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Competing Visions of the 1986 Lima Prison Massacres: Memory and the Politics of War in Peru

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In the bleak, grey winter of June 1986, the streets of Lima teemed with international dignitaries. Journalists, politicians and foreign heads of state filled the local hotels and restaurants, in eager anticipation of the Socialist International. All eyes rested on a freshly minted Alan García, one year into his first presidency. García was a rising star within the APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) party, one of the strongest and longest standing parties in Peru. Despite APRA's age, numerical strength and populist appeal, García's election in 1985 represented APRA's first presidential win. Promising a return to APRA's center-left roots, García saw the hosting of the Socialist International as a platform to announce his own brand of social democratic policies. This was a moment of great expectations for the young Peruvian president.¹

Then, with unprecedented ferocity, the bitter war with the Maoist Shining Path insurgent group, Sendero Luminoso, previously relegated to

¹ I would like to thank Steve Stern, Jaymie Heilman, Michele Leiby, Julie Gibbings and Yesenia Pumarada Cruz, as well as this journal's anonymous readers, for their helpful comments on various incarnations of this article.

the remote Andean highlands in the pages of the national press, violently exploded onto the Lima stage. Shining Path militants incarcerated in three separate Lima prisons staged simultaneous riots, took prison guards hostage and made vocal demands of the government. Republican Guard forces quelled the riots in the Santa Barbara women's prison quickly and with little loss of life. But the Shining Path gave no ground at the Lurigancho and El Frontón men's prisons. García responded with force to break the standoff. He sent the army to Lurigancho and the navy to the island fortress of El Frontón. The combined forces of the Army and the Republican Guard captured the Shining Path rioters at Lurigancho first. The Navy had a more complex battle in the labyrinth-like El Frontón, yet put down the riots only one day after the army had subdued Lurigancho. However, the cost in these prison battles was high. Cost to life: 250 prisoners dead. Cost to reputation: the Shining Path seemed out of control and the state response was barbaric. Cost to peace of mind: the Shining Path transformed from a distant problem in Ayacucho to an imminent threat for the national capital of Lima.

Historians carefully select and present moments in the past to weave a narrative that lends significance beyond simple storytelling. Not all facts warrant mention. Others take on a weight and meaning that go beyond their face value. Some events are so loaded with deeper revelation that they can offer a window into the political and social dilemmas facing an entire nation. The Lima prison massacres that took place in 1986 offer one such window. On the surface they were just one more human rights tragedy in a long line of human rights tragedies throughout the 1980s in Peru. They were neither the first instance of Shining Path prison riots, nor the first instance of state excess in counterinsurgency policy. While garnering attention in human rights advocacy literature, the prison massacres have received little analysis within academic scholarship.²

² The 1986 prison massacres have received passing mentions in important scholarship regarding the period of violence. Scholars who have noted the importance of this event include: José Luis Rénique, *La voluntad encarcelada: Las 'luminosas trincheras de combate' de Sendero Luminoso del Perú* (Lima, Peru: IEP, 2003); Luis Pásara, *La izquierda en la escena pública* (Lima, Peru: CEDYS, 1989); and Jo-Marie Burt, *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru: Silencing Civil Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2007.) However, most

Yet this event had a profound impact on the way the nation imagined and came to terms with the internal conflict from 1980-2000. It placed in high relief some of the most difficult contradictions of a war that blurred the line between innocence and guilt, victim and perpetrator, and forced key political actors to reassess their positions on the war. The massacres catalyzed a dramatic shift in war policy for the García administration. It outraged leftist opposition forces concerned with the rising human rights costs of the war. It served as a rallying cry for insurgent action to the Shining Path. In sum, it became a memory knot on the Peruvian body politic that allowed multiple actors to construct not only very different interpretations of the massacres themselves, but also very different interpretations of the civil conflict that had torn the country apart since its start in 1980.³

This article delves into the ways in which three different political actors remembered the 1986 prison massacres—with each group tied firmly (or in the case of APRA more ambiguously) to the Left. I argue that these groups used their visions of the massacres as an opportunity to redefine their political identities and public positions on the war. The conflictive stance taken by the democratic opposition front of the United Left (IU), the ruling APRA party, and the insurgent Shining Path also reveal the impact flashpoints of violence had on the antagonistic relationships evolving

authors who have gone in depth into the massacres' causes and impact have been those from human rights non-governmental organizations, inside and outside Peru. Two of the most poignant examples are, Tulio Mora, *La matanza de los penales: días de barbarie* (Lima, Peru: APRODEH, 2003) and Americas Watch, *Peru under Fire: Human Rights since the Return to Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.) In October, 2013, however, historian Carlos Aguirre gave a keynote address during *A Contracorriente's* virtual symposium on the 1986 prison massacres, perhaps marking a growing interest in the theme by academics. See also Aguirre's recently published anthology piece: Carlos Aguirre, "Punishment and Extermination: The Massacre of Political Prisoners in Lima, Peru, June 1986," in *Murder and Violence in Modern Latin America*, eds. Eric A. Johnson, Ricardo Salvatore, and Pieter Spierenburg (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 193-216.

³ The concept of memory knots comes from Steve Stern's theoretical analysis of collective memory struggles in Chile. He defines memory knots as "specific dates and events... [that] stir up, collect and concentrate memories, thereby 'projecting' memory and polemics about memory into public space or imagination." For a longer discussion see Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 121. For a Brazil-focused use of memory knots see Victoria Langland. *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

amongst each other throughout the war. While all three groups vied for control of the state and courted a similar popular base for support, each had profoundly different political projects and tactics. The United Left (IU) was a democratic electoral front formed by a vast grouping of disparate leftist parties, a number of which had long-standing political rivalries with the larger, populist APRA party since the early twentieth century. The insurgent Shining Path, a radical provincial splinter from the Maoist branch of the Communist Party, had violently targeted all participants in the new democracy (including APRA and IU) since its declaration of war against the state in 1980. The distinct ways each group framed memory of the 1986 prison massacres mirrored and heightened the tensions between the groups.

This approach to contestations over memory fits within a larger literature on the memory of violence, which has examined the internal struggle between competing interpretations of the past during moments of severe national trauma.⁴ As Jeffrey Gould has suggested in his work on El Salvador, strong ideologies can affect the national way of remembering or ordering past moments of violence.⁵ And as Alessandro Portelli has shown in his work on Italy, political battles between different groups can influence the memory of an event in a way that is quite intentional.⁶ Commemorations and memories of the 1986 prison massacres reveal that both ideology and concrete politics greatly affected the ways in which

⁴ For two Peruvian examples of this debate on memory struggles over symbolic figures and dates, see also the work of Iñigo García-Bryce and Jo-Marie Burt in earlier volumes of *A Contracorriente*. García-Bryce's work contrasts the starkly different ways in which APRA and the military interpreted the July 1932 APRA uprising in Trujillo, while Burt's piece looks at the politically motivated memorial clashes between different political actors over María Elena Moyano's 1992 assassination. Jo-Marie Burt, "Los usos y abusos de la memoria de María Elena Moyano," *A Contracorriente* 7, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 165-209 and Iñigo García-Bryce, "A Revolution Remembered, a Revolution Forgotten: The 1932 Aprista Insurrection in Trujillo, Peru," *A Contracorriente* 7, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 277-322.

⁵ Jeffrey Gould, "Nacionalismo revolucionario y memoria local en El Salvador," in *Memorias del mestizaje. Cultura política en Centroamérica de 1920 al presente*, ed. Darío Euraque, Jeffrey Gould and Charles Hale (Guatemala: Ediciones RIBEaux, 2004), 395-429.

⁶ Alessandro Portelli, "Memoria e identidad. Una reflexión desde la Italia postfacista," in *Monumentos, memoriales y marcas territoriales*, ed. Elizabteh Jelin and Victoria Langland (Spain: Siglo XXI Editores, 2003), 165-190.

differing groups remembered the event. These competing memory positions had both political and legal implications.⁷

Recent memory scholarship has emphasized the impossibility of constructing one unified, national, collective memory of past moments of trauma, and scholars like Kimberley Theidon and Elizabeth Jelin have critiqued the pitfalls of binary divisions of memory between either remembrance versus oblivion or popular versus official memory.⁸ Nevertheless, memory scholarship on the Peruvian internal conflict sometimes splits memory debates between two poles: a state-sponsored vision of glorified military triumph over terrorism and a human rights community vision of insurgent and state sanctioned atrocities built on societal inequalities centuries deep.⁹ These scholarly interpretations are built on recent, polarized post-conflict public debates over memory of the violence. This article, in contrast, focuses on the formation of memory in the midst of the war between one non-state and two state actors that each had significantly different interpretations of the massacres and the war. This analysis underscores not only the multiplicity of memory camps inside Peru, including inside the state itself, but also helps reveal the way post-conflict memories of the war were actively debated and formed in the midst of the violence.

Concretely, this article examines two battlefronts over memory that emerged over this collective prison massacre. One is over the fallen.

⁷ Memory scholar Andreas Huyssen's work has emphasized the importance of combining the study of memory and human rights work, since human rights prosecution "depends on the strength of memory discourses in the public sphere." Andreas Huyssen, "International Human Rights and the Politics of Memory: Limits and Challenges," *Criticism* 53:4 (Fall 2011): 612.

⁸ Elizabeth Jelin, "Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Post Repression in the Southern Cone of South America," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1 (2007): 138-156. Kimberley Theidon, *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁹ For example, much of the scholarship on the highly controversial "Eye that Cries" monument reflects this state versus human rights dichotomy, although even these authors acknowledge the larger plurality of memories of the war that go beyond this binary debate. See Paulo Drinot, "For Whom the Eye Cries: Memory, Monumentality, and Ontologies of Violence in Peru," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies Travesia* 18:1 (April 2009): 15-32; Cynthia E. Milton, "Public Spaces for the Discussion of Peru's Recent Past," *Antipoda* no. 7 (July/December 2007): 143-168; and Katherine Hite, "'The Eye that Cries': The Politics of Representing Victims in Contemporary Peru," *A Contracorriente* 5, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 108-134.

Analysis of this battle uncovers the varying ways in which the United Left (IU) and the Shining Path depicted those killed in the massacres. The Shining Path's canonization of the fallen as sacred heroes stood as a call to arms for further violent action against the state. The IU's depiction of the fallen as human rights victims solidified the IU's position as human rights champions in the face of state-sponsored atrocities. The second memory battle is over responsibility. This battle shows the conflictive ways in which the United Left (IU) and APRA assigned blame through state mechanisms. APRA's decision to blame the Shining Path for its own massacre implied both legal and moral innocence for Alan García and his party and signaled a hardening of counterinsurgency policy. The IU's focus on APRA culpability in the event helped IU differentiate itself from a political competitor (APRA) on visible political, legal, and ethical grounds. Both of these battles over how to remember this event show not only the massacres' significance as a flashpoint in the history of the war, but also how the solidifying positions of each group impacted one another.

The Making of a Massacre

Before examining the memory of the 1986 Lima prison massacres, it is important to understand the build up to this particular eruption of violence. The massacres themselves, and the larger crisis within the wartime prison system, did not spring from thin air. It had built incrementally as a result of Shining Path initiative and organization, as well as government neglect. The civil war began in 1980 in the Andean highlands, on the eve of the first democratic elections in over a decade. A small Maoist splinter within a much larger constellation of leftist groups, the Shining Path declared war in a moment when the majority of the Left had committed itself to democratic participation in the new electoral system. Aiming to topple the new government, the Shining Path coordinated various acts of violence and local indoctrination in the south central Andean highlands of Peru. With insurgent action focused in the marginalized department of Ayacucho, the provincial Ayacucho prison system was ill-equipped to handle the growing number of inmates accused of participating or sympathizing with the Shining Path. The Shining Path's

notorious 1982 prison break, which released all 257 of their prisoners in the Huamanga city prison, starkly demonstrated the provincial government's inability to contain Shining Path prisoners.¹⁰ As a result, the Belaúnde regime (1980-1985) began a new policy of shipping suspected Shining Path militants from the provinces to prisons in Lima, in order to contain the threat better.

However, Lima prisons were poorly equipped to deal with the influx of highly organized Shining Path prisoners, which led to growing tensions inside the prison system. Shining Path prisoners were separated into their own cellblocks, over which they exerted *de facto* control. Some Shining Path operations were conducted and planned from within the walls of the Lima based prisons of Lurigancho and El Frontón. In a 2009 interview with Pilar Coll, a church-affiliated human rights advocate who was President of the *Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos* in the 1980s and worked extensively in the prison system, Coll noted that the Shining Path had great liberty in the prisons during the 1980s. In addition to the well-publicized pro-Guzmán marches (which were later recorded by a documentary crew inside the prisons¹¹), the Shining Path also regularly had “cultural Thursdays,” whose content seemed scandalous to Coll. In particular, Coll was shocked by the dramatically graphic reenactments and parodies of Shining Path assassinations of police officers, which received no interference from the prison personnel.¹²

By the mid 1980s, the situation in the prisons was reaching a boiling point. The Lima-based Lurigancho prison was a particular hot spot for Shining Path action, with small riots breaking out in April and July of 1985. In October, Shining Path inmates collided with police forces during a police search of cellblocks in October 1985. To prevent police entrance, Shining Path inmates barricaded the entrance to their wing with cement blocks and burning mattresses and launched a variety of homemade weapons, wounding one officer and 20 inmates. The struggle ended with 30 prisoners dead. Critics from the IU suggested that the police had murdered the

¹⁰ Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo, *Violencia política en el Perú, 1980-1988. Tomo II*, (Lima, Peru: Desco, 1989), 829.

¹¹ A British documentary crew from Central Independent Television filmed these prisons marches for “Dispatches: The People of the Shining Path” (1992.)

¹² Pilar Coll, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 19 October 2009.

inmates and burned the bodies to cover the evidence. The police insisted they had discovered the bodies already burned and suggested that the Shining Path had probably used this as an opportunity to murder dissidents within its ranks.¹³ The Shining Path used the October skirmish as a rallying cry, insisting that the police response was part of a “genocidal plan,” whose barbarism only lent moral superiority to the Shining Path.¹⁴ These escalating skirmishes revealed not only the deeply entrenched problems of the Peruvian prison and legal system, but also the importance of prison politics to Shining Path war strategy, particularly its self-representation.

Within this context of poor prison management, and on the heels of a prison guard strike¹⁵, Shining Path inmates carefully planned coordinated riots in three separate Lima prisons for the early morning of June 18, 1986. With a stash of homemade weapons and fortifications, they took state agents hostage and gained control of Lurigancho, El Frontón and Santa Barbara prisons.¹⁶ They carefully chose the timing of the riots to capitalize on the Lima-hosted Socialist International meetings in order to embarrass García on the international stage. The violent civil conflict with the Shining Path had already deterred some international dignitaries from visiting Peru.¹⁷ The simultaneous riots at three prisons inside the capital only served to reinforce the image of an insurgency out of control.

While the women’s prison of Santa Barbara was retaken the same day with few casualties, the El Frontón and Lurigancho prisons were

¹³ October 7, 1985, US Embassy (Lima) Cable, “Thirty Inmates Die at Confrontation at Lurigancho Prison,” Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

¹⁴ José María Salcedo, “Con Sendero en Lurigancho,” *Quehacer* (June/July 1986): 21.

¹⁵ The prison guards launched their strike on the 16th of June 1986 over better working conditions. The strike led to a suspension of prison visits that further heightened tensions within the prisons. Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, “Las ejecuciones extrajudiciales en el penal de El Frontón y Lurigancho,” *Informe Final* Tome 7 (of 9), Chapter 2.67 (Lima, Peru: CVR, 2003), 740.

¹⁶ US Embassy (Lima) Cable, “At Least 158 Prisoners, Three Navy Personnel Die As GOP Restores Order in Prisons,” June 20, 1986, 2, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

¹⁷ Leaders like Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi and Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland canceled participation in the Socialist International, due to security concerns. Tulio Mora, *La matanza de los penales: días de barbarie* (Lima: Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos, 2003), 30.

different stories. The Shining Path and the Republican Guard were locked in a standoff in both prisons, with guards as hostages at both locations. While the government's Peace Commission made a very brief attempt to negotiate a resolution, García and his Council of Ministers quickly decided to call in the armed forces to take back control of the last two prisons. The operation at Lurigancho was handed over to the command of the Peruvian Army under General Jorge Rabanal, who was accompanied by Republican Guard Chief Máximo Martínez Lira. The joint Republican Guard/Army force stormed the prison on the morning of June 19 and regained control of the terrorist cellblocks.¹⁸

El Frontón was trickier by nature, and therefore the last to be subdued. Like a Limeño version of Alcatraz, El Frontón was located on a small island off the coast of the capital. It had been refurbished and reopened specifically in 1982 to house the growing Shining Path prison population in a location that would discourage routine prison breaks.¹⁹ It was natural, then, that the navy was called in to retake the island prison. By the late afternoon of June 19, thirty Shining Path members had surrendered and half the prison lay in ruins.

After it was all over, reports began to come in that 100 to 300 prisoners were dead (although later consensus would be that it was around 250). The initial public response of general support for the government's actions began to turn as the magnitude of the death toll became clear.²⁰ Witnesses began to come forward and reveal that many of the prisoners had surrendered their weapons and themselves, and yet still ended up dead with a bullet to the back of the head. García's reaction to the mounting

¹⁸ The Peace Commission was a standing government commission created by García in September 1985. During the prison standoff, the Peace Commissioners waited 30 minutes outside the prison, with no response from the warden, and eventually gave up before even getting to speak with the Shining Path rioters. Rolando Ames, et. al, *Informe al Congreso sobre los sucesos de los penales* (Lima: OCISA, 1988), xi, 260-268.

¹⁹ El Frontón had in the past been a prison that housed various political prisoners, including former President Belaúnde, 1960s peasant leader Hugo Blanco and various Apristas such as Armando Villanueva—the 1980 APRA presidential candidate. Gustavo Gorriti, *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 244.

²⁰ Jorge Acevedo Rojas, *Prensa y violencia política (1980-1995): aproximación a las visiones de los derechos humanos en el Perú* (Lima, Perú: Asociación de Comunicadores Sociales Calandria, 2002), 70.

criticism was swift. He immediately began to distance himself from the military operations that brought the two prisons under control and added his voice to those calling for an investigation into the massacres. Railing against the perpetrators of the massacres, he dramatically proclaimed: “Either they go, or I go!” García initially placed the blame on overzealous police forces, despite the fact that it was technically the military that had command over the operation. He vociferously denied any personal responsibility in the massacres.²¹

The mushrooming scandal highlighted the continued brutality of the war to a national and international audience. APRA, the United Left (IU) opposition front, and the insurgent Shining Path each reacted in strikingly different ways to the massacres. The next two sections will examine the battles between these political actors over how to represent the fallen and the guilty in the years following the massacres.

Battle over the Fallen: Heroes or Victims?

In the aftermath of the 1986 prison massacres, both the Shining Path and the United Left emphasized the fallen prisoners in their memorialization of the event, yet each group did so in distinct ways. The two groups selected not only very different content and meaning to their memories of the event, but also had different concrete *manners* of remembering the massacres. The Shining Path lauded the fallen prisoners as heroes and focused memorial events around the date of the massacres. Shining Path representations of the fallen reinforced an image of revolutionary fervor among Shining Path militants and highlighted the central role of violence as political action. On the other hand, the United Left lamented the fallen as human rights victims, and in order to differentiate itself from the Shining Path, focused its public demonstrations on the massacres in later years around judicial and legislative investigations, not the actual anniversary date. This vision helped the IU construct a public image of human rights defender and underscored the use of legal and pacific means of combating state violence. These divergent

²¹ “Aquí fue: sobre las huellas de la matanza, la denuncia indignada, el desafío,” *Caretas*, 20 June 1986: 10-17.

representations tied to clashing ideological positions held by each group on politics and the war itself. This section will explore how these two distinct visions were fashioned of the fallen, and how conflict over the memory of the event erupted, in particular, on the first anniversary of the massacres in 1987. The emerging conflict between the Shining Path and IU over this event was deeply entwined with contestations over popular perceptions of political legitimacy.

Soon after the tragedy, the Shining Path appropriated the 1986 massacres with the objective of commemorating an anniversary of “heroism” among its ranks. They transformed the day into a type of official holiday, naming it “el día de la heroicidad” or the “Day of Heroism.” Every year they would enact marches, ceremonies, terrorist attacks and other commemorations that highlighted Shining Path symbols and mythology. This included elaborate commemoration through print publications, ranging from pamphlets designed specifically for the occasion, as well as the dedication of entire editions of the Shining Path’s media outlet *El Diario*. Usually released in the anniversary month of June, these publications included a mix of political pronouncements by Gúzman himself, memorial lists of the fallen, eyewitness accounts, as well as cultural artifacts like poetry and artwork.

The Shining Path used these memorial publications to shape the tone and content of memories surrounding the massacres to remake the massacres as a political victory for the Shining Path. Despite the enormous loss of life, these memorial publications consistently depicted the confrontation as a victory for the Shining Path, in which they successfully unmasked the true nature of the Aprista regime. In one publication, Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán insisted that the battle invoked a severe political crisis for the Aprista government. The violence used to put down the rebellion challenged the state’s narrative of protector of the people and violated its own rules, resulting in an ethical victory for the Shining Path.²²

²² Gúzman wrote: “The rebellion of the prisoners of war...has conquered for the party and the revolution a grand moral, political and military triumph... In this way, the prisoners of war, as historical actors, continue to win battles even

The death of the fallen victims not only served as a powerful weapon to unmask the brutality and illegitimacy of the state, but also stood as a spur to action in these publications. This sentiment was echoed in the poetry and artwork inserted into these pamphlets and newspaper editions. For example, in one poem, titled “Long Live the Revolutionary Heroes,” the author (a Shining Path prisoner named “Gaby”) not only attacked the brutality of the government forces, but highlighted that the deaths of the prisoners were not in vain and would spark further support from the masses and eventual victory in the Shining Path’s war against the state:

The fallen equal three hundred
Three hundred hearts lifted up to the world
Which not even ripped out
Can, or could
Silence their deafening beat.
Three hundred revolutionary heroes
That march to the Front
Their blood a seed
Their Sacrifice a spur²³

This poem, reproduced in various Shining Path memorial publications, represented the fallen in heroic tones. Even dead, they served a key purpose for the party as a seed of future rebellion.

The heroic nature of the fallen was underscored in artistic renditions of the massacres as well. Often the lopsided nature of the battle, represented in David and Goliath like terms, was emphasized. For example, one 1988 insert art piece showed a graphic depiction of the massacre with a field of dead prisoners and a few defiant Shining Path members holding a communist flag with fists raised, as a line of faceless, faded grey soldiers fired upon them (see Figure 1.)

after death.” Comité Central Partido Comunista del Peru, *iGloria al día de la heroicidad!* (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, June 1987), iv.

²³ Comité Central Partido Comunista del Peru, *iGloria al día de la heroicidad!* (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, June 1987), 89.



Figure 1: Shining Path illustration, reads: “Glory to the Fallen Heroes, Long Live the Revolution! Crown the Great Assault with a Seal of Gold! The Day of Heroism, 19 June 1986—Communist Party of Peru.” *El Diario*, 19 June 1988.

This event held deep traction for the Shining Path, with commemorations of the event that echoed throughout the war and into the post-conflict era. For example, on June 12, 2009, the week before the twenty-third anniversary of the massacres, a five-foot tall, cardboard backed placard appeared in the outdoor student cafeteria of Lima’s San Marcos University. It stood there for a week, honoring the “Day of Heroism.”²⁴ Why were these massacres resonant enough to still warrant anonymous plaques in San Marcos University twenty-three years later? Why was this event so revered among Shining Path members that it won a place of honor alongside Guzmán’s birthday and the start of his “Popular

²⁴ The placard included a long, rambling text stating: “Our people will never stop fighting... Here we have the greatest revolutionary social movement developed to this day for the Peruvian people in the 1980s and 90s, uncountable martyrs who gave their lives for poor peasants, but only class can forge the expression of heroism... In the 1986 Frontón prison massacre on June 19, in only one day 500 political prisoners were assassinated, a painful deed still unpunished today.” Frente Democrático Estudiantil, *iMatanza en los penales de el Frontón, Lurigancho y el Callao, ¡Justicia! ¡Gloria a los hijos del pueblo!*, placard observed by author in Lima, Peru (12 June 2009).

War”? Why was it sacred enough to inspire artwork, poems, and yearly rituals?

As with other violence-inspired anniversaries from other parts of the world, Shining Path commemorations of the 1986 prison massacres served a political strategy in Peru. Argentine sociologist Elizabeth Jelin’s memory anthologies have exposed how commemorations of specific dates serve to focus collective memory, often in opposition to traditional national narratives.²⁵ Focusing on one such “site in time” in Brazil, Victoria Langland demonstrated how the anniversary of the first student to die in police hands in 1968 was transformed into an annual ritual of student mobilization, which served “to inscribe each generation of students with a permanent and renowned memory and with a political identity of resistance.”²⁶ In Peru, the 1986 prison massacres served a similar role of inscription and identity formation for the Shining Path. First it underscored prisons as sites of political organization and open rebellion.²⁷ Indeed, in the annals of Shining Path holidays, prison massacres often found an honored place. The October 1985 massacre in Lurigancho was celebrated and then overshadowed by the much larger and more internationally scandalous 1986 massacres. The 1986 massacres then were echoed in the 1992 Castro Castro prison massacre under the next president, Alberto Fujimori.

Second, while the villainy of the state is often emphasized in Shining Path literature on these massacres, equally important is the rebellious nature of the mythologized dead. The preceding riots therefore take on a clear importance in the sequence of events in 1986, since they shape the fallen as vested actors with a mission. In Pablo Sandoval’s work on the Fujimori-era La Cantuta massacre of a university professor and nine

²⁵ Elizabeth Jelin, comp., *Las conmemoraciones: las disputas en las fechas “infelices”* (Madrid, Spain: Siglo Veintiuno, 2002).

²⁶ Victoria Langland, “‘Neste luto começa a luta’: la muerte de estudiantes y la memoria,” in *El pasado en el futuro: los movimientos juveniles*, comps. Elizabeth Jelin and Diego Sempol (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo Veintiuno, 2006), 22. See also Langland’s previously mentioned new book, *Speaking of Flowers*.

²⁷ Historian José Luis Rénique has argued that prisons were a fundamental site of political action within Shining Path ideology José Luis Rénique, *La voluntad encarcelada: las ‘luminosas trincheras de combate’ de Sendero Luminoso del Perú* (Lima, Peru: IEP, 2003).

students by a military death squad, Sandoval argues that traditional human rights victims hold no appeal in Shining Path mythology.²⁸ In the case of La Cantuta, leftist students sequestered and murdered clandestinely provide no heroic fodder for the Shining Path. Furthermore, while social and economic rights are mentioned at times in Shining Path rhetoric, “human” rights are reviled as a bourgeois abstraction in conflict with the “people’s” rights.²⁹ The nature of the 1986 massacres, however, allowed Shining Path rhetoric to reshape the fallen prisoners into heroic actors as opposed to subject victims. Since the prisoners began the confrontation by coordinating riots and taking prison guards hostage on the eve of the Socialist International, their intentions and actions become the motors of change. Using the fallen as exemplary heroes serves as a strategic call to arms: Shining Path imagery of this event showed how even imprisoned members can strike against the state, up to and including the manner of their own deaths.

The United Left, on the other hand, had a very different approach to representations of the fallen prisoners in their own publications and media pronouncements, which reflected a distinct conceptualization of human rights and the war. As a loose front of divergent leftist parties with different ideological roots, the United Left had varying discourses in reaction to the massacres, but their positions converged on a number of points. In contrast to Shining Path representations, the legal Left did not glorify the riots that preceded the massacres. In fact, moderate IU front president and Mayor of Lima Alfonso Barrantes harshly condemned the Shining Path rioters in the press during the prison crisis, and supported (at least initially) the government’s use of force. But this soon caused great contention inside the

²⁸ Pablo Sandoval, “El olvido está lleno de memoria. Juventud universitaria y violencia política en el Perú: la matanza de estudiantes de la Cantuta,” in *El pasado en el futuro: los movimientos juveniles*, comps. Elizabeth Jelin and Diego Sempol (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo Veintiuno, 2006), 131, 135.

²⁹ Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán in fact denounced the ideology of human rights, stating “For us, human rights contradict the rights of the people because we base ourselves in man as a social product, not in an abstract man with innate rights. ‘Human rights’ are nothing more than the rights of the bourgeois man, a position that was revolutionary in the face of feudalism.” Carlos Basombrío Iglesias, “Sendero Luminoso and Human Rights: A Perverse Logic that Captured the Country,” in *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 431.

front, and the focus rapidly shifted from the Shining Path's culpability regarding the riots (and its other violent actions), to the inordinate and brutal reaction of the state forces.³⁰ For example, the more radical IU Deputy Javier Diez Canseco began his pronouncement on the riots by clearly stating that he did not represent the Shining Path and its various criminal attacks and behavior, yet insisted that Shining Path terror could not be fought with "a terror of the state a thousand times more lethal...murderous...criminal and abusive than the former."³¹ In an opinion piece for *Amauta*, Rodrigo Montoya emphasized that just as the Shining Path was wrong, and "cannot defend peasants by killing peasants," neither can a president "defend democracy with premeditated massacres and clandestine graves."³² These statements reflected a strategic distancing vis-à-vis the anti-democratic political projects and violent methods of both the Shining Path and the Aprista government.

Yet, leftist politicians and intellectuals also attempted to both humanize and contextualize the prisoners. For example, IU congressman Yehude Simon emphasized that "hundreds of children depend in one way or another on the fallen," and questioned what these family members would think of their president handing prisoners over "to the Joint Command, in order to murder their loved ones?"³³ Montoya's piece, on the other hand, pointed out that many of the prisoners accused of Shining Path crimes had not actually been tried or convicted, and therefore might be innocent of the charges against them. Underlying this questioning of guilt was an implicit uncertainty over the true Shining Path militancy for some political prisoners. Members of the United Left had reason to be more critical of issues of criminal and insurgent guilt, as a number of their own militants were being held as political prisoners in the same prisons as the Shining Path. Despite the United Left's legal status and democratic credentials, the military command often equated being from the left as

³⁰ The distinct shading of condemnation inside IU over the massacres pointed to larger internal tensions caused by the war over who to condemn more forcefully: Shining Path or State forces. "Barrantes expresa repudio a motines," *El Nacional*, 20 June 1986 and "La hora de la decisión," *El Nacional*, 22 June 1986.

³¹ "Diez Canseco denuncia que se ensañaron con reclusos," *El Nacional*, 22 June 1986.

³² Rodrigo Montoya, "No, Señor Presidente," *Amauta*, 3 July 1986, 7.

³³ "Carta al presidente," *Amauta*, 3 July 1986: 3.

being from the Shining Path. Local IU authorities, heads of leftist NGO's and peasant leaders were at times unjustly arrested. Human rights leader Pilar Coll pointed out that captured Shining Path members when forced by the police to name collaborators, would often intentionally name individuals with no connection to the Shining Path whatsoever, in order to protect their comrades.³⁴ Humanizing the fallen prisoners, and questioning the system that determined their innocence or guilt, helped position the fallen and their families more securely as human rights victims. This clashed with the Shining Path's idealized depiction of the fallen as engaged insurgents whose militancy was emphasized and glorified.

This is not to say that the United Left contested the Shining Path militancy of most fallen prisoners. Yet more important to the Left's position was that, regardless of past acts or ideology, the prisoners' extrajudicial murder was not acceptable in a democracy, and therefore deserved condemnation and eventual justice. The massacres represented a dangerous precedent that undermined the democratic foundations of the nation by promoting a counterinsurgency policy that violated basic civil and human rights. Leftists across the ideological spectrum condemned this threat to democracy, as seen in editorial pieces from radical and moderate leftist media outlets. The cover of the June edition of the moderate leftist *Quehacer* showed a stark, barren cemetery with the headline: "Graves for Democracy? Not this way!," and included an editorial from Marcial Rubio that highlighted the threat such violent state responses posed for the health of democracy in Peru.³⁵ Montoya's piece in the more radical *Amauta* highlighted the distinction between a "civilian government" and an actual democracy: democracies require more than just civilian leadership. They require at their very core a respect for civil and civilian rights.³⁶

The Left's focus on the preservation of human rights and democracy also shifted the arena of action. The prisoners' deaths were a call to action in the courts and Congress, and not on the war field. This contrasted significantly with both the depiction and objectives demonstrated by the Shining Path. As a result of these differences, clear tensions between the

³⁴ Pilar Coll, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 19 October 2009.

³⁵ Marcial Rubio C., "No a la barbarie" *Quehacer* (June/July 1986): 5

³⁶ Rodrigo Montoya, "No, Señor Presidente," *Amauta*, 3 July 1986, 7.

Shining Path and the United Left emerged over the memory of the massacres. Each group sought to distance itself from the other, and in doing so, hoped to add more legitimacy to its own role in representing the fallen. The legal Left sought to highlight its role as human rights defender, while the Shining Path sought to highlight its role as militant revolutionary.

These tensions were catalyzed during the first anniversary in 1987, which turned into a political landmine. This resulted in two competing memorial events, one by those tied to the legal Left and a separate one by the Shining Path. The legal Left event focused on remembering the victims of the massacres and highlighting the continued lack of justice on the case within the Congress and the courts. The march was organized by members of the ANP (*Asamblea Nacional Popular*—National Popular Assembly), a group not only including members of IU, but also various labor unions and leftist parties outside the IU front. Even the name of the march reflected the distinct political framing and objectives of the legal Left: the “Great Pro-Human Rights March.”³⁷ Because of the sensitive nature of the anniversary, local government officials were loath to approve any type of political rally and refused permission for the ANP march. Despite this official denial, the ANP went ahead with the rally at the Plaza Dos de Mayo, with a reduced speaker list. A feared government interruption of the event (due to its unapproved nature) never materialized, yet, strikingly, small groups of Shining Path members actively attempted to disrupt the rally, loudly heckling the leftist speakers. This disruption reflected the general antagonism between the legal Left and the Shining Path, specifically on the issue of the massacres.³⁸

The Shining Path never shared a spirit of integration with other leftists groups and rejected any tie with the IU, which they saw as being contradictory and a threat to the ideology and mission of their party. Their enmity towards IU came out clearly in their publications relating to the 1986 prison massacres. While casting García and the military as the prime villains in the massacres, a close second was the entire leadership of IU and

³⁷ “Gran marcha ‘Pro DD. humanos’ será el próximo jueves 18: ANP.” *La Voz (Lima)*, 13 June 1987. The slogan for the march was: “For Human Rights, Against Genocide, and For a Solution to the Peruvian People’s Fight.”

³⁸ “Mitin por derechos humanos se hizo pese a prohibición,” *La Voz (Lima)*, 19 June 1987.

most especially IU front President Alfonso Barrantes. Disparagingly referring to Barrantes as an Aprista, the Shining Path claimed that “the mayor is an accomplice in that his ‘anti-terrorist front’ proposal undeniably served to arrange the genocidal act.”³⁹ The Shining Path criticized the media’s lackluster coverage of the massacres, but only bothered to single out the PUM’s *Amauta* by name, which ironically had some of the most condemnatory editorials of García within the leftist partisan press.⁴⁰

It is not surprising, then, that Shining Path militants attacked the organization of the initial union/IU/ANP march on the 18th of June 1987, for being an “opportunist march that seeks to traffic with *our* dead.”⁴¹ In an even stronger rejection in *El Diario*, the Shining Path again accused IU of being guilty of the massacre itself: “But it’s wrong, and reprehensibly opportunist, that those who were directly involved in this atrocious crime, today pretend to place themselves at the head of the protest of the people.”⁴² By attacking IU, the Shining Path framed the legal Left as an illegitimate representative of the popular base for which both groups were vying. By casting guilt by association on the United Left, the Shining Path made IU human rights claims seem invalid. It was only the Shining Path that could be the true spokesman for the fallen prisoners.

In this vein, the Shining Path-linked front *Socorro Popular* and the Committee for Family Members of Political Prisoners, Prisoners of War, and the Disappeared organized its own event the following day (on June 19) at the University of San Marcos, in order to commemorate the massacres in a ritual clearly distinct from the earlier ANP/IU rally. They began their ceremony on a stage festooned with a huge red and gold communist flag, posters celebrating the “Day of Heroism”, and a huge mural with various

³⁹ Comité Central Partido Comunista del Perú, *iGloria al día de la heroicidad!* (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, June 1987), xi.

⁴⁰ Comité Central Partido Comunista del Perú, *iGloria al día de la heroicidad!* (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, June 1987), xxvii. These types of accusations against IU complicity in the massacres continued in the following year (1988), where *El Diario* devoted half a page to reiterating IU responsibility in the massacres. “La sangre de los combatientes caídos rego la revolución,” *El Diario*, Special Supplement, 19 June 1988, v, APP2/PCP-SL/41, Archivo de Partidos Políticos Collection, PUCP CEDOC Archives—Plaza Francia, Lima, Perú.

⁴¹ “Sendero critica marcha IU,” *El Nacional*, 16 June 1987.

⁴² “La versión de Sendero Luminoso sobre la matanza de 300 presos políticos,” *El Nuevo Diario*, 14 June 1987.

slogans from the Shining Path's "Popular War". One of the speakers read from Guzmán's letter about the massacres. In addition to reciting the various highlights and successes of the "Popular War," the speech also vocally attacked the United Left, claiming again that IU leader Barrantes knew about and was consulted on the massacres before they took place.⁴³

While a number of media outlets covered the competing marches on the first anniversary, in later anniversaries the legal Left retreated from participation in anniversary day commemorations. Indeed, the majority of the IU members and human rights workers whom I interviewed in 2009 did not remember active IU participation in any commemorations on the anniversary of the massacres. When asked about participation, most denied any, suggesting that the anniversary was something more celebrated by the Shining Path, and not the legal Left. In a 2009 interview with former IU senator Rolando Ames, Ames responded to the question by saying: "I don't know. I don't know because in my memory these anniversaries were completely Shining Path. I never thought about attending, never attended, and never was invited to attend. If anyone from the legal Left attended, I don't know, but I don't think it would have been significant." When asked if this had something to do with the Shining Path's cooptation of the anniversary, Ames replied:

Totally, totally! The families that were not from the Shining Path became known because they acted in a totally independent manner. They were the ones that took the case to the court in Costa Rica... And surely there were families of some of those that were not of the Shining Path that began to celebrate on their own account, to remember on their own account, but the great group was Shining Path sympathizers. Therefore the Shining Path monopolized it.⁴⁴

In Ames's response, one can see the distinct lines drawn between the legal Left and the Shining Path manners of remembering. The anniversary day commemorations were reserved for the Shining Path, and the courts (like the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica) were reserved for non-Shining Path members.

⁴³ "Acto de homenaje a los caídos el 19 de junio," *El Nuevo Diario*, 20 June 1987.

⁴⁴ Rolando Ames, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 16 April 2009.

The distinct modes of remembering reflected the distinct content and political objectives of those remembering. As the Shining Path transformed the anniversary into a celebratory holiday of heroism, it closed off participation from those who saw the event as a tragedy and not a triumph. In a separate interview, historian and former PUM militant Antonio Zapata explained, “What are we going to celebrate? It was a horrible day, of death, of black flags, of the very worst of Peru, there is nothing to celebrate. It wasn’t a day to remember or incorporate into the calendar of celebrations of the Left. It’s not like it was May Day.”⁴⁵ This explanation is interesting, particularly considering that the legal Left indeed commemorated other tragic dates and anniversaries—such as the assassination of key leftist leaders like Saúl Cantoral and María Elena Moyano, and other massacres like Uchuraccay and Barrios Altos.⁴⁶ However thinking comparatively, the tone of these other human rights commemorations is always solemn and not congratulatory, and more importantly the Shining Path had not adopted any of these other massacres as holidays, as they did with the prison massacres.

This negation of participation in this first anniversary in the memories of many former IU members is clearly related, therefore, to a need to distance IU from the Shining Path. This need for distance stemmed from three sources. First, by the mid to late 1980s the Shining Path had begun to more virulently target IU and labor leaders with assassination and intimidation.⁴⁷ The sometimes ambiguous position initially taken by some members of the Left, ranging from viewing the Shining Path as a wayward

⁴⁵ Antonio Zapata, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 9 February 2009.

⁴⁶ Saúl Cantoral, a key labor union leader, was assassinated in 1989, possibly by the APRA linked Rodrigo Franco Death Squad. María Elena Moyano, United Left vice-mayor of Villa El Salvador, was assassinated in 1992 by the Shining Path. The 1983 Uchuraccay massacre of 8 journalists investigating the Shining Path conflict was committed by a local civil patrol in the highland department of Ayacucho. The 1991 Barrios Altos massacre of 15 people at a local party was perpetrated by the Fujimori-era La Colina death squad.

⁴⁷ For one regional example of the bitter battle between the Shining Path and members of the IU-affiliated PUM, see José Luis Rénique’s *La batalla por Puno: conflicto agrario y nación en los Andes peruanos, 1886-1995* (Lima, Peru: IEP, 2004.) For an English language version of his arguments, see José Luis Rénique, “Apogee and Crisis of a ‘Third Path’: Mariateguismo, ‘People’s War’, and Counterinsurgency in Puno, 1987-1994,” in *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru 1980-1995*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 307-340.

and confused brother *or* an invention of the state to justify repression, began to harden as the Shining Path more systematically targeted IU leaders. Second, as time progressed, the Shining Path became a forcefully delegitimizing factor for the image of the legal Left. Their terrorist tactics not only decimated leftist leaders and militants, but garnered public outrage and distrust. Yet being a splinter of the Maoist Left, the Shining Path used similar communist rhetoric and imagery to the legal communist and socialist parties that made up IU. For example, the legal Maoist branch of the Peruvian Communist Party (*Patria Roja*) used the same hammer and sickle in their propaganda as the Shining Path, claimed that power was born of the gun, and used a wooden rifle as a symbol at their political rallies. Yet this imagery clashed with their actions, as they pragmatically chose strikes, social mobilization and electoral politics as their main forms of struggle. Third, association with the Shining Path not only left a political and public taint, but also by the 1990s became a peril to one's legal freedom. Even being caught with Shining Path literature could lead to arrest and trials with hooded judges that fell well outside international legal norms of jurisprudence. All of these factors compelled the Left to draw a stronger distinction and distance from the Shining Path as time progressed.

Therefore, the elevation of the anniversary to an official Shining Path holiday, in practical terms closed space for the participation of other groups inside the legal Left. But this does not mean that the legal Left did not have its own vision of the event. Quite the opposite, the Left fought forcefully to construct its own specific memory of the event within the public imagination, organizing through another route. While the Shining Path may have treated those who died in the prisons as war heroes, IU members depicted the fallen as human rights victims.⁴⁸ Nothing could justify the brutally violent reaction of the armed forces, which included the extrajudicial execution of already surrendered prisoners: not the victims' alleged participation in terrorist acts prior to incarceration (for which many

⁴⁸ While most of the victims were from the Shining Path, it is also important to note that IU also claimed a small number of the fallen as from their own ranks. For example, one PUM publication listed six militants linked to their party who died in the massacres. *El Mariateguista*, Year 3, Number 12 (October 1987), Archivo de Partidos Politicos Collection, PUCP CEDOC Archives—Plaza Francia, Lima, Peru.

had not yet been tried), nor their involvement in the riots preceding the massacres. Indeed, the legal Left used state and judicial investigations to paint its own official memory of the event, which fit well into the legal Left's growing participation within the human rights movement. Leftist publications emphasized the failures of the state and more specifically the García administration. This position will be discussed at length in the following section on the battle over blame.

Battle over Blame: the State or the Shining Path?

While the Shining Path and the United Left battled over how to represent the fallen in the popular media and memorial rallies, APRA and the United Left battled over how to assign blame for the prison massacres within the framework of state mechanisms of accountability. These disputes over ultimate responsibility often took place through the Congress and the courts, and had political and legal consequences. The way each side framed the debate also had deeper implications related to how each group assigned blame for the larger spiral of violence and for the war itself. The smaller arguments on the massacres in 1986 pointed to larger arguments over the root causes of the war, concepts of justice and accountability, and appropriate policy solutions to the conflict. These positions reflected a growing rift between APRA and IU, as well as a shift in concrete counterinsurgency policy by the APRA regime. While, the Shining Path also had its own opinion on whom to blame, it eschewed this forum of accountability as it saw the state and its mechanisms as illegitimate.

During the first year of his presidency, García had attempted to woo various member of IU into a more conciliatory position with his new regime. However, Carlos Iván Degregori, an active IU intellectual at the time, emphasized that the leftist front was divided over these maneuvers. Some, like Barrantes and other moderate independents, hoped to collaborate with the new President, who espoused a rhetoric of socialist sensibility. Others, such as Degregori and other new left intellectuals, were wary of García's promises, but not entirely opposed to some form of dialogue. Other more radical members saw any participation or

collaboration with García as impossible from the start.⁴⁹ Another IU leader, Ricardo Letts, emphasized that the 1986 prison massacres were an irreversible breaking point that made any type of further dialogue with García impossible.⁵⁰ Those wary and undecided over García's intents and motives hardened into strong opposition after the massacres. One US cable from September 1986, which analyzed the fracturing of the Left, noted that among certain members of IU, "the prison affair not only showed a 'fascist' aspect of APRA, but also underscored the futility of seeking power democratically while a 'repressive' military existed."⁵¹ This U.S. observation underscored the latent distrust many leftists felt toward state security forces and lingering distrust of APRA. The brutality of the massacres posed the question: if a Center-Left administration like García's was just as bad as the Right at protecting human rights, what hope was there for democratic processes in controlling military abuses during the war?

Indeed, the massacres marked a turning point in García's war policy that reverted back to a civilian abdication of power in the implementation of state counterinsurgent warfare. This fit within the lessons learned from the massacres by APRA. For example, while García was outwardly condemning the military excesses committed in retaking the prison in July 1986, his position was different in a private conversation with the outgoing US Embassy political counsel. García noted that while he wished it had not happened in this fashion, the massacres had a positive side. He stated that both Lurigancho and El Frontón had turned into indoctrination centers for accused terrorists who were often eventually released back into the public because of lack of evidence or intimidation of judges. García saw this as coming to an end now that such a large number of incarcerated terrorists had been eliminated.⁵² While this prediction was profoundly incorrect, García's reflections showed a growing inclination towards recognizing the strategic benefits of state violence in spite of the moral implications and

⁴⁹ Carlos Iván Degregori, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 5 December 2009.

⁵⁰ Ricardo Letts, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 17 November 2009.

⁵¹ US Embassy (Lima) Cable, "Peruvian Marxists: Internal Feuds Widen, Radicals Flirt with Terrorism," September 26, 1986, 5, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

⁵² US Embassy (Lima) Cable, "President García Says Crisis is Over," July 1, 1986, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

dangers. This represented a growing breach between APRA and IU, and a shift in policy for APRA's concrete implementation of counterinsurgency efforts.

The fissures between APRA and IU were apparent at one of the centers of political power: the Peruvian Congress. The Congress was used as a staging ground for oppositional protest to what had occurred in the prisons. This protest began soon after the massacres took place in September 1986, when congressional members of the United Left, *Acción Popular* (AP), and the Popular Christian Party (PPC) unified to censure García's cabinet for its involvement in the prison massacres. While this motion failed, the United Left used the event as a soapbox to voice reservations, criticisms, and outrage over APRA complicity in the massacres. IU congressmen charged that the deaths that took place in June were acts of murder and the use of the armed forces to quell the riots lacked any solid legal foundation. In response, APRA Prime Minister Luis Alva Castro highlighted that the cabinet had attempted to negotiate a peaceful end to the uprising, but also had a constitutional and legal obligation to maintain public order. In the end, democracy "must be defended at any cost and regardless of who opposes it." Alva Castro further attacked the United Left for refusing to take a strong position against terrorism and for jeopardizing civil-military relations by calling for the vote of censure. This initial debate immediately after the event would echo later political battles between the United Left and APRA over responsibility for the massacres. The APRA accusation of leftist complicity through inaction against the Shining Path would be repeated into the post-conflict period.⁵³

The most visible attempt to plant official memory of the massacres occurred through the work of the Congressional Ames Commission, formed to investigate the prison massacres. Under national and international scrutiny, President García had promised the creation of a multi-party congressional investigative commission to uncover the truth.⁵⁴ The

⁵³ US Embassy (Lima) Cable, "Cabinet Interpellation Ends with Vote of Confidence for Cabinet," September 19, 1986, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁴ The head of the commission, Rolando Ames, expressed doubts on whether a multiparty investigation headed by the opposition would have been possible without the added pressure offered by the international delegates present

commission's appointment process stalled for close to a year, but in August 1987 the administration finally appointed IU Senator Rolando Ames as Chair of the multiparty commission.⁵⁵ Over the span of four months the commission reviewed testimony and conducted interviews with ex-Ministers, members of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces, military and police officers, members of the Judiciary and Public Ministry, the Supreme Council of Military Justice, as well as surviving prisoners who witnessed the riots and subsequent military operations. However, before long the commission fractured along distinct party lines—leading to two competing final reports, with very different conclusions, garnered from the exact same pool of information and evidence.⁵⁶

The conflict was not over content, but blame. The actual substantive chapter that relayed the chronological turn of events was approved by all thirteen members of the commission, and was reproduced in both majority and minority reports. Both groups agreed that horrible excesses had been committed in the operations to subdue the prison riots. In fact, the APRA majority report even went so far to call it an act of genocide.⁵⁷ But there were stark differences in how opposing reports framed the conflict and assigned responsibility for the massacres.

In framing the massacres, the majority (APRA) report crouched in a defensive pose, lauding García for his general policies and washing his hands of culpability in the massacres. The title of the published version of the majority report (“Barbarity cannot be fought with barbarity...”) was in fact a quote from García's inaugural speech a year before the massacres, where he promised to reformulate war strategy away from “state barbarity”

in Lima for the Socialist International congress. An embassy cable from the time revealed that a condemnatory statement against García was in the works by Dutch, Belgian and Scandinavian delegates. Rolando Ames, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 6 March 2009. U.S. Embassy (Lima) Cable, “GOP Orders Investigations of Prison Deaths,” June 23, 1986, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C..

⁵⁵ US Secretary of State Cable, “1986 Human Rights Report for Peru,” February 13, 1987, 7, Peru Documentation Project, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁶ With a vote that also fell along strict party lines, the APRA dominated Congress approved the APRA version of the report on December 10, 1987. Rolando Ames, et. al, *Informe al Congreso sobre los sucesos de los penales* (Lima: OCISA, 1988), xi.

⁵⁷ Congreso de la República del Perú, *La barbarie no se combate con la barbarie* (Lima: Congreso de la República del Perú, 1988), 9.

and towards a greater respect for human rights for the population.⁵⁸ The majority (APRA) report began with this inaugural quote not to discredit García, but to exemplify how he had always had a commitment to human rights. The prison massacres were presented as the aberration, not attributable either to García's actions or to his political philosophy. The report emphasized that, indeed, García clearly fulfilled his promise to avoid a dirty war during the beginning of his term, a fact that was recognized by many international human rights organizations.⁵⁹ Furthermore, García immediately denounced the excesses committed in the prisons, as soon as they were revealed. He called for investigations across the board, including the Congressional commission. If García and APRA were guilty, would they have convened a commission headed by an opposition party like the United Left? Would they only reserve five seats on the commission instead of a clear majority? That APRA and García asserted this was proof, according to the majority report, that they had nothing to hide.⁶⁰

So if APRA, García and his Council of Ministers were not to blame for the clear national tragedy, who was? The majority report singled out three general culprits. The most direct culprits were the military and police forces who carried out the operations. They were the ones who committed the atrocities and had ultimate responsibility. García and his ministers were following legal and constitutional norms by handing over control of the operation to the Joint Command of the Armed Forces. Therefore, whatever choices the military made rested solely with them.⁶¹ This stance

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁹ Congreso de la República del Perú, *La barbarie...*, 8. While this might have been a slight exaggeration, human rights groups like Americas Watch had been cautiously optimistic about the shift in policy in García's first year of office. Juan Mendez, *Human Rights in Peru: After President García's First Year* (New York: Americas Watch, September 1986), 2.

⁶⁰ The quickness of the installation of the commission was also praised. The year-long intermission transformed into a few months ("unos meses.") García and his administration was clearly exonerated in the "conclusion" section in a similar manner, the report insisting that he had neither constitutional nor legal responsibility and that the murders were not an expression of any State Doctrine of extermination by the current government. Ibid, 9-10, and 160-161.

⁶¹ The conclusions indeed called for further investigation and prosecution of military and police personnel involved in all three prison operations, including even the one in Santa Barbara that had resulted in two prisoner deaths. This general call for deeper investigations into officials went up only to the highest officials present on the scene (such as General Rabanal and Chief Martínez). The

signaled a greater abdication of control by APRA to the military for counterinsurgency policy.

Not surprisingly then, the APRA report selected the Shining Path as the second major culprit responsible for the massacres. It represented the Shining Path not as the victims of the massacres, but as major contributors to their own slaughter. According to the report, the Shining Path had begun the larger societal cycle of violence, to which García had tried to respond with non-violent measures. Moreover, the Shining Path had started the immediate cycle of violence in the prisons, by rioting, taking prisoners, and creating general chaos in a coordinated three-prison takeover. One had to take into account the general societal atmosphere of fear, tension and agitation when looking at the antecedents and context of the massacres. This was an atmosphere caused in large part by the Shining Path.⁶²

The third culprit singled out by the majority report was the legal Left. While admitting that any leftist groups outside the Shining Path's peculiar brand of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology were considered anathema to Shining Path militants, this did not absolve the Left. The complacency and complicity of the Left with regards to the Shining Path insurrection were typified by the ideological preaching found in their freely circulated journals and newspapers, and in the refusal of their leaders to take clear positions regarding terrorism. According to the majority report, such stances made the Left "morally and intellectually responsible for the spiral of violence that Peruvian society bears."⁶³ The majority report posited in its final reflections that, while most Peruvian Marxist-Leninist parties might publicly denounce the Shining Path, others indirectly supported them, in part because these extreme leftists doubted their own ability to succeed within the democratic system.⁶⁴

report however insists that these murders were not the result of an "institutional conception" on the part of the armed forces or police. *Ibid.*, 9, 157-158, 161.

⁶² Structural causes like poverty were not sufficient explanations of the Shining Path's positions and tactics. According to the majority report, the Shining Path's uniquely destructive form of "terrorist nihilism" was responsible for the violence. This strong ideological influence was blamed for dogmatic and intolerant behavior that created grave problems for the prison personnel who were trained to deal with common criminals, not violent ideologues. *Ibid.*, 8, 153-54.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

Not surprisingly, the minority report penned by IU commissioners framed the Left in a much different light. The United Left was not a group of terrorist sympathizers, but one of the staunchest defenders of human rights in the country. The introduction of the minority report painstakingly recounted all the setbacks and difficulties in setting up the commission, and the controversy over the two separate versions of the final report. Instead of representing APRA as magnanimously allowing IU and independent viewpoints to be represented in the investigation, the minority report stressed how the promise of giving IU leadership to the commission was proven false by the refusal to accept the conclusions presented in the minority report. Not only was IU represented as a human rights defender under fire from the APRA majority, but also its active defense of human rights was framed as a form of salvation from the quagmire into which the country had fallen. Abdicating power to the armed forces and allowing them to fight fire with fire was not only morally wrong, but also strategically disastrous. It had only led to a deepening spiral of violence. To stand up and speak out against this policy and to hold the highest officials responsible for its implementation was, in fact, a form of patriotism.

The minority report held a distinctly different group of participants ultimately responsible for the massacres. At the top of the list of the guilty were Aprista President Alan García and his Council of Ministers.⁶⁵ The report argued that it was not sufficient to point the blame at the military forces that perpetrated the crime. Society should also hold the intellectual authors of the policy that allowed the massacres to occur accountable. In his speech before Congress during the debate over the report, Commission President Ames quoted from the same speech that García had made at the beginning of his term, promising to not fight barbarity with barbarity. Yet Ames's use of the quote was markedly different from the APRA majority report interpretation. García's words were not seen as primary evidence of a commitment to human rights, but instead to show a promise betrayed.

⁶⁵ In fact, the PUM had published its own version of events relating to the massacre in August 1986. This earlier report accused the Council of Ministers of being constitutionally responsible and accountable for the events that took place in the prisons, and railed against the persistent distortion of facts by official sources. Partido Unificado Mariateguista, *Los sucesos en los penales* (Lima: Oficina de Copias e Impresiones, 1986), 7.

The purported aims never materialized in an alternative policy, and whatever attempts were begun in that vein at the beginning of his administration were soon weakened and lost.⁶⁶ Ames represented the decisions of García and his Council during the riots as a clear and intentional case of reprisal without forethought, which could be understood in the context of a schoolyard fight, but not in the context of legitimate state authority confronted with a kamikaze adversary like the Shining Path.⁶⁷

This distinction over blame with the APRA majority report went beyond just immediate legal and political accountability, and also pointed to a different leftist conceptualization of the root causes of the war and the best way to halt the spiral of violence. After APRA's 1985 electoral victory, the Left had been concerned that García's rhetorical promises towards human rights ran only skin deep, which threatened the likelihood of substantive, foundational change to state counterinsurgency policy. For the Left, the prison massacres provided concrete evidence that this was in fact the case. The Ames report's tone of condemnation highlighted the Left's human rights position that repaying violence with violence without thought of the larger consequences was an essential policy error.

Yet if the minority report depicted the military and armed forces as holding secondary responsibility to García, which is not to say that the report did not hold the armed forces accountable for their actions. One of the main conclusions was that "the military force used was disproportionate in relation to the actual existing danger and the form of attack implemented also did not reveal any precaution to reduce the human costs."⁶⁸ The report indeed pointed out the need for further prosecution of the military and police personnel involved in the operations. The report also insisted that this incident revealed two greater societal problems with the armed forces. First was the established habit within the armed forces of resorting to repressive behavior "outside the law," such as extrajudicial executions. This tendency was shared by both officers and subordinates alike, and permeated the emergency zones. Second was the dominant understanding that States of Emergency allow for the broad and vague

⁶⁶ Ames, et. al. *Informe al Congreso...*, 4

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁸ Ames, et. al. *Informe al Congreso...*, 298.

suspension of judicial order, which in fact exceeded the true limits set by the Constitution.⁶⁹

One of the more interesting details of this fight between APRA and opposition versions of the massacres is that while the minority report was not approved by the Congress, the Left made an active attempt to garner greater publicity, attention and distribution for their version of the report. Some on the Left argue that while IU lost the battle in the Congress, it won the battle for public memory of the event.⁷⁰ Ames commented that there was an intentional decision to publish the report and distribute it to the public in order to promote their version of events. Indeed, he was rather surprised that APRA never tried to publish its own majority report.⁷¹ PUM militant Antonio Zapata also recalled that there was an effort to spread the minority report to the public as a political act, not only to show the excesses of the APRA government, but also to offer a political vision of the Left to the youth.⁷²

Yet, the debate over blame that unfolded within the Ames Commission was restricted to those parties participating in the Congress, leaving out a key political actor in the event: the Shining Path. As the Shining Path was intrinsically antagonistic towards the state and its mechanisms, it did not participate in the commission and was highly skeptical of the

⁶⁹ The report described how in the case of the prison massacre, this lack of rule of law allowed for a post facto cover-up of the crimes. *Ibid.*, 305.

⁷⁰ Essentially, the battle was over assigning blame to García and his cabinet for the massacres. IU's position, again, was that García was ultimately responsible. In addition to the opinions of Ames and Zapata noted in the text, most of my other interviewees referenced the Ames version of the report as being the definitive one. This included not only leftist militants, but also human rights workers and non-partisan journalists who covered the violence in the 1980s and 90s. Indeed, Ames and other IU politicians were much more adept at getting their point of view on the prison massacres published in the press. García's villainy and responsibility in the prison massacres was even cited by later President Alberto Fujimori during his defense trial. Fujimori was criminally tried in 2008-2009 for human rights crimes committed under his presidency (1990-2000). In his defense, Fujimori cited García's role in the 1986 prison massacres, stating that if García could avoid prosecution for a crime committed under his supervision, Fujimori shouldn't be held accountable either. Essentially: either they both should be tried, or neither should.

⁷¹ APRA's more muted position on publishing their version of the massacres does make sense on one level, since garnering any further attention to one of the most significant human rights atrocities during the García regime was not necessarily in APRA's political interest.

⁷² Antonio Zapata, interview by author, Lima, Peru, 9 February 2009.

commission and its findings.⁷³ This, however, does not imply that the Shining Path did not have its own position on blame for the massacres. As discussed in the earlier section on the fallen, the Shining Path was very vocal in condemning the García government, framing it as breaking its own rules during the massacres and of betraying its supposed role as protector of the people. In speaking of the massacres, Abimael Guzmán euphemistically referred to García as “der Führer,” and portrayed the state as a “reactionary beast drinking blood to its fill in order to impose the peace of the dead.”⁷⁴ However, as noted in the previous section, the Shining Path also placed the United Left on an almost equal footing with APRA in terms of guilt. It accused IU leaders, and particularly Barrantes, of being either complicit or directly responsible for the tragedy, suggesting that IU leaders consulted with García in the planning of the massacres.

The Shining Path’s stance on blame further complicated the United Left’s political position in relation to the war. The IU needed to differentiate itself from both the APRA administration and the Shining Path, yet both of those actors conflated the United Left with the opposing force. On the one hand, APRA accused the IU of complicity and sympathy towards the Shining Path. APRA portrayed the IU’s advocacy to protect the human rights of Shining Path victims as proof of the IU’s secretly held sympathies for the terrorists. On the other hand, the Shining Path accused the IU of complicity and sympathy toward the “fascistic” and “genocidal” García administration. The IU’s open participation and incorporation into the government created guilt by association in all state-perpetrated crimes against the people, according to the Shining Path. This double-edged dilemma would dog the Left throughout the war and beyond.

⁷³ In a group interview article in the June 1988 anniversary edition of the Shining Path newspaper *El Diario*, respondents emphasized real justice would take place only after the people (i.e. the Shining Path) had taken control of the state. The Ames commission was referred to as a farce and a cover-up, with one respondent (Elliades Sánchez) stating that, “the famous Ames Commission has been used to cover up those directly responsible for this vile massacre, and to wash their hands in front of the people.” *La sangre de los combatientes caídos rego la revolución*, *El Diario*, Special Supplement, 19 June 1988, v, APP2/PCP-SL/41, Archivo de Partidos Políticos Collection, PUCP CEDOC Archives—Plaza Francia, Lima, Peru.

⁷³ “Sendero critica marcha IU,” *El Nacional*, 16 June 1987.

⁷⁴ Comité Central Partido Comunista del Peru, *iGloria al Día de la Heroicidad!* (Lima: Ediciones Bandera Roja, June 1987), iv.

However, the state-centered battle over blame was not limited to the Ames Commission. The prison massacres to this day remain a point of contention between APRA, the Left and the human rights community, especially over issues of accountability and justice. There have been a number of examples of flashpoints over this incident in the past two decades.⁷⁵ For example, only a few years after the conclusion of the Ames report, the issue reignited once again in the Congress when opposition members attempted to censure García soon after he finished his term in 1990. While the attempt at censure failed, it underscored the persistent political volatility that the prison massacres played in Peru. Indeed, by 1990 the tone of debate over responsibility for the massacres became even more combative between IU and APRA.

The new political climate in 1990 undoubtedly heightened the antagonism and the stakes of political disputes over the massacres and war policy more generally. The hostility between IU and APRA had been rising steadily throughout the latter half of García's regime, which was reflected by the ferocity of exchanges between IU and APRA politicians during the 1990 censure motion. While the movement in the Congress to censure the ex-president on the prison massacres ultimately failed, it put García on the defensive and he was called before Congress multiple times. By the early 1990s the Shining Path war had become an entrenched reality in Lima, with no immediate end in sight. Even more so than in 1986, the public viewed the Shining Path as a phenomenon to be feared and not defended. This lessened public traction for IU accusations on the massacres. Furthermore, the disintegration of the United Left front in 1989 meant that the most vocal political opponent of military excesses had lost much of its legitimacy, power and voice. This emboldened APRA to sharpen its attacks against the leftist congressmen mounting the censure motion.⁷⁶ Some

⁷⁵ More recently, similar debates over the 1986 prison massacres between APRA and the Left emerged in relation to the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

⁷⁶ Partido Aprista Peruano, "Pronunciamento," *La República*, 5 November 1990.

Apristas went so far as to accuse the opposition of being terrorists themselves.⁷⁷

While the risks to vocal human rights denunciation were becoming higher in the 1990s, and the power of the Left to perform and protect itself weaker, the 1986 prison massacres still represented an unclosed wound that could become an opportunity for critique by the Left, or a pressure point of dangerous political and legal vulnerability for APRA. In the battle for blame, the United Left pointed to the deep historical roots of inequality, but also the immediate political and legal responsibility of the García administration. The consequences had to reach up to the highest level to reaffirm that there was a line of morality that the state could not cross in the formation and implementation of counterinsurgency policy. This served to establish the Left as human rights defenders and differentiated the IU from APRA. As APRA shifted its policy to consistently cross that line of morality, with a greater reliance on violent force to fight the war, APRA needed to place responsibility for the massacres and the larger cycle of violence at the footsteps of the Shining Path. As APRA critiqued IU ambivalence towards making a fervent denunciation of Shining Path activities, APRA's approach served a dual function of casting doubt on a political rival like IU while continuing to emphasize a societal need to focus blame on Shining Path (and not state) culpability. This contestation over how to frame issues of guilt for the massacres have continued to this day, particularly through the persistent claims for justice in national and international courts, and truth seeking bodies like the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Conclusion

The 1986 prison massacres continue to hold significant symbolic power in post-conflict Peru. For the remnants of the Shining Path, it not only bleeds into urban university graffiti (like the placard mentioned earlier), but also into documentarian recollections of ex-Shining Path

⁷⁷ Alvarado Contreras complained: "It turns out that Dr. Castro Gómez comes here acting like a little angel making accusations, when the truth is he should be responding to the charges of being a terrorist." "Votos del APRA y Cambio 90 salvaron a Alan de acusación constitucional," *La República*, 8 November 1990.

militants.⁷⁸ For many on the Left, the massacres in the prisons stand as a prime example of what was wrong with García's administration, in both his first (1985-1990) and second terms (2006-2011). The shadow of the massacres worked its way into contemporary leftist critiques of government policy at rallies and in print media editorials.⁷⁹ For APRA, it remains a legal Achilles heel that has inspired vehement defenses in the face of the release of non-binding documents like the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, to the more daunting threat of formal court cases on the unfinished prosecution of the massacre at El Frontón.⁸⁰ The continued traction of this human right event, decades later, shows how the war has had long-term repercussions that live well beyond the immediate consequences of specific human rights events.

An analysis of the memory of this tragedy shows how the war antagonisms between different political actors became reproduced in battles over how to represent the fallen and the blame. In these memory battles, what is forgotten can be as important as what is memorialized. The memory battle that developed over how to represent the fallen demonstrates the Left's need for visible public distance from the Shining Path, and vice versa. With significantly different ideological and strategic beliefs, while vying for the same popular base, Shining Path and IU representations of the fallen were bound to diverge. For the Shining Path,

⁷⁸ See the recent film documentary tracing the life of ex-Shining Path militant and survivor of the massacre at El Frontón, Julio Yovera, easily accessible online: "Aquí vamos a morir todos," dir. Andrés Mego (2012).

⁷⁹ For example, in a January 2010 article, Raúl Wiener later made a comparison of the 1986 prison massacres with the June 5, 2009 controversy in Bagua, a remote jungle region in Peru where police and military clashed with protesting indigenous leaders. Raúl Wiener, "El año del Baguazo," *Trenzar* No. 4 (January 2010): 4. Ricardo Letts, referenced the 1986 prison massacre in a short unrelated opinion piece condemning the high infant mortality rates in Peru. "Repudiable, repugnante, aborrecible genocidio en Perú," *La Primera*, 30 March 2009.

⁸⁰ While the massacre at Lurigancho was prosecuted during García's first administration, the massacre at El Frontón remains unprosecuted with continuous movement by human rights groups to press for prosecution through the judicial system. The human rights legal advocacy group IDL (Legal Defense Institute) has asserted that the recent July 2013 decision of the Constitutional Tribunal to rule that the Frontón massacre was not a "crime against humanity" was politically motivated to shield García from legal responsibility. Carlos Rivera, "La justicia colosal," *Ideele* 232 (August 2013) <<http://www.revistaideele.com/ideele/content/la-justicia-colosal>> downloaded 7 December 2013.

the fallen prisoners were lauded as valiant heroes and stood as a call to arms and further rebellion. For the United Left, the fallen were clearly shown as human rights victims, who stood as a call to further legal action and protest through the courts and the crucible of public opinion. Because of these tensions, the two groups could not participate in the same memorial events in the immediate aftermath, which resulted in competing events on the first anniversary. Yet, as time passed most forgot any leftist participation in first anniversary events altogether, although one such leftist event was well documented in the press. As the date transformed into a Shining Path holiday, forgetfulness became a natural defense for the Left. It reflects the Peruvian Left's peculiar dilemma during the civil war: the Shining Path's rabid violence tainted moderate and radical members alike of the legal Left.

The battle over blame, on the other hand, demonstrates the Left's attempt to refashion itself as a human rights champion in the face of state atrocities. APRA President Alan García had won his post with populist leftist promises to refashion the economy and redistribute wealth. The Marxist Left had struggled with differentiating its message from APRA for decades. As García's APRA government took a turn towards endorsing state forms of political violence to combat the war, the United Left had a clear issue on which it could show its distinction. Its position on blame for the massacres, and its position on blame for the violence itself, highlighted the role of the state. As revolutionary forms of rhetoric became tainted by the Shining Path, the Left found a new identity in human rights advocacy which forged an alternative form of legitimacy with certain segments of the Peruvian population and the international community. For APRA, the shift in counterinsurgency policy, caused in part by the 1986 massacres, also required a reshaping of APRA's framing of the war. The deeper socio-economic roots of the war, which García had promised to address in his 1985 presidential campaign, were discarded as an emphasis by APRA and replaced over time with a more restricted view of Shining Path provocation as the sole root of the war. Memory over the massacres therefore helped the Left, APRA and the Shining Path politically define themselves and their attitudes on the war, while recalibrating their relations with one another.

This case study on Peruvian memories of violence also underscores three conclusions relevant to the larger literature on memory. First, as Argentine memory scholar Elizabeth Jelin has observed, the process of making memory “is always active and socially constructed in interaction and dialogue.”⁸¹ The examination of memory formation over the 1986 prison massacres has shown the importance of studying the dynamic interplay in this process, where different memory camps change their positions in reaction to opposing views which go beyond a static binary of memory and counter-memory.⁸² In this example, the way each group defined its memory of the massacres was linked not only to its political projects and identities, but was also influenced by the interactions with one another. Second, this case also highlights the importance of breaking down the State into multiple groups with distinct memories, positions, and political projects and avoiding an approach that views the state as one monolithic actor. This is particularly true in democratic regimes that have suffered through periods of violence. Third, while much memory scholarship focuses on post-conflict debates, this study has shown the value of looking at wartime formulations of memory and how interpretations shift or solidify over time. For example, in her work on post-conflict memories of violence in Peru, Cynthia Milton has argued that Alan García’s later regime (2006-2011) promoted a heroic vision of military and police forces during the war.⁸³ However, looking at the 1986 massacres as a flashpoint helps us to see how APRA’s later position slowly evolved over time in reaction to the changing political currents and crises throughout war. Understanding the germination of these wartime memories helps us to understand the post-conflict constellation of debates over meaning.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Jelin, “Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Post Repression in the Southern Cone of South America,” *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1 (2007): 141.

⁸² Memory scholars like Steve Stern and Elizabeth Jelin have emphasized the importance of surpassing this binary.

⁸³ Cynthia E. Milton, “Public Spaces for the Discussion of Peru’s Recent Past,” *Antípoda* no. 7 (July/December 2007): 161.

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