossell Hospital before being detained by police for interrogation. Neighbors reported feeling shocked at the incident. They recalled nothing suspicious of Mechoso's transitory hours, claiming, "He came and went from work as a graphic artist at the newspaper *El Plata* like anyone else." They remembered Guirnalda as performing the role of a typical housewife – she cared for the children and frequently tended to her garden. The explosion marked the initiation of the FAU's armed branch, Revolutionary Popular Organization – *33 Orientales*.[287]

This chapter explores the infrastructure and pilot implementation of the FAU's "two foot" strategy, a unique approached that combined mass mobilization and armed struggle. By 1969, the FAU realized the formation of the Student Worker Resistance (ROE), a mass front that sought to intersect and synergize labor, student, and neighborhood conflicts, and the

[287] "Esplosión en refugio de Tupamaros: cuatro heridos," In *El Dia*, Montevideo, 27 April 1969, Uruguay National Library

Revolutionary Popular Organization – *33 Orientales* (OPR-33), a small armed apparatus that funded the organization via bank robberies and extorted managers to settle labor disputes.[288] The heavy hand of the Pacheco Areco government provoked a nationwide radicalization of social movements. The radicalization of popular mobilization brought to light clear divisions amongst among the various Left camps. These differences manifested not only in public debates between labor leaders, but also in the strategical and tactical approaches of the CNT majority and Tendencia Combativa.

The FAU's "two foot" strategy aimed to break PCU hegemony in the labor movement while still envisioning everyday people as the protagonists of revolution. They sought to create a new hegemony of direct action and confrontation, including the use of armed intervention, within popular organizations. As such, the organization's role was to proactively foment and stimulate class struggle by establishing concrete infrastructural, organizational, and financial mechanisms to enable workers to act. Isolation, whether within the specific organizing site or among the broader labor movement, proved the worst possible outcome of a campaign. The

[288] The "two foot" strategy is a unique position among the global New Left. Abraham Guillen's *Estrategia de la guerrilla urbana* (1969) offers the only conception of guerrilla warfare that resembles the FAU's position. Guillen, a Spanish anarchist exile living in Uruguay at the time of the book's release, was inspired by both the MLN-Tupamaros and the OPR-33, although he saw the latter as more accurately fitting his theories on urban guerrilla strategy. Although Guillen resided in Uruguay, members of the FAU recall little contact between him and the organization. In all my oral testimonies, interlocutors referenced only one encounter in 1966, in which Guillen spoke to a crowd of less than a dozen militants at the FAU's local in El Cerro. Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969) was released the same year in Brazil, but, like nearly all theories of revolutionary violence from the epoch, diverges strongly from the "two foot" strategy in its advocacy for direct confrontation with authorities. The strategy shared similarities with Argentina's PRT-ERP, which combined the Leninist strategy of the working class vanguard party (PRT) with a guevarist-influenced armed apparatus (ERP). The group gained strength in Cordoba between 1969 and 1975. While the ERP leant armed assistance to various labor conflicts, the apparatus also waged various spatial battles, such as sieges on military barracks and a 1975 rural guerrilla campaign in Tucuman. Such paramilitary-esque operatives veered drastically from the FAU's conception of armed struggle; Eduardo Rey Tristan was confronted with such difficulty when examining the broader Left student movement that he openly stated these limitations within the text, declaring: "Existing documentation about student groups is limited, mainly existing in fliers and handouts for quick printing by mimeograph, so it is only possible to partially compose the organizational panorama of these groups." He instead limits his inquiry to the groups' general tendencies and their relationships with revolutionary organizations, Eduardo Rey Tristan, *La izquierda revolutionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, pp. 398

Organization's highest priority was to remain relevant in the labor movement. Regardless of rapidly growing number of everyday people who embraced direct action tactics, the combination of PCU majority within the CNT, COPRIN official channels to resolve labor disputes, and Frente Amplio electoral project created a nexus of varying, but interrelated, hegemonies that often pushed the FAU and other dissident workers to the fringes of popular movements.

The Organization: Fomento, Alejandra, Aguilar

The FAU's party infrastructure took on a more formal shape by early 1969. A group of veterans made up the organization's *foment*o, or directorate. All aboveground FAU militants participated in a branch of *Alejandra*, the Student Worker Resistance (ROE) mass political front; whereas some militants participated clandestinely or semi-clandestinely in *Aguilar*, the armed OPR-33. The anarchists paid close attention not to mix the legal and anti-legal spheres for security purposes. Moreover, the compartmentalization of tasks and growing safety risks generated a need for members to abide by strict behavioral codes and logistical responsibilities.

All employed FAU members were required to belong to a union, student group, or neighborhood organization.[289] Militants set out to identify struggles specific to these spaces and galvanize support for an organized campaign around them. Such campaigns required an attunement with the broader sentiment of those affected by the grievance to avoid taking up struggles that only called the attention of "militant minorities" at the site. Yet, the FAU viewed missed opportunities as presenting even more of a difficulty, declaring, "The worse defeats are

[289] Whereas the MLN-Tupamaros and Argentina's Montoneros were made up primarily of middle class membership, see Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Richard Gilespie, *Soldiers of Peron: Argentina's Montoneros*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982; Lindsey Churchill, *Becoming Tupamaros: Solidarity and Transnational Revolutionaries in Uruguay and the United States*, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014

those defeats without putting up a fight." Similarly, the anarchists also emphasized that militants develop an awareness of when to retreat from campaigns in progress due to a low morale or lack of combativeness from their colleagues. Without such savviness, militants risked isolation and/or were faced with having to dishonestly claim victory amid failure. Militants could avoid such scenarios only through solid relationships and open dialogue with colleagues. The FAU recognized that once a combative orientation gained footing in an organizing space "reformists" would attack it by labeling it adventurist, fringe, or collaborationist.[290] Such attacks would likely come amidst prolonged campaigns that drew heavy repression from authorities, and therefore militants would face attacks not only from management and the state, but also from political rivals among the Left. Recognizing the isolating effects of sectarianism, militants' fundamental task was to strike a delicate balance between popular appeal within their workplaces and the broader Left milieu while advancing the combative position of the Organization.[291]

FAU militants also shared responsibilities researching history and theory of River Plate anarchism and Global South revolutions. The research was synthesized and shared publicly as part of organization's alternative perspective to that of the hegemonic Left. For example, editors of the *Cartas* worked in separate teams dedicated to political formation. One team, consisting of Lilian Celiberti, Luis Presno, Raúl Cariboni, met weekly to discuss historical and theoretical texts, especially regarding the emergent debates regarding the Soviet Union that translated to the national context by way of the differences between the *Tendencia Combativa* and Communist Party. Lilian Celiberti recalls continuing the conversations late into the night while walking

[290] An MLN-T document recalled a case when PCU President Rodney Arismendi accused FAU militants Leon Duarte and Washington Perez of treason and collaboration with management during an occupation of the FUNSA plant. The Supreme Court charged the union with a financial penalty after ruling against their use of occupation to combat police's attempt to evict, "Apuntes sobre la accion frente a las masas" (Documento III, 1968), In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 52
[291] "Se eligió la lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 16 June 1969

through Montevideo's empty streets.[292] Furthermore, teams of militants carried out a wide variety of thorough investigations to further the organization's understanding of legal codes, political opponents, and demographics. All members carried "know your rights" documents, which included legal definitions of crimes and their subsequent penalties, descriptions of eleven tasks, and were expected to perform at least one a day. An internal document titled "Responsibilities for every militant, every team, everyday" spelled out the quotidian responsibilities of FAU militants to ensure security and efficiency. The tasks required militants to pay close attention to the everyday spaces in which they navigated, including documentation of sites of police presence, recognition of behavioral patterns of local bosses or political elite figures, and identification of suspicious vehicles.[293]

For the FAU, membership in a revolutionary organization meant to move beyond the individual and to make sacrifices for the sake of the collective. Membership in the collective, and commitment to a collective project, was a step towards revolutionary counter-subject formation. Militants were expected to behave as *pez en el agua* (fish in the water), remaining undetectable by authorities and undistinguishable from their peers while in public.[294] The organization even enforced an unofficial dress code that aimed to avoid unwarranted attention and the individual desire for superficial bids for attention: beards, long hair, and shabby clothes were highly

[292] Lilian Celiberti, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 5 July 2017

[293] "Tarea que debe realizar cada militante, cada equipo, todos los días," circa 1970, Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive

[294] Vania Markarian's *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails* (2017) explores the relationship between youth counterculture and the Uruguayan Left. The author argues that the PCU equally embraced counterculture in an effort to appeal to a growing middle class base, specifically among students (see pages 146-7). The trend serves the author's broader argument, which claims that Uruguay's student movements maintained close relations with traditional Left organizations. However, the work falls victim to using trends within the PCU and MLN-T to make broader claims about the Left. While FAU militants recall debating among themselves regarding their tastes for music and art, the Organization insisted that militants refrain from open markings of counterculture because of its estrangement from working class culture and its potential to mark them as subversives.

discouraged.[295] In this way, the FAU's anarchism shared much more in common with Latin American Marxist and Third World Liberation organizations than it did with anarchist theory and practice in the Global North.[296]

Fomento: The Directorate

The FAU directorate consisted of veterans Gerardo Gatti, Mauricio Gatti, Juan Carlos Mechoso, Hugo Cores, Raul Cariboni, and Leon Duarte. They primarily focused on building strategy, producing analysis and propaganda, mounting connections between the labor and student movements, and coordinating actions between the popular and armed front. The directorate differed significantly from its Trotskyist democratic centralist counterpart in that ROE and OPR-33 cells could discuss their proposals and decide amongst themselves whether or not to accept tasks. Lilian Celiberti, a teacher who acted as intermediary between the directorate and both branches, recalls never having questioned the organization’s structure because of its organic fluidity in decision-making processes. While she came to question the male-dominated directorate after embracing feminism in the 1980s, she recalls having embraced the veterans’ role because of the knowledge and wisdom that they offered.[297]

Alejandra: Resistencia Obrero Estudiantil (ROE)

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[295] Anonymous, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017; Such discipline was rather common among other revolutionary Left organizations in the River Plate, see Vera Carovale, "Disciplinamiento interno: moral y totalidad," In *Los combatientes: historia del PRT-ERP*, Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2011

[296] Many First World anarchist groups of the sixties and seventies were much more influenced by anarcho-individualism and the Situationist International. Most groups were more oriented towards petty terrorism and/or a "politics of play" than towards a disciplined and organized collective movement. See Provos (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers (New York, USA), The Diggers (San Francisco, USA), and The Angry Brigades (United Kingdom).

[297] Lilian Celiberti, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 5 July 2017

The FAU had been seeking to build an interlocking network of worker and student militants since the 1958 Ley Organica, which brought strong acts of solidarity between striking FUNSA workers and combative students in the FEUU. [298] But throughout the sixties the organization directed its energy towards towards building up the CNT and Tendencia. By late 1968, the momentum of the student movement organically synergized with that of the labor movement, and the FAU used the intergenerational ties to form the *Resistencia Obrero Estudiantíl* (ROE). For many students, especially high schoolers, the May 1968 episodes served as their first experiences with street protests and their first confrontations with state authorities. In the University of the Republic, these newfound bonds gravitated primarily towards the *Unión de Juventud Comunista* (UJC), the youth wing of the PCU, which served as the major Left force within the FEUU.[299] University students also gravitated towards the newly-formed FER, which served as a recruiting base for the MLN-T. However, many freshly energized high schoolers were not yet networked into an established political project. As a result of Communist dominance in the University, the FAU sought to build ROE chapters in local high schools, especially those in El Cerro, La Teja, and Colon, which deepened the organization's influence and presence in all three peripheral working class neighborhoods. The ROE developed a strong presence in at least 16 different Montevideo high schools. They also built a university and technical school student base at UTU (night school specifically), Fine Arts, Faculty of Medicine Faculty of Agronomy, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Architecture,

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[298] Beginning as early as 1958, team of about two dozen FUNSA union leaders and rank-and-file took on the responsibilities of communicating between the combative labor unions and militant student organizations, laying the foundation for what would eventually become the ROE (the most notable of those involved in networking include Leon Duarte, Miguel Gromaz, Jacinto Ferreira, Ferardo de Avila, Luis Romero, Riaño, Márquez, Bidigaray, Berrusi, and Washington Perez - many of them also belonged to the FAU, Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 45

[299] Twenty percent of Uruguayan university students participated in a political organization. Most channeled political energies into the FEUU, which was dominated by PCU, CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "The Uruguayan Government and the Left," Washington DC, 10 May 1969, pp. 3

Economics, Chemistry, and Education. With less than 500 militants, the ROE would play a key role in the next half decade of the Uruguayan social conflict. According to a 1972 internal survey distributed to eighty ROE militants in the El Cerro-La Teja zone, the group was made up of fifty-five perfect males and forty-five percent females, including eight mothers. The average age was 21 years old, with more than half being below 20 years old. The youngest militant was 16, and the oldest was 35. Over sixty-two percent were students; and twenty percent of the students held a job as well. Occupations included: 6 "workers," 4 "odd jobs," 3 hospital employees, 1 plumber, 1 shoemaker, and 8 unemployed (including 1 "without stable housing"). More than three-quarters reported having no prior experience in a political organization.[300]

As a "mass front" organization, the ROE was open to militants of all political persuasions who shared a commitment to escalation of social conflict through coordination of struggles and the use of direct action. Although the FAU grounded ROE's infrastructure and strategical framework, the popular organization refrained from making direct references to anarchism. The ROE served as the primary vehicle by which the FAU agitated to make direct action and anti-legality hegemonic within the labor movement. All FAU militants participated in the ROE due to the requirement that all members carry out political labor in their own workplaces, but unions with the strongest quantitative presence included SAG, UOESF, AEBU, UF, Professors (Mvd), and public health clinic staff. As part of a broader FAU strategy to expand the Tendencia, ROE militants were tasked with identifying the most combative circles within each union and to assist in forming them into caucuses based on a shared set of goals and objectives specific to their organizing site. These caucuses were then networked into the Tendencia by means of their ROE

[300] "Ficha ROE," Montevideo, 1972, Mechoso Family Archive; Compared to the UJC, Vania Markarian claims, “Most members worked, but the prevalence of students among the more active militants suggests that the sectors that set the tone of the organization were not strictly working class but rather wage-earning middle-class youths,” pp. 148

contact, who could serve as a liaison for coordinating direct action campaigns alongside other workers.[301]

Students and workers planned alongside one another in the union halls of the Bakers Union in La Teja and UOESF in the city center. The Bakers Union had been an anarchist stronghold since the beginning of the twentieth century, while the UOESF local served as a headquarters for other rubber workers unions, like Ghirenghelli and Fanaesa, as well as for many other centrally located unions who did not have their own local, including TEM, CICSSA, Pepsi-Cola, FUS Seral, Record, EGSA, Campeón S.A., Médica Uruguaya, CÍírculo Napolitano, and more. The union halls served a variety of functions beyond a meeting space, including concert venue, social center, and even refuge for homeless militants without work.[302]

Tactical escalation required high levels of organization to maximize impact of actions and to lessen security risks. Students and workers meticulously planned actions prior to leave little room for spontaneity. Scouts would scope out the premises before a manifestation, while others would keep watch during the gathering. All illegal actions were carried out by experienced militants, who had physical and technical skills that enabled them to properly execute the task and subsequently evade authorities if necessary. The organization kept track of militants' skills and abilities, and called upon certain people for specific tasks. The most common tasks were *relampagos*, or lightening actions, which the organization defined as under-five-minute actions carried out by highly coordinated "disciplined groups" while among a mass gathering, such as vandalism, traffic stops, graffiti campaigns, and/or building administration

[301] *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 June 1969, pp. 250
[302] Mari Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo 26 June 2017

takeovers. Militants thoroughly planned prior to actions and expected all those involved to remain committed to their roles as they saw the actions through.[303]

The student-worker coalitional strategy proved important due to the limitations of networks insular to the union world. Maintaining the Tendencia's infrastructure required popular participation beyond union officers and rank-and-file. While union officers primarily dedicated themselves to planning and bureaucratic responsibilities, rank-and-file balanced between their workplace responsibilities, assembly participation, and mobilization. This often lead to the neglect of research, information gathering, propaganda distribution, and more. Thus, the ROE fulfilled many of these quotidian tasks as a gesture of student solidarity with the labor movement. For example, a ROE team from El Cerro produced thoroughly researched profile of the neighborhood, including the location and hours of shift changes of all factories in the area. The profile also included schools, bars, and cafes. Militants referenced the neighborhood profile when outreaching to workers and members of the community. For security purposes, many documents were signed off as "CNT - *Comisión Juvenil*" and dated 1965 – some were written extensively in code.[304] The ROE also participated in various local neighborhood organizations, such as the Support Committee for Popular Struggles in La Teja and the El Cerro Neighborhood Commission, which represented upwards of 45,000 families. The former represented a coalition of workers, students, and shopkeepers who alerted the community of local social conflicts by painting on walls, whereas the latter served as a tenants union.

The ROE encouraged a proactive role for those who did belong to a Tendencia-affiliated union, especially students, *amas de casas* (homemakers), small vendors, and unemployed. The FAU the mass front after realizing the limitations of labor unions and the necessity to build a

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[303] "Actos relampago: definiciones y generalidades," Montevideo, cir. 1972, Mechoso Family Archive
[304] "Limites de la zona," Montevideo, cir. 1972, Mechoso Family Archive

rearguard based on mutual aid and collective social reproduction. Unions, including combative tendencies within them, fell victim to a structure that prioritized salaries and other workplace issues, and thus struggled to incorporate participants beyond their membership base. An April 1970 communique declared:

> There are many people in the neighborhoods who are not members of labor unions but who are prepared to fight, and who have organized amongst themselves to do so. The Tendencia realistically cannot provide a backbone for this reality. Instead, we should develop… the coordination of activities among groups who share our tendencies within the same zone or neighborhood, and thus open a real possibility for all those who wish to participate in the struggle to do so whether or not they are affiliated with a union: non-unionized factory or shop workers, students, unemployed, and *amas de casa* should have the chance to participate in the fight.[305]

Uruguayan Left organizations broadly sought to connect with students, but the FAU's call to unemployed youths and *amas de casas* was especially unique. Some scholars have identified the Left's failure to challenge traditional gender roles as marking an epoch of "regression" during the fifties and sixties.[306] For example, the PCU's *El Popular* continued to depict women in the domestic sphere, including weekly columns dedicated to cooking recipes and beautification. While the FAU did not promote a discourse of gender liberation attune to early twentieth century anarcha-feminism, which promoted free love and liberation from the domestic sphere, the organization saw *amas de casas* as protagonists in a broader class struggle and sought to find role for them within the ROE's rearguard support network.

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[305] "Sindicatos y tendencia," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 27 April 1970, Mechoso Family Archive

[306] Gerardo Leibner identifies a "masculinization" of the PCU, in which "the invisibility of women and their demands during the 1960s was due to a power-centred vision of revolution, reproducing a patriarchal division of roles inspired by the success of the Cuban Revolution." While the Party saw an increase in women's participation in its ranks throughout the 1960s, its growth as a mass party lead to the lack of a women's-specific agenda attuned with a larger social reality in which working class families had yet to radically change the gendered division of domestic labor. He recognizes that challenging gender conceptions was among the first issues to be sacrificed in the Left's transformation from small avant-guard into mass politics in the sixties, Gerardo Leibner, "Women in Uruguayan Communism: Contradictions and Ambiguities, 1920s-1960s," In *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 50, 2017, pp. 643-672.

Similarly, the ROE recognized women and shopkeepers in La Teja for offering support behind industrial conflicts, declaring, "They have given a hand to those who are fighting for the dignity of all of us. There is a role for everyone; and there is no place for any one person to come away feeling like a hero. There is no such thing as isolated acts. With every act we construct something bigger."[307] Women played an increasingly important role as part of a prisoner solidarity network. Mothers and spouses transmitted information and transferred care packages to imprisoned loved ones as repression increased.[308] Thus, unemployed and non-wage workers, including small shopkeepers, prefigured a non-market-oriented and solidarity-based economy through their gestures of mutual aid.

The protagonists' multi-sectoral categories consolidated as the *pueblo*. The FAU, like other cotemporaneous Left organizations in the River Plate region, borrowed heavily from populist discourse to re-define popular protagonism beyond the term *working class*. While anarchism had a rich history of organizing popular sectors outside of the Marxist purview, such as peasants, street peddlers, and vagrants, the regional term *pueblo*, or people, also carried anti-imperialist notions. Argentine philosopher Ernesto Laclau called the term an *empty signifier*, so much so that it could be defined and redefined to incorporate a sectors ranging from peasants to middle classes in the name of a shared political objective.[309] While the FAU's use of the term recognized the importance of a broad alliance of protagonists, the organization still centered labor conflict as central to social transformation. This differed greatly from the strategy of the MLN-T. While the Tupamaros similarly recognized "all sectors of the poor" as revolutionary

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307 "La Teja: un barrio solidario," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, Montevideo, 28 May 1971, Uruguay National Library
308 Lilian Celiberti, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 16 October 2018
309 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, New York: Verso Books, 2005

protagonists, they did not have a clear role for the working class prior to the organization's Marxist-Leninist reformation while exiled in Chile in 1973.[310]

Finally, the worker-student coalition sometimes created tensions between both groups. Augusto Andrés recalls students' response to the campus closures in September 1968:

> In September Pacheco closed the middle schools, high schools, and the UTU so the youngsters invaded the faculties. Up until then, control of the campuses was the responsibility of unionized staff workers. The FER and ROE, each on their own, expropriated two rooms where furniture and files were kept in the Faculty of Medicine – they began to use them without consulting anyone. There, they began to use paint, cardboard, and papers. They kept gasoline there too and it got all dirty. Conflicts began to develop between them and unionized staff. In FUNSA it was something similar. The youngsters of the ROE began to operate in the main room and then occupied the Secretariat that is in the entrance—they often answered the phone and there were always a dozen of militants at a time. The FUNSA workers began to retreat. They would meet in the bar nearby, which was almost theirs anyways.[311]

Aguilar: Organización Popular Revolucionaria – 33 Orientales

In mid 1969, the FAU also founded the Revolutionary Popular Organization – *33 Orientales* (OPR-33), a small armed apparatus that began with roughly twenty militants. Unlike the ROE, all members of OPR-33 were also members of the FAU. More than a guerrilla wing, the OPR-33 served the function of a "military-technical apparatus," with clear targets and goals within existing campaigns and social conflicts. The branch modeled itself on the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), a confederation of small affinity groups that carried out direct action and political violence from within the anarcho-syndicalist National Labor Confederation, but its genealogy can be traced to turn of the century debates amongst the transatlantic Spanish-

[310] Clara Aldrighi, *Memorias de insurgencia: Historias de vida y militancia en el MLN-Tupamaros, 1965-1975* Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2009, pp. 252

[311] Augusto Andrés, "Un Testimonio de vida" (presentation), Taller Mayo 68 – 50 primaveras, Montevideo, May 2018

speaking anarchist community in the River Plate.[312] OPR-33 militants worked in cells of three to six members who all performed and contributed to the same specific function. Militants did not know other members outside of their cell for security purposes.[313]

The branch did not possess more than a dozen pistols and quintet of shotguns. and most had only practiced shooting on two or three occasions. However, members were well-versed in street fighting and often carried bats and pipes on them, which they used to combat scabs and members of fascist organizations in retaliation for attacks on workers, comrades, and family members. The FAU took a very strong stance against killing political opponents not so much out of moral opposition, but instead due to the misinterpretation of assassinations by the broader population. In other words, the social psychological impact of assassination tactics was bound to lose the support of the public, and such circumstance was never worth the risk.[314]

The FAU was very particular about who they recruited to join the OPR-33, which resulted in very low membership especially in comparison to the MLN-T. One militant recalls having recognized the unique makeup of the OPR-33 upon meeting members of the MLN-T while in jail, whose membership consisted of a mixed-bag of socialists, communists, liberals, and Christian Democrats, many of whom were drawn to the organization out of philanthropical

[312] By the beginning of the twentieth century, transatlantic state repression of organized anarchist movements lead to the rise in popularity of anarcho-individualism and anti-organizationalist anarchism. This anarchist current saw working class organizations as impotent and incapable of making revolution on their own, and thus envisioned small cells of anarchist affinity groups as harbingers of violence during moments of popular mobilizations. Tactics like bombings, vandalism, and assasinations earned anarchists a reputation as terrorists and provacateurs from outside of working class organizations. Militants like Antonio Laredo argued that only those unions who identified as anarchist should receive such violent intervention in their workplace struggles. Nevertheless, they maintained the position that the working class would be the primary protagonists in the revolution, but the anarchist militant's role was to escalate working class mobilization towards revolutionary insurrection by use of propoganda by the deed. Such normalization of violence would serve as preparation for the revolutionary moment, Pascual Muñoz, *Antonio Laredo: aletazos de tormentas*, Montevideo: La Turba Ediciones, 2017
[313] Internal documentation accounts for the existence of at least nine cells, "Lista de propuesta para integrar la dirección del sector," cir. 1972, Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive
[314] In one case, the directorate considered assassinating the police officer who shot FAU/ROE militant Heber Nieto in 1971, but they later called the action off after realizing it was too much driven by the ego, Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

interests.[315] Recruits were invited based on their trustworthiness rather than their knowledge and comprehension of the *en vogue* arguments around Left strategy and armed struggle. The FAU intentionally recruited fellow workers who demonstrated an affinity for militant direct action into the OPR-33. As a result, many recruits came from the UOESF and Graphic Artists Union. Working class members always made up at least half the militants in the organization.[316] Such emphasis on working class participation strongly distinguished the OPR-33 from the MLN-T, who drew their membership primarily from professional classes and students. A CIA report on the MLN-T declared, "The leaders of the Tupamaros are mainly members of the intelligentsia and young professionals. The great majority of recruits over the years probably have come from the ranks of university students... To some extent, it appears to be a case of sons and daughters rebelling against their fathers, as many of the terrorists come from relatively advantaged and at times prominent families."[317] While the CIA's pseudo-Freudian analysis may be better read as a projection of their own insecurities and internalized patriarchy, they accurately recognized the well-off background of a sizeable number of MLN-T militants.

Members of OPR-33 were held to high standards of discipline. The FAU acknowledged the potential for disequilibrium within the group as a result of building and maintaining armed cells. The Organization was highly cognizant of the broader New Left tendency to fetishize armed struggle as a means of transforming into a revolutionary subject, which often bred a sense of elitism among guerrilleros.[318] Juan Carlos Mechoso recalls seeing members of the MLN-Tupamaros flaunting their weapons in their pants while in public. The FAU saw such gestures to

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[315] Edelweiss Zahn, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 June 2017
[316] Augusto Andrés, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 June 2017
[317] CIA Office of National Estimates, "Varieties of Political Violence in Latin America: The Case of the Tupamaros in Uruguay," Washington DC, 3 January 1972
[318] Decolonial struggles throughout the Global South drew strong inspiration from Che Guevarra and Franz Fanon, who both conceived of a "new man" who could be liberated by violently confronting his oppressors.

be signs of vanity and individualism, or reproductions of an elitist system of values that insisted upon ascribing varying degrees of importance to different members of society.[319] Yet, the strict conduct code developed a more reclusive and private subjectivity. Lilian Celiberti recalls a clash between the militant profiles of those in *Alejandra*, who acted as public figures via the Tendencia, compared to *Aguilar*, who acted privately via OPR-33. She recalls transitioning from her role as intermediary from the former to the latter as causing a sense of bewilderment, as if they were two completely distinct political organizations.[320]

The OPR-33 divided militants into three different compartments based on their roles: *Cholas*, intelligence, and *Violencia FAI*. *Cholas*, or action groups, carried out high risk and tactically developed actions, primarily kidnappings and armed expropriations. These militants were the most competent in weapons handling. While most maintained normal lives as students or workers, some lived clandestine lives due to being wanted by authorities.

Intelligence groups performed information gathering to lay the foundations for the armed actions of *Chola*. Intelligence tasks often required months of astute investigation of physical spaces and people. Intelligence teams would take pictures, document schedules, locate nearby police and military outposts, identify emergency escape routes, and more. Intelligence gathering required militants to be competent performers due to the longevity of their investigative assignments. Militants would spend hours loitering at park benches, factory parking lots, sidewalk corners, and storefront verandas, where they had to act the part of an ordinary citizen going through an ordinary day's routine. Much of the intelligence work never resulted in an OPR-33 intervention, but remained on file for potential use in the future.

[319] Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 June 2017
[320] Lilian Celiberti, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 5 July 2017

Violencia FAI (VF) performed the task of planting, normalizing, and systematizing the role of violence in popular social conflicts. Formed within the OPR-33 two years after its foundation, the FAU directory saw the need to more directly bridge the armed apparatus with the mass front. VF militants often participated in the ROE and were responsible for the tactical escalation during rallies and/or strikes. They performed community self-defense, which could entail armed security for striking workers or physically confronting strikebreakers and police. As protagonists in their own workplace conflicts, they laid the foundation for future class-based violence and sought to plant the seed of a popular militia among the working classes. Lastly, VF militants assisted and complemented *Cholas* by performing reconnaissance and driving escape vehicles.[321]

Each cell had one *encargado* who was responsible for keeping contact with the directorate by way of an intermediary and for organizing information within the group. Cells elected their *encargado* based on a formal survey process, which included questions about each militants' ability to work in a team, discipline, capacity for self-criticism, organizational skills, demonstration of solidarity, and punctuality.[322] Although the Fomento assigned the cells with tasks based on the climate of union conflicts, cell members debated the responsibilities internally before consenting to carry them out. Cells often declined tasks based on their own self-perceived limitations, but Fomento simply assigned them to other cells instead. The consent process different dramatically with other armed organizations throughout the continent. For example, the

[321] Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Accion directa anarquista*, pp 189-90; Zelmar Dutra, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 13 June 2017

[322] "Lista de propuesta para integrar la dirección del sector," Montevideo, cir. 1972, Mechoso Family Archive

MLN-T permitted militants to debate within their own cell, but prohibited militants from disobeying orders from their superiors and punished them with sanctions for doing so.[323]

The Organization's anti-legality required a complex infrastructure and an extended support network of sympathizers. The OPR-33 surveyed all of its members and sympathizers to document the skills and resources they had to offer the organization. These profiles were hidden in a sealed water hole at a FAU safehouse on the outskirts of Montevideo in order to prevent risking leaking the participants' identities to state authorities. For example, sympathizers were contacted to provide handyman skills in order to construct secret storage sites within the walls or under the beds of homes.[324] Many sympathizers did not participate in the organization beyond offering their homes as future safe spaces for clandestine and/or wanted militants to take refuge. In order to maintain a "clean house" and low profile, they were asked to refrain from participating in any other organizational role. Sympathizers with higher social class positions were very important because of their networks within broader communities with means. In one example, an Economics professor linked the OPR-33 to a friend who owned a private aircraft, which was used to fly escaped prisoners across the river to Argentina.[325] The FAU also formed the Solidarity Commission, which kept in regular contact with imprisoned members and their families. Many of the OPR-33's small-scale robberies served the purpose of raising funds for imprisoned members or to offer stipends to family members and sympathizers who were sustaining clandestine militants.[326] Imprisoned members often communicated by means of

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[323] "Article 27: Inferior units will be subordinated to superior units. The directives from them [superiors] are obligatory for them [inferiors]. Failure to comply is a discipline violation. Similarly, the lower ranks within any organism should comply with any command from their superiors," "Reglamento" (circa 1968), In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, 2nd Edition, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 69

[324] Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 June 2017; Zelmar Dutra, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 13 June 2017; America Garcia, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 22 April 2017

[325] Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 June 2017

[326] Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 June 2017

pastillas, or pills. The encrypted notes were written cigarette wrapping papers and surrounded in nylon thread, then passed by mouth to visitors.[327] The FAU's attention to care work reflects an attempt to spread the responsibilities of gendered labor by taking them on as an organization.

Labor Action and Armed Struggle

A report titled "Algunos criterios para el trabajo a nivel de masas (1)" in the 19 May 1969 edition of *Cartas de FAU* spelled out the FAU's strategy and situated it within Left debates of the epoch. The document makes an argument specific to the conditions in Uruguay, where both rank-and-file union militancy and armed struggle had both obtained high levels of organization and achieved significant success. The piece directly criticizes the PCU, declaring:

> In spite of accumulated experiences and practical everyday evidence, there are still those that insist on presenting the two methods as exclusive and incompatible when really they are just different levels of the same struggle that can, and should be, convergent and harmonious. There are those who continue to create and artificial tension between mass action and armed struggle, union mobilization and direct action… Following such a trajectory one is destined to suggest, "The conditions are not there yet – we should stick to legal propaganda, nonviolent action, and electoral fronts." In the same spirit they also argue, "First we organize the Party." [328]

While legal means, such as electoral politics and aboveground press, had successfully won wage increases and workplace rights historically they were not enough to break the austerity politics of the moment. The Organization's insistence on recognizing the applicability and necessity of both tactics situates the its position among a broader New Left debate around the use of violence and popular mobilization, specifically those of the United States Civil Rights movement.[329]

[327] "OPR: Información pasada por pastilla," Montevideo, cir. 1972, Mechoso Family Archive
[328]"Algunos criterios para el trabajo al nivel de masas (1)," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 19 May 1969
[329]Movimiento Nacional de Liberacion – Tupamaros, "Partido o Foco, un falso dilema," In *Uruguay: La estrategia de los Tupamaros*, Buenos Aires: Los Libros, November 1971

Furthermore, the FAU argued that mass mobilization presented itself in various different stages and that a political organization's role was to escalate the class conflict by empowering base-level participants in popular organizations to act collectively and autonomously, or use direct action. They labelled the first stage as (1) agitation, or rallies, fliering campaigns, mural paintings, and protests to lay the foundation for a later confrontation. The second stage included (2) work stoppages and strikes, which served the purpose of making workplace-specific gains. Thirdly, workers participated in (3) street actions with low levels of confrontation to argued that unions varied in their capacity to move public opinion and galvanize workers, both within the acting union and more broadly, and to galvanize people around a combative strategy.[330] Finally, public participation in (4) direct action to defend workers from scabs, state authorities, and paramilitaries, radicalize the workplace-specific conflict, and enact damage on members of the owning class. Thus, the ROE and OPR-33 served as militant sectors within the labor movement that could be mobilized to escalate to stages three and four: the ROE laid the site-specific groundwork for dissident workers to coalesce around an organized union caucus and provided an infrastructure to link them with other dissident currents throughout the country; the OPR-33 provided the tools and skills necessary to move beyond labor-based tactics and towards normalizing, and preparing for, the confrontations characteristic of insurrection. The FAU condemned the PCU for exploiting any small gain for the labor as a victory for the working class and for using their hegemony among the Left to gather more Party support via electoral votes.[331]

[330] Public opinion remained a long time obsession of Uruguayan anarchists. In 1911, Montevideo's anarchist-lead streetcar union initiated a conflict that morphed into the country's first general strike. The streetcar workers insisted that the city's electric trolleys were a public good and invaluable "connector of public space." See Anton Rosenthal, "Spectacle, Fear, and Protest: A Guide to the History of Urban Public Space in Latin America," In *Social Science History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2000

[331] "Algunos criterios para el trabajo al nivel de masas (1)," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 19 May 1969

Finally, the strategy served as a compromise between the even further contrasting strategies of the MLN-T and PCU. The MLN-T sought to drive a wedge between the masses by forcing them to choose between joining the armed struggle or side complacently with counter-revolution. They envisioned themselves at the vanguard that was accelerating society into a new stage of armed struggle between the masses and the state, one in which previously used tactics of protest and striking were no longer adequate tools of resistance. Unlike the FAU, the MLN-T refused to enter into forums for debates among the Left; instead, they claimed that they could lead by example in their practice.[332] The MLN-T rejected the PCU's argument that foco tactics contradicted a mass organizing strategy. In a document titled, "Foco o partido – falso dilemma" (1972), they clarified their concept of armed propaganda, declaring, "The kidnapping of a hated person from the regime in power registers with the masses and transforms the life of the country more than any publication or public rally of the traditional Left." They drew from the examples of China, Russia, Cuba, and Algeria to shed light on historical cases in which parties organized for the creation of an armed apparatus. While the MLN-T accurately recognized a false dichotomy between mass politics and armed struggle, they fell short of offering a revolutionary strategy beyond arming the *pueblo*. Thus, their writings never resolve a contradiction between the vanguard role of the armed apparatus and the role of the masses.[333] The FAU saw their strategy as inevitably confining everyday people to the role of passive observers of MLN-T actions.

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[332] "Apuntes sobre la accion frente a las masas" (Documento III, 1968), In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, 2nd Edition, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 52

[333] MLN-T writings called for guerrilla leadership to be made up of militants with the highest levels of consciousness because they would be the ones to eventually take power and implement the revolutionary project. Unlike the FAU, the MLN-T did not have a political "party" under which to organize the masses. As a result, they joined the Frente Amplio for the 1971 election campaign, which brought about further contradictions between anti-legal armed struggle and legal institutional politics, "Foco o partido – falso dilemma," In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, 2nd Edition, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 87-91

1969: Meat Processing Plant and Bank Workers on Strike

On 18 April 1969, Minister of Commerce and Industry Jorge Peirano Faccio terminated 14,000 meat processing plant workers' right to two kilos of meat per person at the end of each shift, a prized benefit earned nationwide by striking workers in the 1940s and 50s. The decree was part of a larger plan to restructure the meat processing industry, including the liquidation of El Cerro's Frigorifico Nacional and breaking it into smaller, private industries in the interior of the country, where labor was easier to control and less organized. The plan entailed targeting other unionized meat processing plants nationwide, such as Comargen, Cruz del Sur, Sudamericano, Casablanca, and Anglo. Frigorifico Nacional workers responded with a strike and occupation under the coordination of the Autonomous Meatpackers Federation (FAC). They also set up an encampment in front of the Establecimientos Frigorificos del Cerro Sociedad Anonima (EFCSA), an El Cerro-based cooperative of 1,800 workers that collaborated with the government to demonstrate worker support for the new decree. Workers from Casablanca and Anglo, located in the interior cities of Paysandu and Fray Bentos respectively, marched to Montevideo to participate in the protest camp, encountering various waves of police violence along the way.

The campsite received support from thousands of sympathizers in the El Cerro-La Teja neighborhoods. The FAU's networks in local neighborhoods and middle schools played key a key role in offering solidarity to the strikers. The ROE implemented road blocks and *peajes*, or toll booths, to collect money from passing drivers. Students carried out daily expropriations of supermarkets and food delivery trucks to gather sustenance for the encampment. One report in *Cartas* claimed, “In the aisles of Manzanares, not a single food product remained.” Upwards of

30 people, militants and common people alike, participated in these frequent supermarket raids.[334] The occupation tactic required workers to hold space inside Frigorifico Nacional and thus led El Cerro's *amas de casas* to take on a unique role in the home and community. Their domestic labor took on new meaning as the backbone of labor strife. They frequented local fruit stand vendors to request food donations and cooked large meals from an *olla comunitaria* (communal pot) to feed their husbands. They also brought home laundry to assure their spouses had clean clothes. At night, they roamed the city pinning flyers and painting walls to provide updates of developments throughout the conflict. [335] Over 11 different unions affiliated with the *Tendencia Combativa* set up donation boxes in their union locals. The Railway Union (UF), which was site of the ROE-affiliated "Worker Dignity" caucus, refused to transport cattle and offered limited service throughout the interior in solidarity with strikers and to pressure the state-owned railway services into paying their withheld salaries from April and May.[336] When companies turned towards trucks to transport meat instead, two were mysteriously set on fire.[337]

Not only did striking workers face off against management, but they violently confronted police and strikebreakers as well. In early May, an armed coalition of MLN-T and OPR-33 militants organized alongside striking workers to establish a community self-defense network. Augusto Andrés recalls:

> There were moments that resembled an insurrection. There were enormous barricades made with cut-down trees set ablaze. Police on horseback forcing children off the street were confronted by mothers, who struck them with whatever they had in their hands […] At nighttime, students dressed in all black climbed the trunks of trees on Calle Grecia and launched steel pellets at police patrols with slingshots.[338]

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[334] "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 June 1969, pp. 254; "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 14 July 1969, pp. 263
[335] Doneschi Family, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 17 October 2018; Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 28 June 2017
[336] "Ferroviarios amplian sus paros", *El Popular*, Montevideo, 20 June 1969, Uruguay National Library
[337] "Son tiempos de pelea" In Cartas de FAU, Montevideo, 2 June 1969, pp. 237
[338] Augusto Chacho Andrés, *Estafar un banco—que placer!,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2009, pp. 60

Striking workers at Frigorifico Carrasco confronted police with bats and knives after being evicted from their encampment in front of the factory. When the police unit that lead the eviction operation took over their encampment and began using it as a base for further eviction operations, the workers laid siege on the site and reclaimed it for their own use. An unclaimed bomb blew up the front door of ex-police commissioner Besio Viña's home after he was rumored to be using his newly-opened bar as a recruitment center for scabs.[339]

Between May 15 and 18, the CNT held its First Ordinary Congress, which shed light on clear strategical differences between the CNT majority and *Tendencia Combativa.* The gathering was attended by 603 delegates representing 71 unions nationwide. The Tendencia introduced its May 1969 Plan of Action aiming to coalesce the organic expressions of solidarity with the meat processing plant workers into a coordinated plan to fight the broader grievances of workers nationwide, such as the wage freeze, mass layoffs, union busting, and salary cuts. The Tendencia announced their opposition to the COPRIN and argued for its abolition. The motion also called for the nationalization of the meatpacking industry and reinstatement of workers' right to 2 kilos of meat. Although the meat processing plant workers strike inspired solidarity actions across the nation, they were primarily directed towards aiding the site-specific struggle in El Cerro rather than fighting for a universal program that captured the entirety of the labor movement. Finally, the motion recognized a sincere disconnect between mobilization efforts of private versus public sector workers.[340] An AEBU motion echoed the Plan, declaring, "It is correct that we should not be using a general strike for the sake of it, but it remains incorrect to limit its use solely in the face of a military coup. Doing so puts workers in the defensive against a military intervention, a

[339] "Son tiempos de pelea" In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 2 June 1969, pp. 237
[340] "Mocion de la Tendencia al primer congreso de CNT," May 1969, In *La Historieta*, Montevideo, cir. 1974, pp. 12, Mechoso Family Archive

weapon of capitalism and imperialism."[341] The Plan was voted down 397 to 150 along caucus lines. Instead, the Congress resulted in a CNT-wide strike on June 11, which left Montevideo and the interior paralyzed for one day, but resulted in the arrest of upwards of 5,000 workers.[342]

While the Tendencia's motions did not win majority throughout the CNT, their combative spirit grew across industries where they maintained a stronghold. In early June, 80 percent of workers at FUNSA participated in elections to reaffirm Leon Duarte and ROE's List 1 at the union's helm. Workers selected List 1 with 52 percent of the total vote. The PCU-aligned List 5 frequently accused union leadership of "adventurism" in an intense campaign to change power, but they fell short with only 15 percent of the total vote. After the electoral victory, List 1 announced: "Workers should be united against management, the government, and capitalism… without opportunism and without demagoguery… Against sectarianism and dialog without struggle. For an offensive Plan of Action to confront capitalism and its reaction. For solidarity with all workers in conflict, with politically persecuted, and with political prisoners."[343]

On 16 June 1969, the Association of Bank Employees (AEBU) assembled for the largest gathering of locals in the union's history. The assembly agreed to begin partial rolling strikes at different bank locations to initiate a campaign for a break from IMF influence and support for the striking meat processing plant workers. AEBU President Hugo Cores, a member of the FAU directorate and Vice-President of the CNT, remained committed to unifying the CNT around an escalation strategy to break the wage freeze. The AEBU strike call arguably induced MPS for the second time in twelve months. On June 17 the Pacheco Areco government implemented Prompt

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[341] Asociacion de Bancarios del Uruguay, "A los compañeros delegados del 1er congreso de la CNT," Montevideo, May 1969, CEIU— Hector Rodriguez Archive
[342] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 382; "Algunos criterios para el trabajo a nivel de masas (2)," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 26 May 1969
[343] The rivalry also spawned two non-aligned lists, which won 7 percent and 25 percent of the vote respectively, "Se eligió la lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 16 June 1969

Security Measures (MPS), which enabled free range policing tactics against work actions and banned press freedom. The MPS censored major news outlets *Accion*, *Extra*, *BP Color*, and *El Diario* for 21 days and closed *El Popular* for one month. All autonomous distribution of fliers and pamphlets by everyday people was also prohibited. The Ministry of the Interior eventually reported the three weeks of work actions in an official statement published in press organs on 9 July 1969.[344]

The Prompt Security Measures initiated two weeks of illegalized work actions throughout the country, including wildcat strikes, sabotage campaigns, vandalism, and censorship defiance. The revolt saw over 500 detentions, including Jose D'Elia, the standing President of the CNT. Railway workers continued to refuse to transport meat. Bank workers intervened in the supply chain refused to process checks for the meat packing plants. On June 26, electrical grid workers at the state-owned UTE launched an industry-wide strike in reaction to militarization, a forced draft of striking workers in the industry. Montevideo was left without electricity for five hours after workers at the Batllé Thermoelectric Central sabotaged the grid—and rolling blackouts continued throughout the city for the next week. The El Cerro encampment continued to resemble a warzone with nightly clashes between strikers and police, often in the dark.[345] The strike drew a violent response on behalf of the state, including the opening of new detention

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[344] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 34; The censorship continued until the end of the year, during which the newspaper primarily reported on legalized strike actions based on communiques from the Ministry of the Interior. For the second half of 1969, the newspaper reported only 19 work conflicts nationwide. Of the 19 reported actions, seven were less than half day strikes by municipal workers (ADEOM) in the interior, and 5 were notifications of partial train services (AFE). The other seven work actions testified of lockouts in Tendencia-affiliated industries, such as glassworks, meat packing, and textiles. For example, textile workers at Hisisa and Hytesa responded to layoffs by organizing 45 and 80 day strikes respectively. Both maintained campaigns in face of a lockout.

[345] "Se Prohibe la Difusión de Noticias sobre Determinados Actos," *El Popular*, Montevideo, 9 July 1969, Uruguay National Library

center at the abandoned lighthouse station on Isla de Flores, a small island in the 21 miles offshore from Montevideo.

Journalists and graphic artists defied their new prescribed role as mouthpiece for the government. Rather than legitimize press censorship by continuing to production of Ministry of Interior reports, they implemented an industry-wide strike. Workers at *Extra* occupied the plant and used the printing machinery to barricade the doors. Police refrained from evicting them after warning that such procedure could destroy the company's machinery. At *El Pais*, the nation's largest newspaper and government sympathetic press outlet, a group of writers associated with the police reports defied the strike. Upon encountering them in the street, ROE militants chased the writers into the bathroom at Montevideo's famous Café Tasende, where they took refuge for two hours only to be beaten physically upon leaving.[346] In one evening, 200 journalists and graphic artists were arrested.[347] The enthusiastic participation of meat processing plant workers, AEBU, UTE, SAG, AFE, and COT demonstrated the CNT's potential to shut down the nation's most lucrative industries, and thus reinforced the FAU's call for a plan of coordinated action because the energy already present, but it remained isolated.

Montevideo's militarized environment led New York Governor and Alliance for Progress representative Nelson Rockefeller to cancel his visit to Montevideo and take refuge in Punta del Este instead. The days leading up to his visit saw over twenty attacks on US-owned private firms scattered throughout Montevideo. A Tupamaro cell set ablaze the Uruguayan headquarters of General Motors. Students and workers responded Rockefeller's visit by leading a caravan to Punta del Este to protest the visit. Waving the flags of Vietnam and Cuba, protesters denounced Rockefeller as a symbol of US aggression and imperialism abroad. The FAU showed their anti-

[346] "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 30 June 1969, pp. 254
[347] "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 14 July 1969, pp. 263

imperialist position by using red and black balloons to ascend a large banner proclaiming "Death to Empire" in Montevideo's Plaza de Libertad.[348]

On June 30, after two weeks of rolling work stoppages and solidarity strike actions, 8,500 bank employees at 105 bank locations initiated a 73 day strike demanding full nationalization of the banking sector and break from IMF restructuring, a minimum wage equivalent to basic living standards, rehiring of fired workers, and right to strike.[349] That day, delegates from AEBU, UOESF, FUS, COT, and FUM presented the CNT Representative Table with a proposal for a CNT-wide indefinite general strike on July 2. The Mesa voted against the proposal following the lead of the AUTE delegate Wladimir Turiansky, who announced that the union's leadership called off the electrical workers' strike earlier that same morning. Union leadership instead opted for a 36 hour strike, during which partial services would be sustained for the first 24 hours. They defended the decision based on the logic of a "wear down strategy."[350] UTE workers later testified that the decision was made unilaterally and without their consultation.[351] Martín Ponce de Leon, a GAU militant and AUTE officer at the Batllé Thermoelectric Central, exclaimed:

> We considered it inexplicable and incredibly erroneous that the AUTE delegation in the CNT voted against a confederation-wide general strike while its own membership was on strike. That united struggle of the whole labor movement, something that AUTE leadership argued didn't exist as a justification not to go on the offensive in 1968; that united struggle that thousands of UTE workers were waiting for in the streets and the jailcells… That united struggle never happened—not because there were not conditions nor reasons to do so, but because there were people who saw it as taciticly inconvenient. Instead, they preferred to wage a struggle that didn't include everyone—just AUTE—so the CNT limited itself to a solidarity strike.[352]

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[348] "Unanime rechazo a misionero imperial," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 9 July 1969, Uruguay National Library
[349] "Balance de nuestra lucha," *La Historieta*, Montevideo, cir. 1974, pp. 15, Mechoso Family Archive
[350] "Lo que no cambia," In *Cartas de FAU,* Montevideo, 7 July 1969, pp. 256
[351] Hugo Cores, *Uruguay hacia la dictadura, 1968-1973: La ofensiva de la derecha, la resistencia popular y los errores de la izquierda*, Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1999, pp. 30, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive
[352] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa,* Paris, 1983, pp. 32-33, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

Wladimir Turiansky, PCU militant and AUTE executive representative to the CNT, proclaimed that the strike had begun as a defensive mechanism to military inscription. While some sectors maintained a strike, many workers suffered detention and forced conscription after being arrested at their homes. He declared, "Knowing beforehand that this strike would be waged under completely unfavorable conditions… The AUTE Congress of Delegates, having reunited the evening of July 25, elected the only path: *the path of dignity*."[353]

The July 2 General Strike saw strong police repression against the nation's most combative industries. At FUNSA, striking workers were surrounded by a squadron of 40 military trucks and a small tank while holding a rally outside of the factory. Soldiers fired above the heads of workers to intimidate them, striking many of the valves that ran alongside the factory walls. That evening, the Metropolitan Guard detained the union's Secretary General Leon Duarte at his home. Workers responded the following morning by prolonging the strike in demand for Duarte's release. They initiated daily marches alongside workers from Cuopar, neighboring textile factory under worker occupation, with whom they barricaded streets and painted delivery trucks and buses with the slogan "Freedom for Duarte—Down the Measures!" After five days on strike, the conflict escalated into a month-long occupation of the plant.[354] In mid-July, the union submitted a letter to the CNT General Secretary reaffirming the June 30 Plan of Action.[355]

On July 15, an OPR-33 cell broke into the National Historical Museum and expropriated the flag of independence, leaving the following comunique:

> The pueblo responds by recovering the custody of the flag that once waved so gracefully. Under its motto the first independence was won: Freedom or death! Today, Uruguayans again face the despotism of the oligarchy. With the persecution of workers, with terror, by converting Isla de Flores into a jail, they

[353] Walter Turiansky, "Continua la respuesta a Hector Rodriguez: la huelga de UTE," In *Lucha y polémica sindical, 1968-1973 (II),* Montevideo: Centro Uruguay Independiente, pp. 56
[354] "Bastión de dignidad y coraje," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 14 July 1969, pp. 264
[355] "Los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU,* Montevideo, 28 July 1969, pp. 273

> try to silence our protest. Allied with the octopus of foreign interests, they take from the country and increase their fortunes. It is time for this flag to stop being used as a museum piece in the insulting possession of *vendepatrias*.
> Now the flag of "the 33" will wave again above the popular struggle.[356]

The same evening, a group of four OPR-33 militants broke into the Banco Commercial and poured acid on the IBM/360 motherboard computer, causing various explosions within five minutes. The group left a comunique declaring solidarity with the striking bank workers and denouncing the Banco Commercial's complicit role in finance imperialism via the IMF.[357]

On July 28, the Armed Forces occupied state-owned finance institutions nationwide to force them open and press strikers to the military.[358] Management and other bank officials maintained restricted services at some locations due to the absence of personnel, but many bank locations had remained closed for nearly a month. The Ministry of the Interior issued a notice of closure for AEBU locals nationwide and announced a search warrant for union leadership, who had been directing the strike clandestinely. Workers responded by targeting management's homes with vandalism and terror. In a series of attacks, they attempted to seal the front door shut with tar while launching Molotov cocktails at the windows. In the core finance district of Ciudad Vieja, roughly 330 bank tellers return to their posts for the workday. In the afternoon, a mob of students and strikers set two cars ablaze—the first belonged to City Bank's manager; the second belonged to the manager of the Collection Bank.[359]

The militarization of the finance district intensified throughout the week, during which the banking industry slowly resurrected back into production. On July 29, a caravan of military vehicles carrying detained bank tellers arrived from interior cities San Ramon and Treinte Tres.

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[356] "Desgravio a la bandera," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 21 July 1969, pp. 269
[357] Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Accion Directa*, pp. 207-208
[358] "Rige la militarización de los bancos," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 28 July 1969, Uruguay National Library
[359] "Arriba," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 4 August 1969, pp. 278

Authorities increased the number of Montevideo tellers to 427 after mandating they work in the capitol's banks or face conscription. On July 30, the number increased to 576 workers. Feeling pressured, strikers and students set out to vandalize and set fire to various bank manager's homes. The unrest sparked Undersecretary of Industry Washington Cataldi to offer for mediation on behalf of the state. On Thursday July 31, AEBU and Uruguayan Bank Association representatives met and agreed upon a settlement favorable to the union. However, Cataldi held off on formalizing the agreement with hopes that the strike would wind down without implementing a new contract. He hoped that numbers of strikebreakers and detainees would increase into the weekend to break the strike's momentum. Yet, their numbers decreased and labor combativity continued to escalate. On August 1, hospital staff (FUS) and textile workers (COT) held solidarity strikes. Protesters in Ciudad Vieja slashed bus tires and used the stalled vehicles as makeshift barricades to prevent transit in the Financial District. The strike continued the following Monday after the weekend passed without any legal headway.[360]

In the first half of August, roughly 4700 bank workers gathered in separate meetings to discuss strategies for maintaining the strike. They re-evaluated tactics of communicating with strikebreakers. While they previously used shame and confrontation, such as public tarring and circulation of blacklists with personal information, they decided to do more outreach. This plan, called Rescue Operation, saw a strong decrease in strikebreaking at over a dozen banks, including City and Banco do Brasil. Workers rotated calling in sick *en masse*, leaving banks with only two or three employees on hand and thus forcing bank closures due to understaffing.[361] Strikers continued attacks on bank property. At the Banco Commercial, a team of workers

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[360] "Arriba," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 4 August 1969, pp. 278

[361] "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 11 August 1969, pp. 285; "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 18 August 1969, pp. 289

ransacked administrative offices. They dragged out furniture and files cabinets and set them ablaze in broad daylight. In the span of one evening, four banks in Montevideo were lit on fire. University students made play out of breaking bank windows and throwing Molotov cocktails between classes.[362] In early September, President Pacheco Areco called for the militarization of private banks as well.

On September 9, the MLN-Tupamaros kidnapped Gaetano Pellegrini Giampietro, Secretary of the Uruguayan Bank Association and Head Director SEUSA, the editorial firm for both *El Diario* and *La Mañana.* Pellegrini, whose father served as Minister of Labor in Benito Mussolini's government, acted as a spokesperson for management's hardline stance throughout the conflict. The guerrillas demanded settlement favorable to the workers within 48 hours.[363] In response, Minister of Labor Jorge Sapelli shared news of secret negotiations between the government, Carlos Gomez, and CNT President José D'Elía that commenced days prior. The announcement accompanied a call for an AEBU general assembly to discuss a potential settlement. Carlos Gomez, who represented the PCU-affiliated minority caucus within the union, argued that settlement offers were growing progressively worse since July 26. He claimed that continuing the strike would at least preserve the union's legal status and reinstate all conscripted workers. AEBU leadership argued that settlement maintained IMF control over Uruguay's financial system and abandoned the 181 workers who lost their jobs during the conflict. They accused José D'Elía and Carlos Gomez of misrepresenting the membership base. On July 12,

[362] "Arriba los que luchan," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 11 August 1969, pp. 285
[363] Pellegrini Giampietro was released after 73 days in captivity. His friends paid 15 million pesos to a workers' hospital and primary school as ransom.

bank employees voted to settle and return to work the next day. For Hugo Cores and other Tendencia militants, the maneuver caused an irreparable loss of trust.[364]

The meat processing plant workers strike ended with the permanent closure of El Cerro's main source of employment, Frigorifico Nacional, and initiated an extended process of closing down all other meat processing plants in the neighborhood. Management relocated 900 plant workers to new firms in the interior, where they hoped to take advantage of a rural population desperate for work and lack of union presence. The plant's closure lead to a six month conflict for worker compensation and reimbursement for the factory's auctioned machinery. Military personnel established a presence at packinghouses throughout the country to ensure their productivity and truck drivers transported the butchered meat in lieu of rail workers' refusal to do so.

Conclusion: A Head-On Collision?

By the end of the conflicts, eight hundred labor organizers were detained and 5,600 workers were imprisoned.[365] Workers in both unions suffered harsh blows on behalf of management and the state. Of 8,500 total bank workers, upwards of one thousand bank employees were detained throughout the conflict. On 23 September 1969, authorities detained Hugo Cores after both major strike campaigns were in full retreat. Cores and other members of the AEBU leadership were harshly tortured.[366] Police ordered hundreds of electrical workers to

[364] Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 387-8; Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 100
[365] Raúl Zibechi, "La dignidad en la acción colectiva: centenario de Hectór Rodríguez," In *Brecha*, Montevideo, 10 August 2018
[366] Like in June 1968, many striking workers were again drafted for the military, Howard Handelman, "Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1983, pp. 383

stand for 18 hours in front of the UTE headquarters; one UTE worker died while in prison.[367] Two thousand bank workers were marked deserters for evading military conscription and 181 bank employees remained without their jobs.[368] The repression of AEBU rank-and-file affected the April 1970 union elections, which saw participation from nearly six thousand workers who selected the PCU-affiliated *Lista 3* by a 154 vote margin. Election participation fell by 25 percent less compared to the previous year – many of the more radical workers remained in prison while more conservative workers turned away from union participation in general.[369] Dozens of union officers began living clandestinely by the end of the year. According to MLN-T commander and ex-bank worker Eleuterio Fernandez Huidobro, "The 1969 bank strike was one of the largest and best organized in the history of the country."[370]

The 1969 conflicts provide the clearest example of divulging positions among the Left at the time.[371] The May 15 Plan of Action best reflected the Tendencia position. It advocated for a coordinated and prolonged strategy of escalation grounded in an ethos of solidarity unionism. The Tendencia emphasized broad support for the conflict—the Metropiltan Cathedral offered refuge during a hunger strike and Samuel Lichtenztejn, an economics professor, offered frequent workshops for strikers to learn about the IMF.[372] The Pacheco Areco government's poor handling of the conflicts created a political crisis within the Colorado Party—congressmen Zelmar Michellini and Alba Roballo left the party and General Liber Seregni retired from his

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[367] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 383
[368] "Balance de nuestra lucha," *La Historieta*, Montevideo, circ. 1972, pp. 15, Mechoso Family Archive
[369] "Bancarios: la lista No. 3 obtuvo mayoría de votos," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 17 April 1970, Uruguay National Library
[370] Eleutorio Fernandez Huidobro, *El Tejedor: Hector Rodriguez*, Montevideo: Editorial TAE, 1995, pp. 289
[371] Eduardo Rey Tristan, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 385
[372] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 100

position in protest.[373] All three soon after participated in the formation of a Left electoral coalition alongside the PCU in 1971.

On July 16, FAU militant and UOESF Secretary Washington Perez drafted a letter to the CNT Executive Board on behalf of the union declaring that the only way to put a stop to wage freezes, state repression, massive layoffs, and ramped poverty was to work towards coordinate a CNT-wide indefinite general strike. He recognized workers' autonomous tactical escalation among PCU-led unions, like AUTE, AFE, and postal workers, and critiqued the PCU leadership for bypassing internal processes to put an end to strikes, such as in the cases AEBU and AUTE.[374] The Tendencia saw these calls for de-escalation as undermining the full potential of a labor federation by returning to a strategy of site-specific isolated conflict which could at best produce spontaneous action. But the PCU saw the 1969 strikes as distracting energy away from building an electoral project.

Hector Ramirez (GAU) and Mario Acosta (PCU) publicly debated the diverging positions of the Tendencia and PCU in six month-long exchange. Ramirez, who published his position in the New Left journal *Marcha*, claimed that support for the 1969 Plan of Action was a "moral imperative" and a warranted response to keep up with government repression "punch for punch." He accused Acosta and the PCU of offering mixed messages. On one hand, the Party emphasized caution and claimed that an indefinite general strike call would unleash the violent full force of the state apparatus. Acosta warned that labor and political organizations could lose legal status, a concern that solely occupied the PCU as the sole legal entity on the Left. However, the Party's rhetoric offered false myths of hope and invincibility, claiming, "No force is strong

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[373] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 100
[374] From *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 28 July 1969, pp. 273

enough to stop a united *pueblo*—neither MPS, nor strong governments, nor military takeovers, nor dictatorships."[375]

Acosta, who published a series of rebuttals in *El Popular*, proclaimed that the entire year of labor activity could not be reduced to the 20 days of mobilization in late June. He recognized that the government had implemented Prompt Security Measures for a combined nine months out of the year which created a quotidian feeling of shock amongst workers, leaving them unable to sustain the level of resistance seen in the midyear. Moreover, Acosta emphasized that the working classes and CNT had not yet reached a position to take institutional political power and thus impose the necessary structural reforms to ensure successful transformation.[376]

The GAU organ *Lucha Popular* further reflected on the shortcomings of 1969 conflicts also blaming the PCU majority within the CNT, declaring:

> The losses suffered by some important sectors of the labor movement have been consequences of the hard lived battles and the erroneous orientation of the majority leadership of the CNT. The advances that they have produced in the construction of the Tendencia have the capacity to transform into a real direction, with a plan to wage an offensive battle, in the CNT program.[377]

However, the article continued by hinting at the organization's own move towards an electoral strategy. The conflicts led the GAU to realize that the majority of workers followed the electoral strategy of the PCU and thus felt the need to reflect and reform their own positions. The public debate between Héctor Rodriguez and various representatives of the Communist Party, including Mario Acosta, César Reyes Daglio (SAG), and Wladimir Turiansky (AUTE) continued into

[375] Hectór Rodriguez, "La táctica sindical en 1969," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 6 February 1970 reprinted in *Lucha y polémica sindical, 1968-1973: ¿Cómo luchar por el programa?,* Documentos Sindicales No. 4, Montevideo: Centro Uruguay Independiente, 2012

[376] Mario Acosta, "La verdadera faz de 1969 y la tactica C.N.T.," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 23 January 1970; Mario Acosta, "La definición política popular y la táctica de la C.N.T.," In *El Popular*, Montevide, 20 February 1970 reprinted in *Lucha y polémica sindical, 1968-1973: ¿Cómo luchar por el programa?,* Documentos Sindicales No. 4, Montevideo: Centro Uruguay Independiente, 2012

[377] "Lucha Popular," Montevideo, 9 March 1970 from Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa,* pp. 15

February 1973.[378] In calling for a conclusion to the debate, Rodriguez identified a repeated trend in Reyes's rhetoric – he frequently distinguished between the CNT leadership and "combative currents" or "left militants."[379]

The 1969 conflicts marked a clear division between the CNT majority and the Tendencia Combativa. This diverging strategical vision would play out repeatedly over the next four years. The core tension revolved around the question of legality. Whereas the PCU aimed to maintain its legal status, Tendencia-alligned organizations already illegalized and thus did not respect legal rulings nor state institutions. Moreover, the MLN-T and OPR-33 interventions in the conflicts showed the possibility of coordinating labor conflict and armed struggle. Hugo Cores recalls:

> What set [FAU] apart from the PCU in the everyday life of unions had to do with our conception that gave credence to workers' capacity for rebellion and theirs which saw political action as channeling support for elections… For us, if the legitimacy of the capitalist state relied on violence—which, beginning in 1968, we are talking about a constitutional dictatorship—our practices should not express any fetishization of legality. It was the state that violated the law… The struggle, as we saw it, was to remain firm against an ongoing persuasion and coercion—the violent deception that upholds domination.[380]

[378] For full debate see *Lucha y polémica sindical, 1968-1973: ¿Cómo luchar por el programa?,* Documentos Sindicales No. 4, Montevideo: Centro Uruguay Independiente, 2012

[379] Héctor Rodríguez, "Cierre de esta polémica," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 15 February 1973 reprinted in *Lucha y polémica sindical, 1968-1973: ¿Cómo luchar por el programa?,* Documentos Sindicales No. 4, Montevideo: Centro Uruguay Independiente, 2012

[380] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 99, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

CHAPTER 4:
¿TIEMPO DE LUCHA? ¿TIEMPO DE ELECCIONES?
Peripheral Conflicts and Election, 1970-71

In the latter half of 1970, the OPR-33 embarked on a series of expropriation operations to raise necesarry funds for sustaining an armed apparatus, by which roughly a dozen militants had already begun living clandestinely. The operations targeted wealthy citizens and enterprises rather than banks due to heightened security measures. Of the five operations, only one terminated successfully. On 29 December 1970, the OPR-33 coordinated three simultaneous actions under the name Operation Apretesis. Militants entered the homes or offices of three national elites and forced them to sign off on checks. Two of the actions failed: one ended in numerous arrests and the other ended in a shootout and subsequent retreat. The successful action was carried out against Cándido Eizmendi, who signed off on a check for 14 million pesos.[381]

One of the failed operations sought to force a signature from Pedro R. Core, a right-wing banker rumored to sit below a portrait of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in his office. With falsified identification cards in pocket, militants entered into the Uruguay chamber of Commerce and visited Core's office on the sixth floor. To ease entry into the office, the militants had fabricated a story in which Washington Perez, an ignorant yet bossy *latifundista* from the interior, had arrived to Montevideo eager to purchase urban real estate. Perez was accompanied by Selva Artigas, who played his sister, and Augusto Andrés, who played his financial adviser. Ivonne Trias kept remained on the street to keep lookout while the other three cell members ventured inside.

Upon exiting the elevator the militants were greeted by two janitors who had never been present at that hour during the previous reconnaissance visits. They stared firmly as the trope

[381] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 300

moved down the hall. Clearly, they were aware of something. After picking up on the janitors' strange vibes, Perez suggested aborting the operation and returning to the elevator. Andrés pressed the button to go down, but it was blocked. Police arrived to the scene and arrested all three militants. They were soon after charged with possession of falsified documents.[382]

On 6 January 1971, Augusto Andrés arrived at Punta Carretas prison where he was greeted by a dozen fellow imprisoned FAU militants. Andrés' comrades hurried to update him of their recent political falling out with the MLN-Tupamaros. His heart felt heavy upon hearing the news. While passing time in the patio the next day, Andrés encountered Eleuterio "El Ñato" Fernández Huidobro, an old friend and member of the MLN-T. They greeted one another with a hug and immediately began smiling and joking. The two had developed an amicable friendship beginning in 1969, when both organizations initiated weekly coordinating meetings in a Barrio Buceo safehouse. The two militants would rideshare and often arrive early to the house. Passing the time, they shared mate and chatted about topics beyond the purview of political strategy, like recent barfights and who played the best *tambora* among their Afro-Uruguayan neighbors. Gerardo Gatti would finally arrive amid the conversation struggling to connect to the content to the class struggle. Militants from both organizations resentfully observed the conversation—subordinate members of the MLN-T were surprised to watch one of their leaders break character to interact with a member of a rival group. After the chat, Andrés declared his intention to rupture the silence between both two groups, but other FAUistas warned him of the dangers of getting too close and leaking too much information. Two weeks prior, imprisoned MLN-T leadership announced the group's adhesion to the *Frente Amplio*, or Broad Front (FA), a Left electoral coalition centered around the PCU and Christian Democratic Party. While the FAU

[382] Augusto Chacho Andrés, *Estafar un banco—que placer!,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2009, pp. 63-65

remained loyal to an anti-legal strategy, the MLN-T was moving towards a ceasefire and participation in above-ground politics. Andrés recalls, "But they were right—I returned to our anarchist circle."[383]

Throughout 1970 and 1971, small and newly-formed unions waged a series of fights that were synergized and triangulated via the ROE. Roughly 90 percent of industrial firms in Uruguay employed less than 20 workers.[384] By midyear, overall cost of living had increased 105 percent, while COPRIN authorized private sector salary increases by only 50 percent.[385] Workers in some industries saw upwards of 31 percent reductions in real wages.[386] Others feared unemployment as they witnessed the management gradually reduce personnel until eventually closing down factories.[387] In El Cerro, unemployment reached 25 percent in 1971.[388] While owners of small and medium-sized scrambled to maintain profit margins, workers challenged massive layoffs, backpay, wage cuts, and union busting. Their remains a historiographical gap between 1969, the year of the AEBU and FAC conflicts, and 1972, the "year of fury" which saw the highest quantity of labor actions in the country's history. Meanwhile, the years 1970 and 1971 are remembered for the successful formation the Broad Front, an electoral coalition that laid claim to being the formal (and legal) representative of workers' interests. While the CNT majority directed efforts towards this end goal, they further neglected to develop an offensive Plan of Action. Moreover, their inability to split energies between the electoral and syndical fronts, they

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[383] Augusto Andrés, "Flashes de otros tiempos," In *Brecha*, Montevideo, 12 August 2016

[384] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 374

[385] "Asi entiende la 'estabilizacion' el gobierno," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 June 1970, Uruguay National Library

[386] "Textiles: En 14 meses se redujo en 31% el valor real del salario," In *El Popular*, Montevideo21 April 1970, Uruguay National Library

[387] "Everfit: Todo el personal quedará desocupado," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 20 May 1970, Uruguay National Library

[388] "La desocupacion invade los barrios del Cerro y La Teja," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 29 April 1971, Uruguay National Library

left an opening for the FAU and other Tendencia-affiliated lists to gain strength within the labor movement, especially amongst small, newly-formed unions waging battles with management for recognition. While the period saw three general strikes, it did not see any CNT-wide coordination in the nation's largest industries like in 1968 and 1969. However, the period proved key grounding solidarities and developing shared praxis amongst workers from small and medium-sized firms. Moreover, the gap between the public and private sector's combativeness grew even larger after a 25 June 1970 law that recognized all state employees as providers of "essential services" and prohibited them from striking.[389]

From 1970 to 1971, Uruguayan workers carried out at least 120 work actions. The two-year period saw at least 53 occupations, of which 42 were carried out by Tendencia-affiliated unions. The period also saw at least 56 strikes lasting more than three days and 36 strikes lasting more than 10 days. Of the former, 45 were carried out by Tendencia-affiliated unions; of the later, 27 were carried out by Tendencia-affiliated unions. Workers at Decovid and Hermanos Carino printing press (SAG) struck for over 7 months, including a plant occupation at the former; six foreign-owned medical laboratories (SIMA) occupied their plants for over 80 days; COT called industry-wide occupations and two weeks of rolling strikes; Zurzul, a cargo ship, remained docked four days in Montevideo's port after being occupied by workers demanding nearly two years of backpay. Despite their alignment with the CNT majority, workers at five different metallurgy plants (UNTMRA) occupied for over 20 days. After management closed the Erosa metallurgy factory due to accumulating 110 million pesos in debt, workers occupied for ten months and eventually experimented with self-management for 25 days while demanding the plant's nationalization. The period saw four other experiments with autogestion, including

[389] Law 13.730, "Cercenan derecho de huelga," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 25 June 1970, Uruguay National Library

multiple days of free train transport (UF) and health services (FUS). After management fired a union delegate of the Lanasur textile factory (COT), workers defied a lock-out by putting the plant under worker control. After management at Bio, Gramon, Atenas, and Bayer failed to comply with a COPRIN ruling in favor of wage increases, medical laboratory workers (SIMA) at all four sites implemented autogestion. Graphic artists at the Catholic news organ BP Color (SAG) printed various editions under worker control amidst a three week dispute, during which they utilized the daily editions as a mouthpiece for their perspective regarding the conflict.

In a March 1971 internal document, the FAU affirmed the rising trend of direct action as reflective of workers' growing distrust of political institutions and political parties capability to resolve their increasing economic and social problems. The document proclaimed:

> At the level of mass action, the rising conflicts are confirming the validity of popular direct action as an effective response to the situation that everyday people find themselves in at the current historical conjuncture… Neither political repression nor reform efforts have proven capable of restraining mass action and pacifying it in turn for an "electoral exit," a proposal offered from above which claims to offer "solutions" for everyday problems. The gradual radicalization of the class struggle exceeds those previously seen… and they impede the construction of the "electoral peace" that reformists want to offer while at the meantime they continue to use repressive measures.[390]

The growing number of workplace conflicts drew inter-union solidarity. Workers and ROE militants found refuge in the UOESF local, where Tendencia-affiliated locals met to organize over two dozen conflicts. In March 1970, over 300 workers at Ghiringhelli plant concluded a two month conflict with rolling strikes and occupations. The conflict saw a two week long occupation after management announced the layoff of over half the workforce. Although the plant's workers recently voted to replace the longstanding Tendencia-alligned leadership with a CNT majority list, they looked towards the old guard for orientation in the face of management's

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[390] Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, Tomo IV, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 166

offensive.[391] FUNSA and BAO workers occupied their respective plants in solidarity, while ROE militants gathered students and community members from La Teja, El Cerro, and Colon to set up toll booths in front of the plant in support. In mid 1970, workers at Decovid used the UOESF local to lay the infrastructure for a six month long factory occupation. Workers frequently demonstrated gestures of solidarity that transgressed Left divisions. For example, BAO workers donated 300 thousand pesos to 150 striking workers at the occupied Erosa metallurgy factory. Local merchants and neighbors also helped sustain the occupation by donating food and household goods.[392]

Inter-union coordination proved most fruitful for organizing boycotts. During a three month conflict at ATMA plastic factory, over ten different unions gathered in the local to declare a boycott of the company's products at their workplaces – FUNSA workers further crippled production by refusing to deliver essential rubber products to the plant.[393] In August 1970, ROE militants organized a boycott of Pepsi products to support 450 workers carrying out two months of rolling strikes and plant occupations in opposition to layoffs.[394] The ROE's strength in in the railway union (AFE) proved especially impactful due to the firm's reliance on national infrastructure to transport their products. In October 1971, ROE militants set fire to the Divino mattress storefront in Barrio Sur. Plant workers remained on strike for eight months after management suspended 23 workers for refusing to comply with a bi-monthly payment plan – railway workers supported by boycotting shipment of Divino mattresses throughout the country.

[391] "La gente no está quieta," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 2 March 1970, Mechoso Family Archive
[392] "Expresión de militante solidaridad," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 June 1970, Uruguay National Library; "Obreros de Erosa enfrentan el hombre en sus hogares," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 30 January 1970, Uruguay National Library
[393] "Atma: Hay firmeza y mucha solidaridad," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 12 December 1970, Uruguay National Library
[394] Hugo Cores, *Uruguay hacia la dictadura, 1968-1973: La ofensiva de la derecha, la resistencia popular y los errores de la izquierda*, Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1999, pp. 51, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

The conflict terminated in favor of the workers, who gained management's recognition of the union, full staff rehiring, and backpay.[395]

At Portland, a cement mill owned by US-based Lone Star Cement Corporation, workers occupied and held management hostage for one week in the plant's office. Worker's recently formed a splinter union in 1968 after discovering a bribing network linking union leadership and management. In October 1971, workers discovered the presence of four infiltrators from the US-backed Uruguayan Institute for Sindical Education (IUES) and responded by purging them from the union. In demand for healthcare and updated machinery at the 75 year old plant, workers first initiated a slow-hand strike cutting production to 10 percent; three days later they occupied the plant using a gasoline tank truck as a barricade. During the next four days, AFE conductors slowed trains when passing the occupied plant and allowed workers onboard to distribute fliers and circulate a donation box. The week-long conflict terminated in a settlement favorable to workers' demands, including an intensive health inspection, wage increase, holiday bonus, and retirement severance after 25 years.[396]

The frequent and sustained conflicts, inter-union solidarity, autonomous labor action, and community solidarity demonstrated the labor movement's swift recovery after the nation's most lucrative industries suffered defeats in 1968 and '69. This chapter explores a handful of labor conflicts in small- and medium-sized industries. Whereas the Uruguayan left shifted focus towards an electoral strategy in preparation for the November 1971 elections, the FAU continued to emphasis everyday people's protagonism as the sole means of creating power. While the CNT majority viewed labor action, especially in smaller industries, as peripheral to a campaign

[395] "En Divino: todos o ninguno," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 20 October 1971, Uruguay National Library
[396] "La lucha decidio: la patronal fue derrotada," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 30 October 1971, Uruguay National Library

strategy, the increasing number of labor conflicts and growing labor militancy proved that workers would not be pacified by the prospect of an electoral victory. Moreover, the COPRIN's ambivalent role in the face of management's growing antagonism showed state institution's limited capacity to resolve a growing number conflicts induced by economic crisis. Instead, workers confronted their realities by utilizing a variety of direct action tactics that were coordinated alongside other unions.

"In Support TEM: Direct Action at Every Level"

In mid-1970, a medium-size factory of metalworkers organized a firm campaign that drew participation from various Tendencia-affiliated unions while drawing little attention from PCU labor officers. On 16 April 1970, Minister of Industry Dr. Julio Sanguinetti visited the Canadian and US-owned TEM kitchen appliance factory in the Montevideo neighborhood of Maroñas.[397] Sanguinetti arrived with a team of photographers, who sought to capture images of the plant's metallurgical workers greeting him with warmth while steadily at work. The TEM management mandated workers to clean the floors and machines of the factory floor to prepare for the spectacle. Upon the Minister's arrival, a voice shouted "*hora*" to announce a work stoppage. All 500 plant workers responded by leaving the factory and refusing to pose for photographs. One worker described the factory floor as having taken on a "deathly silence," in which the Minister and his crew anxiously navigated the space searching for an appropriate site to capture a photograph. The TEM management responded by suspending all 500 workers for six days without pay. When workers returned to the plant, management presented them with a

[397] TEM was owned by foreign enterprises Castleton and Hoover.

written letter of apology and required each worker to sign it before starting the shift, but most of the workers refused—management responded with massive layoffs.[398]

In an attempt to divide the workforce and curb unrest, management accepted all but 39 workers back to the plant, all belonged to the Sindicato Autonomo de Obreros de TEM (SAOT). However, the numbers began shifting as management rejected the union's various requests for COPRIN mediation for nearly six weeks. In late June, management announced rehiring of all but 135 workers; on July 2, management offered six months of temporary on-call labor to 210 workers.[399] The SAOT launched a 112 day strike under the call "All, or no one!" and the ROE supported by organizing a boycott of TEM products. The boycott called for all commercial vendors to refuse to sell TEM products; for consumers to decline purchasing them; and for media outlets to decline company advertisement and to refuse management a speaking platform. Students raised money for striking workers and their families by setting up tollbooths in front of the University of the Republic. Workers associated with the Tendencia Combativa demonstrated solidarity through workplace sabotage. Various radio station broadcasters contacted the strikers to notify them that they would no longer offer TEM advertising space on their shows. Workers at Acodike, a gas company, blocked the shipment of 3,000 propane tanks to the TEM factory. Bank tellers initiated a slowdown strike on all TEM-related transactions, refusing to process them for weeks at a time and thus delaying profit revenues.[400] Bus drivers responsible for the 109A route redirected their journeys to avoid stopping in front of the TEM factory.[401]

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[398] *Cartas de FAU,* Montevideo, 27 July 1970, Mechoso Family Archive
[399] "Mantiene TEM los 210 despedidos," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 7 July 1970,Uruguay National Library
[400] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, 1983, pp. 42-46, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive
[401] During the first days of the strikes, police forces launched stones at buses from inside the TEM factory due to the CUTCSA union's strong showings of solidarity, including horn-honking and banner-waving upon passing by, "Omnibus: no se detienen en TEM," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 7 June 1970, Uruguay National Library

After 100 days of striking, the conflict saw a wave of tactical escalation. On July 17, ROE militants took on a protagonist role and launched a sabotage campaign against kitchen vendors who dismissed the boycott. In a coordinated effort, fifty pairs of ROE militants entered into stores on Av. 8 de Octubre emulating newly wedded couples. While one member distracted the retail workers by expression interest in certain stovetops and ovens, the other snuck away to pour acid into TEM appliances or paint them with the words, "Fabricated by novice strikebreakers." The vandalism was accompanied by a public propaganda campaign that painted "Do not buy TEM products - they might burst" on walls throughout the Montevideo, hinting at the potential for malfunction due to the damage induced by the acid. By the afternoon, some kitchen setups began smoking and TEM management. Police responded to the vandalism by arresting over a dozen of the most active SAOT workers in a wave of home raids two days later. The ROE responded by developing a prison solidarity commission in collaboration with families of the detained. Students escalated the public shaming campaign by covering blocks Av. 18 de Julio with union propaganda, also leading to various detentions for breach of the peace.

On the morning of July 21, workers at nearby factories initiated a work stoppage and convened at the intersection of Av. 8 de Octubre and Av. Corrales, where they met up for a rally alongside workers from FUNSA and COT. After a series of orations, the mob marched down Av. 8 de Octubre towards the city center, but eventually met a police barricade after preceeding only a few blocks. Confined to the street where the conflict initiated, distraught students and workers attacked various vendors who continued to sell TEM products, including Bazar Lamar, where marchers dragged stove sets into the street and set them on fire to use as a barricade; others tossed molotov cocktails into the store and set it ablaze, igniting a fire that required two fire crews to extinguish. Solidarity marches took place in various ROE strongholds, such as Zona

Norte, Sayago, Carrasco, Colón, and Peñarol, and 28 retail workers at various appliance stores declared a solidarity strike. In one solidarity march, an OPR-33 militant experimented with a newly encountered molotov cocktail recipe, which he used to set ablaze one manager's car while parked in front of the TEM administrative offices.[402] As street violence escalated, a dozen TEM workers took refuge in the United Methodist Church and initiated a hunger strike. A banner hung at the doors of the church, reading "Then they spat in the face, and punched him and others slapped him (Matthew 26-27)."[403] The ROE saw the importance of maintaining a delicate balance between fighting management and winning public opinion. In this case, workers used non-violent protests tactics and spirituality to appeal to the public morality.

On July 24, students at the Instituto Alfred Vásquez Acevedo, Montevideo's centrally located and largest high school, set up barricades on Av. 18 de Julio denouncing a recently announced state audit of the public school system and announcing solidarity with TEM strikers. Upon drawing attention from police, the high school students took refuge in the University of the Republic, where they linked with more strike sympathizers. The skirmishes continued throughout the morning, resulting in more vandalism of TEM products. The march culminated in a rally inside the Methodist church, where speeches were read by the head priest, hunger strikers, a student, and one worker from FUNSA, who declared:

> And there are no conditions? And there are no conditions for fighting?... Working every day in the unions, organizing the resistance, acting with and among the people...and acting out of practical solidarity in model struggles like that being waged by the workers of TEM, we are starting to pave a new path. With their lives, their struggle, and their sacrifice for the cause of the people, Che Guevara and Camilo Torres show us the path, that with the everyday militancy we are

[402] One OPR-33 militant recently encountered an expose report on the Vietcong, in which the author included a recipe for a molotov cocktail used by guerrilla fighters. The recipe required gasoline and coconut oil, which was supplemented with coconut soap instead. creating quite the spectacle as firefighters took two hours to put out the flames, Augusto Chacho Andrés, pp. 97; *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 27 July 1970, Mechoso Family Archive

[403] Maria Esther Gilio, "TEM: Union en la lucha," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, July 1970, pg 15, Uruguay National Library

> going to follow. And like this, fighting, as said by Buenaventura Durruti, labor militant from Spain, “We will make a new world because we carry it in our hearts.”[404]

The speech directly challenged the PCU's preference for reformism, in which party leaders often labeled direct action tactics as "adventurist" and "misguided." Moreover, the speech highlights the FAU's syncretism Left political symbols and figures, referencing two recently martyred Latin American revolutionary figures for the sake of maintaining popular relevance while situating their ethos and spirit alongside that of a more obscure anarchist historical figure.

On July 26, the Senate of the Republic intervened and pushed for mediation between the union and management. Five days later, management re-hired all 500 workers at the plant and agreed to a 4 percent “productivity” wage increase approved the following year by the COPRIN.[405] Striking workers recognized the essential role of those outside the factory. Their victorious communique proclaimed:

> *Compañeros*, You are a pillar in the victory that the *pueblo* will pull off against the millionaire gringo management of TEM. This victory is not only by the TEM workers, but instead by all the workers, and from a will to fight – one that is rooted in a combative unity of the *pueblo*, and one that can defeat the hardstanced management.[406]

Similarly, one SAOT officer declared, “Given the selflessness and sacrifice of the striking workers, the strike became a central concern and welcomed solidarity from broad sectors of the *pueblo*.” [407]

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[404] *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 27 July 1970, Mechoso Family Archive
[405] Workers poked fun at the June 1969 COPRIN ruling as providing them the means to buy two bus tickets and a box of matches. Regardless, management remained incompliant with the ruling until after the 1970 conflict; “Citaran a la patronal de TEM,” In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 6 May 1970, Uruguay National Library; Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, 1983, pp. 46, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive
[406] *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 27 July 1970, Mechoso Family Archive
[407] “TEM: una recia moral de victoria,” In *El Oriental*, Montevideo, 7 August 1970 quoted in From Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 170

Notwithstanding the popular support, the conflict failed to draw the attention of the UNTMRA nor the CNT's PCU majority. The officer quoted above went on to lament the lack of interest from the CNT Strike Commission, which did not inquire with union leadership about the nature of the conflict until the seventieth day of the strike. The officer recognized the conflict as a clear example of the disconnection between the CNT's strategy and the reality of everyday people's strong combativeness. He went on to praise the support offered from the ROE and Tendencia-affiliated unions, especially UOESF and AEBU. He declared:

> We believe that the CNT statute and program are good things. It is clearly evident that the CNT draws membership from the great majority of the Uruguayan working class. However, we find issue with its current direction, whose tactics are not sufficient for confronting the current dictatorship. Regardless, we believe that our union should affiliate with this organism. Other unions find themselves in a similar situation – taking issue with the current direction – but they, bank workers, FUNSA, teachers, and textiles, participate in it anyways.[408]

Similarly, another officer proclaimed, "We believe that the CNT does not utilize the full potential of the labor movement."[409]

Yet, the PCU's dissatisfaction with the SAOT's tactics remained clear. While the Party organ *El Popular* covered the conflict in the first two months of negotiations within COPRIN, it offered no reporting on any of the illegal actions that repeatedly took place in the final weeks. Although the organ was censored for 11 days beginning on July 24, coverage of the conflict omitted details of the SAOT's more combative tactics, although they spoke fondly of the hunger strike. In an effort to save face, *El Popular* published an article titled, "From the beginning we extended solidarity to the workers at TEM." The article included testimony from workers at

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[408] "TEM: una recia moral de victoria," In *El Oriental*, Montevideo, 7 August 1970 Quoted in Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 170

[409] from Maria Esther Gilio, "TEM: Union en la lucha," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, July 1970, pg 15, Uruguay National Library

Galmisa metalworks factory, who convinced their management to boycott selling galvanized plates to TEM and collected donations to support workers.[410]

Communist Party member and UNTMRA President Gerardo Cuesta attempted to court SAOT representatives who attended as fraternal observers to the confederation at the confederation's congress one year later. However, he could avoid infantilizing his guests before extending the welcome, proclaiming, "Impatience should be channeled into the broader movement so that it does not become the root of division or transform into waisted, useless, and counterproductive gestures… Cheers to every tendency that strives to unite workers in a single path of organization and struggle."[411] After the long struggle, the SOAT expanded to include all wage-earning workers at the plant and thus changed its name to Union of TEM Workers and Employees, reflecting its new industry-wide base.[412]

To Unite Fighting, To Divide Voting: The FAU and the Broad Front, 1971

For nearly two years prior to the November 1971 elections, Left organizations channeled political energy into building and campaigning for the coalition *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front) party. PCU General Secretary Rodney Arismendi, MLN-T leader Mauricio Rosencof, and Christian Democratic Party politician Juan Pablo Terra bottom-lined the coalition and recruited ex-Colorado Party member General Líber Seregni to run as the Frente Amblio candidate for President. The PCU identified their strategy as "the least painful road to socialism." The Party rejected armed struggle while emphasizing the importance of courting the military. According to

[410] "Desde un principio dimos la solidaridad a los obreros de TEM," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 18 August 1970, Uruguay National Library
[411]From Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 170
[412] Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 167

Rodney Arismendi, the current state form remained open to outside influence in certain sectors, such as public administration and education, but maintained a bourgeois monopoly on violence via the military, which never saw the influence of popular sectors in its directorate. However, the growing radicalization amongst the General class provided a possible opening should a Left government gain access to the state. Arismendi saw critiques of elections, parliamentarianism, and broad coalition-building as historically revisionist for assuming such strategy could only lead to a synthesis of capitalism and socialism (ie. Social democracy) and not to the "destruction of the bureaucratic-military machine of the bourgeois state."[413] For PCU officials, the elections offered a unique opportunity considering their rare status as one of the only Communist Parties in Latin America to not yet have been illegalized. In a 6 July 1971 speech to members of FIdeL, Rodney Arismendi proclaimed:

> Revolution is the product of a united people, the product of a united working class, of the working masses, of the most advanced sectors and the anti-imperialists. There is no other war towards the liberation of the people on earth… Dear friends: to speak of electoralism as creating a clash between the campaign work and revolutionary work is old news and was resolved forever by Marx, by Engels, by Lenin, by Fidel Castro, by our beloved and dear *compañero* Guevara in his old polemics against the anarchists and other *infantalistas* of the Left.[414]

The PCU looked towards the Soviet revolution as an example of a unified *pueblo*, which included peasants, workers, and soldiers. Its officials argued that in Uruguay, the FA coalition offered an opportunity to unify these sectors around a political project and saw this as a prerequisite for any revolutionary endeavor.

The FA coalition aimed to achieve three main objectives: agrarian reform, nationalization of banking, and nationalization of foreign commerce. The objectives overlapped to form a broad

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[413] Rodney Arismendi, *Lenin, la revolución, y America Latina,* Montevideo: Ediciones Pueblos Unidos, 1970, online copy: https://www.marxists.org/espanol/arismendi/lenin-rev-amer-latina.pdf

[414] Rodney Arismendi, "Ahora, mas que nunca, unidad para asegurar y ganar la elección," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 9 July 1971, Uruguay National Library

economic program. Agrarian reform aimed resolve the massive rural exodus by shifting production into the hands of small producers. While less than one third of the national population worked the land, the decline of rural industries endangered some of Uruguay's most important urban industrial sectors, such as textiles, wool, and leather goods. Through nationalization of foreign commerce, the FA sought to utilize the state to ensure that foreign enterprises purchase raw resources at market value rather than buying them low and selling the finished product high in the domestic market. The FA claimed that such interventions reflected an Uruguay-specific revolutionary program, declaring, "Revolution is the only thing that cannot be imported nor exported… No one is going to invent the Uruguayan path except for us Uruguayans, and it is based on our way of seeing our own reality."[415] The FA set out to develop a program that permitted "an organic national link" and brought together "cadres that formed hundreds of movements.. and that created thousands of forms of struggle, whose originality and contributions we should validate and respect."[416]

In December 1970, the MLN-T expressed frustration about a popular coalition formed around elections, but nonetheless saw potential in the mobilizations leading up to and after the vote. In one communique, the MLN-T declared, "In our support of the Frente Amplio, we understand that its principal task is to mobilize the working class masses and assure that this labor does not start and end with the elections."[417] The MLN-T aknowledged a "false dilemma" between *foco* strategy and party politics. They saw themselves to be providing "armed propaganda" for constructing a political party. In other words, the armed apparatus served to

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[415] Speech transcript, "Seregni: no nos dejaremos trampear nuestro destino," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 27 March 1971, Uruguay National Library

[416] "Llamado desde las fabricas," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 24 December 1970, Uruguay National Library

[417] "Adquiere renovada viegencia la declaración del M.L.N. de adhesión al Frente Amplio" (December 1970), In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, 2nd Edition, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 184-5

raise revolutionary consciousness and to express the urgency and viability of a revolutionary moment.[418] The MLN-T eventually agreed to a ceasefire in October 1971 out of respect for the electoral process.

The FA held its first public rally on 26 March 1971. The rally commenced a seven month long campaign around the call "*el publo unido*" (The people united). Over two hundred thousand braved autumn rain to participate in what El Popular declared as the largest political rally in Uruguay's history.[419] The months leading up to the official announcement saw a hopeful narrative among the Left, including a Gallup poll that reported 35 percent support for the FA among Uruguayans.[420] Although the FAU officially declined to attend the founding rally as a political organization, a handful of members arrived to scope out the atmosphere in curiosity. Some felt isolated and envious while viewing the excitement and fervor of such a large gathering of fellow workers, neighbors, and radicals.[421]

The FAU saw the FA's use of the CNT infrastructure as traitorous to the initial mission of the labor confederation, which aimed to maintain the autonomy of the labor movement by means of apoliticism, or non-affiliation with a political party. Moreover, rather than maintain the autonomy of existing social movements, the FAU saw the FA's electoral strategy as co-opting them into a liberal democratic framework and thus legitimizing its hegemony for making politics. In the June 1971 CNT Congress amended Article 49 to allow for CNT officials to hold government positions yet kept a clause preventing references to the CNT in campaign rhetoric.[422]

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[418] Movimiento Nacional de Liberacion – Tupamaros, "Partido o Foco, un falso dilema," In *Uruguay: La estrategia de los Tupamaros*, Buenos Aires: Los Libros, November 1971
[419] "El acto mas grande de la historia del país," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 27 March 1971, Uruguay National Library
[420] "Gallup: Medio millon de votos para la unidad popular," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 30 November 1970, Uruguay National Library
[421] Lilian Celiberti, interview with author, Montevideo, 5 July 2017
[422] Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005, pp. 61

The formation of the FA also brought about a split within the Tendencia. In December 1970, the GAU and MRO decided to join the electoral coalition as a gesture of Left unity. They joined more radical members of the PSU to form the *Corriente* and played the role of militant minority within the FA. The FAU and Revolutionary Communist Party were the only Left organizations to decline participating in the coalition.[423] FAU militants Hugo Cores, Gerardo Gatti, and Mauricio Gatti spent the majority of 1970 in prison, and thus were absent from the conversations about where to direct the energy and momentum of the CNT.[424] Cores was again arrested in April 1971 – he remained in prison for the duration of the year eventually reuniting with sixteen other FAU militants behind bars.

"Voting Does Not Solve The Problem of Power"

> *The electoral campaign is the means by which the oligarchy seek to re-establish contact with recuperate their influence among them disguised as their representatives. The unpopularity and lack of prestige of politicians and politicians in general is evident… They aim to "reactivate the political life" destined to reinstate the mainstream political parties to their importance and gravitational function in the national politic. This would be achieved as the result of an election campaign that generates expectations, hopes of renewal, and after a massive propaganda campaign that mobilizes old sentimental values that still remain effective in many sectors. In the end this will only open the door for reactionary interests […]*
>
> *To divide the pueblo around empty slogans and banners, in an electoral bout practically inconclusive, avoiding that in the struggle for revindication and real solutions to the grave problems that effect them. Through action, everyday people come together around concrete motives. In elections, everyday people divide amongst themselves over abstract pretexts and utopic illusions […]*

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[423] In a gesture of good faith leading up to the election, President Pacheco Areco legalized the FAU along with the five other revolutionary Left organizations banned in 1967. This allowed the organization to print and circulate material freely. After the closure of *Epoca*, the organization circulated the *Cartas de FAU* via underground networks to over five thousand recipients. On 29 April 1971, the FAU began circulating a bi-weekly newspaper called *Compañero*. Under the editorial lead of Leon Duarte, the publication documented and analyzed the ROE-Tendencia Combativa's campaigns.

[424] Augusto Andrés, personal email correspondance with autor, "En 1971 aperece el FA," Montevideo, 14 Agosto 2017

> *Those who never really divide themselves between banners and parties remain united in defense of their positions vis a vis the pueblo, are the privileged members of the dominant classes. Their circumstantial disagreements and conflicts never make them lose sight of their common interests as a class. They never cheat respect and thus… they continue promoting that the elections are the only "correct" form for the pueblo to express its opinions […]*
>
> *Thus, faced with the intentionally confusing maneuvers of reaction, and faced with the attempts to derail the pueblo towards the electoral route, there is only one response: escalate and broaden the struggle. We must unite together to break the austerity politics of wage freezes. We must spread solidarity to unions involved in conflicts. We must drive forward with all of our energy a popular organization… We must combat every tendency to subordinate the activity of popular movements to the interests and perspectives of electoral candidates.*[425]

Guided by an anarchist perspective, the FAU recognized the limitations of the electoral strategy from its inception. Yet the anarchists maintained the position that the Left was not in the position to take power. Referencing the shortcomings of the 1969 conflicts due to lack of long-term and sustainable escalation strategy, the anarchists argued that the Left was instead in a phase of *resistance*, in which militants were still laying the foundation for a prolonged struggle with capital and the state.[426] In other words, everyday people required more experiences as protagonists *via* direct action and mutual aid to advance further towards the formation of revolutionary counter subjectivities that could take an active role in the implementation of a new mode of political economy beyond the market and the state. Instead, the electoral route, like *foco*, relegated the population to the passive and disempowered role of spectators. percent, and the Frente Amplio finished third with 19.6 percent.[427] They foresaw an inevitable loss in the

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[425] "Cuidado con los desvios, lo central es la lucha," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 2 June 1969, pp. 234

[426] Augusto Andrés, personal email correspondance with autor, "En 1971 aperece el FA," Montevideo, 14 Agosto 2017

[427] "El F.A. pasó en Montevideo del 17,10 al 30.89%," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 29 November 1971, Uruguay National Library

elections regardless of rumors of 30 to 40 percent support based on Gallup poll surveys, and such a loss would have devastating consequences on working class morale.[428]

The FAU pamphlet *Tiempo de lucha? Tiempo de elección?* (1971) directly countered Communist arguments regarding the state. The FAU recognized that the state has two functions—to provide services and maintain order. Yet, they claimed that the state's primary obligation laid with the latter. Most importantly, they argued that the state was not neutral and could not be utilized as an instrument to challenge the interests of the oligarchy and bourgeoisie. Moreover, they looked towards history to claim that any government's attempt to significantly challenge ruling class power would inevitably result in a military takeover.[429] The FAU viewed the recent struggles at small and medium-sized firms as proof of labor's unity in the face of worsening economic realities. Whereas workers could potentially think, feel, and vote against their own interests, their shared economic condition moved them into the role of protagonist in their neighborhoods and workspaces. A November 1970 article in *Cartas* proclaimed:

> The reformist leaders cling more and more to their policy of confronting the struggle at the mass level to avoid tensions and channeling the generalized malaise of the people towards the electoral opening, where it will materialize, without risks, for the system in obtaining some seats legislative However, under the pressure of increasingly difficult living conditions, people naturally tend to adopt attitudes and combative positions as soon as they are lowered from the unalterable and rarefied climate of union "summits" to the reality of concrete action between the people… workers who, at the time of voting, have opted for the most diverse hairs, which had the most diverse beliefs or opinions (white or red, believers or atheists) at the time of facing the prepotencies or the revived ones of the above, they unite closely, in the hard fight and without returns, in that war of always, between the exploited ones and the exploiters.[430]

[428] *Tiempo de elecciones? Tiempo de lucha?*, Montevideo, May 1971, pp. 18, Mechoso Family Archive
[429] *Tiempo de elecciones? Tiempo de lucha?*, Montevideo, May 1971, pp. 19-21, Mechoso Family Archive
[430] "Unirse en la lucha – no dividirse en el voto," In *Cartas de FAU*, Montevideo, 9 November 1970, Mechoso Family Archive

Throughout 1971, the ROE grew not only among combative sectors of the labor force but also amongst students. In April 1971, the ROE took advantage of a government lift on press censorship and began releasing *Compañero*, a bi-weekly newsletter under the editorial direction of Leon Duarte. The paper's content paid special attention to the labor conflicts by unions under the Tendencia Combativa. By this time, the FAU infrastructure had grown to be upwards of two hundred active militants who participated in advancing and reproducing the organization at various different levels of participation. The growth was primarily due to the popularity of the ROE among workers and students, which had gained a reputation for winning dramatic labor conflicts in coordinated efforts with the storied FUNSA union. Many of the newer members were high schoolers from El Cerro-La Teja. For example, Juan Pilo joined the ROE at age thirteen and began distributing copies of *Compañero* to 75 different subscribers throughout La Teja—most were purchased by members of the Bakers Union. One afternoon, while Juan was waiting outside a union hall with papers in hand, an unknown man approached him and asked for a copy. Juan responded with the paper's cost; and the man responded, "I am Duarte, you know?"[431] The anecdote demonstrates the ROE's large growth and local emphasis—new members could not identify core militants because of the organization's widespread reach and emphasis on maintaining a low profile.

Regardless of the organization's legal status, participation in the ROE and other Left youth organizations became increasingly risky throughout the election year. In May, the government mandated that all households register their family members at local police stations. Police monitored houses for gatherings larger than the registered number in effort to prevent political meetings. The program's architects drew inspiration from Nazi anti-espionage and

[431] Juan Pilo, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 22 June 2017

hoped that its implementation would inspire a social fear of gathering in private spaces.[432] The increasing criminalization of popular political activity left youths vulnerable to attacks by fascist groups and the police, who sometimes acted jointly. On 31 May 1971, a group of JUP-affiliated students and plain clothes police collaborated to violently attack high school students in Colon, a ROE and UJC stronghold. The JUPistas identified their dissident peers to the group of middle-aged men, who mounted an attack on the playground leaving 40 injured including one in critical condition.[433] In October 1971, a middle school student in Bauza threatened a teacher with a revolver after faculty members broke up a JUP rally on campus.[434]

The focus on national elections also opened up opportunities for ROE caucuses to win union elections, as their PCU and PSU rivals did not have the capacity to balance between both fronts. One of the ROE's biggest wins came in the Railworker Union (UF), a 12,000 worker union that stretched out across Uruguay's nationalized railway system, the Administration of State Railways (AFE). Upon nationalization of the railways in 1952, the UF developed close ties with mainstream political parties due to the Battlista model, thus gaining AFE workers a reputation as some of the most conservative in the country. AFE workers watched the street conflicts of the late sixties from a distance and condemned more militant actions, such as *peajes* and property damage. But they faced a tactical and moral crossroads beginning in 1969, when the government began radically slashing funding to the industry and preferencing the construction of a private bus infrastructure instead. The rail industry was already highly

[432] Eduardo Rey Tristan, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya*, pp. 352; “Emulando a Hitler,” In *El Popular*, Montevideo, circa May 1971, Uruguay National Library
[433] “Indignación en Colón ante la agresión de ayer,” In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 1 June 1971, Uruguay National Library
[434] “En un establecimiento donde se esgrimen armas de fuego los profesores niegan a dar clases,” In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 4 October 1971, Mechoso Family Archive

neglected – workers frequently loaded railcars built in 1872. Nearly half of the country's locomotives remained out operation and workers received monthly paychecks every 45 days.

With a small nucleus of under two dozen militants, the ROE-affiliated Worker's Dignity caucus won the UF elections in 1971. Their victory reflected more of a change in workplace culture than an outright ideological shift among the railway's employees. Raul Olivera, a UF officer and member of the FAU, remembers workers welcoming more radical tactics after recognizing no other alternative. They found themselves replicating tactics used by the student movement, such as blanketing the street with spike strips to prevent police vehicles from approaching train stations during strikes. Amidst one conflict, workers expropriated operating machinery from the Peñarol station and held it hostage until management agreed to demands. While workers previously refused to align with students for questions of disparate class interests, they embraced the ROE contingent from the Construction School (UTU). Students played an important role distributing propaganda via flyers and murals to grow zonal solidarity around the worker's conflict in the face of the industry's liquidation. Workers showed support or students by implementing political strikes against police violence against the student movement, including six students assassinated by Armed Forces between 1971 and '72. The ROE caucus not only embraced combative tactics, but also introduced the first female UF representative. These events and conflicts led to the formation of new solidarities amongst AFE workers, who could no longer rely on institutionalized channels of representation. On 24 March 1972, workers placed the railways under workers control for two days and offered passengers free rides from rural areas to Montevideo, but refused to transport military supplies. Olivera recalls the union circulating the following phrase: "Fight against the bosses and for public opinion." [435]

[435] Raul Olivera, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 25 July 2017

On 23 June 1971, the CNT held its Second Ordinary Congress in Montevideo. In a statement addressing congress attendees, PCU Prime Secretary Rodney Arismendi hinted at the CNT's role in the Frente Amplio project, declaring, "Today an unforeseen trajectory has opened up to the *pueblo*—that of taking over the government. While recognizing the importance of not derailing the specific function of our unions… the unifying function of the CNT has contributed to this new situation."[436] Delegates from the Tendencia denounced the PCU's manipulation of process and use of the platform for election campaigning. For example, the Federation of Maldonado Industrial and Commercial Employees, a Tendencia-affiliated union representing over one thousand workers in the interior, was prohibited from participating in the Congress for failing to pay dues.[437] A delegate of the Railway Union (UF) asserted:

> There has not yet been any real joint effort to confront the oligarchy… Those unions who have come out to fight did so alone in the majority of cases. They received no mass support from the CNT, which merely released some declarations of support… As the result of the lack of a plan of action, today there are very important unions that remain semi-paralyzed after having exerted themselves alone and without the support of the rest of the workers.[438]

Beyond participating in workplace conflicts the FAU sought to maintain connections to popular neighborhoods by redistributing resources in Montevideo's periphery. Such actions took new meaning during the 1971 election season, as many among the Left saw the newly formed Frente Amplio as a real possibility to take power. On 6 August 1971, the Dia del Niño, an OPR-33 cell broke into the Plastlit toy factory and began filling large sacks with toys. The expropriation went smoothly and without interruptions, but upon arriving to the distribution in Barrio Cerrito the operation changed tone. Children began fighting over the toys, and teenagers

[436] Rodney Arismendi, "Del P. Comunista a la C.N.T.," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 24 June 1971, CEIU—Hector Rodriguez Archive
[437] "Congreso de la CNT," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 22 July 1971, Uruguay National Library
[438] "Congreso de la CNT: Ferroviarios," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 22 July 1971, Uruguay National Library

harassed younger children to take their toys. After a few hours, the FAU militants terminated the action with a poor taste in their mouths. Some militants returned a few days later to sign off the action by leaving a photo copy image of independence flag. A group of mothers came outside to take the fliers and burned them; others called the police who sent out search teams throughout the city in an attempt to find "Los 33." The militants realized that they had lost popularity in the neighborhood after consistent visits from Pachequistas, who came to distribute spaghetti and blankets in the months prior as part of the electoral campaign. The action would be one of the FAU's last neighborhood redistribution efforts. Instead, the Organization redirected energy and resources into labor conflicts and political prisoner support. The Left's overall ability to connect with peripheralized populations appeared to be losing ground. While the FA relied strongly on the CNT infrastructure to collect votes, the community's reaction proved that the labor-based strategy had not gained equal footing amongst unemployed nor *amas de casas*.

"All or Nothing": The Three Fs (FUNSA, FOEB, FUS) and CICSSA

On 20 April 1971, an OPR-33 cell broke into the FUNSA factory to expropriate a collection of arms from management's office. The operation was one of four raids to steal arms from known collections of business firms and individuals.[439] A week later, the UOESF published the following statement regarding the local's role in the growing climate of unrest amongst small and medium size workforces:

> We have nothing to hide regarding the use of our union hall – it is regulated and public, and we are notorious for what we do here... If a union hall should function as a social club, then it should be a bastion of student militancy and for the people.... It should serve as a bastion, like a binding center, for all of the FUNSA union to come together with other unions, and with students that invigorate the

[439] Although the cells collected no more than four arms from each site, the operations were the first public acts signed off by OPR-33; Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, Tomo IV, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 293

> space with their enthusiasm, with the youth of the pueblo that struggle against its oligarchy. In our local, our beloved local, they have planned, programmed, and pushed forward some of the hardest fought battles and conflicts against the dictatorship... It was the center of restlessness and hopes, of happiness and deception... This is the use of our local and we are proud and honored that we can serve the student and worker pueblo, as they have served us too.[440]

The UOESF local hosted Sunday afternoon meals commonly attended by community members and guests from ally union. The support network often extended into Leon Duarte's home, where fellow organizers gathered frequently to seek consultation.[441] The UOESF maintained its commitment to solidarity unionism primarily by offering support for smaller union struggles largely ignored by the CNT majority. The union's unique role as referent proved key to moving the labor movement further towards the strategies and tactics encouraged by the FAU and Tendencia.

While UOESF remained outspoken in their support for direct action, the union rarely entered conflict with management beyond verbal negotiations. FUNSA's workers largely entrusted and respected Leon Duarte's negotiation skills and remained prepared to act should bargaining efforts fall short of successful. In late August 1971, the UOESF called for a boycott of Funsa products in demand of a cost of living wage increase. Regardless of the union's militancy and notable gains over the past decade, management enjoyed an annual profit margin five hundred times greater than employee's yearly salaries. Upon receiving the demand, management insisted the issue be presented before the COPRIN, but the latter responded asserting that the claim be handled at management's discretion. In a maneuver that further

[440] "Sobre el uso de un local sindical," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 29 April 1971, Uruguay National Library
[441] Rodolfo Porrini and Mariela Salaberry*, Leon Duarte: Conversaciones con Alberto Marquez y Hortencia Pereira*, Montevideo: Editorial Compañero, 1993, pp. 105

surpassed the COPRIN's function, management announced they would accompany a wage gain with augmented prices and increased productivity. [442]

One week before the August 30 boycott call, an OPR-33 cell kidnapped Luis Fernández Lladó, a member of FUNSA's stockholder board of directors. His father, Saturnino Fernández, served as the board president. The kidnapping initially set out to intervene in a labor conflict at Frigorifico Modelo in Tacuarembó, where workers labored in twelve hour shifts and where Lladó acted as stockholder vicepresident. The armed cell held Lladó for 51 days after kidnapping him while *en route* to his local butcher shop. On October 9, Lladó's father delivered 200 thousand US dollars in ransom and brokered a settlement of the FUNSA conflict in exchange for his son's release.

On 12 August 1970, four hundred workers at Pepsi Cola commenced a two month strike in response to management's firing of a Douglas Lacuesta, a union steward who recently requested management provide workers with boots and gloves. Lacuesta also served as the local's delegate to the Federation of Beverage Workers and Employees (FOEB) which represented seven thousand workers throughout the industry. The union petitioned COPRIN's intervention to remove chief director Ignacio Aguerre from decision-making over labor. Aguerre was a frequent collaborator with the Uruguayan Institute for Sindical Education —he sent six supervisors to the school in hopes of breaking the plant's union—and also served as the chief director for TEM. The union accused him of creating the workplace conflict as a means to pressure COPRIN into approving the company's outstanding request for price increases. In November 1969, the company's four largest beverage producers petitioned COPRIN with Pepsi uniquely threatening a lock-out to leverage the request.[443] The union's request drew mediation

[442] "Resistencia obrera en FUNSA," In *Sol*, Montevideo, cir. October 1971, Mechoso Family Archive
[443] "Refutan a patronal yanqui de Pepsi," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 3 September 1970, Uruguay National Library

from the Ministry of Labor on September 3, however Aguerre left the meeting in outrage before receiving interrogation.[444] Instead, company lawyer Daniel Jimenez de Arrechaga proposed a plan titled "Internal Labor Regulation," which banned the distribution of union propaganda within the plant, prohibited workers from leaving their section, mandated workers to clock-out when going to the bathroom, granted management authority to search the locker room, and forbid the use of the telephone. The plan consisted of 93 new rules in total.[445] On September 22, the union rejected the COPRIN's mediated solution for leaving Aguerre in place and neglecting to rehire Lacuesta.[446] Two days later, plant foreman Heber Chechile fired a shot from his car window as he drove past a group of strikers in Montevideo's center, leaving one assembly line worker with a bullet in the knee.[447]

The conflict drew widespread support—the CNT called for a boycott of Pepsi products and collected over 40 thousand pesos of donated money and supplies from fellow unions, students, and small shop-owners. A women's committee from Barrio Peñarol donated two thousand pesos-worth of food stuffs. On September 15, the CNT North Zone held a two hour work stoppage halting production in surrounding textile, metallurgy, and chemical factories; students and teachers also walked out to join the rally in front of the plant.[448] The next day Tendencia-affiliated unions held a two hour work stoppage to gather at the UOESF local for another solidarity rally.[449] The plant's eighty-strong fleet of delivery drivers expressed solidarity

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[444] "Nueva negativa de Pepsi-Cola," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 4 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[445] "Pepsi: rechazan plan represivo de la patronal," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[446] "Pepsi: formula inaceptable," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 22 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[447] "Hirieron de bala a obrero de Pepsi Cola," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 26 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[448] "Jornada solidaria con trabajadores de Pepsi el jueves en Zona Norte," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 15 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[449] The rally hosted speeches from representatives of FUNSA, TEM, and FOEB; "Pepsi: rechazan plan represivo de la patronal," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 September 1970, Uruguay National Library

with the striking assembly line workers. Elcio Mancini, president of the Cargo and Transportation Workers Union (SUTCRA), proclaimed:

> We express full support to the Pepsi Cola workers and our comrade delivery drivers whose labor remains halted at the fault of plant manager Ignacio Aguerre. We denounce management's bad attitude that has deliberately provoked this conflict in attempt to break the Pepsi Cola worker's union. SUTCRA remains committed to our classist line and will always be side by side with the workers in conflict. Our union demands an immediate resolution to this situation.[450]

On 16 October 1970, Pepsi plant workers negotiated an agreement to all four strike commands, including a joint labor-management committee to negotiate workplace conflicts, a fifty thousand peso loan reimbursement for lost time, Aguerre's removal from his acting position, Chechile's forced resignation, and Lacuesta's rehiring without penalty.[451]

FUS

On 22 October 1971, the Uruguayan Health Federation (FUS), an MLN-T stronghold, occupied private clinics throughout Montevideo and began offered free medical services for two weeks. The "Popular Hospitals," a tactic utilized on four different occasions, responded to the year-long conflict between workers and management at Montevideo's ten largest private hospitals that serviced over 800,000 patients annually combined.[452] While each hospital local negotiated separately with private management, the federation enabled all workers to coordinate both demands and labor actions to make a stronger effect on industry.

In July 1970, an assembly of 300 FUS delegates representing over 13,000 health service workers, voted to initiate a campaign for nationwide free health service with worker participation

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[450] "Pepsi-Cola intenta romper sindicato," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 5 September 1970, Uruguay National Library
[451] "Triumfaron obreros de Pepsi: se firmó anoche la solución," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 October 1970, Uruguay National Library
[452] Including British Hospital, American Hospital, Italian Hospital, Spanish Hospital, IMPASA, Larghero, Evangelico, Fraternidad, and CASMU

in its direction. The campaign began with two separate 48 hour and 72 hour strikes within the same month. In October, various acts of police repression, including a bloody bludgeoning of three workers at Hospital Britanico's entrance, swiftly radicalized the conflict. On October 27, workers responded by implementing the first Popular Hospital and issued free services for two days—workers at IMPASA and the Italian Hospital followed lead.[453] Furthermore, students and staff at the Faculty of Medicine camped in front of the recently-closed residency clinic, which closed its doors due to lack of budget. The clinic lacked medicine and hygiene products, leaving staff so dramatically under-resourced they could not adequately change patients' bedsheets. The government's 2.3 billion peso debt to the university forced the closure of various campus resources, including labs and cafeterias, and left scholarship students without stipends. One student declared, "We conceived of the encampment as a propaganda method to reach the everyday worker, the housewife, the man in the street. The encampments are everyday evidence of the 1,800 scholarship students who cannot continue studying, who have to return to the interior with their careers on hold."[454] The encampment at the Faculty of Medicine drew support from health service workers in the public sector organized under a separate union. Although they could not legally strike, they presented the COPRIN with a parallel list of demands and utilized the encampment as a means to draw public sympathy.[455] On November 15, FUS retreated from further labor actions and announced they would integrate the free health service wage increase demands into the CNT program.[456]

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[453] Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa*, Paris, 1983, pp. 47-48, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive; N/A "Conflicto en las mutualistas replantea crisis asistencial," In *Sur*, Montevideo, 26 October 1971, Mechoso Family Archive
[454] "Hospital de clinicas: situacion angustiosa," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 28 October 1970, Uruguay National Library
[455] The Uruguayan Federation of Public Health Administrators and Staff (FUFEMM), a subsidiary of ADEOM, was responsible for services at all government supported clinics, including those at the University.
[456] "Salud: sigue conflictos por salarios," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 15 November 1970, Uruguay National Library

By October 1971, the entire health industry spiraled into labor conflict. Health service workers protested management's failure to comply with a September ruling by the COPRIN, which approved immediate 27.2 percent wage increase, six-hour day, and salary bonus for nightshifts and skilled labor. On 26 October 1971, FUS initiated a campaign for a 50 percent salary increase as cost of living continued to rise. They began by implementing Popular Hospitals that drew participation from unionized doctors who offered free service to roughly 300 people each day. Many doctors were were recent graduates of the Faculty of Medicine, a long time feeder of militants to both the FAU and MLN-T – the Uruguayan Medical Union (SMU) remained an MLN-T stronghold.[457] Doctors maintained their own set of demands, including pay bonuses for performing surgeries and paid transportation costs to and from work. The conflict also intersected with workplace occupations at Omega and Warner Lambert, two pharmaceutical laboratories. Both laboratories belonged to Union of Drug and Allied Industries (SIMA), a federation of lab workers that coordinated occupations across five different labs during a three month conflict over pay increases one year prior.[458] Moreover, the November 1970 conflict ignited a union drive at the US-owned Warner Lambert laboratory. By mid-October 1971, Warner Lambert's 200 workers had maintained a two month occupation in protest of management's firing of a union militant for insubordination." The campaign drew solidarity

[457] In the early 1960s, the *Ciclo Basico* program of the Faculty of Medicine began sending students to poor communities to offer health services free of charge as part of the curriculum. Students, who primarily came from the Catholic school system and drew influence from liberation theology, developed relationships Montevideo's impoverished communities and fostered a more holistic analysis of the place of health services in a market economy, Augusto Andrés, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 8 July 2017

[458] In November 1970, Gramon, Bayer, Bio, and Atenas pharmaceutical laboratories fell under worker control after management failed to fulfill COPRIN's ruling for an eight thousand peso monthly wage increase. The rulling affected some three thousand workers in the country's 39 pharmaceutical laboratories, Management at 24 plants responded to the ruling by declaring a lock-out. Workers further decried the industry's growing foreignization – within two years, foreign ownership of medical laboratories increased from 48 to 63 percent, "Medicamento: levantan el lock-out," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 16 December 1970, Uruguay National Library; Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combative*, pp. 49, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

from FUS and FUFEMM, who refused to distribute the company's products, and SAG, who refused to print the company's labels.[459]

By November 1971, various hospitals agreed to settle the conflict, agreeing to a month paid vacation and time-and-a-half for nightshifts.[460] The conflicts in the health service industry calmed down until March 1972, when FUS and SMU launched another bid for universal healthcare accompanied by demands for wage increases, pension reform, and freedom for political prisoners. The campaign drew support from the CNT Representative Table and took on new meaning amidst increasing state repression against accused members of the MLN-T, which left many health industry workers imprisoned and tortured by military officers who sought consultation from doctors. Beginning in October 1972, FUS embarked on a 52 day strike demanding universal healthcare and backpay from as far back as 1967. Regarding the 1972 campaign, one FUS steward proclaimed, "The current government, while installing fascism through concentration camps, state of siege, violent attacks, torture, and assassinations… on the other hand proposes for the "humanization" of medicine. The people know that a humanization of medicine is only viable if it is framed in the total change of the structures of the country."[461] The campaign for universal free health service would eventually come to fruition under the Frente Amplio government in 2005.

CICSSA

[459] "El conflict en Warner podria involucrar a todo el medicamento," In *Sur*, Montevideo, circ. November 1971, Mechoso Family Archive
[460] "Solucion en el sanitorio Español ayer," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 13 November 1971, Uruguay National Library
[461] "La salud y su contexto," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 22 September 1972, Uruguay National Library

The close relationships forged at the UOESF local opened the possibilities for armed intervention in labor conflicts on behalf of the OPR-33. In mid 1971, CICSSA paper plant's 250 workers waged a three-month campaign for union recognition. The plant's North American owner, known throughout Uruguay as "Gringo Brown," openly boasted that he had saved up 30 million dollars to bust any unionization efforts. Workers organized an unsuccessful campaign for union recognition three years prior, during which a strike breaker assassinated CICSSA employee Urián Correa after a confrontation at the picket. When management obligated workers to sign off on a contract amendment that would forfeit their benefits, workers responded with another union drive campaign. Brown lashed back by firing the entire workforce.[462]

On 23 June 1971, the OPR-33 kidnapped Dr. Alfredo Cambón, a lawyer and legal advisor to both CICSSA and FUNSA management. Cambón was also founder of the Comision Vecinal de Colaboración, a neighborhood watch organization that collaborated with police units to enforce the recently implemented neighbor registry.[463] Upon leaving for a visit to Germany, Brown entrusted CICSSA under Cambón's control. The armed cell approached the lawyer's home disguised as a moving crew and greeted him bedside with a 9mm pistol. Upon transferring him to a "people's cell," they demanded he contact his family to request they deliver groceries and supplies to the workers' encampment at the gates of the plant – his son delivered the goods personally. The OPR-33 released Cambón after two days of interrogations during which he promised to resolve the conflict by the end of August.[464] To keep up the pressure, a mob of

[462] "Cicssa: triunfo de la linea combative," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 7 August 1971, Uruguay National Library
[463] "Secuestran a conocido abogado," In *El Dia*, Montevideo, 24 June 1971, Uruguay National Library
[464] Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, Tomo IV, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 317-19

students and workers set fire to Brown's car while stationed in front of the Legislative Palace for a visit with the Minister of Labor two weeks later.[465]

Throughout the campaign, police shot and wounded five workers during public actions, leaving one in critical condition. On 24 July 1971, the campaign also saw the death of Heber Nieto, a ROE militant and construction school student, who was shot with a sniper rifle during a tollbooth organized to support the workers.[466] Historian Clara Aldrighi later discovered that the assassin's .225 Winchester was one of four donated by CIA agent Dan Mitrione to the Uruguayan secret police in 1969.[467] On 26 July 1971, sixteen unions called for an indefinite general strike against state repression.[468]

In early August 1971, CICSSA workers won the right to union recognition. Workers rejected Brown's initial offers to rehire a proportion of the employees, 44 and 95 respectively. Management eventually agreed to rehire the entire staff within 45 days and pay 40 days of backpay with help from a loan by the national social security fund. Regarding the experience, one worker declared:

> In the conflict we established a unity amongst our coworkers, which was something that we did have prior. We got to know one another by sharing mate and meals, and during the sleepovers. This was the most important result of the occupation. There were eighty of us who cohabitated and did things together that we had never done throughout the 10 or 12 years that we had worked together. Now, it is like we are all brothers…. We also discovered the support of groups from the outside, like students, who we did not understand the logic behind what they were doing prior, such as socking someone in the face or burning a car. Now, after having gone through this with our own bodies, we understand it all…We

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[465] "Ahora, mas que nunca, toda la solidaridad," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 22 Julio 1971, Uruguay National Library
[466] "CICSSA: triunfo de la línea combativa," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 7 August 1971, Uruguay National Library
[467] Roger Rodriguez, "Heber Nieto fue asesinado con un rifle que Dan Mitrione le encargó a la DNII," In *La red 21*, Montevideo, 12 March 2009
[468] Cicssa, FEUU, UOESF, SIMA, COT, TEM, FUS, Seral, ATMA, UTAA, Ghiringhelli, Frigorifico Nacional, Administrative Federation of Textile Industry, List 1955 AEBU, Assoc. Funcionarios de Subsistencias, URDE (Union de Destajistas del Espinillar, Union Ferroviaria, General Electric, List 9 of Hospital Clinics; "16 sindicatos impulsan lucha," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 26 July 1971, Uruguay National Library

recognize that what the students do is very fruitful. They come out to work (tollbooths, signs, mobilizations) and to defend us.[469]

Elections: Fervor, Fear, and Failure

The Pacheco Areco government maintained strong influence over media and disciplined public space in the months prior to the election. On 10 September 1971, the government censored four FA-affiliated press organs, including one for six months.[470] On October 30, a group of FA supporters were detained on Montevideo's Playa Ramirez after setting up a day camp with umbrellas featuring the coalition's logo.[471] Meanwhile, the government made use of media coverage around recently completed infrastructural projects, such as National Highway Routes 5 and 26, to simultaneously campaign for the Colorado Party. The repression extended beyond the state apparatus including numerous JUP attacks on FA locals.[472]

As labor conflict escalated and election fervor heightened, sixteen FAU militants were indefinitely detained in the Punta Rieles "special holding centers." All those detained were members of the ROE, including Gerardo Gatti, Washington Perez, and Hugo Cores, who had contracted hepatitis after being detained for over six months.[473] Other prisoners included Dario Espiga, an active militant in the TEM and Ciccsa struggles; Eduardo Dean, a shoemaker and student; Lilian Celiberti, a middle school teacher; Jose Caraballa, a student at the technical university; and Ruben Prieto, a student in the Faculty of Education and union delegate. Other

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[469] "Lo que piensa un obrera," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 18 August 1971, Uruguay National Library
[470] "Cuando un periodista libre se convierte en usurpador de las libertades," In *Flecha*, Montevideo 10 September 1971, Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive
[471] "Detenidos en Playa Ramirez por platar bandera de Otorgues," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 30 October 1971, Uruguay National Library
[472] O.A. "El prosteletismo, la legislación, y la propaganda," In *Flecha*, Montevideo 10 September 1971, Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive
[473] Alongside Cores, four other AEBU militants remained in detention. All were members of the 1955 List, "Libertad para Cores y todos los presos," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 16 November 1971, Uruguay National Library

FAU militants also moved in and out of prison during the months leading up to the election. If authorities considered militants useful sources of information, they could be detained repeatedly even after serving prison terms.[474] Although Pacheco Areco denied their imprisonment to the press, word of the militants' detention became well known in Left political circles, inducing sympathy from organizations within the Broad Front. On 19 November, The GAU published a statement condemning the arbitrary detentions.[475] Although the two organizations took different positions on the elections after working closely together for nearly a decade, the GAU remained solidarious with the FAU. On 22 November, all sixteen political prisoners launched into a hunger strike to bring light to their torture and mistreatment, and to decry the undemocratic conditions under which elections were being held. Family members moved between First Military Division, Commando General, and Ministry of the Interior searching for answers, but no one accepted responsibility nor pointed the location of the prisoners. On election day, 28 November 1971, *Ahora*, the Frente Amplio newspaper, published an article titled "Huelga de hambre en cuarteles: Los secuestados por el gobierno no podrán votar hoy," problematizing Pacheco Areco's emphasis on free elections with significant numbers of the population held in prison. The article also contained a statement by the Sindicato Medico del Uruguay, which recognized the illegality of the prisoners' detention and placed responsibility on the military operating the detention center for any health risks encountered.[476]

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[474] Judges even made this clear to prisoners after serving their sentences, informing them that they would likely be detained again in the future for "security purposes." Augusto Andrés recalls having been detained in September 1972 by Captain Manuel Cordero, who sought to extract more information about those who participated in failed "Operation Apretesis" one year prior. Upon arriving to the Fifth Artillery, Captain Cordero carried out waterboarding and other methods of torture personally, Augusto Andrés, *Estafar un banco, que placer!*, Montevideo: AlterEdiciones, 2009, pp. 74-75

[475] "Libertad para los presos politicos," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 19 November 1971, Uruguay National Library

[476] "Huelga de hambre en cuarteles: Los secuestados por el gobierno no podrán votar hoy," In *Ahora*, Montevideo, 28 November 1971, Uruuguay National Library

On November 29, Uruguayans voted in favor of the Colorado Party candidate Jorge Bordaberry, who won the presidency by less than a one percent margin 40.6 percent of the votes. The Blanco Party took second; and the Broad Front placed third with only 18.3 percent of the vote total.[477] The next day, an OPR-33 cell kidnapped Michele Ray, a foreign journalist and wife of famous French-Greek film director Costas Gavras. Ray, a sympathizer with armed struggle who was kidnapped by the Vietcong in 1967, debatably collaborated with the FAU to manufacture a sensationalist event that would communicate the OPR-33's commitment to armed struggle and anti-legality after the FA's shortcomings.[478] Ray was staying in the home of Maria Ester Gilio, an Uruguayan journalist with close ties to the MLN-Tupamaros. The two women developed a friendship while Gavras and Ray visited Uruguay to investigate for the film *State of Siege* (1972). Upon releasing Ray a few days later, the OPR-33 shared a communique reflecting on the limitations of the elections – she aided distributing the content to foreign media sources.

On 4 January 1972, the ROE held its first post-election rally, in which Gerardo Gatti, Hugo Cores, and Leon Duarte delivered speeches after having been recently released from detention. Appearing guant and malnourished from the torture and hunger strike, Gerardo Gatti reminded gatherers of the importance of maintaining an independent syndicalist movement, free of state direction and intervention. He proclaimed:

> This is why we give importance to union action as one of the key areas of direct action at a mass scale. Why should we give it such recognition in this country and why is this not the case in other countries of the continent? Here, we have a syndicalist movement, complete with its limitations and defects, with its diversity of conceptions for its direction, with 'uneveness' in its tradition and organization, and with all of this, it is not a vertical syndicalism, it is not a yellow syndicalism.

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[477] "Está detenido en el CGIOR dirigente de FUNSA," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 7 January 1971; SAG General Secretary Gerardo Gatti was also detained arbitrarily for two weeks in mid-March, "Confinan a Gerardo Gatti," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, circ. March 1971, Uruguay National Library
[478] Associated Press, "Michele Ray Kidnapped from Uruguay Home," In *New York Times*, New York, 1 December 1971 https://www.nytimes.com/1971/12/01/archives/michele-ray-kidnapped-from-uruguay-home.html

Even in the worst historical times of weakness and division, it has not admitted state regulation.[479]

Conclusion:

Between 1969 and 1971, labor won a sixteen percent wage increase.[480] However, cost of living continued to rise with 35.8 percent increase in housing costs and 50.3 percent increase in food costs.[481] While workers at FUNSA enjoyed the fruits of a successful wage increase campaign, management petitioned COPRIN to double the market price of the firm's products. Throughout 1971, over one hundred firms requested permission for price increases from CORPIN.[482] In the wool industry, firms responded to the upsurge of labor conflicts by firing over 75 percent of the industry's workforce—wool and textile investors instead imported as much as 40 million pounds of contraband wool from abroad.[483] The years saw an upsurge in conflicts but, according to the FAU and Tendencia, still no clear role for the CNT amongst them. Moreover, the government-sanctioned COPRIN was proving increasingly incapable of resolving tensions between labor and management.

The struggles of 1970 and 1971 would foment new solidarities independent of the CNT. Workers established zonal solidarities across different industries, such as in Carrasco, where workers at CICCSA, Seral, and Portland linked and coordinated actions. The period also laid the foundation for what would become the most visible representation of the Tendencia coalition,

[479] Gerardo Gatti, "El llamamiento de enero!A pelear juntos compañero!" In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 12 January 1972, Uruguay National Library

[480] Martin Weinstein, "Uruguay: Military Rule and Economic Failure," *In Politics, Policies, and Economic Development in Latin America*, ed. Robert Wesson, Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1984, pp. 42

[481] "La alimentacion ancarecio el 50,3% en 1971," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 31 January 1972, Uruguay National Library

[482] "Cientos de empresas reclaman aumentos de precios para sus productos ante la COPRIN," In *El Popular*, Montevideo, 16 October 1971, Uruguay National Library

[483] The wool industry downsized from four thousand to eight hundred employees by 1971; "El contraband de lana acrece desocupación," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 12 February 1972, Uruguay National Library

Los tres Fs (FUNSA, FOEB, and FUS). Finally, the period saw greater unity between the labor and student movements. Whereas some unions doubted the utility of working alongside the student movement, the bond strengthened throughout the era as both movements coordinated actions while maintaining boundaries and autonomy.

Finally, the Broad Front's failed electoral bid closed the door on a legal route to political economic change in the near future. Yet, everyday people's living conditions showed no signs of recovering to their pre-crisis levels and the government remained steadfast in upholding the Prompt Security Measures. The hegemonic Left could no longer rely on rallying people around the hope of change from above and thus had to look within for answers to growing unrest amongst popular classes. Left leadership, specifically those amongst the PCU who occupied visible platforms in parliament and the CNT leadership, was in need of a strategy that matched the urgency of its rhetoric. Increasing working class militancy, especially in the nation's majority small industrial firms, required a new and thoughtful response from movement leaders that proved attuned to the base.

CHAPTER 5:
TO KNOW HALF PEOPLE
Social Subversion, Internal War, and Military Takeover

Juliana's lover returned to the table after using the payphone at a Montevideo bar. "It happened," he said. She smiled back and the two continued the evening out while fighting their instincts to avoid drawing unwarranted attention. On 11 May 1972, an OPR-33 cell kidnapped Sergio Molaguero (23), a member of a neo-fascist youth organization and son of the Seral shoe factory owner. Juliana Martinez, a sunglass factory worker and recent dropout of the School of Fine Arts, and Ana Rosa Amoros, a bank worker at the state-owned Social Security Institute, carried out two months of reconnaissance to lay the groundwork for the operation. The women lived semi-clandestine lives while maintaining *Casa Emma*, a FAU/OPR-33 safehouse named after the anarcha-feminist Emma Goldman.

This chapter explores the period between January 1972 and June 1973. The Frente Amplio's defeat closed the electoral path to power and thus forced the Left to shift focus towards extra-parliamentarian strategies, especially the labor movement. The period saw dramatic shifts amongst, such as increased in labor militancy among PCU-affiliated unions and a new void created by the military defeat of the MLN-Tupamaros in April 1972. While the FAU remained committed to its two-foot strategy, half of its core leadership and the entirety of its armed apparatus exiled to Buenos Aires by end of 1973. Yet, the brief period of heightened labor unrest reflected the potential of the CNT and the possibility for armed direct action to complement it. This relationship is further explored in the case of the 1972 kidnapping of Sergio Molaguero. While the chapter offers a macro-analysis of labor conflict and Left activity vis a vis rising state repression, it also explores daily life of two women members of OPR-33 who ran a safehouse

and served as accomplices to Molaguero's kidnapping. The chapter concludes with the June 1973 military coup and CNT general strike in response.

In 1972 alone, public sector workers participated in 134 strikes, 351 work stoppages, and 7 occupations; private sector workers participated in 130 strikes, 95 work stoppages, and 80 occupations; students participated in 56 strikes and 40 occupations.[484] The period saw a boom in work actions because industries began coordinating days of action, including across sectarian lines—on July 5, COT and UNTMRA organized coordinated to occupy over one hundred factories for two days. The CNT made three calls for general strikes *with* workplace occupations as part of a campaign for a 40 percent wage increase. Although the campaign sparked widespread work actions across most of the country's main industries, the COPRIN offered a 20 percent raise while simultaneously authorizing price increases for consumer goods in September. Factory occupations remained common amongst textile workers (COT), who saw upwards of 2,500 layoffs by mid-1973. But PCU stronghold sectors such as metallurgy (UNTMRA), yarn (FOL), and tannery (FUECI) also began to frequently utilize the tactic. In one case, metalworkers at Etchepare Gil occupied their factory for 100 days after the release of 17 union delegates. Interior cities experimented with municipal-wide strikes. In Juan Lacaze, all factories stopped production for 3 hours to demand union recognition for workers at Indelaco (FOEB). In Maldonado, workers frequently walked out to join public administrators (ADEOM) on indefinite strike after not receiving their salaries for five months. Railway (AFE) and health service (FUS) workers placed their industries under worker control on numerous occasions throughout the year. Finally, teachers (FUM) nationwide launched a 64 day strike against an education reform bill

[484] Comando General del Ejercito, *Testimonio de una nacion agredida*, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 475

drawing solidarity from all sectors in the CNT. The "year of fury" marked a shift in CNT majority strategy to begin utilizing more combative tactics, including in the public sector.

Union membership increased thirteen percent nationwide primarily due to the successful union drive campaigns waged by workers at small plants. Most campaigns for union recognition met strong resistance from employers. In May 1972, the CNT National Encounter of Shop Committees gathered 1,800 delegates from 600 locals. In an opening statement, the Representative Table warned of a possible *coup d'etat* on the horizon and reaffirmed the CNT's commitment to "achieve structural transformations that will create the conditions so that exploitation of man by man will disappear.[485] The Congress concluded with a reaffirmation of the CNT Program, including escalation of the campaigns against wage freezes and state of internal war, but rejected a Tendencia-backed proposal to withdraw the CNT delegate from the COPRIN.[486]

State of Internal War

While labor militancy escalated so did state repression against the entirety of the Left. Labor conflict increased alongside armed direct action by the MLN-Tupamaros. In the first quarter of 1972, the MLN-T successfully executed more than 70 armed actions.[487] On 15 April 1972, the Coordinating Organizations for Anti-Subversive Operations (OCOA), or Joint Forces,

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485 Robert Jackson Alexander and Eldon M. Parker, *A History of Organized Labor in Uruguay and Paraguay* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2005, pp. 63-64

486 Delegates behind the proposal included: Funsa, BAO, COT, UTAA, Palacio de la Luz (UTE), Ghiringhelli, Serratosa, Coca-Cola (FOEB), Plenario Juan Lacaze, Plenario Mercedes (ADEOM), Anda, Español (FUS), Casmu (FUS), Tem, Seral, Atma, Alpargatas, SIMA, Aceiteros, Tanners Union (UOC), Ubur (AEBU), OMTUTU (UTU), and Professors Liceo #13, among others, from Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Accion directa anarquista: una historia de FAU*, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 355

487 Interview with Raul Sendic, "Los Tupamaros hacia una alternativa de poder," In *Punta Final*, No. 157, Santiago, 9 May 1972, pp. 4

declared a “state of internal war.”[488] One day prior, the MLN-T assassinated four Joint Force members due to their participation in what they called “Death Squads.” The April 15 operative against the MLN-T resulted in eight deaths and the arrest of high officers, including Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro and David Cámpora. That same evening, Joint Forces team raided the PCU central headquarters. On April 17, a Joint Forces operation resulted in the deaths of eight Party leaders at the PCU local in Paso Molino. The military attack at Paso Molino sought to invalidate the PCU by provoking it to move towards political violence and thus direct confrontation with the state.[489] By September 1972, authorities recaptured MLN-T leaders José Mujica, Mauricio Rosencoff, and Raul Sendic. Upwards of five thousand people were prosecuted by military courts on charges of sedition, including a handful of militants from the FAU.[490] The offensive crippled the MLN-T and left a lasting impression on the Left.[491]

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[488] On 9 September 1971, President Areco formed the Coordinating Organizations for Anti-Subversive Operations (OCOA) and called upon the military to take over matters of subversion.
While police and military began collaborating against Left opposition in 1969, less than twenty percent of military resources and personnel went towards anti-subversion efforts. Prior to the formation of OCOA, Armed Forces involvement primarily included the organizing and sharing of US intelligence documents to form profiles of Uruguayan political activists who travelled to socialist countries, such as Cuba. The United States also offered assistance by training servicemen. Between 1950 and 1979, nearly 3,000 Uruguayan military men trained at the US Army School of the Americas (SoA). Between 1970 and 1975, roughly 310 trained at the SoA with nearly half dedicated to “Internal Security Operations.” The Uruguayan military recruited primarily from poor rural regions that had not been exposed to the Left ideologies and struggles centered in Montevideo, Wolfgang S. Heinz and Hugo Fruhling, *Determinants of Gross Human Rights Violation by State and State-sponsored Actors in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina, 1960-1990*, Cambridge, MA: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1999, pp. 354-57

[489] While authorities largely turned a blind eye to the PCU’s hidden stockpile of six hundred AR-15 rifles, they hoped to provoke the Party to pick up arms in order to justify its illegalization and subsequent violence against it, Sergio Israel, *La enigma Tribal: una investigación periodística sobre el coronel Ramon Trabal: su persona, su actividad militar política, y su nunca aclarado asesinato en Paris*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2002 , pp. 75

[490] Aldo Marchesi, “Political Violence and the Left in Latin America, 1967-1979,” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, Ed. William Beezley, New York: Oxford Press, April 2015, http://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-89

[491]Over the next few years the MLN-T's organizational framework was shattered not just due to state repression, but also due to a lack of strategical coherency among members, in which militants continued many of the debates regarding class struggle, syndicalism, and mass mobilization that caused friction within *El Coordinador* in 1964. The weakened organization and disparate communication between militants lead to an effort to reform the organization under a more centralized structure, pro-Moscow disposition, and Marxist-Leninist vanguard strategy, Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, *Historia de los Tupamaros*, Montevideo: Tae Ediciones, 1994, pp. 112

mid-1972, the FAU produced an internal document that assessed the state of the revolutionary Left, specifically the shortcomings and subsequent dismantling of the MLN-Tupamaros. The anarchists allotted the failure of the MLN-T to their use of the *foco* strategy, one that put their armed organization at risk by acting as a disparate paramilitary force as opposed to serving as a tool for escalating mass social conflict.[492] They assured that the MLN-T did not lack connections to popular movements out of neglect, but instead could not strike a balance between armed struggle and mass action due to prioritizing the former.

Although the FAU expressed disagreement with the MLN-T's *foco* strategy, one that had caused a political antagonism between the two groups throughout the sixties, the organization expressed a heartfelt solidarity with fallen members of the MLN-T, and a sincere sadness regarding the loss of an accomplice:

> Until today, armed activity was predominately oriented around the *foco* conception. We disagreed with this conception from the very beginning – we saw and highlighted its weaknesses […] and we oriented our practice along an alternative line. Against all else, above our own shortcomings, or own mistakes, time and actions have given us reason. We do not rejoice in seeing so many of our comrades from the MLN-T, murdered, tortured, and imprisoned after all that marvelous effort they have made to build up a revolutionary movement in the recent years. We cannot be satisfied with the fact that what we predicted years ago is now coming true. Those dead are our dead. Those tortured are our tortured. They are just as much comrades as those comrades of our own Organization, who today are now enduring savage torture themselves, and are putting their lives out there to defend the principles, life, and line of our Organization.[493]

The FAU viewed the MLN-T as one of the few Latin American revolutionary organizations to move beyond the *foco* strategy, specifically through their use of urban guerrilla. Although the

[492] Abraham Guillen, the MLN-T's main intellectual and strategical point of reference, echoed the FAU's critique in his impactful *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla* (1973). Guillen, a Spanish anarchist exile residing in the River Plate, recognized the FAU's tactical support for workplace conflicts as more accurately reflecting the ideas moved forth in his text. He drew parallels between their approach to armed action and that of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) in the years prior to the Spanish Civil War, Abraham Guillen, *Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla*, New York: William Morrow, 1973, pp. 273

[493] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 4

MLN-T's tactics represented an attempt to depart from *foco* orthodoxy, they were still informed by and unable to fundamentally break from the strategy throughout their ten years operating as an armed organization.[494]

The FAU offered four main critiques of *foco* strategy. First, the FAU critiqued the sense of urgency to initiate armed struggle due to *objective* conditions, such as the technological underdevelopment of Latin American states, the economic impoverishment of the majority of Latin American populations, and the popularity of revolution in the collective imaginary. Yet, this rush caused expectations of immediate results, which did not come about aside from various reform-minded concessions in the political arena.[495]

Second, they critiqued the assumption that political ideologies, or *subjective* conditions, would radicalize alongside armed struggle, especially as the guerrilla demonstrates its strength through military victories. However, the FAU recognized that military victories did not provide the means for ideological development among the masses. Instead, they converted the idea of insurrection into a grand myth, something achievable upon the advancement of the guerilla vanguard and thus detached from everyday life. Such a myth was rooted in the earthshattering events of the Paris Commune (1871), Soviet Revolution (1917), and Spanish Revolution (1936), which saw the masses running to the streets to construct barricades and defend a set of ideals rooted in a certain revolutionary praxis. These historical cases continued to play a role in the leftist imaginary and to offer a sort of prescription for achieving a revolutionary situation. Whereas collective action provided a clear proactive role for everyday people, *foco* strategy maintained their roles as witness to a military theatre.[496] Similarly, Abraham Guillen, the MLN's

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[494] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 4
[495] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 5; 7
[496] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 5; 9

guiding strategical influence, argued that the organization's strategy was limited to encounters between the guerrillas versus the army and/or police, which ended up with "the people [being] caught in the middle."[497]

Third, the FAU viewed foco as unique to rural areas, where guerrillas could "strike and disappear" and always stay in movement. Urban guerrillas served to complement their rural counterparts by laying the foundation for their eventual arrival to the metropole and thus the final victory against the state. Instead, the FAU looked towards historical examples of urban armed struggle in the anarchist tradition, specifically those of Spain's Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), who used "propaganda by the deed" to confront workplace strife.

Finally, they challenged the action-repression dialectic, or the assumption that generalized state violence would motivate everyday people to action. Instead, as repression increasesd the armed apparatus takes on a more privileged, or vanguard, role.Such polarization created an opportunity for the state to mobilize behind the "old ideological myths of bourgeois liberalism," such as elections and legality, which were more likely to win the support of everyday people due to the state's hegemonic position. While *foco* strategy often made ground towards national liberation, such as sparking foreign capital flight, it only strengthened the relationship between the domestic military and national bourgeoisie, thus doing nothing to challenge the fundamental social relationship under capitalism, labor and resource appropriation.[498]

The document assured that the MLN-T's failure was due to their replication of the foco model; not the result of their use of an armed strategy. Instead, the FAU offered a reassuring commitment to armed struggle, declaring, "The process of deterioration is clearer than ever.

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[497] Abraham Guillen, *Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla*, New York: William Morrow, 1973, pp. 269.
[498] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 15

Nothing indicates, therefore, that we have to change our strategy, and in this strategy, the armed struggle takes on a fundamental role."[499] The document concluded: "Are the comrades who have participated in *foco* strategy revolutionaries? Yes. Is *foco* an efficient revolutionary strategy? No. Instead, *foco* is an erroneous strategy that is negative and dangerous for making the revolution."[500]

In a follow-up document titled *Huerta Grande* (1974), the organization further developed the concept of *especifismo*, or party anarchism. The document emphasized the importance of integrating theory and praxis:

> Without a theory one runs the risk of examining every problem individually, in isolation, starting from points of views that can be different in each case, or examining them based on subjectivity, guesses, or presentation…If we have insufficient or incorrect knowledge, we will not have a program but only a very general line, difficult to implement at all the places the party is inserted. If there is no clear line, there is no efficient political practice. The political will of the party then runs the risk of getting diluted, "voluntarism" in action ends up becoming just doing whatever comes up out of sheer good will, but does not determine the outcome of events, based on its inaccurate previsualization…The class struggle has existed long before its theoretical conceptualization. The struggle of the exploited did not wait for the elaboration of a theoretical work. Its existence precedes knowledge about it, it was there before being known about, before the theoretical analysis of its existence.[501]

The document went on to distinguish between theory and ideology—the former being a "scientific" instrument rigorously elaborated with the intention of understanding reality and the latter being a set of ideas influenced by reality, but not of it. In other words, theory of class struggle can only be developed by examining evidence of its praxis.[502]

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[499] *COPEI*, Montevideo, 1972, pp. 3
[500] *COPEI* (II), Montevideo, 1972, pp. 14-15
[501] "Huerta Grande," Montevideo, 1974, Mechoso Family Archive; for English version, see Pedro Ribeiro's 2009 translation published by Black Rose Anarchist Federation http://blackrosefed.org/huerta-grande/
[502] "Huerta Grande," Montevideo, 1974, Mechoso Family Archive

Seral, Sergio Molaguero, and the Women of Casa Emma

While the MLN-T escalated guerrilla action in the face of state repression, resulting in upwards of 30 assassinations in the first nine months of 1972, the FAU/OPR-33 remained dedicated to their understanding of armed action as complementary to labor conflict.[503] The coordination between armed cell and mass front is best represented in the May 1972 kidnapping of Sergio Molaguero. A network of intelligence gatherers and supporters laid behind OPR-33 armed interventions. Such invisibilized and under-documented labor served as a lynchpin for armed organizations throughout the continent. Women protagonists predominately participated in this form of labor.[504] Like their MLN-Tupamaro rivals, the FAU did not advance a clear gender analysis nor incorporated demands for gender equality into a revolutionary vision. Whereas the MLN-T saw gendered domestic labor as oppressive and sought to liberate women from this sphere, the FAU recognized domestic workers as potential protagonists acting from within their role in the domestic sphere. A network of intelligence gatherers and sympathizers laid behind the OPR-33's armed interventions. Women commonly served as *encargadas* (heads) of mixed-gender surveillance cells, which entailed taking on more organizational and cognitive labor, such as filing documents, identifying and solving problems, synthesizing information, and remembering deadlines.[505] Although the responsibilities were highly gendered, female militants

[503] Comisión de Constitución, Códigos, Legislación General y Administración, *Familiares de víctimas de los enfrentamientos armados ocurridos entre los años 1962 y 1976*, President Tabaré Vázquez et al., Folder No. 1628, March 2007, https://legislativo.parlamento.gub.uy/temporales/D2007030926-004897406.pdf

[504] Women members of the FAU/OPR-33 rarely participated directly in armed direct action tactics, such as kidnappings and robberies. They sometimes served as lookouts, but they primarily acted in the rearguard by information gathering.

[505] In 26 interviews with ex-members of OPR-33, only one recognized a practice of gendered division of labor within the organization. All others insisted that the organization never intentionally divided tasks by gender. Various works on the MLN-Tupamaros have encountered a similar negation of such practice. Yet members of OPR-33 unanimously agreed that women were not present in the armed direct actions for safety purposes, but they insisted that this had more to do with questions of seniority, experience, and the small number of armed militants more broadly due the organization's primary focus on building popular power. The MLN-T, which saw armed struggle as the revolutionary vanguard, emphasized an equal role for women in armed direct actions. They even wrote about this in a November 1971 text with a section dedicated to "revolutionary women." The text declared: "It is essential

recall feeling equal to their male counterparts and insist that a gendered hierarchy did not exist. Edelweiss Zahn recalls, “Intelligence was no small task.”[506]

Women militants embraced a counter-subjectivity that required sacrifice and compromise in their everyday lives to fit the mandates of a political strategy in an amplified social war. Ernesto Che Guevarra famously labeled this transformation as the *hombre nuevo* (new man), a clearly gendered descriptor that omits the ways in which women militants throughout the continent took on revolutionary subjectivities. Women militants resignified their everyday labor in the rearguard of social unrest and thus provided an integral, yet invisibilized, role in maintaining a revolutionary infrastructure. Whereas the traditional role of household labor has served to reproduce value-producing (male) labor power, the women of *Casa Emma* contributed to socialized struggle by redirecting home labor to a political organization antagonistic to both the market and the state. Rather than produce and reproduce value, the OPR-33 expropriated and redistributed value from the possession of banks and business owners as part of an anti-capitalist and anti-statist project. Their habitual compromise in the name of a revolutionary project challenged liberal feminist understandings of autonomy as personal choice and option, or “living a life of one's own choosing.”[507]

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for the militant woman to find in her own revolutionary comrades the just understanding of her limitations, in order that her revolutionary role be efficacious and in order that the work of the group overcome prejudices so that there will no longer exist ‘male’ jobs and ‘female’ jobs, but rather the necessary complementarity which the revolutionary task as a whole requires.” Both organizations insisted that carrying arms leveled the gender hierarchy between men and women militants, Jane Jaquette, “Women in Revolutionary Movements in Latin America,” In *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1973, pp. 351; Lindsay Churchill, *Becoming the Tupamaros: Solidarity and Transnational Revolution in Uruguay and the United States*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014; Edelweiss Zahn, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 June 2017; "Lista de propuesta para integrar la dirección del sector,” OPR-33 Folder, Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive

[506] Edelweis Zahn, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 June 2017; Juliana Martinez , Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017; Ana Rosa, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 1 May 2017; America Lopez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 22 April 2017

[507] Amy R Baehr, "Liberal Feminism", In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Palo Alto: Stanford Press, Fall 2018

The everyday lives of both women subverted hegemonic gender roles of the epoch by participating in social production and socialized struggle, and thus took on a unique counter-subjectivity. Rather than exacerbate a tension between public and private, or *calle* (street) and *casa* (house), women militants in the rearguard acted from a space in which they were considered experts, the home. They acted as much more than supporters—their labor was primary and fundamental.[508] Moreover, Uruguayan women's participation in the burgeoning global sexual revolution depended on one's class position. According to Ana Laura DiGiorgi:

> Participation in activities that defined a particular youth culture, including the possibilities to enjoy sexual liberation… depended much more on one's class position tan the traditions of their particular family. It required material, cultural, and symbolic resources – to purchase modern clothing, to dance rock n' roll in the clubs, to sing in English, to disavow one's father with a miniskirt, to go to the pharmacy and purchase a pill, and to be capable of not coming home to sleep in one's family home.[509]

While a few women militants of the FAU participated in youth countercultural, including sexual liberation and free love, the organization's majority working class background led to a gendered division of militancy that resembled tradition gender roles prevalent at the time.

I situate women's labor in the narrative of a 1972 political kidnapping of Sergio Molaguero. While narratives of armed intervention in the Southern Cone remain well-documented in police files and media outlets, little is known about the everyday lives of militants nor the broad organizational infrastructure within which these actions occurred, especially the key contributions of women. Media representations and scholarly analysis commonly reinforce a

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[508] Linda Reif's telling work on women guerrillas throughout the continent identifies two key barriers to women's participation in armed organizations, including 1) structural disenfranchisement via resource maldistribution along gendered lines, and 2) organizational attitudes regarding women, including lack of attention to women's issues and patriarchal internal dynamics amongst guerrillas themselves. She recognizes that Latin American men deferred to and recognized women as experts of the home. Such attitudes, combined with their ability to raise less suspicion then men, situated them in what the author calls *supportive roles*, Linda Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements: A Comparative Perspective," In *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1986

[509] Ana Laura de Giorgi, "La otra nueva ola: jóvenes mujeres comunistas en el Uruguay de los 60," In *Revista Izquierdas*, No. 22, Santiago, 2015, pp. 222

gendered hierarchy of labor by rendering it invisible or secondary due to its location in the rearguard. Yet, a study of this labor with attention to autonomy and compromise offers a unique insight into revolutionary Left counter-subjectivity at this historical conjuncture of amplified social war.

Ana Rosa Amoros and Juliana Martinez, The Women of Casa Emma

Ana Rosa, Juliana, and two male militants made up *Torres* (tower), an OPR-33 intelligence cell.[510] They operated the cell out of *Casa Emma*, an OPR-33 safe house inhabited by the two women members of the team. Ana Rosa, a bank teller at the state-owned Social Security Bank (BPS), began participating in FAU as a collaborator in 1969. Throughout high school, she belonged to the Catholic Association of Students and teachers, a Montevideo-based liberation theology project lead by Father Jorge Techera. The bank teller's union (AEBU) remained a FAU stronghold beginning in 1968, when a dissident caucus lead by FAU militant Hugo Corres won the union elections. A fellow bank worker recruited her after a brief conversation about her prior political militancy. She began participating by distributing *Cartas de FAU*, an illegal underground newsletter. Ana Rosa also collaborated by storing the *Cartas* other FAU-related materials, such as autoparts and hardware, in her family home. Her father, who served as Deputy Representative of Rivera Department, held parliamentary immunity due to his role in national politics. In mid-1971, Ana Rosa joined OPR-33 and accepted the responsibility of operating the safe house.[511]

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[510] Each cell had one *encargado* who was responsible for keeping contact with the *Fomento* (directorate) by way of an intermediary and for organizing information within the group, "Lista de propuesta para integrar la dirección del sector," Montevideo, cir. 1972, Mechoso Family Archive
[511] Ana Rosa, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017

Juliana joined the cell after one year participating in the ROE. In 1970, she moved to Montevideo from the northeast border town Chuy and began her trajectory as a student at the School of Fine Arts. She had no political formation nor participation prior to arriving. She felt moved to participate in an anarchist political project after her cousin gifted her Daniel Guerin's *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (1970). However, she remembers struggling to comprehend the complex debates surrounding the ideology during student union meetings, where the FAU's brand of Latin Americanist anarchism often clashed with a more traditionalist vision popular amongst Fine Arts students.[512] She eventually joined the ROE and participated in various solidarity campaigns with striking workers at various Montevideo factories. An intermediary eventually approached her about taking on intelligence-gathering responsibilities in OPR-33. She recalls joining without second thought, even after being warned that participation would likely result imprisonment, exile, or execution. She moved into *Casa Emma* in late 1971. Soon after inhabiting the house, Juliana dropped out of school and began working full time in an eyeglass factory.[513]

The quaint house was located in Montevideo's Brazo Oriental neighborhood. The women, both in their early twenties, claimed to be students. This narrative helped explain the frequent visits from other members of the organization. While they received a small stipend from the organization, the women worked in the formal sector to pay for rent and living costs. They kept up the home's maintenance, received a daily newspaper, and hired a gardener to visit once a

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[512] The FAU broke from orthodox anarchism after declaring support for the Cuban Revolution in 1962. They operated with a central committee rather than general assembly.
[513] Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

week to care of the garden. Ana Rosa recalls, “We were two people living a normal life…We had a life that resembled everyday life in the rest of the country.” [514]

Yet, the domestic sphere served as the primary site of the women’s political labor. They hosted weekly meetings where participants sought to develop a shared analysis of the national reality. The FAU published content from the conversations in *Cartas* and drew upon it to develop appropriate strategies and tactics in its mass front. They studied daily newspapers to compile a photo album of politicians, factory owners, and members of neo-fascist organizations to preempt intelligence gathering for potential interventions. They filed the albums in secret compartments fabricated behind dressers and vanities within the house. Finally, the women participated in physical training exercises, including weight-lifting, aerobics, and self-defense. Ana Rosa recalls frequently practicing lifting one another up off the ground in a drill to simulate assisting a fallen team member while running from authorities.

The home served as a space of refuge but also required attention to detail to avoid unwarranted attention from neighbors. The women had to pay close attention to symbols and references to politics within the home. Prior to a meeting, a visiting militant noticed they had decorated a vanity dresser with a red and black ribbon. He demanded they remove it for security purposes should the house be visited by police.[515] Juliana spent hours in front of the house with yarn and a crochet hook imitating hand motions although she did not know how to knit. She recalls feeling anxiety about household malfunctions that necessitated a handyman or plumber to

[514] Ana Rosa, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017; After a raid of a FAU/OPR-33 safehouse in El Cerro, neighbors remembered the home’s occupants as three youths who “lived a normal life planting vegetables and raising chickens in a small improvised coop of bricks and blocks,” “Descubrieron un cubrir donde estuvo Molaguero,” In *El Pais,* Montevideo, 7 August 1972, Uruguay National Library
[515] Ana Rosa, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017

enter the home. The organization thus relied on its own network of trusted repairmen who shared common skills and maintained on-call.[516]

Relationships within the armed cell remained compromised due to security precautions. The women knew one another, their neighbors, and fellow members of OPR-33 by way of an alias. But safeguarding personal information was very important for the inhabitants and visitors alike because any revealing of information could compromise a fellow militant should another member get caught and interrogated. These security measures became even more important when hosting clandestine members who sometimes passed time at the house before leaving the country to evade warrants. They interacted with a strict focus on political labor and took caution not to stray into any personal information about their interests, backgrounds, or identities. In one gesture of trust, a visitor shared her real name with Ana Rosa. The four members of Torres had no contact with FAU/OPR-33 militants outside of their intermediary and those who passed through the house. [517] Militants not only compartmentalized tasks but also social relationships.

The women's political labor also required them to compromise their social lives outside of the organization. While they participated in social activities popular amongst Uruguayan youths, such as moviegoing and nightlife, they could not share information regarding their activity with anyone, even their closest friends. Within Left circles, youths knew that their friends could potentially be participants in clandestine armed organizations. This mandated a social code in which such inquiries and topics of conversation remained taboo. They distanced themselves from friends and family members in order to maintain boundaries. Juliana recalls feeling anxious when converting previously substantive relationships to superficial encounters.

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[516] Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

[517] Some visitors were high-profile clandestine militants and had to participate in meetings behind a ski mask.

While she remained in touch to avoid raising suspicions, she struggled to balance between maintaining the façade of her previous self and her militant counter-subjectivity.

Their universe of potential love interests was limited to those they met within the armed wing of the organization. They could not date outside of this circle because sharing information regarding their activities, even within the confines of a romantic relations, could compromise both individual's security.[518] This became even more complicated if one member of the couple was fully clandestine. Juliana recalls balancing her relationship with security needs after authorities issued a warrant for her arrest in July 1972. She maintained relationships with her fully legal partner and friends but feared for their safety in the event that authorities came looking for her while they were together. She remembered feeling like she was putting the people closest to her at risk. She shared, "Sometimes the flow of life brought you into situations in which you would be together with people. The idea was to do so as little as possible, but sometimes it just happened."[519]

Militants struggled to balance between their desires and needs as individuals and their responsibilities to the organization. They often felt guilty for not attending worker solidarity actions, such as picket lines and rallies, even when the timing clashed with their responsibilities in the rearguard.[520] Juliana remembers having little time for leisure. She attended one of Montevideo's many beaches only once while living in the safe house. She shared the experience with fellow members of Torres. The day trip brought her a feeling of joy and freedom irreplicable elsewhere in the city.[521] But, the feeling was fleeting.

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[518] Similar to the MLN-Tupamaros, the FAU/OPR-33 saw both maternity and romantic relationships as burdensome and distraction.
[519] Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017
[520] Lilian Celiberti, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 5 July 2017
[521] Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

Seral: A Fight for Dignity [522]

On 12 April 1971, 308 workers at the Seral shoe factory began a campaign for union recognition after plant owner José Molaguero insisted that they appear for work on a holiday weekend.[523] A group of 18 workers from the vulcanization section refused to comply due to having planned a fishing trip together. Molaguero fired the entire section and the plant's workers responded with a strike. They lamented management's frequent firings, refusal to pay maternity leave and overtime, child labor practices, and denial of break time. Molaguero gained notoriety for personally entering the women's restroom to mandate workers return to their posts if they took longer than two minutes.[524] Management developed a reputation for using a strong hand as the sole competitor to Funsa's national monopoly over athletic shoe production. On April 22, management resolved the strike by recognizing the collective bargaining unit and reinstating all fired workers.[525]

Julio Ojeda, the union's elected General Secretary, was a member of the ROE. He and five co-workers served as liaisons between the Seral union and the FAU.[526] Seral workers looked towards the UOESF as a point of reference because of their hard-fought campaign against anti-union employer Pedro Saenz—the union's leadership selected Leon Duarte as an outside consultant. They gathered frequently in the UOESF local to meet with members of the ROE,

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[522] This story incorporates an intricate look at the Seral shoe factory conflict by request of the protagonists themselves, who continue to see their activity as embedded in popular social conflict. They insisted that their protagonism be situated as part of a broader narrative of the conflict to avoid misrepresentations of heroism and adventurism.
[523] The workforce included 90 women and 83 minors.
[524] "Seral: mas de 300 despidos," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 10 September 1971, Uruguay National Library
[525] Sergio Molaguero, *Conocer la verdad: la historia de mi secuestro.* Montevideo: Artemisa Editores, 2008, pp. 60; "El 'benefactor' Molaguero pierde una batalla," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 29 April 1971, Uruguay National Library
[526] The ROE affiliates included José Estevez, Rogelio Alavarez, Omar Fernández, Rodolfo Paez y Joaquín Texeira, Juan Carlos Mechoso, Private Correspondence with Author, Montevideo, 11 September 2018

including students from local high schools and fellow independent unions, such as Portland Cement and CICSSA paper mill.

Although the union earned recognition, Molaguero continued the use of draconian practices on the shop floor. Foremen painted the factory walls with tar to prevent workers from leaning on them for rest. They prohibited conversation and penalized workers with two hours lost pay if they were caught laughing. On 14 May 1971, management fired 32 underage workers after a law was passed to limit child labor to 6 hour workdays. After over a month of failed negotiations, Seral's workers went on strike and won their rehiring after 24 hours.[527]

Yet, the union continued to pursue outstanding demands. On 26 August 1971, management closed the plant after four months of stalemate negotiations regarding salary increases, workload, maternity leave, and child labor practices. Molaguero, the sole proprietor of the enterprise, enjoyed earnings at one thousand times higher than the average worker's anual salary. Rather than capitulate to a Ministry of Labor ruling in favor of the Seral union, Molaguero closed the factory and fired all 308 employees.[528] Workers frequently utilized partial and slowdown strikes throughout the negotiations and met the lockout with an occupation. After only three days, police raided the plant takeover and forced workers out at gunpoint.[529] With supper from the ROE, Seral workers launched a boycott campaign against the buying and selling of Seral brand shoes. [530]

Molaguero utilized his son's networks within the neo-fascist organization Uruguayan Youth on Foot (JUP) to recruit strikebreakers.[531] Intimidation became commonplace. Nelson

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[527] Juan Carlos Mechoso, "Seral," Montevideo, Mechoso Family Archive
[528] "Obreros de Seral ¡Firmes en la pelea!" In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 12 January 1972, Uruguay National Library
[529] "Seral: mas de 300 despidos," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 10 September 1971, Uruguay National Library
[530] "La leccion de FUNSA ocupada," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 7 July 1972, Uruguay National Library
[531] "Desde Santa Lucia llega la marcha de la dignidad," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 23 November 1971, Uruguay National Library

Hardoy, a shift manager and member of the JUP, provided the names of union agitators to local police forces, who frequently raided homes. Demonstrations outside the factory often drew violence from strikebreakers. In one case, a member of the JUP struck a child in the face while distributing fliers in front of the plant. Police frequently arrested workers and their family members during public gatherings. Three workers and two minors were detained for distributing fliers; five workers spent three days in prison for painting a wall with propaganda; and a hired driver of a *perifoneo* (mobile loudspeaker) was detained for 24 hours. Family members commonly faced harassment from police officers upon visiting detainees. Montevideo's Sub-Commissioner of Police once insulted a group of workers' wives, insisting, "Go wash yourselves, filthy women!"[532]

On 8 December 1971, forty workers set out on a caravan from the Seral's plant in Santa Lucia, Canelones. The "March for Dignity" left without destination in an effort to galvanize support throughout the Montevideo metropolitan area. Eleven workers were detained before the march finally settled in Cerro Norte. Within a week, the encampment grew to nearly one thousand. Police eventually raided the camp and forced the marchers to relocate to San Rafael Church in El Cerro, where a dozen workers initiated a hunger strike for over one week. On Christmas eve, a group of fifteen Seral workers and ROE militants escalated the conflict by vandalizing storefronts of vendors who did not respect the boycott, including the pro shop at the Punta Carretas Golf Club. The group used Molotov cocktails to set fire to Casa Sanz, Montevideo's oldest sporting goods store, causing upwards of ten million Uruguayan pesos. The shop owner insisted he was not selling Seral brand shoes.[533]

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[532] "Santa Lucia: los tiempos cambian," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 20 October 1971, Uruguay National Library
[533] "Casa Sanz: los incendiarios eran empleados de Seral," In *Acción*, Montevideo, 24 December 1971, Uruguay National Library

The conflict continued into the new year. Authorities repeatedly evicted various protest encampments as workers moved throughout the city. In April, Leon Duarte began closely conversing Seral's ROE caucus to question the possibility of an armed intervention on behalf of OPR-33. Duarte's internal report back to the FAU acknowledged:

> It seems to be that Molaguero, the son of the owner and active shareholder in the company, has been insulting workers, groping female staff members, and encouraging a crackdown on the factory's workforce. He seems due for a kidnapping. It's clearly time to look beyond union action for a resolution of the dispute.[534]

Upon receiving confirmation from Seral's ROE caucus, a FAU intermediary relayed the task to Torres.

Members of Torres unanimously accepted the task of surveilling Molaguero.[535] Juliana recalls, "There was no discussion. It was clear because our job was simply to support the labor movement. There was no doubt among any comrade. And we knew that this kidnapping target had a girlfriend in Canelones."[536] Seral's workers shared plentiful tips regarding Sergio Molaguero's 1955 Ford Thunderbird and his weekly pattern of visiting Canelones. The team selected Juliana and Ramon to frequently visit the house and confirm the information. Twice a week, they traveled 60 kilometers each way to pass three hours together on a park bench, where they simulated flirting while surveilling the area. They held hands, cuddled, giggled, and played

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[534] "The FAU version of story of the Seral dispute and Molaguero kidnapping [as published in Lucha Libertaria]," *The Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU): Crisis, Armed Struggle, and Dictatorship, 1967-1985*, Kate Sharpley Library, 2009, pp. 41

[535] Cells often declined tasks based on their own perceived limitations, but the directorate simply assigned them to other cells instead. The consent process different dramatically with other armed organizations throughout the continent. For example, the MLN-T permitted militants to debate within their own cell, but prohibited militants from disobeying orders from their superiors and punished them with sanctions for doing so: "Article 27: Inferior units will be subordinated to superior units. The directives from them [superiors] are obligatory for them [inferiors]. Failure to comply is a discipline violation. Similarly, the lower ranks within any organism should comply with any command from their superiors," "Reglamento" (circa 1968), In *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros): documentación propia*, 2nd Edition, Caracas: Indal, 1972, pp. 69

[536] Juliana Martinez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 October 2017

with each other's hair to replicate a couple.[537] These gestures reflected a simulacrum of love and intimacy—both of which were limited due to their involvement in clandestine political labor. OPR-33 information teams often feigned romance while scouting targets because public displays of heteronormative romantic love proved least likely to raise suspicion. Such frequent interactions often resulted the two militants following in love with one another.

After two weeks scouting, Juliana quit her factory job. Her political work schedule became aligned with the schedules of Molaguero and another potential kidnapping target, the owner of the Divino mattress factory, where workers maintained a campaign for union recognition for over a year. She could not balance all three responsibilities. She decided to quit the factory job and thus began to rely on the organization for day-to-day living expenses. She dedicated herself fully to rearguard political labor. The decision represents a compromise that made her economically dependent on the organization yet independent of market social relations. She gained autonomy by disavowing her role as a wage laborer while embracing a singular role as protagonist in social subversion.

The team eventually compiled a detailed report after five weeks of surveillance. They identified Molaguero's girlfriend's home, his commuting patterns, and his time schedule. They also identified important geographical markers in the surrounding area, such as bridges and cow forests for hiding. They typed and passed the report to an intermediary who they met on a Montevideo side street.[538] Juliana waited patiently while she continued scouting at Divino.

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[537] The task required that Juliana draw upon her subjugated knowledge to avoid drawing unwarranted attention. She remembers paying close detail to her clothing style to avoid resembling an urban dweller. She drew reference from her upbringing in Chuy to recall the social codes specific to a small town, such as the infrequent use of makeup purses by women inhabitants. She feared running into friends or family members during the outing because such encounters would require explanation for why she had ventured so far from the capitol alongside a male companion.

[538] Passing information required precision and vigilance. In a prior exchange with the same intermediary, the military-police arrived and stopped Juliana's car prior to passing the information. The authorities searched the car to no avail and the intermediary left the scene. The militants knew to return the next day at the same time for what was

On May 11, a cell of four OPR-33 militants disguised themselves as military service men and set up a checkpoint along National Route 11. The cell failed in four previous attempts, including one risky error that lead to stopping a local politician.[539] The disguised militants detained Molaguero and transported him to a "people's jail" in El Cerro. The cell was previously used for holding the French journalist Michele Rey a year prior. Neighbors testified to hearing construction noises from the home nearly a year prior, but they gave it little thought considering the frequent informal building in the poor neighborhood[540] The FAU presented his father with a list of demands, including backpay compensation for striking workers, school supplies for local students, 100 pairs of jeans, jackets, shoes for children in a local slum, and publication of the agreed upon terms in all five mainstream press organs.[541] Amidst negotiations between the organization and Molaguero's lawyer, Joint Forces detained Leon Duarte and three other Funsa workers accusing them of participation in the kidnapping – the Funsa factory remained under occupation for duration of their two week detention.[542] On July 19, José Molaguero met all demands and his son was released. Media outlets reported that he was malnourished and lost 25 pounds due to receiving a daily meal of rice, cheese, and an apple. He decried the persistent playing of "protest music," such as Carlos Molina and Daniel Viglietti.[543]

called the *automatico,* a normalized practice to assure the exchange in the case of a botched prior attempt, Juliana Martinez, interview with Author, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

[539] On the first attempt (May 6), Molaguero elected a different route. On May 8, the teams failed to communicate Molaguero's departure due to the receiving team forgetting to turn on their walkie talkie. On May 9, the walkie talkie was interfered with by crossing radio signals. On May 10, the intercepting team mistakenly stopped the car of Deputy Bari Gonzalez, Sergio Molaguero, *Conocer la verdad: la historia de mi secuestro.* Montevideo: Artemisa Editores, 2008, pp. 40.

[540] "Descubrieron un cubrir donde estuvo Molaguero," In *El País*, Montevideo, 7 August 1972, Uruguay National Library

[541] "Dr…. El dia 11 del corriente," Montevideo, 12 Mayo 1972, Mechoso Family Archive

[542] "FUNSA ocupada," In *El Popular,* Montevideo, 23 June 1972, Uruguay National Library

[543] "Molaguero: estuve un mes encadenado y hambriento: en deplorable estado, ayer habló para los periodistas," In *El País*, Montevideo, 21 July 1972, Uruguay National Library; A member of the FAU/OPR-33 later shared that the food ration was comparable to that of working poor folks of the time.

A day after his release a Joint Forces raid captured Ana Rosa Amoros and Enylda Silveira Griot a *Casa Emma*. The latter arrived to the house a week prior after a warrant was issued for her role as guardian over Molaguero. Juliana and Ana Rosa would to the interior every Sunday to visit their families—Enylda remained in the home and ignited the stove for warmth. Soon it began emitting smoke so she moved it outside. A worried neighbor visited the home, but Enylda did not answer the door to avoid raising suspicion. The neighbor, who sent her granddaughter to the home each week for tutoring, became concerned and notified police. A Joint Forces team arrived hours later and immediately identified Enylda from wanted photos. Ana Rosa denied any involvement in OPR-33 and insisted that Enylda was staying at the house after separating from her husband. She failed to convince the authorities but managed to remove a deodorant bottle from the bathroom window to warn Juliana upon her return.[544] Later that night, a nearby shopkeeper intercepted Juliana while she walked towards the home. The shopkeeper, a member of the Communist Party, dashed towards her to give her a wine bottle upon seeing her walk down the street. While simulating a chummy encounter, he warned her that the house was occupied by Joint Forces who awaited her return. She kissed his cheek and continued walking. She escaped into hiding with a warrant out for her arrest after police found documents revealing her identity inside the home.

The *Casa Emma* raid commenced a series of operations that broke the FAU/OPR-33's social and material infrastructure. Rather than utilize the established network of clandestine safe houses, Juliana had to rely on family and friends. She soon left for Buenos Aires with a fake

[544] The women knew to glance at the bathroom window to check for the bottle's presence before entering. Its absence signified that the house was unsecure and surveilled, Ana Rosa, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017

passport but felt estranged and feared being captured in a foreign country. She returned to Uruguay one month later and was eventually arrested in March 1973.[545]

On the same day as the *Casa Emma* raid, Leon Duarte (UOESF), Washington Perez (UOESF), Gerardo de Avila, (UOESF), Julio Ojeda (Seral), Hilda Ojeda (wife), and four other seral workers were detained for connection to the kidnapping and alleged membership in OPR-33. The raids also saw the arrests of Alberto Mechoso, Augusto Andres, Ivonne Trias, and "La Malet," some of whom served prior sentences but received warning that they could be detained thereafter for more interrogation. Funsa workers occupied the plant and published a communique recognizing the suspicious timing of Duarte's detention—he was scheduled to mediate negotiations between Seral workers and management after ten months of conflict.[546] The detainees arrived at the 5th Artillery Regiment, where Joint Forces authorities used a variety of torture tactics in hope of encountering information.

[545] Julian spent 11 years and 5 months in prison after being convicted by a military court for subversion, accomplice to kidnapping, and possession of fake documents. Ana Rosa served two years in prison after being sentenced for subversion (membership in a revolutionary organization). Authorities frequently raped and tortured both women while imprisoned. The torture tactics often relied on appeals to affect. For example, interrogators frequently threatened Ana Rosa with showing her the corpse of her recently deceased child. She recalls the difficulty of remaining noncompliant, declaring:

> There were things that we knew, like half the person. But we were accustomed to the role of using an alias, one could not give [the authorities] more information than what one knew. Sharing too much information was dangerous. It had nothing to do with the other person being bad or anything - me, I think that all of us in some way took in the enemy. In my case, I never thought that the torture I would receive was going to be so gutting. And that the rape would be so widespread… You think that you are brave, but then there are so many ways that they could break you down and manipulate you. Really, you feel like you are in the hands of monsters. You try to defend yourself, but there were so many things that kept happening. Then, after nine months my entire team ended up falling.

Ana Rosa suffered extreme back problems that left her immobile for the duration of her sentence. Guards began treating her for tuberculosis. Her father, who exiled to the French Basque Country after the coup, petitioned for her release for medical reasons with support from the International Red Cross. She exiled to Australia and soon after learned she was misdiagnosed—doctors and prison guards commonly collaborated to issue medicine treatment to prisoners for false medical diagnoses. She remembers feeling like a "lab rat" after learning she was negative, Juliana Martinez, Interview with author, Montevideo, 13 June 2017; Ana Rosa Amoros, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 10 May 2017

[546] "La situación en FUNSA," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 30 June 1972, Uruguay National Library

The detainees had to feign ignorance to avoid revealing their activity to the guards. Washington Perez lunged towards Andres and attempted to punch him upon his arrival. He then yelled profanities and accused him as serving an agent provocateur who collaborated with the FUNSA management. Days later, Generals Manuel Cordero and Washington Varela introduced Andres and Ivonne Trias to see if they knew one another. Both refrained from sharing even under pressure from waterboarding. Meanwhile, imprisoned MLN-T leadership and Uruguayan Joint continued to negotiate a permanent ceasefire. The conversations arguably lead to more frequent and brutal torture tactics against imprisoned members of the FAU as authorities hoped they could pressure the organization into following the footsteps of their rivals.
Andres remembers Alberto Mechoso and Ivonne Trias receiving the harshest expressions of torture. The latter once attempted suicide by slitting her own wrists after undergoing extreme torture.[547] Duarte's high profile status led the Uruguayan Parliament to formally acknowledge his torture and demand his release.[548]

The defeat of the MLN-T created further division between the FAU and PCU. In the absence of the MLN-T, the FAU represented the largest threat to PCU hegemony over the Left. The growing militancy of everyday workers proved the possibility for a new alternative, one rooted in mass protagonism rather than the activity of a small guerrilla vanguard. Tensions climaxed when the PCU mobilized its majority within the CNT to release a statement publicly denouncing the ROE. The statement came after skirmishes between the rival factions during a march. It labeled the ROE as "having nothing to do with the labor movement" and claimed that

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[547] Although they participated in the same cell, authorities could not draw the connection—while authorities first detained Andres for his role in Operation Apretesis, Trias escaped after serving as lookout on the street rather than enter the building, Augusto Chacho Andrés, *Estafar un banco—que placer!,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2009, pp. 74-75

[548] Secretaría de Derechos Humanos para el Pasado Reciente (ex Secretaría de Seguimiento de la Comisión para la Paz), Legajo LDD 111.

the gesture represented a "divisive and adventurist line."[549] In a following communique, the PCU accused the ROE of serving as a front for the CIA. For the FAU, the PCU's "sectarian" rhetoric served to distract from the CNT leadership's recent decision to cancel a general strike call.[550] The PCU previously reserved the latter label to describe the armed activity of the MLN-T, but they redirected it towards the ROE as the sole surviving threat to their hegemony within the Left.

On August 23, the ROE held a rally of support for Leon Duarte and Washington Perez at the Artigas Theatre. Upwards of 5,000 attended the event disguised as a homage to the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, political prisoners murdered by electric chair in 1927. The rally hosted speeches by Hugo Cores and Gerardo Gatti (FAU/ROE), Hector Rodriguez (GAU), Enrique Erro (*Unión Popular* – National Party), Armando Rodriguez (Movimiento 26 de Marzo/MLN-T), Zelmar Michillini (*Agrupación Avance* – Broad Front), and a delegate from CGT de los Argentinos (CGT-A). [551] All Uruguayan organizations aside from the FAU belonged to *La Corriente* (The Current), a radical faction within the Broad Front searching for alternatives to an electoral strategy. Mario Benedetti, a famous writer and member of the Corriente,

[549] "CNT Denuncia Acción Provocadora de la ROE," in *El Popular*, Montevideo9 August 1972
[550] Hugo Cores, "Después de cuatro meses de barbarie, somos capaces de reencontrarnos," In *Luchar Ahora*, ed. Comité Obrero Sacco y Vanzetti, Montevideo, August-September 1972, Mechoso Family Archive
[551] The Argentine visitor greeted the crowd with words of solidarity from Raimundo Ongaro, CGT-A General Secretary and Secretary of the Buenos Aires Graphic Artists Federation (FGB), and Augustin Tosco, *Luz y Fuerza* Secretary and leader of the *Cordobazo*. The CGT-A formed a militant sector Peronism that sought to resignify the ideology around an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-bureaucratic practice. The CGT-A shared many similarities with the Tendencia, especially its use of direct action tactics including armed intervention in labor conflicts by the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP). The CGT-A also reflected a synthesis of Left ideas around "unity in action." The FGB was originally founded by anarchists in 1857. Like in Uruguay, anarchist influence in graphic arts unions remained steady. In the late 60s and early 70s, an unnamed tendency with strong influences from the ROE formed within the union. Two of its members, Hugo Quijano and Raul Oliveira, were Uruguayan anarchists who participated grew up participating in the student movement with close ties to the FAU/ROE, Rafael Viana da Silva, "Um Anarquismo Latino-Americano: estudo comparativo e transnacional das experiências na Argentina, Brasil e Uruguai, 1959-1985" [Doctoral Thesis], Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, 2017, pp. 140

exclaimed, “Perhaps the grand defeat was necessary to remove an electoral strategy from its near sacred position… This kind of lesson can only be learned with experience.”[552]

The rally’s speakers shared a commitment to solidarity with political prisoners, anti-imperialism, salary increases, and *lucha* (struggle). They frequently reiterated the importance of unity in action—no one emphasized political parties nor elections. On the contrary, many bluntly denounced sectarianism. While speakers notably differed in the intensity of their rhetoric, they shared common ground in their tactful critique of the Communist Party. Zelmar Michellini declared:

> There has been so much list time trying to figure out where one does political work, the group to which he belongs, or the label upon his forehead. This fight must be understood and must be felt inside, and it is not the moment for treatises or useless thoughts, nor to uphold artificial preconceptions ... Those who enter into this struggle to establish divisions beyond the question of tactics establish barriers that sharply separate those who are in the fight, and that is deeply wrong. These people do not understand the meaning of history. I repeat that they are longing for the feelings of solidarity that we here have. It is very easy to be alongside someone with whom you always agree; it is very easy to fight side by side with someone whos shares all the same ideas. The depth of life is beyond discrepancies, it is understanding the meaning of struggle.[553]

Similarly, Gerardo Gatti decried:

> We need unity among the working class. We need unity to fight. But this fight of the working class should not be reduced solely to them. We think that this class is fundamental, that it is the primary force, but we should be able to, all of us, without sectarianism, with flexibility, to unite the working class with all of the population who works and suffers and wants to change their conditions.[554]

Finally, Hugo Cores proclaimed, “The problem is not one of discussion and dividing ourselves, but instead to go out into the street and fight, to occupy factories, to organize ourselves and

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[552] Quoted In Hugo Cores, *Sobre la tendencia combativa,* France, October 1983, pp. XVII, CEIU – Hugo Cores Archive

[553] Zelmar Michellini, “Les duele que no todos sean mansos,” In *Luchar Ahora*, ed. Comité Obrero Sacco y Vanzetti, Montevideo, August-September 1972, Mechoso Family Archive

[554] Gerardo Gatti, “Convocamos a todos a pelear unidos,” In *Luchar Ahora*, ed. Comité Obrero Sacco y Vanzetti, Montevideo, August-September 1972, Mechoso Family Archive

fight… Because we are living in a difficult moment in which we cannot show any weakness. One in which we cannot give any sign of division." He drew from examples of military boycotts in Funsa and Alpargatas, where workers refused to produce military supplies. On the day of the rally, railway workers announced they would no longer transport military personnel.[555]

In turn, Communists declined to echo the call to free political prisoners out of fear of reprisals from the Armed Forces. Instead, the Party insisted that the CNT remain committed to labor-specific issues rather than take up political positions. Antagonisms between the CNT majority and Tendencia in union meetings and publications, but also frequently spilled over into physical confrontations during street manifestations.[556]

Buenos Aires (Re)querido

After the rally, Uruguayan Joint Forces issued arrest warrants for FAU/ROE militants Hugo Cores, Gerardo Gatti, Elvira Suárez, Kimal Amir, Sara Lerena de Goessens, Mariaselva Echagüe, Darío Espiga, Carlos Goessens, Rubén Rodríguez Coronel, Silvia Valeron and Gonzalo Vigil.[557] They were forced into hiding and some began swiftly exiling to Buenos Aires. The Funsa plant remained occupied for over 100 days until Leon Duarte, Washington Perez, Julio Ojeda, and Gerardo De Avila were eventually released in mid-November 1972. Workers received the prisoners with a rally at the UOESF hall. De Avila could not address the crowd due to his poor physical condition after enduring harsh torture—he instead waved and blew kisses

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[555] Hugo Cores, "Después de cuatro meses de barbarie, somos capaces de reencontrarnos," In *Luchar Ahora*, ed. Comité Obrero Sacco y Vanzetti, Montevideo, August-September 1972, Mechoso Family Archive
[556] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 126
[557] Daniel Augusto Almeida Alves, "Arriba los que luchan! Sindicaismo revolucionário e luta armada a trajetória da Federaçao Anarquista Uruguaia: 1963-73" [Dissertation], Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal Rio Grande do Sul, 2016

from the stage. Augusto Andrés attended the event disguised and remained hidden in the back of the audience to uphold the narrative that he was unaffiliated with the group.[558]

Alberto Mechoso and Ivonne Triás remained in detention and continued receiving intensive torture for their refusal to share information about OPR-33. Authorities claimed they were responsible for Molaguero's kidnapping. Instead, they plotted prison break amongst themselves. As the planned date of escape approached, guards coincidentally mandated Trias to solidarity confinement and assigned a single soldier to watch over her, nullifying the militants' initial plan to escape together. On 21 November 1972, Alberto Mechoso broke from his cell, jumped the prison wall, and ran towards the North Cemetery. After crossing the Arroyo Miguelete, he flagged down a *juntapapeles* on a horse and buggy. The two men exchanged clothes before the informal worker offered his humble getaway vehicle. Mechoso maneuvered the horse and buggy through a police-ridden Barrio Cerrito until reaching the home of a friend and ex-colleague from his days working in the Swift refrigeration plant. Gerardo Gatti and Leon Duarte arrived to the refuge the next morning to transport him to a FAU safehouse in Ciudad Vieja, where a medic treated him for fractured ribs and amputated numerous fingers. After two weeks of recovery, Gerardo Gatti invited longtime friend Eduardo Galeano to meet and conduct an interview with Mechoso.[559] Galeano used an alias for his own security purposes and fabricated the interview's suburban Madrid location to give the impression that Mechoso had already fled the country. The interview provided detailed descriptions of the OCOA's various torture methods, including sessions of electrocution and waterboarding that lasted up to three

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[558] Augusto Chacho Andrés, *Estafar un banco—que placer!,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2009, pp. 74-75
[559] María Eugenia Jung and Universindo Rodríguez, *Juan Carlos Mechoso: anarquista*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2006, pp. 80-86

hours. He also testified as to having witnessed rape and genital electrocution as common practice against female prisoners. Mechoso concluded the interview by proclaiming:

> If there is anything that feels good when inside the prison underworld of my country, in the middle of electrocutions and waterboarding, it is knowing that one always has to be in the trenches. I am going to return to the trenches once more with the people of my class. Fighting. There, I am going to reunite with my family and my brother, who is also currently suffering persecution as well.[560]

Recognizing the difficulty of maintaining Mechoso's safety within Uruguay, the FAU utilized networks from its sympathizers list to arrange for Mechoso's escape to Argentina via private airplane. After one month in hiding, Mechoso departed from Aeropuerto de Melilla to Buenos Aires under the alias Alfredo Leizagoyen Cantonet. One week later, his wife traveled via commercial airliner under the alias Delia Toribia Rodríguez.[561] Mechoso and others spent the next six months laying an infrastructure for others to exile across the River Plate.

In the Face of a Coup, General Strike

The first half of 1973 saw at least 95 labor actions nationwide, including 33 strikes lasting three or more days with 24 of them including occupations – nearly half the conflicts were waged by Tendencia-affiliated unions. Of the 24 occupations, seven were carried out by unions belonging to the Textile Worker Congress (COT), including La Industrial (51 days), Montegal (27 days), and Industria Este (20 days). Cicssa, another Tendencia-affiliated union, carried out a 36 day occupation. Metalworkers (UNTMRA) showed a growing radicalism regardless of the PCU-aligned leadership – they carried out occupations at four different worksites. Finally, the

[560] Eduardo Galeano, Interview with Alberto Mechoso, "Desde el fondo del abismo," In Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de la Federación Anarquista Uruguaya*, Tomo IV, Montevideo: Ediciones Recortes, 2009, pp. 387-92
[561] María Eugenia Jung and Universindo Rodríguez, *Juan Carlos Mechoso: anarquista*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2006, pp. 86-88

first half also saw four CNT-wide partial strikes and two general strikes, including one with over half a million participants on June 21, the eve of the *coup d'état*.

The cleavage between the burgeoning new Left coalition and the PCU deepened after the Uruguayan military began openly intervening in politics in February 1972. On February 9, the Armed Forces released "Communiques 4 and 7," two cryptic statements regarding the military's role in politics:

> The Armed Forces neither adhere nor adjust their mental outlooks to any specific politically partisan philosophy, but seek to adjust their beliefs and orient their actions according to the native and original concept of an ideal Uruguay… which will offer the greatest well-being and happiness to all its sons. This concept will be achieved with the creation and consolidation in all Uruguayans of the mystique of Uruguayaness, which consists in recovering the great moral values of those who forged our nationality and whose basic facets are patriotism, austerity, disinterest, generosity, honesty, self-denial and firmness of character.[562]

PCU leaders, who maintained frequent conversations with factions within the military for nearly a decade, saw the announcements as reflecting a potential turn towards a progressive military takeover, similar to the military-led and Marxist-oriented Peruvian Revolution of 1968. The PCU strategy remained in line with Lenin's prescription to inspire a mutiny within the armed forces and court them to the side of revolutionaries. In the week following the communiques, CNT majority leadership and the PCU Central Committee secretly met multiple times with high level generals to discuss a tactical agreement between the military, CNT, and PCU. Publicly, the CNT leadership reiterated its call for a general strike in the face of a *coup d'état* with numerous public statements.[563] But Communist organs repeated, "There is no conflict between civil power and

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[562] For full transcription of both texts, see "Los comunicados 4 & 7 presente," In *El Muerto*, Montevideo, posted on 11 February 2011, http://elmuertoquehabla.blogspot.com/2011/02/los-comunicados-4-7-1973-presente.html

[563] The meetings consisted of General Gregorio Alvarez, Coronel Ramon Trabal, General Hugo Chiappe Posse, Brigadier Pérez Caldaz, Viceadmiral Olazábal, Gerardo Cuesta (PCU), Wladamir Turiansky (PCU), and José D'Elía, Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84*, Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 31; Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 436 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, "Preliminary Analysis of Possible External Orientation of Uruguayan Military," Montevideo,

military power, instead it is between oligarchy and *pueblo*."[564] Party leadership proposed converting Mayday 1973 into a festival to celebrate the new favorable political circumstance. On May 23, Secretary General Rodney Arismendi declared, "No one doubts that there are now circumstances for more unity among the *pueblo*… Now it is time that a worker, a student, a professor, a peasant, and a soldier join together in the street and act together."[565]

While the communiques eventually proved to offer false hope, they opened up a crisis in legitimacy for the Uruguayan government. Rather than implement structural reforms to combat the mounting economic and political crisis, especially the 94 percent rise in cost of living since 1972, Bordaberry made space for the Armed Forces as the new "locus of power."[566] In early April, the government announced the formation of the National Security Council (COSENA), a vehicle for involving the military in political decision making. The body representatives from all three branches of the Armed Forces and key government cabinet members.[567] While the February communiques opened frequent dialog between CNT leadership and Coronel Ramon Trabal, a rank officer with populist sympathies, the government's announcement solidified the prevailing line of conservative General Gregorio Alvarez within the military. On April 9, COSENA placed blame on the CNT for having created an economic crisis and announced its intentions to reform labor rights, specifically the right to strike.[568] Advocates argued that labor had become too politicized. Thereafter, the military declared their plan for national development

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11 February 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d330

[564] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la resistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 127

[565] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la reistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 128

[566] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 453 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, "Preliminary Recommendations Re U.S. Posture in New Uruguayan Situation," Montevideo, 13 February 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d331

[567] Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "The Future Role of the Military in Uruguay," Washington, 10 April 1973, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d333

[568] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84*, Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 32

to be "irreconcilable" with the interests of the CNT.[569] In one dramatic move, military officials took over the direction of train services. The Railway Union (UF), which had operated services under worker control numerous times throughout 1972, frequently disobeyed strike prohibitions for public sector workers. While the new military directorate announced their intentions to salvage a failing public transport industry, they also used the industry as a laboratory for the Armed Forces' further participation in politics.[570]

In a scathing critique of the Communist Party's position vis-à-vis the military, the FAU highlighted what seemed to be increasingly absurdist justifications for a strategy involving the Armed Forces. Notwithstanding the recent assassination of student Joaquin Klüver and public denunciation of torture by senators Enrique Erro and Zelmar Michellini, some CNT leaders claimed that military repression had toned down dramatically since September 1972.[571] The FAU and Tendencia In early May, the Bordaberry government prohibited a ROE rally in Montevideo. A week later, the Joint Forces detained Tendencia-affiliated militants throughout the country, including Sergio Benavidez (President of Fruit and Vegetable Union – Salto) and his wife, Arturo Echinique (Delegate of the Mercedes Roundtable), and Julio Arizaga (Delegate of the UTU Staff Union).[572] The FAU insisted upon moving beyond Marxist-Leninist dogma which fetishized a key role for the military. Instead, the FAU argued that the Uruguayan reality proved such a prescription was not possible. On May 31, the UOESF rejected an COSENA's offer to release union delegate Celso Fernandes in exchange for a public statement in support of the labor

[569] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 1176 From the US Embassy in Uruguay to the US Department of State, "Uruguay Two Months After the Crisis," Montevideo, 18 April 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d334
[570] "Ferrocarril: dos meses de directorio militar," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 13 June 1973, Uruguay National Library
[571] "Nuestra opinión sindical," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 22 May 1973, Uruguay National Library
[572] "Mas sindicalistas de la Tendencia detenidos," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 22 May 1973, Uruguay National Library

reform. The union made the following declaration in a text signed by Leon Duarte and stewards representing all four UOESF caucuses:

> At this moment, with as much clarity as possible, we convey our position of open and absolute rejection of any law or decree that implies restricting, preventing, or limiting union activity… These are unrestricted and unalienable rights that the working class has conquered in this country in hundreds of tough struggles for union freedoms in the course of almost a century of trade unionism.[573]

Moreover, the CNT responded to the labor reform bill with a variety of planned mobilizations over the next three weeks. They included a two hour work stoppage in the private sector on June 7; manifestations across the banking and meatpacking sectors between June 11 and 15; a two hour work stoppage by public administration workers on June 14; private sector worker manifestations in front of COPRIN between June 18 and 22; gathering of food service, health service, and bank workers on June 22; and a series of rallies in support of teachers between June 25 and 29. The FAU called the response "absolutely insufficient given the gravity of the situation." Not only did the itinerary fail to intersect conflicts by allotting industries specific days, but it also failed to synergize energy around existing conflicts in TEM, Cicssa, Atma, family services, Cativelli, Hisisa (COT), and the Central Bank (AEBU).[574]

On 27 June 1973, a guard transmitted a government communique throughout the hallways of Punta Rieles women's prison—President Bordaberry, Ministry of Interior Col. Nestor Bolentini, and Minister of Defense Walter Ravenna signed a decree to dissolve congress in an effort to "revitalize the nation." Juliana and a half dozen cellmates, all Tupamaras, crammed together and looked out a small window overlooking a workshop across the street.

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[573] "El sindicato de FUNSA responde al comando general del ejercito," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 5 June 1973, Uruguay National Library

[574] "Nuestra opinión sindical: el plan aprobado por el secretario de la CNT dispersa las movilizaciones y debilita el peso de la clase obrera en la situación political," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 5 June 1973, Uruguay National Library

They eagerly awaited any indication of a strike in response to the military takeover. Beginning a decade prior, founding members of the CNT moved urgently to form the confederation as a means to confront a foreseeable future dictatorship with what they saw as the working class's most effective weapon, a general strike.

The CNT responded by launching a fifteen-day general strike. In La Teja, the ANCAP chimney was no longer emitting smoke. Essential services, such as electricity, water, telecommunications, and healthcare, operated under worker's control. Workers at the Funsa occupied the plant and hung a banner hung from the entrance declaring "Down with the fascist dictatorship!"[575] Joint Forces surrounded the eighteen square blocks of the Funsa plant and remained there from the start. They recognized the symbolic importance of FUNSA within the labor movement and thus directed significant resources into repressing the occupation. Faced with a potential violent confrontation, workers inside kept the lights and machinery running to give the impression of an operating assembly line. They hoped that authorities would refrain from entering if they knew they would be faced with shutting down the complex and expensive machines themselves.

As a means to curb labor unrest, the government prohibited public and private assemblies "with political ends." Three days later the government illegalized the CNT, forced closed its offices, and ordered the arrest and trial of all officers for the crime of "delinquency."[576] By the first days July the Armed Forces began clearing out factories and taking them over to prevent workers from returning to occupy the sites. However, workers at many sites returned to occupy their worksites. The FAU/ROE and GAU utilized a clandestine communication network to

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[575] Aurelio Gonzalez, *Una historia en imagenes, 1957-1973,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2012, pp. 260
[576] Resolution 1.102/973 of 30 June 1973, Goldman, Robert K., Joaquin Martinez Bjorkman, and Jean-Louis Weill, "Memorandum from mission of inquiry to URUGUAY from December 12-18, 1977," CEIU—Waksman Folder 24

update workers about activity going on within their own plants or those within their vicinity.[577] Organizers convened in the home of ROE militant Jorge Zaffaroni to produce propaganda. They later printed the content at the UOESF local and distributed it factory-by-factory.[578] Hector Rodriguez recalled:

> Construction sites resembled piles of iron and concrete. You could only see frozen machinery, immobile. Inside the occupied factories, workers not only recognized the importance of achieving a minimum level of self-organization to maintain the occupation, but very important tasks were performed in the neighborhoods throughout the strike, such as distributing bulletins and information on small pieces of paper to the entire population.[579]

After one week, CNT leadership began to question whether to maintain strike. The PCU recognized the strike as a "small gesture" and saw severe tactical limitations due to lack of support from the Blanco and Colorado parties. While neither traditional party took a position on the military coup, the CNT and their student movement allies were isolated as the only clear protagonists with little capacity to gain support beyond those already aligned with the Left. Contrarily, the *Tendencia* set out to "win" the strike at "whatever price necessary." Delegates Hector Rodriguez and Leon Duarte identified severe risks in losing because movement towards a Brazil-style military dictatorship potentially meant the end of organized labor.[580]

On July 4, the key industries of collective transportation, railways, and municipal workers began returning to work. On the same day, the government announced warrants for 52 CNT delegates. Recognizing the CNT's incapacity to maintain the strike, UOESF officers, including Duarte, began to advocate for negotiating with the military to avoid harsh retaliation

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[577]Decree 466/973 of 27 June 1973, Robert K Goldman, Joaquin Martinez Bjorkman, and Jean-Louis Weill, "Memorandum from mission of inquiry to URUGUAY from December 12-18, 1977," CEIU—Waskman Folder 24
[578] Francois Graña, *Los Padres de Mariana: Maria Emilia Islas y Jorge Zaffaroni*, Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2011, pp. 130
[579] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84*, Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 50
[580] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84* Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 63-65

on behalf of the state. Occupation Committee delegates Alberto Marquez and Luis Romero reached out to Coronel Barrios, an Armed Forces contact with whom the UOESF previously established contact during negotiations to free Duarte and Perez from detention. In exchange for ending the occupation, UOESF leaders demanded that no workers be arrested for participating in the strike. Duarte and others recognized that labor was no longer on the offensive but instead fighting to return to pre-civic-military status quo—they saw the best potential outcome to be the legalization of the CNT and release of all political prisoners. Workers left the plant on July 6 and returned the following day to work. Angry with the decision to end the occupation, they immediately called for an assembly and unanimously decided to re-occupy the workplace. Joint Forces responded by breaking in to remove the workers—they remained inside as a symbolic gesture. Recognizing they had no way out, Duarte reached out to fellow Tendencia delegates from Portland, COT, and UNTMRA to request further negotiations with the military and plea for the best possible outcome amidst a devolving situation. As the Tendencia sought an exit strategy at Funsa, ANCAP management replaced strikers with busloads of workers from Southern Brazil. Joint Forces broke into the homes of bus drivers and forced them to work at gunpoint—some accompanied workers along their transit routes to curb any attempts of subversion.[581]

On July 11 the CNT Representative Table called an end to the strike. The saga at Funsa played a key role in forcing other Tendencia-affiliated unions into submission. As the symbol of the labor movement's most radical potential, the UOESF's defeat marked a turning point in working class morale nationwide. The general strike sparked the civic military government to

[581] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84* Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 63-65; Chagas and Tonarelli are careful to distinguish the Tendencia's July 1973 negotiations from those between the CNT majority and Coronel Bolentini beginning in February 1973. The PCU had long sought to identify military sectors that would side with the people in the inevitability of a civil war. This strategy was best reflected in the Party's support for General Seregni as Frente Amplio presidential candidate in 1971 elections.

use a variety of repressive measures to break the CNT's infrastructure. In response to the official end of the strike, the UOESF published a statement with ally unions FOEB and FUS under the name "El documento de los tres 'F,'" proclaiming, "The level of escalation brought on by the occupied factories eloquently signaled the strength and vanguard role of the working class in the struggle for liberation."[582] The document emphasized the existing high levels of working class consciousness and the need continue to channel such energy into a coordinated plan of action via base-level organizing. "Los tres F" concluded by taking a slight jab at the PCU majority for lifting the strike, declaring, "No union was defeated. What was defeated was a style, a method, and an approach to union labor."[583]

Aside from illegalizing the CNT, the government closed press organs during and after the strike. The PCU's *El Popular* was closed for ten editions beginning June 30; *Marcha* and *Compañero* were closed for two editions on July 10.[584] On July 4, the government passed a decree permitting employers to fire workers suspected of union organizing, leading to over 1,500 layoffs. Unions with strong connection to the Tendencia suffered disproportionate hiring. For example, of the 225 UNTMRA workers laid off, 96 belonged to TEM and ATMA – the former suffered more firings (67) than any metallurgy plant in the country.[585] The textile industry (COT) was hit especially hard. Combined with the past two years of personnel downsizing, over 2,500 textile workers were out of work by September 1973. At the National Beverage Factory, 100 transport workers were laid off and 27 workers were arrested, including the General Secretary and Secretary of FOEB.

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[582] "El documento de los tres 'F': FUS, FOEB, FUNSA," Montevideo, August 1973, Mechoso Family Archive
[583] "El documento de los tres 'F': FUS, FOEB, FUNSA," Montevideo, August 1973, Mechoso Family Archive
[584] "Clausuras," In *Marcha*, Montevideo, 27 June 1973, Uruguay National Library
[585] Susana Dominzain, *Así se forjó la historia: Acción sindical e identidad de los trabajadores metalurgicos en Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones Primero de Mayo, 2016, pp. 332-3

While Funsa workers did not suffer any layoffs, Leon Duarte was again detained alongside two other UOESF officers. The plant's workers responded by sending 0.5 percent of their weekly salaries to support fired and/or imprisoned workers from Textíl Ferres, La Mañana, El Diario, Textíl Campomar (de Juan Lacazé), Lanasur, AFE, Optilon, Ardea, Sapelli, Amdet, TEM, Ciccsa, and Dique Nacional, among others.[586] The UOESF also raised funds by hosting a benefit concert at the local. The ROE organized a campaign to collect food donations of one kilo of meat every Friday. [587] In the two months after the coup, *Compañero* hosted over thirty interviews with workers who maintained strikes and occupations, or others who had recently lost their jobs. The FAU/ROE used their press organ as a platform to maintain communication and dialogue, but repression proved to outweigh their intentions. Hugo Cores recalls, "There were many people among the ROE who I never saw again."[588]

On 31 July 1973, six members of AFE's Worker Dignity caucus (ROE) were detained after police entered the union local amidst a meeting. Raúl Olivera, Luis Raimundo, Oscar Rodriguez, Luis Peña, and Naydú Sosa remained in prison for the duration of the dictatorship. On December 14, FAU militant and AFE officer Gilberto Coghlan died after being taken from his cell to the middle of a soccer field where drunken officers waterboarded him to the point of cardiac arrest.[589] On August 24 the government prohibited all forms of "inter-union organizing

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[586]"Mientras se comercializan lana sucia hay 2,500 trabajadores textiles desocupados"; "Una olla sindical no es solo para comer sino para continuar la lucha," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 25 September 1973, Uruguay National Library; "Movilización Ascendente en torno a los despedidos" In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 18 September 1973, Uruguay National Library

[587] "Festival de la solidaridad en el sindicato de FUNSA," In *Compañero,* Montevideo, 2 October 1973, Uruguay National Library; "Los Viernes haga llegar su solidaridad," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 18 September 1973, Uruguay National Library

[588] Hugo Cores, *Memorias de la Reistencia*, Montevideo: Ediciones Banda Oriental, 2002, pp. 133

[589] Ivonne Trias, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008, pp. 141

by way of the CNT."[590] Police occupied various union locals, including UNTMRA and SUNCA; the CNT local was converted into a detention and torture center.[591]

Labor militants continued meeting secretly with help from students, who held at least 30 meeting spots on various campuses throughout Montevideo. In late October, GAU militants accidently set off a bomb in the Faculty of Engineering. The explosion resulted in the death of a professor who also belonged to the group. The military responded by occupying the University of the Republic and closing it down for the remainder of 1973. The offense saw the arrest of dozens of GAU militants, demobilizing one of the FAU's closest allies. Moreover, the military occupation forced the closer of all 30 organizing spaces.[592] As the Tendencia's infrastructure deteriorated, Leon Duarte, Washington Perez, and Miguel Gromaz went into hiding and released the last edition of *Compañero* on 6 November 1973. Three weeks later, the government passed a new decree to dissolve and declare "illicit" all Uruguayan Left political organizations, including the FAU/ROE, PCU, PSU, GAU, and nine others. All political activity involving a banned political organization constituted a crime of "subversive association" or "assistance to a subversive association." Alongside the prohibition of the organizations, the government also mandated the closure of *Compañero*, *El Popular*, *Marcha*, *Cronica*, *Ahora*, *Vea*, *El Oriental*, and *Ultima Hora*, eliminating all Left perspective from public circulation. Within the next three years, 26 national newspapers and five local newspapers, including various church-related publications, received cease and desist orders from the state. [593] Leon Duarte was detained one week later.

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[590] "Prohiba la union de los sindicatos," In *Compañero*, Montevideo, 28 August 1973, Uruguay National Library
[591] Ricardo Vilaro, *Uruguay y sus sindicatos,* Holland, March 1979, pp. 56, CEIU—Ricardo Vilaro Archive
[592] Augusto Chacho Andrés, *Estafar un banco—que placer!,* Montevideo: Alter Ediciones, 2009, pp. 80
[593] Decree 1.026/973 of 28 November 1973, Robert K Goldman, Joaquin Martinez Bjorkman, and Jean-Louis Weill, "Memorandum from mission of inquiry to URUGUAY from December 12-18, 1977," CEIU—Waksman Folder 24

Duarte remained in detention first months of 1974. Throughout his holding, authorities assured UOESF leadership that his capture would be brief. General Hugo Chiappe Posse, who lead the interrogations, sought to build a "non-red" labor union confederation outside of the CNT structure. His "nationalist central" followed Mussolini's corporatist model and would be channeled vertically into the military government. Moreover, the new central would break the CNT's class struggle strategy and replace it with one of labor harmony with the state as mediator. He hoped to take advantage on tensions between the PCU majority and Tendencia Combativa, and recognized Duarte's key leadership role amongst the latter faction—he offered Duarte a position in the Ministry of Labor. Duarte declined, proclaiming, "There is only one central: the CNT. I am a delegate of the CNT. My responsibility is to the CNT… I recognize that those of you who speak to me are on one side and the working class is on the other."[594] In May 1975, Leon Duarte and Washington Perez crossed the Rio de la Plata to join fellow members of the FAU/ROE in exile.

Conclusion

Between November 1971 and June 1973, Uruguayan workers carried out upwards of 900 work actions, including at least 200 occupations. The CNT coordinated over a dozen days of action across industries, including four general strikes. Of the total work actions, 22 percent included occupations. In dramatic change of trend compared to previous years, CNT majority-affiliated unions accounted for 41 percent of occupations; 37 percent of strikes lasting longer

[594] Jorge Chagas and Mario Tonarelli, *El sindicalismo uruguayo bajo la dictadura, 1973-84*, Montevideo: Ediciones del Nuevo Mundo, 1989, pp. 123-4

than three days; and 34 percent of strikes lasting longer than ten days.[595] While the FA's electoral defeat forced majority-affiliated union leadership to discover new approaches outside of the electoral strategy, rank-and-file demonstrated an impressive propensity to act by foregoing legal processes and embracing direct action tactics instead.

One of the longest and most dramatic strikes took place at the Seral factory, where workers waged a ten-month campaign that concluded victoriously after intervention from the OPR-33. The balance between mass protagonism (ROE) and armed action (OPR-33) provides the best example of the FAU's two-foot strategy. Moreover, a narrative-analysis of the event centering women's reconnaissance labor offers a unique opportunity to demystify the multiple forms of political labor behind the growing popular unrest. While everyday people certainly embraced a role as protagonists, the tactical forms utilized throughout the epoch were made possible by a complex, overlapping social infrastructure maintained by political organizations. Within that infrastructure, women's reproductive labor played a primary role.

August 1972 marked a unique moment in which the FAU/ROE stood as the sole challenger to the PCU's hegemony over the Left. The MLN-T ceasefire shifted emphasis towards building popular power and coincided with rising militancy within the labor movement. Moreover, state repression against high profile union organizers Leon Duarte and Washington Perez inspired solidarity across factions of the Left, which drew local comparisons to worldwide experiences during the Sacco and Vanzetti trails. Finally, the PCU's stigmatization of the FAU/ROE, something addressed by numerous speakers during the rally, revealed a prevailing tension within the Left. While the Uruguayan Communist Party certainly showed an

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[595] Although my sample of 343 total work actions represents only a fraction of those recorded in official data, the set, taken from *El Popular*, offers a rather accurate look at an increasing militancy among CNT majority-affiliated unions.

exceptionalism by remaining open to contemporary influences, especially cultural, they maintained a rigidity, orthodoxy, and dogmatism that upheld the *old vs. new* divide, specifically the "revolutionary parliamentarianism" strategy and privileged role of the vanguard party. These strategical and tactical differences, and the shifting coalition formations around them, presented clear tensions that proved irresolvable even in the face of rising state repression. Moreover, the historical moment showed potential for a vibrant new coalition outside of the electoral framework – one rooted in mass action rather than voting. The shifting political field clearly surfaced after the PCU announced its position on "Communiques 4 and 7" in February 1973 and continued into the June 1973 general strike.

Strategical differences between the Tendencia and CNT majority carried over into the 1973 general strike. While Tendencia-affiliated unions demonstrated intentions to force the civic-military government into submission by withholding their labor, the majority-aligned unions representing essential services proved ill-prepared to continue beyond the first week. Arguably, the workers' inexperience with sustaining large-scale work actions left them without the necessary infrastructure to hold out. Their return to work left more militant sectors isolated and forced an end to the strike. Thus, while workers showed an increasing combativeness throughout 1972, the PCU's hegemony among the labor movement remained in-tact.

Regardless, President Bordaberry justified the Armed Forces' role in government by pointing towards its victory against the MLN-Tupamaros in April 1972. He insisted that the military's participation in politics represented a compromise between "chronic anarchy" and a "true military takeover."[596] The civic-military government prioritized labor reform upon taking

[596] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 3712 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, Subj: Conversation with President Bordaberry, Montevideo, 26 December 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d339

power. Minister of Defense Walter Ravenna declared commitment to "uprooting the Marxist infiltration of Uruguayan society." He recognized the influence of organizations "further to the Left than Communists" and insisted, "There was no turning back possible; there would be no mediation or negotiation."[597] The government enjoyed strong support from Uruguayan industrialists who shared the opinion that the CNT, not the MLN-Tupamaros, was the largest threat to national security in the country. Over half proclaimed "control of labor unrest" as the government's largest accomplishment—of those who mentioned the MLN-Tupamaros, nearly one half saw the guerrilla movement and labor unrest as part of a coordinated Left conspiracy.[598] Scholar José Nun has called this phenomenon the "middle class military coup."[599] Over the next twelve years, the US-based American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) collaborated upwards of 160 thousand dollars annually to form the General Confederation of Uruguayan Workers (CGTU), a new trade union central in opposition to the CNT. According to a clandestine periodical titled "Carta," the US Embassy acted in collaboration with Uruguayan ex-delegate J. Betancourt to bring instructors from Central America to the Uruguayan Institute of Union Education, a local branch of the American Institute for Free Labor Development [600] Real salaries nationwide decreased by 50 percent in the first five years of the new government.[601]

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[597] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2164 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, Subj: Defense Minister's View on Current Situation, Montevideo, 13 July 1973, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d337

[598] Howard Handelman, "Labor-Industrial Conflict and the Collapse of Uruguayan Democracy," In *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1981, pp. 378

[599] José Nun, "The Middle Class Military Coup," In *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America*, ed. C. Veliz, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 66-118

[600] Comité de Solidaridad – Casa del Pueblo Uruguayo, "Noticias Noticias Noticias Noticias Noticias Noticias…Cono Sur – 1976: Resumen servicio especial," Montreal, cir. 1976, CEIU—Waksman Folder 26; Martin Weinstein, "Uruguay: Military Rule and Economic Failure," In *Politics, Policies, and Economic Development in Latin America*, ed. Robert Wesson, Palo Alto: Hoover Press, 1984, pp. 43

[601] Ricardo Vilaro, *Uruguay y sus sindicatos,* Holland, March 1979, pp. 56, CEIU—Ricardo Vilaro Archive

Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material as it may appear in Social History/Histoire Sociale *(York University Press, 2020). Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis, the dissertation author, was the primary researcher and author of this paper.*

CHAPTER 6:
THE GARAGE WAS NOT A GARDEN
Exile Strategy, US AID, and the Argentine Clandestine Detention, Torture, and Extermination Center "Automotores Orletti," 1973-76

The jungle is very big,
There is plenty of room for all the animals,
And no one would lack a thing,
If everyone were able to work.

The animals love the jungle very much,
The rivers and the trees,
Its land and its fruits…

The animals that work
Have realized that
In the jungle there are many things to fix.
They gather around a little fire
And they start talking.

If someone comes to bother
the owl upon the branches
Is the one responsible for calling out.

One day without being seen, a hunter arrives in the jungle
Of the jungle, he does not understand a thing.
He does not care if the animals live better.

-Mauricio Gatti, 1972

In 1974, Uruguay's now famed cartoonist Walter Tournier released his first animated short film based on a prison letter from FAU militant Mauricio Gatti to his daughter, Paula.[602] The letter and film, both titled *En la selva hay mucho por hacer*, depicted Uruguay as a free land inhabited by wild animals who cooperated and lived in harmony until being the arrival of a hunter who began capturing animals to send to the zoo. Some of the animals identified the hunter and tried set up an alert network, but they were captured first. They eventually escape from the

[602] Tournier would later become Uruguay's most famous animated film director.

zoo by boat and return to jungle, where the rest of the animals had warded off the encroaching zookeepers.

Alberto Mechoso's jailbreak and subsequent exile paved the way for what would become a mass exodus of the organization to Buenos Aires. Beginning in late 1972, many FAU militants were forced underground while those already clandestine members of the OPR-33 began the journey towards Buenos Aires.[603] Most exiles belonged to the FAU's armed apparatus, Popular Revolutionary Organization 33 (OPR-33), which found itself isolated as the only armed group in Uruguay after the MLN-T agreed to a ceasefire and subsequently suffered mass arrests in April 1972.[604] The FAU's strong presence in the Graphic Artists Union allowed the organization to counterfeit passports, national identification cards, and even money.[605] Recognizing the importance of working in coalition, the Organization made an easy decision to divide forces on

[603] One 15 June 1972, the OPR-33 released their kidnapped victim Sergio Molaguero, a member of the neofascist youth organization Uruguayan Youth on Foot and son of an infamous union-busting boss of Seral shoe factory. One day later, the Uruguayan Armed Forces detained FAU militants Leon Duarte, Washington Perez, and five other workers from Seral and the FUNSA rubber factory, a FAU stronghold. Both Duarte and Perez were detained once more on July 30.[603] On August 23, the ROE hosted a support rally for Duarte and Perez which they disguised as a homage to the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, who were murdered via electric chair in 1927. The rally hosted speeches by Hugo Cores (FAU/ROE/AEBU) and Gerardo Gatti (FAU/ROE/SAG), Hector Rodriguez (GAU), Armando Rodriguez (Movimiento 26 de Marzo/MLN-T), Zelmar Michillini (Agrupación Avance), and a delegate from the CGT de los Argentinos. After the rally, Uruguayan Joint Forces issued arrest warrants for FAU/ROE militants Hugo Cores, Gerardo Gatti, Elvira Suárez, Kimal Amir, Sara Lerena de Goessens, Mariaselva Echagüe, Darío Espiga, Carlos Goessens, Rubén Rodríguez Coronel, Silvia Valeron and Gonzalo Vigil. On September 6, authorities detained Duarte, Perez, and two other FUNSA workers. Duarte and Perez were released after attending a military trial one month later. Due to increasing risk of state repression, the FAU central coordinating body decided to relocate Gerardo Gatti, Hugo Cores, and Roberto Larrasq to Buenos Aires, from Daniel Augusto Almeida Alves, "Arriba los que luchan! Sindicaismo revolucionário e luta armada a trajetória da Federaçao Anarquista Uruguaia: 1963-73" [Dissertation], Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal Rio Grande do Sul, 2016; Ivonne Trías, *Hugo Cores: Pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008, pp. 95; FAU militant Alberto "Pocho" Mechoso made use of the OPR-33 sympathizer network to venture to Argentina in a private personal aircraft after escaping from detention in the 5th Artillery Barracks on 21 November 1972. Before leaving Uruguay, he gave an interview to Eduardo Galeano, which he published under the title "From the Bottom of the Abyss," In Juan Carlos Mechoso, *Accion directa anarquista*, pp. 387

[604] Other members of the OPR-33, such Juan Carlos Mechoso, Alfredo Pareja, and Raúl Cariboni, were imprisoned in March 1973.

[605] After leaving the MLN-T to participate in the formation of the OPR-33, Hébert Mejías Collazo shared his knowledge of how to counterfeit paper documents. Members of the FAU with training in graphic artists replicated these methods to produce a variety of fake state-issued documents, Interview with Augusto Andrés, 27 December 2017

both sides of the river because staying in Uruguay meant being forced to operate as a small, isolated organization of a few hundred anarchists. Instead, they followed exiled Left groups from throughout the continent to Argentina, the only Southern Cone country that had not fallen to military rule as of late 1973.

While exiled in Buenos Aires, the FAU remained independent of formal Left coalitions but continued collaborating with other Uruguayan New Left organizations to fortify a cross-border resistance network between Argentina and Uruguay. They funded these efforts via ransom money after kidnapping Dutch businessman Federico Hart and extorting him for ten million US dollars. Lured by the prospect of recovering the massive sum of ransom money, the Uruguayan Armed Forces and Argentine Secretariat of Intelligence collaborated to permanently disappear thirty-five FAU militants at the Buenos Aires-based clandestine detention, torture, and extermination center, Automotores Orletti. However, as word of the Uruguayan government's seven thousand political prisoners and frequent use of torture gained wider circulation abroad, the dictatorship found itself target of an international Human Rights campaign lead by Amnesty International and the Beltrand Russel Tribunal.

This chapter sets out to achieve three main goals. First, I explore the FAU as a relevant political organization in the Latin American Left milieu exiled in Argentina between 1973 to 1976. In doing so, I show the possibilities for scholarship when moving away from the "heavyweight" Left organizations in the region, specifically Argentina's Guevarist *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP) and Peronist Montoneros, and Uruguay's PCU and MLN-Tupamaros. The FAU advanced their own political vision and strategy as an independent organization still working in coalition with other groups in the New Left milieu. They not only played a protagonist role in the decade leading up to the 1973 Uruguayan civic-military coup, but

continued influencing strategies and tactics for resistance to dictatorship from abroad. As such, the Organization acted as one of many lynchpins in the region's transnational Left. They represent one of the many exiled Latin American Left organizations that crossed paths in Argentina before the country became the last Southern Cone government to fall under military dictatorship on 24 March 1976.[606] While much has been written about the region's transnational state terror networks linked via Plan Condor, little has been written on the transnationality of the Left.[607] Aldo Marchesi's recent historiographical contribution and shows that Southern Cone national liberation movements operated transnationally and thus cannot be explained by what the author calls a "national-foreigner dichotomy."[608] Moreover, Vania Markarian shows how exiled Uruguayan congressman effectively launched a campaign to politically isolate the Uruguayan military dictatorship from abroad by mobilizing a human rights discourse. Like other exiled

[606] Much has been written about the role of exiled anarchists residing in the Rio de La Plata region, specifically the development of transnational networks to both support resistance in the homeland and to build and influence the development of revolutionary Left movements in their countries of residence, whether Argentina or Uruguay. The historiography focuses primarily on Italian and Spanish exiles who arrived in the region and played key roles in both native and host countries, such as the cases of Luce Fabbri and Abraham Guillen. Once arriving in the Rio de La Plata, anarchists often found themselves moving back and forth between Argentina and Uruguay to escape right wing dictatorships that seized power during different historical moments in both countries alike. Such works on exile in the Rio de La Plata have proven very useful for shaping an analysis of this chapter, especially the works of María Migueláñez Martínez, Davide Turcato, and Carl Levy, all of whom have studied exiled Italian anarchists in the region. For example, during the Mussolini era, Italian anarchists fled to the Rio de La Plata to sustain the movement and launch resistance from abroad, in an effort that María Migueláñez Martínez has labeled as "exile as a political strategy against fascism," María Migueláñez Martínez, "Atlantic Circulation of Italian Anarchist Exiles: Militants and Propaganda between Europe and Río de La Plata (1922-1939)," In *Zapruder World*, Vol.1, 2014; One Argentine scholar argues that the FAU-PVP's activity abroad resignified "exile" to mean more than merely "retreat," Fabiola Labrolla, El exilio combatiente: la Fundación del Partido de la Victoria del Pueblo del Uruguay en la Argentina" (conference paper), Jornadas XIV, University of the Republic (Montevideo), 2013, pp. 12
[607] See John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet brought Terrorism to Three Continents*, New York: The New Press, 2005; Fernando Lopez, *The Feathers of the Condor: Transnational State Terrorism, Exiles, and Civilian Anticommunism in South America*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016; Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005
[608] Aldo Marchesi's *Latin America's Radical Left* (2018) acknowledges four important sites for the development of the Southern Cone Left: Montevideo (mid-sixties), Havana (1967), Santiago (1970-73), and Buenos Aires (1973-76). The latter is the focus of this chapter due to its importance as a refuge for exiles. Although Allende's Chile offered refuge to militants in the three years prior, Argentina's unique condition as the last country to fall under dictatorship enabled militants to find shelter there after having exhausted the potential of armed struggle in their home countries.

organizations at the time, the FAU sought to maintain a balance between the changing internal dynamics induced by exile and a firm political position rooted in a local Uruguayan reality in which most the organization's militants were no longer present.

Next, I follow members of the FAU to their incarceration at the clandestine detention, torture, and extermination center Automotores Orletti in mid-1976. The space served as the Argentine headquarters the regional anti-subversion operation, Plan Condor. Of the 172 Uruguayans disappeared throughout the Dirty War era, 119 were disappeared in Argentina – 34 were members of the FAU. [609] John Dinges, a *Time* and *Washington Post* journalist who extensively covered the Plan Condor, has recognized that the operations against Uruguayans in Argentina resulted in the largest group of Plan Condor disappearances.[610] The Orletti case demonstrates how trans-national state terror came as a response to the de-territorialization of the Left post-1973. Although a small and under resourced organization, the FAU's continued commitment to political coalition building abroad made them an important target of Uruguayan and Argentine governments. Recognizing the FAU's low profile membership, international obscurity, and strength in the domestic labor movement, the multinational military offensive against the FAU served as a pilot run for later Plan Condor operations. The FAU suffered more deaths (34) than any other Uruguayan organization abroad. Moreover, by the end of 1976, the only surviving members still located in Uruguay were in prison – the rest were killed or exiled.[611] Thus, a thorough understanding of the Organization's exile experience, especially their

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[609] Alvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo I, Montevideo, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 769-783

[610]John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terror to Three Continents,* New York: New Press, 2005, pp 210

[611] Scholars tend to downplay the Uruguayan dictatorship because of its relative low numbers of permanent disappearances compared to other Plan Condor governments. For example, political scientist Paul Sondrol (1992) challenged Alfred Stephen and Martin Weinstein for having classified the dictatorship as "totalitarian." He distinguishes between totalitarian and authoritarian patterns of repression, claiming that the former seeks to eliminate entire categories of people viewed as threats to the national project for their mere existence whereas the

confrontation with state authorities, serves as a key case to understand both Plan Condor state offensives and the popular human rights campaigns that followed.

Finally, the Argentine and Uruguayan governments moved forth with kidnapping, detaining, and torturing FAU militants and other Uruguayan political exiles while simultaneously communicating with US State Department and Embassy officials regarding activities in the region. The case shows a clear tension between the US Department of State and CIA's explicit and implicit support for the formation and implementation of a transnational state terror network *vis a vis* the US Congress's effort to defund the Uruguayan civic-military government due to extreme human rights violations. Scholar Katheryn Sikkink emphasizes that although human rights became central to US foreign policy towards Latin America, they lead to a practice of "mixed signals" due to differing internal visions regarding Cold War strategy.[612] Internal tensions within the US government eventually lead the Uruguayan Joint Forces to develop an assassination plot against US House Representative Ed Koch and fabricate a raid on a fictitious FAU safehouse under the codename "Chalet Suzy." While the rumored operative against Koch aimed to intimidate US politicians who voiced opposition to Human Rights violations throughout the Southern Cone, the spectacle event sought to court sympathy and justify continued access to

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latter targets individuals due to their political activity (pp. 196). Yet, combined with previous offensives against the Comunidad del Sur and the closure of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, the mid-1976 offensive against the FAU had successfully eliminated nearly all anarchists from Uruguay.

[612] Sikkink argues that human rights activists disillusioned by the failure in Vietnam and inspired by the success of Civil Rights pressured the US government to take up human rights policy globally beginning in 1973. The "global human rights idea" was an outward extension of rights allotted to US citizens based on the country's founding documents. However, the United States struggled to balance its staunch anti-communism while simultaneously attempting to support human rights abroad. The author continues, "There was no one US policy, no single vision of who or what the United States was and what it stood for… Since the 1950s, intense anticommunism had informed all aspects of US policy in the region. This anticommunism was often justified by referring to abysmal human rights practices of communist regimes. But by the 1970s, anticommunism led the United States to support, arm, and train authoritarian regimes that carried out massive human rights abuses against their citizens. In principle, anticommunism could be made compatible with a commitment to human rights, but US policy makers in Latin America had come to accept as an article of faith that anticommunism required strong support for authoritarian military regimes, Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signal: U.S. Human Rights Policy in Latin America,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. xviii; 5-7; 18

USAID funding. Coinciding with the Argentine government's escalating belligerence, the Chalet Suzy event marked a turning point in US *discursive* support for Plan Condor. The case offers insight into how US Congressional politics clearly affected the decisions of a foreign government. While regional governments doubtless enjoyed US assistance and support, they did not serve solely as puppets and their autonomous behaviors brought about negative repercussions for their relationships with the US government. Regardless of growing tensions, the US government maintained *financial* support for both governments throughout their tenure.

To Endure Doing: Exile as Political Strategy

In the months after the military assumed power, roughly sixty members of the FAU, OPR-33, and ROE exiled to Buenos Aires, where they intended to continue advancing an anarchist political project and lay the groundwork for a coalition Left resistance alongside other exiles. The FAU's Fomento decided to split the organization between both sides of the river. Hugo Cores, Leon Duarte, Carlos Coitiño, Raul Olivera, Mariela Salaberry, and Jorge Zaffaroni Perez made up the directorate in Uruguay, which primarily consisted of members of the ROE who would continue organizing at the mass level. In Montevideo, they maintained a small printing press for producing pamphlets and fake national documents, and a small laboratory for making explosives.[613] While Argentina served as a refuge for militants with arrest warrants on the other side of the river, Alberto Mechoso and a team of three other militants spent the year prior laying an infrastructure for OPR-33 to take advantage democratic political climate abroad to raise money and resources via expropriations.[614] The FAU recognized that the dictatorship

[613]Interview with Hugo Cores from Ivonne Trias, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008, pp. 139

[614]The decision to relocate the OPR-33 to Buenos Aires caused a small schism in the organization. One small team of four militants insisted on remaining in Uruguay to wage direct war against the Armed Forces rather than fight

would maintain power for at least a decade and thus committed itself to a strategy they called *durar hacienda* (to endure doing).

Militants maintained a vision of the Organization as a little motor behind popular mobilization. They conceptualized their role from abroad as one of "helping to elevate working class moral, combating calls for demobilization and surrender, reporting on and making sense of acts of resistance, and maintaining networks of solidarity with political prisoners."[615] They traced the lineage of their political activity in exile to a long history of anarchists waging struggles in places outside of their countries of origin.[616] Practically, the Organization prioritized four main endeavors that aligned with an overall strategic vision for building a resistance: 1) to produce and disseminate propaganda on both sides of the Rio de La Plata, 2) to amplify and proliferate an international smear campaign against the dictatorship by drawing attention to human rights; 3) to maintain the use of direct action, specifically property damage against elite holdings, in effort to demonstrate the dictatorship's permeability; and 4) to establish communication network for strategic planning around points of unity between exiles and militants back home. The Organization situated itself as both part of a national and regional struggle to "liberate the Rio de La Plata." Moreover, they continued to see themselves as part of the broader continent-wide

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from the rearguard. To this group, called *Libertario*, the move towards military rule required a reconsideration and reframing of the armed strategy, moving away from the "dos pata" model and more towards a foquismo. In April 1974, police raided a bar in Barrio Maroñas that produced a shootout with three members of the splinter organization. The exchange saw the deaths of FAU militant Julio Larrañaga and officer Nelson Vique; FAU militants Idilio De León Bermúdez y José María Seque successfully escaped.

[615] "A los comptriotas[sic], a los amigos del pueblo uruguayo," Paris, May 1975, CEIU–French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[616] They drew comparisons between the Italian, Spanish, German, Polish, and Jewish anarchists who founded the first workers' organizations in the Rio de La Plata with Che Guevara's transnational organizing efforts in Cuba, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Africa, "En exilio hay mucho por hacer," In *Boletín de la Resistencia*, No. 23, Buenos Aires, 20 August 1975, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

struggle of the epoch and continued using the Cuban revolutionary call, *Hasta la victoria siempre!*[617]

Regardless of the FAU's intentions to realize a coalition of resistance from abroad, including the participation of progressive politicians, they continued to see everyday people as the main protagonists of resistance. In a communique directed towards fellow Uruguayans in exile, the FAU proclaimed:

> The resistance struggle is possible, and in our country there is a resistance. There are frequent examples of this. They do not consist of spectacular acts that result in immediate triumphs nor generate feelings of success. They are instead constant everyday acts in which the pueblo is principal actor… For this reason, Uruguay is set up for a long and tolling struggle for socialism and the forging of popular power.[618]

While resistance to the dictatorship would not grant immediate results, it was not seen to be in vain. Although many on the Left insisted on waiting out the regime, the FAU saw the everyday acts of resistance as seeds for building class power and forging new subjectivities in a prolonged process of social transformation.

While the Organization envisioned a prolonged struggle against the dictatorship, they remained skeptical of reaching solutions via institutional politics. They pushed back against the PCU's continued faith in a progressive mutiny from within the military, insisting, "The pueblo should not subordinate itself to the spirit of February by waiting, still, for the fulfillment of Communiques 4 and 7."[619] For nearly a year and a half after the military coup, the still legal PCU continued aspiring to collaborate with a progressive sect within the military. Perhaps the best

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[617] "A los comptriotas[sic], a los amigos del pueblo uruguayo," Paris, May 1975, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12
[618] "A los comptriotas[sic], a los amigos del pueblo uruguayo," Paris, May 1975, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12
[619] "A los comptriotas[sic], a los amigos del pueblo uruguayo," Paris, May 1975, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

example of this intention can be found in the publication of an aboveground military bulletin titled *9 de Febrero*, which received backdoor funding and influence from the PCU.[620] While the military demonstrated clear signs of internal incoherence, it had clearly shown its commitment to dismantling organized labor and the Left prior to and after the coup.[621] Instead, the FAU espoused a view that reflected an influence from both orthodox Marxist and New Left ideals, one that saw politics and government as "superstructure" to working class struggle and the forging of the "new man." The search for political solutions only disempowered everyday people who had already demonstrated, by instinct, their willingness and knowledge of how to subvert to regime. Thus, the pueblo's organic response to the dictatorship offered an opportunity to accumulate experiences necessary for a transformation of collective subjectivity.

With the relocation of some militants to Buenos Aires, the Organization shared a similar condition with other exiled Left organizations from Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile who had also relocated there as conditions in their home countries became too hostile. While the MLN-T stumbled through exile for three years before re-organizing around a Marxist-Leninist position

[620] The paper served as one of various internal media organs within the military and was edited by Luis Michelini, a PCU fellow-traveler. The primary source compilation of Uruguayan police and military files *Testimonio de una nacion agredida* claims the paper was clandestinely funded by the PCU, but that Michelini also served as a double agent for the CIA (pp. 110). Perhaps the best indication of the PCU's financial backing can be found in a statement in the 19 October 1973 edition, which declared, "The weekly paper *9 de Febrero* does not correspond to any military orientation, nor is it sponsored by the Armed Forces. We have taken up this task with an enormous amoung of sacrifice to support the national cause. Surely, the pueblo Oriental will judge our work. But with independence and clean consciousness we take on this responsibility during this difficult time." FAU militant Juan Carlos Mechoso recalls a conversation with a Party leader and labor union official in prison, who showed him a copy of the newspaper and declared, "Look what my organization is doing!" Conversations about the meaning of "Communiques 4 and 7" continued into 1976, when the ROE held debate in Paris about the meaning of the two cryptic messages to commemorate three years passing, "3 años de los comunicados 4 y 7," Montevideo, March 1976, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[621] US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest Siracusa declared, "With the armed forces having recently moved formally into the economic decision making process through the economic and social council and having placed a number of military officers in important government posts, it would seem that the military is the driving force in the nation's efforts towards economic and political change. However, a better description of the present state of affairs is that the military presence is the spur prodding such efforts but no one hand is on the reins," US Ambassador Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2224 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: The Uruguayan Military: A Lack Of Cohesion, Montevideo, 8 August 1974, US Department of State – Office of the Historian

and eventual membership in the *Junta Coordinadora Revoucionaria* (JCR), the FAU encountered dilemmas regarding tactics and coalition-building but did not face the same serious challenges of re-evaluating strategy, ideology, and internal organization.[622] The FAU did not join the JCR due to its continued emphasis on a foco approach.[623] In the second half of 1973, the FAU initiated a dialogue among the entirety of the Uruguayan Left, including progressive factions within the Blanco and Colorado parties, in hopes of forming the *Frente Nacional de Resistencia* (FNR).[624] The conversations marked a noteworthy shift in the Uruguayan Left. In November 1973, the *Frente Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (FRT) and *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario* (FER), two Marxist organizations previously associated with the MLN-T, incorporated into the ROE.[625] By October 1974, the FNR conversations eventually solidified in a

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[622] While exiled in Chile in 1973, MLN-T leadership recognized the organization's shortcomings, specifically their inability to build around a mass movement strategy. Andrés Cultelli's self-critique declares: "In the end, the mass political wing March 26 could do very little once it was decided that everything would revolve around a military strategy… The question of unions… was left to the Communist Party. The question of the role of masses as a necessary condition for revolution never entered into the consciousness of the MLN-T leadership nor its members, who were all fascinated by the armed apparatus and its 'indestructability,'" Andrés Cultelli, *La revolución necesaria, contribución a la autocrítica del MLN-Tupamaros*, Montevideo: Colihue, 2006, pp. 51

[623] The Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria (JCR), an international coalition of the Marxist guerrilla organizations Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP, Argentina), Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR, Chile), Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN, Bolivia), and Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros (MLN-T, Uruguay). The four groups coalesced in Argentina in 1974 to foment a joint paramilitary strategy within the last-standing country to avoid falling to dictatorship in the Southern Cone. Similar to the far Right's World War Three discourse, the JCR saw Argentina as host to the decisive battle in the region's prolonged war between guerrillas and the state. For more, see Aldo Marchesi, *Latin America's Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global Sixties,* New York: Cambridge Press, 2017

[624]On 23 August 1972, the ROE hosted a support rally for FUNSA union leaders and FAU militantes Leon Duarte and Washington Perez which they disguised as a homage to the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, who were murdered via electric chair in 1927. The rally attracted an attendance of nearly 800 people and hosted speeches by Hugo Cores and Gerardo Gatti (FAU/ROE), Hector Rodriguez (GAU), Armando Rodriguez (Movimiento 26 de Marzo/MLN-T), Zelmar Michellini (Agrupación Avance), and a delegate from the CGT de los Argentinos. After the rally, Uruguayan Joint Forces issued arrest warrants for FAU/ROE militants Hugo Cores, Gerardo Gatti, Elvira Suárez, Kimal Amir, Sara Lerena de Goessens, Mariaselva Echagüe, Darío Espiga, Carlos Goessens, Rubén Rodríguez Coronel, Silvia Valeron and Gonzalo Vigil, from Almeida Alves, Daniel Augusto. "Arriba los que luchan! Sindicaismo revolucionário e luta armada a trajetória da Federaçao Anarquista Uruguaia: 1963-73" [Dissertation], Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal Rio Grande do Sul, 2016

[625] Throughout the late sixties, the FER served informally as a front student organization for the MLN-T. In 1970, the FER divided over questions of strategy, autonomy, and their affiliation with the with the Tupamaros. This "microschism" formed the FER68, which eventually morphed into the MLN-T popular organization, 26 de Marzo. The members of the FER who maintained the organization's name linked with the newly formed FRT social movement. Both of the latter eventually merged with the ROE, Eduardo Rey Tristán, *La izquierda revolucionaria uruguaya, 1955-1973*, Sevilla: University of Sevilla Press, 2005, pp. 403

coalition spearheaded by Enrique Erro and Zelmar Michelini in collaboration with the GAU, PCR, and MLN-T ("New Times" faction). The coalition, titled *Unión Artiguista de Liberación*, intentionally excluded the PCU, marking a rejection of the Frente Amplio and an end to communist hegemony within coalitional Left spaces.[626] The UAL critiqued the PCU for having placed too much hope in organizing a progressive military sector. Erro especially accused the PCU of forcing an end to the 1973 general strike as a concession in return for negotiating with military leaders. Again the FAU did not formally join the coalition, but the Organization continued working alongside various individuals and political organizations within it.[627]

FAU exiles also linked up with members of the anarchist organization *La Protesta* and the Left-wing Peronist organization *Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas*.[628] The FAU's emphasis on a Third World liberation and mass politics created many differences between the Organization and and most Argentine anarchist groups. Instead, they sought to foment political allegiancs elsewhere. Reflecting on the parallels between the FAU and Peronists, Hugo Cores declared:

> It had nothing to do with the Peronist doctrine, with the figure of Perón and his unions. We didn't like any of these… You're Uruguayan with a fresh defeat on your back… and suddenly in a country where a popular movement is going to win after eighteen years… Their emotional drive was appealing to us. They were very different from the arrogant and well-dressed Argentines we had met. These

[626] Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Network*, 1967-84, London: Routledge Press, 2005, pp. 74

[627] According to Argentine scholar Fabiola Labrolla, the FAU grew away from the FNR/UAL after successfully obtaining a ten million dollar kidnap ransom in August 1974. The Organization built an independent exile infrastructure utilizing their own resources, Fabiola Labrolla, "El exilio combatiente: la Fundación del Partido de la Victoria del Pueblo del Uruguay en la Argentina" (conference paper), Jornadas XIV, University of the Republic – Montevideo, 2013, pp. 12

[628] While the Federacion Libertaria Argentina remained hegemonic in Argentine anarchist political circles, their position on Peron, specifically their collaboration with various right-wing factions to support the ouster of Peron in 1955, spawned a rift among the anarchist movement. Anarchist veterans, including famous turn of the century expropriator Emilio Uriondo, formed a small circle under the name La Protesta, which they borrowed from the FOR A's newspaper, La Protesta Humana. Moreover, some members of the Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas, such as Alva Castillo, were born of anarchist parents remained anarchist sympathizers. Castillo frequently visited imprisoned members of the FAU in Buenos Aires jails, and offered her home as refuge when members of the FAU-PVP became targets of a state offensive in 1976, Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 26 December 2017

> Peronists were like brothers to us. They dressed badly, talked badly, and were very friendly.[629]

Local contacts aided the new arrivals by producing and circulating a document of 50 forbidden words to use in Buenos Aires. Any subtle marker of difference could flag the exiles as suspicious, including use of an Uruguayan Spanish lexicon rather than Porteño.[630] The most common way to distinguish Uruguayan migrants was through their use of "ta" as a substitute for "está bien." Sara Mendez recalls her first taxi ride upon arriving to Buenos Aires, in which she commented, "ta, ta, ta" to indicate arrival to her destination. The cab driver turned around with a glaring look on his face, inquiring, "Tupa?!"[631]

Many militants felt insecure and overwhelmed by the new political landscape in Buenos Aires. Local armed groups such as the ERP and Montoneros demonstrated a level of organization and militancy that far surpassed that of the FAU. Both organizations dwarfed the FAU in numbers – the ERP had 500-700 members while the Montoneros had upwards of two thousand.[632] They subscribed to a paramilitary model influenced by Maoism and foco strategy, and saw themselves as a revolutionary vanguard whose role was to violently confront the military. Due to mandatory military inscription in Argentina, members of the Montoneros and ERP were much more advanced in weapons handling. Whereas the FAU operated with a couple shotguns and handful of pistols, their Argentine counterparts stockpiled hundreds of assault rifles and sub-machine guns. Moreover, the both groups operated a factory to produce over five

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[629] Interview Hugo Cores, In Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Network*, 1967-84, London: Routledge Press, 2005, pp. 71
[630] Augusto Andrés, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 11 June 2017
[631] Sara Mendez, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 13 July 2017
[632] CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Subj: The Roots of Violence: The Urban Guerrilla in Argentina, Washington DC, 9 June 1975, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85T00353R000100180001-6.pdf

hundred submachine guns.[633] By 1975, the groups had assassinated over one hundred military and police servicemen, and wounded over 3,000 more combined.[634]

While the FAU remained opposed to the foco strategy, the Organization still emphasized the role of kidnapping, extortion, and robbery as a means to accumulate resources for resisting the dictatorship. In an effort to raise money for the militants' relocation and housing costs as well as resistance efforts back home in Uruguay, the OPR-33 began meeting in the home of anarchist sympathizer and budding Argentine film maker Aida Bortnik to plan future activities.[635] In late July 1973, the OPR-33 carried out their first kidnapping operation abroad targeting the manager of the Argentine Pepsi-Cola corporation, Nelson Laurino Penna. While an OPR-33 cell captured Laurino Penna successfully, nearly two months of negotiations between the FAU and representatives from the transnational headquarters failed to bring about resolution. Pressured by the arrest of two militants, and the uncertainty of operating on a new terrain, the Organization released the captive without collecting ransom.[636]

Federico Hart and Funding a Transnational Infrastructure

On 16 March 1974, the OPR-33 targeted the Dutch-Argentine wool exporter Federico Hart, a known white-collar crook who was convicted of contraband in 1957 by an Uruguayan

[633] The mythical JCR-1 was a replica version of the Swedish-made Carl Gustav M-45. The 1975 JCR "Plan 500" set out to build five hundred submachine gun models, a small arms factory, two fully equipped fun stores with indoor shooting ranges, and one tech laboratory to fabricate police interceptors, from Aldo Marchesi, *Latin America's Radical Left*, pp. 162

[634] Many ERP operations were extremely ambitious and high risk, including a 1974 siege on the Azul C-10 Armed Calvalry Regiment only three months after Peron's return to Presidency and a 1975 guerrilla offensive in rural Tucuman where they sought to liberate 310 kilometers of space, including some parts of southern Bolivia, Robert L. Sheina, *Latin America's Wars: The Age of the Professional Soldier, 1900-2001*, Vol. 2, Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2003, pp. 102-3

[635] Juan Carlos Mechoso, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 26 December 2017

[636] The Laurino kidnapping resulted in the arrest of OPR-33 militants Pablo León and Anibal Griot. Another failed kidnapping attempt shortly after resulted in the arrest of Omar Zina. All three had the luck of passing as ordinary criminals without affiliations with a political organization, Ruben 'Pepe' Prieto, Interview in *The Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU): Crisis, Dictatorship, and Armed Struggle, 1967-1985,* Kate Sharkey Library, 2009

court. After roughly two months of scouting the residence, an OPR-33 team of Alberto Mechoso, Iván Morales, and Adalberto Soba kidnapped Hart from his suburban Buenos Aires home. Gerardo Gatti handled negotiations over the next five months while Hart remained captive in a basement room—Hart presented himself as Arab (Palestinian) and only spoke in French. Gatti demanded two million dollars for his release, but a flawed communication lead Hart to seek *diez* (ten) rather than *dos* (two) million dollars in ransom. A family member paid the sum in hundred dollar bills for a total that weighed over one hundred pounds. The organization used this money to purchase safe houses throughout the city. Property in the center costed as little as 30 thousand dollars, and homes in peripheral neighborhoods sold for as little as 8 thousand dollars.[637]

On 19 March 1974, the Organization collaborated with the GAU to hold a public rally at the Buenos Aires Boxing Federation. As the first gathering to include FER-FRT membership in the ROE, the event brought together upwards of five thousand attendees, including Zelmar Michelini, Enrique Erro, and Enrique Rodriguez (PCU). Event organizers also invited representatives from some of Argentina's largest political organizations, including the Union Civica Radical and Juventud Peronista. Although the event had no scheduled orators, both Enrique Erro and Enrique Rodriguez asked to speak over the megaphone. After a strange encounter between the two regarding who would speak first, Erro took the opportunity to publicly denounce "those who supported Communiques 4 and 7" without naming the PCU nor its individual delegates. He called them traitors to the working class and condemned their decisions for continuing to induce state violence against the Left. He concluded by acknowledging that the government's main targets remained those militants most active in the street while the Frente Amplio maintained a passive approach that continued to seek a solution

[637] François Graña, *Los padres de Mariana: Maria Emilia Islas y Jorge Zaffaroni: la pasión militante*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2011, pp. 169-70

within the Armed Forces.[638] The crowd's majority MLN-T, Montoneros, and PRT-ERP broke into a chant, "Tupas! Tupas! Tupas!" Enrique Rodríguez then took over the megaphone to the sound of boos and hisses. After numerous attempts to initiate his speech, he forfeited his speaking role to an eruption of applause and chants.[639]

On 2 June 1974, the ROE hosted another rally on a street corner in Barrio Almagro to celebrate the anniversary of the largest CNT general strike. The Argentine Federal Police carried out Operation Gris and arrested one hundred Uruguayan attendees, including thirty three OPR-33, and charged them with unlawful assembly.[640] Although the detainees were released only days later, the list of names and addresses served as the basis for future operatives against the FAU-ROE and other exiled Uruguayans in the country.[641] The operative came two months after security officials from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay met in Buenos Aires to discuss "coordinated actions against subversive targets." The region's police forces welcomed a six hundred percent increase in US funding for anti-narcotics efforts, which doubled as financing for anti-subversion. Historian J. Patrice McSherry argues that the February 1974

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[638] Erro was likely referring to the efforts of the FAU-ROE and GAU militants to maintain a communication structure during the 1973 General Strike while PCU delegates remained committed to reaching an agreement with the Armed Forces.

[639] "Carta presumiblemente redactada por un informante de la policía sobre las actividades de políticos uruguayos en Argentina y sobre el acto organizado por la ROE y realizado en la Federación de Box el 19 de abril de 1974," Uruguay, 6 May 1974, Archive of the Uruguayan National Direction of Information and Intelligence (DNII) – Folder 7065, https://medios.presidencia.gub.uy/jm_portal/2011/noticias/NO_B889/tomo1/2-sec2-cronologia-documental-anexos/2_partido_victoria_pueblo/PVP_crono_larga.pdf

[640] Seven of the arestees had outstanding arrest warrants and twenty six had criminal records in Uruguay, Interview with Hugo Cores from Ivonne Triás, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008, pp. 143

[641] "Realización de un acto público en Buenos Aires. Documentos que informan sobre el "Operativo Gris" de la Policía Federal Argentina, vinculado a la detención de 101 uruguayos participantes de una reunión realizada en calle México Nº 2936," Argentina, 2 June 1974, Archive of the Uruguayan National Direction of Information and Intelligence (DNII) – Box 60, https://medios.presidencia.gub.uy/jm_portal/2011/noticias/NO_B889/tomo1/2-sec2-cronologia-documental-anexos/2_partido_victoria_pueblo/PVP_crono_larga.pdf

meeting and subsequent operatives, such as Gris, represent a prototype of what would eventually consolidate as Plan Condor in November 1975.[642]

Over the next two years, the Organization utilized five hundred thousand dollars of the Hart ransom money to fund a transnational infrastructure including houses, vehicles, propaganda material, and public transportation costs.[643] While most militants kept their personal homes "clean" of any references to their political activities, a handful lived on-site and served as caretakers at FAU locals mostly located in the Buenos Aires periphery, which also served as meeting spaces, warehouses, and workshops. Caretakers received monthly stipends to ensure their presence at the space.[644] In one case, a team of three female militants gave the façade of an operating daycare at a FAU local. Militants convened at the site in morning and later received children their own children, who their partners dropped off in route to work. Other militants arrived early to construct a soundproof basement located ten feet below the building to serve as the future home of a newly-purchased industrial printing press, the Organization's first upgrade from the mimeograph. The space, just over six feet high from floor to ceiling, served as a photography lab. Yet, the printing press never arrived to the local due to the difficulty of

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[642] US Ambassador Hill and José Lopez Rega held a televised press conference regarding US funding for the drug-related policing in Argentina, during which the Minister of Social Welfare declared, "The anti-drug campaign will automatically be an anti-guerrilla campaign as well," J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America,* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005, pp. 74; 78

[643] The majority of houses were purchased in Buenos Aires suburbs for as little as six thousand dollars, Interview with Juan Carlos Mechoso, "Anarchists had more of a stomach to fight," In *The Federacion Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU): Crisis, Dictatorship, and Armed Struggle, 1967-1985,* Kate Sharkey Library, 2009

[644]All militants received a one month stiped to spend on pension lodging while searching for more permanent residence. Some continued to receive stipends after facing difficulties encountering work due to the need to maintain a low profile. The first wave of exiles produced a late 1972 report acknowledging the difficulty of balancing wage labor with political militancy. The odd jobs that many encountered, such as ice cream vending in the street, required shift availability for up to twelve hours a day. Those who continued receiving monthly stipends were required to live in homes with kitchen equipment available to keep cost of living down. Stipends enabled up to six bus rides, two coffees, one packet of cigarettes, and one newspaper daily. Militants also received monthly money for hygiene products and one entrance to the movie theatre. Finally, militants received an annual stipend for one pair of pants, two shirts, two shirts, one sweater, and two pairs of underwear, "Contestación de la nota recibida el 9/10/72," Montevideo, cir. December 1972; "Criterios Generales," Montevideo, cir. March 1974, Mechoso Family Archive

transporting such a large machine without raising suspicions. Instead, the machine remained unused in the home of Alberto Mechoso. The Organization printed propaganda on borrowed printing machines of members and sympathizers of the PRT-ERP and Montoneros.[645] FAU-ROE propaganda became much more centralized after the coup due to the difficulty of maintaining more diffused methods of print production and distribution under the dictatorship.[646]

Recognizing the inevitable prohibition of aboveground press, the FAU initiated a new clandestine media titled the *Boletín de la Resistencia*, which first entered into circulation in July 1973. It reported on national politics, labor actions, solidarity campaigns from abroad, and state repression. The *Boletín* connected the diaspora with those who remained in Uruguay. It sought to inspire political activity among the half a million exiles living abroad and insisted that exiles maintain a community abroad thus creating a new battle front from which to strike the dictatorship. Unlike many historical political organizations who used exile as means to move further underground, the ROE called for high visibility from abroad as a tactic to challenge the new meanings prescribed to national symbols and national identity on behalf of the dictatorship.[647] The *Boletín* contained images of ROE solidarity actions from abroad, such as banner drops at soccer stadiums in Argentina, murals on the streets of Paris, and denunciation of

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[645] Augusto Andrés, "Aquella Locura," In *Brecha*, Montevideo, 20 May 2016; In a private conversation on 28 December 2017, Augusto Andrés also shared information about how and where the FAU-ROE printed material while abroad.

[646] The Organization initially drew inspiration for the slogan from another phrase being circulated around Argentina, "Peron Volvera" (Peron will return). They adopted a similar styled logo, an "R" above a "V" to remain discreet while appealing visually to a regional population already familiar with the famous Peronist "victory" symbol. Francois Graña*, Los Padres de Mariana: Maria Emilia Islas y Jorge Zaffaroni*, Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2011, pp. 131; Print propaganda was accompanied by a sustained wall-painting campaign that utilized a slogan, "Resistencia Vencera," that was widely circulated among Tendencia-affiliated unions during the 1973 General Strike. Propaganda also made frequent use of images of the national independence flag to draw on the common sensical knowledge of it's capture by OPR-33 in 1969. Similar to the FAU's use of the ROE as a popular space for anarchist practice without the necessity of anarchist ideological affinity among members, "Resistencia" served as a new signifier for a mass front behind which were militants of the FAU. Everyday people knew this as result of the frequent use of the *Libertad o Muerte* flag in print propaganda.

[647] "En exilio hay mucho por hacer," In *Boletín de la Resistencia*, No. 23, Buenos Aires, 20 August 1975, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

torture in the Swedish press. Images of international solidarity were meant to lift everyday people's morale and demonstrate exiles' refusal to abandon the struggle against dictatorship back home regardless of the new spatial reality.

Members of the ROE distributed the bulletin anonymously in the workplaces and campuses by leaving them in public spaces. Similar to the previous FAU literature, the *Boletín* included a section calling on workers to submit workplace grievances for publication in future press. Militants identified fellow workers and students who expressed interest in the material through casual conversations without releasing their identities as distributors. If a colleague happened to express serious interest, militants might slip a copy of the bulletin in a frequently transited space accompanied by a note with information about the time and place for future bulk distribution. Members of the ROE would punctually leave boxes of content in the arranged site, often a centrally located plaza, then leave the premises without encountering any of the volunteer distributors.[648]

Militants had to innovate new methods for distributing propaganda as result of new legal codes that prohibited the organization and all political propaganda within Uruguay. The dangers of distributing pamphlets by hand in public lead the ROE to search for creative new ways to spread information. One device, called a "flier thrower," could be made of a shoebox or food can with a small firework attached. Militants adjusted the wick to allow for over a minute before detonating to prevent being caught near the explosion. Upon placing multiple devices in a public space, such as a weekend feria or Av. 18 de Julio, hundreds of quarter-sheet flyers, called "butterflies," would trickle down from above after the initial shock of a small bang. François Graña recalls:

[648] "Como dice ésta carta: con ingenio y cuidado difundir la información popular," In *Boletín de la Resistencia*, No. 29, March 1976, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

> The flier thrower had a real propagandistic affect, but it also had an extra charm: it was a prank to throw in the faces of the repressors. It would be enough to have only been recognized by the onlooking pedestrian accomplices, even those who would not dare to pick up a flier, for it to have been a successful action. The tin can was a more efficient vessel because it did not take that much space and could fit in a purse, small bag, or backpack. It was very easy to leave it wherever and the explosion, strengthened by the tin itself, made a lot of noise[649]

Militants also devised new methods for communicating on both sides of the river. The organization also devised a special tactic to utilize international mail services to send material from Argentina to Uruguay. They sent up to a dozen packages without return addresses to a mix of random addresses, military officers, and one member of the FAU-ROE located in Uruguay, often Elena Quinteros who managed the organization's Montevideo local. Each box consisted of propaganda material and a cover letter, declaring, "This material is for dispersal. Do not feel obliged to read it or distribute it. Feel free to discard of it."[650]

ViloX, A New Brand of Politics

In June 1975, forty-eight members of the FAU-ROE met in a Buenos Aires for ten days to complete the final deliberation of an organization-wide Congreso that had begun eight months prior. The transnational Congreso saw the participation of ninety percent of the organization's membership, totaling upwards of three hundred militants, who met clandestinely in four day increments during the months prior to the final deliberation.[651]The Congreso took on new

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[649] Francois Graña, *Los Padres de Mariana: Maria Emilia Islas y Jorge Zaffaroni*, Montevideo: Editorial Trilce, 2011, pp. 132

[650] Augusto Andrés, Interview with Author, Montevideo, 27 December 2017; The tactic became even more useful after the government implemented Decree 450/975 of 5 June 1975, which directed postal authorities to confiscate all "Marxist and antidemocratic" correspondence in the mail, Goldman, Robert K., Joaquin Martinez Bjorkman, and Jean-Louis Weill, "Memorandum from mission of inquiry to URUGUAY from December 12-18, 1977," CEIU—Waksman Folder 24

[651] Participants in the Congreso concealed their faces with hoods to avoid leaking any of the identities of their comrades. The sudden numerical growth of the organization after the merger with the FRT-FER and heightened risk of arrest and torture, especially within Uruguay, mandated an increased vigilance around security. Militants

meaning after Enrique Erro was imprisoned by Argentine authorities in March 1975. The loss of Erro drastically slowed the UAL's momentum and the coalition never reached its potential thereafter. Thus, the ROE provided the sole infrastructure for a mass resistance to the dictatorship among the New Left.

The June 1975 final deliberation saw an affirmative vote to change the Organization's name to the Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo (PVP). The Organization maintained the same two foot strategy, but Gerardo Gatti, Maricio Gatti, León Duarte, and Alberto Mechoso took over regional duties of the Fomento while Hugo Cores and Luis Presno laid the groundwork for new branches of the Organization in Europe. They shrunk the armed apparatus to include only eleven militants divided into three different teams, but grew the size and resource allocation for internal propaganda considering to better fit the mandates of transporting information between both countries. The military apparatus carried out only one operative on 11 January 1976, when a team lead by Alberto Mechoso placed small bombs at various sites in the upper-class city of Punta del Este, including the iconic Hotel San Rafael, two country clubs, a marina, and numerous yachts. While the operative failed to enact considerable damage upon the target sites, it demonstrated the vulnerability of the dictatorship.[652] The action demonstrated a reconceptualization of the armed apparatus as a means of spreading propaganda rather than solely as a unique tool for escalating workplace conflict.

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coalesced around subgroups of twelve to fifteen. Drivers used the organization's vehicles to pick up militants from arranged locations, where they were immediately covered by a hood and driven to the meeting space. There, they deliberated around various topics and eventually came to conclusions by vote. Notetakers compiled documentation of the discussions and decisions and sent the information along to the Buenos Aires-located Fomento. All documentation from the Congress was burned upon completing the final deliberation in June 1975, Interview Anonymous, 15 May 2017

[652] Director of SID General Amauri E. Prantl (OCOA Military Division I), "Análisis sobre el Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo," from *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo III, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 75-83

In a creative attempt to break the Uruguayan government's censorship of political propaganda, the FAU-PVP launched a publicity campaign disguised as advertisement for a fictitious Belgian cosmetics line, called ViloX. The Organization published advertisements blanked full pages with the company logo in mainstream press, such as *El Pais*. The company logo coincided with PVP propaganda clandestinely circulating within factories. In one bold effort, ViloX sponsored the Uruguayan wing of the Fifth Annual Rutas de America bicycle tour. The sponsorship included various banners located along the competition route, a frequently aired television commercial, and brand placement on three different competitors' jerseys.[653] Similar to the Punta del Este bombing operation, the ViloX campaign set out to disrupt the dictatorship's control over the commonsensical understanding of political and social possibilities. Moreover, the joking nature of the campaign, including various witty product slogans, attempted to shine a humorous light upon a rather macabre climate in effort to raise popular morale.

Regardless of the prospects for a continued militancy from abroad, the FAU was a weakened and compromised organization after suffering nearly a decade of repression. Augusto Andrés reflects on the Organization in exile:

> In Argentina I was not doing well. It was very tolling to adapt. It felt like I had to be in our own country and things just took much longer to do. Because overall I was just not doing well. In Argentina, no one was doing well... Everyone who went did it feeling pressured, because you feel like you are abandoning everything. We were under a moral pressure. It was like a schizophrenia because at the same time I realized that I had to leave, I also realized that I had nothing to do there [in Argentina]. We got together to see who we had lost and who was going to be next. What was this for? To do politics? No. We were just subsisting. We stretched out our lives a bit, but it was nothing else. It is true that there was always a good atmosphere between us, something that did not exist in other organizations and parties that I knew, but that is not sufficient.[654]

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[653] Ivonne Trías, *Gerardo Gatti: revolucionario*, Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 261-63

[654] Augusto Andrés,Interview from Ivonne Trías and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario*, pp. 237

Plan Condor: Transnational State Terrorism as Response to Transnational Left Resistance

> *They say that Uruguay has set up a base in the Argentine territory, but it would be completely unheard of that the Argentine government would permit that, within its own territory, armed forces from a foreign country to install an operation base, venture around the city armed, carry out operations, detain persons, etc (...) Such fictitious histories could only be made the mind of a novelist.*- Major Jose Nino Gavazzo, 1976 [655]

On 14 April 1975, Argentine police detained Hugo Cores in his La Plata home. Internal police memos claimed to have discovered a plot to transport "extremists" and arms between Argentina and Uruguay through use of a small boat stolen from a private dock in the Tigre suburb.[656] Cores was detained in a larger sweep that included members of the MLN-Tupamaros, including Andrés Cultelli, who was accused of traveling with false documents.[657] During the first six days of Cores' detention, Uruguayan police tortured him in an effort to obtain information about the location of Hart money and the Uruguayan independence flag. They also questioned extensively about the whereabouts of Gerardo Gatti and Leon Duarte. Cores' detention drew international attention, including a letter published in the Buenos Aires newspaper *Ultima Hora* signed by organizations and individuals, including Italian Confederation of Worker's Unions (CSIL), the General Confederation of Labor (CGT France), Roland Barthes, Alain Touraine, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.[658] Upon his release in December 1975, Cores exiled to Paris, France

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[655] from Leonel Groisman, "La dictadura, el anonimato, y el silencio," In *Voces*, No. 528, 4 August 2016

[656] "Prontuario Policial N. 252, 27-v-75" from Ivonne Trias, *Hugo Cores: pasión y rebeldía en la izquierda uruguaya* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2008), pp. 151

[657] The April to May sweep also captured the Etchinique brothers (MLN-T) and Enrique Erro (UP). During this same period, authorities at the Ezeiza airport prevented Zelmar Michelini from traveling to the United States and detained his passport on site, "Un dirigente acusa" from *Tribunal Russel: la dictadura civico-militar uruguaya en el blanquillo de los acusados*, February 1976

[658] "Demandamos a las autoridades argentinas el resguardo de su vida y su libertad, hoy en serio peligro," In *Ultima Hora*, Year 1, No. 67, Buenos Aires, 28 April 1975, CEIU—Movimiento Laboral (Hector Rodriguez)

where he linked up with other Uruguayan exiles to found a European faction of the ROE within the *Comités de Defensa de los Presos Politicos Uruguayos*. Members of the FAU who remained in Uruguay also suffered torture during this same period. In May 1975, Carlos Coitiño, an officer in the Uruguayan Association of Bank Employees, was detained by the military and detained in Artillery No. 1, where he suffered daily torture sessions that put him in a critical health condition, including electrocution to sensitive areas of the body, waterboarding, obligation to stand on two feet for multiple days without food or water, and more.[659]

Yet, the US State Department remained committed to downplaying Human Rights violations and even painting the Uruguayan government as victim. In a May 1975 conversation between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Uruguayan Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco, both agree that the rise in Human Rights discourse is the result of the influence of Left intellectuals in global media outlets. Kissinger even went so far as to play the victim card for the US government regarding global opinion on the Vietnam invasion and domestic poverty rates, declaring:

> We should discuss some time how the left-wing and the intellectuals are demoralizing public opinion on every issue. In Europe, 90 per cent of television is controlled by extreme leftists and intellectuals and they are preventing the public from receiving a fair perception of events and of reality. I saw a survey of television programming in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, and one other country, and it indicated that nothing favorable about the United States is being shown. The Viet Cong are depicted as heroes, the United States as an ogre, and U.S. farmers as being poor and oppressed. I don't know where you'd find such farmers in the United States. Only eight per cent of our population are farmers, and they are not noticeably poor. Perhaps the Mexicans are. But the left-wing extremists are demoralizing public conceptions. [660]

[659] "Solo la protesta y el repudio internacional a los crímenes de la dictadura Uruguaya, pueden salvar la vida y la libertad de Carlos Coitiño, 6 May 1975, CEIU French Exile – Organizations Politiques Folder 12

[660] Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Uruguayan Foreign Minister's Bilateral Meeting with the Secretary, 10 May 1975, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d341

In this same conversation, both parties identify the need for inter-American cooperation to combat armed groups. Juan Carlos Blanco:

> We need completely new reforms. We are trying to develop our own solutions to the political crisis facing Western civilization. The second most important thing is that we must solve the problem of subversion and terrorism. Many may have thought when this first started that this only happened in countries with military governments, or as the result of tyranny, or because of social injustices. But now we have it in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Central America, Mexico, and even Western Europe… In Western Europe, it can be stopped without altering the life of the country. But in our own country, it destroyed our small defenses, and we have had to fight for our life. We do not ask others to do it for us; we will do it ourselves, and we will continue to do it. But these subversive movements are all inter-connected. We can fight them in our country, but it is difficult when they get assistance from abroad.[661]

While Southern Cone governments broadened their scope to embark on a regional offensive against subversion, the US Embassy emphasized Uruguay's internal improvements regarding Human Rights. The Embassy's narrative suggests a commitment to isolating the Uruguayan government's actions to within its own borders, rejecting US presence in security efforts, and downplaying the role of imprisonment and torture.[662] US Embassy official Russel Olsen downplayed the reports of Human Rights violations to "rumors" and insisted that political arrests had dropped significantly. He acknowledged the continued use of "some torture" of prisoners, but he insisted that the recent killing of the political prisoner remained an isolated incident that was "absolutely contrary to policy and intent."[663] Meanwhile, upwards of twenty

[661] Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Uruguayan Foreign Minister's Bilateral Meeting with the Secretary, 10 May 1975, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d341
[662] In the first months of 1976, Kissinger and the US State Department moved away from their previous "New Dialogue" strategy, which recognized Latin America as a monolithic bloc, and instead turned towards bilateral foreign relations that dealt with each country separately.
[663] Russell E. Olson, Letter to Aurelia A. Brazeal, Montevideo, 8 August 1975, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d342

political prisoners had been tortured to death since the military coup, including FAU-ROE militant Gilberto Goghlan.[664]

The potential for international collaboration became even more realistic when officials from fifteen Latin American countries met on October 20 for five days in Montevideo at the 11th Conference of Latin American Militaries. On the day of the meeting's commencement, the Uruguayan Joint Forces launched "Operation Morgan" against the PCU. The operative resulted in the detention of roughly five hundred members of the Communist Party and dealt a decisive blow to the political organization.[665] The FAU-ROE responded to the Morgan offensive by calling for isolated PCU militants find refuge by linking up with the Resistencia, whether in Uruguay or in exile abroad. A document released shortly after the offensive summarized the contentious history of the FAU and PCU by specifically highlighting PCU leadership's repeated efforts to take distance from radical elements among the Left amid moments of state repression. Amidst high levels of state repression that broke apart the organization, various PCU leaders appeared on television and radio stations to express repentance for their affiliation with the Party. Yet the FAU-ROE made a clear expression of solidarity with those victims of state repression, declaring:

> There continue to be great differences between our orientation, conceptions, and political practice and that of the Communist Party. Like always, we argue strongly

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[664] News of Coghlan's death and others imprisonment gained publicity throughout Europe via the ROE network established abroad by Presno and Cores. Images of Coghlan's face lined Parisian streets and news of the five detainees surfaced in Swedish press, "Campaña por la libertad de los compañeros ferroviarios presos" in *Boletín de la Resistencia*, Buenos Aires, 4 April 1975, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[665] All attendees reaffirmed commitment to cooperating between countries to fight continental subversion. Argentine representative Jorge Rafael Videla declared, "To be precise, as many people necessary will die in Argentina to ensure the security of our country." Although PCU many leaders went into exile after the Party was illegalized in November 1973, roughly forty organizers remained in Uruguay and meetings continued with the active involvement of a couple hundred members. The Party operated in the first years of the dictatorship with a *de jure* prohibited status, but did not suffer severe repression until Operation Morgan. The Operation, launched in October 1975, saw 23 disappearances, 16 deaths by torture, and forced exile of all Party leadership over the span of the next decade.

> and openly against dialogue as a substitute for struggle, and against the positions that intend to place popular movements as a caboose for the political and owning classes…And like before, we continue to distinguish the distinct methods that should be utilized to resolve the contradictions at the core of the pueblo with those that we have reserved for the real class enemy. When forces on our side are struck the entire popular movement is struck, and there is no room for sectarianism… For that reason, to the militants of the Communist party that have resisted torture, to those who have distributed propaganda clandestinely, to those who have lost contact and look to rearm their political cadres, to those who know that the task at hand is difficult but do the impossible to complete it, to those we say: *compañeros* of the Communist Party, *arriba los que luchan*![666]

The FAU emphasized the shared conditions, experiences, and class positions among Left militants to push for a unified Left. The statement's distinction between the official PCU line and the moral and practical commitments of individual militants demonstrates the organization's commitment to practical collaboration beyond ideological and theoretical differences.

The Operation Morgan offensive drew the attention of Amnesty International and the Beltrand Russel Tribunal. The human rights organizations were nearing completion of their reports on both Uruguay and Argentina with the assistance of Zelmar Michelini, Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, Hector Gutierrez Ruiz, and Hugo Cores, who spoke at a Beltrand Russel press conference in Rome in December 1975. Cores denounced the recent Operation Morgan offensive and shed light on the 5,000 political prisoners in Uruguay. He acknowledged the nearly two dozen militants recently killed during torture sessions and warned of the potential for more murders of political prisoners after the Morgan offensive. Graciela Tabey, a ROE militant who testified alongside Cores, also recalled her experiences being tortured while detained in Buenos Aires.[667] The Beltrand Russel Tribunal (February 1976) and various Amnesty International reports throughout 1976 played key roles in transmitting what was taking place within Uruguay

[666] "Contra el enemigo vale todo" In *Boletín de la Resistencia*, No. 28, Buenos Aires, February 1976, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive
[667] "Tribunal Russel: la dictadura cívico-militar uruguaya en el blanquillo de los acusados," Paris, February 1976, pp. 11-12, CEIU—Hugo Cores Archive

to government officials and general public abroad because the Uruguayan government prohibited domestic press from wiring stories concerning the "the political, economic, or social situation in Uruguay" to foreign media outlets beginning in October 1973.[668] The reports accompanied Aldunate's growing condemnation of the US Embassy, US government, and global financial institutions for serving as accomplices to the Uruguayan government. Aldunate, who maintained distance from armed organizations and considered himself a "defender of Western Civilization," recognized that the US government had armed the Bordaberry regime with more financial assistance than any previous Uruguayan government.[669]

Yet, US officials remained in denial. In anticipation of the AI and BRT reports, US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest Siracusa called a meeting with Uruguayan Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco to insist that both countries maintain a friendly relationship and express concern for the growing criticisms while also maintaining "sympathy and understanding." Although Siracusa recognized some validity in both reports, he insisted that they were "propagandistic distortions" based on incomplete information.[670] A *Washington Post* article quoted Ambassador Siracusa declaring that the Amnesty International's report was greatly exaggerated.[671]

On 24 March 1976, the Argentine Armed Forces overthrew President Isabela Peron and implemented a martial government leaving the entire Southern Cone region under military

[668]Resolution 1.804/973 of 15 October 1973, Robert K. Goldman, Joaquin Martinez Bjorkman, and Jean-Louis Weill, "Memorandum from mission of inquiry to URUGUAY from December 12-18, 1977," CEIU—Waksman Folder 24

[669] Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Network*, London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 92

[670] Memorandum of Conversation, Ambassador Siracusa and Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco, Subj: Ambassador Siracusa speaks to Juan Carlos Blanco about Human Rights concerns in US, Montevideo, January 27 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d347

[671] This sentiment extended to all but one other worker in the US Embassy in Uruguay. Katherine Sikkink recalls, "I was curious about what people in the embassy in Uruguay were saying about human rights. Only on of the embassy staff people I interviewed admitted that they thought the Amnesty International report was accurate. The others told me that their boss, Ambassador Ernest Sircausa, assured them that the report was highly misleading, Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy in Latin America*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. xvi

dictatorship. From March 1976 to December 1983, the Argentine military embarked on the Process of National Reorganization during which they systematically targeted members of Leftist political organizations, trade unionists, and intellectuals while simultaneously liberalizing the national economy. Although Kissinger was warned of the "potential for a good deal of blood" following the military's takeover, he insisted, "I do want to encourage them. I don't want to give the sense that they're harassed by the United States."[672] The new military government plugged into a regional network of shared intelligence services initiated by the Chilean Secret Services (DINA) at a late November 1975 meeting in Santiago. The network, called Plan Condor, linked military intelligence services of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay to combat subversion in a so-called "Psycho-political war."[673] Participating governments looked towards INTERPOL as an example, but sought to build a more specific computerized database, called Contel, which documented organizations and individuals "connected directly or indirectly with subversion." The project's visionaries sought to utilize modern communication systems to collectively compile individual profiles, document counter-insurgency operations, and track suspects' movement across borders.[674] Perhaps the most useful

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[672] Memorandum of Conversation, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger – Chairman, 26 March 1976, pp.20, 23, National Security Archives; Similar to Kissinger, US Ambassador to Argentina Robert Hill viewed the junta's economic program as "encouragingly pragmatic," and assured, "The US government should not become overly identified with the junta, but so long as the new government can hew to a moderate line the US government should encourage it by examining sympathetically any requests for assistance." He saw promise in Videla's quick attention to opening the country to foreign investment and resolving "various investment problems," such as Exxon, Chase Manhattan, and Standard Electric, Telegram 2061 From US Embassy in Argentina to US Department of State, Subj: Videla's Moderate Line Prevails, National Security Archives, Buenos Aires, 29 March 1976, US Department of State–Office of the Historian

[673] Luis Gutiérrez, "Primera Reunion de Trababajo de Inteligencia Nacional," Santiago, 29 October 1975, pp. 1, National Security Archives

[674] Luis Gutiérrez, "Primera Reunion de Trababajo de Inteligencia Nacional," Santiago, 29 October 1975, pp. 3, National Security Archives

communications tool proved to be a Telex system located at US military facilities in the Panama Canal Zone.[675]

Although unaware of the newly established regional intelligence structure, US House Representative Edward Koch felt a heightened since of urgency to pursue sanctions against Uruguay after the military coup in Argentina. [676] On May 7, the US House Foreign Operations Subcommittee approved an amendment to prohibit the transfer of three million dollars of USAID money allotted to Uruguay for fiscal year 1977. The approval converted the amendment to a Congressional resolution that would soon be voted on in the Senate.

Upon news of the amendment's approval, Ambassador Siracusa telegrammed the Department of State to reinforce their opposition and by emphasizing that the measure, which would only be passed in vain, would only jeopardize US interests while failing to enact the changes it set out to accomplish. He instead hinted that Koch and others were delusional, claiming that the amendment passed because of their "perception of the human rights situation in Uruguay."[677] Both the US State Department and US Embassy in Uruguay continued to downplay, or outright deny, the ongoing human rights offenses in the region in hopes of

[675] J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, Lanham: Roman and Littlefield, 2005, pp. 9

[676] USAid workers began expressing concern about losing Congressional support for continuing the flow of Public Safety Program funds to Uruguay as early as July 1973. Reports about torture in the interior province of Paysandu caused a USAid Representative to write to US Deputy Chief of Mission in Uruguay Frank Ortiz regarding a foreseeable difficulty in continuing the program. The memo acknowledged the growing difficulty of maintaining a US presence in the country after the negative the negative publicity brought on by the Council of Churches' "investigation" (square quotes in original) and Costas Gavras' film *State of Siege*, Copy of Memo – Rhoads to Ortiz, "Possible Efects of Uruguayan Torture Charges on the AID Public Safety Program, and Other U.S. Relationships with the GOU, 1 July 1973, National Security Archives, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB309/index.htm; Moreover, ex-CIA officer Philp Agee's book *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (1975) confessed to personally sharing names and information of Uruguayan Leftists with local police officers. He vividly details hearing screams from an adjoining room while waiting in a Montevideo police station in 1965.

[677] Telegram 1610 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Amendment Against Military Assistance to Uruguay, , Montevideo,7 May 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d348

deterring congressional action. According to Uruguayan historian Vania Markarian, US officials, specifically those in the State Department, were concerned that such damaged reputation would jeopardize Uruguay's ability to play a "moderating and constructive role in the Organization of American States." They feared that strong policies in opposition to human rights violations would weaken their ability to exert influence over the growing wave of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the Southern Cone region. As result of an absence of US influence in the region, the authoritarian governments would become isolated from the United States' "cognitive universe" and respond by launching even bloodier counter-terrorism campaigns in the future.[678] However, such offenses had already begun.

On May 20, an Uruguayan OCOA unit operating in Buenos Aires assassinated exiled politicians Zelmar Michelini and Hector Gutiérrez Ruiz. Although the Uruguayan government denied responsibility for the murders, officials accused both men of membership in the JCR. The assassinations represent two high profile cases during an increasingly macabre national climate. Beginning in late April, a total of ten unidentifiable cadavers washed up along Uruguay's shores in the eastern department of Rocha. A peasant made the initial discovery of a "white lump" that was eventually found to be a "semi-decomposed young man, hogtied and blindfolded." Within the next week a series of bodies washed up on the shore nearby.[679] FAU-PVP members Ricardo Gil, Elida Alvarez, Eduardo Ferreira, Ary Cabrera, Telba Juarez, and Eduardo Chisella disappeared from their Buenos Aires homes during the first days of April.[680] The findings raised

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[678] Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation*, London: Routledge, 2005 pp. 97-98

[679] "Uruguay: Muertos pasados por agua," In *Camb16*, Buenos Aires, 31 May 1976

[680] On March 28, four days after the military coup in Argentina, FAU-PVP militants Ricardo Gil (28 year old Economics professor working with UN in Buenos Aires), Elida Alvarez (28 year old law student who exiled to Argentina after detention and torture alongside her still-imprisoned husband in Uruguay), and Eduardo Ferreira (27 year old factory worker and union organizer) were detained in the port of Colonia transporting propaganda into Uruguay. On April 3, Ary Cabrera (AEBU, 21) was detained in her Buenos Aires home. On April 16, Telba Juarez (teacher, 29) and Eduardo Chissella (teacher, 25) were detained in Barracas (Buenos Aires); Amnesty London,

immediate concern because OPR-33 members Juan Carlos Mechoso, Alfredo Pareja, Raúl Cariboni, and Hector Romero had mysteriously vanished from their jail cells in Libertad Prison in late April.[681] Hugo Cores' contact with European press outlets launched a wave of commentaries from foreign newspapers, including *Le Monde* and *Le Quotidian de Paris*. As result of word spreading throughout European press, Amnesty International London telegrammed President Bordaberry and Foreign Minister Blanco to express concern and demand that the bodies be identified.[682] While the Uruguayan government maintained the narrative that the bodies belonged to Asian fisherman, a competing Interpol report demonstrated that the bodies had been previously mutilated, and some even shot numerous times.[683] On May 22, the Uruguayan government held a press conference presenting the four prisoners wearing uniforms and shackles. The men appeared after enduring one month of interrogation and torture at the hands of Uruguayan authorities, who hoped to extract information about the location of the national independence flag.[684] While the press conference offered proof of life of the four prisoners, no word was mentioned of the other six disappeared militants.

One month after the internationally organized political assassinations and cadaver scandals, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with Argentine Foreign Minister Admiral Cesar Augusto Guzzetti in Santiago, Chile. The 6 June 1976 meeting took place on the eve of a wave

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Urgent Message to AIUSA: ATTN Bill Whipfler, 6 May 1976, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[681] Hector Romero (UOESF, 28) was detained since 1970, while the other three men entered prison in 1973. Mechoso, Romero, and Pareja suffered intensive torture in 1975, leaving the latter with a heightened level of asthma and difficulty walking, Amnesty London, Urgent Message to AIUSA: ATTN Bill Whipfler, 6 May 1976, CEIU French Exile – Organizations Politique Folder 12

[682] Amnesty London, Urgent Message to AIUSA: ATTN Bill Whipfler, 6 May 1976, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[683] Amnesty London, Urgent Message to AIUSA: ATTN Bill Whipfler, 6 May 1976, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

[684] "Sediciosos 'Asesinados' con la Prensa: Un Desmentido Rotundo a Falaz Acusación," In *El País*, 23 May 1976, CEIU—Ponce de Leon Vilaro Folder 19

of state violence in Argentina, including kidnapping and detention of numerous members of the FAU-PVP. The conversation focused primarily on the relocation of half a million Leftist exiles from Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, and Bolivia to Argentina. When told of the large number of exiles living in Argentina, Kissinger initially responded, "You could always send them back." Guzzetti responded by acknowledging the moral questions with sending exiles back to their home countries considering the known human rights violations in Chile and Uruguay. Kissinger cynically responded, "Have you tried the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization)? They need more terrorists." As the conversation developed, Guzzetti made the first known references to Plan Condor and Kissinger tacitly approved of them. Guzzetti declared, "The terrorist problem is general to the entire Southern Cone. To combat it, we are encouraging joint efforts to integrate with our neighbors." Kissinger responded by making clear that he saw regional economic uplift and integration as key to defeating "internal subversion," but further declared, "If there are things that have to be done, you should do them quickly." Kissinger then went on to warn Guzzetti of the growing domestic pressures intervene in human rights, but assured the Admiral, "We want you to succeed. We do not want to harass you. I will do what I can."[685]

Internal communications between the US Embassy in Uruguay, US National Security Council, and US State Department show a collective commitment to spreading misinformation, specifically the denial of the international cooperation of Condor-affiliated governments. Regarding the murders of Michelini and Gutiérrez Ruiz, the National Security Council insisted, "There is no evidence to support a contention that Southern Cone governments are cooperating in some sort of international 'Murder Inc.' aimed at leftist political exiles resident in one of their

[685] Memorandum of Conversation – Santiago Chile, 6 June 1976 (Secretary's Suite, 8:10am-9:15am), Participants: US Secretary Henry Kissinger, US Under Secretary Waters, US Undersecretary Maw, Argentine Foreign Minister Guzzetti, Argentine Ambassador Carasales, Argentine Ambassador Pereyra, and "Mr. Estrada," transcribed by Luigi R. Einaudi

countries."[686] Similarly, the US Embassy in Uruguay telegrammed the US Department of state commenting on the recent murders in Argentina. US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest V. Siracusa declared: "We know of no evidence to indicate that the recent deaths of Michelini, Gutierrez, and Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw, have been the result of any GOU action, or desire, or by 'arrangement'… We have no evidence to support allegations of international arrangements to carry our such assassinations or executions." He continued by acknowledging that the Embassy was indeed aware of Uruguayan officials traveling to Argentina and Chile for the purpose of interrogating Uruguayan prisoners, but emphasized that officials preferred to keep detainees alive for the purpose of extracting information.[687]

El Jardín: Automotores Orletti

Taking Kissinger's suggestion seriously, the Argentine Armed Forces began moving quickly to disappear foreign and domestic Leftists within their borders. On June 9, half a dozen men dressed in civilian clothing kidnapped FAU-PVP member Gerardo Gatti from his Buenos Aires home. The kidnappers had been warned that Gatti belonged to an organization in possession of a large sum of money. During the kidnapping operative they took $100,000 that they found hidden in a box at the home. They first brought Gatti to a Federal Police outpost and then transferred him to a clandestine holding center four days later, where he underwent frequent interrogations under the command of Anibal Gordon, a civilian employee of the Argentine Secret Police (SIDE) and leader of the neofascist organization Alianza Anticomunista Argentina, or

[686] Harold M. Saunders, Department of State Briefing Memorandum – Secretary of State Harry Kissinger, Buenos Aires, 4 June 1976, National Security Archives https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB73/760604.pdf
[687] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2046 From the US Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Possible International Implications of Violent Deaths of Political Figures Abroad, Montevideo, 7 June 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d349

Triple A. Gordon notified Gatti of his intention to recover two million dollars of the ransom money in exchange of for his release and the release of ten other detained Uruguayans. On the day of Gatti's transfer, a group of Triple A members broke into the home of Washington Perez and transported him to a holding center blindfolded and alongside his son. Perez, who arrived to Buenos Aires nearly broke after fleeing Uruguay, no longer participated in the Organization and worked selling newspapers at a small stand in front Café Monterrey.[688] Gordon hoped to use Perez as an intermediary between Gatti and the rest of the FAU-PVP. Over the next three days Perez was brought to and from the holding center five times to communicate between Gatti and the rest of the organization.[689] The visits were brief and monitored by the guardsman. Perez felt overwhelmed and could not help but focus his energy on the growing infection on Gatti's Left wrist as result of the use of hanging as a method of torture.[690] After the first four attempts to communicate between parties by use of word of mouth, the FAU-PVP sent Perez to deliver an envelope containing a written proposal of their demands, including proof that Gatti was alive. Gordon responded to the request with a counter proposal accompanied by a photo of the two militants together. The photo would become the last image captured of Gatti, who by that time had communicated to Perez that he had experienced various torture sessions during which he was

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[688] "Transcripción literal de las declaraciones de Wáshington Pérez en ALVESTA, Suecia," recorded 1 September 1976 and transcribed on September 4 in London, pp. 10, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12 2

[689] Gordon initially approached Carlos Gromaz, a FAU militant who took on negotiations to free union officers from detention in Uruguay during the pre-coup years, to represent the FAU-PVP in the negotiations. However, recognizing the extent to which the Argentine authorities had discovered the organization's networks, he refused to take on the role. Instead he made use of Amnesty International networks to go into exile in Europe, from Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario,* pp. 275

[690] "Transcripción literal de las declaraciones de Wáshington Pérez en ALVESTA, Suecia," recorded 1 September 1976 and transcribed on September 3 and 4 in London, pp. 9, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12

hung by his arms from the ceiling. He warned, “Be careful, these are the same people that killed Michelini and Gutiérrez Ruiz.”[691]

On June 23, Perez returned to the detention center to present a counterproposal on behalf of the FAU-PVP. Augusto Andrés recalls a collective feeling of confidence among members of the Organization. He recalled, “When Gatti fell we gathered together and unanimously said to ourselves: we’ll wait. We had full confidence in Gerardo.” The Organization had accumulated previous experiences negotiating the freedom of political prisoners in both Uruguay and Argentina. However, this time proved different. Perez recalls being met with the response, “These people are fucking around too much. We are going to have to clean out about twenty or thirty. We are going to have to kill them… so that they shape up.”[692] From June 15 to July 15, twenty-six members of the FAU-PVP and five members of their families, including two spouses, two toddler-aged children, and one militant’s father, were kidnapped from their Buenos Aires homes and detained in the back room of a vacant a Barrio Floresta mechanics shop, known as Automotores Orletti. One month prior, the Uruguayan Army Intelligence Department submitted a list of sixty-four most wanted FAU-PVP militants to the Contel shared intelligence database.[693] The Uruguayan government also initiated an offensive against the Organization in Uruguay, including the kidnapping and permanent disappearance of Elena Quinteros, who sought refuge in

[691] Ivonne Trias and Universindo Rodriguez, *Gerardo Gatti: Revolucionario,* Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2012, pp. 274

[692] “Transcripción literal de las declaraciones de Wáshington Pérez en ALVESTA, Suecia,” recorded 1 September 1976 and transcribed on September 3 and 4 in London, pp. 16, CEIU—French Exile Organizations Politique Folder 12; On 12 August 1976, Washington Perez and his family arrived to Sweden as refugees with support from the UN High Commission of Human Rights, pp. 26

[693] “On 30th Anniversary of Argentina Coup: New Declassified Details on Repression and US Support for Military Dictatorship,” ed. John Dinges, Washington DC, 23 March 2006, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB185/index.htm

the Venezuelan Embassy but eventually fell captive to the OCOA in a raid on June 26. Augusto Andrés recalls the kidnapping of his wife and fellow FAU-PVP militant in Buenos Aires:

> Early on the morning of July 14, 1976, Edelweiss (Zahn) and I arrived at the house of Margarita Michelini to leave off our children. She was not there. We wait ten, fifteen minutes and then leave with great anxiety because Marga was always on time.
>
> We take the train to Rivadavia station, only 30 meters from our old house on Dehesa Street, which we had moved out of a few days prior. What were we coming back to? To get two bags filled with clothes and food that we had left near the front door. Were they essential? No. But we felt committed to gathering our belongings that were purchased with the collective's money.
>
> "Stay with the kid-os. I will be back in five minutes," says Edel. "*Dale*", I answered. Feeling uncertain and unconvinced, I stay behind with our children, Julia (5) and Diego (3). I wait five minutes, ten minutes, and it keeps getting later. So I leave the children sitting alone at the station while I walk slowly to get some cigarettes at a kiosk located across the street from our house. My mouth is dry and my legs are heavy. I try to smile. The man, usually talkative, recognizes me and turns pale. He makes gestures with his mouth while his eyes dance wildly. I return to pick up the kid-os at the station and we take the train to go meet up with another comrade, Ana Quadros, as planned. Ana organized contacts with Leon "Loco" Duarte, who was key to many things in the organization. I leave the children sitting at the door of a bowling alley and walk down the opposite side of the sidewalk, half a block from the appointment. It is a busy avenue. I take another turn down a parallel street looking, realizing something strange. I am distressed and arrived at the appointment at the exact time. No one. I wait a little longer than five minutes and then walk away slowly. I sit on a bench and I try to think. I feel total anguish because Ana is very responsible. I do not know what to do. Suddenly I am moved – forty-five minutes ago I left my children at the door of a cafe! I feel like a Nazi criminal.
>
> I go back to find them there, accompanied by Daniel Bentancur, an old El Cerro comrade and member of the organization. Daniel and Dorita, another comrade, came walking down the street and saw a couple of scared-faced children at the entrance to the café, and Dorita said: "I think they are the children of the pelado." It was a miracle inside the Condor. They take me to Sandra's house, today a psychologist, who takes me to the attic. Today Sandra still remembers and tells me: "You were shocked and it was hard for you to talk, just like your children, who looked at you without speaking."
>
> That's how things ended on 14 July 1976, and there was nothing to celebrate.
>
> […]

> Then there were people in a hurry to leave for Europe, including someone from the emergency lists. And other cases like mine, of suicidal behavior. For months I continued with my children in that infernal Buenos Aires, the scariest things had already happened and I rejected going to the United States as a refugee. Carter had accepted me and our two children. Then, I passed on Sweden and Switzerland despite the desperation of Guy Prim, a Frenchman and head of the UNHCR in Argentina. I took the last plane out, on December 14, bound for Paris, alongside Senator Enrique Erro and Ignacio Errandonea, brother of our missing comrade Pablo, and some other survivors. I wanted to pay for the sin of being alive, the sin of not having run the fate of all the others, of Edel and Gerardo in the first place.[694]

Automotores Orletti operated from May to November 1976, during the immediate months after Argentina fell under military dictatorship. The space, which housed the TELEX communication machine linked to other countries in the region, operated as the primary site for implementing Operation Condor in Argentina. Roughly three hundred detainees, most of whom were political exiles from other countries in Latin America, entered the site.

Anibal Gordon managed Orletti's primary operators, including the Argentine SIDE, the Uruguayan Defense Intelligence Services (SID), and the Triple A.[695] SID Deputy Directory and Colonel José Fons linked the Uruguayan Armed Forces to Plan Condor after serving as the country's representative for the operation's late 1975 founding meeting in Santiago. SIDE officer Roland Oscar Nerone headed a special task force within the Triple A to pursue and kidnap Leftist exiles in Buenos Aires. The task force included Juan Gattei, a recipient of a USAID scholarship in 1962 and employee of the Department of Foreign Affairs within the Federal Police, a branch overseen by CIA Station Chief M. Gardener Hathaway.[696] Within Orletti, Major

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[694] Augusto Andrés, "Aquella Locura," In *Brecha*, Montevideo, 20 May 2016

[695] The crossover between the Argentine military and paramilitary organizations is perhaps most visible in the SIDE's "Operaciones Tacticas 18" (Taskforce 18), also known as "Gordon's Men," which consisted of both members of the military intelligence service and civilian members of the Triple A's *Grupo de Tareas*.

[696] J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 75-77

José Nino Gavazzo led torture and interrogation practices against Uruguayan detainees alongside fellow Uruguayan officers who belonged to the 60 person strong División 300, including Major Manuel Cordero. At this time, Gavazzo was also employed as plant manager at Frigorifico Comargen in Las Piedras, Uruguay.[697] Orletti also welcomed authorities from Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and the United States, who sent CIA agents to torture and interrogate Crescencio Galañena Hernández y Jesús Cejas Arias, both employees of the Cuban Embassy in Argentina.[698]

Orletti's owner, local businessman Santiago Cortell, rented the property to the Argentine SIDE whose officers maintained the facade of an auto mechanic shop, including the original sign reading "Cortell S.A." Located adjacent to a schoolyard, the sounds of school bells and children laughing were audible throughout the day. The operators used this point of reference when agreeing on the site's name, *El Jardín* (The Garden). However, detainees knew the site as "Orletti" after word spread amongst them that someone had caught glimpse of the front sign from under the hood used to cover his face by the kidnappers. Struggling to gain awareness of

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[697] Angelo Angelopoulos, the Greek national and owner of Comargen, hired Gavazzo after striking a deal with him while in exile in 1975. In 1973, the Uruguayan government placed Comargen under administrative intervention after detecting widespread fraud and tax evasion. Angelopoulos avoided trial by fleeing to Buenos Aires, where he linked with Triple A leader Anibal Gordon. Shortly after, Gordon introduced him to Gavazzo, who advocated for his return within the Uruguayan military government. In 1975, Angelopoulos returned to oversee his factory in Uruguay, and placed Gavazzo at the floor's helm. Gavazzo fired and imprisoned the union's most dedicated militants. Comargen workers protested layoffs with a six month long encampment and hunger strike in 1969. The factory eventually closed in the late 1980s leaving hundreds or workers unemployed, "Gavazzo, Arab, y Anibal Gordon," In *LaRed21*, Montevideo, 15 July 2007

[698] The CIA and Latin American authorities were especially interested in extracting information about the JCR. In late August 1976, the CIA Buenos Aires office learned of the detentions of the two Cubans alongside two members of the Chilean MIR, Patricio Biedma and "Mauro." Eager to extract information about potential Cuban funding for the JCR, Michael Townley, a CIA agent working in Chile as part of Pinochet's secret police force (DINA), and Guillermo Novo, a Cuban-American exile living in Miami, few to Buenos Aires to interrogate the Cubans. The duo participated in the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organizations, a CIA-sponsored paramilitary organization of anti-Castro Cuban exiles. In a 2001 case opened by Argentine judge María Servini de Cubría, ex-director of the DINA Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda testified that both men utilized torture techniques to extract information from the Cuban embassy workers. Under the orders of Augusto Pinochet less than one month later, Townley and Contreras Sepúlveda participated orchestrated the assassination of ex-Chilean ambassador to the United States and leading Pinochet opponent Orlando Letellier. The Cubans' remains were found thirty-six years later hidden in cement barrels that washed ashore in the northern Buenos Aires suburb of Virreyes, from Cecilia Devana, "En el marco del Plan Cóndor: la CIA torturaba cubanos en Argentina," In *Infojus Noticias,* Buenos Aires: Agencia Nacional de Noticias Juridícas, 29 July 2013

his surroundings while being dragged from the van, he read "Orletti" out of the figures “Cortell S.A.”

Guardsman, mostly members of the Triple A disguised as auto mechanics, rotated cars in-and-out of the front garage to give the appearance of an operating repair shop. Operators lived in a lodging area upstairs alongside a collective holding room for detainees, who operators watched over through three small peep holes in the wall.[699] Operators stripped detainees naked and prohibited them from speaking to one another – if they heard any sounds of communication they would arrive at the cell entrance and fire shotguns above the detainees’ heads, hitting the wall with the purpose of intimidating them. The dynamic was meant to create the ultimate form of alienation: together, but divided. Detainees frequently underwent torture sessions in a separate room adjacent to the operators’ living quarters. Major Gavazzo interrogated and tortured detainees alongside a member of Taskforce 18 who was referred to internally as Oscar 1. Gavazzo openly spoke about his identity and sometimes allowed detainees to remove their blindfolds – he acted without fear of consequences because the site’s operators had no original intentions of releasing detainees alive. Instead, the SID brought FAU-PVP detainees to Orletti to extract information, specifically regarding the location of the ransom money, and to later murder them. In one case, a militant’s father was detained and tortured in quest of information regarding his son, who remained adjacent in the holding cell throughout the torture session. The father, Enrique Rodriguez Larreta, recalls his experiences in a torture session:

> The next night was my turn to go to the top floor where they interrogated me under torture, like all the other women and men who were there. They got me completely naked, and, placing my hands towards my back, they hung me by my wrists for about 20 minutes at 30 cm above the floor. At the same time the placed a sort of loincloth over me so that I received various electric shocks. When the

[699] The collective holding cell at Orletti veered dramatically from other holding methods at Argentina's larger clandestine detention centers like ESMA and "La Perla," where prisoners were isolated in casket-sized boxes and only released to eat. There were no clear feeding schedules nor forced labor like at other detention sites of the epoch.

> electricity hits it the victim receives an electric shock to multiple places at the same time. The apparatus that they called *la maquina* [machine] was connected while they asked questions and made insults and threats, carrying shocks to one's most sensitive parts. The floor under where they hung the detainees was wet and covered with glass the size of coarse salt for the purpose of adding to the torture if a person tried to support themselves by putting their feet on the floor. Various people that were with me got themselves out of the rig and kicked against the floor, which produced series injuries. I remember a special case of someone who I later realized was Edelweiss Zahn, who suffered deep wounds to her temples and ankles that later got infected.
>
> While they tortured me that asked me questions about the political activities of my son and about my participation in the Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo (PVP), to which they claimed my son belonged. It was in this room where I could see, at one moment when the blindfold began to fall due to the intense perspiration, that on the wall there was a regular sized portrait of Adolf Hitler.[700]

The Koch Amendment

Amidst the wave of disappearances in Argentina and Uruguay, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Hewson A. Ryan (US State Department) sent a letter to Representative Koch to deter him from pursuing the resolution. After denying the classification of the Uruguayan government as a military dictatorship, Ryan insisted that the human rights issues be taken on in private, claiming, "We believe that our private diplomatic representations have had a positive effect in strengthening the Uruguayan Government's resolve to improve the human rights situation in that country…the Department does not believe that a legislated denial of assistance to Uruguay would serve the cause of human rights in that country or the interests of the United States in international affairs." Throughout the letter, Ryan repeatedly emphasized that the human rights situation had improved greatly since the demobilization of the Tupamaros

[700] Torture sessions lasted between thirty minutes to three hours. One of the few survivors of the center, Edelweiss Zahn remains completely deaf in one ear due to the torture she endured while in detention, "Informe Enrique Rodriguez Larreta Piera," Equipo de trabajo Sitio de memoria Ex CCD y Automotores Orletti

in mid 1972.[701] One day later, Ryan messaged Kissinger to assure him that the recent removal of President Juan Bordaberry would not affect US interests in Uruguay. He proclaimed, "The armed forces are moving quickly to restructure the government" and acknowledged that the Uruguayan military had hinted at remaining in power for at least a decade. He highlighted the fragility of the military government due to frequent disagreements over political restructuring, and emphasized that "friendly relations with Uruguay" could potentially become strained due to Koch's amendment because it would grant "military hardliners" an upper hand and "make it difficult for the moderate civilians and military leaders to improve Uruguay's human rights performance." [702]

Yet Representative Koch continued pursuing the goal of withdrawing USAid money from the Uruguayan government and continued to openly voice concern for the lack of reporting on human rights violations. On July 19, Koch published an article in the *New York Times* declaring that the Embassy "shuns the idea that there is a human rights problem in Uruguay." Ambassador Siracusa responded internally by declaring the claim to be "totally unwarranted, uninformed and unfair." While the *Times* article triggered Siracusa's response, Secretary of State Kissinger also encouraged him to take a more active role refuting the narrative of US complicity.[703] Meanwhile, the US Bureau of Inter-American Affairs continued to intervene on the resolution and wrote Koch a letter calling his claims of US Embassy complicity to be

[701] Robert W. Zimmermann, Briefing Memorandum, Director of the Office of East Coast Affairs, ARA/ECA, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Ryan) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Shlaudeman), Subj: Congressman Koch – Bureau Contacts, Washington, 22 June 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d354
[702] Hewson A. Ryan, Briefing Memorandum, Subject: Uruguay – Current Political Situation, Washington DC, 18 June 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d352
[703] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2722 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Department of State, Subj: Congressman Koch's Charges, Montevideo, 21 July 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d355

"completely unfounded."[704] On July 20, Ambassador Siracusa reiterated that Southern Cone military governments blamed an international Communist conspiracy for the rise in human rights campaigns and suggested that hostility and/or lack of sympathy from the US government would only further isolate their allies. He concluded:

> The US had long urged these countries to increase their cooperation for security. Now that they are doing so our reaction should not be one of opprobrium. We must condemn their abhorrent methods, but we cannot condemn their coordinated approach to common perceived threats or we could well be effectively alienated from this part of the world. When Pinochet, Bordaberry, and Banzer spoke of their deep concern of new forms of intervention in their internal affairs and of the need for more effective hemispheric security, they were addressing these same problems – and talking to us.[705]

In response to the pressure induced by the Koch amendment, Uruguayan high government officials called for a handful of detainees to be relocated from Orletti back home to Uruguay. On July 24, a flight left from Buenos Aires to Montevideo's Carrasco International Airport carrying 26 hooded and handcuffed members of the FAU-PVP alongside dozens of boxes of household goods obtained by officials during the June raids. Ana Quadros recalls overhearing conversations about the decision to transport detainees:

> I heard things, including from the place where they held reunions between Argentine and Uruguayan servicemen, military and paramilitary. That place was right next to where they held me. So I heard all of their conversations. The Uruguayans wanted to bring us back to Uruguay, and I had no idea why, but they wanted to bring us. But the Argentines were firmly against it – they said that one

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[704] In a 14 July 1976 letter from Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of Inter-American Affairs Hewson Ryan to Rep. Koch, the former accusses the latter of being uninformed of Embassy reports and/or chosing to ignore them in favor of the Wilson Ferreira and Amnesty International narratives, Ambassador Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2722 From US Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Congressman Koch's Charges, Uruguay 21 July 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d355

[705] Ernerst Siracusa, Telegram 2702 from US Embassy in Uruguay to US Embassy in Brazil, US Embassy in Argentina, US Embassy in Paraguay, US Embassy in Bolivia, US Embassy in Chile, Subj: Trends in the Southern Cone, Montevideo, 20 July 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB125/condor03.pdf

> day "this," "all of this," could be known. So they debated until, clearly, the Uruguayan position won. And so they decided to transport us back to Uruguay.[706]

Detainees were transported to a home located at the address Rambla República de México 5515, in Barrio Punta Gorda. Authorities eventually relocated detainees to holding cells at the SID headquarters, where they met with José Nino Gavazzo to continue discussions about the ransom money and the location of the independence flag.[707]

Eventually, growing evidence of Uruguay's international collaboration and human rights violations could not be ignored. In a July 30 meeting between members of the CIA and US State Department, participants recognized that Operation Condor had developed beyond serving as a shared intelligence network and instead morphed into a "more activist role, including specifically that of identifying, locating, and 'hitting' guerrilla leaders."[708] Thus, members of the US State Department began growing more aware of the atrocities taking place in the region and the potential for such climate to force a break in US relationships with Southern Cone governments.

On August 3, Head of the US Bureau of Inter-American Affairs Harry W. Shlaudeman warned of a "siege mentality shading into paranoia" that had swept over the region, including in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, where "despite near decimation of the Marxist left" the governments insisted that "the war must go on." He continues by referencing Uruguayan Foreign Minister Blanco, declaring, "Some talk of the 'Third World War,' with the countries of the southern cone as "the last bastion of Christian civilization." For Shlaudeman, the Third World War discourse that had begun circulating within more radical circles of the military regimes

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[706] Ana Quadros, Interview with Bianca Ramírez Rivera, from "En ese lugar que era tan frío: sobre la (im)posibilidad de comprender la experiencia de Ana Inés Quadros, ex detenida del centro clandestino de detención Automotores Orletti" In *Testimonios,* Vol. 7, No. 7, Buenos Aires, Winter 2018, pp. 132-33
[707] Sergio Lopez, Testimony in *La Gran Farsa*, 45:00-50:00
[708] US Department of State Memorandum for the Record, Subject: ARA-CIA Weekly Meeting 30 July 1976, Washington DC, 3 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian

demonstrated “bothersome parallels with National Socialism” and a growing antagonism with the United States as a failed ally in the struggle against communism due to internal government infiltration, growing domestic instability around civil rights, and a failed military venture in Viet Nam. While the looming threat of a right-wing block united around the use of “bloody county-terrorism” threatened further isolation from the West, the US would indeed benefit as “casual beneficiaries.” But such benefits would not come without consequences due to the international perception that the United States was responsible for and closely aligned with the Chilean government of Pinochet. Shlaudeman suggested four policy recommendations for keeping the region within the US sphere of influence yet distant enough to avoid entanglement, including: 1) to emphasize the differences between the six countries, 2) to depoliticize human rights, 3) to oppose rhetorical exaggerations, 4) to use systemic exchanges to keep potential bloc members in the US cognitive universe.[709]

Shlaudeman’s first recommendation proved key for understanding the importance of maintaining strategic ties with the government of Uruguay. While the Argentine and Chilean military governments continued to attract negative attention internationally for their heightened levels of brutality, the Brazilian military government had remained stubbornly in power for over a decade and, although less prone to extremism due to its self-perceived role as a rising global power, continued “cooperating short of murder operations.” Uruguay thus proved to be highly important to prevent a formation of a bloc of the four largest economies in the regions. While Shlaudeman suggested a policy that refrains from broad generalizations and instead favored highlighting “what the countries do not have in common rather than what they do,” Koch’s bill

[709] ARA Harry H. Shlaudeman, Monthly Report (July): The ‘Third World War’ in South America, Washington DC, 3 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB309/19760803.pdf

shed light on a human rights crisis in Uruguay that had gone under the radar for more than three years during which both governments had enjoyed what Ambassador Siracusa repeatedly emphasized as friendly relations. Thus, the bill threatened those amicable relations by lumping together Uruguay with its far more belligerent neighbors, Argentina and Chile, and thus pushing them to join such a bloc. Although still a civil-military government with civilians "up front," Foreign Minister Blanco's coining of the "Third World War" discourse demonstrated the government's growing eagerness to cooperate with its neighbors. The loss of Uruguay potentially left only Bolivia and Paraguay within the US's sphere of influence. Both majority non-white nations with highly underdeveloped economies, the former teetered on the verge of military intervention due to paranoia of a Left uprising to avenge the country's role in Che Guevera's death, and the latter maintained a cryptic nineteenth century-style dictatorship under the rule of Alfredo Stroessner.[710] Neither proved strategic for asserting a strong presence in the region nor shifting foreign perception.

As news about the growing brutality of the Argentine dictatorship began circulating globally alongside the Amnesty International report about the human rights violation in Uruguay, Ambassador Siracusa was tasked with confronting Uruguayan Army Chief of Staff Queirolo and Army Commander in Chief Vadora more directly. During the conversation Ambassador Siracusa clearly changed his tone regarding the reality of Plan Condor operations. Instead of trivializing the disappearances of roughly thirty Uruguayans in Argentina and their subsequent torture at the hands of an Uruguayan officer, Siracusa acknowledged that the Uruguayan government's public silence on the matter continued to raise suspicion. However, he continued to paint a positive

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[710] ARA Harry H. Shlaudeman, Monthly Report (July): The 'Third World War' in South America, Washington DC, 3 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB309/19760803.pdf

picture of Human Rights within Uruguay, specifically referencing the decreased number of political prisoners and state policy against the use of torture. Regarding prisoners, he insisted that the current number of political prisoners sat at 2,017 as opposed to the 5,500 claimed in the Amnesty International report. As for torture, he denounced two reports of "psychological" torture by hooding of prisoners, but insisted that the cases did not reflect standard practice[711]

By late August the reports of Human Rights violations in the Southern Cone became so rampant that US officials began feeling as though they were losing control of the situation. The Department of State warned embassies in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia against sharing information about "individual subversives" with host countries while still encouraging exchange of information about "general level" subversive activity. The telegram concludes, "It is essential that we in no way finger individuals who might be candidates for assassination attempts." More specific to Uruguay, the Department of State suggested that Ambassador Siracusa begin communicating with General Vadora instead of the President's assigned Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco, who was branded as an extremist after becoming one of the region's main proponents of the Third World War thesis.[712] In mid-September Ambassador Siracusa met with both Foreign Minister Blanco and newly installed Uruguayan President Aparicio Mendez. He insisted to meet with the former so as to not jeopardize their amicable relationship by going above his head.[713] All parties agreed that recent approval of the Koch resolution, although detrimental to Uruguay's public image, was much preferred vis a vis executive implementation

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[711] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2941 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, subj: Human Rights Discussion With Lt. Gen. Vadora and Gen. Queirolo, Montevideo, 7 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d357

[712] US Department of State, Telegram 209192 From the Department of State to the Embassies in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia, Subj: Operation Condor, Washington DC, 23 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d241

[713] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 3123 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Operation Condor. Ref: State 209192, Montevideo, 24 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d358

of the Harkins Amendment, which would block $85.4 million of Inter-American Development Bank loans while giving a clear impression of executive opposition rather than dissent by a congressional fringe. According to Foreign Minister Blanco, such a measure could spark a reaction that was "not only bitter and resentful, but highly nationalistic." [714] President Mendez confessed to the validity of various human rights violations reported in the Koch amendment, but expressed confidence in the US government's commitment to maintaining a "friendly disposition towards Uruguay" rooted in "understanding and sympathy due a friend." While President Mendez also admitted that transition to democracy in Uruguay depended greatly on the success of the Argentine and Brazilian government's campaigns against subversion, all parties agreed on the importance of President Mendez's announcement to replace the Prompt Security Measures with a new law on a "State of Danger" and right to due process.[715]

On September 16, the US Senate introduced a bill containing the Koch amendment. After nearly two weeks of debates among Democrat and Republican members of the House and Senate, Congress passed the Koch amendment prohibiting USAid money, military training, and weapons sales to the Uruguayan government due to its human rights violations. President Mendez responded publicly by criticizing Uruguayan exile Wilson Aldunate as being menaced by "foreign ideology." He also denounced Representative Koch as having ties with "international communism."[716]

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[714] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 3388 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Meeting with Foreign Minister, Montevideo, 11 September 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d360

[715] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 3451 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj.: Meeting with President Aparicio Mendez. Ref.: Montevideo 3388, Montevideo, 15 September 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d361

[716] Support for the bill totaled 216-155 in the House, and 56-24 in the Senate, from Vania Markarian, *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Network*, pp. 97-98

But the resolution's passing proved too late to save the lives of roughly two dozen OPR-33 militants, who were permanently disappeared during the final days of the US Congressional debates around the resolution. The late September offensive lead to the recovery of six million dollars of the ransom money after the capture of FAU-PVP militants Beatriz Castellonese and Elena Laguna. Two OCOA officers accompanied the women and their children on a commercial flight to Montevideo, during which the officers posed as their husbands.[717] Three days after the Congressional vote, the US Department of Defense shared an Intelligence Information Report from Buenos Aires announcing that beginning September 24 the Argentine SIDE and Uruguayan SID conducted a three-day joint operation to "eliminate" the entire infrastructure of the OPR-33 in Argentina. While the author did not provide details about the fate of OPR-33 militants, he did report on a "third and reportedly very secret phase" that included state collaboration with "special agents" to carry out assassinations of terrorists and "supporters of terrorist organizations," including the expansion of counter-insurgency networks to both France and Portugal. The report recognized that Operation Condor had become normalized throughout the region and cites that military officers had begun to speak openly about the project after previously keeping silent about the topic, stating, "A favorite remark is that, 'one of their colleagues is out of the country because he is flying like a condor."[718] The militants likely disappeared on an October 5 "second flight" from Buenos Aires to Montevideo, shortly after the recovery of the missing two million dollars.[719]

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[717] Alvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo III, Montevideo, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 36

[718] The report concludes by recognizing that military officers often remarked to one another that "one of the colleagues is out of country because he is flying like a condor," Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report Number 6 804 0334 76, Subject: (U) Special Operations Forces (U), Buenos Aires, 1 October 1976

[719]Alvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo III, Montevideo, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 36

The amendment's congressional support prompted a meeting between high officials of the US State Department and Foreign Minister Blanco in Washington DC. Regardless of the abundance of information regarding Uruguay's participation transnational human rights violations, State Department officials maintained a sympathetic tone and chose to focus instead primarily on domestic improvements in the treatment of political prisoners. US Acting Secretary of State Charles W. Washington declared:

> One of the basic problems Uruguay faces in the United States with regard to human rights is the absence of appreciation for the difficulties with which the country has had to cope. Human rights are relatively academic until a system has been established that permits individual freedoms. When subversive activities threaten the overthrow of a government, that government must take appropriate steps, and when it does so these steps are interpreted here as violations of human rights. This perspective is reflected in our Congress. The United States is a stable country and thus the people have very broad rights; consequently U.S. citizens react when people abroad do not enjoy the same human rights. The U.S. believes in human rights but must see them in relation to the problems existing in any particular place.[720]

Foreign Minister Blanco seized the moment to situate Uruguay in a victim role by reiterating that charges of human rights violations had been trumped up and that the political violence in Uruguay was minimal compared to places like Lebanon and Cambodia. He celebrated the Uruguayan government's successful bid at countering armed Left organizations with a death count on both sides totaling below two hundred people, and thus lamented the fact that Uruguay remained branded as a "chamber of torturers." He noted that the recent release of 1,800 political prisoners had cut the total number of jailed subversives in half, and that the ICJ and AI reports on of human rights abuses would have never existed had the Uruguayan government "simply killed the terrorists and dumped them in the Rio de la Plata" instead holding them in jail "under better conditions than ordinary criminals." He assured US State Department officials of the

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[720] Memorandum of Conversation, Subj: US-Uruguay Relations, Washington DC, 8 October 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d363

Uruguayan military's sensitivity towards human rights, proclaiming, "These are people who go to Church and take holy communion."[721]

After the Storm, the Spectacle: Military Simulacra and "Chalet Suzy"

While Uruguayan officials continued to play down the negative consequences of the Koch bill vis a vis the use of the Harkin amendment, word of a July 1976 death threat against Representative Koch began circulating in communications between the US Embassy in Uruguay and US Department of State. The comment occurred during a conversation between Uruguayan Colonel Jose Fons, Major Jose Gavazzo, and numerous members of the CIA while meeting in Montevideo. On October 20, FBI agent Richard T. Taylor finally notified Koch of a July 23 comment made by Colonel Fons, in which he declared, "Maybe Uruguay would have to send someone to the United States to get him."[722] After the recent car bomb assassination of ex-Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier in Washington DC, the CIA took what had previously been considered a drunken comment much more seriously and finally reported it to the FBI and State Department. While US officials had previously understood that Condor-linked governments would not realize "operations" outside of the region, recent activities, including an Uruguayan and Argentine joint plot to "operate against" Hugo Cores in his Paris home, demonstrated that this was no longer the case.[723]

[721] Memorandum of Conversation, Subj: US-Uruguay Relations, Washington DC, 8 October 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d363
[722] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 4652 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Threat Against Congressman Koch. Ref: State 292202, Montevideo, 2 December 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian,https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d365; Edward Koch, Letter to US Attorney General, Washington DC, 19 October 1976, National Security Archives, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB112/koch01.pdf
[723] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 4755 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Montevideo, 10 December 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d367; A US Department of State Top Secret document from 22 July 1976 discussed an early July plan to "liquidate" Latin American exiles living in France. The

The comment raised even more questions due to the Uruguayan government's appointment of Fons as Vice President of the Inter-American Defense Board and Gavazzo as Defense Atache in the Uruguayan Embassy, which would relocate both officers to Washington DC While the former received the appointment as a "plum to a Senior Colonel not likely to make General," Gavazzo was tasked with the appointment "to get him out of the day-to-day fight with terrorists because he had been burned and is known." The appointments also served as a reward for the men's service in recovering the large sum of ransom money held by the FAU-PVP. Fons had previously informed Ambassador Siracusa that the Uruguayan government never seriously considered Condor operations within the US due to the high risk and inevitable blowback, but the coincidental assignment of both Uruguayan officers stirred suspicion in DC where officials sought to reject their entrance to the country. Ambassador Siracusa, who felt offended about being last to receive word of the assassination plot, reaffirmed that chances of an Uruguayan attack on US soil remained slim and highlighted Fons' reputation as a "loose talker." He begrudgingly advised State Department officials to deny access to both Uruguayan officers due to the potential for political violence to take place on US soil. Fons had already expressed fears of being subject to attack due to his participation in anti-terrorism campaigns. Thus, Siracusa suggested to play off those fears to avoid having to give further explanations. [724]

The Uruguayan government's anxiety about loss of US financial support came to a peak on October 26 when officials staged a raid on a fake FAU-PVP safe house in the Montevideo suburb Shangrila. Three days prior to the raid, OCOA officers transported detainees Asilú

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author proclaimed, "Condor operations in France would simply be an extensive of the recently intensified cooperation among Southern Cone governments to eradicate terrorism," US Department of State, "INR Afternoon Summary," Top Secret, 22 July 1976, National Security Archives, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3238657-1-Department-of-State-INR-AFTERNOON-SUMMARY-Top

[724] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 4652 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, Subj: Threat Against Congressman Koch. Ref: State 292202, Montevideo, 2 December 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian,https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d365

Maceiro, Ana Quadros, Sara Méndez, Elba Rama, and Sergio López from the First Battalion detention facility to a fabricated safe house, named "Chalet Suzy." Upon arriving to the temporarily rented house, officers insisted that the militants eat well and groom themselves because they remained in poor physical health since returning months prior on the first flight from Orletti. Officers curated the space with PVP propaganda and ViloX products. They stored guns and ammunition in the fireplace and built a small bunker below the living room to emulate a people's prison. Finally, they frequently shook furniture, banged walls, and yelled suspiciously in an effort to give neighbors the impression of something strange was occurring on their block. The militants witnessed the performance as they anticipated the government's next move.

On the morning of October 26, two female militants accompanied their officer captors to the meat market and corner store. While sharing a meal that afternoon, the officers warned the detainees of the arranged military operation at 3pm. Upon finishing the meal, officers covered the detainees' faces with hoods and instructed them to wait in the living room. A team of television reporters set up their equipment in front of the house before the arrival of military units shortly after. True to schedule, a squadron of vehicles surrounded the house and General Ricardo Medina stepped forward with a megaphone, announcing, "Subversives, give up. Present yourselves!" Detainees remained hooded inside the house as the officers produced more suspicious sounds and shouted back to Medina. After a short verbal exchange, the officers de-hooded the militants and instructed them to present themselves before the squadron.[725] The detainees were greeted by Uruguayan press upon leaving the house who took their photos and asked for their names to publish media outlets. The detainees then left the site in paddy wagons

[725] Although late October marks a transition to late Spring in Uruguay, the militants presented themselves dressed in winter clothing that they had gathered from other prisoners along the journey. All FAU-PVP members were detained in the thick of Buenos Aires winter, Interview with Alicia Cadenas, in *La Gran Farsa*, dir. Alejandro Figueroa https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtceMAHEzfU>

and headed towards a large field across from the Centennial Stadium. There, they met with other militants who had also been "recently captured" in what OCOA sought to present as a large organized raid on various safe houses and hotels. The officers took advantage of the large crowd gathered at the stadium to witness a championship match between domestic football clubs Defensor and Peñarol. Militants disembarked hooded and shackled from the vehicles and lined up in the field, which resembled a temporary military camp. Police and military vehicles arrived one by one with sirens blaring to capture the spectators' attention. Once all detainees were present at the field, the Joint Forces initiated a large caravan that cruised down Montevideo's main avenues with sirens blaring. The procession finally arrived at a press conference, where officers presented militant Ana Quadros as the face of the sixty-two guerrillas they claimed to have captured in the day's raids. The list of detainees included many militants who still remained disappeared or secretly murdered in Buenos Aires, including Gerardo Gatti and other FAU-PVP militants "transferred" on the second flight.[726]

On 30 October 1976, the Italian Associated Press National Agency (ANSA) and US-based Associated Press (AP) published the story of the sixty-two captured FAU-VP militants based on a press release by the content on a Uruguayan Joint Forces. Argentina's *La Nación* printed the story in an article titled "The plans of the group recently destroyed in Uruguay," which claimed that the PVP had been plotting to assassinate at least eight government officials and businessmen both within Uruguay and the exterior, including Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco, Ambassador to Brazil Carlos Manini Rios, and President of Club Atletico Peñarol

[726] Juan Ferreira, son of Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, notified the US State Department of the Chalet Suzy episode and proclaimed that the event was meant to embarrass the US government. He acknowledged that all those detained in the simulacra belonged to the list of thirty Uruguayans recently disappeared in Buenos Aires, Henry Kissinger, Telegram to US Embassies in Argentina and Uruguay, Subject: Arrested Uruguayans, Washington DC, 29 October 1976, Wikileaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976STATE267364_b.html

Washington Cataldi, among others. They further claimed that the PVP planned to set up foreign bases of operation, specifically in Buenos Aires and Southern Brazil, to shelter other guerrillas upon returning from assassination operatives within Uruguay. The text concluded with a declaration from General and Comander of the Fourth Division, Gregorio Alvarez:

> We are mending the gaping wounds in Uruguayan society. Subtly, thanks to our politicians, Marxism has infiltrated and seeped into Uruguayan society during the last thirty years, specifically among the most sensitive classes in a way that these wounds are going to take some tie. At this time, Uruguay is gaining back consciousness that it should be the owner of its own destiny and that it shouldn't draw on foreign and alienating slogans nor ideas to move into the future. [727]

However, the FAU-PVP had no plans to assassinate any government officials aside from Jose Nino Gavazzo, who they passed up after trailing his whereabouts for nearly five weeks earlier that same year. While many members of the FAU-PVP saw such an operation as an opportunity to seek personal vengeance, they maintained committed to a strategy of mass movement building even as members faced state violence at the hands of government officials.[728]

Yet, the theatrics took place too late to win over US Congressional opinion regarding USAid money nor State Department officials acceptance of the DC appointments. Assistant Secretary of Inter-American Affairs Harry W. Shlaudeman recognized that the appointment of Fons and Gavazzo would bring "unfavorable publicity damaging to relations between the two countries."[729] The situation spun even more out of control when two orphaned children mysteriously appeared in Plaza O'Higgins in Valparaiso, Chile on December 29. The siblings, Antatole Julien Grisona (4 years old) and Victoria Julien Gisonas (1 year old), had been abducted from their parents, FAU-PVP militants Victoria Grisonas and Roger Julien, who were

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[727] "Los planes del grupo desbaratado en Uruguay," In *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, 31 October 1976
[728] Juan Carlos and Mariana Mechoso, Conversation with Author (unrecorded), Montevideo, 12 December 2017
[729] Henry Kissinger, Telegram 306332, US Department of State to the Embassy in Uruguay, Subj: Condor, Washington DC, 18 December 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d368

permanently disappeared during the September 1976 offensive in Buenos Aires.[730] With the curtain swiftly raising on the Uruguayan government, the US State Department could not afford to risk the backlash of another potential attack on US soil by officers from a Condor-affiliated nation. On December 31, Shlaudeman finally informed the Uruguayan Ambassador of the decision to deny visas to Fons and Gavazzo.[731] Their denial of entrance marked a clear turning point in US-Uruguayan relations.

President Jimmy Carter eventually assumed the US Presidency in January 1977. Scholars mark the new presidency as a turning point in the two country's relations due to Carter's emphasis on human rights. While Southern Cone military governments became increasingly antagonistic to the United States for the duration of the Carter regime, the Chalet Suzy case shows that the Uruguayan government intentionally shamed the United States government amidst the Ford administration and before the election of Carter. The new administration and staff embodied a clear shift from prior government policy to feign ignorance or cover up the atrocities taking place in the Southern Cone region. Lawrence Pezzullo took over duties as US Ambassador to Uruguay.[732] He recalled:

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[730]Without knowledge of their backstory, an image of the orphaned children "with strange accents" appeared in Santiago's *El Mercurio* newspaper. A middle class Chilean family adopted the children within a few days of their appearance, but the eerie occurrence lead to more questions than answers. Without knowledge of her grandchildren's appearance in Chile, Angelica Grisona spent two years appealing to Argentine military courts and even obtained various meetings with President Jorge Rafael Videla, who declared, "Don't look anymore. We do not do those sorts of things. In the end, if there was a confrontation and your son was involved, who knows, but we do not have anything to do with those things. In July 1979, *Clamor*, a Sao Paulo-based human rights organization headed by Archbishop Paulo Evaristo Arns, discovered the children and contacted their grandmother who travelled to Valparaiso to claim them.Eduardo Gentil, "Children of Couple Kidnapped in Argentina in 1976 Found in Chile," *In Latin America Daily Post*, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1 August 1979, CEIU French Exile – Organizations Politique Folder 12

[731] Harry W. Shlaudeman, Action Memorandum to the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Subj: Uruguayan Intelligence Personnel to the US, Washington, 31 December 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d369

[732] Kissinger remained supportive of the region's anti-subversion efforts. His position eventually conflicted with President Jimmy Carter's *discursive* emphasis on Human Rights. During Kissinger's visit to Argentina to view the 1978 World Cup, he applauded the government for their efforts against subversion during a private conversation with President Videla. The comments raised concern among US representatives in the Organization of American States, who reported that Kissinger's repeated praise surely went to official's heads and undermined President

> It was really shocking. We had an embassy in Uruguay that was an apologist for the Uruguayan government… They knew nothing … You've got to sift out fact from fiction. An embassy can find things out if you want to. Once you find them out you can stand your ground. We had no factual evidence at the embassy … How many in prison? In what conditions? Who does it? Who tortures? Where? Who gives instructions?[733]

While the Carter administration provided a shift in tone, the Uruguayan government continued smaller scale Plan Condor operations for the duration of his presidency without US backing. The disappearing of FAU-PVP militants continued for the next two years and extended across the borders into Paraguay and Brazil. In March 1977, Paraguay authorities detained FAU militants Gustavo Inzurralde and Nelson Santana at the border with Argentina. Both were permanently disappeared. In November 1978, FAU-PVP militants Lilian Celiberti and Universindo Rodriguez were kidnapped in Porto Alegre, Brazil in an effort to locate Hugo Cores, who had been moving between France, Mexico, and Brazil in order to meet with exiles to devise an updated political strategy. Brazilian military forces held the couple hostage in their Porto Alegre home for five days before sending extraditing them to Uruguay, where the government announced their imprisonment and detention upon being captured transporting prohibited political material at the border. Brazilian journalist Luiz Claudio Cunha challenged the government's narrative by testifying to having been hostage upon visiting the couple's home while authorities occupied it. He utilized his platform in the magazine *Veja* to contest the government's fabrication. Brazilian

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Carter's Human Rights agenda. However, the Carter administration recognized Videla as a "moderate" option and began privately supporting his government as early as September 1977 Robert Pastor, National Security Council Memorandum, Subject: "Kissinger on Human Rights in Argentina and Latin America," Confidential, Washington DC, 11 July 1978, National Security Archives, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3010641-Document-04-National-Security-Council-Kissinger

[733] Quoted in Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signal: U.S. Human Rights Policy in Latin America,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007, pp. xvi

citizens felt shocked and deceived by the news because the government of Joao Figueiredo had supposedly initiated a transition to democracy four years prior.[734]

Plan Condor concluded in the mid-eighties with the fall of the Argentine, Brazilian, and Uruguayan military governments. By then, Southern Cone dictatorships had combined to permanently disappear upwards of 35,000 people.

Conclusion:

On 10 December 1976, FAU-PVP militant Hugo Cores penned a letter from exile in Paris where the first use of the word "disappeared" surfaced in public lexicon.[735] He used the word twice to describe his experience in detention, both in quotation marks to indicate that the word had not yet been normalized as it would become so in the next two years. Cores declared:

> Just as it began happening in our country beginning three years ago, and as it happens in Argentina to hundreds of labor militants, students, and revolutionaries, I was tortured for eight days. During those long days for my family, I was "disappeared" … Dozens and dozens of declarations, proclamations, and telegrams demonstrated the broad concern around my case to the Argentine authorities. That is how we managed to break not only fence the silence that existed about the situation of the "disappeared" in Argentina, but also what allowed for my freedom.[736]

While the letter serves as the first example of the use of the term "disappeared" in public lexicon, internal communications between regional military officials and members of the US Department of State began utilizing the term as early as August 1976.[737] The use of the term among state

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[734] Washington Office on Latin America, "Brazil and Uruguay: Repressive Illegal Cooperation," 29 November 1978, Washington DC, CEIU – Collection Waksman – Folder 26

[735] Sandra Pintos Llovet, "Trayectorias de las investigaciones antropológica forenses sobre detenidos desaparecidos en Uruguay y Argentina" [Masters Thesis], University of the Republic (Uruguay), Latin American Studies – Human Sciences, forthcoming 2018

[736] Letter from Hugo Cores, 10 December 1976, Paris, CEIU— Hugo Cores Archive, Box 4

[737] Ernest Siracusa, Telegram 2941 From the Embassy in Uruguay to the Department of State, subj: Human Rights Discussion With Lt. Gen. Vadora and Gen. Queirolo, Montevideo, 7 August 1976, US Department of State – Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d357

actors before its surfacing in public discourse demonstrates a level consensus around the tactic of disappearance.

Although the Uruguayan military government earned the infamous title of "Latin America's Torture Chamber" primarily due to its treatment of domestic political prisoners, an exploration of its anti-subversion policy abroad sheds new light unto its logic of disappearance. From 1968 to 1978, the Uruguayan government detained upwards of 55,000 political prisoners for varying amounts of time—1 in 30 adult Uruguayans spent time in prison; 80 percent (1 in 62 adults) experienced torture.[738] Throughout the Dirty War, 172 Uruguayans were permanently disappeared in eight different countries. Of the total number disappeared, 136 belonged to political organizations: MLN-Tupamaros (42), FAU-PVP (35), PCU (23), GAU (19), Partido Comunista Revolucionario (9), Montoneros (5), and 3 independent anarchists.[739] The vast majority, 138 Uruguayans, were disappeared from 1976 to 1978, of which 119 were disappeared in Argentina.[740] Of the 35 disappeared FAU-PVP militants, 34 were disappeared in Argentina between April 1976 and April 1977. Their cases provide the first examples of transnational cooperation to detain and disappear Uruguayan political militants during the Plan Condor era. While the GAU (18) and MLN-T (25) also suffered substantial losses in Argentina during this time period, state offensives against both organizations occurred well after those against the FAU-PVP.[741] Thus, the cases of permanent disappearance of FAU-PVP militants provide key evidence for understanding Plan Condor's logic, infrastructure, and practical application.

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[738] Ricardo Vilaro, *Uruguay y sus sindicatos,* Holland, March 1979, pp. 56, CEIU—Ricardo Vilaro Archive; Handelman, pp. 373

[739] The rest were common citizens, members of the FEUU, or independent union militants. Three children were also disappeared.

[740] Alvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo I, Montevideo, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 769-783

[741] Offensives in Argentina disappeared 17 GAU militants in 1977. Of the 25 members of the MLN-T disappeared in Argentina, 11 disappeared in 1977 and 10 disappeared in 1978. Only 10 members of the PCU disappeared during

While both academic and popular narratives about the Global Cold War accurately recognize the centrality of the capitalist-communist narrative, most accurately represented by the struggle between the United States and USSR over global geo-political hegemony, such a narrative fails to capture the wide range of political ideologies and actors who took on a protagonist role during the era. While the FAU-PVP remained peripheral to long-term US political interests and intervention in the region, the Organization became a central concern for early Condor-era US foreign policy. The FAU-PVP's transnational infrastructure, mass movement presence, and armed apparatus situated the small organization as among a powerful Southern Cone New Left. As such, regional anti-subversion efforts and US foreign policy in the can be better understood as a holistic offensive against the diverse spectrum of the organized Left.

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these years – 4 in Argentina, from Alvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay (1973-1985)*, Tomo I, Montevideo, UDELAR, 2008, pp. 769-783

CONCLUSION
Un Pueblo Fuerte and All Power to the People

Throughout my research stay in Uruguay, a question continued to arise amongst my interlocutors: "*¿Qué pasó con las Panteras Negras?* (What happened to the Black Panthers?). They asked because the Black Panther Party utilized a strategy most similar to that of the FAU in the United States context: community programs and armed self-defense. This variation of a "two-foot" strategy outlined in the Black Panther Party "Ten-Point Program" set out to build popular power towards collective empowerment of (racialized) working class populations towards an end goal of economic self-determination. While the two organizations never exchanged dialog, the FAU saw themselves as part of a global Third Worldist movement that experimented with alternatives to Soviet-led Marxist-Leninist strategies geared towards empowering peripheralized populations. Like the Black Panther Party, most of these organizations drew their influences primarily from Maoism.

Anarchism's unique influence in Uruguay can only be explained by the FAU's willingness to transform the ideology to create dialog with an anti-Soviet Third Worldism that gained traction in the Global South after the success of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba's promotion of the *foco* throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America has misguided scholars to investigate the strategy as the only viable *organized* alternative to Soviet hegemony among the Left. This error has limited the significance of the New Left, which remains stuck in debates around youth counterculture and armed adventurism. This investigation offers one exploration into Uruguayan anarchism during the global sixties, but hopefully this argument for the relevance and importance of a so-called *fringe* ideology inspires further examinations into organized political movements beyond binaries of capitalism-communism, or Party-*foco*. Such investigations would not be

limited to the Left, but would also take seriously the mark of small, but extremely impactful, neo-fascist organizations throughout the world as well.

While the rarity of an armed anarchist organization operating out of Latin America during the Cold War drew my initial interest to the project, I learned quite quickly from the militants themselves that the armed protagonism was of secondary importance to that of everyday people in their workplaces. Yet, for the sake of an investigation, this proved the most difficult to narrate and analyze due to its diffused and under-documented nature. Most importantly, it shifted the focus away from the organization and towards the everyday person as catalyst for social change. Thus, the FAU served as a node by which to access the protagonism of everyday people's behavior in a historical moment of intense social conflict in Uruguay.

Whereas New Left history emphasizes the ideologies, strategies, and tactics advanced by political organizations and countercultural movements, everyday people's contributions have been severely ignored. In the case of Uruguay, this heterogeneous and often apolitical category not only responded to declining living conditions, but created an economic, social, and political crisis that required a military intervention to squash it. While we know very little about who these people were – in most cases we do not even know their names – the exceptionally high proportion of imprisonment (1 in 30 adults) and torture (1 in 62 adults) shows the degree to which the Uruguayan state saw a potentially in the entirety of the population. Whereas the total number of PCU, MLN-T, and FAU militants likely totaled less than 13 thousand militants, a total of 55 thousand people passed through Uruguay's prisons in the decade after 1968.

While the FAU never overtook the Communist Party as majority representatives of the labor movement, Uruguayan workers organically confronted their declining conditions with a repertoire of tactics advocated for by the organization. At many worksites, colleagues shared

diverse, and often opposing, political views. Certainly, very few people identified as anarchists. But ideology showed its limitations when official channels proved insufficient for resolving a crisis brought on by global historical forces, both political and economic, that most everyday people could care less to understand. Meanwhile, they faced the realities of factory closures, mass layoffs, wage theft, backpay, and anti-union policies, and they responded to them with a rage and dignity that mirrored anarchist values of direct action and mutual aid. A such, the FAU did not concern themselves with growing membership to nor votes in support of the organization. Instead, militants aimed to free the social and political climate of its hegemonic influences to encourage everyday people to react to their realities as they saw fit for themselves, on their own terms. While everyday people were certainly not prepared to take up arms and face the military, their willingness to challenge oppressive conditions at their workplaces demonstrated a move towards dissident hegemonic subjectivity that prefigured social relations in a revolutionary society. These *new men* would sustain collectivized production in the rearguard while the FAU's "little motor" (military apparatus) confronted the state's armed forces. Although the prospect of revolution remained far in the distance, even beyond the curve of the horizon, the FAU saw everyday people's accumulated experiences as integral to achieving any real alternative in the first place. On 27 June 1973, this process of building revolutionary popular power was brought to an end by a violent civic-military government that permanently leaves up to question these everyday people's full potential.

POSTSCRIPT

> *It was midday overlooking the Hamburg docks. Two men chatted over a beer. One was Phillip Agee, who was the CIA director in Uruguay. The other was me. The son does not appear much at these latitudes, but the table was soaked with light.*
>
> *One beer after another, I asked about the fire. Some years prior,* Epoca*, the newsletter where I had worked, went up in flames. I wanted to know if the CIA had anything to do with it.*
>
> *No, said Agee. The fire was a gift from God. He later said: "We received a lot of money to burn printing presses, but we couldn't use it."*
>
> *The CIA could not get through to a single affiliate of our newsletter's workshop, nor could they recruit a single one of our graphic artists. The director of our workshop did not let a single one pass. He was a great goalkeeper, Agee recalled. Era un gran arquero.*
>
> *Yes, he was. I said.*
>
> *Gerardo Gatti, with such a gentle look on his face, was a great goalkeeper. He also knew how to play the attack. When we encountered one another in Hamburg, Agee had split with the CIA, a military government ruled over Uruguay, and Gerardo had been kidnapped, tortured, killed, and disappeared.*
>
> -Eduardo Galeano[742]

Survivors of the mid-1976 offensive in Argentina left for exile to countries throughout Latin America and Europe. Other survivors were fortunate enough to fall prisoner in Uruguay prior to the coup and thus remained in prison throughout the massacre. While all imprisoned militants suffered torture, all those arrested prior to the coup were released at the fall of the dictatorship in 1985. Exiles maintained written communication and sent care packages to imprisoned comrades back home. Some even sent monthly economic contributions to prisoners' families to supplement the lack of income. Only Gilberto Coughlan and Elena Quinteros, both arrested during the dictatorship era, died while imprisoned in Uruguay.

[742] Eduardo Galeano, "El Arquero," *Cerado por futbol*, Madrid: Siglo XXI España, 2017

Upon the fall of the Uruguayan civic-military in 1985, militants re-convened from all over the world and set out to re-build the Organization. Some came from Bolivia, where they participated in the formation of a local cell of the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru and organized miners alongside longtime anarchist ally Liber Forti. Some ventured to Costa Rica and later to Nicaragua, where they connected with the Frente Sandinista Liberación Nacional. Others arrived from Europe, where they had met up with Basque anarchist Lucio Urtubia to counterfeit twenty million dollars-worth of Citibank traveler's checks which was used to finance Left causes globally, including Italy's Red Brigades, Basque Country's ETA, and the ongoing Human Rights campaigns in Latin America. Numerous protagonists in this story continue doing political work as members of the FAU. Others saw their politics shift to more Marxist-Leninist tendencies and joined Hugo Cores' in the PVP electoral party, which currently belongs to the Frente Amplio ruling government. The party formed in 1978 when Cores and other exiles in Europe abandoned the prospect of revolution and formalized a new political coalition around the fight to return to liberal democracy.

All survivors continued participating in the Human Rights campaign by offering court testimonies to condemn Argentine and Uruguayan politicians and military officers. In 2010, and Uruguayan court sentenced ex-President Juan María Bordaberry and ex-Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Blanco to twenty years in prison. While the former was convicted of treason against the Uruguayan constitution, the latter was sentenced specifically for his role in the disappearance of FAU militant Elena Quinteros. Bordaberry's imprisonment came as only the second time in Latin American history that an ex-dictator was sentenced to prison by his own country's judicial system.

Dozens of FAU and PVP militants provided key testimonies in an Argentine trial to condemn the murderers and tortures who operated Orletti. On 27 May 2016, eighteen Argentine military officers received varying prison sentences for their ties to Plan Condor.[743] The most recent conviction concluded on 11 September 2017, when four ex-Argentine federal police were sentenced to sixteen years in prison. One, Rolando Oscar Nerone, was brought from Brazil for the trial, where he was living a secret life in Rio de Janeiro's *boheme* neighborhood of Santa Teresa—he informed neighbors that he was an exiled Leftist militant who had escaped the Argentine military junta. Raul Guglielminetti, an Argentine military officer and member of the Triple A taskforce operating Orletti, was involved in selling off property from the disappeared and managing a Miami-based money laundering operation that funneled tens of millions of dollars in Bolivian Drug money to the Nicaraguan contras after the Cocaine Coup of 1980.[744] In March 2011, Guglielminetti was sentenced to twenty years in Argentine prison for the kidnapping and torture of over twenty people.[745] The fortunate timing of my research has granted me the opportunity to accompany many interlocutors as they experienced the joy, relief, and satisfaction of the legal victory.

However, many officers, high authorities, and civilian accomplices from both countries have yet to be convicted. Santiago Cortell returned to inhabit the ex-clandestine detention, torture, and extermination center Automotores Orletti with his family in the late eighties. He used wallpaper and plaster to cover hundreds of bullet holes. In 2006, the government of

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[743] Carlos Osorio and Peter Kornbluh, "Operation Condor Verdict: GUILTY!," Washington DC, 27 May 2016, National Security Archive https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/southern-cone/2016-05-27/operation-condor-verdict-guilty

[744] Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pg. 50

[745] "JUICIO A LOS REPRESORES DE AUTOMOTORES ORLETTI: Gulielminetti fue condenado a 20 años de prisión, Rufo y Martínez Ruiz a 25 y Cabanillas a perpetua," in *Pagina 12*, 31 March 2011, https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/ultimas/20-165283-2011-03-31.html

President Nestor Kirschner expropriated the building and converted it into one of various spaces for historical memory of the Dirty War in the country. In a 2011 trial, Cortell denied having any knowledge of what had occurred at his property. He relocated to a new house only five blocks away, where he still lives today.[746]

[746] Natalia Biazzini, "Inspección ocular al centro clandestino: Una visita a Orletti, la sede del Plan Cóndor en la Argentina," In *Archivo InfoJus Noticias*, 22 June 2013, http://www.archivoinfojus.gob.ar/nacionales/una-visita-a-orletti-la-sede-del-plan-condor-en-la-argentina-607.html

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Anonymous, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

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Oscar Delgado, Montevideo 20 December 2017

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Zelmar Dutra, Montevideo, 13 June 2017

America Lopez, Montevideo, 22 April 2017

Juliana Martinez, Montevideo, 31 May 2017

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Juliana Martinez, Montevideo, 13 June 2017;

Juan Carlos Mechoso, Montevideo, 26 December 2017

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