

regarded scope. The Zapatista program intended to “restructure property relations” nationally, but remained an “unfulfilled utopia” (200). The Constitutionals hoped to address discrete situations through agrarian reform and only “accidentally” developed policies that redistributed half the national territory. If agrarian reform contributed to authoritarianism, it was not because it rendered peasants clients of the state; rather, the broader process developed to address peasants’ forceful demands compromised (or “transcended,” as revolutionaries preferred) the rule of law in favor of social inequality.

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### ARMED REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

*With Masses and Arms: Peru’s Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.* By Miguel La Serna. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 270. Abbreviations. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$90.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2021.22

This is the captivating story of Peru’s Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), a formidable but not widely known revolutionary movement in Cold War Latin America that was overshadowed by the parallel insurgency of the Shining Path during the 1980s and 1990s. It was named after the eighteenth-century leader of a massive Indian uprising in the Andes, whose indigenous forces almost overturned three centuries of Spanish colonial rule at the cost of over a third of the colony’s population. The story of MRTA in the hands of historian La Serna reads like a fiction thriller all the way up to its last-ditch dramatic capture of the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima in 1997. Then, it will be remembered, the denouement of MRTA occurred three months later when, under the glare of a worldwide television audience, special forces tunneled into and successfully recaptured the ambassador’s residence, remarkably releasing unharmed almost all the captives while killing their captors.

Rather than a more conventional blow-by-blow account of this 13-year conflict, La Serna has chosen to “humanize” his narrative by focusing on the lives of the individual combatants—rebel leaders, state actors, and the everyday men and women participants. For example, we follow the remarkable figure of Lucero Cumpa who, because of her gender, was at first relegated like her other female companions to a secondary, non-combat role in the rebel army, despite the movement’s advocacy of women’s empowerment and gender equality. We follow Cumpa’s surprising rise to the rank of commander of MRTA’s guerrilla forces, successfully challenging and then breaking through the typically paternalistic, patriarchal, and misogynistic culture of her male colleagues.

La Serna also effectively emphasizes the highly political-cultural strategy that accompanied MRTA's armed struggle for power. This involved an effort to win the public relations war—that is, to win the hearts and minds of Peruvians—by appropriating the national symbols of collective memory, cultural identity, and history. Thus, MRTA targeted for attack symbolical individuals, institutions, buildings or monuments, effectively identifying the state and the ruling class as illegitimate outsiders unworthy of public support. In each case, the Peruvian flag was replaced with its own redesigned MRTA version. Likewise, it cleverly manipulated the media with secret interviews with its leader, the seemingly amiable Víctor Polay Campos, who favorably presented the movement's demands for democratic, egalitarian, and socially responsible reforms as well as his willingness to negotiate with the government. This stood in marked contrast to the uncompromising and viciously violent tactics of its rival the Shining Path, and it made headway with public opinion for a time.

Two of the most gripping stories relate the extraordinary escape of Víctor Polay from Peru's highest-security prison and later the equally daring rescue of the captives in the Japanese embassy by army special forces. Both were accomplished by means of the painstaking, indeed excruciating, construction of underground tunnels. Polay and his colleagues escaped prison through tunnels. Years later, an assault unit gained entrance surreptitiously to the ambassador's residence, catching the captors unawares; they were playing a game of soccer in the mansion's great hall. Polay's escape in 1990 momentarily enabled MRTA to reach the high point of its public favor while the army assault several years later in 1997 brought the movement to its crushing defeat.

In the end, Polay gambled that he would win the day with his embrace of the hard-liners in MRTA, in a last-ditch effort to capture the ambassador's residence in order to use its captives as pawns to force President Alberto Fujimori to negotiate a favorable outcome for the beleaguered movement. However, he had not counted on Peru's wily president outmaneuvering him by holding out from entering talks with Polay for several months, while simultaneously plotting a final assault on the embassy to rescue its inmates. That bold move drove up Fujimori's then low poll numbers to extraordinary heights and doomed Polay and the MRTA to the ash heap of Cold War history in Peru and Latin America.

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