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Demolishing Legitimacy: Bogotá's Urban Reforms for the 1948 Pan-American Conference

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Abstract. Traditional accounts of the 1948 *Bogotazo* – the riot in Bogotá, Colombia, sparked by the assassination of populist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán – have overlooked the urban context that explains the extent of the destruction. Preparing to host the 1948 IX Pan-American Conference, Bogotá had undergone aggressive urban reforms that financially burdened and dispossessed residents. More than just a political figure, Gaitán was recognised as an urban advocate for the marginalised. They responded to his death by destroying reform projects and symbols of political authority. Informed by architectural journals, legislation and periodicals, this article shows that Bogotá's elite and dispossessed alike inscribed their political projects onto the urban landscape.

Keywords: Bogotá, *Bogotazo*, Colombia, Gaitán, Pan-American Conference, urban history

Violence erupted across central Bogotá, Colombia, on Friday, 9 April 1948. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the charismatic lawyer and populist leader in whom the working classes had placed their hope for the next presidential election, had been shot. A crowd gathered outside the hospital. Hearing Gaitán pronounced dead, the group marched towards the Presidential Palace to demand an explanation. Tension mounted at the palace gates and the Presidential Guard reacted by shooting at the crowd. Bodies fell across the plaza. Those still alive began to riot and hundreds joined them in the streets over the following hours. Throughout the city centre, furious residents threw stones, knocked over trams, looted stores, and set buildings ablaze. In the middle of it all, on the first floor of Colombia's Capitol building, a

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group of foreigners looked on in horror and wonder. These were the delegates participating in the IX Pan-American Conference. That afternoon, they watched enraged citizens tear apart a city that had appeared so charming just days before.

This article provides a new perspective on the 9 April riot by factoring in tensions caused by urban reforms. In preparation for the Pan-American Conference, Bogotá had been swept up in a frenzy of urban renewal projects. These included landscaping, construction projects, renovations, and street improvements. Elites viewed the conference as an unprecedented opportunity to unveil a modern Colombia, attractive to foreign investors and capable of coordinating political cooperation among the American nations. Political and economic leaders spared little expense to make Bogotá shine, but forced the city's working and middle classes to foot the bill. To pay for the reforms, the city issued bonds, raised housing taxes and levied special assessment taxes. Residents of working-class neighbourhoods in the city centre had to pay the additional price of physical displacement as a result of extensive demolition. Aggressive and invasive, the reforms made residents believe government leaders had thrown away policies of compromise, reciprocity and respect for private property. To be clear, the riot in the wake of Gaitán's assassination arose as a culmination of multiple sources of political tension. But the pre-existing aggravated urban condition provided impetus to the destruction on 9 April.

Histories of Bogotá's urban development and the April riot have, until now, been treated separately. Architects and urbanists based in Bogotá's universities have produced most of the city's urban history.[1] This is quality scholarship, but tends to isolate urban reforms from their social and political consequences. This article bridges that gap and then fills the lacuna on the Pan-American projects, allowing scholars to understand the extent of the capital city's urban development in the 1940s.

[1] Juan Carlos de Castillo Daza, *Bogotá años 50: el inicio de la metrópoli* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia Sede Bogotá, 1952); Juan Carlos de Castillo Daza, *Bogotá: el tránsito a la ciudad moderna, 1920–1950* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2003); Fernando Arias Lemos, *Le Corbusier en Bogotá: el proyecto del 'grand immeuble', 1950–1951* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia Sede Bogotá, 2008). Other relevant works on Bogotá's urban history include Carlos Niño Murcia, *Arquitectura y estado: contexto y significado de las construcciones del Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Colombia, 1905–1960* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2003); Carlos Niño Murcia, *La carrera de la modernidad. Construcción de la carrera décima, Bogotá (1945–1960)* (Colombia: Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, 2010); Germán Rodrigo Mejía Pavony, *Los años del cambio: historia urbana de Bogotá, 1820–1910* (Bogotá: Centro Editorial Javeriano, 1998); Carlos Eduardo Hernández Rodríguez, *Las ideas modernas del plan para Bogotá en 1950: el trabajo de Le Corbusier, Wiener y Sert* (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, Instituto Distrital de Cultura y Turismo, 2004).

A broader group has penned works on the *Bogotazo*, the name attached to the April riot in the capital city. Journalists, novelists and politicians published memoirs in the wake of the event. These early texts, often lacking scholarly rigour, were constructed with partisan arguments blaming the riot on communism or the political party in opposition.[2] Since then, historians such as Arturo Alape, Herbert Braun and Jacques Aprile-Gniset have extended and deepened scholarship on the riot. Alape's compilation of interviews demonstrated the emotional and organisational bonds between Gaitán and his followers, providing the Liberal leader unwavering support in life and death. Braun's insightful work demonstrated that Gaitán changed Colombian politics by inviting non-elites to be active participants in more than just presidential elections. Members of the working class entered politics through protests and grass-roots organisations. Finally, Aprile-Gniset argued that the destruction of trams during the 9 April riot was not only a result of public anger but also of bus company employees lending a hand in the destruction to weaken their competitor.[3] Aprile-Gniset rightfully indicated that explanations of the riot focused on emotional and partisan reactions to the loss of Gaitán are not incorrect, just incomplete.[4] The riot of 9 April saw such high levels of destruction and popular participation because the recent urban reforms had convinced a large sector of the population that their leaders were abusing their political power.

Charles Tilly's model of collective violence serves as a useful reminder that, while a riot may appear spontaneous, it is contingent on the presence of an

[2] Among these were Luis Vidales, *Insurrección desplomada (el 9 de abril, su teoria, su praxis)* (Bogotá: Editorial Iquelma, 1948); Joaquín Estrada Monsalve, *El 9 de abril en palacio: horario de un golpe de estado* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 18 April 1948); Mariano Ospina Pérez, *La oposición y el gobierno: del 9 de abril de 1948 al 9 de abril de 1950. Dos documentos políticos: memorial de algunos ciudadanos liberales y respuesta del Excelentísimo señor Presidente, doctor Mariano Ospina Pérez* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1950); Rafael Azula Barrera, *De la revolución al orden nuevo: proceso y drama de un pueblo* (Bogotá: Editorial Kelly, 1956); Julio Enrique Santos Forero, *'Yo sí vi huir al verdadero asesino de Jorge Eliécer Gaitán', relato de un testigo presencial* (Bogotá: Gráficas Atenas, 1959).

[3] Arturo Alape, *El Bogotazo: memorias del olvido* (Bogotá: Círculo de Lectores, 1985); Jacques Aprile-Gniset, *El impacto del 9 de abril sobre el centro de Bogotá* (Bogotá: Centro Gaitán, 1983); Herbert Braun, *Assassination of Gaitán: Public Life and Urban Violence in Colombia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Also see Víctor Diusabá Rojas, *9 de abril: la voz del pueblo* (Bogotá: Planeta Colombiana Editorial, 1998).

[4] On partisan tensions and *La violencia*, see David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia, a Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); James Henderson, *Modernization in Colombia: The Laureano Gómez Years, 1889–1965* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001); Paul Oquist, *Violence, Conflict, and Politics in Colombia* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); Daniel Pecaut, *Orden y violencia: Colombia 1930–1954, vol II* (Mexico DF: Siglo XXI editores, 1987); Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire*: La Violencia *in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946–1953* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); G. Gonzalo Sánchez, *Los días de la revolución: gaitanismo y 9 de abril en provincia* (Bogotá: Centro Cultural Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, 1983).

aggrieved community that feels it lacks the political voice necessary for redress.[5] The key elements of the model (tension, polarisation and opportunism) are highlighted throughout this article. Tension arises when a number of people in a city feel wronged. While such a sentiment is admittedly commonplace in urban life, the issue becomes serious when the offending party refuses to accommodate in the face of local protest. Polarisation occurs first as previously uninvolved individuals are brought into the conflict and, second, when lines are drawn so that a community can isolate who is to blame. Finally, if the tense atmosphere is exposed to a violent stimulus, such as an assassination, individuals are likely to lose inhibitions. When subsequent signals suggest that typically-risky behaviours can be performed with impunity, a riot breaks out. Tilly classifies an urban riot as a form of opportunism to the extent that it arises unexpectedly, lacks central planning and features individuals pursuing their own interests. While such collective opportunism is not totally organised, this does not mean a riot is any less political. Reacting violently to years of perceived wrongs, participants view their actions as a public statement.[6]

In Bogotá, government leaders backing the reform project economically burdened and physically displaced residents, ratcheting up tension throughout the community. As residents increasingly felt the weight of the reforms, Gaitán stepped into the volatile mixture. He polarised politics not only through staging massive protests but also by denouncing the bipartisan group that orchestrated the Pan-American building project. In the wake of Gaitán's assassination, residents released their harboured hostility. The chaotic aspects of the riot that ensued did not detract from its political significance. Many participants tried to make their political statement clear by targeting buildings renovated for the conference.

Planning

In August of 1945, journalist and statesman Alberto Lleras Camargo found himself in a stressful situation: he had just been handed the presidency. The previous president, Liberal and reform-minded Alfonso López Pumarejo, had resigned after seeing his personal and professional life destroyed by the party politics of 1940s Colombia. Hard-line Conservative Party leader Laureano Gómez had waged a defamation campaign against López in the courts and newspapers. In 1944, military leaders had imprisoned the president and unsuccessfully pushed for a coup. Even the moderate members of the Liberal Party had refused to support the president's platform.[7]

[5] Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[6] Tilly, *Politics*, p. 132, pp. 144–5.
[7] Henderson, *Modernization;* John D. Martz, *Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), chap. 3.

Stepping into office as interim head of state, Lleras Camargo knew he could meet the same end, and the country would experience further violence, if he did not find a way to limit the hatred between parties. In the previous administration, Camargo had alternated between serving as a government minister and ambassador to the United States. As a minister, the interim president faced the possibility of inheriting his predecessor's enemies, yet his ambassadorship provided him credibility in international affairs. Lleras Camargo knew that the moderate wings of both Liberal and Conservative parties had periodically succeeded in setting aside ideological differences in the name of national economic development. So the president set out to rally both parties behind the upcoming Pan-American Conference to be hosted in Bogotá. The conference, he hoped, could promote national unification and international cooperation.

Furthermore, since so many hate campaigns had been waged through partisan newspapers, Lleras Camargo asked the very newspaper directors to take centre stage in preparing for the conference. The leaders accepted. In February 1946, the papers announced that Laureano Gómez himself would lead the Preparation Commission.[8] His paper, *El Siglo*, would provide positive coverage of the reforms occurring over the next two years. Roberto García-Peña, director of the Liberal organ *El Tiempo*, also accepted the invitation to serve as a member of the committee. To further boost the Pan-American Conference, Lleras Camargo himself, upon finishing his stint as president in August 1946, founded a Liberal weekly called *Semana* that covered the conference preparations. In a single year of leadership, Lleras Camargo not only survived, but set in motion two interrelated processes: the Pan-American urban reforms and a new political alliance that would soon be called the National Union. In time, local anger at the reform projects would turn into distrust of the initially-acclaimed alliance of parties. But Bogotá's leaders would be too focused on conference preparations to take notice.

In early 1946, Gómez and the rest of the Preparation Commission established a planning department to oversee the urban reforms connected to the conference.[9] They chose modernist architect Manuel de Vengoechea as the department leader and provided him with a staff of engineers, surveyors and landscapers. Vengoechea was assured full government cooperation.[10] The Planning Department enjoyed support from a growing group of enthusiasts that had been pushing for development since the early 1930s. This group, arguably Bogotá's urban reform bloc, was composed of members of Bogotá's economic elite, political leaders, employees in the Ministry of Public Works, and academics and students from the Faculty of Architecture at the National

[8] *El Tiempo*, 6 Feb. 1946, p. 1.
[9] *Semana,* 14 June 1947; *El Tiempo*, 24 March 1948, p. 10.
[10] *Semana*, 14 June 1947.

University of Colombia. The bloc frequently turned to foreign urbanists for advice. Among these, Karl Brunner and Charles Édouard 'Le Corbusier' Jeanneret had a strong influence on the city and its architects. The planning principles of these two urbanists were central to the design of each of the Pan-American Conference projects.

Brunner had moved to Bogotá in December 1933, hired to head the city's nascent Department of Urbanism. The Austrian urbanist focused on cultivating an experience and space distinctive to the city of Bogotá. He was happy to borrow ideas from other cities, but only as long as they would not interfere with Colombian history and tradition. As a professor in the National University's Faculty of Architecture, Brunner shared his ideas in the classroom and in local publications.[11] He also planned entire neighbourhoods and added dozens of green spaces to the city.[12] Brunner's work for the department culminated in a project for Bogotá's 1938 Quadricentennial, which was itself in turn instrumental in securing the city's bid to host the IX Pan-American Conference.

Brunner's work anticipated the urban practices of 'placemaking' and 'architectural phenomenology' that would not arise until decades later. Placemaking takes local practices into account to create spaces conducive to social gathering. Brunner pushed for this, for example, in advocating for a renovated marketplace that attracted customers through traditional design and location. Then, just as phenomenological architects would later invite the viewer to reflect and make memories, so too Brunner inaugurated structures on historic days, prompting visitors to consider the city's history as they walked by. By designing parks including the Bosque Izquierdo (Left Woodland) – with its meandering walkways and romantic groves – Brunner anticipated phenomenological architects' tendency to prioritise experience over practicality.[13]

The conference planners in the following decade strove to emulate their Austrian teacher. With regards to renovations, the Planning Department selected buildings of symbolic import. They restored the Capitol, which symbolised legitimate authority; the Colón Theatre, representative of high culture in Bogotá; and the San Carlos Palace, a reminder of national patrimony.[14] Even the city's historic jail, an actual panopticon and symbol of civilisation,

[11] Karl Brunner, 'La ciudad satelite de Bogotá', *Ingenieria y arquitectura*, 5: 50 (1943), pp. 22–30; Karl Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo*, 2 vols. (Bogotá: Imprenta Municipal, 1939–40).

[12] Castillo Daza, *Bogotá: el tránsito*; Germán Palacios Castañeda, 'La urbe modernizada: elementos para un historia ambiental de Bogotá, 1920–1980', in Germán Palacio Castañeda (ed.), *Historia ambiental de Bogotá y la Sabana, 1850–2005* (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones, 2008).

[13] Brunner's projects for the 1938 IV Centenary serve as an example. Castillo Daza, *Bogotá: el tránsito*.

[14] *Semana*, 14 June 1947; *El Tiempo*, 24 March 1948, p. 10.

was converted into a network of museums displaying the nation's history and cultural achievements. Department leaders then selected and landscaped spaces to create memorable experiences. They chose meeting rooms located next to winding paths and lookout points. Nearby streets were lined with trees and flowers. The department even placed artwork and monuments throughout the city to provide delegates with cultural encounters. The debt to Brunner was especially present in the Planning Department's crowning glory, the *Avenida de las Américas* (Avenue of the Americas). Brunner had long recommended a parkway in Bogotá, which he believed to be important for tourism and to showcase the city's natural surroundings.[15] The department responded to Brunner and, in doing so, shared with delegates a powerful narrative of Colombia's patrimony and embrace of modernity.

At first glance, the implementation of Brunner's principles may seem odd given that his work was criticised in the 1940s. The challenge came from a younger generation of architects driven by class concerns. These architects lambasted Brunner's work as 'feudal urbanism' that kept the masses in substandard housing.[16] These criticisms stemmed from Brunner's tendency to create homes and neighbourhoods for members of Bogotá's elite.[17] Younger urbanists looked instead to Le Corbusier, an urbanist based in France with an enormous influence on the modernist architectural movement. Le Corbusier's popularity in South America increased in the late 1920s and 1930s after he toured and drafted plans for metropolitan centres such as Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.[18]

Le Corbusier believed cleanliness and order cultivated moral values in the citizenry. Bogotá's modernist planners repeated this line of thought, proclaiming that dirty neighbourhoods and markets threatened the city. Since hygiene, according to the theory, correlated with moral and political order, unhygienic areas ought to be bulldozed. Le Corbusier argued that overcrowding, darkness and filth had to be replaced by space, sunlight and greenery. The architect's plan was to ameliorate urban congestion by building vertically and moving families into mass-housing units. This would theoretically result in a number of vacated houses which were to be bulldozed, clearing space for

[15] Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo,* vol. 2, p. 328.
[16] *PROA*, 14 Nov. 1947.
[17] Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo*, vol 1, p. 62.
[18] On Le Corbusier's reception in Latin America, see Arturo Almandoz (ed.), *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850–1950* (London: Routledge, 2002); Arias Lemos, *Le Corbusier*; Carlos Eduardo Hernández Rodríguez, *Las ideas modernas del plan para Bogotá en 1950: el trabajo de Le Corbusier, Wiener y Sert* (Bogotá: Instituto Distrital de Cultura y Turismo-Observatorio de Cultura Urbana, 2004); Jean-François Lejeune, *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005); Fernando Pérez Oyarzún (ed.), *Le Corbusier y Sudamérica: viajes y proyectos* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Arq, 1991).

parks.[19] In the years leading up to the Pan-American Conference, the community of modernist architects followed Corbusian principles in their architectural proposals and undertook a number of such constructions. In addition, the urban reform bloc invoked the famous urbanist to justify demolitions.

Conference planners recognised green space as a common value between Brunner and Le Corbusier. The overlap meant that, in landscaping, the Planning Department found a place to integrate the two urbanists' styles and core values. Local character as championed by Brunner could co-exist with, even enhance, Le Corbusier's model of modernity. This premise formed the basis for the broader narrative of the Pan-American reforms: Bogotá's historical tradition of pursuing continental cooperation, combined with its embrace of modernity, made the city ideally suited to host the Pan-American Conference. Three projects provide clear examples of how the department employed landscaping to communicate this message. These were the Avenida de las Américas, the *Quinta de Bolívar* (Bolívar's Summer Home) and the modernist restaurant *El Venado de Oro* (The Golden Deer).

Construction

The Avenida de las Américas was the most important landscaping effort undertaken for the Pan-American Conference.[20] In 1944, the Colombian Society of Architects sketched out the parkway and presented it to the city council.[21] Two years later, the Planning Department decided to pursue the project, which they thought would impress delegates while they were transported directly from Bogotá's Techo Airport to the city centre.[22] The avenue featured three lanes in either direction split by a central reservation, 40 metres wide, planted as a forest. Outside each set of lanes lay an additional tree-lined strip, surrounding the viewer with green space.[23] The reconstructed trip down the avenue that follows conveys the experience of the delegates and recovers the symbolic significance of the project.

On 29 March 1948, delegates walked out of Techo Airport and were warmly greeted by dozens of locals. The Pan-American Preparation Commission had rented 50 Pontiac cars, each with a chauffeur, to transport

[19] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), chap. 7; Arias Lemos, *Le Corbusier,* pp. 76–85; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), chap. 4; Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977).
[20] *El Tiempo*, 29 March 1948, p. 14.
[21] *PROA*, 1 Aug. 1946.
[22] *El Tiempo*, 5 Feb. 1946, pp. 1, 17.
[23] *PROA*, 1 Aug. 1946.

delegates to Bogotá in style.[24] Once in the vehicles, delegates travelled only a few blocks before arriving at the first of their encounters, the *Monumento de Banderas* (Flag Monument) where the flags of the American nations were flown on 20 giant masts. Bordering a large roundabout, the flagpoles framed a central, elevated mast bearing the Colombian flag. Along the ground, radial lines connected every flag to the Colombian centre, a representation of Colombia's central role in uniting the hemisphere. The panorama of flags also symbolised community, fraternity and cooperation. On this same day, *El Tiempo* ran an article explaining to the delegates that the monument 'reveals the cooperation and community, both past and future, that ties together the nations of the Western Hemisphere, also showing the deep desire of Colombians to increasingly invest in the bonds of cooperation between the countries of the Americas'.[25]

The Monumento de Banderas was overwhelming not just because of the size of the flags, but also because of the detail. Six hand-sculpted statues of women circled the base of each mast. Each woman carried an object denoting her symbolic representation of justice, science, progress, agriculture, commerce, and wisdom (Figure 1). The fact that the statues were naked women suggests that Bogotá's value of high culture outclassed the moral concerns of parochial residents.[26] A parking space built around the monument allowed the visitors to step out of the vehicles to admire the monuments and appreciate their meaning. The delegates then returned to their cars. More than just a leisurely ride, the rest of the drive was a tour through Colombia's geography and history.

The Planning Department worked to make the trip down the avenue a simulation of a geographical excursion through the entire country. They achieved this by filling the parkway with plants from all over the nation. By September 1947, *Semana* boasted that 10,000 trees of various species had been planted in the area surrounding the avenue and that another 10,000 awaited planting.[27] The week before the conference, *El Tiempo* reported that 30,000 trees had been planted along the avenue.[28] A veritable forest had sprung up to line the area. Nor were trees the only flora. Colombian urbanists had taken bushes and flowers from all over the country and carefully acclimatised them to the cooler temperature of Bogotá's savannah in order to plant them along the avenue as a 'grand spectacle revealing the country's rich floral

[24] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947.
[25] *El Tiempo,* 29 March 1948, p. 14.
[26] *El Tiempo*, 25 Oct. 1947, p. 17; Carolina Vanegas Carrasco, 'Colección de arte, área de escultura: desnudos en la Avenida de Las Américas en 1948', *Cuadernos de Curaduría*, 4th edition (Museo Nacional de Colombia, Dec., 2006).
[27] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947.
[28] *El Tiempo*, 24 March 1948, p. 10.

Figure 1. *Monumento de Banderas*

Source: Photo by author. Bogotá, Colombia, 2013.

abundance'.[29] Through landscaping, the urbanists were able to treat the parkway as a painter's canvas, capturing the beauty of the entire nation.

Conference planners saw the project as symbolic proof that modernity had arrived in their country. Colombians have long recognised the role local geography has played in impeding the construction of a national transportation infrastructure and communication network. The acclimatisation project proved to viewers that Colombia's geography had finally been 'conquered'. Urban developers had the ability to domesticate wild plants. The parkway was also modern in that it converted nature into a commodity, in the sense that the project was used to promote the nation to potential investors. Landscape was used to sell Bogotá across the Americas, not just to conference attendees. Pictures of the projects were compiled into books and pamphlets published and distributed across the hemisphere.[30] Finally, as an encounter with nature to be experienced from a car, the parkway itself was modern to the extent that it converted active exploration into passive spectacle.[31]

The ride down the avenue was also a ride through Colombia's history and into her future. Organised chronologically, the first segment of the trip exhibited the country's pre-Columbian heritage. Ten hours south of Bogotá lay the town of San Agustín, home of one of Colombia's greatest archaeological treasures. The area has over 500 pre-Columbian statues carved of stone. The Planning Department made reproductions of at least 20 of these statues and placed them alongside the Avenida de las Américas to introduce the delegates

[29] *El Tiempo*, 29 March 1948, p. 14.
[30] Leo Stanton Rowe (ed.), *Bogotá*, (Washington, DC: Pan American Union, 1944); Álvaro Forero (ed.), *Bogotá, 1948* (Bogotá: José Elisio Guerrero, 1948).
[31] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit, MI: Black and Red, 1970), chap. 7.

to Colombia's remote past.[32] After travelling for a kilometre and a half, the group looked left into the central reservation. There they saw a grand monument highlighting a statue of Sía, the water goddess of the Chibchas, a pre-Columbian indigenous peoples native to the region. The deity's mythological character was architecturally explained through a reflecting pool extending in front of her and jets of water that shot towards her statue.[33]

Halfway down the avenue, the delegates reached the *Puente Aranda* (Aranda Bridge), a giant roundabout fashioned into a park. At the centre of the park, the department had placed a monument. The piece featured statues of Cristopher Columbus and Queen Isabel I of Spain backed by obelisks 36 metres tall. As the delegates arrived at the contact period, they came face to face with the towering personifications of Spanish civilisation and Catholic rule. Dwarfed by these figures, delegates had the chance to physically experience being overshadowed by the Spanish colonial past.

Delegates continued down the parkway-timeline until reaching a sculpture on loan from the Museo Nacional called *El Silencio* (The Silence) by Colombian sculptor Marco Tobón Mejía. The sculpture was of a captivating nude woman, whose modesty was protected by crossed hands and bended knees. The young lady kneeled on a bridge over a river, gazing at her own reflection. She personified an adolescent Colombia beholding herself for the first time, preparing to step into adulthood. Beyond the symbolism, conference planners were keen to show visitors that Colombians were achieving artistic productions of international merit: Tobón Mejía's work had been displayed in salons in Paris and Seville.[34]

Reaching the end of the Avenida de las Américas, the drivers veered to the right to continue through Calle 26 until reaching the Carrera Séptima. At this intersection, the passengers were directed to look to the left, where they saw the *Parque de la Independencia* (Independence Park). The visitors had reached Colombia's independence moment. In the final two and half kilometres of the drive into central Bogotá, delegates rushed into the present. Here the Carrera Séptima bustled with activity, commerce and traffic.

When delegates stepped out of the cars in the city's central square, the Plaza de Bolívar, they experienced both the past and the future. Delegates encountered the past embodied in the bronze statue of Simón Bolívar, Colombia's independence hero. His historic deeds made him an asset to Bogotá's conference planners. Bolívar had chosen Bogotá as the capital of the conglomerate state Gran Colombia, endowing the city with an historic, if spurious, claim to being a leader of Pan-American cooperation. Additional actions taken by Bolívar, such as his organisation of an international congress in 1826, increased

[32] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947.
[33] *El Tiempo*, 29 March 1948, p. 14.
[34] Vanegas Carraso, 'Colección'.

his value in the Planning Department's project of invented tradition.[35] Bogotá's urban planners wanted delegates to see themselves as reviving Bolívar's project of hemispheric cooperation. To this end, the conference planners made sure the liberator's presence extended beyond the city's central square.

The second trip planned for delegates included a visit to Bolívar's summer home, the Quinta, followed by dinner at the brand-new El Venado de Oro restaurant. Both sites served as ideal meeting places for the conference. Just east of central Bogotá, the locations allowed delegates quick access to meeting rooms and hotels in the heart of the city. But the destinations also provided respite from the city's noise. This was partially the result of the lush gardens and tall walls surrounding the Quinta. In addition, the sites were nestled in the foothills of the beautiful mountain Monserrate, making the city feel distant. The Planning Department accentuated the way out of the centre with newly-paved streets lined with flowers.[36]

Conference planners and journalists agreed that holding conference meetings at the Quinta would lend a sense of importance to the work achieved by the delegates. Bogotá knew in advance the conference would be geared around uprooting communist activity across Latin America and facilitating international trade.[37] Weeks before the conference, one writer proudly stated, 'The Bolivarian dream of continental cooperation … will be better played out in the nearby Quinta, which provided the environment for [Bolívar's] brainstorming and planning.'[38] The city had already converted the summer home into a history museum replete with the liberator's personal possessions. Standing in front of Bolívar's personal desk and sword, delegates could imagine themselves as inheritors of an historic undertaking.

Symbolic landscaping reinforced this message.[39] At the property's gated entrance, delegates encountered a cannon from the wars of independence. The historic weapon served as reminder that the Americas needed to defend their own territory from encroaching threats.[40] In the courtyard, guests walked through a beautiful garden. The middle of the garden featured a stone platform displaying the flag and emblem of each country present (Figure 2). On this altar, visitors viewed their own countries in a lasting

[35] Recent historical work has shown the power in reviving symbols, rituals, and myths of the past to establish legitimacy through legacy, even when the legacy is largely invented. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[36] *El Tiempo*, 6 March 1948, p. 12.
[37] *El Tiempo*, 13 Aug. 1947, p. 1; *El Tiempo*, 8 Feb. 1948.
[38] *El Tiempo*, 13 March 1948, p. 6.
[39] *Semana,* 27 Sept. 1947.
[40] Ferrero, *Bogotá*.

Figure 2. *Pan-American Platform, Quinta de Bolívar*

Source: Photo by author. Bogotá, Colombia, 2013.

communion with the other American nations.[41] Coming down from the platform, the group encountered a tree planted specifically for the conference. The corresponding plaque read, 'Tree of American Fraternity'. The commemorative plant presented an organic metaphor of hemispheric cooperation. With the careful cultivation of political fraternity, all would enjoy strong anchorage and protection in storms. The tree was not just figuratively rooted in cooperation, but was literally so. Conference planners had imported soil from 14 different American nations for planting the tree.[42]

Leaving the Quinta, guests had a full view of Monserrate, the mountain towering over Bogotá. Passing the nearby cable car, chauffeurs may have encouraged the visitors to take a ride during their stay. The trip up the mountain provided access to a breath taking panorama of the whole city. Delegates were then dropped off at El Venado de Oro.[43]

Conference organisers created the restaurant to further the delegates' experience of a modern and exceptional Bogotá. Laureano Gómez, head of the Preparation Commission and Conservative Party leader, bankrolled the construction so that he could be appointed restaurant owner.[44] He contracted local modernist architect Carlos Martínez to design the building. The architect installed large glass windows in all sides of the restaurant. Beyond making the building instantly recognisable as modernist in style, the glass allowed delegates

[41] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947.
[42] Author's visit to the Quinta de Bolívar.
[43] *El Tiempo*, 6 March 1948, p. 12.
[44] *El Tiempo*, 25 Sept. 1947, p. 7.

to continue appreciating the breath taking view of the city on one side and Monserrate on the other.[45] The restaurant served traditional Colombian cuisine so foreign dignitaries could try local dishes. Even the name of the restaurant, the Golden Deer, evoked a local legend. Delegates had no doubt heard the tale of the deer of solid gold hidden in the foothills of Monserrate. The allegory served as one more reminder of the treasures of Colombia's capital city. From the restaurant, delegates returned to the centre via the renovated east–west avenue bearing the name of the city's founder, Jiménez de Quesada.[46]

In each reform and renovation, conference planners, journalists and politicians concerned themselves more with delegates' impressions than residents' experience. The types of projects actually needed by locals, such as additional working-class housing and marketplace renovations, were postponed or passed over in favour of the more aesthetic reforms. If Bogotá was concerned about the welfare of the hemisphere, this came at the cost of ignoring the welfare of many of her own citizens.

Demolition

Urban planners argued that demolition was necessary to modernise Bogotá. A 1946 issue of *PROA*, Bogotá's modernist monthly, claimed that the city's pre-reform condition bred filth, misery, contagion, even child abandonment. Demolition was the proper course of action. '*PROA* proposed an urban renewal "of the dirtiest sector of the city, the so-called Market Square".' The journal categorised the neighbourhood as a '16 block area in desperate need of demolition, fire, or an earthquake.'[47] The commentary seems ironically prophetic. The modernist reformers spoke of fire as contributing to the demolition process. The flames would instead rise as a response.

Journalists agreed that Bogotá was unpresentable. The famous columnist Enrique Santos 'Calibán' decried the city's backwardness and filth.[48] Writers in the weekly *Semana* discussed the city as ugly and lacking in modern services. Criticism from visiting experts seemed to confirm local fears.[49] Especially harsh was Le Corbusier's disapproval of the city during his 1947 visit. The urban bloc felt discouraged by the architect's disparaging comments regarding the city's poverty, filth and lack of urban planning.[50]

As 1947 wore on, journalists increasingly voiced fears that the reforms would not be completed on time. They did not want delegates to find a city in disarray. One critic declared the conference would bring a loss of respect

[45] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947; Ferrero, *Bogotá*.
[46] Map of route in *El Tiempo*, 6 March 1948, p. 12.
[47] *PROA*, 3 Oct. 1946.
[48] *Semana*, 14 June 1947.
[49] *El Tiempo*, 19 June 1947, pp. 1, 15; *El Tiempo*, 11 Oct. 1947, p. 1.
[50] *El Tiempo*, 17 June 1947, pp. 1, 16; *El Tiempo*, 19 June 1947, p. 15.

for the nation and that 'delegates will not be able to find … food to eat, nor a place to shower, nor space to meet'.[51] Another writer listed his fears: the Avenida de las Américas would look like an unplanted desert; the Plaza de San Martín would be missing its statue, and Colombia's Chief of Protocol would have to tell US Secretary of State George Marshall that the buildings designed for the conference were still in the imagination stage. Referring to neighbourhoods in the city centre, the same journalist remembered Le Corbusier's recent disapproval of the city. He wrote, 'Nothing better could be presented [to Le Corbusier] than these city sectors demolished, this being the only way for [the city] to not appear so ugly.'[52] The urban bloc was ready to support any leader willing to tear down the city's less aesthetic sectors.

Fernando Mazuera Villegas served as that leader. More a businessman than a politician, Mazuera prided himself on knowing how to get a job done. He had only recently moved into politics in 1945 when invited to help run a presidential campaign for moderate Liberal Gabriel Turbay.[53] The campaign failed because of a division within the Liberal Party. Gaitán had chosen to run for president and refused to bow out of the race. Because of the Liberal split, Conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez won the presidency on a minority vote. He took office in August of 1946 but, as a moderate Conservative, chose to continue Lleras Camargo's policy of bipartisan cooperation. Naming the programme of political cooperation the 'National Union', Ospina Pérez assigned six of his 12 Cabinet posts to Liberals, continued the support of the Pan-American Preparation Commission, and then appointed the Liberal Mazuera as mayor of Bogotá in February 1947.

Mazuera stepped into office painfully aware that the city was far behind in its preparations for the Pan-American Conference. The criticism from journalists and foreign experts served as additional impetus for Mazuera to implement drastic changes. But the mayor would have to hurry. At the time, the conference was scheduled for January 1948 (later postponed to March–April 1948). This gave the mayor less than a year to transform the city. In addition to the incomplete building renovations, several streets remained to be lengthened, widened, or paved.

The largest of the many road projects that Mazuera tackled before the Pan-American Conference included the Avenida de las Américas, Avenida Caracas, Avenida Colón, Avenida Jiménez de Quesada, Carrera Décima, and the Paseo de Bolívar.[54] Some of these roads were widened to improve traffic flow.

[51] *Semana*, 14 June 1947.
[52] *Semana,* 28 June 1947.
[53] *El Tiempo*, 26 Feb. 1968, p. 11.
[54] *El Tiempo,* 2 July 1947, pp. 1, 16; *El Tiempo,* 25 July 1947; Carlos Niño Murcia, *La carrera de la modernidad: construcción de la Carrera Décima, Bogotá (1945–1960)* (Bogotá: Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, 2010), 71.

Widening the Carrera Décima, for example, would clear up the congestion in the very heart of the city. The daunting project, widening the road from 10 to 40 metres, was not fully completed until years after the conference. Other streets were chosen specifically to improve delegates' mobility and view. The Avenida Jiménez de Quesada was extended towards the Quinta de Bolívar so the guests could quickly return to the liberator's historic home. Plans also called for unpleasant sights and dilapidated buildings to be transformed into zones with green spaces or featuring historical monuments.[55] Before this could be done, the city needed to requisition properties and raise sufficient funds.

Legal reforms in the 1930s and early 1940s had granted Bogotá's government the power of eminent domain and an increased urban reform budget.[56] The 1936 amendments to the Colombian constitution had endowed the government with the power to expropriate private property for reasons of 'public utility or social interest'. This phrase was expanded in 1943 to include everything contained in the conference projects: 'works of landscaping, beautification, security, cleanliness, construction, reconstruction and modernisation of *barrios*, road widening and lengthening, marketplace buildings, plazas, parks and public gardens'.[57] Colombian law stated that while indemnification would be the preferred practice in expropriation cases, this could be circumvented with the support of Congress.[58]

Additional legislation provided the city with multiple methods of financing urban renewal.[59] In 1944, Bogotá's city council passed a law enabling the city to pay for urban improvement projects by means of a special assessment tax.[60] This tax was justified on the basis that the urban renewal would enhance property value for nearby homeowners. The tax was levied on all homeowners within 80 metres of any given public improvement project. Instead of placing a cap on the tax, the legislation mandated that the tax be assessed on the total budget of the urban reforms plus 20 per cent. The tax was a one-off fee payable either as a lump sum or in instalments every three months over the five-year period with a 6 per cent interest rate.[61] As seen below, Bogotá's residents came to despise the law because of its tendency to burden a select few with unreasonable financial commitments.[62] In the years leading up to the Pan-American Conference, the special assessment was

[55] *El Tiempo*, 21 June 1947, 3; *El Tiempo,* 27 June 1947, pp. 1, 11.
[56] Patricia Pecha Quimbay et al., *Historia institucional de la alcaldía mayor de Bogotá D. C.*, vol. 1 (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2011), pp. 97–113.
[57] Ley Primera, 1943. Quimbay, *Historia*, p. 102.
[58] Pecha Quimbay, *Historia*, pp. 98–9.
[59] Pecha Quimbay, *Historia,* p. 99.
[60] Acuerdo 70 de 1944, Concejo de Bogotá. Referred to in Spanish as *impuesto de valorización*.
[61] Article 19, Acuerdo 70 de 1944. Referenced in *El Tiempo*, 22 Oct. 1947.
[62] *El Tiempo,* 30 July 1937, 4; *El Tiempo*, 7 April 1960, p. 14.

enforced for the Avenida de las Américas, Avenida Caracas, Avenida Colón, and Carrera Décima projects.[63]

Other taxes were distributed across the whole city. The Ley Primera of 1943 permitted a general increase in property tax of 0.2 per cent. This law also supported the urban renewal budget by allowing the government to circulate up to Colombian$ 30 million in urban bonds. Finally, a law passed the following November raised taxes once more for a general fund supporting landscaping and parks.[64]

The Liberal mayor hastened the piecemeal process of demolition. The city continued to purchase lots from property owners who were willing to sell. Mazuera's officials then revisited each area, expropriating remaining buildings from uncooperative owners. A date was set for residents to leave the premises. Finally, the city sent in the bulldozers. The mayor spent his first months in office obtaining properties. He carried out his first wave of demolitions in June 1947. From July to September, the city continued to acquire properties and demolish vacated neighbourhoods. In October, city workers conducted another wave of demolitions for the Carrera Décima expansion. Destruction continued into 1948, but at a reduced pace.[65]

For the June demolitions alone, the city had purchased 30 houses for the Avenida de las Américas; 46 buildings and lots for Calle 26; 27 for the Avenida Caracas; four for the Carrera Novena; two for Calle 12; and several estates to improve the Paseo Bolívar.[66] Two property owners refused to sell their lands for the proposed government price, which was around half of what the owners were asking. When an agreement could not be reached, the government confiscated homes without providing compensation.[67] There are various possible explanations as to why the government made this decision. It could be argued that this was a case of partisan hostility between the mayor and homeowners. But this seems unlikely given the Liberal mayor's action was already in cooperation with the bipartisan Pan-American Preparation Commission, itself led by the leader of the Conservative Party. More likely explanations include haste on the part of the government and the sense that failure to cooperate was unwise on the part of homeowners. The government, afraid of not making the conference deadline, did not want a protracted legal dispute over properties and prices. Government

[63] *Semana*, 27 Sept. 1947; *El Tiempo*, 2 Aug. 1946, pp. 1, 13; Acuerdo 45 de 1946, Concejo de Bogotá; Acuerdo 84 de 1945, Concejo de Bogotá (respectively).

[64] Pecha Quimbay, *Historia*, pp. 102–3.

[65] The following dates in *El Tiempo* list municipal purchases and demolitions for the Conference reforms: 29 Aug. 1946, p. 3; 21 June 1947, p. 3; 27 June 1947, pp. 1, 11; 2 July 1947; 20 July 1947, p. 3; 25 July 1947, pp. 1, 16; 14 Aug. 1947; 23 Aug. 1947, p. 8; 24 Aug. 1947, p. 3; 26 Aug. 1947, pp. 1, 15; 12 Sept. 1947, p. 2; 25 Sept. 1947, p. 7; 7 Oct. 1947, pp. 1, 15; 21 Oct. 1947, p. 3; 16 Nov. 1947, p. 8.

[66] *El Tiempo*, 27 June 1947, p. 11.

[67] *El Tiempo,* 27 June 1947, p. 11.

confiscation was not only quicker; it also served as a warning to other uncooperative homeowners. Indeed, after the two expropriations, the government faced few subsequent challenges acquiring properties.

The speed and scale of the June demolitions was intense. An article in *El Tiempo* estimated that five to ten houses were demolished each day.[68] A journalist in *Semana* dealt with the same reality with metaphor and humour: 'enormous shovels make their way all over [the city centre] knocking over houses like card castles. The man on the street walks from his house to the centre, and when he comes back in the afternoon they have knocked down half of the block that was still standing when he had finished his breakfast'.[69]

In addition to the demolitions for the street projects, the city cleared space for plazas and the erection of monuments. For the Plaza de San Martín and the installation of the corresponding statue, the city bought and then razed 32 properties.[70] Mazuera also tore down the houses in a street close to the Capitol.[71] Buildings surrounding Bogotá's renovated bullring were removed to allow green space around the arena.[72]

In July and August, urban reformers turned their focus to the street projects of the avenues Caracas, Colón, Comuneros, Jiménez Quesada, and the Paseo Bolívar.[73] The demolition process had become so commonplace that, apart from regular financial updates and government debates, unexpected events were necessary for stories of destruction to feature again in the newspapers. This was the case after 22 August 1947, when workers tearing down an old timber mill uncovered a coffin with a murder victim inside. The bizarre discovery provoked a news story that provided an update on demolitions occurring across the city.[74]

The cycle of purchases and demolitions continued on a wide scale in October, when the city began demolitions for the Carrera Décima. Although legislation for the project had been signed into effect back in December 1945, implementation was slow. Quadrupling the avenue from 10 to 40 metres required massive property acquisition in the heart of the central area.[75] It took two years and Mazuera's resolve for the city to acquire the lots necessary for the first round of demolitions in October 1947.[76]

[68] *El Tiempo*, 27 June 1947, p. 11.
[69] *Semana*, 12 July 1947.
[70] *El Tiempo*, 21 June 1947, p. 3; *El Tiempo*, June 27, 1947, pp. 1, 11.
[71] *Semana*, 28 June 1947.
[72] *El Tiempo*, 26 Aug. 1947, pp. 1, 15.
[73] *El Tiempo*, 24 Aug. 1947, p. 3; *El Tiempo*, 26 Aug. 1947, pp. 1, 11.
[74] *El Tiempo*, 23 Aug. 1947, p. 8.
[75] Niño Murcia, *Carrera de la modernidad*, pp. 65–78.
[76] *El Tiempo*, 2 July 1947; *El Tiempo,* 7 Oct. 1947, pp. 1, 15.

Reaction

The leaders of the reform project did not present the public with many opportunities to share their reactions or criticisms. Nevertheless, residents including journalists, homeowners, tenants, and even construction workers raised their voices in the channels available to them.

Print media played multiple roles in the demolition campaign. The press first served as a tool to garner support for the reforms. Advocates from the Liberal *El Tiempo* repeatedly made supportive comments such as 'a great undertaking is being realised for the benefit of the city' and '[the government] has bought and is demolishing the ugly and unhygienic "ranches" that were truly the stain of the city'.[77] A writer from the pro-reform *Semana* made it appear as if the city itself supported its own destruction: 'The city, which knows it is ugly, does not protest against these assaults of progress and dynamism, giving it the look of a recently bombed town.'[78] Mazuera himself employed the press as a vehicle for his slander campaign against individuals unsupportive of the urban reforms. The mayor labelled these individuals 'human hindrances' and denounced their actions as harmful to the city.[79]

The press, however, also provided a medium for objections to the Mazuera project. Certain journalists and editors engaged in light-hearted criticisms. They nicknamed Mazuera 'the demolitioner'.[80] Some referred to his administration as the 'demolition on the march', a play on President Alfonso López Pumarejo's 1934 platform, 'revolution on the march'.[81] Cartoonists joined the conversation. A few weeks after the June demolitions, *El Tiempo* included a cartoon of a street cleaner sweeping humans away in a pile of debris. The drawing was titled 'Parable of the Clean-Up' and its caption played on a biblical adage: 'All are from the dust, and to dust all return.'[82] Local professor and columnist Luis de Zulueta begged the city to consider keeping tradition alive even as it embraced modernity. He pleaded with Bogotá's leaders to consider preserving the city's architecture and historic sites instead of tearing them down.[83]

Residents directly affected by the renewal projects protested through legal and physical means. Homeowners losing their property to the San Martín project filed a lawsuit against the mayor. They were not only protesting against the demolition project, but how it was carried out; there had been looting alongside the demolition of the 32 homes, and none of the

[77] *El Tiempo*, 27 June 1947, pp. 1, 11.
[78] *Semana,* 28 June 1947.
[79] *El Tiempo*, 27 June 1947, pp. 1, 11; *El Tiempo*, 12 Oct. 1947, pp. 3.
[80] 'El demoledor', *Semana*, 28 June 1947.
[81] *El Tiempo*, 25 July 1947, pp. 1, 16.
[82] *El Tiempo*, 15 July 1947, p. 4.
[83] *El Tiempo*, 21 June 1947, p. 3.

construction workers had tried to stop it.[84] This added insult to the injury of displacement. A more violent encounter occurred after the city bulldozed several houses in the city centre. The residents rioted and at least one man fired his shotgun at the Presidential Palace. While police quickly put an end to the violence, it is significant that anger over demolitions was high enough that members of the displaced community would take to the street, gun in hand.[85]

Even property owners unaffected by the demolitions resisted the city's increased financial demands. By August of 1946, the first of the special assessment taxes had gone into effect. This forced homeowners or their tenants to shoulder the cost of the renewal projects in their area. The first zone alone, alongside the Avenida de Caracas, ran for almost 70 blocks.[86]

Enraged homeowners organised the 'Comité Pro-Defensa de los Propietarios' (Committee for the Defence of Property Owners) with the hope of convincing the city council to repeal the tax.[87] On 12 October 1947, the committee published a letter to Mayor Mazuera. Members decried the urban renewal campaign and the increased powers of government. They first argued that the expropriations were unconstitutional because they denied owners their right to private property. Then they denounced the special assessment, which they viewed as exploitative. In addition to being an unwelcome financial burden, the special assessment was believed to be a form of government coercion pressuring homeowners to sell their properties. Committee members made a strong argument against the assessment. They pointed out that the expansion of the Avenida Caracas served the general interest of all of Bogotá and, as a result, ought to be funded by the whole city. According to the authors of the letter, the total cost of the special assessment tax for a given homeowner could reach Colombian$ 30,000 or 50,000 pesos (US$ 16,000 or 27,000 in 1947).[88] The figure appears credible, as the total tax quota was set for Colombian$ 14.4 million pesos.[89] In addition to these challenges, owners already faced property taxes that had tripled over the last decade. 'Honourable mayor', the letter decried, 'these days it is a tragedy to be a property owner!'[90]

[84] *El Tiempo,* 21 June 1947, p. 3.
[85] *Semana,* 28 June 1947.
[86] *El Tiempo*, 2 Aug. 1947, pp. 1, 13.
[87] Committee leaders included Jorge Gutiérrez Valenzuela, José María Sáenz, Alfonso Uribe Misas, Guillermo Martínez Ánjel and Ernesto McAllister. *El Tiempo,* 10 Oct. 1947, p. 1.
[88] Colombian $ to US$ conversion rate in 1948 was close to Colombian $ 1 = US$ 0.54. Jorge Arango and Carlos Martínez, *Arquitectura en Colombia: arquitectura colonial 1538–1810, arquitectura contemporánea en cinco años, 1946–1951* (Bogotá: Ediciones PROA, 1951), p. 35.
[89] 14.4 million was the legally-permitted 120 per cent of the Avenida Caracas budget, *El Tiempo*, 27 June 1947, p. 1.
[90] *El Tiempo*, 12 Oct. 1947, p. 3.

The committee also attempted to counter Mazuera's 'human hindrances' slander campaign. They argued that protesting against an unjust system did not make citizens culpable. Turning the criticism back on the mayor, they stated the real hindrances to the city were 'government functionaries that, with confiscatory taxes, wage war on the sources of production, public wealth, and collective prosperity'. Later in the week, the committee held a meeting at a local theatre.[91] More than 2,000 attended, reflecting the high levels of discontent. They summed up their attitude in one of their inflammatory declarations to the mayor: 'The public faith [in our government] has ended.'[92]

A legal representative for the committee took the city to court. He demanded the special assessment tax be suspended. The city considered the challenge but rejected the case on 22 October. The verdict defended the constitutionality of the tax and assured the assessment had been conducted lawfully. Owners were left to deal with their anger and the legal obligation to pay.

Most of the Committee members belonged to Bogotá's middle or upper-middle class. As such, it is unlikely that many of them were actively involved in the destruction of 9 April. But the government's rejection of their requests signalled the futility of formal means of political protest. In this case, not even a court case, a published letter to the mayor, or community meetings were sufficient to sway the opinion of a government unwilling to compromise. This contributed to a lack of faith in the leaders governing Colombia's capital city.

Homeowners along the Avenida Caracas unable to pay the taxes or faced with demolition no doubt had the economic means to relocate. Not all were so fortunate. Hundreds of families were displaced during the conference preparations. Renters of homes in the demolition sectors likely either became homeless sought shelter among relatives, or moved into overcrowded tenements. An examination of the neighbourhoods targeted for demolition reveals the reforms disproportionately struck the working class. Such a review also reveals the relationship between Gaitán and these residents.

Central Bogotá consisted of many *barrios obreros* (working-class neighbourhoods). By the 1940s, these included La Perseverancia, Las Cruces, Egipto, Belén, San Cristóbal, and Santa Inés. Just west of the central area lay the city's industrial and commercial hub, Los Mártires. This district contained working-class neighbourhoods such as Antonio Ricaurte and Samper Mendoza. In the 1920s and 1930s, housing projects had been constructed in the district. Industrialists financed some of the projects to give factories easy access to cheap labour while government initiatives sponsored others,

[91] Advertised *El Tiempo*, 6 Oct. 1947, 1; reported on *El Tiempo*, 20 Oct. 1947, p. 2.
[92] *El Tiempo*, 12 Oct. 1947, p. 3.

hoping to reform character, improve public hygiene, and dissuade workers from organising.[93] Working-class men found employment in factories and workshops. Some produced commercial goods such as biscuits and cigars. Others worked at gas and electric plants.[94] Many men had jobs related to the transport sector, and were employed in the construction and maintenance of local trains and trams.[95] Local breweries also employed many workers, especially in La Perseverancia.[96]

Many of the city's street expansion projects cut across these neighbourhoods (Figure 3). The extensive demolition of the Carrera Décima and the Avenida Caracas ploughed right through working-class San Victorino and Santa Inés. Construction on the Paseo Bolívar and Carrera Séptima encircled La Perseverancia. Many from the barrio lost homes to the projects surrounding the Plaza de San Martín and the bullring. Residents from Las Cruces and La Pepita lost homes to the Carrera Décima and Avenida del Progreso projects.

Jorge Eliécer Gaitán had personal connections to these neighbourhoods. He was born in Las Cruces and raised in Egipto. Despite humble origins, Gaitán managed to become a lawyer. In 1929, having been elected to the House of Representatives, he caught national attention defending the rights of field workers after the United Fruit Company Banana Massacre.[97] This was one of many experiences bringing the young lawyer recognition as a voice for the working class. Gaitán maintained his solidarity with the common worker in personal relationships. In La Perseverancia, he spent time in the evenings playing *tejo* (a Colombian game similar to quoits or horseshoes). He was also known to drink illegally brewed *chicha*, the corn-based brew then considered a hallmark of working-class identity.[98]

[93] Carlos Ernesto Noguera, 'La higiene como política. Barrios obreros y dispositivo higiénico: Bogotá y Medellín a comienzos del siglo XX, *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura,* 25 (1998), pp. 188–215.

[94] Freddy Arturo Cardeño Mejía, *Historia del desarrollo urbano del centro de Bogotá (Localidad Los Mártires)* (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2007), p. 33.

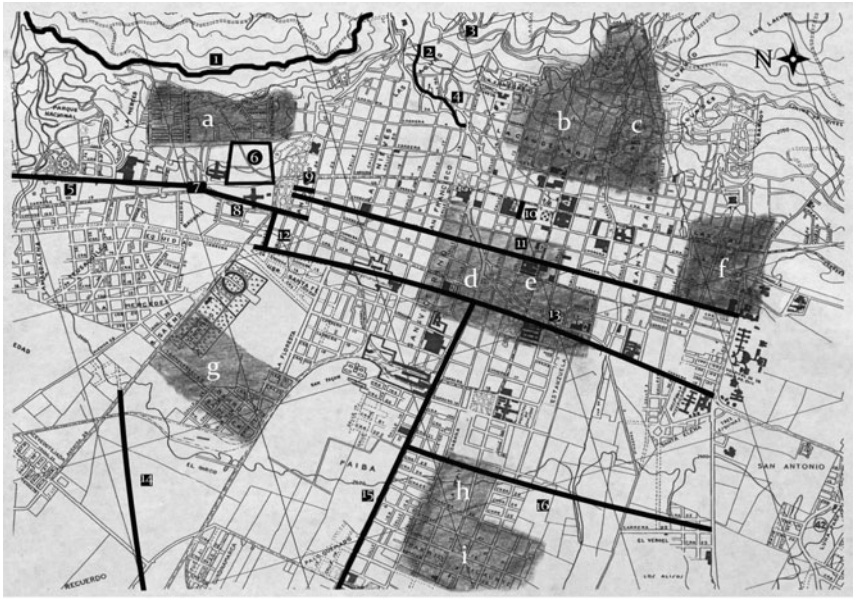
[95] Cardeño Mejía, *Historia*, pp. 40, 44.

[96] Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril,* p. 97.

[97] Braun, *Assassination,* pp. 39, 58. The massacre was later immortalised by Gabriel García Márquez in the 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Penguin, 2007), which scholars have examined for veracity. See Eduardo Posada-Carbó, 'Fiction as History: The Bananeras and Gabriel Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude', *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 30: 2 (May 1998), pp. 395–414; Catherine LeGrand, 'Living in Macondo: Economy and Culture in a UFC Banana Enclave in Colombia', in Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine LeGrand and Ricardo D. Salvatore (eds.), *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 333–68.

[98] Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril,* 67, 124. Liliana Ruiz Gutiérrez and Esteban Cruz Niño, *La Perseverancia: barrio obrero de Bogotá* (Bogotá: Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, Archivo de Bogotá, 2007), p. 48.

Figure 3. *Conference Reforms Intersecting Working-class Neighbourhoods, 1946–48*



Conference reforms:

1. Paseo Bolívar
2. Quinta de Bolívar
3. Venado de Oro Restaurant
4. Avenida Jiménez de Quesada
5. Carrera Séptima
6. Plaza de Toros
7. Plaza de San Martín
8. Carrera Trece
9. Carrera Novena
10. Calle 12
11. Carrera Décima
12. Calle 26
13. Avenida Caracas
14. Avenida de las Américas
15. Avenida Colón
16. Avenida del Progreso

Working-class neighbourhoods:

a. La Perseverancia
b. Egipto
c. Belén
d. San Victorino
e. Santa Inés
f. Las Cruces
g. Samper Mendoza
h. La Pepita
i. Antonio Ricaurte

Source: Background shows Bogotá before construction, from *Secretaria de Obras Públicas*, 1938. Map constructed by author.

The dedication to these neighbourhoods carried over into Gaitán's political work. This was most evident in his term as mayor of Bogotá in 1936–37. The charismatic leader brought electricity, sewers and paved roads to impoverished neighbourhoods. To improve hygiene, Gaitán built communal washing stations for areas without running water. For working-class children, he created a library-on-wheels programme and worked with charities to ensure

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free school breakfasts.[99] The mayor even worked to give low-income housing to city employees.[100]

These areas mirrored Gaitán's loyalty throughout the 1940s. Every Friday afternoon, Gaitán spoke at the Municipal Theatre, teaching the working class about hygiene and politics. Faithful followers would arrive in the morning to find a good seat in what was always a packed house.[101] Each neighbourhood had a local *gaitanista* leader to facilitate widespread cooperation in the protests organised by the charismatic Liberal leader. Many residents hung the Liberal Party's red flags outside their homes knowing full well that such explicit partisan display was technically prohibited within city limits.[102] This widespread support of Gaitán earned the working-class neighbourhoods the nickname *el cinturón rojo* (the red belt).[103] Yet hanging the Liberal flag meant loyalty first and foremost to Gaitán, not to the Liberal mayor destroying houses, or the broader group supporting the Pan-American reforms. On 9 April, Gaitán's death meant that the people of the barrios obreros lost the politician born among them, the man who lived among them and politically championed their urban interests. These would be the neighbourhoods supplying the greatest number of rioters in the wake of the assassination.

In the early months of 1948, a general strike and a surge in unemployment increased the number of residents angry with the government. A problem arose when the provider of asphalt for Bogotá's extensive street projects, the Tropical Oil Company, announced that they would be shedding workers. The oil workers' union decided to strike, and Colombia's union confederation (the Confederation of Colombian Workers) called for solidarity action. On 7 January 1948, Bogotá was caught up in a general strike.[104] Without a full team of workers, asphalting and landscaping efforts became a considerable challenge. Waste collectors stayed off duty until an estimated 700 tons of waste lined the city streets.[105] Violent attacks occurred against figures such as Tropical Oil

[99] Richard Sharpless, *Gaitán of Colombia: A Political Biography* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), pp. 89–94; Ruth Ann Updegraff, *Gaitán, 'el alcalde del pueblo', la administración de Jorge Eliécer Gaitán en Bogota, 1936–7* (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá DC, 2013), pp. 61–5.

[100] Braun, *Assassination*, p. 71.

[101] Braun, *Assassination*, p. 70; Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril,* pp. 73–6.

[102] Ruiz Gutiérrez, *La Perseverancia*, p. 26.

[103] Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril,* p. 97.

[104] *El Tiempo*, 6 Feb. 1948. On labour, see Mauricio Archila Neira and Álvaro Delgado Guzmán, *¿Dónde está la clase obrera? Huelgas en Colombia, 1946–1990* (Bogotá: Cinep, 1995); Mauricio Archila Neira, *Cultura e identidad obrera: Colombia 1910–1945* (Bogotá: Cinep, 1991); Mauricio Archila Neira, 'Los movimientos sociales y las paradojas de la democracia en Colombia', *Controversia*, 186, Bogotá (2006); Medofilo Medina, *La protesta urbana en Colombia en el siglo veinte* (Bogotá: Ediciones Aurora, 1984).

[105] *El Tiempo,* 7 Feb. 1948.

director Pedro Moreno.[106] The general strike heightened tensions and violence across the city.

Although the strike ended in February, construction workers employed for the conference soon faced another challenge, unemployment. Bogotá did not have a budget for post-conference urban renewal beyond finishing incomplete street projects. As a result, many of Bogotá's 3,000 construction workers, landscapers and demolition workers were laid off as soon as they completed conference commissions.[107] Days before the riot, a journalist confirmed what labourers already knew: 'The number of new urban construction projects diminishes each day and with such a serious reduction there will be, inevitably, numerous construction workers left without work in the coming weeks.'[108] Layoffs began in early 1948. The Planning Department continued dismissing workers right up to the inauguration of the conference, swelling further the ranks of those facing economic challenges.[109] In their frustration with the government, construction workers actually had something in common with local homeowners and tenants whose houses they had recently razed.

Gaitán had taken advantage of the February strike to organise a protest against the Conservative Party's involvement in perpetuating *La Violencia* (The Violence), a civil war spreading through Colombia's rural areas.[110] While Conservative President Mariano Ospina Pérez had made good on his commitment to pursue bipartisan cooperation within Bogotá, the attitude of compromise was limited to the urban area. In rural areas across the nation, the Conservative return to political power in 1946 had resulted in abuse, displacement and murder of Liberal opponents. By 1948, the violence had resulted in an estimated 14,000 casualties.

On 7 February 1948, two months before the Bogotazo, Gaitán brought together thousands of Liberals to mourn those killed in the countryside and ask the Conservative government to bring about peace. Protesters carried red and black flags, the former in allegiance to Gaitán and the latter as a sign of mourning. The group met at the recently-renovated Plaza de San Martín, by the barrio La Perseverancia. Following Gaitán's request, the group maintained total silence as they marched to the Plaza de Bolívar. In the city's central

[106] *Ibid*.

[107] The figure of 3,000 comes from *El Tiempo*, 24 March 1948, p. 10. Layoffs discussed in *El Tiempo*, 4 April 1948, p. 9.

[108] *El Tiempo*, 4 April 1948, p. 9.

[109] *El Tiempo*, 24 March 1948, p. 10.

[110] For an introduction to scholarship on *La Violencia*, see Paul Oquist, *Violencia, conflicto y política en Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios Colombianos, 1978); Daniel Pécaut, *Orden e violencia: Colombia 1930–1954* (Bogotá: Siglo XXI, 1987); Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946–1953* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Gonzalo Sánchez and Donny Meertens, *Bandits, Peasants, and Politics: The Case of 'la Violencia' in Colombia*, trans. Alan Hynds (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001).

plaza, the Liberal leader delivered a moving speech and then asked the crowd to go home in silence and in an orderly fashion. The crowd dispersed without making a sound.[111] The terrifying silence demonstrated the power of Gaitán's following not only to the Conservative president but to Gaitán's supporters themselves. That power was not forgotten. After the assassination of 9 April, workers from La Perseverancia took the same protest route. But on that day, they substituted silence with shouting and traded their flags for firearms.

Following the silent protest, Gaitán called for an end to the National Union by asking Liberal political figures to resign their posts. The populist leader increasingly recognised that the Liberal cooperation in the Ospina government undermined his ability to condemn Conservatives for their abuses.[112] Since the previous year's congressional elections had established Gaitán as the official Liberal Party leader, his call was heeded. Liberal leaders, including a very reluctant Mazuera, submitted resignation letters in February and, despite protests of the president, left their posts in March.[113] As set out by Colombia's political system, it was Ospina Pérez's responsibility to appoint Bogotá's next mayor. The Conservative president selected Manual de Vengoechea, the leader of the Pan-American Planning Department. Four days before the massive riot, Bogotá's central position of authority was occupied by the architect of the displacement projects.[114]

In the wake of the February call to end the National Union, Liberal leaders debated its implications for the Pan-American Conference. Gaitán considered a Liberal boycott of the event as a strategic protest of the rural violence. Such a move could bring international visibility to the issue and weaken the Conservative Party.[115] Days before the conference, Gaitán instead announced that the Liberal ambassadors would attend the conference to best represent the country, while he himself would have no part in the events.[116] The decision reflects how Gaitán balanced his role as congressional party leader, on the one hand, and urban advocate on the other. He allowed the participation to guarantee Liberal involvement in international affairs but stayed away from the conference, reassuring followers he did not support the displacement caused by the Pan-American reforms. The Liberal presence in the conference proceedings, however, sent the message that the National Union was still functioning in practice, if not on paper.

[111] *El Tiempo*, 8 Feb. 1948.
[112] Braun, *Assassination*, chap. 5; Henderson, *Modernization,* pp. 293–309.
[113] *El Tiempo*, 6 March 1948, p. 1.
[114] *El Tiempo*, 6 April 1948, pp. 1, 19.
[115] *El Tiempo*, 13 March 1948, p. 1, 11.
[116] *El Tiempo*, 25 March 1948, 1; Braun, *Assassination*, 130.

Destruction

In the second week of the conference, just after 1 p.m. on 9 April, Gaitán stepped out of his office and was shot three times in the back and neck. The assassin, the mentally-unstable Juan Roa Sierra, was lynched on the street. Gaitán was rushed to the hospital where a crowd quickly gathered. Hearing their leader had died, the group marched on the central plaza to demand an explanation from the Conservative president. When the president did not appear, the crowd became agitated. Then the Presidential Guard opened fire on the crowd. Chaos ensued. Rioters broke into armouries and hardware stores to grab weapons, hammers and picks. They ransacked liquor stores, drinking to drown their grief and steady their hands.[117] The Presidential Guard remained in the palace, and neither the military nor the police made an immediate effort to stop the rioters.[118] This served as a signal that illegal behaviour would go unpunished. Rioters made Molotov cocktails and threw them at buildings and trams. Bogotá began to burn. Soon after, a group of protesters took over the national radio station and incited others to take to the streets.[119] With this second signal, new waves of rebels came to the city centre to continue the destruction and looting. The riot continued all afternoon and evening. The worst was over by early Saturday morning, but the streets remained dangerous on Sunday 11 April.[120] The military finally restored order, but only after hundreds had been killed.

Most of the angry men who took to the streets upon hearing of Gaitán's assassination were from the working-class neighbourhoods. When word of Gaitán's death came to the railway workshops in the barrio Samper Mendoza, union leaders Manuel Martínez and Pedro Cáceres organised the workers into a makeshift army. Men grabbed their tools to use as weapons, and 200 workers marched into the centre to show their fury.[121] In the barrio La Perseverancia, workers did not return for their afternoon shift at the local Bavaria brewery. Instead, they raided the local police department for weapons and then made their way to the city centre.[122]

For the rioters, Gaitán's death left no political leader in office who represented their interests. They showed their disdain by burning down the city's sites of authority. These included the Capitol, the Presidential Palace, the

[117] Braun, *Assassination,* pp. 146–7, 159.
[118] Braun, *Assassination*, pp. 152–4.
[119] Alape, *El Bogotazo*, pp. 254–8; Braun, *Assassination*, pp. 150–1.
[120] Braun, *Assassination*, p. 163, asserts looting lasted until military reinforcements arrived at dawn on 10 April. *CROMOS,* by contrast, suggests the military did not reinstate order until evening of 11 April. *CROMOS,* 8 May 1948.
[121] Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril*, pp. 123–4.
[122] Ruiz Gutiérrez and Esteban Cruz Niño, *La Perseverancia,* pp. 26–7.

Palace of Justice (housing the Supreme Court), the Ministry of Governance (in charge of national security), the Ministry of Education, the Headquarters of the Departmental Government, and the Office of the Inspector General of Colombia, whose role was to defend the rights of the people and intervene in instances of unlawful conduct in public office.[123]

Conference construction sites also served as targets for rioters. One crowd ransacked the planning offices for the Pan-American Conference.[124] Another group destroyed the renovated San Carlos Palace, the historic building that served as Simón Bolívar's office long before delegates used it for conference meetings. A bus driver later recalled being asked to help tear down international flags on display for the conference.[125] A glance at the ruins prompted a journalist to later write, 'all of the work of the Pan-American Organisation Committee vanished like soap bubbles'.[126]

Rioters also destroyed the modernist restaurant El Venado de Oro.[127] By burning a restaurant so far away from the destruction zone, rioters demonstrated they were intentionally targeting conference construction sites. Protesters had to leave the centre, march east along the Avenue Jiménez de Quesada, and then pass the walled-off Quinta de Bolívar to reach the restaurant. The decision to burn the restaurant surely combined disdain for its role as focal point in the conference proceedings with hatred of restaurant owner Laureano Gómez, leader of the Conservative Party. Gómez led the Pan-American Preparation Commission and was a key figure behind expropriations and demolitions. Many suspected he was corrupt. Newspapers had made it clear that even other senators accused him of unlawfully acquiring houses for demolition areas and funding El Venado de Oro through misappropriated government money.[128]

Certain conference reform sites, such as Bogotá's bullring and the Colón Theatre, went untouched by the rioters. It is highly likely that these sites were saved from destruction because of their association with Gaitán. When Gaitán became leader of the Liberal Party after the February 1947 congressional elections, he staged a massive ceremony at the bullring, where he delivered a celebratory inaugural speech to thousands. Gaitán spent the following days in the theatre, working to develop his official platform. The resulting 'Colón Platform', likely cemented an association between the auditorium and the Liberal leader.[129]

[123] *CROMOS*, 8 May and 15 May 1948.
[124] *CROMOS*, 8 May 1948.
[125] Diusaba Rojas, *9 de abril*, p. 54.
[126] *CROMOS*, 29 May 1948.
[127] Braun, *Assassination,* p. 168.
[128] *El Tiempo*, 25 Sept. 1947, p. 7.
[129] Sharpless, *Gaitán*, chap. 12, discusses Gaitán's work as Liberal leader in 1947.

By targeting conference reform projects, rioters were able to justify their destructive behaviour. Angry residents were selective not just in the buildings they tore down but even in their specific actions. Men downing stolen liquor knew that thousands of bottles had been imported and displayed in windows to impress foreign delegates while the everyday costs of living had been raised beyond what they could afford.[130] Some rioters justified their actions by encouraging destruction over theft. When a teenager at the renovated Palacio de San Carlos grabbed an expensive leather cushion, one such woman took it from him and threw it in the fire, declaring, 'We have not come here to rob, but to destroy everything.'[131] Within the chaos of the massive riot were individual men and women retaliating against years of perceived urban injustices.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Pan-American reforms contributes to scholarship on mid-century modernist projects by examining new sites and recovering the contributions of overlooked historical actors. Felipe Hernández recently argued that urban scholars of Latin America should move beyond studies of modernist projects between 1930–60, suggesting that the period presents an overly-homogenous picture of urban trends in Latin America.[132] Publications on local interventions and contemporary projects, argued Hernández, would allow for a better recognition of the heterogeneity of Latin American nations and their urban centres. But studies of modernist urban reforms need not imply uniformity. Quite the contrary, and especially when examined with an eye on diverse social actors, they reveal exactly the kinds of political struggles, cultural practices and local needs that scholars such as Hernández recognise as significant. In the case of 1940s Colombia, it was not the reform-minded urban bloc alone that altered Bogotá's built environment. In addition, homeowners, renters and workers changed their city through lawsuits, protests, strikes and ultimately the Bogotazo itself.

The re-examination of the Pan-American building project then suggests a historical recategorisation of the Bogotazo. While Gaitán's leadership will continue to be relevant to studies of populism in Latin America (and scholars ought examine how other populist leaders have engaged local urban debates), the 9 April uprising can now be seen as connected to a larger struggle

[130] The cost of living rose dramatically in Colombia throughout the 1940s. Articles such as one published in *El Tiempo*, on 11 Oct. 1947, 18, suggest residents in Bogotá saw a connection with the rising prices and the upcoming Pan-American Conference. On alcohol consumption, see Braun, *Assassination*, 159.

[131] 'Aquí no vinimos a robar sino a acabar con todo…', *El Tiempo*, 9 April 1968.

[132] Felipe Hernández, *Beyond Modernist Masters: Contemporary Architecture in Latin America* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag, 2010).

for urban citizenship, referring to protection of property rights, access to the city and opportunities for political involvement. Urban citizenship is contingent on the built environment and can be threatened through reform. Teresa Caldeira has recently documented that the construction of walls, both material and symbolic, limits which social classes have physical access to the city.[133] David Harvey has gone further, showing that many cities allowing corporations free rein to change the built environment witness not only the geographic exclusion of the working class, but also their physical and legal dispossession.[134] The Bogotá case adds to this body of scholarship, demonstrating that the circumstances of reform can further undercut citizenship; reforms undertaken for international events permit a discourse of 'necessary haste' justifying disenfranchisement. In Bogotá, the marginalised responded with meetings, denunciations and isolated acts of violence. More importantly, Gaitán presented himself as a representative of the dispossessed and provided them with a political channel for dissent. But when the marginalised lost their urban advocate, they lost also their political voice and took to the streets.

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. Los estudios históricos del Bogotazo de 1948 – el levantamiento popular en Bogotá, Colombia, desencadenado por el asesinato del líder populista Jorge Eliécer Gaitán – ignoran el contexto urbano que explica el nivel de destrucción en la capital. Debido a los preparativos para recibir a la IX Conferencia Panamericana de 1948, Bogotá pasó por una serie de reformas urbanas económicamente costosas que además desalojaron a muchos de sus residentes. Además de ser una figura política, Gaitán era reconocido como defensor de los derechos urbanos de los marginados, y estos reaccionaron a su muerte, destruyendo inmuebles recientemente renovados y símbolos de autoridad política. Por medio de revistas de arquitectura, proyectos legislativos y periódicos, este artículo muestra que tanto la elite bogotana como los desposeídos inscribieron sus proyectos políticos en el paisaje urbano.

Spanish keywords: Bogotá, *Bogotazo*, Colombia, Gaitán, Conferencia Panamericana, historia urbana

Portuguese abstract. Narrativas tradicionais do Bogotazo de 1948 – o motim em Bogotá, Colômbia, deflagrado pelo assassinato do líder populista Jorge Eliécer Gaitán – ignoram o contexto urbano que explica a escala da destruição ocorrida. Durante as preparações para a IX Conferência Pan-americana de 1948, Bogotá passou por agressivas reformas urbanas que causaram desapropriações e oneraram os

[133] Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, CA: University California Press, 2000).

[134] David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review*, 53 (Sept.–Oct. 2008), pp. 23–40.

moradores financeiramente. Mais que apenas uma figura política, Gaitán era visto como um defensor urbano dos marginalizados. Estes responderam à sua morte destruindo projetos de reforma e símbolos de autoridade política. Baseado em revistas de arquitetura, legislação e periódicos, este artigo demonstra que tanto a elite de Bogotá quanto os marginalizados inscreveram seus projetos na paisagem urbana.

Portuguese keywords: Bogotá, *Bogotazo*, Colômbia, Gaitán, Conferência Pan-americana, história urbana