

# CEPAL

## Review

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# C E P A L

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## Introduction

# The political radicalization of working-class youth in Peru

*Julio Cotler\**

Over the past 25 years Peru has undergone a substantial change in its social structure which has stimulated the political radicalization of the working classes and of their young people in particular.

During the 1960s and up to the mid-1970s the urban working classes, whose numbers were boosted by internal migrations, enjoyed a degree of upward mobility accompanied by a much greater increase in their expectations of better jobs, incomes, education and political participation. However, the somewhat closed nature of the political regimes of the time blocked the political aspirations of these classes and provoked the first wave of radicalization.

The situation changed from the mid-1970s. On the one hand, the continued expansion of education fuelled expectations, and the content of education fostered radicalization even more. On the other hand, economic conditions deteriorated and the obstacles to full political participation remained in place. In these circumstances, which affect young people in particular, violent and inorganic confrontation becomes a normal feature of political conflicts.

The author argues that an examination of these phenomena, which have taken a particularly intense form in Peru, can also be very useful for other countries of the region whose political processes seem to be headed in the same direction.

It is commonly recognized that in the past 25 years Peru has undergone major changes in its social structure. In explanation or description of these changes, reference is usually made to the demographic transformation brought about by migration and urbanization, to alterations in the production and employment structure, which have strengthened capitalism and extended it to rural areas, and to the expansion of the education system and the mass communication media, which in conjunction with the earlier processes have contributed to a major shift in life styles and in the types and levels of social aspiration. To all this must be added the striking institutional reforms introduced by the former military régime which dismantled the anachronistic oligarchical system and led to a considerable expansion of the functions of the State and of its sphere of action.

It is less common, in this connection, to draw attention to the political and cultural changes in Peruvian society in this period and, in particular, to the change in the political identity of the urban working classes in general,<sup>1</sup> and of their young people in particular. There is varied and very clear evidence of the radicalization of the working classes and their young people. First, there are the results of the election of representatives to the Constituent Assembly in 1978, of the President and members of parliament in 1980, and of mayors in 1981 and 1983. On all these occasions the Leftist groupings, which were divided in the first three cases and united in the last, won the support of about a third of the electorate, an unusual event in Latin America.

Although the analyses of these elections are not conclusive, they do indicate a close correlation between the working-class vote, together with that of the inhabitants of the marginal urban districts ("young towns"), and

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<sup>1</sup>The working classes are defined in terms of their jobs; they thus include manual workers, non-professional independent workers, and white-collar workers without managerial power.

the vote of the Marxist groupings of the Left, especially in Lima, which contains a third of the total electorate. This correlation also seems to exist between the urban population and these political organizations in the southern mountains, the so-called "*mancha india*" (native patch) (Roncagliolo, 1980; Tuesta Soldevilla, 1983 and 1985).

The latest general elections, in April 1985, in which the APRA and its young candidate won an overwhelming victory, followed by the candidate of the Izquierda Unida, saw a massive shift to the APRA of the working-class, which had previously voted for the "traditional" parties. Some 80% of the electorate, therefore, supported nationalist, popular and democratic formulas proposing major changes in the country's social and political structure and aimed at the nationalization and democratization of society and politics. These results have reduced the representation of the ruling classes and created an unprecedented situation full of hopes and fears for the country's future development.

The second piece of evidence of the radicalization of the working classes is the apparent consolidation of the General Confederation of Workers of Peru, which, although indeed controlled by the Communist party, has also seen the development of "class" trade unionism in the working-class and public-employee strata. At the same time, the level of demands from the various associations in the working-class districts is fuelling the mobilization and radicalization of the urban working classes as a whole.

Lastly, the existence since 1980 of "Sendero Luminoso" and its apparent influence with some working-class sectors, despite the military coups and the political defeat inflicted by the massive turn-out of voters in April 1985, is the clearest evidence of the widespread radicalization and violence of Peruvian society.

In this shift towards radicalization of the political scene and political identity in Peru, which is redefining the working classes, working-class youth seems to have played a crucial role: it took a decisive part in the organization and control of this process from its

beginnings in the universities, trade unions and political parties, in the associations in the working-class districts and in Christian organizations and centres. This might explain, for example, the establishment in the Partido Aprista, after the crisis following the death of Haya de la Torre, of a new set of leaders who managed to reorganize this grouping and go over the heads of the old powers established by the historical leader. This new generation of leaders reformulated the party's policies and its relations with society and succeeded in creating a new image which produced the popular support and the decisive electoral triumph of April 1985.

Something similar happened in the Izquierda Unida, which had been established by former university students and working-class leaders trained in the vigorous popular mobilization against the military régime of the past decade.

Lastly, Sendero Luminoso was certainly influential among certain youth sectors and played an important role in the recruitment of women in these sectors.

The factors underlying the radicalization and the violence of working-class youth and its influence on the working classes, especially in the towns, are of more than academic interest: they affect the lives and human rights of all Peruvians. The purpose of the attempt to understand these factors, even only tentatively, is to find alternative formulas which can channel the participation of working-class youth and its radicalism towards a popular consensus to form the basis of development and democracy in Peru.

In turn, since the case of Peru seems to be an extreme one in the South American sphere, this tentative understanding ought to be able to make a useful contribution to the consideration of the present or potential problems of other countries in the region.

We will first discuss the demographic, educational and economic changes of the last two decades and their effects on the condition of youth, and then these changes will be related to the political and cultural experience of the working classes and young people during this period.

## I

## Youth and the demographic, educational and economic changes

The demographic changes resulting from migration and urbanization in the last two decades meant that young people —i.e., people aged 15 to 24, according to the common convention— increased from 18 to 20% of the population between the censuses of 1961 and 1981. In this same period the numbers of young people in the urban areas jumped from 51 to 70%, while the country's urban population increased from 47 to 65%. In addition, whereas in 1961 22% of all young people in Peru lived in Lima, a prime example of a metropolitan centre, that proportion had increased to 31% in 1981.

Accordingly, while in 1961 the great majority of urban youth was of provincial and rural origin, 20 years later the majority was made up of persons born in the towns: the first urban generation.

In other words, the young population not only increased as a relative proportion of the country's total population, but also showed a

considerable increase as a proportion of the urban population. Young people could thus take a more active part in the country's modernization and, accordingly, in the break-up of the traditional order.

This latter assertion is supported, for example, by the spectacular changes in the educational profile of the population of Peru during the last two decades. Firstly, there was a sharp increase in literacy among the population as a whole and especially among young people, both urban and rural. In both cases, the population aged 15 to 24 achieved higher levels of literacy than the whole of the urban or rural population. As is to be expected, the urban population has a greater proportion of literates than the rural. However, in general terms, the differences are not as marked as might be expected in view of the well-known backwardness of other public services in the Peruvian countryside (table 1).

Table 1

### PERU: ILITERACY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, BY URBAN AND RURAL AREA, 1961-1981 (Percentages)

Age group	Literate			Illiterate			Not specified			Total		
	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981
<b>National</b>												
15 - 24	71.8	85.9	92.8	28.2"	13.2	6.9	-	0.9	0.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
25 - 29	65.9	77.4	89.3	34.1"	21.7	10.4	-	-	0.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total population	58.6	67.0	78.4	41.4"	31.6	21.1	-	1.3	0.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Urban</b>												
15 - 24	89.1	95.6	97.6	10.9"	4.4	2.1	-	-	0.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
25 - 29	85.9	91.5	96.3	14.1"	8.5	3.4	-	-	0.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total population	79.8	82.6	88.5	20.2"	17.4	11.1	-	-	0.4	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Rural</b>												
15 - 24	53.5	68.9	81.3	46.5	31.1	18.1	-	-	0.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
25 - 29	46.1	54.5	71.5	53.9	45.5	27.9	-	-	0.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total population	38.9	45.5	58.5	61.1	54.5	40.6	-	-	0.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National censuses of 1961, 1972 and 1981.

"Includes persons who did not declare their state of literacy.

<sup>ic</sup>Total population aged 5 and over, except for 1961 when it is 6 and over.

Secondly, the change in the educational profile can be seen in the differing participation at the three educational levels. Here, the following points must be made:

a) There was a sharp decline in the numbers of people with no education at all, a decline associated with the increase in literacy.

b) The participation of the total population at the primary level increased as a result of the inclusion of the rural population in the education process. At the same time, there was a decline in the participation of the urban population at this level, especially in the case of young people, which now increased its representation at the secondary and higher levels (table 2).

It is very probable that, as was pointed out in another study (Alberti and Cotler, 1977), young people from rural origins migrate to the towns when they acquire a certain level of education no longer in keeping with the degree of economic and social development of their place of origin.

c) However, as can be seen from the data in tables 3 and 4, the participation of women in the education system is still lower than that of men, and there are far more urban than rural women involved. The disparity is even greater when the education level of urban young women is compared with the total female level and with the level of young women in the same age group in rural areas.

d) This educational development which, as has been seen, is a feature of the young population has contributed to the considerable expansion of university education. Whereas in 1960 there were 30 000 university students, 10 years later there were 109 000 and in 1982 the figure had grown to 305 000 (National Statistical Institute, 1983). Men made up 63% of this total.

In the majority of the countries of Latin America one in 10 young people were at university at the beginning of the present decade (ECLAC, 1983) but in Peru only 6.8% of young people were in higher education; however, in Metropolitan Lima the figure was 16.5%.

Urban and educational conditioning seems to have contributed to the great exposure of young people, especially in Metropolitan Lima and the country's larger towns, to the modern communication media, a situation which leads to

new aspirations and life styles and to new kinds of social and political behaviour based on growing expectations of social mobility and social change.

In employment terms, 50% of Peru's young people held waged jobs in 1972, as either manual or white-collar workers. This proportion declined in 1981, especially among the rural population (table 5), owing to the austerity policy pursued during that period.

In conjunction with the decline in waged work among the young population, there was an increase in the numbers of independent workers. This increase was found both in the towns and in the countryside, where independent work had always predominated because of the economic and social backwardness. The growth in own-account work among young people is especially relevant when it is remembered that, nationally and as a proportion of the total employed EAP, this category declined slightly between the two intercensal periods.

However, despite the relative decline in the proportion of waged young people in the EAP, their numbers in the categories of manual and white-collar workers remain higher than in the EAP as a whole. In fact, as can also be seen in table 5, in 1972 50.7% of employed young people had this kind of job, as against 44.4% of the total EAP; in 1981 the figures were 47.4 and 43.1 % respectively. It can thus be concluded that there is a higher proportion of waged workers among young people than in the total EAP.

For the same reason, and despite the increase in independent workers among young people, the proportion of these workers remains lower than in the total EAP, or in the urban or rural EAP.

Lastly, the proportion of unpaid family workers is higher among young people than in the total EAP. Although it is an established fact that these unpaid workers have an important role in producing the family income in the working classes, it must be pointed out that in rural areas more than a fifth of the total population work in the family setting, a phenomenon connected with the importance of independent workers in the countryside.

Important changes can be seen in the type of activity of young people in Lima, for in the last two decades their representation in the

Table 2

**PERU: YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 TO 24, BY EDUCATION LEVEL, 1961-1981***(Percentages)*

Education level	National						Urban						Rural					
	15 -24			Total national population"			15 -24			Total urban population"			15-24			Total rural population"		
	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981	1961	1972	1981
None	28.2	12.0	6.3	45.8	30.2	16.9	11.4	4.2	1.8	27.0	16.8	7.7	46.0	27.4	15.5	<b>63.0</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>32.6</b>
Preschool and primary	53.3	48.5	37.0	43.0	51.2	52.5	56.7	41.2	24.3	54.1	54.8	48.3	49.7	62.6	62.3	32.8	45.7	<b>55.9</b>
Secondary	15.5	34.3	46.8	7.8	14.8	23.1	27.6	47.3	59.7	14.8	22.6	32.1	2.7	9.0	18.6	1.3	2.8	6.7
University	1.0	3.7	5.5	0.9	2.5	4.5	1.8	5.4	7.8	1.9	4.0	6.6	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.1	<b>0.2</b>	0.3
Non-university higher	0.9	0.4	3.7	0.6	0.4	2.3	1.6	0.6	5.2	1.2	0.7	3.3	0.1	0.1	<b>0.4</b>	-	0.1	0.2
Not specified	1.1	1.1	0.7	1.9	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.1	2.0	1.4	0.6	2.7	2.8	0.5	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* National censuses of 1961, 1972 and 1981.

"Aged 5 and over, except for 1961 when it is 4 and over.

Table 3

**PERU: URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION, BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX, 1981***(Percentages)*

Education level	Total urban population		Total rural population		Total national population"	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
None	5.2	10.1	22.6	42.5	11.1	21.9
Preprimary	47.1	49.5	64.5	47.1	53.0	46.5
Secondary	34.5	29.6	9.1	4.2	25.8	22.0
Non-university higher	3.4	3.3	0.3	0.2	2.3	2.4
University	8.3	4.9	0.4	0.2	5.6	3.5
Not specified	1.4	2.5	2.8	5.5	1.9	3.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Absolute numbers (thousands)	4 790	4 864	2 469	2 445	7 008	7 260

Source: INE, national census. Unpublished tabulations.

"Population aged 5 and over.

Includes normal basic and work.

Table 4

**PERU: YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 TO 24, BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, 1981***(Percentages)*

	Population			Urban			Rural		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
None	2.9	8.6	6.3	1.0	2.5	1.8	7.5	23.7	15.5
Preprimary	34.0	37.0	37.0	20.8	27.6	24.3	65.3	59.3	62.3
Secondary	51.7	43.5	46.8	63.5	56.3	59.7	24.4	12.6	18.6
Non-university higher	3.4	4.0	5.5	4.8	5.6	7.8	0.4	0.4	0.5
University	6.4	4.8	3.7	8.7	6.7	5.2	0.5	0.5	0.4
Not specified	1.4	1.9	0.7	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.7	1.7	2.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Absolute numbers (thousands)	1 722	1 743	3 466	1 205	1 239	2 444	516	504.2	1 020

Source: INE, 1981 census. Unpublished tabulations,

Table 5

PERU: YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 TO 24, BY JOB CATEGORY IN URBAN  
AND RURAL AREAS, 1972-1981

(Percentages)

Job category	1972						1981					
	Young people			EAP <sup>"</sup>			Young people			EAP <sup>a</sup>		
	Na- tional	Urban	Rural	Na- tional	Urban	Rural	" tional	Urban	Rural	Na- tional	Urban	Rural
Manual	29.0	31.2	25.4	24.4	27.9	19.2	26.8	30.3	20.1	22.4	26.3	15.3
White-collar	21.7	31.8	4.6	20.0	30.7	3.7	20.6	30.0	3.0	20.7	30.6	2.4
Independent	27.5	17.8	43.8	42.6	30.2	61.6	32.2	22.9	49.7	41.9	31.0	62.1
Employer	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.3	1.1	1.4	0.5
Unpaid family member	10.3	3.0	22.5	6.2	1.9	12.6	8.9	2.1	21.7	6.3	1.6	15.2
Household worker	8.2	12.3	1.3	4.4	6.8	0.8	6.5	9.2	1.4	3.7	5.2	1.0
Not specified	3.0	3.6	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.3	4.5	4.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National censuses of 1961 and 1981.

<sup>"</sup>Total employed economically active population aged 6 and over.

economically active population has declined considerably. Whereas in 1961 54 out of every 100 young people were in the employed EAP, 20 years later the ratio had declined to 35 in every 100, a reduction of 18.6%. This change was much more marked than the change in the total EAP (aged over six) which fell from 44.4 to 39.1%, a decline of 5.7%. This situation is no doubt due to the fact that the expansion of education among young people has helped to delay their assumption of productive activity.

In accordance with the pattern observed earlier in youth employment at the national level» the majority of the young people living in Lima are waged (manual, white-collar and household), workers while only 10% are independent workers (table 6).

However, the young people of Lima have higher rates of total unemployment and underemployment than the EAP as a whole. Thus, half of the young people are underemployed, the majority of them with low incomes, in contrast to the situation in the total EAP (table 7).

Where incomes are concerned, the young people in the EAP are found mostly at the lowest

Table 6

METROPOLITAN UMA: YOUNG PEOPLE  
AGED 15 TO 24, BY JOB CATEGORIES, 1984

(Percentages)

	Young people	Working- EAP	Per- centage of young people in job category
White-collar	28.2	30.68	27.5
Manual	25.9	25.82	30.0
Independent	10.1	26.33	11.5
Householder worker	19.1	9.64	59.0
Unpaid family member	8.7	4.53	57.7
Trainee	8.0	3.00	79.6
Total	100.0	100.00	29.9

Source: Ministry of Labour, 1984 household survey.  
Unpublished tabulations.

Table 7

METROPOLITAN LIMA: EMPLOYMENT  
LEVELS OF THE 15 - 24 EAP, 1982  
(Percentages)

	15 - 24	Total EAP
Total unemployment	14.1	6.6
Underemployment	49.3	28.0
In income	47.2	24.0
In time	2.1	4.0
Adequate employment	36.6	65.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Labour, 1982 household survey.

levels. In 1984 in Metropolitan Lima almost half of the young people had incomes below or roughly equal to the legal minimum wage, but this was the case for only 34% of the total of Lima's working classes (table 8). However, the young migrants had lower incomes than the Lima-born residents; almost 60% of them earned less than the minimum wage or similar amounts, as against 40% of the young people born in the city (table 9).

To sum up, although youth has the highest education levels in the population, especially in

Table 8

METROPOLITAN LIMA: INCOMES, 1984  
(Percentages)

Incomes	Young people 15 - 24	Working- class EAP
None	22.5	13.0
Below minimum"	40.1	26.7
About minimum	9.1	7.7
Above minimum	14.3	16.5
Over 350 000 soles	13.9	36.1
Total	100.0	100.0
Absolute numbers	480.1	1 363.1

Source: Ministry of Labour, 1984 household survey.  
Unpublished tabulations.

"Minimum wage at the time of the survey: 195 000 soles.

Metropolitan Lima, the young people of both sexes belonging to the urban working classes earn the lowest incomes, despite working the longest hours in the most difficult conditions. This means that young people of both sexes are the most numerous group in the lowest income strata of the working classes of Lima (Galín, Carrion and Castillo, 1984).

Table 9

METROPOLITAN LIMA: INCOMES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 15 TO 24,  
BY MIGRANT STATUS, 1984  
(Percentages)

	Young people				Working-class EAP			
	Lima-born	Coast	Mountain	Jungle	Lima-born	Coast	Mountain	Jungle
Without income	24.5	19.4	21.0	15.4	15.8	10.3	11.5	10.1
Below minimum"	31.9	53.0	50.7	46.8	23.0	25.2	30.7	33.9
About minimum	9.6	5.8	9.6	9.6	7.8	5.7	8.3	9.5
Above minimum	17.7	8.0	6.8	22.0	16.8	15.2	17.1	15.6
Over 350 000 soles	16.3	13.8	9.6	6.2	36.6	43.6	32.4	30.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Labour, 1984 household survey. Unpublished tabulations.

"Minimum wage at the time of the survey: 195 000 soles.

## II

## The political and cultural experience of the working classes and young people

These contradictory and conflicting characteristics of young people are not exclusive to Peru and seem to represent a universal Latin American experience (ECLAC, 1983; PREALC, 1980). However, working-class youth seems to play a very decisive role in the political development of the working classes and society as a whole.

This first generation with urban and educational experience has a high rate of participation in the various organizational forms which have grown up with the changes in the social structure since the "Velasco" period. Through this participation young people would have been able to gain a sense of integration as a generation group and a social class capable of overcoming the ethnic and social fragmentation of earlier generations, and this would have represented a significant advance in national integration. Through this participation in various bodies and organizations, working-class youth has instead developed radicalized and violent activities which are decisive in determining the social and political attitudes and behaviour of the urban working classes.

During the 1950s and 1960s, a large body of working-class young people in Lima, native-born and migrants, set up households, built their homes, established the "marginal" districts in which they lived, changing the city's existing pattern in the process, and obtained paid work in the new production structure which was developing. Then, as time passed, a sector of them joined the so-called "informal" market, as a result of the low wages paid elsewhere, the savings made by the domestic unit and also their aspiration for social mobility (Gonzales, 1984; Verdera, 1985; Herrera, 1985).

This move gave the embryonic working classes a feeling of security and competence in their efforts to continue improving their living standards, seeing their children as the ones who would achieve the longed-for social mobility. As they followed this course of action, however,

these classes, and especially the Andean migrants, encountered much difficulty, deceit, contempt and violence, mostly on the part of employers and government agents (Degregori, Blondet and Lynch, 1984).

In response to these traumatic experiences, the new urban working classes took up anew the anti-oligarchic struggle started by Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui. They learned to organize themselves in defence of their homes and their districts, their incomes and jobs, and their education and health. Moreover, the young migrants from the mountains, whose socio-cultural universe had been thrown out of joint, also had to learn to organize themselves in ethnic and regional terms, in order to be able to adapt to and master the new city conditions, defending, strengthening and renewing their ethnic identity and resuming the "*mancha india*" tradition of peasant resistance (Golte and Adams, 1984).

This organizational apprenticeship marked an important advance in the identification of individual and family interests with the collective interest, and it influenced the development of the self-identity of these working classes through opposition to those who rejected them. This social innovation marked out the course, in a decisive manner, of the future political development of these classes and thus of the country as well.

Accordingly, when these mobilized sectors, most of them recent arrivals in urban and national life, sought to persuade the State to recognize their civil rights and thus to allocate them their fair share of resources and social opportunities, the response was violent rejection, humiliation and daily insult. This strengthened the perception that "master Government" was not only remote and alien to them, but also the enemy of the popular classes and that it existed only to represent and protect the powerful. For this same reason, daily experience seemed to suggest to them, quite

apart from the community tradition, that the power of the State could be fought only through the determined organization of working-class resistance, and they were strengthened in their conviction that only through confrontation could they achieve their goals; this was the source of the "class" outlook which their organizations acquired.

Against this background, "democracy" was seen as nothing more than a fiction, a formality, which served only those with access to "power". The exclusion of working-class interests from representation in the State was a denial of political pluralism. In addition, it impeded the establishment of legitimate institutional mechanisms in which different social actors and political bodies could reach compromises leading to the redistribution of resources and opportunities and fostering the national integration of social classes (Cotler, 1981).

However, against this background, fraught with hostility and confrontation, in which the popular political culture was marked by violence and the rapid break-up of the traditional mechanisms of patron-client rule, the working-class sectors did manage to win ground during the 1960s. The political parties had to include some of the working-class claims in legislation and they passed measures of assistance to ensure the continued dependence of the working classes. Education, employment and public services were expanded, in some cases considerably, and this bolstered the organized demands of these classes. For example, the movements centered on the demand for "structural changes" to democratize and nationalize society, politics and culture, became the axis of the social and political struggle of the working classes.

It was in these circumstances that the armed-forces Government made its revolution, designed to respond to the popular demands and to usher in the country's economic and social modernization. While on the one hand the Government brought about a dramatic expansion of the social participation of the working classes (recognition of trade unions, establishment of work communes, educational reform, etc.), on the other hand, owing to its military outlook, the Government denied the possibility of political participation to the

supposed beneficiaries and presumed objects of its reforms (Cotler, 1985). It was around this dichotomy —fed by radical talk on the part of the Government intellectuals— that a rapid and increasing radicalization of working-class organizations developed, especially in the towns, sealing the birth and destiny of General Velasco's revolution.

Young people played a decisive role in this organizational and political development of the urban working classes, for it had a particularly acute awareness of the situation, and for two reasons. Firstly, the expansion of the education system to the youth sectors was accompanied by radicalization, in the anti-oligarchic tradition, of the content of education and of the teaching staff. Secondly, a young working class had been formed which had a higher level of education than the older generations and was concentrated in the most dynamic industries and remote from the old "Aprista" trade-union tradition. Both youth groups, student and worker, promoted and directed intense and relatively successful popular movements.

The decision by the leader of the APRA to keep his party off the political scene, and by the Communist Party to give its "critical support" to the military Government created favourable conditions for the radical preaching and other activities of the many Leftist groups —led by young students, professionals and workers, many of them the children of migrants— to take root in key sectors of society and production, creating the "class" current in the trade unions, in the popular organizations in the working-class districts, and in the student and peasant federations which were independent of the Government.

It was against this background that General Velasco opted for an economic policy of distribution and foreign debt. This policy marked the beginning of the economic crisis and it failed to control the new radicalized currents in society. His successor confronted the crisis and the new social dynamics by blocking the existing forms of participation, many of them developed in the previous period, and thus provoked even more discontent and opposition. The lack of institutional mechanisms for political negotiation was exacerbated by the growing deterioration in living standards which

heightened social and political tensions. This, in fact, was the reason for the success of the national strikes in 1977 and 1978 which were a milestone in the country's modern history and consolidated the political radicalism of youth and of the working classes in general.

It can thus be said that from the 1960s arose the first wave of youth radicalization, which was associated with the social changes initiated in that decade and was then catalyzed by the political block of the 1970s. The mid-1970s saw the emergence of a second wave of youth radicalization—superimposed on the first one—when the paths of occupational and income mobility were being closed off, together with those of social organization, and at a time when an unprecedented openness was gaining ground in politics.

Although the first radical wave seems to have been characterized by a high level of institutional participation, on the part of working-class youth and by the rationality of the demands and the chosen means of action, the second, in contrast, blocked economically and socially, seems to combine inorganic and violent forms of expression—individual and collective—with marked electoral preferences for the *Izquierda Unida* and the *APRA*.

The opening-up of politics and the restoration of the representative system in 1980 helped to some extent to calm the belligerent spirits in society and politics, a fact which the Leftists were slow to understand. Belaunde's overwhelming victory was part of this process, for he displayed a pluralist image, unlike his rivals: society saw in him the political institutionalization of collective negotiation in which there would be a legitimate place for working-class representatives and their demands for improved living conditions and social mobility. The democratic promise of the 1980s thus seemed to initiate the coming-together of the State and the working classes.

However, the Government took a different line from the outset: on the one hand, it brought in the policy of economic austerity recommended by the *IMF* and, on the other, it sought a "social pact" to establish consensus as a standard political practice. Nevertheless, the contradictions produced by these policies limited the possibilities of the "Tripartita". For as the

crisis worsened, earnings declined; at the same time, job losses multiplied and wages fell, while casual work and subcontracting increased, as did own-account activities.

On the other hand, the supply of university places did not grow in step with the demand, and the education and production structures also contributed to the tightness of the jobs market, which was unable to absorb the young people emerging from colleges and universities. This led to a general feeling of frustration and rejection of the social order and its State guarantor.

In addition, the Government became increasingly resistant to the wishes of public opinion and to the establishment of machinery for negotiation and agreement which might have produced consensus formulas.

Thus, a State ill-disposed towards the working classes, and youth sectors which had little but aspired to much created a situation in which none of these actors was in a position to view its interests in collective terms. The "other side" seemed to be not a rival but an enemy; negotiation was synonymous with surrender, betrayal and defeat. In other words, political relations were seen in military terms, as a continuation of or substitute for war.

In these circumstances, paradoxically, trade unionism declined (Balbi and Parodi, 1984; Parodi, 1985), partly as a result of its failure to become more representative of the casual workers, mainly young people, and it remained a body for protection of workers with regular jobs, particularly in big companies. This held back the numbers of young people from the working classes joining trade unions and reduced the unions' capacity to act as a rallying point for this social group.

The lack of youth participation in the organized levels of the economy and society has coincided with the failure of the political parties to devise structures capable of providing training, from the organizational and ideological standpoint, for the working classes in general and their young people in particular. Thus, the weakness and inefficiency of the machinery for negotiation of the increasing popular and youth demands, with respect to society, politics and the State, open the way to options of political and individual violence. Political violence seems still

to stem from the anti-oligarchic tradition which supposes that force is the only means of wresting from the State the concession of civil rights.

The radicalization of the urban working classes and the decisive role of young people can be seen at the lower levels of the Izquierda Unida and the APRA, which go much further than the stated positions of their leaders. This situation has also seen the rise of Sendero Luminoso. The steady decline in the living standards of the working classes and the manifest ineffectiveness of the political system and its parties and of "class" trade unionism have been matched by the growth of Sendero Luminoso and of its importance on the political scene. This movement has become a focus of attention and a magnet for the urban working classes and, in particular, the youth sectors, including those active in the Izquierda Unida and the APRA.

Accordingly, whereas the first wave of youth radicalization seems to have led primarily to the radicalization of the working classes as a whole, the second wave, because of its inorganic nature, has remained relatively separate from the rest of the working classes and would appear

to incline towards Sendero Luminoso. This body, by denying the political régime any validity and committing acts of unprecedented savagery, seems to express a feeling held by large sections of working class youth, who see violence as the only solution to the obstinacy of a political régime dominated by "the old". This trend may be an indication of fresh political swings in the future and of a series of changes of political identity among young people.

It may therefore be concluded that the substantial decline in living standards and the denial of any prospect of mobility, added to the unwillingness of the political system to build institutions capable of producing consensus on the distribution of resources and social opportunities for the working classes and their young people, have accentuated social perceptions and attitudes of enmity confrontation and harassment which lead to individual and collective violence. This situation explains the attraction of any ideology which justifies the inevitability of this kind of behaviour.

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