

TWO QUECHUA PROTESTANT VILLAGES AND TERROR IN HUANTA, PERU  
1980-1991

by

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## ABSTRACT

BRENDA TATIANA PAREDES GUERRERO. Two Quechua Protestant Villages and Terror in Huanta, Peru 1980-1991. (Under the direction of DR. JURGEN BUCHENAU)

This research examines the role of Protestant churches in the lives of Quechua peasants of two small and isolated villages in the province of Huanta during the armed struggle between the Communist Party of Peru (*Sendero Luminoso*) and the Peruvian army from 1980 to 2000. My research brings new insights regarding the response of small Quechua villages to the armed struggle. During those two decades, *Sendero Luminoso* meted out violence in Quechua villages, and Peru's government responded by sending army to confront terror with terror. The thesis inquires into the rationale behind the actions of Quechua Protestant peasants, and how these peasants used their own religious concepts to craft two different responses to the violence. These Quechua villages, as many others did not have the support of the government or the Catholic church, and the Protestant churches from the cities failed to reach out to their small rural churches. In the midst of the violence, thousands of Quechua peasants lost their lives, and most of the local Quechua Protestant churches were the only institutions that remained standing during the armed struggle.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Commander Camion threatened me because I denounced his cruelty on the radio. Equally, *Sendero Luminoso* approached me to broadcast their communist cassettes or I was going to be killed. What was the right thing to do?”<sup>1</sup>

— Quechua Protestant Vicente Saico Tinco, manager of Radio “Amauta.”

May 17, 1980 marked *el Inicio de la Lucha Armada* (beginning of the armed struggle) in Ayacucho in the south-central Andes of Peru, introducing unprecedented violence to Peru and especially its indigenous communities. That day, *Sendero Luminoso*,<sup>2</sup> or “Shining Path,” launched its first wave of hostilities against the administration of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry after the elections of 1980 ended twelve years of military rule.

In 2001, after twenty years of violence, Peru’s democratic government under President Valentín Paniagua appointed a commission to ascertain the truth of what happened during the conflict. Far removed from the violence in the Andes, the government in Lima did not know the extent of the terror and suffering in the rural communities. Two years of in-depth investigations by the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) collected nearly 17,000 individual testimonies taken in 530 villages, constructing the first complete picture of what happened in Peru in those years

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Vicente Saico Tinco, Huanta (15 July 2017).

<sup>2</sup> El Partido Comunista del Perú *Sendero Luminoso* embraced the idea of a peasant revolutionary movement, “Surrounding the cities from the countryside.”

of violence. The final report in 2003 estimated approximately 69,280 deaths and disappearances from 1980 to 2000 during the armed struggle.<sup>3</sup>

My research uses these and other sources to explore the differing strategies of two Quechua Protestant villages during the conflict between the Communist Party of Peru *Sendero Luminoso* and Peru's *Comando Político Militar* (CPM, Political Military Command) in the 1980s and 1990s. I chose these two cases for a deeper investigation after learning of them through my field work among Protestants in Huanta. I noticed that Protestantism played a role in their decision making when reacting to the violence. Both villages of Callqui and Ccano are located in Huanta Province, Ayacucho. Huanta was, and still is, one of the most remote, poverty-stricken provinces of Peru. These factors helped empower *Sendero Luminoso's* ideology of a peasant revolution in the region. Furthermore, most scholars agreed that revolutionary movements and social protests in the Americas resulted from indigenous socio-economic and political conditions combined with a legitimacy crisis of the state. The indigenous population of Peru confronted socio-economic structures that deprived them from a fair share of the region's wealth, resulting in poverty, and economic hardship. In addition, they experienced firsthand the absence of democracy and the everyday reality of repression, as consequences of excessive and undemocratic concentrations of political and economic power.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Los periodos de la violencia," in *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación reporte final*. (Lima: Aug. 3, 2003), 54-77.

<sup>4</sup> Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 12-13.



Between 1980 and 2000, Huanta would experience the largest number of deaths, disappearances and human rights violations of any region in Peru, as a result of the conflict between *Sendero Luminoso* and the *Comando Político Militar*.

Our examination must begin with the geographic and historiographical isolation of Callqui and Ccano, two small villages that had little or no communication with the outside world during the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, there were no roads connecting rural villages in Ayacucho to each other, further complicating communication among and beyond individual communities. The majority of historians on the topic have overlooked these tiny villages and the role of Quechua Protestants.

The purpose of this study is not merely to fill a gap in scholars' knowledge of recent Peruvian history, but also to add to an emerging conversation about religious values and concepts that influenced some villages in Huanta during the violence. During the armed struggle, the Protestant churches would host gatherings of most of the peasants of those two tiny Quechua villages. I will use two specific massacres involving six Presbyterian worshipers by the Peruvian marines in Callqui village on August 1, 1984 and thirty-one Pentecostal members in Ccano village by *Sendero Luminoso* on February 23, 1991 as a lens to examine the role that Protestant Churches played during the conflict between the Sendero Luminoso and the government.

These almost forgotten villages adopted different strategies to react to the armed struggle. In other words, they displayed local autonomy. On one side, Ccano behaved in the manner described by historian Miguel la Serna and chose a side in the conflict. La Serna studied the reasons why some Andean peasants chose to either embrace *Sendero Luminoso's* ideology and others did not. Ccano peasants decided to follow the

instructions of the Peruvian marines by joining the *Rondas Campesinas* as a system to oppose *Sendero Luminoso*. On the other side, Callqui did not behave according to La Serna's pattern. Instead, the villagers of Callqui chose not to participate in the conflict.<sup>5</sup> Their reaction to the outbreak of violence was a religious strategy focused on attempting to turn away the violence by means of prayer. I intend to understand the reasoning behind their actions and how these Quechua churches influenced the peasants to fight *Sendero Luminoso* on one side, and to stay neutral on the other.

This study uses a variety of sources. Interviews with Protestant Church members, non-Protestants, and Peruvian scholars yield a better understanding of those two isolated villages. For instance, interviewing Quechua Protestant leaders allowed me to comprehend their rationale and the actions taken in the midst of the violence, at least in terms of the way that these participants remember these turbulent years today. The Presbyterian pastor, Samuel Montes, who lived in Ayacucho and witnessed the violence provided help by sharing his story, translating interviews with those who spoke only Quechua, and assisting with making connections with peasants in Huanta. Pastor Saturnino Gavilán, a community leader from Huanta, also shared his story. He was one of three who denounced the Callqui attack to the Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú (CONEP) and made this massacre public knowledge. Similarly, Pastor Vicente Saico Tingo was a Protestant leader during the violence and was closely involved in the aftermath of the attack. As one of the three leaders who denounced the Callqui attack to CONEP, he added greatly to understanding of the Protestant experience during the war.

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<sup>5</sup> Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012).

Additionally, Pastor Pedro Arana, part of the Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope) committee commissioned by CONEP to investigate the Callqui case, shared detailed information from his experience. Callqui and Ccano peasants also contributed to this research by providing oral histories through personal interviews. Additional oral histories were shared by non-Protestants encountered at ANFASEP (Asociación Nacional de Familiares de Secuestrados, Detenidos y Desaparecido del Perú). The ANFASEP leaders interviewed are Catholic and brought a different perspective to research focused on Protestant communities. These non-Protestant interviewees closely witnessed the violence and helped construct an argument without bias. The scholars interviewed included anthropologist José Coronel, Ayacuchan anthropologist who studied the conflict in depth. He is a former professor of social sciences at the Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga (UNSCH) who shared an office with Abimael Guzmán, founder and leader of *Sendero Luminoso*. Additionally, Dr. Gustavo Gorriti, provided insight as one of the two most notable experts on *Sendero Luminoso*. Lastly, Dr. Ponciano Del Pino, Ayacuchan historian and one of the leading experts on the role of Protestants during the conflict assisted in pulling ideas together.

Printed sources also contributed important insights. The Biblioteca Nacional del Perú (National Library of Peru) offered literature on *Sendero Luminoso*, but most importantly, access to the detailed interview with Abimael Guzmán by *El Diario*. Also, El Seminario Evangélico de Lima (SEL), a Protestant seminary, allowed examination of literature on the history of the Protestant church in Ayacucho and the beginnings of the Protestant Church in the region. While in Ayacucho, Radio Cultural Amauta, a Christian station founded on November 7, 1960 to serve remote Andean communities, permitted

study of their archives and allowed copies of recorded testimonies. Another important source this research uses is Paz y Esperanza, a Christian human rights organization in Ayacucho dedicated to defending and promoting justice for people and communities in poverty or affected by different forms of injustice. Henry Mercado, the lawyer in charge of many cases of human rights violations during the conflict, including the Callqui Presbyterian Church case, spoke with me and allowed copies of case files that contributed significantly to this investigation.

Other research included visits to three museums. Firstly, was the *Museo de la Memoria* in Ayacucho, a museum that displays the impact *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian military had on Andean peasants. This museum presents a strong, opinionated perspective against the Peruvian military and government. In Lima, the pro-government *Museo de la Nación* primarily displays the horror Peruvians endured because of *Sendero Luminoso*. Lastly, I spent time in Lima at the *Museo del Lugar de la Memoria (LUM)*, a museum built as a result of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. The displays here present and blame both sides for the 69,280 lives lost during the conflict.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, I use the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report records such as statistics, documents and public hearings. Newspapers such as *el Diario* and *el Diario La Marka* had a distinctly leftist perspective, while *Caretas*'s magazine extensively covered the conflict from the beginning and had a more Conservative perspective on *Sendero Luminoso*. These publications provided insight on how the left-wing broadcast the conflict and how pro-government newspapers saw it.

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<sup>6</sup> "Los periodos de la violencia,"54-77.

This research includes three chapters. Chapter One provides historical and historiographical background and is divided into two parts. Part One provides a brief description of the main characters during the armed struggle. Part Two examines how Peruvian and foreign scholars have analyzed and documented Peru's armed struggle.

Chapter Two studies the first evidence-based case in the village of Callqui. In this chapter, I explore the role the Presbyterian Church of Callqui had on the peasants of Callqui, and their choice to stay neutral during the violence.

Finally, Chapter Three explores Ccano, a village whose peasants took an active role during the time of violence. Ccano peasants followed their religious concept of fighting the devil as preached by the Pentecostal Church of Ccano. In contrast to Callqui, they decided to fight *Sendero Luminoso* by joining the *Rondas Campesinas* with the help of the marines.

These chapters bring new insight to what has been previously published regarding the response of small Andean villages to the violence thrust upon them. Now we turn to chapter one for a thorough discussion of each character of the analysis.

## 1. CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF *SENDERO LUMINOSO* AND TERROR IN HUANTA

This chapter will give contextual background on the armed struggle in Huanta, Peru. I divide this chapter into two parts. Part One gives a short background on characters such as *Sendero Luminoso*, *El Comando Político Militar*, *ronderos* and *Rondas Campesinas*, and the Protestant Church. This first part gives us a better understanding of the characters that will be mentioned throughout the following chapters. Part Two examines how Peruvian and foreign scholars have analyzed Peru's armed struggle. This historiography looks at the different perspectives and sometimes critical differences between Peruvian and foreign scholars. Furthermore, this historiography demonstrates that most scholars have greatly overlooked the importance of Protestantism during the armed struggle. In some cases, including the two analyzed in this thesis, peasants understood and applied Protestantism to their villages' reality. Peasants of some villages had their own religious concepts and reacted differently to the armed struggle according to their faith.

## 1.1. MAIN ACTORS

### 1.1.1 The Communist Party of Peru (PCP) *Sendero Luminoso*

The Communist Party of Peru, *Sendero Luminoso*, was founded in 1969 by Abimael Guzmán Reynoso (also known as President Gonzalo), as one of nearly 74 Marxist-Leninist political parties in Peru in the 1970s. His ideology was known as the Pensamiento Gonzalo (Gonzalo Thought). In an interview conducted by *el Diario* in 1988, Guzmán described the Gonzalo Thought as the application of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism to Peruvian reality. He stated, “Just as Lenin rises from the great work of Marx, Maoism rises from the great work of Marxism and Leninism.” However, Guzmán pointed out that the Gonzalo thought is primarily Maoist, embracing the idea of a peasant revolutionary movement or “Surrounding the cities from the countryside. Maoism, unlike Leninism, focuses on revolution in the countryside and especially rural agricultural communities.”<sup>7</sup>

Peruvian writer Santiago Roncagliolo, in his book *La cuarta espada: La historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso*, recounts that *Sendero Luminoso* and its leader declared themselves as the “The fourth sword of communism”, after Marx, Lenin, and Mao. Roncagliolo did extensive research in order to put together a biography of Abimael Guzmán when there was not much information of Guzmán’s personal life. The few who knew him, mainly *Senderistas* (*Sendero Luminoso* members) or police officers, deny knowing him or were forbidden to talk about him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Luis Arce Borja, “La Entrevista del Siglo,” *El Diario*, (Lima, Perú) July 28, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Santiago Roncagliolo, *La cuarta espada: La historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2007), 62.

In the early 1960s, Guzmán visited China. As a result of this visit, he based his ideology of social change for the proletariat on the Maoist revolution. He returned to Peru to lead the way to a new society, preaching that the destiny of the poor was to fight with arms.<sup>9</sup> For Guzmán, the ideology of the Proletariat is the only all-powerful ideology because it is the product of the extraordinary work of extraordinary figures such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Soviet leaders Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin and Chinese leader Mao Zedong. Guzmán wrote: “Without the ideology of the proletariat there is no revolution, without the ideology of the proletariat, there is no perspective for the class and the people, without the ideology of the proletariat, there is no communism.”<sup>10</sup> When Guzmán got back to Peru, he took a professional position at the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga (UNSCH) in Ayacucho. Students and sympathetic professors soon became his followers. His students would call him Dr. Puka Inti (Red Sun in Quechua). Guzmán would often say to his students, “You either use power, or others will use it against you.”<sup>11</sup>

By the 1970s Ayacucho was the center of Communist ideas. The growing Marxist influence at the UNSCH was beginning to filter into schools. Many teachers who graduated from the UNSCH took strong Marxist ideas to their schools. They worked revolutionary and Marxist ideas into everything they taught, even geography or math lessons.<sup>12</sup> Romulo Sauñe, a Presbyterian Pastor of Ayacucho said in early 1970’s, “The only way to get ahead is through going to school, and the University of Ayacucho is full

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<sup>9</sup> Luis Arce Borja, “La Entrevista del Siglo.”

<sup>10</sup> Luis Arce Borja, “La Entrevista del Siglo.”

<sup>11</sup> Terry Whalin and Chris Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism, the Life and Testimony of Romulo Sauñe: One Bright Shining Path* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993), 107.

<sup>12</sup> Whalin and Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism*, 85.



of Marxists. And now it is not just in the University, but it's coming into the local schools."<sup>13</sup>

The left-wing anthropologist José Coronel shared his personal experience as an ex-colleague of Abimael Guzmán in the UNSCH. Dr. Coronel said, "I was the general secretary of the Union of Professors of Ayacucho. I taught courses on regional development and history of political ideas in Peru. One day at a University meeting with close to three thousand attendees, I accused *Sendero Luminoso* of being a fascist instead of a socialist movement, because they would force peasants to do what Abimael wants. The next day I received a threatening note to leave Ayacucho in the next 72 hours, and I had to."<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, this revolutionary movement did not tolerate any opposition and used terror to force peasants to support its drive to overthrow Peru's elected government. If peasants chose not to join, they were pronounced enemies and therefore killed, as we will see in the following chapters. Early in the conflict, the *senderistas* proclaimed to be fighting for a better life for the peasants, a fight against capitalism and imperialism. They punished the *abigeos* (cattle thieves) and corrupt community leaders in public in order to gain support among the peasants. However, not long after the beginning of the armed struggle, the rural Quechua speaking peasants found themselves caught in the crossfire between *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian *Comando Político Militar*, an institution explored in the following section.

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<sup>13</sup> Whalin and Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism*, 86.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with José Coronel, Huanta (July 16 2017).

### 1.1.2. The Peruvian Government and el *Comando Político Militar*

Sendero Luminoso's antagonist in the armed struggle where approximately 69,280 people were affected, was the Peruvian government. Although the government claimed to aim at protecting the most vulnerable population of the country, it ended up fighting terror with terror. On October 10 of 1981, a year after the beginning of the armed struggle, President Fernando Belaúnde Terry declared a State of Emergency in five provinces of Ayacucho due to the armed struggle: Huamanga (Ayacucho's capital), Huanta, La Mar, Cangallo and Víctor Fajardo.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the ineffectiveness of the police forces in dealing with the increasing violence, on December 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1982 the Peruvian government decided to install a counterinsurgency force in Ayacucho called *El Comando Político Militar* (CPM, Political-Military Command), under the command of General Clemente Noel. The Belaúnde administration gave General Noel absolute power over the areas affected by *Sendero Luminoso*. In the distribution or zoning of land of the counterinsurgency, the Peruvian marines took control over the provinces of Huanta and La Mar.<sup>16</sup> In January 1983, the marines set up their counterinsurgency base in the municipal stadium of Huanta and installed two hundred and fifty marines in that facility. Located in the center of the city, it was a very strategic place. This counterinsurgency base took control of the area with an attitude of suspicion towards the population that they were intended to protect. As a result, a year after General Noel's time in Huanta, the municipal stadium became the center of complaints of murders, disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions,

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<sup>15</sup> "Decreto Supremo N° 026-81-IN," *El Peruano*." (Lima, Perú), Oct. 10, 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Both located at the northernmost of the eleven provinces of the Ayacucho region in Peru.

forcing the government to make a change of commander and leaders. General Noel's command was documented in July 1984 by leftist magazine *Equis X*, who published pictures of more than 5,000 peasants who disappeared in the emergency zones under the command of General Noel to demonstrate the beginning of a cruel military strategy in the emergency zones, and violence from the marines.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in January of 1984, General Adrian Huamán Centeno took power of the *Comando Político Militar* in Ayacucho. He brought with him to command the counterinsurgency base in Huanta a marine trained in the U.S. state of Virginia, Álvaro Francisco Artaza Adrianzén, known as the sanguinary "Comandante Camión." This change of command only worsened the situation for the Quechua speaking peasants in the emergency zone, who had begun to doubt the marines' intentions and even, to fear them. The attitude of the marines generated a tense situation and distrust from the Quechua community. And now we will see how the Quechua peasants reacted, and organized themselves in *Rondas Campesinas*.

### 1.1.3. *Ronderos* and the *Rondas Campesinas*

The Peruvian government's inefficient and inequitable administration of justice and security of the remote areas of the country pushed rural peasants to organize themselves to patrol their villages with the intent of providing peace, security, and justice for the villagers. *Las Rondas Campesinas* (rural patrols) had existed in northern parts of Peru since 1976 and were originally formed by villagers as a protection force against theft, mainly cattle rustling, as well as crimes within their communities, like, for example,

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<sup>17</sup> Julio Cesar Gaitán, "Cinco mil casos: ¿Dónde están los desaparecidos?," *Equis X*, July, 1984.

domestic violence. They were largely autonomous and organized in assemblies where their members discussed the offenses that the peasants presented to them. In those assemblies, they decided the fate and, if appropriate, the punishment meted out to the offender. The early *Rondas* did not have guns. For the most part, they used sticks, stones and whips. In the late 1970s, the Peruvian government saw these *Rondas* as a threat of peasant organization and the problems it would cause if they expanded into other parts of Peru or organized into guerrillas, so the government tried in different ways to shut them down.

In July 1979, the interior ministry sent a telegram to the sub-prefect of the northern town of Chota with an order to shut down the *Rondas*. However, the *ronderos* did not accept these orders and protested. Female peasants were also part of the *Rondas Campesinas* and played an important role. Their significance to the *Rondas* came at a time when they were supposed to be devoted to their domestic duties, what was called “domestic feminism,” shaping the opinions and actions of her husband, as well as her children.<sup>18</sup> Female peasants lived in a culture where they were excluded from most authority in their villages’ societies and any kind of leading role. However, in 1977 they started organizing themselves in committees, and joining the *Rondas*.<sup>19</sup>

After the beginning of the armed struggle, when the tactics of the Peruvian armed forces appeared to be failing, the government decided to borrow the strategies from American and British counterinsurgency experiences in Malaysia and Vietnam. In that manner, in 1983 the Peruvian armed forces reached out to the villages of the south and

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<sup>18</sup> Orin Starn, *Night Watch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes*. Durham (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 163.

<sup>19</sup> Starn, *Night Watch*, 162-167.

central Andes to further develop the *Rondas Campesinas* as a system to oppose *Sendero Luminoso* in the rural areas of Ayacucho under the name of *Comités de Defensa Civil*.<sup>20</sup> The main role of these *Rondas Campesinas* was to confront *Sendero Luminoso*, although sometimes they confronted cattle rustling cases as well. Refusing to become a *rondero* and join a *Ronda* implied sympathy with, or support of *Sendero Luminoso*. Unlike the *Comando Político Militar* members, the *ronderos* were locals. They knew the peasants, they spoke Quechua, and knew who the *senderistas* were in their villages. As a result, the *Rondas* grew into an entire system of peasant justice and one of the most significant Andean social movements of the late twentieth century, whose goal included the defeat of *Sendero Luminoso*.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, I explore the arrival of the Protestant Church in Ayacucho.

#### 1.1.4. The Protestant Church

Since 1915, Peru practiced religious tolerance via the “Freedom of Religion Act,” which stipulated that every Peruvian was free to follow the religion or belief they chose. The Protestant Church had operated in Huanta since 1930 with the arrival of Pastor Tomás Ransley Morgan. However, Ayacucho’s conservative Catholic population did not welcome Protestant missionaries like Pastor Ransley. The sub-prefect of Huamanga (Ayacucho’s capital) filed a complaint against Ransley for being a threat to public order by promoting Protestant ideas that, as he saw it, were in conflict with the religious sentiment of the Ayacuchan people. However, this denunciation did not lead to any action due to the Freedom of Religion Act.<sup>22</sup> On February 5, 1937, Presbyterian

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<sup>20</sup> IEP Instituto de Estudios Peruano, *Hablan los ronderos: La búsqueda por la paz en los Andes*, ed. Orin Starn (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos Ediciones, 1993), 7.

<sup>21</sup> Starn, 162-176.

<sup>22</sup> Prefecture section, *report of the sub prefecture of Ayacucho*, record 9, 1930.

missionaries Alonzo David Hitchcock and Bessie Light Hitchcock established the first Presbyterian Church in Huanta, where peasants were more receptive of Protestantism.<sup>23</sup>

On November 7, 1960, Protestant missionaries Rev. Nickles Cochran installed Radio Cultural Amauta in Huanta. Radio Amauta has distinguished itself in these 57 years of existence in trying to reach and influence all people by preaching the word of God in Quechua and Spanish.<sup>24</sup> During the armed struggle, leaders at Radio Amauta witnessed the violence. The Peruvian armed forces threatened its leaders, such as Vicente Saico Tinco, Saturnino Gavilán, with death if they were to file a report against the marines involved in the Callqui attack. Similarly, *Sendero Luminoso* members used threats of violence to try to pressure Radio Amauta into broadcasting their communist pronouncements. Radio Amauta was a way to reach out to the remote and isolated Quechua communities that had no other access to the outside world.

Another Protestant institution established by foreign ministers also found itself trapped in the conflict: the Bible Institute in Huanta City. The Bible Institute became the most important institution from which Protestantism continued to expand through the, mountain ranges of Huanta, Huamanga, Huancavelica and the Ayacucho rainforest. Like the liberal ideas they questioned including the coexistence between the *hacendados* (landowners) aristocracy and traditional Catholicism, the Protestant churches also questioned the social hierarchies when considering the peasant and the artisan as brothers. While the Catholic hierarchy offered a covenant that included paternalism and marginalization, Protestants established a much more horizontal relationship. “Suddenly

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<sup>23</sup> David Luyo Venegas, *Llegaron los Predicadores: El establecimiento de la iglesia Presbiteriana en Ayacucho, 1937-1940* (Huancayo, Perú: Industria Gráfica Obregón, 2008), 63-83.

<sup>24</sup> Luyo Venegas, *Llegaron los Predicadores*, 83.

a foreigner gringo presented to the peasants and held their hand calling them *hermanos* (brothers).”<sup>25</sup> In Huanta, by 1980, the Presbyterian Church had 108 places of worship, followed by the Pentecostal church.<sup>26</sup>

The main Protestant organization of Peru is The Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú (National Evangelical Council of Peru, referred from now on as CONEP), located in Lima. This organization includes all Protestant denominations throughout the provinces of Peru. However, we will see in Chapter Two that this organization provided little support to the rural peasants who were in the middle of the armed struggle. Continuing with the background of the armed struggle, herein I aim to show some of the most representative scholarship on the emergence of *Sendero Luminoso* from Peruvian and foreign scholars in contrast to the small scholarship on Protestantism.

## 1.2. HISTORICIZING THE TIMES OF TERROR IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY PERU

The following historiography examines how Peruvian and foreign scholars have analyzed Peru’s revolutionary movement initiated by the *Sendero Luminoso* that began in Ayacucho and spread throughout Peru. The books and articles explored in this historiographical analysis represent the most important scholarship on the topic.

Intellectuals and scholars have discussed indigenous issues, such as their exclusion and marginalization, since independence. One of the most prominent thinkers was José Carlos Mariátegui, who wrote *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad*

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<sup>25</sup> Ponciano Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac.” In *Las rondas campesinas y la derrota del PCP-SL*, (Lima: IEP Ediciones, 1996.), 130.

<sup>26</sup> Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac,”131.

*peruana* in 1928. Mariátegui criticized the social problems of Peru with an intent to provide a radical blueprint for reshaping the social, economic, and political structure of the country.<sup>27</sup> His book became one of the most representative works focused on the problems of the indigenous people. Mariátegui had a European Socialist and Marxist ideology, and he often examined Peruvian society through these lenses.<sup>28</sup> He was the founder of the original Peruvian Communist Party in the 1920's. Furthermore, Guzmán named his organization in honor of Mariátegui's most celebrated phrase, "El Marxismo-Leninismo abrirá el sendero luminoso hacia la revolución" (Marxism-Leninism will open the shining path to the revolution).<sup>29</sup>

The first book-length study of *Sendero Luminoso* was Rogger Mercado Ulloa's book *El Partido Comunista del Perú: Sendero Luminoso*, published in 1982. In 1988, the third edition of this book also included a full interview with Guzmán. Mercado traced *Sendero Luminoso*'s origins back to Mariátegui and followed many evolutions of the Party through eras of *caudillismo* (autocratic leadership). He described briefly its Maoist line and development, through "reclaiming Mariátegui" to "reconstructing and reconstituting" the Party. He called *Sendero Luminoso* the new Communist Party of Peru and declared that it was a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party.<sup>30</sup>

The two most notable Peruvian senderologists, Carlos Iván Degregori and Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, conducted in depth research on *Sendero Luminoso*. Their

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<sup>27</sup> José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, Trans. Marjory Urquidi. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971).

<sup>28</sup> Jorge Basadre, "Introduction" in *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, Trans. Marjory Urquidi (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971), XIII.

<sup>29</sup> Roncagliolo, *La cuarta espada*, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Rogger Mercado Ulloa, *El Partido Comunista del Perú: Sendero Luminoso*, (Lima: LA MANO IZQUIERDA, ediciones latinoamericanas, 1988.) 71-73.



scholarly production has been highly recognized for their detailed research and objective arguments. Furthermore, in “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party-Shining Path and the Refusal of History,” Orin Starn argued that Degregori and Gorriti’s works are the ones that best explain the *Sendero Luminoso* doctrine.<sup>31</sup> Anthropologist Degregori and investigative journalist Gorriti researched the reasons why a rural revolution could happen in Peru, instead of just condemning it, as other historians often did. These two authors focused not only on *Sendero Luminoso*, but also on its historical, social, and political context in order to better understand the genesis of this radical movement.

Degregori’s *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso: Ayacucho 1969-1979 de movimiento por la gratuidad al inicio de la lucha armada*, published in 1990, is one of the two most important monographs on *Sendero Luminoso*. His main focus was the birth and spread of this Maoist movement, giving special attention to the *Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Ayacucho* (UNSCH), which was a breeding ground for communist organizations in the 1960s and 1970s. Degregori portrayed the UNSCH as an instrument of regional development that became the social, political and economic center of the Ayacucho region. It was here that the director of personnel of the University, Abimael Guzmán, and his fellow professors fought their ideological battles, influenced a generation of poor, ambitious, indigenous and mestizo<sup>32</sup> students and recruited their political force for the struggle ahead. Degregori provided exceptional focus on the regional background where the insurgency was born.<sup>33</sup> Here Guzmán and his

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<sup>31</sup> Orin Starn, “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party-Shining Path and the Refusal of History,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, (1995): 400.

<sup>32</sup> A man of mixed race, especially the offspring of a Spaniard and an American Indian.

<sup>33</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *El surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso: Ayacucho 1969-1979 de movimiento por la gratuidad al inicio de la lucha armada* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990).

fellow Marxists began a campaign of agitation that drove out foreign instructors such as North American David Scott Palmer (author of *The Shining Path of Peru*) and others, such as anthropologist José Coronel, who did not agree with Abimael Guzmán's revolutionary plans.

Six years later, Degregori, together with North American anthropologist Orin Starn and Ayacuchans José Coronel and Ponciano Del Pino intensively researched through trips to the most remote areas of Ayacucho. They published *Las rondas campesinas y la derrota de sendero luminoso* in 1996. In chapter one, Degregori explained how in 1983 the Peruvian Army arrived in Ayacucho to impose order in the region. However, by 1983 *Sendero Luminoso* had a strong presence there. *Sendero Luminoso*, when seeing the arrival of the Army, commanded the rural peasants to move to the higher mountains instead of staying in the *pueblo* (village). Their motto was, "whoever stays in the *pueblo* is a traitor and deserves to die." On the other hand, the Army ordered the peasants who claimed to be innocent to remain in the *pueblo* and not flee to the high mountains, saying who flees dies.<sup>34</sup>

In *How Difficult is it to be God: Shining Path's Politics of War in Peru, 1980–1999*, Degregori continued his research on *Sendero Luminoso*, this time dissecting the movement's dynamics. Degregori grounds his findings in deep research and fieldwork, as he witnessed *Sendero Luminoso's* recruitment of militants in the 1970's. He explained not only the ideology and culture of revolution among the insurgents, but also their

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<sup>34</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori. "Ayacucho después de la violencia." In *Las rondas campesinas y la derrota del PCP-SL*, (Lima: IEP Ediciones, 1996), 15-28.

capacity to extend their influence to university youths, Indian communities and competing social and political movements.<sup>35</sup>

As a reporter for *Caretas* magazine in the 1980s, Gustavo Gorriti covered *Sendero Luminoso* every week from late 1980, reporting on many issues experienced by Peruvians. His work as a reporter for *Caretas* helped him gain significant knowledge and facilitated his masterpiece on *Sendero Luminoso, Sendero: Historia de la Guerra milenaria en el Perú*. In a series of persuasive and dramatic chapters, Gorriti exposed the complete failure of the Peruvian government to comprehend the nature of the threat that *Sendero Luminoso* posed. He demonstrated the uncompromising and fanatical devotion to the bloody transformation of Peruvian society that the movement represents.<sup>36</sup> Gorriti helps the reader understand *Sendero Luminoso*'s every step before and during the revolution. He criticized the Peruvian government for not taking action against the violence early on, when a great deal of information reached the intelligence services on the anticipated insurgence even before the beginning of the armed struggle.

Although foreign scholarship has also contributed important perspectives on the historiography of *Sendero Luminoso*, some of this foreign scholarship (or “Senderología gringa”),<sup>37</sup> has been criticized for its bias and Cold War-like focus on the conflict of ideologies. In “Senderología Gringa” Gustavo Gorriti briefly described David Scott Palmer as one of the first North American intellectuals dedicated to the study of *Sendero*

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<sup>35</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, *How Difficult is it to be God: Shining Path's Politics of War in Peru, 1980–1999*. Ed. Steve J. Stern. Trans. Nancy Appelbaum. (Wiscnsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Gustavo Gorriti Ellenbogen, *Sendero: historia de la guerra milenaria en el Perú*. (Lima: Editorial Apoyo, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> Term used by Gustavo Gorriti on the subject of foreign scholarship on Sendero Luminoso. “Senderología Gringa” in *Caretas*, no.1218 (July 6, 1992).

*Luminoso*.<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that Palmer was a professor at the UNSCH from 1962 to 1963. While serving in the Peace Corps, he even shared an office with Abimael Guzmán at the University. Palmer remembers Guzmán as a very radical leader and a *fidelista*.<sup>39</sup> Guzmán preferred not to communicate regularly with the *gringos*,<sup>40</sup> but he was always polite and respectful. Even so, it was Guzmán who organized most of the demonstrations against the Peace Corps teachers. According to Palmer, *Sendero Luminoso* is a product of the university years of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>41</sup> In *Latin America and Caribbean Contemporary Record*, Palmer writes about Peru's economics and politics up to 1983. Palmer's article describes a "campaign of bombings and disruption of public facilities that are provoked by elements of the extreme or "irresponsible" left". He blamed the Maoist faction of this Communist party.<sup>42</sup> In "Conclusion: The view from the Windows," Palmer concludes that *Sendero Luminoso* grew out of the UNSCH instead of peasant activism, largely intellectual, ideological, and predisposed in interpreting Peruvian society along the lines of urban intellectuals.<sup>43</sup>

In 1991, U.S. anthropologist Deborah Poole and Peruvian historian Gerardo Réñique published a controversial article *The Bulletin of Latin American Research* titled "The New Chroniclers of Peru: U.S. Scholars and their 'Shining Path' of Peasant Rebellion." Leftist progressives Poole and Réñique criticized the work of well-known

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<sup>38</sup> Gustavo Gorriti. "Senderologia gringa." *Caretas*, no.1218, July 9, 1992, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Referred to supporters of Cuban leader, Fidel Castro.

<sup>40</sup> According to the Real Academia Española, *gringo* means foreigner, mainly a white person who speaks English or other language that is not Spanish. <http://dle.rae.es/?id=JY0Q3cz>

<sup>41</sup> Gustavo Gorriti, "Mi colega Abimael." *Caretas*, no.721. November 2, 1982, 68-71.

<sup>42</sup> David Scott Palmer, "Peru," *Latin America and Caribbean Contemporary Record*. Edited by Jack W. Hopkins. No. 1, (1981-1982): 342-353.

<sup>43</sup> David Scott Palmer. "Conclusion: The view From the Windows" in *The Shining Path of Peru*, ed. David Scott Palmer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 241-247.

American Senderologists such as Scott Palmer and Cynthia McClintock and censured them for imposing their preconceived theories on a Peruvian and Ayacuchan reality.

Like Palmer, Cynthia McClintock also spent some time in Peru during the 1970s. In her essay “Sendero Luminoso: Peru’s Maoist Guerrillas” she argues that it is possible that *Sendero Luminoso* was not the only organization trying to radically change Peru. She believed there were many linked organizations and stating that “while the “Sendero”, based in Ayacucho is considered cruel and doctrinaire, a second “Sendero” organizing in the Lima barrios is less rigid and more criminal.”<sup>44</sup> Her thesis from 1983 was that *Sendero Luminoso* was unlikely to be successful due to isolationism, rejection of broad-based alliances and lack of external support. She argued that *Sendero Luminoso* is an example of the violence that can result from a combination of extreme poverty, ethnic and regional tensions and radical leftist ideology.<sup>45</sup>

Poole and Réñique argued that these U.S. Senderologists were following a long tradition of conducting scholarship in order to serve the interests of political, social and economic elites. They criticized other North American historians for creating generalized arguments, for being unfamiliar with Peruvian literature as well as being indifferent to other sectors in Peru like the nonaggressive left. Poole and Réñique concluded by arguing that *Sendero Luminoso* is a political and military movement firmly rooted in a Peruvian historical, and sociological context.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Cynthia McClintock, “Sendero Luminoso: Peru’s Maoist Guerrillas,” *Problems of Communism*, no.32 (September-October 1983): 19-34.

<sup>45</sup> Cynthia McClintock, “Sendero Luminoso: Peru’s Maoist Guerrillas,” 19-34.

<sup>46</sup> Deborah Poole and Gerardo Réñique. “The New Chroniclers of Peru: U.S. Scholars and their ‘Shining Path’ of Peasant Rebellion,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 2 (1991): 133-191.

The following year, in 1992, Poole and Réñique published *Peru: Time of Fear*, which expanded on these ideas. The book examined the movement's political and social context, and specifically how *Sendero Luminoso* declared war on left-wing parties with the objective of overthrowing the Peruvian government. As a philosophy professor at UNSCH, Guzmán started *Sendero Luminoso* in this area high in the Andes where the poverty-stricken peasants were quickly enveloped in the violence that followed. With a corrupt, authoritarian government led by Alberto Fujimori granting unrestricted powers to the military, these peasants were immersed in fear as they faced the extraordinarily violent tactics of both the military and *Sendero Luminoso*. Guzmán was finally arrested in September, 1992, but the violence continued for years with innumerable Peruvians killed or disappeared.<sup>47</sup> The authors continuously emphasized their affinity with the people of Peru and their opposition to the ferocity of Peru's government organizations as well as the police and army, who all fought against their declared enemy, *Sendero Luminoso*.

Also in 1992, Gorriti's "Senderología Gringa" argued that what began as a few articles analyzing an exotic phenomenon in Peru had become an avalanche of books and studies. He explicitly said that "a few trees had become a whole forest on *Sendero Luminoso* scholarship." In this article, he criticized some of the books published up until July, 1992. He started by describing Scott Palmer's *Shining Path of Peru*, published earlier in 1992. Palmer edited the first collection of the best Peruvian and foreign senderologists in *The Shining Path of Peru*. Some of the contributors are Degregori, McClintock, Smith, Gorriti and others, who studied many different aspects of the war,

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<sup>47</sup> Deborah Poole and Gerardo Réñique. *PERU: Time of Fear*. (UK: Latin America Bureau, research and action, 1992).

including political theory, peasant responses, military strategy, narcotrafficking, organization and intra-left relations.<sup>48</sup>

Another foreign intellectual mentioned by Gorriti in “Senderología Gringa” is British writer Simon Strong. Strong lived and worked in Peru for four years as a correspondent for many newspapers. His book, *Shining Path: The World’s deadliest Revolutionary Force*, is a detailed account of Peru’s *Sendero Luminoso*. He explored the devastating impact of the *Sendero* revolutionaries on Peru and exposed the group’s history, ideology and global links while examining the potential international implications of *Sendero Luminoso*. Strong presented parallels between Chinese and Andean customs, language and religion, and some anthropologists have criticized these attempted parallels as coincidental and misleading. He portrayed an unambiguous picture of a Peru in which racism pervades every part of society and in which mutual hate and disrespect between contemptuous white elites and resentful Indians leaves no room for peace. This representation leads Strong into his argument that *Sendero*’s roots lie in centuries of oppression.<sup>49</sup> Degregori explicitly criticized Strong’s work in his article, “¡Dejen en paz a Túpac Amaru! Simon Strong, los Andes, y *Sendero Luminoso*.” Degregori acknowledged that his comments towards Strong’s work were tough, but the subject was too distressing to be treated irresponsibly. He criticized Strong for portraying the Peruvian indigenous population as exotic. He disapproved of Strong’s arguments that build parallels between Chinese and Andean ideology.<sup>50</sup> However, for this research, I

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<sup>48</sup> *The Shining Path of Peru*. Ed. David Scott Palmer. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> Simon Strong, *Shining Path: The World’s deadliest Revolutionary Force*. (London: Harper Collins, 1992).

<sup>50</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, “¡Dejen en Paz a Túpac Amaru! Simon Strong, los Andes, y Sendero Luminoso” *Argumentos*, no. 2, December, 1992, 14-16.

believe Strong has valid points when exploring the role of the Catholic Church and Protestantism during the emergence of *Sendero luminoso*. He does a thorough examination of the division of the Catholic Church after the arrival of the Liberation Theology discourse in the Andes, and how this division led to the acceptance of Protestantism by peasants in the rural areas of Ayacucho.

Another school of North American scholars who studied *Sendero Luminoso* and the effects of this political party, as well as the responsibility of the government and Peruvian society, are Orin Starn (previously mentioned in *Las Rondas Campesinas y la Derrota de Sendero Luminoso*), J. Steve Stern and Peruvian-North American historian Miguel La Serna.

Unlike other U.S. based works, Orin Starn's "Sendero, Soldiers and Ronderos in the Mantaro" received high praise in Gorriti's "Senderología Gringa," which pronounced the work one of the best articles on the topic. Starn analyzed *Sendero Luminoso* activity district by district in the Mantaro region. In 1992, the *Latin American Research Review* published Starn's "New Literature on Peru's Sendero Luminoso," which explored the significance of the term Senderología. He argued that "The initial dearth of good information gave scholars especially free reign in constructing their own interpretations of Guzmán's cultural-revolution-style Maoist party. *Sendero* was represented as, among other things, a peasant rebellion, an ethnic based Indian uprising and an insurrection of Peru's Andean periphery."<sup>51</sup> Starn also applauded the work of the two most eminent Peruvians in the field, Degregori and Gorriti. He particularly noted Degregori's work *El*

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<sup>51</sup> Orin Starn, "New Literature on Peru's Sendero Luminoso," *Latin American Research Review*, no.27 (1992): 212-226.



*Surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso*, where Degregori established that *Sendero Luminoso* is mainly a solid vanguard party characterized by tight organization and planned use of mass violence. Starn argued that Degregori's interpretations of *Sendero* demolished McClintock's conceptualization of *Sendero Luminoso* as a peasant rebellion and Andean millenarian movement. Starn also praised Gorriti's work in *Sendero: Historia de la Guerra milenaria en el Perú*. Starn applauded how Gorriti depicted Guzmán in his examination of *Sendero Luminoso*'s thrilling violence.<sup>52</sup>

Several years later, in 1999, Starn followed up his article with a book *Night Watch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes*, which was the product of ten years of research. The book chronicles the historical conditions that led to the formation of the *Rondas Campesinas*, the social and geographical expansion of the movement and its gradual decline in the 1990s. Throughout this analytical account, Starn relied on interviews with *Rondas* participants, villagers and Peru's regional and national leaders to explore the role of women, the involvement of nongovernmental organizations and struggles for leadership within the *Rondas*. The *Rondas* grew into an entire system of peasant justice and one of the most significant Andean social movements of the late twentieth century. *Night Watch* is the first full-length ethnography and the only study in English to examine this grassroots agrarian social movement, which became a rallying point for rural pride.<sup>53</sup>

Another important U.S. intellectual writing about *Sendero Luminoso* is the historian J. Steve Stern. Stern's edited book, *Shining and Other Paths*, offered a systematic account of the social experiences at the heart of the war waged between

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<sup>52</sup> Starn. "New Literature on Peru's Sendero Luminoso," 212-226.

<sup>53</sup> Starn. *Night watch*, 162-167.

*Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian military during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Confronting and unraveling the many myths and enigmas that surround the war and the wider history of twentieth-century Peru, this book presented clear and often poignant analyses of the brutal reshaping of life and politics during a war that cost thousands of lives.<sup>54</sup>

The contributors to Stern's book, a team of Peruvian and North American historians, social scientists and human rights activists, explored the origins, social dynamics and long-term consequences of the effort by *Sendero Luminoso* to affect an armed communist revolution. The book begins by interpreting *Sendero Luminoso's* emergence and advocacy for war as one logical culmination, among several competing culminations, of trends in oppositional politics and social movements. It then traces the experiences of peasants and refugees to demonstrate how human struggle and resilience came together in popular determination to defeat *Sendero Luminoso* and explores the unsuccessful efforts of urban shantytown residents, as well as rural and urban activists, to build a "third path" to social justice. Finally, this book analyzes the often inconsistent and unintended legacies of this tumultuous period for social and human rights movements and for presidential and military leadership in Peru.<sup>55</sup>

The most recent North American literature about *Sendero Luminoso* is Miguel La Serna's *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency*. The main focus of this historian is the insurgency and counterinsurgency in the villages of Chuschi and Huaychao high in the mountains of the department of Ayacucho. These

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<sup>54</sup> Steve J. Stern, *Shining and other paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

<sup>55</sup> Steve J. Stern, *Shining and other paths*.

cities are similar on the surface, but Huaychao sided with the Peruvian *Comando Político Militar* and Chuschi, with *Sendero Luminoso*. La Serna asked why some Andean peasants chose to embrace *Sendero Luminoso* ideology and others did not. Yet, his research does not include the importance of religion in any way. In Chuschi, the peasants supported the movement and dreamed of generating a worldwide Maoist revolution. However, in Huaychao, the peasants rose up against *Sendero Luminoso*, precipitating even more violence. La Serna emphasized his research on the years leading up to the peak period of violence from 1980 to 2000.<sup>56</sup>

La Serna examined how the political power structure in Chuschi developed over forty years and led to the community's choices when armed conflict began in 1980 in his article "Murió comiendo rata: Power Relations in Pre-Sendero Ayacucho, Perú, 1940–1983." His work makes three contributions to previous literature. First, he contextualizes the political violence within a larger historical trajectory. Second, he examines the role that cultural factors played in the peasants' decisions to support *Sendero Luminoso*. Third, he shows that the social and cultural infractions of the local power holders figured just as heavily in peasants' political calculations.<sup>57</sup> His research further explores peasant reaction to violence by focusing on two communities. I want to look the role of Protestantism played in other two communities, one who chose to stay neutral instead of pick a side, and another who fought *Sendero Luminoso*.

There are a few studies on other rural villages with highly Protestant population, such as Chuschi and Quispillacta. Gustavo Gorriti briefly mentioned the importance and

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<sup>56</sup> Miguel La Serna, *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Miguel La Serna, "Murió comiendo rata: Power Relations in Pre-Sendero Ayacucho, Perú, 1940–1983," *A Contracorriente*, no. 9, (Winter 2012).

spread of the Pentecostal Church in the village of Chuschi. He argued, “From humble beginnings at the end of 1960’s, by 1980 it had grown to include more than 200 people within a population numbering barely 1,000. He compares it to another village Quispillacta, where the conversion to Protestantism had been even more intense and far-reaching.”<sup>58</sup> In “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac” in *Las rondas campesinas y la derrota de sendero luminoso*, historian Del Pino, who was a student and Social Sciences professor at the UNSCH, is one of the few scholars who studied the discourse Quechua Protestant churches preached during the conflict in Ayacucho. His study comes from a historian who is not Protestant, but who witnessed the increase of Protestant churches in the most affected areas during the conflict. Furthermore, he expressed the need for more detailed research of the Quechua Protestant churches in the rural areas of Ayacucho. He argued “There are no books about the role of protestant churches during the conflict, even though everyone knows the important role they played.”<sup>59</sup>

Other studies regarding Protestantism during the conflict were conducted by foreign scholars. For instance, John Maust published early findings of the August, 1984 Callqui massacre in *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead: A story of tragedy and hope from Ayacucho, Peru* while serving as missionary journalist in Lima. Maust’s main focus is the mobilization of the National Evangelical Church after the murder of the six Quechua Protestants in the Presbyterian Church of Callqui by the marines. However, since his publication in 1987 in the midst of the conflict, there is much more to be added

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<sup>58</sup> Gustavo Gorriti, “Chuschi” in *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru*. Trans. By Robin Kirk (Chapel Hill: 1999), 19.

<sup>59</sup> Del Pino. “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac,” 117-188.

to the literature about the role Protestantism played.<sup>60</sup> David Miller, a British journalist published in 2001 *The Path and the Peacemakers: The triumph over terrorism of the church in Peru*. He wrote a compilation of stories building up from interviews with Degregori, Dario López and many more. Miller chronicles the suffering of evangelical Christians and the steps that were made towards peace and healing in the middle of a cruel conflict. These stories intertwine so that, by the end, the reader has gained a four-part perspective on the Shining Path insurrection.<sup>61</sup> And finally Simon Strong, gives a complete chapter to the importance of the Pentecostal Church in the jungle regions of Ayacucho of Peru.

It is noteworthy that most Peruvian and foreign historians focused attention on the conflict, the reasons that led to this revolution and the social problems in Peru, ultimately creating a rich and sometimes controversial scholarship on the subject. However, very few have explored the importance of the Quechua Protestant villages in the rural areas of Ayacucho. I have witnessed myself through frequent trips to Huanta since 2005 that there is at least one Protestant church in each village, and that most peasants have a lot of respect for the community leaders who are Protestant. Furthermore, after talking to Protestant peasants, I could see the important role Quechua Protestant churches had in their lives during the armed struggle.

And now we turn to chapter Two to a fuller discussion on the Callqui peasants' agency during the conflict.

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<sup>60</sup> John Maust, *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead: A story of tragedy and hope from Ayacucho* (Miami: Latin American Mission, 1987).

<sup>61</sup> David Miller, *The Path and the Peacemakers: The triumph over terrorism of the church in Peru* (London: Omnia Books, 2001.) 30-43.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: THE MARINES ARRIVE: THE CASE OF THE QUECHUA PROTESTANT VILLAGE OF CALLQUI

Quechua Protestant Teodora Huincho's experience as a mother of two Callqui peasants killed by the marines shows us to one of the ways people recall their personal stories and link them to a sense of collective remembrance:

“Why are they taking them outside? I wondered, what did my kids do? They are not *Senderistas*! If only I knew what the marines would do to them, I would not have let them go outside, I would have grabbed and held them close to me. But then we heard Tara ta, ta, ta! After a few minutes as we all were walking outside the church in the dark, one of the *hermanos* yelled Ayyananachallawya! Crying I was praying to God they were not my kids! But it was them on the ground covered in blood”<sup>62</sup>

Huincho's experience serves as a vehicle to present historical background of the crisis and desperation of this tiny Protestant community. The desperation of all Ayacucho peasants was evident. The cruel tactics of *Sendero Luminoso* forced peasants to join the communist party. If you did not want to join them, you were against the party, and therefore you were going to be killed. The Callqui peasants found the tactics of *Sendero Luminoso* to be in conflict with their religious concepts of love and salvation. The discourse the Protestant Church of Callqui preached was crucial for their decision to remain neutral and hopeful that the arrival of the military would protect them from

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<sup>62</sup> Teodora Huincho Casapoma, interview by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *50 minutes*, LUM Centro de Documentación e investigación, 2002.

*Sendero Luminoso*. They believed that they were going to be saved in the name of God's love and that accepting the will of God would protect them from the violence.

This chapter explores the strategy that the peasants of a small Andean Protestant village adopted in response to the armed struggle between *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian *Comando Político Militar* and the role Protestant religious concepts played in that strategy and their lives.

*Sendero Luminoso*, under the leadership of Abimael Guzmán, trained close to 15,000 *senderistas*, including university students, peasant farmers and teenagers into a cold-blooded fighting force through constant indoctrination, strict discipline and brutal punishment for insubordination to begin the armed struggle in 1980.<sup>63</sup> Guzmán's fundamental tactics were intimidation, violence and assassinations. As he consolidated his power in the Andes, *Sendero Luminoso* killed thousands of peasants, including women and children, making *Sendero* a powerful and pervasive terrorist organization. By late 1982 *Sendero Luminoso* was expanding greatly. Marxism was expressed in Quechua, as in the times of agrarian unionism, but now it was a guerrilla movement.<sup>64</sup> That same year, terrified by the emergence and spread of *Sendero Luminoso*, and seeing that policemen could not control the violence in Ayacucho, Democratic President Belaúnde Terry sent a counterinsurgency force called *Comando Político Militar*, and it had complete power over the five provinces of Ayacucho under the state of emergency to reinforce the rules imposed by the Peruvian Government.<sup>65</sup> These rules included the banning of public nighttime gatherings, curfews, peasants were required to carry their

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<sup>63</sup> David Miller, *The Path and the Peacemakers* (Great Britain: Triangle SPCK, 2001), 3.

<sup>64</sup> Alberto Flores Galindo, *Obras Completas* (Lima: Ediciones Casa SUR), 345.

<sup>65</sup> "Decreto Supremo N° 026-81-IN promulgado el 10 de octubre," *El Peruano*, 1981.

personal identifications with them at all times and were also burdened with the threat of sudden visits of the marines in their homes looking for anything that would relate them to *Sendero Luminoso*.

This study contributes to the existing scholarship on the role Protestantism played in remote and small villages during the time of violence. In order to fully understand what happened in the village of Callqui, I will first introduce a dreadful incident in the Presbyterian Church of Callqui in 1984, precisely at the peak of the violence in Huanta.

### 2.1.THE MARINES ENTER THE CHURCH

Night gatherings were prohibited, so the Callqui *hermanos* moved their Wednesday night Bible study to four in the afternoon. The term *hermanos* is used with reference to Protestant converts and is the most commonly used term in the Andes rather than *Protestante, adventista or maranata*.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, on that fateful Wednesday, their Bible study continued later than expected, Pastor Vicente Saico explained.<sup>67</sup> On August 1, 1984, between 6 and 7 pm., many of the Callqui peasants were still gathered in their Presbyterian church when they were abruptly interrupted by heavily armed marines. The marines knocked down the back door of the church and violently asked for Concepción Chávez, who was not in the building at the moment, but who was and still is a member of their Church. They searched the church for evidence linking the *hermanos* to *Sendero Luminoso*, and found two wooden toy rifles that were carried by school boys as a patriotic symbol in civic parades. The marines used the toy guns to accuse the

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<sup>66</sup> Catherine J. Allen, *The Hold Has Life: Coca ad Cultural Identity in an Andean Community* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, Chicago, 2006), 207.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Vicente Saico Tinco, Huanta (15 July 2017).



*hermanos* of being terrorists and roughly demanded each person's identification papers. Impulsively, the commander picked six *hermanos*, Paulino Cayo Ccoriñaupa, José Yañez Huincho, Constantino Yañez Huincho, Jorge de la Cruz Quispe, Melquiades Quispe Rojas and Wenceslao Huamanaly Oré. The marines took the six *hermanos* outside while forcing the others, including women and children, to remain inside the church and sing aloud. After about fifteen minutes several shots of firearms and an explosion of a grenade were heard. After a final prayer, the church members ventured out to find the six men dead. The following day at dawn, the surviving *hermanos* informed church members and leaders of another prominent church in the village, who informed the judicial authorities of Ayacucho so they could proceed with removal of the bodies.<sup>68</sup>

On August 3rd of 1984, community church leaders Saturnino Gavilán Nuñez, Víctor Contreras Mendiolaza, and Vicente Saico Tinco sent a letter to the Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú (National Evangelical Council of Peru, CONEP) denouncing what happened in Callqui. As explained in Chapter One, CONEP is the main Protestant organization of Peru, in charge of oversight of all the different Protestant churches. This letter not only denounced the violence of the marines, but it was also a desperate call for help to prevent further abuses against Protestants, whose ideological conviction had nothing to do with this genocidal conflict that had persisted in the emergency zone. These leaders clearly stated that they did not support the conflict and did not agree with either the cruel acts of *Sendero Luminoso* or the hateful attitude of the marines. In the case of the Callqui Protestants, they are people who decided to remain faithful to their church in the context of irrational and brutal counterinsurgency. They

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<sup>68</sup> Saturnino Gavilán, Víctor Contreras, and Vicente Saico, "letter to CONEP", private collection, 03 Aug. 1984.

failed to recognize the reality that existed there, to the point that this group of people who were the opposite of what *Sendero Luminoso* represented, were confused as such.<sup>69</sup> Still, after the attack they preached a message of consolation, pardon and reconciliation in God. Even when they denounced the acts by the marines and were threatened, they still did not join the *Sendero Luminoso* movement.

Subsequently, let us take a look at how the Protestant Church arrived and was accepted by rural peasants when Ayacucho was a prominently Catholic region.

## 2.2. HOW PROTESTANTISM BECAME AN APPEALING OPTION

Although Ayacucho was a predominantly Catholic province, Catholic churches were found primarily in the urban areas, leaving most of the remote small villages like Callqui outside of their influence. Historian Simon Strong sheds light on the complexity and division of the Catholic Church after the onset of Liberation Theology in Peru. He explains that Liberation Theology was initiated in Cajamarca, the southern area of Cusco and Puno and was adopted with enthusiasm by some foreign and Peruvian Catholic priests. Nevertheless, it also provoked a long and incessant conflict between the progressive and the conservative sides of the Catholic Church. By the end of the first year of the armed struggle, some newspaper articles accused progressive Catholic priests of being terrorists. But there were also left sympathizers such as a publication from *La República* newspaper. In “Sobre el análisis Marxista y la Iglesia,” Ricardo Durand explains the social doctrine of the church and the point of view of the progressive Catholic leaders. “Certainly within the principles it offers not an alternative, but the right

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, Lima (July 10, 2017).

direction that is a consequence of what God says about man as a worthy human person and his social matters.”<sup>70</sup> The media exposed the division in the Catholic Church, and it was clearly reflected in the difference of attitudes toward attacks against human rights. Although the official position was to condemn them unequivocally, the ultraconservatives did not raise a word of protest and in some cases, especially in Ayacucho, inclusively intervened to prevent denunciations against the military.<sup>71</sup> In fact, some Catholic priests of Ayacucho became targets of local criticism for providing very little support to the rural villages of Ayacucho, and for generally siding with the government. Most of the peasants I interviewed<sup>72</sup> alleged that they did not feel supported by the Catholic Church. Juana Carrión, president of ANFASEP (The National Association of kidnapped, disappeared, and detained relatives of Peru), said in her own words, “I am not sure if Bishop Cipriani was a leader of the Catholic Church or if instead he was working for the government. Cipriani always put the military first, instead of us, the campesinos who needed him the most.” She said that Bishop Cipriani was their enemy instead.<sup>73</sup> In other words, Catholics no longer presented a unified message.

During the 1970s, foreign Protestant missionaries and local Quechua leaders founded new Protestant churches in rural villages of Ayacucho. In 1972, only 2.5 percent of Peruvians professed to be Protestants compared to 96.1 percent declared Catholics. By 1981, the Protestant population had grown to 4.7%, with continued growth to 7.2% in

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<sup>70</sup> Ricardo Durand, “Sobre el análisis Marxista y la Iglesia,” *La República*, February 25, 1984.

<sup>71</sup> Simon Strong, *Sendero Luminoso: El movimiento subversivo más letal del Mundo* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 172-198.

<sup>72</sup> Interviewed 19 subjects: 9 Protestants, including leaders of their church and peasants, 7 Catholics, peasants for the most part, and 3 scholars.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Juana Carrión, Huanta (July 14, 2017).

1993 and 12.5% by 2007.<sup>74</sup> It is necessary to differentiate “confessionalism” from religious “militancy,” since Protestants tend to be much more militant and committed to their churches than those who declare themselves Catholics.<sup>75</sup>

However, Pastor Vicente Saico explained how most of the Protestant foreign missionaries fled Huanta between 1983 and 1985, because they were threatened by *Sendero Luminoso* for preaching their religious ideology instead of *Sendero*'s propaganda. The foreign missionaries left Huanta,<sup>76</sup> leaving behind the Quechua Protestant leaders with great responsibility in their villages. In *The Hold Has Life: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*, Anthropologist Catherine J. Allen discusses the factors that helped Protestantism reach out to the rural Andean communities of Peru. Allen argues that the discourse of converting to *hermano* in the rural areas was that *hermanos* are reformed, work hard, don't drink, don't chew coca, are honest and live peacefully with their families.<sup>77</sup> This shows us one of the initial tactics of Protestant leaders to gather more peasants to become *hermanos*. In the 1980's when the violence was at its peak, Protestant churches worked hard in Ayacucho. The violence apparently made peasants more open to the Gospel, and the Protestant churches wanted to take advantage of this opportunity.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Protestant churches were an attractive option to female peasants. Female peasants saw Protestantism as an option to keep their husbands and kids away from alcohol, coca, and domestic violence. Wife beating was common in the Northern Andes, with alcohol exacerbating cases of domestic violence

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<sup>74</sup> “Adherent Statistics of World Religions by Country,” Religion Facts, last modified November 26, 2016, accessed 25 Feb. 2018, [www.religionfacts.com/charts/adherents-by-country](http://www.religionfacts.com/charts/adherents-by-country).

<sup>75</sup> José Pérez Guadalupe, *Entre Dios y el Cesar: El impacto político de los evangélicos en el Perú y América Latina* (Lima: Instituto de Estudio Social Cristianos, 2017), 19.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Vicente Saico Tinco, Huanta (15 July 2017).

<sup>77</sup> Allen, 223-243

<sup>78</sup> Maust, *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead*, 6.

against women. It can be said that female peasants were the first responders to the arrival of Protestantism because they saw it as a solution to some of their social problems.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the Western Protestantism that arrived with the foreign missionaries allowed women to start organizing themselves for church gatherings and to take leading roles in the church. This cultural shift was a vast change in these tiny villages where men were the long-standing paternal and dominant figures. Importantly, female leadership was also prohibited by the Catholic Church.

José Pérez Guadalupe explained that Protestantism experienced changes in Latin America by 1992. He maintains that the individual perspectives of the *hermanos* became more important in the perceptions of religious phenomena than the dogma coming from religious institutions. It is not the institution that decides what its members should believe, but rather, it is the *hermanos* who determine the religious concepts of their faith.<sup>80</sup> In that sense, we see how the rural protestant villages, each of them an isolated community, developed different strategies to confront the violence according to their own religious concepts. Each village had their own agency, and in the cases of prominently Protestant villages, Protestantism played an important role in their understanding of and reaction to the violence.

The fact that Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report (CVR) examines the history of the Protestants during the twenty years of violence is a sign that the development of the events of the internal conflict directly affected the Protestant community.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Starn. *Night watch*, 173-174.

<sup>80</sup> José Pérez Guadalupe, *Entre Dios y el Cesar*, 34.

<sup>81</sup> Alfonso Wieland, "Los Evangélicos en el informe final de la CVR: Resistencia, consolación e indiferencia," *Ideele*, November 2003, 34.

The Presbyterian Church of Callqui was established in the Callqui *Centro Poblado*<sup>82</sup> in the Huanta province. According to the INEI (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics) a *Centro Poblado* is a territory with a population of only 151 to 250 inhabitants. In “La Matanza de los Evangelistas” Enrique Zileri narrates the Callqui attack and how Callqui was a small village of around 200 peasants, and prominently Protestant<sup>83</sup> Zileri, journalist and director of the *Caretas* magazine during the time of violence, traveled to the emergency zone. He covered the visit by a delegation of the attorney general’s office sent to specifically promote the investigation of what happened in Callqui and the kidnapping of Jaime Ayala, an Ayacuchan journalist who was investigating the Callqui attack.

### 2.3.ABSENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT

At the beginning of the armed struggle in the early 1980’s, the national government was absent and Callqui was in the middle of two violent forces. The local Quechua Protestant Church was one of the few institutions that supported the villagers and peasants clung into their religious beliefs. In that context, the church became significantly relevant to peasants. In this case, the discourse preached by the Church of Callqui to the village was to pray that the marines would control the violence. Unbeknownst to them, the marines were going to be woefully inept in their attempts to distinguish friend from enemy. In fact, by 1983, a year after the arrival of the marines in

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<sup>82</sup> According to the Peruvian Government, Law No. 27795 "Territorial Demarcation and Organization Law", a Centro Poblado (CCPP) is an urban and/or rural national territory identified by a name and inhabited by a population equal to or greater than 151 inhabitants.

<sup>83</sup> Enrique Zileri Gibson, “La Matanza de los Evangelistas,” *Caretas*, August 20, 1984, 12-18.

Huanta, the municipal stadium that served as their base became the center of complaints of murders, disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions.

It is impossible not to mention the discrimination against these tiny Quechua villages, and how this discrimination and geographic isolation made the Quechua peasants of Callqui targets of the violence. There existed a long standing racial divide between the inhabitants of Lima (the capital of Peru) or *Limeños* and Quechua peasants. The conflict only made this gap more visible. *Limeños* felt superior to the indigenous populations and considered the first attacks in the remote areas of Perú as remote, isolated incidents that would not affect them. The Peruvian government and elites did not expect that the Maoist strategy of winning base areas in the countryside and then isolating the cities would eventually cause destruction in Lima and Peru's other cities. In a 1984 publication of *La República*, Monsignor José Dammert Bellido argued that the Andean population of Perú suffers with resigned patience the hunger, abandon, and the oppression to which it is subjected.<sup>84</sup> It is well known that the indigenous communities of most Latin American countries are discriminated against and forgotten by their governments and the elites, and Peru is not the exception. An example close to Peru, the Mapuche indigenous communities of Chile and Argentina continue facing persecution, struggles for their rights and constant discrimination towards them by their own governments. However, the most striking case is that of Guatemalan indigenous communities who were persecuted and killed by their government under President Efraín Ríos Montt, and were accused of being guerrillas. Most of these indigenous communities

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<sup>84</sup> Alberto Alonso, "El cielo es su límite," *La República*, February 10, 1984.

of Guatemala were isolated and left behind and had nothing to do with the insurgency in the early 1980s.

Peruvian Quechua peasants condemned the lack of support from their government, the poverty they lived in and the horrendous military actions, as we saw the letter written by the Protestant Quechua leaders sent to Lima. After all, the marines committed abuses, maybe illegally, but as representatives of a legal government. The marines were for the most part *Limeños* sent to the Andes to control *Sendero Luminoso*. In the documentary “Estado de Miedo,” Degregori claims that the mistake of the government was not in sending the *Comando Político Militar* to Ayacucho, but in the way they entered the emergency zone. Ex-military in the same documentary mentioned the frustration these marines felt as well. One of these marines is quoted saying “I went to Ayacucho in 1983. We, the marines, did not really know what we were doing in the Andes if we were marines. We didn’t speak Quechua, and could not differentiate who was the enemy.”<sup>85</sup>

From a peasant perspective, a peasant only known as Roberto said “The army would come, they would take our livestock, what you had to eat, and they would say, “You all always give to *Sendero*, so what about us?” And they would take it.”<sup>86</sup> Peasants had different ways to express their discomfort with the violence and poverty in the Andes. One of their traditional strategies is testimonial songs. However, he mentioned that if you sang against *Sendero*, they would come in the night in their ski masks, and you knew it was someone who was going to kill you. So, songs against *Sendero* did not

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<sup>85</sup> “Estado de Miedo,” directed by Pamela Yates (United States: Morena Films, 2005), DVD.

<sup>86</sup> Jonathan Ritter, “The Voice of the Victims: Testimonial Songs in Rural Ayacucho,” in *Art from the Fractured Past* (Duke University Press: 2014), 240-244.



exist.<sup>87</sup> His testimony proves how these rural communities were afraid of *Senderista* reprisals.

Pastor Vicente Saico, who was also the general manager of Radio Amauta, explained how the radio leaders witnessed the violence and how the marines threatened them if they were to file a report against the marines involved at Callqui. He said, “I felt persecuted, I was threatened by the brutal Comandante Camión. On December 20th of 1984, the secretary of the sub-prefecture of Huanta, Cesar Urbina, and Comandante Camión had a meeting, ending with an order of detention to myself for having denounced the marines’ acts in Callqui and many other events. I decided to go to Lima, looking for help and shelter.” When he arrived to Lima, he presented himself to Presbyterian leader Pedro Arana in the Pueblo Libre church (in a middle to upper class district of Lima) to ask for help. Pastor Arana was not only leader of his church, but also part of the committee organized by CONEP. Nevertheless, during the first years of the conflict, the Protestant leaders of Lima did not know, or perhaps wanted to ignore, what was going on in Ayacucho. There was a significant disconnect between the Protestant leaders of Lima and the Quechua Protestants. In his book, *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead*, John Maust, a missionary journalist, relates how difficult it was for journalists to get information outside of Ayacucho. Maust tells the story of Peruvian journalist and social activist Esteban Cuya who travelled to Ayacucho in 1983, before the Callqui attack, to collect data on the violence and make it public. Due to the state of emergency, travelers were checked thoroughly. At great personal risk, Cuya carried that information, wrote a pastoral letter and hand delivered it to leaders of the different denominations in Lima and

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<sup>87</sup> Jonathan Ritter, “The Voice of the Victims: Testimonial Songs in Rural Ayacucho,” 240-244.

to CONEP. Maust said, “Tragically, Lima evangelicals knew practically nothing about the problems in Ayacucho, neither this writer.” Cuya’s letters recommended the creation of an emergency commission to help jailed evangelicals, to investigate cases of Protestants who had disappeared, and to gather testimonies of human rights abuses carried out by *Sendero Luminoso* and the marines. This emergency commission eventually led to the creation of the Paz y Esperanza committee that later became the Paz y Esperanza nonprofit organization. According to Del Pino, CONEP through the Paz y Esperanza committee carried out a study church by church, collecting data and details of the attacks on churches during the time of violence, confirming that there were many more attacks on Protestants than what the Truth and Reconciliation report said. He mentioned Lucho Ruíz to be the leader of this study that was conducted during 1991 and 1992. However, this study was never published even though the Protestant churches were targets multiple times.

#### 2.4. LA RELIGIÓN ES EL OPIO DE LOS PUEBLOS

*Sendero Luminoso*’s Marxist-Leninist-Maoist foundations considered religion as the "opiate of the masses", as a form of deception to the make the masses be oppressed. In that sense, religion constituted an obstacle to *Sendero Luminoso*’ revolutionary projects.<sup>88</sup> Guzmán explained religion as a social phenomenon and as a product of the exploitation by the high social classes.<sup>89</sup> However, in this chapter, we see that Churches were not only affected by *Sendero Luminoso*, we see that the violent actions of the marines also reached

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<sup>88</sup> “Las iglesias evangélicas,” in *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación final report* (Lima: Aug. 3, 2003), 468.

<sup>89</sup> Luis Arce and Janet Talavera, “Reportaje del siglo: Presidente Gonzalo rompe el silencio,” *El Diario*, 1988, 24.

the church. Actions against the church by both *Sendero Luminoso* and the marines can be classified into:

Surveillance of ecclesial activities and pastoral agents, including questions to the members of ecclesial institutions about what they do, etc.

Verbal attacks, often through the media, flyers or graffiti, against the pastoral agents or the Church, accusing them of being agitators, subversives, terrorists or communists.

Death threats, whether by letters, flyers or graffiti.

Attacks and raids against the Church or against pastoral agents; attacks or closure of media linked to the church.

Detentions and mistreatment of pastoral and lay agents.<sup>90</sup>

During my 2017 visit to the Callqui community, I found out that most peasants are still hesitant to talk about the time of violence. Most of them lost a loved one, and some agreed with *Sendero Luminoso*'s ideology. Pastor Samuel Montes, who was assisting me as a Quechua-Spanish interpreter, was in charge of marrying a couple from the Callqui community on July 15, 2017 in an Ayacuchan Presbyterian Church. I attended the wedding and was able to conduct valuable interviews as a guest of Pastor Montes. One of those I interviewed was Presbyterian Quechua peasant Paulina Quispe de Mora. A Callqui church member, she told me that in 1984, *Sendero Luminoso* killed her husband (a pastor at the Callqui Church and a community leader) along with other church members. She said, "During that time, *Sendero Luminoso* detested the church and community leaders because the church was promoting a message of peace that went

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<sup>90</sup> "La Iglesia Católica y las iglesias evangélicas," in *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación final report* (Lima: Aug. 3, 2003), 392.

against their peasant revolution ideology, and most of the church leaders were also community leaders, like my husband.”<sup>91</sup>

Del Pino together with several researchers discussed in the historiography section (Degregori, Starn and Coronel) conducted in-depth fieldwork in the remote areas of Huanta and La Mar to investigate the role of the *Rondas Campesinas*. During those trips Del Pino noticed an abundant number of Protestant churches and realized that these churches had played leading roles during the time of violence.<sup>92</sup> When the peasants of Callqui were confronted by the violence imposed by *Sendero Luminoso*, the only leadership that did not give up were the Protestant Quechua leaders and pastors such as Pastor Montes, Pastor Saico Tinco, and Presbyterian Church Pastor Gavilán. These men did not give up even when they were threatened. Between 1983 and 1984, twelve evangelical pastors from rural areas, mainly from the Presbyterian and Pentecostal churches, were assassinated in Ayacucho. It is alleged that they were victimized by *Sendero Luminoso* because many of them were local authorities and strongly opposed the terrorist propaganda. In this region the evangelical congregations became a major enemy of the revolution.<sup>93</sup> These churches did not shut down even when facing the violence. Instead the leadership was strong and continued having gatherings and preaching their religious concepts in the midst of terror. The actions of these leaders made peasants believe in them and cling to their local churches for refuge and consolation. Many times,

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Paulina Quispe de Mora. trans. Samuel Montes, Callqui (July 15, 2017)

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Ponciano Del Pino, Lima (July 24, 2017).

<sup>93</sup> “Actores de la violencia e iglesias evangélicas: significados y afectaciones,” in *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación final report* (Lima: Aug. 3, 2003), 469.

the strength gained through their churches allowed them to confront the violence as we will explore in Chapter Three.

The final report of the CVR mentions only five attacks on Protestant churches from 1983 to 1991 in the Ayacucho region. However, according to several scholars, there were many more unreported attacks on Protestant churches. Most of the Quechua peasants were afraid, threatened by *Sendero Luminoso* and the *Comando Político Militar*, and therefore remained quiet about attacks they witnessed. The final report concludes by recognizing the role of a sector of the Protestant community as an actor contributing to "protect the population from crimes and human rights violations." It also recognizes "the value of the Protestant pastors who fulfilled this task of defending life and denouncing violence, even when putting themselves in danger, often in peripheries of large cities and very remote rural areas." This reflects the religious concept of the Presbyterian Church of Callqui, whose leaders preached against the violence. However, when violence hit the church and when being threatened, they were not afraid to denounce the marines. Pastor Vicente Saico and Church Pastor Saturnino Gavilán explained that the discourse preached to the peasants of Callqui was to love one another, to find refuge in the love of God, and wait for the military to protect them.

Some of the Quechua communities were so remote that it became impossible for them to publicly denounce the acts of violence. The peasants who were able to condemn the *Sendero Luminoso* acts were called "*soplones*."<sup>94</sup> During the conflict, corpses were found on the streets with signs attached to their bodies that said "Así mueren los soplones", meaning "This is how the snitches die". The appearance of these

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<sup>94</sup> In this context, people who denounced the violent acts or reported Sendero Luminoso members to the Police.

bodies created more panic among the indigenous communities. Del Pino explained that it is unlikely to find all the denunciations by the Protestant churches because of these murders. We only know so little of what happened to these Protestants.<sup>95</sup> Coronel, as a member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigating the Cayara community, shared his experience when he travelled to collect information from the peasants. He said, “Kimberly Theidon, community authorities and I went to give and collect information of the massacres done by *Sendero Luminoso*. Nevertheless, I was extremely surprised that none of the community peasants denounced the attacks, even when they all lost someone during the conflict. He recounted that, after the community authorities left, he asked the peasants why they didn’t denounce anything. They answered, “How could we denounce Mister Coronel, if right next to you was sitting an ex-*Sendero Luminoso* chief.”<sup>96</sup> Coronel agreed that *Sendero Luminoso* targeted all kinds of leaders in the indigenous communities that did not agree with the *Sendero Luminoso* ideology. The *Senderistas* would say, “If you are not with us, then you are against us, and that leads to death.” American Historian Kimberly Theidon’s and Del Pino’s research validates Paulina Quispe’s statement that *Sendero Luminoso* members or collaborators came from within the communities and that peasants knew who they were. Theidon’s work, *Entre Prójimos* (Intimate Enemies), argues that *Senderistas* were part of the community who blended with the peasants. According to Theidon, the discourse of these small communities was to not denounce the *Senderistas* because *Sendero Luminoso* members were not foreign, were not from other cities. They could be your neighbor,

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Ponciano del Pino, Lima (July 24, 2017).

<sup>96</sup> Interview with José Coronel, Huanta (July 16, 2017).

friend or family. The discourse of not denouncing *Sendero Luminoso* led to Theidon's book title, *Intimate Enemies*, because they killed each other knowing each other.<sup>97</sup>

## 2.5.GOD WILL SAVE US

*Hermano Segundo Gavilán* said, "All Christians go through fire. And that this fire strengthens them, toughens them, that is why they were gathered, they felt strengthened."<sup>98</sup> He mentioned the book of Hebrews, chapter 2 as the discourse preached by the Church. Hebrews 2 verses 3-4 says:

3 How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.<sup>99</sup>

As we will see in Chapter Three, not all Protestant villages preached the same religious concepts. The Callqui peasants believed that they should not be afraid of death since they would be saved because of their faith. They hoped to be protected by the military's arrival to the emergency zone. However, the arrival of the marines in the area proved them wrong, finding themselves in between two fires.

According to Paz y Esperanza, a Christian nonprofit organization who followed up the judicial case for the Callqui attack, Protestant churches in many rural villages were the only social organizations that resisted and remained standing. Churches in several

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<sup>97</sup> Kimberly Theidon, *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>98</sup> Segundo Gavilán, "Callqui Wanuqkunapa Kawsariynin: El renacimiento de los muertos de Callqui" (Peru: World Vision International en el Perú: 2009), 29.

<sup>99</sup> Hebrews 2: 3-4

rural communities became true centers of consolation and hope for the widows, orphans, displaced and prisoners. These temples were opened as temporary houses of shelter, providing food and clothing and connecting peasants with humanitarian organizations. It seemed that persecution encouraged the believers to engage more in the church discourse. They developed new forms of community faith practices: in homes, in the solitary countryside, using the hours at dawn, on the road, in the caves of the mountains, and in the prisons.<sup>100</sup> As the Truth and Reconciliation final report notes, “Faced with the totalitarian and violent message of the subversive groups and the reality of horror, their faith animated them, led them to elaborate various strategies. From non-compliance with the call to take arms because of their theology reflection, to deciding to fight against *Sendero Luminoso* by joining the *Rondas*, evangelicals took a variety of answers against terror.”<sup>101</sup>

Historian David Carey suggests that scholars are beginning to study the ways religion influences memory and historical narratives. In *Oral History in Latin America*, he claims that, “Among rural inhabitants of Ayacucho, Perú, oral histories reflected their indigenous worldviews and their interpretations of local evangelical religions. The interplay between recently introduced religious concepts and their long-standing knowledge and epistemologies helped them to make sense of *Sendero Luminoso* and other violence to which they were subjected in the late twentieth century.”<sup>102</sup> Then he tells the story of a Protestant peasant in the Uchuraccay village. His study helps us

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<sup>100</sup> “Evangélicos en el informe final: Resistencia, consuelo e indiferencia.” (Lima: Paz y Esperanza: November, 2003)

<sup>101</sup> “La Iglesia Católica y las iglesias evangélicas”, 465.

<sup>102</sup> David Carey, *Oral Histories in Latin America: Unlocking the Spoken Archive* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 169-189.



understand how autonomous Andean villages were when understanding *Sendero Luminoso*, and how their religious concepts played a vital role in some villages like Callqui.

This study argues that not all Quechua villages picked a side, even if they were threatened by *Sendero Luminoso* or the *Comando Político Militar*. And in this case, their understanding of Protestantism led Callqui peasants to choose to stay neutral, with the belief that God would save them and send the marines to protect them. In *The Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency*, Miguel La Serna studies two other tiny villages in Ayacucho, Chuschi and Huaychao. These villages are similar on the surface, however, Chuschi sided with *Sendero Luminoso* and Huaychao with the military. La Serna asks why some Andean peasants chose to support *Sendero Luminoso*'s ideology and others did not? La Serna shows the reality of poor, rural peasants of these two villages, and explores the reasons why they chose to mobilize or not during the armed struggle. He elucidates the motives they had to pick a side, including local power relations, social conflicts and cultural understandings of rural peasants.<sup>103</sup> My approach reflects that not every village picked a side and adds a new subject that has not been explored in depth. Protestantism played a significant role in the lives of the Callqui peasants. Therefore, these Protestants did not support the *Sendero Luminoso* movement but did not rise against them either.

Ponciano del Pino bears witness to the increase of Protestant churches in the most affected areas during the conflict and is one of the few scholars who studied the discourse of Quechua Protestant churches during the conflict in Ayacucho in "Tiempos de Guerra y

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<sup>103</sup> Miguel La Serna. *The Corner of the Living*.

de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac.”<sup>104</sup> During our interview, Del Pino expressed the need for more detailed research of the Quechua Protestant churches in the rural areas of Ayacucho, arguing that most historians have overlooked them.<sup>105</sup>

## 2.6. YEARS AFTER THE ATTACK

We can clearly see the disconnect between this Protestant village of Callqui and the outside world, including CONEP, with Quechua Protestants feeling neglected by the bigger churches outside of the local villages. Additionally, church leaders from Lima and foreign missionaries had to leave the Andean regions because of the danger they were in. Attorney Germán Vargas explained that CONEP organized a committee called Paz y Esperanza after what happened in Callqui to help the widows, orphans and other victims of the conflict. However, when the committee arrived to Huanta, they realized that the problems they were confronting were bigger than expected. Years later in 1995, Paz y Esperanza split from the larger CONEP organization due to little support from the Protestant leaders in Lima. Germán said, “From my experience and work in the affected areas of Ayacucho, the Protestant churches were enemies of *Sendero Luminoso* and the malicious acts of the Peruvian Armed forces.”<sup>106</sup>

Twenty-five years after the Callqui attack, *World Vision International en el Perú* published a magazine in remembrance and commemoration of the six victims. In this publication ex-director of CONEP, Pastor Pedro Arana from Lima states that Callqui

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<sup>104</sup> Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac,” 117-188.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Ponciano Del Pino, Lima (July 21, 2017).

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Germán Vargas, Huanta (July 11, 2017).

remains a symbol of national embarrassment. Twenty-five years after the attack nothing has been done to help this community get out of poverty, and to have a better education.

He said,

“We have not done anything, neither the Catholics nor the Protestants. Huanta is still a stopping point for drug traffickers. Moreover, Peru is the largest producer of cocaine in all of South America, so we are commemorating twenty-five years of what? What happened in Callqui is the representation of a broken gospel. Justice did not exist before what happened in Callqui, however, the missionaries did not say anything at all. We Protestants lost the message and also the ethics. It is painful, it is one thing to talk about poverty, and another thing to identify with the poor.”<sup>107</sup>

Long before and during the times of violence, many villages had no schools, and those few rural schools that existed rarely taught beyond the earliest grades. Such schools also suffered from a lack of resources, and their teachers had little more than basic literacy and numeracy skills. The native language was Quechua and very few peasants also spoke Spanish. In *Now Peru is Mine: The life and times of a campesino activist*, Manuel Llamojha, an Ayacuchan activist states, “Of the many different indigenous groups or nations living in Peru, peoples of Quechua ethno-racial heritage are by far the most numerous.”<sup>108</sup> Poor education is just another sign of the Peruvian government’s terrible neglect of rural Andean villages, who were prominently Quechua. When I visited Callqui, I saw the poverty the peasants continue to endure daily and the enduring struggles they face because of neglect from the state.

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<sup>107</sup> Pedro Arana Quiroz, “Callqui símbolo de la vergüenza nacional,” *World Vision International en el Perú*. (Lima: Praise Communications, S.A.C. 2009)

<sup>108</sup> Manuel Llamojha & Jaymie Heilman, *Now Peru is Mine: The life and times of a campesino activist* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 4.

## 2.7.CONCLUSION

When the marines got to the region in 1982, they did not have a clear strategy on differentiating *Senderistas* from peasants. *Senderistas* intentionally blended into the community, complicating the work of the marines. The attack on the Presbyterian Church of Callqui by the marines is only one example of the violence the peasants endured during the armed struggle. As *hermana* Paulina Quispe mentioned in our interview, many more attacks had been conducted, and almost half of them have not been reported. Enrique Zileri's newspaper article published in Lima days after the Callqui church attack shows the grievance and fear of the Callqui peasants. They lost faith in the force that was supposed to protect them. One interviewee in 1984 said: "Up until last year, the marines were a model of fraternity with the populations of Huanta and Tambo. Now it seems to be the most feared and hated troop in the region. The cases of the evangelists and journalist Jaime Ayala prove it."<sup>109</sup>

This study used the Presbyterian Church of Callqui as an organizing principle after interviewing Quechua Protestants and peasants who sympathized with the religious concept of love and salvation. Callqui, is a tiny and isolated village that elected a religious strategy of prayer and trust that the struggle would end soon. Their religious concepts of love and salvation in God influenced their decision not to participate in the conflict. However, they were drawn in after being attacked by the marines and accused of being *Senderistas*. After the attack, they chose the discourse of pardon and reconciliation preached by the Presbyterian Church of Callqui. Callqui leaders denounced the human rights violations made by the marines, even when they were threatened. As related here,

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<sup>109</sup> Enrique Zileri Gibson, "La Matanza de los Evangelistas," *Caretas*, August 1984, 12-18.

church life was crucial during the armed struggle in Huanta. Faith-based support in these remote Protestant communities helped many weather the storm of violence committed by both the military and *Sendero Luminoso*.

Since the first attacks were primarily in the high Andes of Ayacucho, like in the case of Callqui, many peasants of Huanta migrated to the jungle region of Huanta, known as the VRAEM region. Gorriti, mentions the importance of the Protestant church in these migration waves to the jungle, especially the Pentecostal Church. And now we turn to Chapter Three, for a fuller discussion of the village of Ccano in the rainforest region of Huanta. We will explore the agency of the peasants of Ccano during the armed struggle, and how Protestantism led them to rise up against *Sendero Luminoso*. They basically had a different religious concept than the Callqui peasants, who remained neutral to the conflict because of their religious concept of love and salvation.

3. CHAPTER THREE: *SENDERO LUMINOSO* CALLS ON THE *HERMANOS*:  
THE CASE OF THE QUECHUA PROTESTANT VILLAGE OF CCANO.

Chapter Two explored the village of Callqui, where peasants had the religious concept to not participate in the violence, and remain neutral early in the conflict, praying and hoping God's salvation would be provided through the marines. In contrast, this chapter examines Ccano, another small village in the province of Huanta. Protestantism also played a large role in the lives of these peasants during the time of violence.

According to the INEI, Ccano is also a *centro poblado*,<sup>110</sup> explained in Chapter Two as a territory with a population of only 151 to 250 inhabitants. Ccano is in a remote area about four hours and a half from the capital of Ayacucho by car. Quechua is the native language spoken, with very few in the community also speaking Spanish. This village is also part of the Valle de los Ríos Apurímac, Ene y Mantaro, known as the VRAEM region (Valley of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro Rivers). This region of Peru's rainforests includes Ayacucho's provinces of Huanta and La Mar and is one of the major areas of coca-growing in Peru.<sup>111</sup> Historian Ponciano Del Pino explains how the coca growing phenomenon arose from the negative economic effects brought on by the violence. Because of the violence, transportation systems collapsed, and the prices of the main products like coffee and cocoa dropped. The VRAEM region was fertile land for

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<sup>110</sup> According to the Peruvian Government, Law No. 27795 "Territorial Demarcation and Organization Law", a Centro Poblado (CCPP) is an urban and/or rural national territory identified by a name and inhabited by a population equal to or greater than 151 inhabitants.

<sup>111</sup> "Peru's government touts security gains in coca-producing region" *Peru Reports*, September 8, 2015.

the growth of coca and the production of cocaine became a source of income to some peasants who no longer had other sources of revenue. However, Protestant peasants, or *hermanos*, were against the growth of coca, and saw it as evil. By 1996, a large percentage of the VRAEM's population was Protestant. There was not a village in this region that did not have at least one Protestant church, be it Pentecostal, Presbyterian or Assembly of God.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast to Callqui, where the community chose a religious strategy of prayer and trust that the violence would soon, Ccano is a village that actively resisted the violence in order to protect their community. Ccano peasants, for the most part *hermanos*, saw *Sendero Luminoso* as the enemy, as the Antichrist, and believed they should fight in the war to protect themselves in the name of God. Furthermore, being a *hermano* played a role in their decision to accept training and the support of the marines to organize themselves in *Rondas Campesinas* (rural patrols) or *Comités de autodefensa* as a system to oppose *Sendero Luminoso*. Therefore, Ccano actively responded to the violence. When the marines arrived to the VRAEM, they found a positive reception in communities that had opposed *Sendero Luminoso* from the beginning. Ccano received some armament from the marines, were trained on how to use guns and fight *Sendero Luminoso*. The *Rondas Campesinas* were recognized in November 1991 with Legislative Decree 741 of the Government of Alberto Fujimori as *Comités de Defensa Civil (CDC)*.<sup>113</sup> By that same

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<sup>112</sup> Del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac," 132.

<sup>113</sup> Starn, *Hablan los ronderos*, 7.

year, Ayacucho had approximately 836 villages organized in *CDC*. Of these villages, 280 were part of the *VRAEM* and controlled 95% of the *VRAEM*.<sup>114</sup>

The engagement of the Ccano peasants with the marines suggests that not all Protestant villages followed a single pattern in response to the violence. Instead, each of them had a unique religious concept and understanding of the Quechua Bible, which made them react differently to the violence. This research does not evaluate whether their decision to work with the marines was right or wrong. However, I will document that whether they chose to stay neutral as Callqui, or fight *Sendero Luminoso* as Ccano, these *hermanos* were still targets of the violence.

We will see in at the end of this chapter that *Sendero Luminoso* would not accept that Ccano peasants picked a side and worked with the marines to confront them. Furthermore, this choice led to a massacre in the Pentecostal Church of Ccano perpetrated by *Sendero Luminoso* on February 23, 1991. As Abimael Guzmán once said, “The party has a thousand eyes and a thousand ears, no one could scoff at the party of the poor.”<sup>115</sup> This threat clearly indicated that the *senderistas* knew when peasants would be against their ideology, or even worse, if a village joins the *Comités de Defensa Civil* like Ccano did. Therefore, the Ccano peasants became enemies of *Sendero Luminoso*.

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<sup>114</sup> Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac,” 118.

<sup>115</sup> “Estado de Miedo,” directed by Pamela Yates (United States: Morena Films, 2005), DVD.



### 3.1.ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CHANGES BROUGHT BY THE VIOLENCE

The marines started to operate in the area, for the most part in the mid-1980s, as in the case of Callqui. Especially at the beginning of their operations, they were extremely suspicious of any peasant speaking Quechua. Taking into account that the attack on the Ccano village took place in 1991, eleven years after the beginning of the armed struggle and nine years since the arrival of the *Comando Político Militar* to the emergency zone, we see a different reaction to the violence of this Protestant village because they chose to fight. However, *Sendero Luminoso* was not an easy enemy and reacted to the denial by the Ccano peasants.

As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, before and during the time of violence the Peruvian government largely ignored the peasants of these isolated villages. It is important to understand the power relations in these villages before and during the violence. These recognized power structures led the peasants to cling to their religious discourse and established it as an organizing principle. The Protestant Church has had a fundamental role in reconstructing the social relations disarticulated by the violence in the rural villages. There were no active political parties, no guilds, unions were being dismantled, no judiciary power, no Catholic Church, community leaders had died and the rural Protestant Churches fulfilled a role of spiritual refuge, for the excluded, the battered, the widows, the orphans, and it grew massively the number of Quechua protestants.<sup>116</sup> Each village had their own religious concept that made them choose what to do to

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with José Coronel, Huanta (July 16, 2017).

confront the violence, and there were intentions of unification of the church by some Quechua leaders when seeing the imminent *Sendero Luminoso* growth in Ayacucho.

Protestant anthropologist Tito Paredes, who had a strong interest in the Peruvian indigenous communities, understood the need for the Quechua Church to develop its own expression of faith and spiritual identity even before the violence started. Its adaptation of Western culture had hampered rather than encouraged spiritual growth. Since he saw the danger of the imminent growth of *Sendero Luminoso* in the late 1970s, he talked to thirty-one leaders representing five denominations from the surrounding villages.

Fernando Quicaña was a Quechua Pastor who was later murdered by *Sendero Luminoso* for preaching in Presbyterian churches. He was also targeted for translating the bible from Spanish to Quechua with the help of Wycliffe Global Alliance and then providing more than 20,000 copies to peasants of Ayacucho.<sup>117</sup> Quicaña helped Paredes organize these Quechua Church leaders. Their aim was to empower the Quechua Church, especially in these turbulent times. During the meeting, Quicaña said, “For years we have accepted the wisdom of the missionaries, and the Spanish leadership of the Peruvian Church. We have sung their hymns, we have learned to play their instruments, and we have organized our churches as they instructed us. But I think you will all agree with me that we have not sensed that our faith is truly ours.” He continued, “I believe it is time that we begin to express our faith in our own way, within the context of our own culture. What we need is something truly ours, something that will revive our sense of *ayllu*<sup>118</sup>, or

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<sup>117</sup> Terry Whalin and Chris Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism*, 170.

<sup>118</sup> The *ayllu* is the traditional form of a community in the Andes, especially among Quechuas and Aymaras. They are an indigenous local government model across the Andes region of South America, particularly in Bolivia and Peru.

community support, and bring us all back together.”<sup>119</sup> After hours of dialogue, the leaders agreed to expand this idea and guide their move toward a Quechua interpretation of the gospel. The peasants raised their voices in praise of the Lord and thanksgiving for the renewed pride they felt in being Quechua. Quicaña and others in Ayacucho believed that in that context of *ayllu* the gospel of Jesus Christ could make significant inroads.<sup>120</sup> Quechua Protestants were active in Ayacucho, and were growing rapidly.

According to *World Vision International*, an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development and advocacy organization, growth of the Protestant population in the provinces most affected by the violence has been significantly higher than elsewhere. A census of five communities in Huanta during the years of violence indicated that the protestant population growth neared 40% in the rural villages. In the meantime, Catholic temples were in total abandonment in these villages.”<sup>121</sup> When talking to Claudia Huaraca Ramos, a resident of Ccano and community leader, she explained how most of the peasants of Ccano would call each other *hermano*, because they either belonged to the Pentecostal Church or the Presbyterian Church of Ccano. She expressed that it was like having a big family within the village, an *ayllu*. During my visit to Ccano, I witnessed this phenomenon myself. From the moment I took a step into her little grocery store, she asked, “what are you buying today *hermana*? Claudia Huaraca, without even knowing who I was, simply called me *hermana*.”<sup>122</sup> This shows how the religious language permeated in the community’s day to day language.

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<sup>119</sup> Terry Whalin and Chris Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism*, 126-127.

<sup>120</sup> Terry Whalin and Chris Woehr, *Faith in the Midst of Terrorism*, 126-127.

<sup>121</sup> Darío López, *Los evangélicos y los derechos humanos: La experiencia social del concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú 1980-1992* (LIMA: Centro Evangélico de Misiología Andino-Amazónica, 1998), 89

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Claudia Huaraca Ramos, Huanta (July 17, 2017).

In *Gobiernos locales, ciudadanía y democracia: los casos de Huanta y Huamanga*, Coronel, Degregori, and del Pino explore displacement resulting from the violence. They successfully pointed out that there was a very important social change in the local governments of the districts of Ayacucho after the violence burst. After the war, peasants started to assume positions of power in local offices. To understand these changes, it is important to acknowledge the political changes that occurred in the area even before Sendero started operating in the area. Before 1969, *hacendados* (landlords) were also in charge of the local government, leaving peasants, working in the haciendas marginalized from political participation. This started to change after President Velasco Alvarado declared agrarian reform and the end of *latifundio* in Peru.

At that moment many landlords started to flee the countryside. Those who stayed after 1969 fled when *Sendero Luminoso* entered these villages to kill them. Therefore, villages were left without leaders, and the Quechua peasants needed to take control to confront the violence imposed on them. These peasants had never been mayors or *ronderos*, and they had no experience as political leaders. Female peasants later became *ronderas* (female rural patrols) and played an important role in the composition of the *Rondas Campesinas*. This time brought a huge social reconstructing of local governments, including Protestant Church leaders becoming community leaders in many villages of Huanta.<sup>123</sup>

The displacement of former village leaders also aggressively influenced the rural villages' economics. When in the 1970's the VRAEM region was gaining experience on

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<sup>123</sup> Carlos Iván Degregori, José Coronel, and Ponciano del Pino. In *Gobiernos locales, ciudadanía y democracia: los casos de Huanta y Huamanga* (Lima: Instituto de Defensa Legal, 1998).

how to expand their economy using their agricultural products, the conflict impacted them negatively. Between 1970 and 1971, peasants from the VRAEM region organized themselves into agricultural cooperatives, including "*Unión Selvática*", "*Río Apurímac*" and "*El Quinacho*", which by 1977 had gathered 895, 1,356 and 1,500 partners respectively. In 1975 small merchants and producers formed an *Asociación de Pequeños Agricultores* in order to compete against the monopoly of the big merchants. Over time, however, the big merchants infiltrated this cooperative to finally control it.<sup>124</sup>

In 1979, the *Federación Campesina del Valle del Río Apurímac* (FECVRA) was organized and it became one of the largest and most important organizations in the entire department of Ayacucho. It grouped more than one hundred bases or "unions" until 1983, when it was deactivated by the effects of terror and repressive violence.<sup>125</sup> The downfall of FECVRA was caused by two factors. Firstly, the *senderistas* openly attacked this organization accusing it of being capitalists who were looking to profit rather than to benefit its members. What's more, the marines arrived in 1983, and saw the very few peasant organizations in the region as a cover up of *Sendero Luminoso*. They unleashed open persecution against the few leaders who were still in the VRAEM. In doing so, the marines completed the work of *Sendero Luminoso*, ending every glimpse of peasant organization. The producers and peasants were scattered and plunged into the shadows of a time of terror.<sup>126</sup> However, most of the Protestant churches in these villages had not been weakened and became centers of consolation and organization. In several of the

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<sup>124</sup> Del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac," 126

<sup>125</sup> Del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac," 126.

<sup>126</sup> Del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Río Apurímac," 134.

VRAEM villages, Protestant churches played an important role. The coexistence of non-religious peasants who saw the growth of coca in the jungle region of Ayacucho as their way to survive, contradicted the Protestant discourse. Protestants saw coca and cocaine as evil.<sup>127</sup> The initial tactics of Protestantism by the foreign missionaries was to stop the culture of drinking, and chewing coca, because it was seen as a sin. The peasants of Ccano not only had to confront the violence, but also the aftermath of this economic shock their village was facing.

### 3.2.THEY WERE CORNERED, LEFT ALONE AGAIN

The Pentecostal Church of Ccano was also part of the National Evangelical Council of Peru, CONEP, a group founded in 1940 to promote dialogue among different evangelical churches in the country. The actions against evangelical peasants and pastors by both *Sendero Luminoso* and the *Comando Político Militar* provoked an important discussion within CONEP.<sup>128</sup> However, as we will see in the following pages, CONEP, as many other institutions, failed to reach out to Ccano to provide assistance.

The Pentecostal Church of Ccano was one of the two Protestant churches in the village. There was also the Presbyterian Church of Ccano with a smaller membership, but they all were *hermanos* and fought the *Senderistas* together. The Ccano village felt the absence of the Catholic Church in their community according to Quechua Protestant leaders, and clung to the only two organizing powers they had in their tiny village during

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<sup>127</sup> Interview with Gustavo Gorriti Lima (July 10, 2017).

<sup>128</sup> Coletta Youngers y Susan C. Peacock, “La Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos del Perú: Un Estudio de Caso de Construcción de una Coalición,” Trans. by Enrique Bossio (Washington: Washington Office of Latin America, 2009), 8.

the time of violence, the Pentecostal Church and the Presbyterian Church. Michael Fleet and Brian Smith in *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*, argue that the human rights work in the emergency areas of Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurímac was problematic because of the indifference of local leaders of the Catholic Church, who were openly hostile to the issues these villages were suffering. In these areas, conservative local bishops avoided the establishment of church-affiliated human rights organizations and were an obstacle to the villagers as already explained in Chapter Two. Even as late as 1986, when political violence had decimated the region, the Archbishop of Ayacucho Federico Richter Prada, prohibited the establishment of a vicarage or human rights office in his diocese.<sup>129</sup> Bishop Federico Ritcher took almost the same response as Bishop Cipriani, who was accused by the peasants of not attending the social needs of the province. Ayacuchan anthropologist José Coronel and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report claimed that during the time of Archbishop Cipriani, the Cathedral of Ayacucho had a sign saying, "Here we don't attend human rights violation cases" to discourage people from asking for his help. Instead, many people would think of Archbishop Cipriani as a main ally of the military and the government. He was always protected by the military and unreachable to the peasants. Despite widespread preaching about the role of the Catholic Church in protecting the people, Cipriani showed no interest in promoting human rights.<sup>130</sup> Once again, similar to the Callqui case, here we see the indifference of the Catholic Church and the lack of support for another small and isolated village, unfortunately making the Ccano peasants targets of the violence. In

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<sup>129</sup> Michael Fleet and Brian H. Smith. *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Perú* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 231.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with José Coronel, Huanta (July 16, 2017).

contrast to the Catholic Church whose presence was mostly limited to the cities, the Protestant churches in Peru focused attention in the poorest rural areas of the country. The Catholic priests and their bureaucracy, their teachings of spirituality without action, were unlike the work of the foreign Protestant missionaries, who helped and had direct contact with the poor.<sup>131</sup> However, the violence had driven the foreign Protestant missionaries out, and Quechua Protestants felt isolated and had to take action.

In this same sense, the geographical distribution of the violence from the countryside to the city (*Del pueblo a la ciudad*), showed the tensions within the National Protestant Church. There were intense differences between urban Protestants, who tried to stay out of this problem and rural Protestants that were pressured by the force of violence in their communities. Pastor Pedro Arana Quiroz, pastor of a prominent Presbyterian Church in Lima, explained how some of the churches in Lima did try to follow up some of the cases in Ayacucho through CONEP. However, it was impossible to provide help to everyone since the violence was so intense. Pastor Arana and other Protestant leaders from the Paz y Esperanza committee went to Callqui to comprehend what happened back in 1984. In his own words when speaking about assistance provided by the national Protestant Church, “Most of the Protestant leaders at the national level did not have the slightest notion of defending anyone, so the few of us who went were playing with our lives. The other Protestant Churches in Lima were completely absent to help the peasants of Ayacucho, very few helped.”<sup>132</sup> However, in the case of Ccano, these Protestants from Lima did not reach out. These rural Protestants were forced to learn how

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<sup>131</sup> Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, Lima (July 10, 2017).

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Pedro Arana Quiroz, Lima (July 11, 2017).



survive and promote hope in the midst of hopelessness. The actions of resistance were given, particularly, by small poor Protestant communities located in the Andes and the Peruvian rainforest.<sup>133</sup>

When talking to Ccano peasants, *hermano* Marcelino Chulla and *hermana* Claudia Huaraca Ramos expressed a feeling of resentment and frustration because of the levels of poverty, and for how they tend to be forgotten by the Peruvian Government and the bigger churches from the cities. Marcelino, who has lived in Ccano since he was born said, “In Ccano we suffered a long struggle, in this abandoned village, the *senderistas* and the military arrived whenever they wanted.” When I asked his opinion on external help, like CONEP, he said, “CONEP never came here, none come to this village, especially during the time of violence.”<sup>134</sup>

### 3.3.SENDERO’S TACTICS: IS ABIMAEEL THE ANTICHRIST?

There are many factors that help to understand why the village of Ccano welcomed the military and even took arms against *Sendero Luminoso*. Let us look in more detail at the tactics used by *Sendero Luminoso* that made the peasants of Ccano choose not to join the Party, and instead resisted and fought.

First of all, *Sendero Luminoso*’s tactics involved breaking the peasantry’s dependence on the market economy. *Sendero* prevented them from selling their rural agriculture products in urban centers. As explained in Chapter Two, most of the rural peasants made their living from their crops and livestock. For instance, every Sunday,

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<sup>133</sup> “La Iglesia Católica y las iglesias evangélicas,” 465

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Marcelino Chulla, Huanta (July 17, 2017).

peasants from the north and jungle regions of Ayacucho would meet in markets in the urban areas, such as Huanta city or Tambo, to sell and exchange their agricultural products, a tradition that prevails until today. On the contrary, *Senderistas* forced peasants to feed the members of the party with their agricultural products, leaving the peasants without any income, and with little or nothing, to feed their families.

Second, *Senderistas* would force women to work the crops so there would be more to feed the party. However, by forcing women to work the crops, they destabilized the natural order of hierarchy in the rural peasantry of Huanta, where men are the providers, and women take care of the domestic needs and family.

Third, *Sendero Luminoso*'s revolutionary strategy included the murder of local authorities. While this was welcomed by some communities because of corrupt local authorities, the problem came when *Senderistas* replaced these former leaders with their own *senderista* or a *sendero* sympathizer, appointed by the Party without any prior approval of the peasants living there.<sup>135</sup> Probably the tactic most unwelcomed by the rural peasants was being forced to join the party or be killed by the *senderistas*. The widespread disapproval of these tactics, that were incompatible with peasant cultural values, religious ideology and living goals and practices, propagated intense resentment and disillusionment by the population who chose to remain in their village instead of fleeing. These tactics led to an open conflict and widespread Ccano peasant resistance to *Sendero Luminoso*, with the idea that their God would protect them.

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<sup>135</sup> Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-Rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980-2000* (Amsterdam: Thela Publishers, 2002), 296

As mentioned earlier, the village of Ccano is situated in the VRAEM region, the rainforest region of Ayacucho, where since 1984 the Evangelical Pentecostal Church began to grow with great strength. The message of the Church was: Apocalyptic times were lived, Vespers of the Second Coming of the Holy Spirit. It was necessary and urgent to "choose the path of life" and "True Christianity" to ensure salvation and eternal life. It was very difficult for *Sendero Luminoso* to dominate these villages, so it proceeded to fight them. The Protestants then elaborated their own religious concept according to the reality they were living, which translated into practical action: for the final judgement, the earth was to be clean of "demonic". It was necessary, under God's protection, to fight the forces of evil. In this way, the bloody repression of *Sendero Luminoso* found in response the armed action of Protestants and political warfare became a certain measure in religious warfare, because the Protestants of these rural villages did not imagine fighting against a common enemy, but Against the Antichrist himself.<sup>136</sup> And these Protestants, when *Sendero* came to Ccano with their cruel tactics seeking to impose their ideology, by imposing terror, they saw *Sendero Luminoso* as the Antichrist. "Jehovah! The Lord of all battles will lead us to the encounter with the enemy, and He will be our armor."<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the hermanos of many protestant Churches including Ccano, organized themselves against Sendero Luminoso, and when the marines arrived to the area, the peasants saw in the marines a friend who provided them with guns and helped them organize against *Sendero Luminoso*. This belief had a great effect in coercing the

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<sup>136</sup> Del Pino, "Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac," 117-188.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, Lima (July 10, 2017).

mobilization against *Sendero Luminoso*. They felt empowered and ready to fight the enemy.

My research suggests that each village had their own understanding of Protestantism, making them have their own religious concept. Historian Del Pino explained how in a neighboring Protestant village, called Anchiuay in the VRAEM, arrived Reverend Justin Aliaga, a Pentecostal pastor. Pastor Aliaga came to reveal a biblical message. He told the *hermanos* the bible story of David and Goliath. The philistines were chasing and killing the Jews, the people of God. In response, by order and with the power of God, David organized an army composed of small forces with which he began to fight against the enemies of the Lord, defeating without suffering greater damage and victims. The message was given during wartime, killing in defense of Christianity was not a sin. So they had arguments to move from moral sanction to armed response. The *hermanos* of Ccano chose to engage in the war, using their religious concept that Abimael Guzmán was the Antichrist himself. It must be noted that the Bible does not reveal specifically who the Antichrist is. Instead it warns Protestants on corrupt teachings, such as Guzman's, and the Ccano peasants made the connection between these two.

In 2 Thessalonians 3-4, Paul prophesied of a "man of sin," a liar and deceiver whose natural abilities Satan enhances by supernatural power in order to confuse people in the end time.

<sup>3</sup> Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.<sup>138</sup>

Reacting to the violence against them and using this religious concept to fight against *Sendero Luminoso*, many of the *hermanos* of Ccano chose to join the *Comités de Defensa Civil* and let the Marines train them against the enemy. They received some armament from the Marines, were trained on how to use guns and fight *Sendero Luminoso*, possibly following the example of Guatemala's counter-insurgency war. Years earlier, a similar strategy was adopted by Guatemalan president Rios Montt in 1982 as a strategy of counterinsurgency to cut off the guerrillas from whatever base of support they might have among the local population,<sup>139</sup> for the most part indigenous population. The Guatemalan military, like the Peruvian military, either forced peasants to join the *Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC)* or peasants joined willingly. A Guatemalan system that, according to Historian Virginia Garrard-Burnett, "was extremely effective, indeed, by most accounts on both the political Left and the Right it was the single most successful element of the counterinsurgency campaign in Guatemala".<sup>140</sup> However, the discussion of counterinsurgency war in Guatemala is more complex due to the ideology of Rios Montt and the cruelty against the indigenous people of Guatemala during the seventeen months he was in power. Rios Montt believed himself to be "a prophetic leader, brought by Providence to power at a particular moment in history in which he

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<sup>138</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2-4

<sup>139</sup> Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit: Guatemala under General Efraim Rios Mont 1982-1983* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 101.

<sup>140</sup> Garrard-Burnett, *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit*, 64.

could lead the people of Guatemala against the forces of evil that besieged them on every side.”<sup>141</sup>

### 3.4. PROTESTANTS AND THE RONDAS CAMPESINAS

By the end of 1991, Ayacucho had approximately 836 communities organized in *Comités de Defensa Civil*. Of these communities, 280 were part of the VRAEM and controlled 95% of the valley. In 1994, the joint command of the Marines registered for Ayacucho 1,564 *Comités de defensa civil*, with 61,450 *Ronderos* organized and 5,583 weapons distributed to the *Ronderos*. Nationwide, there were 4,205 *Comités de Defensa Civil*, 235,465 *Ronderos* and 16,196 weapons.<sup>142</sup> We see a new peasant strategy and a new way to organize after the decimation of the old ways in the early and mid-1980's by the burst of violence. However, the *Ronderos* faced more struggles.

Compared to other villages where the military forced peasants to join the *ronderos*, the Ccano peasants voluntarily accepted the training, because of their religious discourse to fight the evil *Sendero Luminoso*. They freely chose to work together with the Marines during their military occupation in Ccano. Caleb Meza, the indigenous communities' director of the social department of CONEP, said “It is evident that in the emergency zones the only remaining social force is the religious force. Protestant evangelicals, especially Pentecostals, have been aggressive.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Garrard-Burnett, *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit*, 64.

<sup>142</sup> Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: *Ronderos*, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac,” 118.

<sup>143</sup> Strong, *Sendero Luminoso*, 193-194.

Degregori gives importance to the agency of the Ayacuchan peasants in the VRAEM region. “When the State wants to impose its way, and the peasants did not agree, las *Rondas* would not work, as they had successfully done since 1989.”<sup>144</sup> It can be the military initiative, sometimes by military imposition, but if there was not an aspect of willingness and initiative of the peasantry, las *Rondas* would not have worked, they would not be successful in their fight.<sup>145</sup> The *ronderos*, no matter how related they were to the Marines, were not pure manipulated puppets. There is initiative and peasant identity in the *Rondas Campesinas*, and as we have seen in many cases, this identity is defined in a dramatic, painful and also courageous way. They were ready to fight.

*“Vamos soldaditos siervos del Señor*

*Vamos a defensa nuestro evangelio*

*Tataratatata tataratatata*

*Y ganaremos la victoria con Jesús.”*<sup>146</sup>

One of the songs sung by the *Rondas Campesinas* from Protestant villages when they went out to patrol their villages, fighting *Sendero Luminoso*.<sup>147</sup>

Some villages of Ayacucho enjoyed periods of peace thanks to the *Rondas Campesinas*. However, ‘Peace is not free,’ said a *rondero*, “it is true, it costs, and is very expensive.” They had to leave their families for long periods of time and did not know if they will return alive, injured or mutilated. Nobody paid them for their service. They abandoned their agricultural produce, the only means of sustenance for them and their

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<sup>144</sup> Starn, *Hablan los ronderos*, 67.

<sup>145</sup> Starn, *Hablan los ronderos* 67-69.

<sup>146</sup> Come on soldiers, servants of the Lord. Let's defend our gospel. Tataratatata tataratatata. And we will win the victory with Jesus!

<sup>147</sup> Kimberly Theidon, *Entre Projimos: El conflicto armado interno y la política de reconciliación en el Peru*. (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos Ediciones, 2004), 151.

family. They had very few armaments. The *Rondas* had to feed other *ronderos* and hundreds of refugees, to whom they must provide housing. There was a lack of doctors, and medicines are scarce. They had to also fight against the endemic diseases that are in the jungle zone, such as malaria, rabies, cholera, and tuberculosis. But they have assumed the responsibility with blood, sweat and tears. A *rondero* said at a workshop of agreement and leadership within the *Rondas Campesinas* of the north and south of Peru, “We know from our own experience that our choice is correct and inevitable, here the neutrals have died,”<sup>148</sup> a phrase that fits very well with the decision they have taken to fight for peace.

As we saw in Chapter Two, the *hermanos* of Callqui had remained neutral, and unfortunately, were attacked by the marines who accused them of being *Senderistas*. The peasants of Ccano understood that remaining neutral was not an option. Juan Méndez, executive director of *Americas Watch*, declared in 1993 after becoming concerned about the vulnerable situation of the neutral population of Peru, who were murdered and mistreated by both forces: “The *ronderos* have understood perhaps long before us. We can only imagine the magnitude of the genocide that *senderistas* try to perpetrate; unfortunately, the most affected will be the peasants and the poor of marginal neighborhoods. Meanwhile, what is society doing against the announced slaughter? The *ronderos* have embarked on a torturous, bloody, and lonely path. They want peace, like all, and they fight to achieve peace.”<sup>149</sup>

With sadness, Maximo Maule Huacho tells the Truth and Reconciliation commissioners in a 2002 public hearing held in Huanta how he lost his mother and

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<sup>148</sup> Starn, *Hablan los ronderos*, 61.

<sup>149</sup> Starn, *Hablan los ronderos*, 62.



brother the day of the attack on his Church in Ccano. His mother and brother were in the Pentecostal Church that night, but he could not join them because he was assigned to patrol a neighboring village, Calicanto, with other *hermanos Ronderos*. In tears he expressed his anger on how the *Ronderos* guarding Ccano did not know of the arrival of the *Senderistas*. “The next day of the attack, around 10am I was told the *Senderistas* attacked Ccano. Then as I had no car, I ran as fast as possible to Ccano. When I got to Ccano, I saw my mother decapitated and my brother had a cut in the neck and another in the stomach.” The scene when he got to Ccano was unbelievable. He also saw two dead *Senderistas*. He continued,

“The *ronderos* did try to defend the village but could only kill two of them. After that scene, I decided I wanted to fight harder against *Sendero Luminoso* to revenge my mother and brother’s death. I wanted to lead the *Comités de Defensa Civil*, and I did. In Ccano, the *hermanos* were well organized, as Ccano is one of the first villages that rose against *Sendero Luminoso* forming the *Comités de Defensa Civil*. Consequently, Ccano was very hated by the *Senderistas*. It is very painful to remember, but it is necessary for other people to know what happened in Ccano. Many orphans do not have education, we have no economic resources, worse still we are forgotten by the government.”<sup>150</sup>

Del Pino also notes that Ccano was one of the first villages that rose up against *Sendero Luminoso*, organized as *Comités de Defensa Civil* with the help of the marines.<sup>151</sup> However, *Sendero Luminoso* did not accept that the Ccano village was

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<sup>150</sup> Maximo Maule Huacho, interview by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *50 minutes*, LUM Centro de Documentación e investigación, 2002.

<sup>151</sup> Del Pino, “Tiempos de Guerra y de dioses: Ronderos, evangélicos y senderistas en el Valle del Rio Apurímac,” 118.

against their ideology with the support of the marines and the religious concept to fight the enemy. Therefore Ccano peasants or *hermanos* became *Sendero Luminoso*'s enemy.

### 3.5.AN ENDLESS NIGHT

Claudia Huaraca states that, "During the late 1980's the marines camped in Ccano for a couple of years and trained the *hermanos* into the *Rondas*. Nonetheless, when the marines left to occupy and train other villages, the *senderistas* attempted multiple times to attack us, and the *Rondas* protected us from many of those attacks, until the *senderistas*' vengeance succeeded that night of February 23, 1991."<sup>152</sup> The actions of the *Senderistas* were taken as revenge on a village who did not follow their instructions. Below is a description of what happened that night in Ccano.

On a late Saturday afternoon, on February, 1991, around a hundred *hermanos* were gathered for a vigil in the Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Ccano. Around 9 at night as the *hermanos* were praying, they heard the burst of firearms. The *hermanos*, including women and children panicked as more shots were heard. Asunta Tambacc said, "My husband was leading the service, but because of the crowd I lost sight of him. I was desperate, and tried to reach out the door but there were *senderistas* shooting from right to left. I thought to myself, am I at a war or am I having a nightmare? Then a bullet reached my hand, I was bleeding heavily as I saw how the *senderistas* put gasoline on a rag at the end of a stick and set it on fire with the purpose to burn the church."<sup>153</sup> The roof

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Claudia Huaraca Ramos, Ccano (July 17, 2017).

<sup>153</sup> Asunta Tambacc, interview by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *50 minutes*, LUM Centro de Documentación e investigación, 2002.

of the rustic houses and the Pentecostal Church of Ccano were made out of straw, and were very flammable. Asunta threw herself on the floor pretending she was dead so she would not get shot again. As the children inside the church begged the *senderistas* to please not kill their moms and dads, the *senderistas* response was, “It is time to finish these miserable dogs, tell me, where are your Marines to defend you? Aren’t they your saviors, and where is your God to save you now?” It was very common for *Senderistas* to mock the people by asking “where is your God to save you now?” as they were killing *hermanos*. The *Senderistas* continued shooting the *hermanos*, male leaders of the church for the most part. Some *hermanos* tried jumping out of the window, unfortunately, some were caught and killed as well.<sup>154</sup>

“I was afraid, I could not say a word of fear. While my mother in law continued to pray, she was killed on her knees.”<sup>155</sup> Then the *senderistas* said, “We have killed all the dogs here, now let’s go house by house and kill the other dogs.”<sup>156</sup> Once the *senderistas* set the Church on fire, they ventured out to attack the village.

*Hermana* Claudia Huaraca Ramos, was only eight years old the night of the attack. She and her mother were inside their house, underneath their bed praying as they heard the *senderistas* trying to burn their house. Claudia said, “My mother and I were lucky our house was not set on fire when the *senderistas* tried to burn it. Luckily it started raining heavily, and the straw of our roof was too humid to be set on fire.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Asunta Tambacc, interview by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *50 minutes*, LUM Centro de Documentación e investigación, 2002.

<sup>155</sup> Asunta Tambacc, interview, 2002.

<sup>156</sup> Maximiliana Urbano, interview by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *50 minutes*, LUM Centro de Documentación e investigación, 2002.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Claudia Huaraca Ramos, Huanta (July 17, 2017).

When the *senderistas* left the church to attack the village, Asunta decided to look for her husband and children, even if that meant she would risk her life. “Huacho, where are you? I called, but he was not inside the church. Wishing he had escaped, hoping he would be alive to raise my children, I looked at all corners of the church and he was not there! Then my two little children grabbed me as I was still bleeding. We went out and climbed up a hill because there was nowhere to escape. There were corpses everywhere on the street. There were many wounded saying with tears in their eyes: Take me, my God, take me with you and take this pain away! It was raining, the *senderistas* were not leaving, they were still looking for survivors with flashlights.”<sup>158</sup>

Asunta and her children ran towards a hill, there they hid with some other survivors. When they thought the *senderistas* were gone, at about 3am, cars appeared with more *senderistas*. They robbed the houses and stole what little the peasants of Ccano had. There were a total of thirty *hermanos* killed inside the church, and four outside. Around 4:30 or 5am the *senderistas* finally left the village. Asunta said, “A *hermana* approached me and my children asking if we were hurt. I said, Yes! Then I asked, if she had seen my husband? The *hermana* said yes, that he was shot and burned and laying on the other side of the hill! I no longer had the strength to accept the death of my husband, then a neighbor told me my in laws and sister were killed too.”<sup>159</sup>

*Hermanas* Asunta and Maximilians’s experience, as told in the public hearing held on April 12, 2002 in Huanta, Ayacucho, serve as a way to recall what happened that night in Ccano. Their testimony provides further evidence of *Sendero Luminoso*’s tactics

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<sup>158</sup> Asunta Tambacc, interview, 2002.

<sup>159</sup> Asunta Tambacc, interview, 2002.

to eliminate peasants who would not join the party. Other testimonies such as those provided by Maximo Maule Huacho also document the order of actions of that night.

### 3.6.WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Not surprisingly, the Peruvian government took twenty-five years to finally exhume the bodies of the peasants of Ccano killed that night. In 2016, the government sent back the bodies in white coffins so the peasants could bury their dead. They were veiled in the school of Ccano, in the midst of hymns, tears and flowers. The 2016 Peruvian minister of Justice, Aldo Vasquez attended the ceremony and said, “On behalf of the Peruvian government, I apologize for what you have tolerated for so long, and I especially apologize to the families of the victims who lost their lives in the midst of such an atrocious and unacceptable conflict.”<sup>160</sup>

When the village was attacked, no one came to help, that’s why they had their dead piled up.”<sup>161</sup> Claudia Huaraca Ramos said, “We could not bury our dead because they were too many, so they were just put one on top of other in a pile. The *hermanos* dug holes and put them there. After much demand from us, the government finally listened to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and exhumed the corpses of Ccano for proper burial.

It is worrisome to see that the situation in the Andes in the 1970s that helped and became the breeding ground to the formation of *Sendero Luminoso* continues up to the

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<sup>160</sup> *Perú: Entregan osamentas de asesinados por Sendero Luminoso*, YouTube, 1:54, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5yFLmqle1M>

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Claudia Huaraca Ramos, Huanta (July 17, 2017).

present. During my visit to the Ccano village in the summer of 2017, I witnessed the poor conditions and isolation they still live in. In fact, there was a feeling of mistrust of outsiders in their village. During my interview with hermana Claudia Huaraca Ramos in her little *tiendita* (small store), an elderly lady came in to buy some items, and asked what were we talking about? Quechua-Spanish interpreter Pastor Samuel Montes explained and asked her in Quechua if she was in Ccano the night of the attack? Her eyes welled up, and tears came down her cheeks. She grabbed the items she bought from the store and quickly left without responding.

It was hard to perform oral interviews regarding the time of violence in the Ccano village. It took nearly five hours by car to get to Ccano from the capital of Ayacucho. After an hour and a half in the village, Pastor Montes told me that the peasants were asking what we were doing there.

Until this day peasants continue to see the arrival of strangers with suspicion. For example, when people in the community of Ccano heard that I was interested in the study of *Sendero*, the neighbors asked why I was taking pictures. I also saw how peasants were apprehensive with the arrival of Pastor Montes and myself, despite the fact that Pastor Montes is very well known in this area. He had previously campaigned for mayor, with his photograph widely shared, and also worked for many years in the municipality of Ayacucho and Huanta. As an outsider to Ccano, he was seen with tremendous suspicion reflecting back to the time their village was invaded by violence. I remember getting out of our rental car and seeing the peasants coming out of their houses clearly mistrustful of the strangers. Many pretended to be sweeping the dusty, unpaved streets outside of their front doors to validate their presence outside. This situation alarmed Pastor Montes, and

he decided we had to leave the village right away because of *Sendero Luminoso* presence in Ccano. I was not expecting this situation since this village was *against Sendero Luminoso* during the time of violence more than eighteen years ago. I personally witnessed the poverty and the dangers they continue to deal with. *Sendero Luminoso* is alive and is vigilant here years after the official end to the violence.

Recent newspapers' publications and denunciations of attacks on military men stationed in the VRAEM region suggest that *Sendero luminoso* presence in rural, isolated villages remains a concern that must be addressed. Nevertheless, the Peruvian government and elites of Peru are not paying attention because it doesn't directly affect them, as happened in the time of terror. In September 2017, after twenty-five years in jail, numerous *Senderistas* were freed. Many had been caught in 1992 alongside Abimael Guzmán and jailed. Today in 2018, we see the new *senderistas* slowly joining with activist organizations against the government's poor decisions and lack of support to the peasants most forgotten.<sup>162</sup>

### 3.7.CONCLUSION

Like the peasants of Callqui, those in Ccano had been ignored and left to fend for themselves by the Peruvian government during the time of terror. The Ccano peasants were for the most part Protestants. Many chose to fight with the *Ronderos*, using the religious concept that, as leader of *Sendero Luminoso*, Abimael Guzmán was the Antichrist himself. Action that the same Quechua peasants took in their aim for peace, the

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<sup>162</sup> *Terrorismo Online: seguidores de Abimael Guzmán difunden discurso terrorista*, YouTube, 19:08, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU-p9u91QVI>.

*Ronderos* are proof of peasant resistance in the VRAEM region. And in the case of Ccano, the Pentecostal Church of Ccano influenced in the decision making of these peasants to fight *Sendero Luminoso* in the name of God.

They believed that fighting against the Antichrist was not a sin, but a call from God. These peasants clung to their local Quechua church, the Pentecostal Church of Ccano.



## CONCLUSION

Dominant institutions of Peru, including the Catholic Church and the national government, remain silent on the topic of the marginalization of the country's Quechua communities. This silence was even more evident during the armed struggle as these institutions largely ignored the human rights violations perpetrated on the most vulnerable populations as happened in Callqui and Ccano. As Presbyterian Pastor Arana explained, these peasants were excluded by institutions including the big churches in the large cities that they considered their mother churches. Even though all of them belonged to CONEP, the rural churches for the most part, were ignored at the time they were most affected by the violence.

In "Entra la Iglesia", Historian Simon Strong suggests that the Protestants of the Andean regions of Peru have assumed a more determined social and political position emphasizing the pervasive violence suffered by the poor. At the end of 1989, the National Commission for Human Rights was established. Then in April 1990, the department of social services together with CONEP made a statement criticizing institutionalized exploitation, injustice and socioeconomic inequality.<sup>163</sup> The statement said: "The marginalization of indigenous populations, their cultures and their languages, and the social stratification are based on socioeconomic inequality in which power and privileges are concentrated in the few and where the poor are marginalized or exploited, consciously

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<sup>163</sup> Strong, *Shining Path*, 193.

or unconsciously."<sup>164</sup> However, as documented in Chapters Two and Three, criticizing the lack of support to the Quechua communities from government and institutions is not enough without action. The Quechua Protestant peasants of Callqui and Ccano were forced to take action on their own when they were being threatened by both *Sendero Luminoso* and the marines.

The Quechua Protestant churches of Callqui and Ccano had their own understanding of religion and each reacted differently to the violence. When the armed struggle started, the Protestant village of Callqui believed that God sent the marines to protect them from the *senderistas*, whose tactics were cruel and against their religious idea to love one another, do not kill or steal. For these religious reasons they remained neutral. However, they were unprepared for the brutality of the marines when they arrived to Huanta in 1982. In this case, the marines attacked the church without complete assurance that these Quechua Protestants were *senderistas*.

On the other hand, the Protestant village of Ccano believed that *Sendero Luminoso* was the Antichrist itself. With that religious concept, they decided to welcome the marines to their village and let the marines train and help them prepare to fight the *senderistas*. The Ccano peasants were organized in *Rondas Campesinas*, and for many years fought *Sendero Luminoso*. However, as we saw in Chapter Three, *senderistas* would not accept how this village disagreed with their ideas. Consequently, they took revenge and murdered thirty-one peasants who were gathered one night in the Pentecostal Church of Ccano.

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<sup>164</sup> Strong, *Shining Path*, 193.

The Quechua Protestant Churches of Callqui and Ccano were the only local institutions that remained strong and played an important role in the lives of the peasants during the violence. The term *hermano* (referring to a Protestant brother) was, and still is, a symbol of how the peasants of those communities identify themselves. Protestantism played an active role in their lives during the violence and continues to be a major component of community life today. Even though both communities were Protestant, they each had their own agency through their religious faith and took different strategies to deal with the brutality that encompassed them. Furthermore, these churches grew rapidly and became centers of refuge and consolation to the Quechua peasants in these villages.

This study contributes to the growing examination of Protestants in rural Ayacucho during the armed struggle. I was only able to explore two villages for this research because of time constraints and geographical challenges. However, it is clear that there are more villages to be explored with unique stories of how faith influenced decisions during the time of violence. In other Andean villages where Protestantism played an important role, *Sendero Luminoso* tried to portray Abimael as a revolutionary leader fighting for the poor as Jesus Christ had done. Even with a common faith, responses varied widely. For this reason, it is important to explore other religious concepts involved in the lives of Quechua

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