


ORIGINAL ARTICLE

El Salvador vs. *Imperialismo Yanqui*, 1912–14

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Abstract

When the United States invaded Nicaragua in 1912 the popular reaction in El Salvador was so strong that it completely upended politics. The article argues that this anti-imperialist movement, completely ignored by the current historiography, forced Salvadorean governments to make decisions regarding foreign policy that would have been unthinkable had it not been for the pressure from below. Popular pressures contributed to limit the scope of the final version of the Chamorro–Bryan Treaty between the United States and Nicaragua. The treaty did not include Platt Amendment-like provisions. Moreover, the Wilson administration abandoned the idea of extending a protectorate to all the Central American countries and building a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca.

Keywords: El Salvador; United States–El Salvador relations; anti-imperialism; social movements; mutual aid societies; Chamorro–Bryan Treaty

Introduction

On 4 September 1912, thousands of people defied a fierce rainstorm to gather in Plaza Bolívar in downtown San Salvador. They had assembled to protest the invasion of Nicaragua by US marines. From that moment until the United States and Nicaragua signed a treaty in August 1914, Salvadoreans, alarmed by the powerful empire that seemed to be closing in, organised and demonstrated in cities and small towns across their country. Historians have virtually ignored how the anti-imperialist movement dominated Salvadorean politics early in the twentieth century. Standard works on the history of US–Central American relations completely ignore the movement.¹ Yet, the powerful grassroots activism kindled by news of the invasion of Nicaragua and the policies of William Howard Taft (1909–13) and Woodrow Wilson (1913–21) shook El Salvador.

Major groups in the political coalition of presidents Manuel Enrique Araujo (1911–13) and Carlos Meléndez (1913–18), artisans, workers, students, intellectuals and some members of the elite harboured strong anti-imperialist sentiments. They

¹See, for example, Dana Gardner Munro, *The United States and the Caribbean Republics, 1921–1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: Norton, 1993); John H. Coatsworth, *Central America and the United States: The Clients and the Colossus* (New York: Twayne, 1994).

could not be ignored. The political system may not have been democratic, but it was competitive. As Erik Ching has demonstrated, it was a system organised around political clientelism. Competition between elite-led patronage networks determined who would wield political power.² The fear of losing power forced Araujo and Meléndez to adopt an independent attitude towards US imperial ambitions. Their policies would have been inconceivable without the pressure from urban subaltern groups. Even if they had reservations about US activities in the region, the two presidents understood the geopolitical realities. As the evidence shows, without outside pressure, their instinct was to cooperate with the empire.

Grassroots activists had a different approach in mind. They understood the disproportionate power of their foe and sought allies in other Central American countries to put together a transnational anti-imperialist network. In addition, they recognised a common agenda with groups and politicians in the United States that since 1898 had become increasingly nervous about the expansionist policies of Theodore Roosevelt and his successors. A key component of the anti-imperialist strategy in El Salvador was to identify potential allies in the United States and influence them. Their actions of forging transnational alliances, pressuring Araujo and Meléndez and lobbying the US Senate were so successful that they helped to stop some of the most extreme elements of US plans: Platt Amendment-like provisions in its treaty with Nicaragua, a protectorate for all Central America, and a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca.

Since the premise behind this article is that relations between El Salvador and the United States were not the exclusive domain of their diplomats and top politicians, the research covered sources that went significantly beyond State Department or Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) documents. In fact, some of the most illuminating information came from sources like the writings of a student activist, a newspaper sympathetic to subaltern groups, a literary magazine and municipal archives. Likewise, it was useful for this project to go beyond Salvadorean and US documents. Costa Rican newspapers, British Foreign Office reports, and publications from and about other Central American countries helped to understand the transnational dimensions of the question.

Beyond the intrinsic interest of rescuing from oblivion noteworthy events in the history of El Salvador, this article calls attention to a gap in the literature on the history of US imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century. We have excellent works on the interactions with the occupiers and the impact of gunboat and dollar diplomacy in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Panama. However, it is hard to find works on the influence of US actions on the other countries in the neighbourhood. One way or another, having the Damocles' sword of the imperialist threat hanging over their heads elicited powerful responses and changed political actors' calculations. The article will argue that the study of these responses in El Salvador demonstrates, first, that as early as the beginning of the twentieth century the political history of the country is better understood in the context of US imperialism. Second, that grassroots activists should be seen as key actors in the narrative of Salvadorean relations with the empire.

²Erik Ching, *Authoritarian El Salvador: Politics and the Origins of the Military Regimes, 1880–1940* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014).

To better understand the intensity and political impact of Salvadorean anti-imperialism, the first section of this article will explore its roots before the 1912 US invasion of Nicaragua. The second section will show the strength and reach of the popular reaction to the invasion. The influence of popular anti-imperialism on the negotiations and content of the infamous Chamorro–Bryan Treaty between Nicaragua and the United States will be the subject of the last part of the article.

Roots of Anti-Imperialism in El Salvador

Ever since William Walker took control of Nicaragua in 1856, Salvadoreans began to question US attitudes towards the region. While Walker consolidated his power, the official government publication reproduced a *New York Herald* article with an elaborate argument on the inability of the ‘Spanish American race’ to govern itself. A Salvadorean editorialist responded with anger. His article highlighted the most negative aspects of life in the northern country such as ‘the annihilation of the unhappy US Indians’, the treatment of slaves, lynching and religious intolerance against Catholics. In contrast, ‘The Spanish American race doesn’t invade anybody ... does not insult or demean’.³ The empire already had a fully fledged discourse of difference, and Salvadoreans were beginning to develop the counter-discourse later utilised by the anti-imperialist movement of the first decades of the twentieth century. El Salvador dispatched almost a thousand soldiers to join the Central American allied forces that expelled Walker. Soldiers and officers returned with indelible impressions of the destruction left behind by the so-called ‘Falange Americana’: ‘churches burned down, agriculture abandoned, trade dead, industry paralysed, shortages’.⁴ Veterans of the expedition, some of whom achieved considerable prominence, kept alive the memory of the war in Nicaragua.⁵

The Spanish American War, the US actions that separated Panama from Colombia in 1903 and, six years later, the intervention in Nicaragua to topple José Santos Zelaya (1893–1909) revived memories of Walker’s predations. The imperial threat was closing in. Response in El Salvador to each event was prompt and well informed. In November 1903, while Roosevelt facilitated Panamanian independence, the magazine *La Quincena*, the leading intellectual publication, printed a poem critical of the events. ‘Bizarre eagles’, it said, were ready for the ‘hunting of nations’.⁶ Other writers continued in the same vein. A Colombian based in El Salvador contributed a poem on the independence of Panama portraying it as the work of ‘corrupt traffickers whose only morality is money’.⁷

³‘Opinión que en los Estados Unidos se tiene de las Repúblicas hispanoamericanas y generalmente de nuestra raza’, *La Gaceta*, 17 Jan. 1856, p. 2.

⁴‘Manifiesto del Presidente del Salvador a los pueblos del Estado’, 21 March 1957, reproduced in Miguel Ángel García, *Diccionario histórico enciclopédico de la república de El Salvador*, vol. 1 (San Salvador: La Luz, 1927), p. 78.

⁵The veterans included General Gerardo Barrios, twice president of the country, and Juan José Cañas, a prominent writer and politician.

⁶Vicente Acosta, ‘Las águilas del norte’, *La Quincena*, 1 Nov. 1903, p. 100.

⁷Francisco Gamboa, ‘A propósito de Panamá’, *La Quincena*, 1 Dec. 1903, p. 147.

La Quincena was the first Latin American magazine to reproduce ‘Oda a Roosevelt’, the famous anti-imperialist poem by Rubén Darío.⁸ Its editors had an extensive network of contacts with Latin American anti-imperialists. In a few weeks, they were ready to publish authors such as the Venezuelan César Zumeta, who described the dangers of the ‘colossus of the north’ and denounced the United States as a new member of ‘the group of colonising powers’.⁹ Salvadorean publications exalted personalities such as the Colombian José María Vargas Vila, the author of *Ante los bárbaros: El yanqui, he ahí el enemigo*.

The hostility to the United States was due also to domestic experiences with US businessmen. Their actions put in stark relief the asymmetry of relations with the United States. The British envoy singled out two examples of friction with entrepreneurs from the north: the ‘Burrell affair’ and the activities of the Moisand brothers.¹⁰

The Burrell affair had to do with a port concession given in 1895 to a group of US citizens (including one Alfred Burrell) and their Salvadorean partners. Three years later, unaware of the tectonic geopolitical shifts produced by the outcome of the Spanish American War, the Salvadoreans tried to wrestle the company away from Burrell and his friends. The government ended up nullifying their concession because the services provided by the port did not meet the concession’s stipulations. For the US partners, the loss of the concession was the result of illegal manoeuvres by their well-connected Salvadorean partners. Since they did not trust the impartiality of the Salvadorean judicial system, Burrell and his associates took their complaint to US courts. The issue of legal jurisdiction escalated to a diplomatic confrontation. To prevent further problems with the United States, El Salvador agreed to submit the case to arbitration. An ad hoc arbitration court composed of a US jurist, a Salvadorean and a neutral member from the Dominion of Canada heard the case in the spring of 1902. Their ruling was a disaster. The two English-speaking magistrates voted in favour of the US partners and punished El Salvador with extraordinary fines. The judges’ deliberations had been a clash of cultures. José Rosa Pacas, the Salvadorean arbitrator, was a provincial lawyer with a legal background in the Napoleonic tradition. He needed a translator to communicate with his colleagues. The US judge, Don M. Dickinson, and his Canadian counterpart, Sir Samuel Henry Strong, PC, were prestigious jurists from the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition. They dismissed Pacas’ arguments and often denied him the right to speak. Even the translator received disparaging treatment. The Burrell affair, said the official gazette in 1904, ‘has deeply wounded the national feeling’.¹¹

The economic consequences of the ruling and Pacas’ humiliation received wide publicity. The government made deep budget cuts to fund the annual payments mandated by the court. It closed two teachers’ schools, the National

⁸Rubén Darío, ‘A Roosevelt’, *La Quincena*, 15 May 1904, p. 117.

⁹César Zumeta, ‘Panamá y la América’, *La Quincena*, 1 Nov. 1904, p. 284.

¹⁰Lionel Carden, ‘Central America, Annual Report 1908’, p. 5 of the report. The report is in Kenneth Bourne, Donald Cameron Watt and George Philip (eds.), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs – Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print: Part I, From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War, Series D, Latin America, 1845–1914* (hereafter *Confidential Print*) (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1991).

¹¹‘El Asunto Burrell’, *Diario Oficial*, 15 June 1904, p. 1141.

Conservatory of Music, the cavalry corps and the infantry unit of San Salvador. The teachers, musicians and soldiers who lost their livelihoods, their families and acquaintances all knew the cause of their economic difficulties: the Burrell case and US arrogance. The publicity given to each annual payment renewed popular anger against the United States. The Salvadorean press did not see the Burrell ruling as the result of a governmental mistake, but as a disciplining of the country through humiliation. The Anglo-Saxon magistrates had ignored the Salvadorean position and gave credence only to the US party. They deemed the Salvadorean legal system as incapable of independent administration of justice; the ruling was an indictment of Salvadorean institutions. It was clear; US businessmen enjoyed the protection of their powerful country while Salvadoreans were at a disadvantage even at home. When Salvadorean authorities expressed dissatisfaction with the mediation, Secretary of State John Hay replied that they had signed a protocol accepting the arbitration ruling as 'definitive and unappealable'.¹² Case closed.

In October 1903 the *Diario del Salvador* framed the case in the context of US hegemonic ambitions: 'The Burrell ruling – iniquitous as it is – symbolises the new form of domination of a policy that conceals vandalistic ambitions under the guise of law; it is the policy that has paraded its banners around Cuba and the Philippines.' The arbitration decision was 'the forced outcome of a dispute between a small country and an omnipotent and ambitious nation'.¹³ The 'vandalistic ambitions' were soon confirmed. Two weeks later, Roosevelt facilitated the separation of Panama from Colombia.

The Burrell affair was not the only source of animosity. The British envoy explained to the Foreign Office that Salvadorean resentment after the Burrell verdict was 'revived by the claims submitted by the brothers Moissant [*sic*], who have notoriously taken an active part in numerous revolutionary attempts'.¹⁴ The Moissants, a Californian family with extensive holdings in western El Salvador, schemed to put in power politicians friendly to their business interests. When the president in office represented an obstacle to their objectives, they supported his rivals and provided them with hiding places in their haciendas. John Moissant was a friend and ally of Nicaraguan President Zelaya. On one occasion he collaborated with the Nicaraguan to orchestrate an invasion of El Salvador to put in power Prudencio Alfaro, a gentleman they both found agreeable to their interests. Regardless of their actions, US diplomats always backed the Moissants. After the failed invasion, the US consul took the defiant step of showing his support for the Californians by appointing one of them, Alfred, as vice-consul.¹⁵

¹²Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (El Salvador), *Reclamación del ciudadano norteamericano Alfredo W. Burrell en nombre de la corporación 'The Salvador Commercial Co.' como accionista de la compañía de 'El Triunfo Lda': Alegatos y documentos justificativos, 1900–1902* (San Salvador: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 1902), p. 549.

¹³'El arreglo de la cuestión Burrell', *Diario del Salvador*, 15 Oct. 1903, p. 8.

¹⁴Carden, 'Central America, Annual Report 1908', p. 5 of the report.

¹⁵Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores to Department of State, 23 Oct. 1905, in US Department of State, *Notes from the Legation of El Salvador in the United States to the Department of State, 1879–1906*, Microcopy T-798 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm, 1962); Thomas Schoonover, 'A U.S. Dilemma: Economic Opportunity and Anti-Americanism in El Salvador, 1901–1911', *Pacific Historical Review*, 59: 4 (1989), p. 412.

The hostility to US haughtiness that had been building up as a result of the Burrell affair and the activities of the *Moisants* surfaced from time to time at public events. An incident during a ceremony organised by Mexican expatriates provides a good example. In September 1910, to celebrate the centenary of their country's independence, members of San Salvador's Mexican community organised an act at the *Varietades* theatre. As part of the programme, Luis Rodríguez Contreras, the secretary of the Mexican Community Committee, delivered a speech. 'Mexico', said Rodríguez Contreras, 'is the sentinel that defends the integrity of Latin America from the unbridled ambitions of the Colossus of the Stars and Stripes – that monster seeking universal dominion, either by the roar of its cannons or the glitter of its gold'.¹⁶ The audience erupted in thunderous applause.

The *Varietades* theatre incident is also an early indication of the influence of Mexican nationalism on the Salvadorean population. Even though between 1910 and 1916 the situation in Mexico was too chaotic for the government to have a coordinated diplomatic strategy towards Central America, Salvadorean mutual aid societies and university students kept in touch with Mexican associations and were influenced by them.¹⁷ As we will see later, Salvadoreans followed events in Mexico with interest.

The US envoy hastened to inform his government about the response to Rodríguez Contreras' speech. His dispatch gave other examples of expressions of anti-imperialism, such as a newspaper article from Santa Ana, a provincial capital. It condemned the Monroe Doctrine because it 'left behind a trail of protectorates, complete and partial', and warned about the proximity of 'another slavery'. 'Sooner or later', warned the article, '[Salvadoreans] will suffer the same fate'.¹⁸

The depth of anti-imperialist sentiments became apparent during a visit made by Secretary of State Philander Knox in March 1912. The purpose of Knox's trip was to highlight the commercial advantages of the Panama Canal for the countries of Central America and the Caribbean. The canal was almost finished, and US authorities anticipated a new era to follow its inauguration. The secretary of state visited Panama, the five countries of Central America, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica and the Virgin Islands to extol the 'new highway of commerce [that] will be opened to the world', and to highlight the need to maintain political stability in a Caribbean area friendly to the United States.¹⁹

Officials from the State Department did not anticipate problems in El Salvador. The briefs prepared by Knox's staff before the trip described the Salvadorean

¹⁶Thomas E. Dabney to Secretary of State, 20 Sept. 1910, in US Department of State (ed.), *Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations between the United States and El Salvador, 1910–29* (hereafter *Political Relations US–ES, 1910–29*), Microcopy 659 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm, 1968).

¹⁷Post-Porfirian Mexican policy towards Central America started in 1916 when Venustiano Carranza sent a special envoy, Salvador Martínez Alomía, to restore diplomatic relations. See Pablo Yankelevich, 'Centroamérica en la mira del constitucionalismo, 1914–1920', *Signos Históricos*, 7 (Jan.–June 2002), pp. 173–99. Civil society contacts included anti-imperialists visiting Mexico and mutual aid societies inviting Mexican delegates to their annual meetings and appointing representatives in Mexico.

¹⁸Thomas E. Dabney to Secretary of State, 20 Sept. 1910, in *Political Relations US–ES, 1910–29*.

¹⁹Philander C. Knox, *Speeches Incident to the Visit of Philander Chase Knox* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 27.

president, Manuel Enrique Araujo, as someone who ‘professes friendship to the United States’. Since the situation was favourable, the secretary’s Salvadorean speech could be pro forma: ‘In Salvador, no particular caution seems needful. Friendship, helpfulness, observance of the Washington conventions, internal development, and incidental advantages from the Canal could be worked out for a twenty-minute address.’²⁰ State Department staff saw no reason for Salvadoreans to object to a visit conceived to underscore the benefits of increased trade opportunities.

As the secretary of state’s trip approached, William Heimké, the US envoy at San Salvador, received information about unexpected opposition. Mysterious individuals approached the legation with intelligence on plots to assassinate Knox. One plan was to place a bomb under the train destined to transport US dignitaries from the port of Acajutla to the capital. Another plan was to collect germs at the hospital to contaminate the secretary’s food with ‘rabies, yellow fever, diphtheria, carbon, and tuberculosis’. According to the plan, ‘Mr Knox will die of diphtheria or rabies aboard his vessel, his family and everyone else on the ship will also die.’²¹ The multiple germ redundancies built into this innovative plan practically guaranteed its success, but it was never put into practice.

In the government-sanctioned narratives published by the Salvadorean and US press, the secretary’s visit was an uneventful protocolary affair. The covers of most periodicals chronicled the official receptions, banquets and speeches. ‘Friendship and peace will result from the reciprocal dependence of the countries upon each other’s products, sympathies, and assistance’, said Knox in his farewell speech.²² However, there were hints of tension. Salvadorean diplomats did their utmost to be cordial, but the legislature did not approve supplementary funds for a special welcome. A detail of 100 soldiers and a machine gun guarded the train that took the secretary from Acajutla to San Salvador.²³ Although newspapers like *Vox Populi* (a publication aligned with the urban workers’ mutual aid societies) published articles on Walker to express opposition to the visit without direct attacks on the US dignitary, they buried such stories in their inside pages.²⁴

Soon after the announcement of Knox’s visit, a group of artisans and students decided to invite the charismatic Argentine intellectual Manuel Ugarte to speak to the Salvadorean public. He had already made a name for himself as a champion of anti-imperialism with books such as *El porvenir de la América Latina*. The idea of having Ugarte in San Salvador at the same time as Knox alarmed the authorities. Government officers sent letters and emissaries to ask him to delay his arrival because ‘the young people were in a state of turmoil, demonstrations are being

²⁰‘The Secretary’s Caribbean Trip’, 13 Feb. 1912, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, ‘The Papers of Philander C. Knox’, Box 33, ‘Preparations for Central American trip’.

²¹Letters from Juan B. Canón to William Heimké, dated 3 Feb., 9 and 10 March 1912, Tulane Latin American Library, ‘Major William J Heimké Papers 1866–1917’, ‘Correspondence 1910–1912’, folder 10. ‘Carbon’ refers to a bacterial disease caused by the bacterium *Clostridium chauvoei* that affects mainly cattle but is transmitted to humans through meat consumption.

²²‘Troops Guard Knox on Salvador Trip’, *New York Times*, 12 March 1912, p. 2.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴‘Lecciones que han debido aprovecharse. La guerra del filibusterismo 1855–1857’, *Vox Populi*, 12 March 1912, p. 2.

prepared'.²⁵ Defiant, he boarded a ship from Guatemala to El Salvador, but the authorities did not allow him to disembark.

Knox left the country on 13 March. The next day students met to coordinate Ugarte's visit. On the day of his arrival, when the train approached San Salvador's Estación de Oriente, 'the crowd burst into cheers and applause'.²⁶ Memoirs and newspapers do not provide numbers for the people gathered to welcome him but describe the attendance as a *muchedumbre* (crowd). A student speaker, Salvador Merlos, 'recalled the invasion of the filibuster Walker in 1856 and the explosion of feelings that awakened all of Central America against him'.²⁷ A speech by Joaquín Bonilla, of the Sociedad de Artesanos (Artisans' Society), discussed the task of continental defence and the responsibilities of the new generations. A Costa Rican writer, Rubén Coto Fernández, explained how 'in other times they attacked us with bayonets, now they do it with the dollar. But we have realized that superiority is to be found in education and we have begun to turn each school into a machine gun'.²⁸

When Ugarte was in the capital, workers and students 'united in a close embrace' to organise activities to protest 'against the rapacity of the Yankee filibuster' that intended 'to increase the power of their dollarised greatness with our extensive and rich soil', as Merlos said in one of the acts.²⁹ Ugarte was a hit. While he delivered a speech at a standing-room-only event organised by the Sociedad de Artesanos, the public interrupted him often with 'cheers and clapping of hands'.³⁰ At the end of the ceremony, the audience escorted him to the Nuevo Mundo hotel.

Knox's and Ugarte's visits exposed the strength of anti-imperialist sentiment and the scope of its appeal, particularly among artisans and university students. The composition of the most fervent groups of anti-imperialists was critical for President Araujo since they were key elements of his coalition.³¹ In the liberal tradition, Araujo had established clientelist relations with mutual aid societies.³² On the anniversaries of his presidential inauguration, he received visits from delegations of the artisans' societies, which also organised parties in his honour in several districts of the capital.³³ On important occasions, Araujo attended the dances of organisations such as the Sociedad de Artesanos and the Sociedad de Obreros (Workers' Society) 'La Concordia'.³⁴

Araujo, who feared the Guatemalan president and his Salvadorean allies' conspiracies to overthrow him, sought popular support throughout the country. In his visits

²⁵Manuel Ugarte, *The Destiny of a Continent*, trans. James Phillips, Fred Rippy and Catherine Alison (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1925), p. 96.

²⁶Salvador Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro* (San José: Imprenta G. Matamoros, 1914), p. 304.

²⁷Ugarte, *The Destiny of a Continent*, p. 100.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, pp. 305–6.

³⁰Ugarte en la Sociedad de Obreros', *Diario del Salvador*, 1 April 1912, p. 1.

³¹John Chasteen discusses Araujo's populism in 'Manuel Enrique Araujo and the Failure of Reform in El Salvador, 1911–1913', *Southeastern Latin Americanist*, 27 (Sept. 1984), pp. 1–25.

³²Arturo Taracena Arriola and Omar Lucas Monteflores discuss mutual aid societies in Central America in the introduction to *Diccionario biográfico del movimiento obrero urbano de Guatemala, 1877–1944* (Guatemala City: FLACSO, 2014).

³³'Los obreros', *Diario del Salvador*, 12 March 1912, p. 1.

³⁴'Sesión pública', *Vox Populi*, 17 Sept. 1912, p. 4.

to the provinces, he made frequent populist gestures. He contributed funds for an orphanage (including 1,000 Salvadorean pesos from his own pocket), started a subscription to buy corn for the poor, and visited schools, prisons and hospitals. In one town, he gave cement to improve the park; in another, he promised a telegraph office. The *Diario del Salvador* called him the 'conqueror of the popular soul', who engaged in 'daily struggles to defend the people's sweat'.³⁵ Araujo's appeals for popular support were a vital part of his strategy to fend off the threat of his political rivals. Knox's and Ugarte's visits revealed Araujo's political problem: the main elements of his powerbase harboured strong anti-imperialist sentiments.

Popular Reaction to the 1912 Invasion of Nicaragua

The memory of Knox's and Ugarte's visits was still fresh when events in Nicaragua put President Araujo in a quandary. In July 1912 the nationalist General Luis Mena declared himself in rebellion against the government of President Adolfo Díaz (1911–17, 1926–9), a great friend of the United States and a critical ally for the implementation of dollar diplomacy in Nicaragua. Araujo realised the implications of the so-called 'Guerra de Mena' for his political position. In similar circumstances, the United States had not hesitated to send marines to defend its interests in the Caribbean area. Araujo faced unattractive options if the United States invaded Nicaragua. Silence was not possible, openly opposing the United States was unwise and acquiescing to an invasion was political suicide.

The geopolitics of the situation was apparent. As the British envoy had informed his government, US policy-makers were 'making strenuous efforts to acquire an unquestioned and supreme influence over the countries bordering on the Caribbean Sea'.³⁶ A tiny country should accept the actions of the most powerful country in the hemisphere and try to make the best of it. Araujo understood this. On becoming president, his first instinct was to be accommodating to US interests. A few days before his election, at the suggestion of a representative of Minor Keith, the owner of the United Fruit Company, the president-elect had signed a memorandum promising to support US policies. 'I have made him [Araujo] accept the memorandum that you know about, and he has committed to the American government to fulfil it, it has not been as easy as you would think', said the report submitted by Keith's agent.³⁷ The day after his election, Araujo visited Minister Heimké. The diplomat's dispatch informed of the president-elect's request to confidentially 'ascertain what treaties would please the Government of the United States to enact with the Salvadorian [*sic*] Government and then at the proper time to submit to him a draft of the same for his consideration, adding that he desires the submission to the National Assembly of such treaties to be among the first acts of his administration'.³⁸

³⁵'Un episodio en la gira presidencial – grandes manifestaciones populares – a favor de la clase pobre', *Diario del Salvador*, 11 July 1912, p. 1.

³⁶Lionel Carden, 'Central America, Annual Report 1911', p. 5 of the report, in *Confidential Print*.

³⁷Letter from René Keilhauer to Minor Keith, 9 Dec. 1910, Archivo CEPA-FENADESAL, San Salvador, SV-CEPA/14/1912, 'Correspondencia Cartas-Telegramas', 'Guatemala Railway', 'Minor C. Keith'.

³⁸Heimké to Department of State, 12 Jan. 1911, in *Political Relations US-ES, 1910–29*.

Despite his willingness to play along, domestic pressures made it politically impossible for the president to consent to aggressive US actions in Nicaragua. Anti-imperialist passions were such that accepting an intervention would guarantee the loss of the support of constituencies essential for the survival of his presidency. Being a good politician, he considered an intermediate option: to prevent the Nicaraguan civil war from being the pretext for a US invasion.

Salvadorean diplomacy thus entered a stage of feverish activity. As a first step, Araujo wrote to Antonio López, his representative in Nicaragua. He instructed him to meet with George Weitzel, the US minister, to convey Salvadorean opposition to direct intervention by the United States because it was 'highly detrimental to American policy and would cause a great scandal throughout the continent and especially in Central America, with consequences that are difficult to foresee'. According to López, Weitzel gave him assurances; the marines would not occupy Nicaragua.³⁹ In addition, the government instructed its representative in Washington to coordinate all Central American diplomats to visit the State Department to deliver the same message. Araujo also tried to coordinate his position with the other presidents of Central America. In Nicaragua, López met with both sides to mediate an armistice.

Mindful of anti-imperialist domestic pressures, the Salvadorean government gave wide publicity to its diplomatic initiatives.⁴⁰ The newspapers favourable to the government explained its objective to save Central America from 'the shame of a foreign intervention that could bring consequences of incalculable magnitude to the Isthmus'.⁴¹ After the mediation failed, the Araujo government decided to support Díaz under the assumption that a decisive conservative victory in Nicaragua would make a marine invasion unnecessary. Araujo, again, took the lead and wrote to his Central American colleagues to coordinate actions of moral and material support for Díaz. Even before the responses arrived, he made arrangements with the Salvador Railway and Steamship Company to transport up to 1,000 Salvadorean troops to the Nicaraguan port of Corinto.⁴² He also sent 5,000 bags of corn to alleviate the famine in Nicaragua, one of the causes of discontent with the Díaz regime.⁴³ Afraid of US impatience with the Nicaraguan situation, the Salvadorean president issued new orders to his minister in Washington to warn the State Department about 'the serious dangers and general excitement in Central America if the United States were to intervene'.⁴⁴ However, the Pacific fleet already

³⁹Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (El Salvador), *Boletín del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*, Sept. 1912, p. 2. Weitzel said later that he had never made such promises. See US Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1912* (hereafter *FRUS, 1912*) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 1070. Unless otherwise noted, the narrative of the official reactions of El Salvador between Aug. and Oct. is based on the cables reproduced in the *Boletín del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores* (Sept. 1912).

⁴⁰See 'Gestiones del Ministro del Salvador en Nicaragua por la paz', *Diario del Salvador*, 9 Aug. 1912, p. 1; and 'Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 12 Aug. 1912, p. 1.

⁴¹'Cuartillas políticas. La mediación centroamericana en Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 26 Aug. 1912, p. 1.

⁴²Letter from Heimké to Secretary of State, 22 Aug. 1912, in *FRUS, 1912*, pp. 1046–7.

⁴³*Ibid.*; 'Noticias palpitantes de Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 27 July 1912, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (El Salvador), *Boletín del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*, Sept. 1912, p. 10.

had plans to land marines in the port of Corinto. Starting on 28 August, USS Denver, USS California, USS Justin, USS Colorado and USS Cleveland deployed hundreds of marines armed with machine guns and heavy artillery.⁴⁵

After the marines disembarked, Araujo appealed to President Taft to keep them in the vicinity of the port without venturing inland. At the same time, he was negotiating a compromise with the Nicaraguans to install a president acceptable to the warring parties. Araujo's freelancing tested the patience of the Taft administration. Early in September, the US minister visited Araujo to deliver a written message from Taft. The United States, said the message, refused to abandon 'its Legation and the life and safety of its citizens and their property and its important interests in Nicaragua at the mercy of a rebellion based upon no principle'. Part of the message was oral. The State Department instructed Minister Heimké to leave 'no doubt in the mind of the president and Government of Salvador that their motives and activities are under considerable suspicion and are being closely watched ... and that the quality of the friendship of the Government of Salvador will be measured by its attitude in the premises'.⁴⁶

The Salvadorean population followed the invasion news with alarm. The *Diario del Salvador* reported 'the USS California' landed '400 sailors with machine guns and a 6-pound cannon'. 'Very soon', the newspaper continued, '2,000 marines will be in Nicaragua'.⁴⁷ The popular reaction was swift. '[W]hen United States forces landed in Nicaragua the populace of Salvador arose in protest', said Heimké in a report.⁴⁸ The same students and artisans involved in the organisation of Ugarte's visit four months earlier got down to work. They printed flyers to call a meeting at Parque Bolívar on 4 September at seven o'clock. The population responded promptly – 'the leaflet was like an electric spark that set ablaze a profound Central American patriotism in the soul of these people'.⁴⁹ A spectacular rainstorm did not prevent thousands of people from gathering in the square. The crowd marched to the presidential palace to force the president to listen to their outrage. The speakers addressed the demonstrators with patriotic ardour, each of them 'was interrupted with cheers that burst into loud applause'.⁵⁰

After the demonstration, students and workers felt the need to organise. The students formed the Comité Defensivo de Integridad Centroamericana (Committee for the Defence of Central American Integrity). The name of the workers' association was Defensa de Nicaragua (Defence of Nicaragua).⁵¹ Since the idea of separate groups did not make sense, both came together to create the Comité

⁴⁵See US Office of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department, Washington, DC, 'List of Expeditions, 1901–1929', available at www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/l/list-of-expeditions-1901-1929.html, last access 4 April 2020.

⁴⁶Telegram from US State Department to US Minister to El Salvador, 4 Sept. 1912, in *FRUS, 1912*, p. 1042.

⁴⁷'Sucesos de Nicaragua – Estados Unidos en Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 2 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

⁴⁸Heimké to Secretary of State, 26 Feb. 1913, in US Department of State, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of El Salvador, 1910–29* (hereafter *Internal Affairs of El Salvador, 1910–29*), Microcopy 658 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm, 1967).

⁴⁹Description based on the article 'La manifestación de anoche', *Diario del Salvador*, 5 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹'Comités de defensa en El Salvador', *Diario del Salvador*, 7 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

Organizador de los Trabajos de Defensa Nacional (Organisational Committee for National Defence). The Comité's first initiative was to convene a second meeting at Parque Bolívar. A Costa Rican newspaper reported a crowd size of about 10,000 people.⁵² Again, the participants marched to the presidential mansion. This time the president said he had reliable information about Washington's intentions. '[T]he United States', he said, 'does not intend to exercise any protectorate in Nicaragua' and 'The White House had undertaken to order the withdrawal of the naval forces sent to Nicaragua'.⁵³ Unimpressed, the demonstrators confronted the president with 'violent words', a veritable 'hail of hurtful verbal darts'.⁵⁴

The new Comité (reported to have 3,000 members) decided it needed to reach beyond the national borders. Its members sent telegrams to related groups in Argentina, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras to announce the formation of their association and establish collaborative ties to protest against the violation of Central American sovereignty.⁵⁵

Regional committees formed in the departments of Ahuachapán, Santa Ana and San Miguel.⁵⁶ The three leading mutual aid societies of the capital of Santa Ana province organised a joint rally. The local newspaper urged 'all the peoples of the Republic to organise demonstrations'.⁵⁷ It was not always easy, however, to follow the newspaper's recommendation. In towns like Santa Tecla, the military authorities prohibited public protests.⁵⁸

It was impossible to ignore the asymmetry of the situation. Salvadoreans, amid their frustration, looked for innovative ways to respond to the intervention. During its brief life, the aforementioned Defensa de Nicaragua committee proposed a boycott of US products. The limited information available suggests a strong response to the initiative. In Texistepeque, in the western region, the workers prepared a list of the businesses participating in the boycott.⁵⁹ A merchant, Arcadio Rochac Velado, wrote to his vendors in New Orleans:

[I]t is my intention to cancel all relations with houses of the Imperialist Republic, for I have learned about the policy of the government in Washington, which is essentially dominant, false and even ridiculous, as demonstrated by the current events taking place in our sister Republic of Nicaragua, where the Yankee cannons have killed thousands, filling many homes with desolation and terror.⁶⁰

⁵²'Actualidad centroamericana', *El Pacífico*, 5 Oct. 1912, p. 6.

⁵³'El mitin de anoche', *Diario del Salvador*, 9 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵'Cablegramas del Comité Defensa Nacional a Centro América y México', *Diario del Salvador*, 10 Sept. 1912. *El Pacífico* from Costa Rica published copies of the telegrams. See 'Contra la intervención Yankee', *El Pacífico*, 5 Oct. 1912, p. 6.

⁵⁶Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, p. 192.

⁵⁷'Protesta de los artesanos de Santa Ana – manifestación popular', *Diario del Salvador*, 9 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

⁵⁸'Manifestación prohibida', *Vox Populi*, 17 Sept. 1921, p. 4.

⁵⁹'Boicoteo al comercio norteamericano', *Diario del Salvador*, 25 Sept. 1912, p. 1; 'Noticias de Santa Ana', *Diario del Salvador*, 8 Oct. 1912, p. 1.

⁶⁰Arcadio Rochac Velado, quoted in Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, p. 193.

Some decided to take up arms to fight the marines. A group went to the presidential house to ask for authorisation to travel to Nicaraguan battlefields. They even requested official support. The government, aware of the folly of armed action against the United States, sent several anti-imperialist leaders to jail.⁶¹ Nonetheless, volunteers travelled to Nicaragua. Students escaped from their homes to join the fight.⁶² A dispatch from Honduras reported how 'every day two or three patriots come from El Salvador, some artisans, others students. They get ready here and travel to Nicaragua in groups.'⁶³ A few arrived with their own weapons and ammunition. Before he joined the Nicaraguan rebels, a farmer from the municipality of Ilobasco sold land to buy his weapon. A young Salvadorean fighter, Lucila Matamoros, demonstrated so much bravery that the Nicaraguans granted her promotion to army colonel right there on the battlefield. This heroic woman had a sad demise. She ended up hanging from a Nicaraguan tree.⁶⁴ It is unclear how many Salvadoreans joined the battle. It could have been dozens, perhaps more.

While the US marines fought Mena's troops, the Salvadorean strategy was to accelerate the end of the civil war in Nicaragua. It seemed to be the most expeditious way to remove US marines from Central American soil. The desperation of Salvadorean diplomacy can be inferred from the direct and undiplomatic tone of communications with US authorities. On 26 September, the Salvadorean minister in Washington arrived at the State Department with a message from Araujo to Taft in which he practically accused the United States of having lied to him. The message described the events in Nicaragua as a 'grave emergency, which I did not anticipate since the Department of State had been so kind as to indicate ... [that] the American naval action would be limited to guaranteeing foreign life and property, and to safeguarding the American Legation and Consulates'.⁶⁵ Araujo's message offered a way out. Salvadorean diplomats had persuaded Díaz to hand over power to Salvador Calderón, a politician also acceptable to Nicaraguan liberals. From the Salvadorean point of view, this solution would put an end to the 'profound excitement which the gravity of recent events has caused in this country [El Salvador]'.⁶⁶ The visit to the State Department was too late. By 26 September General Mena had already surrendered. Although one of his allies, General Benjamín Zeledón, continued the struggle, the marines' victory was imminent. Regardless, the Taft administration had no interest in Araujo's proposals. The Salvadorean minister was told that his boss was viewed with suspicion, and the State Department believed that Nicaraguan liberals had received support over the borders of El Salvador.⁶⁷

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁶²'Patriotas centroamericanos que llegan a Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 3 Oct. 1912, p. 3.

⁶³'Patriotas centroamericanos que acuden a Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 4 Oct. 1912, p. 1.

⁶⁴See Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, p. 195; Morgan Pérez, 'Breve biografía de Zeledón', *Temas Nicaragüenses*, 60 (April 2013), p. 27; 'Las heroínas de la revolución libertadora de Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 30 Nov. 1912, p. 2.

⁶⁵'Interview between the Acting Secretary and the Minister of Salvador', Washington, 26 Sept. 1912, in *FRUS*, 1912, p. 1048.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

After their defeat, rebel fighters sought refuge in El Salvador. Support for them became a new way to express repudiation of US policies. The women vendors of the San Salvador market gave them cigars and the proceeds of a collection of money they had organised.⁶⁸ The mayor of San Salvador offered them jobs in public works.⁶⁹ The Sociedad de Carpinteros (Carpenters' Society), wealthy ladies and people from all sectors of society collected money or distributed food to the Nicaraguans who had arrived with nothing but the clothes on their backs.⁷⁰

Given the high degree of support for the Nicaraguan rebels' cause, the government feared that the country could be the staging ground for a counter-offensive. Such an event could cause considerable friction with the United States. Consequently, after he learned about the rebels' defeat in Nicaragua, President Araujo convened an emergency meeting of his Council of Ministers to approve an executive decree to forbid any act that 'provokes or gives cause for a declaration of war against El Salvador'. It also prohibited private citizens 'in case of external or civil war, to send arms and any other warlike elements to the governments or the rebel forces, to recruit volunteers, or to organise military expeditions'.⁷¹

But Araujo's actions had already earned him an international reputation for resistance to US policies. The British envoy believed the United States wanted his overthrow.⁷² It was not necessary; Araujo was murdered in February 1913. Although the crime remains a mystery, in private communications US diplomats managed the hypothesis that Guatemalan President Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1898–1920), who feared Araujo's ambition to unite Central America under his leadership, was the mastermind of the assassination.⁷³

Salvadorean Activism during the Negotiation of the Chamorro–Bryan Treaty

Araujo's successor was his close collaborator Meléndez. His first challenge was to deal with the popular reactions to a treaty negotiated between the United States and Nicaragua. News of the conclusion of the treaty draft arrived while Araujo was in agony during the five days before his death. As the political uncertainty created by the magnicide gripped the country, the completion of the draft treaty confirmed anti-imperialist activists' worst fears. The proposed agreement granted the United States exclusive rights over a canal through Nicaragua and a 99-year lease for a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca. That is, it assured a US military presence in the small gulf (1,236 square miles) in which Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador had a coastline. The deal had a direct impact on Salvadorean territorial

⁶⁸'Las obreras del mercado y los emigrados de Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 21 Oct. 1912, p. 6.

⁶⁹Altruismo salvadoreño. En favor de los obreros de la emigración de Nicaragua', *Diario del Salvador*, 18 Oct. 1912, p. 1.

⁷⁰'Los emigrados nicaragüenses en San Salvador', *Diario del Salvador*, 25 Oct. 1912, p. 1.

⁷¹'Decreto Ejecutivo del 9 Oct. 1912', *Diario Oficial*, 9 Oct. 1912, p. 2273.

⁷²'Central America, Annual Report 1912', p. 13 of the report, in *Confidential Print*.

⁷³Heimké to Secretary of State, 5 Feb. 1913 and 17 May 1913, in *Internal Affairs of El Salvador, 1910–29*. The murderer confessed that he had been hired by Guatemalan authorities, but the new Salvadorean government, probably to avoid a war, blamed, without evidence, Prudencio Alfaro, a rival for the fledgling government. Araujo's successor decreed a state of siege that allowed him to arrest or exile the main opposition politicians.

waters and placed US naval power threateningly close to the country. It also meant enormous danger if the United States was involved in international conflict.

Nonetheless, Salvadorean authorities and activists had reason to expect improvements to the treaty. National newspapers followed the presidential campaign in the United States and commented with hope how Wilson, the victor in the November 1912 elections, criticised Taft's foreign policy. Moreover, the future secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, was one of the foremost detractors of the Wall Street incursions in Latin America. 'The triumph of the Democratic Party in the United States will be the salvation of these countries', was a Salvadorean newspaper headline before the elections.⁷⁴

The honeymoon was short. When Bryan turned his attention to the Nicaragua treaty, he introduced significant modifications, the most notorious of which was the inclusion of clauses similar to the infamous Platt Amendment that authorised the United States to intervene in Cuban politics. He also contemplated plans to turn all five countries of Central America into protectorates. For Bryan, the goal of the protectorate status was linked to one of the State Department's long-standing priorities for the region: the renegotiation of Central America's foreign debt with US banks. On several occasions, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the default of international debts had opened the door to the direct intervention of European powers in Latin American affairs. This risk was not acceptable in the proximity of the Panama Canal. Bryan thought that a protectorate status would give Central American countries the political stability that Wall Street banks demanded to renegotiate the debt on favourable terms.

In a 1914 letter to Wilson, Bryan said that US financial institutions collected high interest payments 'because of the risk taken' in unstable countries such as Nicaragua. 'If we can eliminate the risk before the loan is made', said the letter, 'the people will receive a pecuniary benefit from the lower rate of interest that stability will secure'.⁷⁵ For Bryan, 'The Great Commoner', it was a real bargain for Central Americans to lose their sovereignty in exchange for the elimination of the risk premium charged by predatory banks. Minister Heimké predicted the protectorate proposal would not sit well and its announcement could trigger 'formidable anti-American demonstrations and disturbances throughout El Salvador, which may assume ungovernable proportions'. He recommended that his government send navy ships for any eventuality.⁷⁶

The public learned of the plan's details in due time. 'Bryan has finally shown that the Democrats' policies are as imperialist as those of the Yankee Republicans', was a newspaper headline on the protectorate plans. News of the worrisome revisions to the treaty (which amounted to 'a slap in the face for Central America') appeared in

⁷⁴'El triunfo del partido demócrata en Estados Unidos es la salvación de estos países', *Vox Populi*, 25 July 1912, p. 1.

⁷⁵Bryan to Wilson, 15 Jan. 1914, in Woodrow Wilson and Arthur S. Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 29 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 134.

⁷⁶Letter from Heimké to Department of State, 12 July 1913, in US Department of State, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations between the United States and Central America, 1911–29* (hereafter *Political Relations US–CA, 1911–29*), Microcopy 673 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm, 1968).

the newspapers on 23 July 1913.⁷⁷ Three days later the anti-imperialists organised a 'formidable though orderly' street rally to demand a forceful response to the State Department.⁷⁸

Demonstrations erupted throughout the country. Protestors, gathered in the central square of Santa Tecla, organised the *Comité para la Defensa Nacional* (Committee for National Defence). The *Comité* warned the population about the US threats to Salvadorean sovereignty. In a matter of hours, it had 400 members.⁷⁹ Outraged citizens congregated in towns such as Opico, Olocuilta, Apopa and Chinameca, large and small communities scattered around the country.

For Minister Heimké, the substance of the plan was good. To him, El Salvador was a country with dangerous anti-imperialist proclivities. Without a protectorate status, he said, El Salvador 'will always be a menace to the peace of Central America as well as to the safety of the Panama and Nicaragua Canals, and an implacable enemy of the Government and people of the United States'.⁸⁰ At the same time, his concern with popular opposition prompted him to renew the request for US warship visits to Salvadorean ports.

While the country received 'courtesy visits' from the US Navy and the massive anti-imperialist protests crowded the streets and squares of El Salvador, Meléndez struggled to consolidate his fledgeling presidency. From the start of his term, the president opted for a dual strategy to confront the political cross-currents. In his public pronouncements, he affirmed his commitment to the defence of national sovereignty and conveyed his understanding of the popular sentiment. In private, he shared with Heimké his wishes to collaborate with the United States and control the street demonstrations. Whatever his personal feelings about the United States, Meléndez was a skilled politician who understood that he could not ignore the popular sentiment (as a former Araujo ally, he had the same political base), or the new geopolitical realities of the western hemisphere.

To deal with the immediate crisis of the July 1913 demonstrations, the president, in interviews with the national and international press, tried to calm the population. In his conversation with the *Diario del Salvador* he dismissed the news of the protectorate as 'just newspaper-driven alarm and in no way, as some think, official action'. El Salvador was taking diplomatic measures, but they were too sensitive to discuss with the press.⁸¹ In his response to a question from the *New York Times*, he rejected the possibility of a treaty like the one proposed for Nicaragua because 'the national opinion would undoubtedly reject' it.⁸² Simultaneously, in a confidential meeting, he assured Minister Heimké that 'he would always take special pains and great delight in his endeavour to meet the wishes of the Government of the United States'.⁸³

⁷⁷'Por fin Bryan ha demostrado que la política de los demócratas es tan imperialista como la de los republicanos yanquis', *Diario del Salvador*, 23 July 1913, p. 1.

⁷⁸Letter from Heimké to Department of State, 29 July 1913, in *Political Relations US-CA, 1911-29*.

⁷⁹'Se fundó en Santa Tecla el Comité de Defensa Nacional', *Diario del Salvador*, 7 Aug. 1913, p. 2.

⁸⁰Letter from Heimké to Department of State, 29 July 1913, in *Political Relations US-CA, 1911-29*.

⁸¹'Entrevista con el señor presidente de la República sobre asuntos de actualidad', *Diario del Salvador*, 26 July 1913, p. 1.

⁸²'Salvador Would Reject Our Protection', *New York Times*, 24 July 1913, p. 1.

⁸³Letter from Heimké to Department of State, 12 Aug. 1913, in *Political Relations US-CA, 1911-29*.

In Washington, the issue of the Nicaragua treaty lost its urgency when the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations rejected the first proposal. Influential senators objected to its imperialist approach.⁸⁴ Without abandoning his plans, Bryan left the matter aside. His department's agenda was crowded (Latin American specialists, in particular, had their hands full with the Mexican Revolution), but he promised to return to the issue in the winter.

It was harder for Salvadoreans to forget the treaty; their country was on the verge of losing its sovereignty. References in the press to the dangers of *el imperialismo yanqui* (Yankee imperialism) were relentless. Since 1912 any occasion seemed good to express opposition to US policies in Central America. A few examples of how this happened help to illustrate the depth and breadth of popular anti-imperialism and, therefore, the political pressure felt by the people in power.

The national tradition of organising float parades to celebrate a town's patron-saint day provided an opportunity for the population to convey its feelings.⁸⁵ The displays on the floats were the culmination of a social process with neighbourhood meetings to conceive an allegory, collect funds, recruit young women and men for the *tableaux vivants*, hire ox-driven carts and coordinate with seamstresses, carpenters and painters. Thus, the floats with their allegories were in every way a social product of neighbours coming together to express what they considered important. In 1912 San Salvador's festivities coincided with the invasion of Nicaragua. The five young women on the float put forth by the working-class Barrio Cisneros represented the Central American countries. A boy dressed as a soldier defended them with a cannon. Everyone understood why it was necessary to defend the flag-carrying women.⁸⁶ The next year the float presented by the Barrio La Vega carried 'two individuals representing the people in arms, one with a revolver and the other with an English cutlass'. They defended the Republic personified by Señorita Blanca Rosseville. The motto of the float was 'The current situation'.⁸⁷ While the Nicaragua treaty negotiations were underway in 1914, one of the floats was a brief skit in which two young women symbolising Latin America chased the Monroe Doctrine represented by a boy dressed as an eagle.⁸⁸ Festivities in smaller towns included floats that communicated similar messages.⁸⁹

Manifestations of anti-imperialism could arise in the heat of the moment. One example happened at the time of the 1914 US invasion of Veracruz, which reinforced fears about US intentions. While the marines were in Veracruz, the municipal band of the city of Santa Ana gave a concert in the park. As soon as the band put down the

⁸⁴'Bryan's Nicaragua Project Discarded', *The Sun*, New York, 3 Aug. 1913, p. 3.

⁸⁵Lorenzo Montúfar explained how the floats constituted 'allegories that mark the situation of the country and the tendencies of the parties'. Lorenzo Montúfar, *Reseña histórica de Centro-América*, vol. 6 (Guatemala: La Unión, 1887), p. 66.

⁸⁶'Días agostinos', *Diario del Salvador*, 26 July 1912, p. 1.

⁸⁷'El Barrio de La Vega y su carroza', *Diario del Salvador*, 30 July 1913, p. 1.

⁸⁸'Ecos de El Salvador', *La República*, 6 Sept. 1914, p. 2.

⁸⁹During the festivities of Chalchuapa, in the western region, a float celebrated Mexican resistance to the US invasion of Veracruz. See 'Simpática fiesta de los obreros en Chalchuapa', *La República*, 6 Sept. 1914, p. 2. For another example of a float with a nationalist allegory, see 'San Marcos. Como se celebró el aniversario de nuestra independencia', *La Prensa*, 22 Sept. 1916, p. 2.

trombones, drums and tubas, a young man stood up and improvised a speech praising the bravery demonstrated by the Mexican people in their fight against the intruder in Veracruz. 'When the speaker finished, the town people applauded for a long time', a newspaper reported. Thereupon 'a demonstration in favour of Mexico was assembled. They hired a marimba available in the vicinity and, playing joyful pieces, the people gathered and, carrying the Mexican flag, paraded through the main city streets cheering "Viva México".' In the city of San Miguel, in eastern El Salvador, demonstrators praised Mexico with 'feverish enthusiasm'.⁹⁰ There were even unconfirmed reports of Salvadoreans volunteering to fight in Veracruz alongside Victoriano Huerta's troops.⁹¹ The frequency and spontaneity of these reactions reminded the Meléndez government that its political survival depended on how it handled relations with the United States.

Public passions were similar in other Central American countries. In Costa Rica, the invasion of Nicaragua and the protectorate plans provoked massive street demonstrations.⁹² Likewise, in Honduras, the rallies against the protectorate were extraordinary in terms of their intensity and geographical reach. The population gathered in protest in practically every Honduran town.⁹³ In Guatemala, the strict control exercised by Estrada Cabrera's authoritarian regime made it difficult for public expressions of anti-imperialism to surface. For example, in 1913, when other Central Americans participated in demonstrations against the protectorate idea, Guatemalan newspapers blamed the problem on Díaz or just reprinted news stories from other countries.⁹⁴ They understood their limits, and that Estrada Cabrera did not want to antagonise the northern power. In any case, both the similarity of concerns and the dimension of the threat suggested the possibility and necessity of transnational coordination, at least between Salvadoreans, Costa Ricans, Hondurans and, of course, the Nicaraguan opposition.

As anti-imperialist leaders understood, the politicians making decisions were in Washington. Their best hope was to influence the Senate, which ultimately would have to approve any treaty. Salvadorean newspapers kept activists informed about the opinions of different senators. They followed the words of legislators such as Republican William Borah of Idaho, whose speeches were front-page news.⁹⁵ The Democratic senator of Georgia, Augustus Bacon, president pro tempore of the

⁹⁰'La manifestación del lunes en Santa Ana' and 'Gran manifestación a favor de México', *Diario del Salvador*, 29 April 1914, p. 2.

⁹¹'Salvador for Mexico', *New York Tribune*, 28 May 1914, p. 2.

⁹²A rally of thousands of people in 1913 is described in detail in 'El mitin de anoche', *El Noticiero*, 25 July 1913, p. 6.

⁹³Speeches and documents related to these events are reproduced in Liga de la Defensa Nacional Centroamericana, *Labor hondureña por la autonomía de Centro-América* (Comayagüela: El Sol, 1914).

⁹⁴See 'Verdad amarga', *La Opinión*, 26 July 1913, p. 1; 'Pro-Patria', *La Campaña*, 30 July 1913, p. 2. The extent of popular anti-imperialism in Guatemala was not clear until the end of Estrada Cabrera's term. In August 1919 student demonstrators yelled 'death to the Yankees' in a demonstration. Anti-imperialist rhetoric was rampant in the events surrounding the fall of the dictator in 1921. See Mary Catherine Rendon, 'Manuel Estrada Cabrera, Guatemalan President 1898–1920', unpubl. PhD diss., Oxford University, 1988, p. 246; Richard V. Salisbury, *Anti-imperialism and International Competition in Central America: 1920–1929* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1989), p. 24.

⁹⁵'El protectorado sólo beneficiaría a algunos comerciantes, sacrificando el amor propio nacional', *Diario del Salvador*, 30 July 1913, p. 1.

US Senate and known anti-imperialist, received similar attention.⁹⁶ This knowledge of US politics was used to select the recipients of opposition documents. Examples abound. In 1912 the members of Santa Ana's city council, after a unanimous vote to protest against the 'armed Yankee invasion of Nicaragua', decided to inform Senator Bacon of their resolution.⁹⁷ On the same occasion, university students wrote to Bacon to beg him 'to let the Senate know about our just indignation for the attack on the sovereignty of Central America'.⁹⁸ When the Salvadorean committee of the Liga Nacional Centroamericana (Central American National League) produced a bilingual anti-treaty pamphlet in 1913, it sent it straight to the Senate.⁹⁹

The interest in influencing senators increased in late December 1913 when Bryan renewed discussions on the Nicaragua treaty. Activists made sure to inform US newspapers about their demonstrations and manifestos. They hoped to have an impact on the Senate's debate by making senators aware of their opposition. In fact, the Senate and newspapers discussed items like the Liga pamphlet. On one occasion President Meléndez himself, to the annoyance of US diplomats, wrote directly to the Committee on Foreign Relations. He wanted the committee to 'require' the State Department to share copies of the Salvadorean government's protests against the treaty.¹⁰⁰ It was not only the Salvadoreans who appealed to the Senate; Honduran students also sent notes to senators to protest the possibility of a protectorate in Nicaragua.¹⁰¹

Bryan's persistence regarding the protectorate idea encouraged Central Americans to coordinate their activities. What started as a loose alliance evolved into an elaborate transnational effort. On the eve of the Senate's treaty discussions, 'a formidable delegation from Central America' travelled to Washington to oppose ratification.¹⁰² In San Salvador, a group of local anti-imperialists and Nicaraguan exiles convened a meeting in the second week of January to discuss the treaty threat. Hotel Granada, the site of the meeting, 'was full of patriots, a crowd of people invaded the adjacent corridors and adjoining rooms',¹⁰³ said a report. In the words of the *Diario Latino*, 'it was a sight to behold how even the poorest Salvadoreans emptied their pockets and promised to make all kinds of sacrifices and to work so that the propaganda of the cause does not decay due to lack of resources'.¹⁰⁴ The success of the gathering was followed by a more formal organisation – the Liga Patriótica Centroamericana (Central American Patriotic League). It had delegates in every province and subcommittees in the main cities. Merlos described the Liga as a group 'created exclusively to fight, within the very heart of the United States, against

⁹⁶'Se escudriñará la política del Departamento de Estado en Centro América', *Diario del Salvador*, 13 Dec. 1912, p. 1.

⁹⁷Acta municipal, 15 Sept. 1912, Archivo Municipal, Santa Ana, 'Libro de Actas Municipales 1912'.

⁹⁸'Comités de defensa en El Salvador', *Diario del Salvador*, 7 Sept. 1912, p. 1.

⁹⁹Comité Salvadoreño de la Liga Nacional Centroamericana, *Manifiesto from the Salvadorian People in Central America, to the People of the United States* (San Salvador: La Unión, 1913). Judging by the people signing the pamphlet, this committee was different from the organisation that emerged from the gathering at Hotel Granada.

¹⁰⁰'Salvador Snubs Ryan but Makes a Faux Pas', *Washington Herald*, 9 July 1914, p. 3.

¹⁰¹Liga de la Defensa Nacional Centroamericana, *Labor hondureña por la autonomía*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰²'Canal Treaty has Opposition', *Washington Herald*, 27 Dec. 1913, p. 1.

¹⁰³'La reunión patriótica de ayer', *Diario Latino*, 12 Jan. 1914, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

imperialist policies, making the US people see the truth of our political affairs and the evils caused by the overbearing policy of their government'.¹⁰⁵ The patriots managed to have news of their meeting printed in US publications.¹⁰⁶

The Salvadorean Liga became part of a network of Central American organisations involved in lobbying and disseminating propaganda in the United States. Honduras already had a Liga founded in 1913. The Hotel Granada patriots wrote to their Costa Rican connections to encourage them to establish one of their own. Soon the Costa Rican Liga had a group in San José and provincial branches. One of the Costa Ricans' first initiatives was 'to incite simultaneous popular rallies, in all the capitals and principal cities of Central America, against the canal treaty between Nicaragua and the United States'.¹⁰⁷ Alarmed, the State Department issued instructions to US ministers in the region to intervene to thwart the demonstrations.¹⁰⁸ The network of Ligas targeted their own governments and the US Senate. They pressured them to eliminate the most objectionable aspects of the treaty (the provisions copied from the Platt Amendment, the extension of the protectorate and the naval base). The Ligas appointed former Honduran President Policarpo Bonilla, who was already actively opposing the treaty on behalf of Nicaraguan exiles, as their representative in the United States. A popular subscription was held in El Salvador to fund the lobbying activities.¹⁰⁹ As part of his work, Bonilla published a pamphlet with an extraordinary critique of President Wilson's Latin American policies. It included a well-researched indictment of US actions in the region since the Monroe Doctrine and documented how 'material interests' had 'overcome morality and justice'.¹¹⁰ Bonilla publicised his appointment by the Ligas, granted interviews to US newspapers and met with senators.¹¹¹

The senators took the issue of Central American lobbying seriously enough to try to sabotage Bonilla's activities. In March 1913, an article in the *Daily Picayune* of New Orleans, the city where Bonilla had a law practice, described arrangements between the Honduran politician and the former Venezuelan President Cipriano Castro, a much-reviled character in the United States because of his independent attitude. The information came from a report by an investigative agent paid by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.¹¹² The article, an early version of the 'strategic leaks' so common nowadays, was a transparent attempt by treaty supporters to undermine Bonilla's credibility.

¹⁰⁵Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, p. 278.

¹⁰⁶'Oppose New Canal Treaty', *The Sun*, New York, 14 Jan. 1914, p. 3; 'Oppose Treaty with US', *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, 13 Jan. 1914, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷'Texto oficial de las resoluciones adoptadas por la Liga Patriótica de Costa Rica', *La República*, San José, Costa Rica, 18 March 1914, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸José Ramón Gramajo, *Fuentes históricas* (Mazatenango: n.p., 1946), p. 105.

¹⁰⁹Merlos, *América Latina ante el peligro*, p. 279.

¹¹⁰Policarpo Bonilla, *Wilson Doctrine: How the Speech of President Wilson at Mobile, Ala., Has Been Interpreted by the Latin-American Countries* (New York: n.p., 1914), p. 3.

¹¹¹'To Fight Nicaragua Treaty', *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1914, p. 2; 'Central America Fears Bryan Policy', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 29 March 1914, p. 6.

¹¹²'Exposición del doctor Policarpo Bonilla al Comité de Relaciones Exteriores del Senado norteamericano', *Diario del Salvador*, 1 May 1913, p. 4.

Even if the impact of popular Central American voices was, by itself, insufficient to sway the Senate, the intensity of activism in the streets was a vital concern for the national governments. Their aggressive foreign policy would have been unimaginable without popular pressure. The Salvadorean government, dependent on the support of mutual aid societies, students, liberal intellectuals and other urban groups to stay in power, was particularly vulnerable to popular pressure. It felt obliged to make very public protests at each stage of the negotiation. President Meléndez, in his message to the National Assembly on 20 February, spoke with pride about his exchanges of letters with the State Department.¹¹³ Yet, this public attitude did not prevent him from engaging in secret negotiations to provide Salvadorean land for US bases on the Gulf of Fonseca coast in exchange for favourable treatment.¹¹⁴

As the discussion of the Nicaragua treaty progressed, activists and diplomats increased their efforts. July was a month of intense action. Demonstrators in Costa Rica took to the streets and on one occasion attacked United Fruit Company facilities.¹¹⁵ The governments of Costa Rica and El Salvador issued diplomatic protests against the draft treaty. Articles in US newspapers described in detail the Senate debates and the opposition to the accord.¹¹⁶

Up to the summer of 1914, Bryan remained insistent on Platt Amendment-style clauses and on extending protectorate status to every Central American country. The Senate studied the matter in detail. Lawyers, bankers, diplomats and Nicaragua experts were invited to testify in hearings held by the Committee on Foreign Relations.¹¹⁷ The committee was busy with its discussions when Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the streets of Sarajevo. The rapid deterioration of the European situation underscored the strategic importance of the Panama Canal and the Caribbean Sea. Many senators spoke explicitly about the possibility of a European war and the need to secure control of the canal route. Now it was of the utmost importance to sign a treaty with Nicaragua. Equally important was the preservation of political stability in the area surrounding the Panama Canal. A treaty with provocative provisions would, at the worst time, cause a destabilising popular uproar in Central America. Eager to sign the treaty, Bryan dropped the Platt Amendment-style provisions. The signing of the Chamorro–Bryan Treaty took place on 5 August 1914; the Panama Canal formally

¹¹³‘Mensaje presentado a la Asamblea Nacional por el Señor Presidente de la República’, *Diario Oficial*, 20 Feb. 1914, p. 381.

¹¹⁴A draft treaty reached President Wilson’s desk although it was never signed. It stated that ‘The Republic of Salvador grants to the United States of America, for the term of ninety-nine years [...] the exclusive right to establish and maintain a naval base on or within the Gulf of Fonseca.’ Department of State to Boaz Long, 8 Dec. 1915, US Department of State, *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910–29*, (hereafter *Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910–29*), Microcopy 632 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm, 1966).

¹¹⁵Edward J. Hale to Department of State, 6 Aug. 1914, in *Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910–29*.

¹¹⁶‘Costa Rica Protests’, *New York Times*, 12 July 1913, p. 7; ‘Reject Bryan’s Isthmian Policy’, *New York Times*, 21 July 1913, p. 1.

¹¹⁷US Congress, Senate and Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing of Committee on Foreign Relations, Sixty-Third Congress, Second Session* (Washington, D C: Government Printing Office, 1914).

opened ten days later.¹¹⁸ The final version of the agreement granted the United States the right in perpetuity to build a canal through Nicaragua, a 99-year lease to the Corn Islands in the Caribbean and an option to establish a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca. Nicaragua received US\$3 million as part of the deal. The base project was never pursued.

Popular mobilisations deserve significant credit for the changes in the final version of the treaty. President Wilson worried about the long-term impact of opposition to his Central American policies. He expressed his concerns in a letter to Bryan:

Is it true that Nicaragua's neighbours have been showing themselves to be very much upset by these proposals and that they have made anything like a joint protest against them? Just now, when we are trying to gain a certain moral prestige in Central America, I would like to know how you think the pressing of the Nicaraguan treaty would affect opinion towards us in the rest of that region.¹¹⁹

The Department of State was also concerned about anti-imperialist fervour. Its diplomats were instructed to report on any sign of opposition to US policy. Their dispatches included clippings of press articles critical of the United States and accounts of every anti-imperialist demonstration.¹²⁰ The numerous Central American expressions of repudiation not only damaged the regional prestige of the United States but also created political obstacles with the Congress. References to local popular opposition were part of the debate in the Senate. On one occasion the Republican senator of Michigan State, William Alden Smith, arrived at one of the treaty discussions with a cablegram he had received from El Salvador. He waved it in front of his colleagues as proof of the local animosity towards the treaty terms proposed by Bryan.¹²¹ By the time the European situation began to deteriorate, policy-makers in the United States were fully aware of the destabilising consequences of a treaty with Platt Amendment-style clauses.

In short, the concerted action of activists made the Senate and the president aware of the strength of public opinion in Central America. Indeed, there was a great deal of opposition to imperialism within the US political system – Stephen Kinzer's work is the most recent effort to highlight its strength.¹²² But Central Americans in general, with Salvadoreans at the forefront, recognised these forces and helped to tip the balance in favour of their struggle.

The energy in the Salvadorean streets that helped to stop the protectorate could be harnessed, even manipulated, to deal with domestic politics. The Nicaraguan National Assembly ratified the Chamorro–Bryan Treaty in the spring of 1916 during a period of crisis in El Salvador. The European war had caused a precipitous

¹¹⁸See Bryan to Francisco Dueñas, 18 Feb. 1914, in *Boletín del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*, Feb.–March 1915, p. 8.

¹¹⁹Wilson to Bryan, 20 Jan. 1914, in *Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910–29*.

¹²⁰*Internal Affairs of Nicaragua, 1910–29, passim*.

¹²¹'New Fight on Treaty', *Washington Post*, 27 June 1914, p. 2.

¹²²Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2018).

decline in the country's international trade. The economic situation was dismal. A new income tax imposed by the government to balance its books provoked virulent elite hostility. Labour unrest increased unease. Shoemakers declared an unprecedented strike. Furthermore, the suspension of operations in one of the gold mines in the eastern region left 1,500 workers jobless.¹²³ The Nicaraguan ratification of the treaty allowed the Meléndez administration an opportunity to distract the Salvadorean public from the crisis. El Salvador contested the document before the Central American Court of Justice. The government propaganda apparatus gave the action the most extensive publicity it was capable of. US diplomats understood the game. The United States never penalised El Salvador for its actions before the court. US diplomats had already explained to their superiors how Salvadorean nationalist politics worked. They were bound to continue 'if only to distract public attention from local politics'.¹²⁴

Conclusion

The 'shameful Chamorro–Bryan Treaty', as César Augusto Sandino called it, is rightly regarded as an emblematic document of US imperialism.¹²⁵ Yet, it could have been worse, much worse. The treaty included a concession for a naval base, but it was never built. Bryan's attempts to include provisions similar to the Platt Amendment and impose a protectorate failed in part because artisans, workers, students, teachers and intellectuals – male and female – and thousands of activists from all over El Salvador exercised their agency with determination, persistence and ingenuity. They organised to force their government to act, coordinated with other Central Americans, lobbied the US Senate and informed the US public.

The fact that this is a forgotten episode illustrates the point made by Max Paul Friedman about how traditional diplomatic history, by ignoring local agency, misunderstood some of the most significant episodes in the history of US–Latin American relations.¹²⁶ Regardless of how asymmetric the relations may have been, local actors from all social groups advanced their interests as best as they could. They joined forces with other Central Americans to compensate for the power imbalance. The transnational effort they marshalled in the process can be considered a precursor of the international advocacy networks made up of 'actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services', analysed by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink for the late twentieth century.¹²⁷

Popular activism stopped the most extreme elements of US policy towards El Salvador, but the desire to impose control over the strategic area in the proximity

¹²³'Noticias de los departamentos', *La Prensa*, 9 Feb. 1917, p. 2.

¹²⁴Letter from Thomas Hinckley to Department of State, 3 Oct. 1913, in *Political Relations US–CA, 1911–29*.

¹²⁵Augusto César Sandino and Sergio Ramírez, *El pensamiento vivo de Sandino* (San José: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1974), p. 330.

¹²⁶Max Paul Friedman, 'Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States–Latin American Relations', *Diplomatic History*, 27: 5 (2003), pp. 621–36.

¹²⁷Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics', *International Social Science Journal*, 51: 159 (1999), pp. 89–101.

of the Panama Canal remained. Protectorates, bases and treaties were just items in an extensive repertoire of available options. Financial control and friendly elites could also achieve the desired goals. US policy-makers saw an opportunity in 1920 when Salvadorean authorities were desperate to refinance a crushing debt aggravated by corruption and the financial crisis associated with the First World War. Diplomats on the ground had spent years cultivating friends in the ruling elite and used their connections to take over the debt renegotiation with the help of Keith. The result was the disastrous 1922 loan that gave US banks virtual control of Salvadorean customs and allowed them to appoint a ‘fiscal agent’ that exercised enormous influence in the country well into the administration of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931–44).¹²⁸ The anti-imperialist movement of the 1910s was an early episode of an important feature of Salvadorean history: the constant give and take between the United States’ hegemonic ambitions and Salvadorean people’s struggle to make their own history.

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Spanish abstract

Cuando los Estados Unidos invadieron a Nicaragua en 1912 la reacción popular en El Salvador fue tan fuerte que trastocó completamente a la política local. El artículo señala que este movimiento anti-imperialista, ignorado completamente por la historiografía actual, forzó a los gobiernos salvadoreños a tomar decisiones en relación a su política exterior que hubieran sido impensables de no ser por la presión desde abajo. Las presiones populares contribuyeron para limitar los alcances de la versión final del Tratado Chamorro–Bryan entre los Estados Unidos y Nicaragua. Dicho tratado al final no incluyó provisiones tipo la Enmienda Platt. Aún más, la administración Wilson abandonó la idea de extender el protectorado para todos los países centroamericanos así como la construcción de una base naval en el Golfo de Fonseca.

Spanish keywords: El Salvador; relaciones Estados Unidos–El Salvador; anti-imperialismo; movimientos sociales; sociedades de ayuda mutua; Tratado Chamorro–Bryan

Portuguese abstract

Quando os Estados Unidos invadiram a Nicarágua em 1912, a reação popular em El Salvador foi tão forte que completamente desestabilizou a política salvadorenha. O artigo argumenta que este movimento anti-imperialista, completamente ignorado pela historiografia atual, forçou governos salvadoreños a tomar decisões relativas à política externa que teriam sido inimagináveis, não fosse pela pressão popular. Tal pressão também contribuiu em limitar o alcance da versão final do Tratado Chamorro–Bryan entre os Estados

¹²⁸Héctor Lindo-Fuentes, ‘La United Fruit Company y el empréstito de 1922 en El Salvador’, *Boletín de la Asociación para el Fomento de los Estudios Históricos en Centroamérica* (April 2015), available at www.afehc-historia-centroamericana.org/?action=fi_aff&id=3934, last access 15 April 2020.

Unidos e a Nicarágua, que não incluiu provisões ao estilo da Emenda Platt. Além disso, a administração de Wilson abandonou a ideia de estender o protetorado à todos os países da América Central e também de construir uma base naval no Golfo de Fonseca.

Portuguese keywords: El Salvador; relações Estados Unidos–El Salvador; anti-imperialismo; movimentos sociais; sociedades de ajuda mútua; Tratado de Chamorro–Bryan