

Ricardo Caro Cárdenas, *Demonios encarnados: Izquierda, campesinado y lucha armada en Huancavelica*

(Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, Estación La Cultura, 2021), 282 pp.

Valérie Robin Azevedo, *Los silencios de la guerra: Memorias y conflicto armado en Ayacucho-Perú*

(Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, Estación La Cultura, 2021), 262 pp.

Charles Walker

University of California, Davis

These two remarkable books push the study of Peru's internal armed conflict (1980–2000) in new directions. They move away from the concentration on the Shining Path leadership and urban Lima and Ayacucho to examine the rise and fall of support for the guerrillas in the countryside or smaller cities such as Huancavelica. In temporal terms, they demonstrate the need to begin the analysis well before the outbreak of the insurgency in 1980 and to address the conflict's deeply painful and complex legacies today. They contribute to numerous theoretical and methodological debates and deserve a wide readership.

The historian Ricardo Caro Cárdenas studies the department of Huancavelica, a renowned mining centre north of Ayacucho that played an important role in the Shining Path uprising. Caro focuses on the rise of the *movimiento campesino* (peasant movement) since the 1960s, tracking the growth of different peasant federations and their evolving relationship with political parties of the Left. He stresses how different Maoist groups in Peru, not just the Shining Path, pushed the countryside to the front and centre of political debates and strategies. In the late 1970s, heated discussions about the correct time for armed insurrection took on a particular urgency, as groups or individuals broke from Vanguardia Revolucionaria and other parties or factions to join the Shining Path. While highlighting the differences between the parties on the Left in these decades and the fluidity with which people changed from one to another, Caro underlines how all the parties discounted the importance of Indigenous culture and of the Quechua language, seeing *campesinos* as 'backward' subjects waiting to be mobilised rather than listened to or understood. This argument constitutes an important subtheme present throughout the book.

Unlike Ayacucho, Huancavelica did not have a university, so the Shining Path efforts focused on schools and peasant federations (they made little inroad into miners' unions). Caro brings to light deliberations and changes within the key peasant federation, the Federación Departamental de Comuneros y Campesinos de Huancavelica (Huancavelica Villagers' and Peasants' Departmental Federation, FEDECCH), tracking several of its key members. In fact, much of the book investigates Justo Gutiérrez Poma, who participated in Huancavelica peasant politics in the 1970s and ended up in the Shining Path. Born in an Indigenous peasant

community, Gutiérrez Poma attended high school in Lima and returned to Huancavelica in 1973 a committed leftist. He participated in both FEDECCH and the Frente de Defensa del Pueblo (People's Defence Front, FDP) and worked at DESCO, a well-known development NGO. Caro uses Gutiérrez Poma's trajectory to explore the variety of options contemplated by the Left in this period. Despite his dogged research, Caro cannot solve the mystery of what happened to Gutiérrez Poma, as the archive trail dries up in 1984. Most assume that he was killed in battle.

Caro demonstrates that the question of why certain individuals and communities joined Shining Path while others refused can be understood only by examining a decade or more of local political history. He has uncovered astonishing sources in archives in Ayacucho, Lima and Huancavelica and interviewed dozens of people. At times, the book approaches an archive report, but the author rarely abandons his important and pathbreaking arguments and discoveries.

While Caro covers Huancavelica, Valérie Robin Azevedo examines two towns south of Ayacucho involved in the conflict, Huancapi and Ocros. In the first section of her book – originally published as *Sur les sentiers de la violence. Politiques de la mémoire et conflit armé au Pérou*, Editions de l'IHEAL, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris (2019) – Robin Azevedo rehashes anthropological debates about the Shining Path, discussions that have not aged particularly well. The bulk of her study, however, is a pathbreaking and stirring examination of the many 'silenced, impertinent memories' (p. 147) regarding the Peruvian conflict, particularly involving women. Robin Azevedo shows how the Shining Path gathered support in the region, through schools and its militants' patient work. As is the case with Caro's *Demonios descarnados*, diligent and innovative research, in this case deep, immersive fieldwork primarily in Quechua, allowed the author to understand the local nature of support for and opposition to the Shining Path. Evaluating Shining Path's efforts is challenging because they relied on both coercion and persuasion – did local support emerge from their promise of a just society or from their threats to murder anyone who opposed them? The other major obstacle, as the author shows throughout the book, is that, in a country where 'apology for terrorism' is still a crime, few want to discuss or admit this support, even after decades. If researchers inquire about 'those years' in a town that at one point backed the guerrillas, virtually everyone will deny giving any assistance. Nonetheless, the author shows how some initial support in these two towns for the Shining Path waned rapidly as the guerrillas displayed their authoritarian nature by 1983/4.

In the most brilliant sections, Robin Azevedo probes multiple, overlapping silences. Community members refuse to speak, at least publicly, about support for the Shining Path. At an individual level, women continue to search for their disappeared husbands or children, leaving out details of their family members' possible Shining Path collaboration. These same women also resist discussing the abuse they have received in the search for their loved ones, the sacrifices they have made. Robin Azevedo discusses the 'double disappeared', those whose bodies have never been found but who also do not appear in subsequent accounts because they presumably fought with the Shining Path. They are the most difficult to trace: human rights groups broke with the Maoists due to their own atrocities and efforts to manipulate these groups; government registrars of victims have excluded those linked with the guerrillas; and the Shining Path has done little to elucidate the

fate of their followers. Applicants for reparations must leave out any mention of the Shining Path other than as perpetrators.

The 'silences' studied by Robin Azevedo also refer to the disturbing moments during brutal periods of the conflict, when some communities or individuals benefitted by aiding the military, by expropriating land and livestock from neighbouring towns, or by turning in a neighbour. Years of fieldwork have allowed Robin Azevedo to probe these different taboo subjects at the centre of her book, still painfully present or relevant decades after the end of the conflict. She handles a variety of ethical questions, including the danger of outing former Shining Path supporters, with aplomb. In fact, *Los silencios de la guerra* represents a model for subsequent studies that seek to explore these thorny and tender topics.

These two outstanding books examine regions out of the limelight of Shining Path studies. They demonstrate the advantages of – if not necessity for – a long timeframe and address sensitively the aftermath of the conflict. Both dialogue with and contribute to debates about war, violence and memory in Peru and beyond, providing a great deal of material for researchers other than Peruvianists.

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David Rock, *The British in Argentina: Commerce, Settlers and Power, 1800–2000*

(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), xxi + 424 pp.

Matthew Brown

University of Bristol

My review of this book was rather delayed by the global pandemic and I apologise for that. I had been looking forward to seeing this book in publication since I learned that it was being written some years ago. It does not disappoint. This is a major piece of work by one of the most-cited, most-read and most-respected historians of Argentina. It is original, of broad scope, and is based on a lot of original primary research and on the revision of a mass of secondary literature.

This is the first major work on the history of the British in Argentina in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, building on and refining earlier works from William Spence Robertson (*A History of Argentina*, 2011) to H. S. Ferns (*Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century*, 1960), and giving a further Argentina-focused depth to Rory Miller's *Britain and Latin America* (1993). There are no comparable works on the British in other individual Latin American countries, and this work will no doubt provide a reference point and comparative model for the brave souls who make subsequent attempts elsewhere. David Rock is able to make a success of this book because he combines empathy for the protagonists of the story with rich understanding of the intricacies and complexities of Argentine politics and economics. The long runs of several surviving