# Sendero Luminoso and the Peruvian Crisis

*by*
*Robert B. Ash*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to dissipate the cloud of mystery which hangs over the Peruvian Communist Party — the Shining Path of Mariategui — its goals, strategy, and tactics. It examines Sendero Luminoso (SL) *vis à vis* other Latin American insurgency movements, bearing in mind the volatile situation in Peru which is being further exacerbated by the dilapidated condition of the country's economy. A comparison is also made between the precepts of Abimael Guzman and those of Mao. Finally, this paper attempts to arrive at a conclusion concerning the probabilities of success of SL.

The paper is divided into six sections, excluding the conclusion. Each section deals with a different aspect of Sendero. The first focuses on the political and economic situation within Peru. It is followed by sections on the seat of the rebellion, SL's ideology, and SL as a Latin American insurgency movement. The fifth and sixth sections analyze SL's conduct of the struggle and the use of terror by both SL and the military.

It is the author's intent to show that Sendero is far from being the disorganized and haphazard group that it is made out to be. It is a highly ruthless and organized movement, with a sophisticated leadership of cadres.

## THE CONTEXT

> Insurgencies and counter-insurgencies are deeply rooted in individual cultures, in religious, racial and social differences within individual nations or sub-national groups.[1]

The uniqueness of each country's particular history, traditions, and ethnic mix and its relevance in the moulding of insurgency is readily apparent in the case of SL in Peru. Peru is a Latin American country and, like most others in that region, it is a preponderantly urban nation, with 67 percent of its population living in the urban centers of Lima, Ayacucho City, Arequipa, and Cuzco. Further, like most other South American countries, Peru is presently passing through a very precarious stage in its development because of a slumping international economy, high U.S. interest rates, and a mounting external debt with attendant interest servicing ratios. Indeed, the deteriorating economic situation of Peru is among the most ominous obstacles which the country has to face in order to maintain its internal cohesion.

Domestic problems also beset Peru's young democracy. President Alan Garcia must content with several impediments: political and

institutional corruption; a military branch which only just five years ago relinquished power, and may step forward, at any moment, to reclaim it; the effects of a crippling foreign debt and the consequent internationally dictated austerity program which is hurting many Peruvians, and has been a contributing factor in several mass demonstrations; and the *narcotraficante* (drug dealer) problem, which is slowly corroding the institutions of law and order. In addition, he must cope with the growing unrest at home over Peru's poor record on human rights.

Peru's democracy was restored in 1980, when former President Fernando Balaunde Terry was elected after twelve years of military rule. During the years of dictatorship, Peru was not characterized by gross infringements on human rights. In fact, the military proved to be quite radical. In 1969, under General Valesco's rule, the government decreed a Land Reform Act which was "breathtaking in scope, [as] it left 1200 proprietors who owned 60 percent of the best cultivable land with little more than government bonds."[2] The land was given to its tillers.[3] In great part, the dearth of insurgency activity during the 1970s was due to the military's radical rule; further, the decade would serve as an 'incubatory' period for a radical group which would later be publicly known as 'The Shining Path of Mariategui.'

Not all went well under military rule, however. Peru had already begun to feel the crunch from skyrocketing energy costs and from a deteriorating international economic environment. This caused an inexorable erosion in the living standards of most Peruvians, not the least of which were the peasants in the peripheral areas of the country's economic hub. Further, it became increasingly apparent that the police and the judicial structure had become victims of the cancerous effects of drug money, as "many ... officials became wealthy during [this] period of general hardship."[4] This had the effect of embedding disrespect and cynicism toward these two bulwarks of the democracy that was about to emerge.

The presidential candidate of the Partido de Accion Popular (PAP), Balaunde was elected from a field of fifteen candidates. His election was due to promises of democratic progress and the revival of the nation, and he offered such things as the guarantee of free press and the legality of opposition parties. In the economic field, he promised to tackle inflation and to create "a host of long-range billion-dollar development projects intended to reverse the economic disintegration that had attended the final years of military rule."[5] To accomplish this, he planned to shift Peru's predominantly state-owned and controlled economy into a free market economy. Unfortunately, these policies were implemented at a time when 'everything that could go wrong did.' Peru was hit not only by droughts but also by floods in the coastal regions. The latter were caused by the unseasonal warm currents in the Pacific known as 'El Niño.' These natural disasters were compounded by a world-wide recession, leading to a slump in exports, and by draconian austerity measures. Thus, both agricultural and industrial productivity fell. Peru's economy continued to deteriorate.

Another of Balaunde's first actions upon election was the annulment of the Land Reform Act. This act undermined the confidence which many Peruvians had placed in the newly elected government. The final *coup de grâce*, in this slow erosion of confidence, came with the onslaught of the 'dirty war' against the guerrillas combined with the harsh austerity program implemented by the government. Presently, many commentators have observed, the government needs to be successful in its campaign against Sendero Luminoso (SL)[6] in order to bolster its popularity once again.

But even now, such a success could prove to be perilous for the government. The reason is quite simple. Fernando Balaunde Terry's first presidential term ended abruptly when the military, with the momentum gained in the eradication of a subversive movement, seized power in 1968. Therefore, this time around Balaunde "has taken pains to keep the military content"[7] within the government. He has authorized a scheduled 3 billion dollar (U.S.) defense project, which includes the expenditure of 870 million dollars (U.S.) on two dozen French Mirage aircraft and contracts with the USSR, the United States, and Italy for a total of 28 helicopters. The President's timidity *vis à vis* the military also accounts for the government's slow reaction to the SL threat, "[for] the first two years of Sendero Luminoso's existence, the government buried its head in the sand, since the incidents were confined to ... less than 5 percent of the territory."[8] Balaunde is credited by many with attempting to forestall the human rights abuses which generally accompany military counter-insurgency operations, by the use of the civil guard. Unfortunately, they proved to be hopelessly ineffectual and indeed counterproductive.

## THE SEAT OF REBELLION

In 1980 few Peruvians had ever heard of Sendero Luminoso. Even fewer paid any attention when the morning after the elections dead dogs appeared hanging from the utility poles down one of Lima's busiest boulevards. Many 'Limenos' figured it was a prankster's joke, but for the peasants up in the *altos* of the Andes the 'joke' had an ominous meaning.

> According to a popular legend dating back to the Incas, which Indians in the region who have never heard of Mao can easily recite, the dog is a companion who follows, or leads, his master to the grave. And so the peasants figured ... that wherever a hanging dog appeared, someone was going to die, or be put to death.[9]

Sendero Luminoso's blend of Incaic mysticism and an unique interpretation of Marxism are the product of the environment in which SL's leader, Abimael Guzman, taught and studied insurgency. The Department of Ayacucho is situated in the heights of the Andes mountains. Wretchedly poor and isolated, it has no industry or steady public works.[10] Over half a million people lived there, in small hamlets hours away from the nearest roads, in localities so small they do not appear in any maps.[11] Quechua is their first language, and illiteracy in Spanish

reaches about 75 percent. Austerity for the Ayacuchans is a way of life, with their annual per capita income of about 60 dollars (U.S.), about one-tenth of the national average.[12] Because of the neglect in which they live, the people are centuries behind in their development. The backwardness of the Andean populace, which is mainly Indian, had caused deep resentment and distrust of the urban Spanish speakers. This resentment has been exacerbated by the brutality of the government's counterinsurgency campaign.[13]

Although in the last couple of months the struggle has spread to the lower-lying jungle, Ayacucho is Sendero's battleground, its power base. The poverty and widespread resentment has provided SL with its needed recruits, despite the violence in the new recruit scheme; recruits are required to execute those found guilty by 'people's trials.' Sendero takes full advantage of the centuries-old ethnic and economic resentment to appeal to the peasants. The Ayacucho Indians have a long history of revolt, and several of their "rebellions were messianic in nature, the peasants believing that a new Inca emperor, assisted by the old Andean gods, would lead them to victory in a war against their Spanish-speaking aggressors."[14] SL has adopted this messianic attitude as a persuasive tool to enlist support, especially for disaffected young peasants who believe their ethnic oppression is as unbearable as their economic oppression, if not more so. For this reason, Sendero remains unique among Latin American insurgency movements.

## THE IDEOLOGY

Sendero Luminoso was conceived almost twenty years ago, the product of a young philosophy professor at the National University of Huamanga in the City of Ayacucho. Abimael Guzman was not only one of the most radical spokesmen for armed struggle during the turbulent sixties. He led a group of equally vociferous students and, most importantly, he literally controlled all levels of education, primary, secondary, and higher, in the Ayacucho City area. Children aged 4-12 were indoctrinated in Marxism and in Maoism at the Pedagogical Institute of Ayacucho. Those same students then finished their primary and secondary education at the Colegio Guaman Poma de Ayala, which too was run by *senderistas*. From there they would go to the University where Guzman took them on.[15] Dissidence was met with hostility and muted by fear.

In his work *Guerrilla Strategies*, Gerard Chaliand has highlighted the importance, at the incipient stages of a revolutionary movement, of achieving "a correct understanding of the social situation one seeks to alter." Indeed, Abimael Guzman, or presidente Gonzalo, his *nom de guerre* which quite recently was changed from camarada Gonzalo, did just that. He began working for a peasant revolution, wanting to alter the existing structure which, in his view, oppressed the peasants. His views were shaped by Maoist theory, especially the Mao of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four; he is also an admirer of Pol Pot, of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, and his tactics. Indeed, Guzman became obsessed with Maoist thinking and dedicated to it. Beginning in the 60s,

he held political meetings in his home, drawing large crowds of students.[16] He and his students saw a clear analogy between the China of the 1930s and the 'feudal' conditions of the Peruvian peasantry. This was the view espoused by the Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariategui and his 1928 book *Seven Essays for the Interpretation of the Peruvian Reality*. Though Mariategui died before his ideal could be fully developed, briefly he believed "that largely rural Peru could achieve a revolution from the countryside to the city — the 'Yenan Way' that was later obtained in Chairman Mao Zedong's China. Peruvian socialism, furthermore, would be a unique blend of Western technology and the ancient communal traditions of the Andean cultures."[17] Influenced by Mariategui, Abimael Guzman studiously developed his own Marxist interpretation and set out to implement it.

For this reason, his followers call him the fourth sword of Marxism (Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Guzman) and assert that he will lead a world revolution which is only now commencing in the Andes. SL's fanaticism and blind zeal are among its most salient characteristics. SL also shuns publicity and devoutly follows Guzman's highly schematic theories. It plans to follow Mao's dicta about a 'prolonged military struggle,' 'peasant mobilization,' and the encirclement and final assault on the cities.[18] Guzman is regarded by his followers as having rescued Marxism-Leninism from the revisionist policies of the USSR, Albania, and, most importantly, China. For this reason, Sendero condemns all leftist Peruvian political parties as 'parliamentary cretins' and refuses to acknowledge them as Marxist. Because of its extremely sectarian nature, it is improbable that SL receives assistance from foreign or domestic sources, although it has been claimed, mostly by the government, that Sendero is financed by drug money, as the traffickers want the attention of law enforcement authorities diverted from their own activities.

Doubtless, in forging his own views, Guzman was well acquainted with Hector Bejar's analysis, *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience,* of the failures of Peru's insurgency movements in the 1960s. While in jail, Bejar primarily blamed ignorance of the peasants' language and customs for the failures of his group, as well as of other groups.[19] It was in Hugo Blanco that Guzman must have found the correct way of guiding the revolution. Blanco had been successful in establishing a friendly rapport and mutual trust between himself and the peasants, by learning their language and their ways. "[He] was one of the few that began at the beginning," Leo Sauvage writes in his book about Che Guevara, "... he tried to be one of the peasants before thinking of himself as their leader."[20] Blanco refused to treat the peasants as *animalitos,* small defenseless animals, whose behavior could solely be directed through the use of terror.

Geoffrey Fairburn has opined that "peasant armies are peasant armies only in the sense that peasants make up a large part of the rank-and-file,"[21] and that people from the middle and high classes of society are the leaders of these armies. In contrast, Sendero's leadership composition seems to be mainly one of lower middle classes and peasants

themselves, although there have been reports of a few upper class cadres within SL's organizational structure.

Between 1968 and 1970, before creating Sendero, Guzman broke with the *Partido Comunista del Peru-Bandera Roja* (PCP-BR). PCP-BR was a Maoist party which had split from the *Frente de Liberacion Nacional* in 1965. Guzman accused *Bandera Roja* of not practicing its commitment to the armed struggle. He therefore decided to form his own party, 'The Peruvian Communist Party — The Shining Path of Mariategui' in 1970.[22] His supporters began canvassing and distributing pamphlets in Ayacucho City; slowly his following grew.

In 1971, he published and distributed a pamphlet which outlined his plan for the revolution. It stated that after nine years of preparation, a campaign of "limited struggle" would commence in 1980, with "diversionary tactics" geared towards obtaining arms and recognition. In two years' time, Sendero would initiate its guerrilla war at the rural level and use sabotage tactics within the cities, to increase the urban feeling of isolation and siege. During 1984, the initial columns of Sendero's 'people's army' would undertake in earnest the 'people's war.'[23] SL has further stated that it expects to wrest power from the government by 1990.

Guzman retired from his teaching post in 1978 and vanished into rural Ayacucho. There,

> he organized his followers into cells of three persons each with military rank. Regional 'special affairs committees' coordinated the activities of the cells, and under the nom de guerre 'Comrade Gonzalo,' Guzman controlled the entire organization.[24]

During the early seventies, Sendero recruits had begun fanning out into the Ayacucho region "to learn Quechua and highland customs and preach the good news of agrarian communism."[25] Eventually, the SL members became the town school teachers, agricultural advisers, and peasant leaders. Currently, there seems to be anywhere between one thousand and three thousand active SL members and about the same number of supporters.

It is interesting to note that Guzman's plans for the peasant struggle were advocated while the military was still in power and were set to take place under those circumstances. It appears it was sheer coincidence that the return to democracy was scheduled for the same year as that of the beginning of SL's struggle. In effect, such an occurrence facilitated the struggle of Guzman's followers, as a democratic government acts under more constraints than a military one.

Sendero Luminoso is ultimately interested in a return to an Incaic agrarian society, through the ruthless methods used by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. "One gets the feeling that their attitude goes deeper than revulsion toward capitalism.... It's the tractor they can't stand."[26]

## SENDERO LUMINOSO AS A LATIN AMERICAN INSURGENCY MOVEMENT

Sendero Luminoso is unique among Latin American guerrilla groups, in the sense that it does not follow or acknowledge the guerrilla

tactics posited by Che Guevara and the Cuban revolutionary example. Neither does SL follow the precepts of Carlos Marighella or any other Latin American urban guerrilla theorists. SL follows a distinctly Asian model of insurgency.

Latin American movements and their tactics are the product of a rather unique set of circumstances. First, insurgency movements in the region have never had to fight foreign occupying powers in wars of national liberation; that is, most Latin American nations, with a few exceptions, have been and continue to be sovereign and independent countries. By and large, therefore, the guerrillas have had to fight the national governments, without being able to use the moral appeal of nationalist aspirations of the populace.

Regis Debray was careful to point this out in his discussions about the Latin American guerrilla experience.[27] Walter Laqueur, in more general terms, stated that the chances of success for a guerrilla movement are more immeasurably enhanced by the presence of a foreign power, however strong, than by a national government, however remiss.[28]

A second Latin American characteristic which has aided the growth of insurgency is the urban nature of the region. The guerrilla should arise and struggle wherever "the population suffices to form the army of the revolution."[29] This is the principal reason why the focus of guerrilla movements shifted from the rural to the urban environment, especially during the sixties. Another major reason for this shift toward the urban environment is the stress which Soviet policy places on supporting urban-worker Marxist parties, although Moscow does not openly advocate the use of terrorist tactics.[30] It ought to be acknowledged that poverty in the rural areas has brought a mass of potentially disaffected people, especially young unemployed people, into the urban environs and thus made it a perfect niche for the spread of insurgent activity.

With respect to most of these factors, Sendero is an uncommon movement. It stresses, at the rural level, the need for a war of 'Incaic national liberation' and the restoration of Incaic glory through an agrarian societal structure. This belief in the restoration of Incaic glory is based on the *rusawilca* myth. *Rusawilca* is a god-mountain "in whose belly a horseman with light skin and a white horse lives in a palace full of gold and fruit."[21] It is believed this horseman will one day come to liberate the Incas (Indians) from the rule of the *conquistadores*. Sendero is, therefore, a uniquely Peruvian movement, for not many other Latin American countries can boast having largely undiluted Indian populations. Peru, in addition, has the problem of having vast segments of its territory which are virtually inaccessible and isolated, centuries behind in their development.

Sendero's rural proclivities are the direct result of its doctrinal requirements. All of Guzman's models of revolutionary warfare and of post-revolutionary reality are agrarian based. As a Latin American revolutionary, therefore, Guzman stands with Che Guevara. But, unlike Guevara, whose theory of the *foco* (mobile strategic base) as the vanguard of the party and the catalizing element of the revolution, and

who largely ignored the need for political proselytizing and organization before initiating armed struggle, Guzman has taken the necessary steps to insure the proper development of his insurgency organization, through nine years of political indoctrination and organizational development. Guzman, again unlike Guevara, is a firm believer in the protracted nature of the struggle and has not opted to expedite the revolutionary process by neglecting the importance of the political side of the conflict.

Vast areas of the Ayacucho region are already under Sendero's control; it has established itself as the local authority. In this sense, Guzman seems to have heeded well the necessity for both a military and a political front in the struggle.

## SENDERO'S CONDUCT OF THE RURAL STRUGGLE

Having seen how SL stands apart from other Latin American insurgency movements in its approach to guerrilla warfare, it is necessary now to focus on what its approach to this type of warfare might be. How much does SL embrace Mao's precepts and, conversely, how much does it differ from them?

As foretold by Guzman, in 1982 Sendero intensified its people's war. There were daring actions taking place throughout that year, such as the raid on the Ayacucho prison in March 1982, which blacked out the city for several hours while a column of about a hundred *senderistas* freed all 297 inmates, most of whom were alleged SL members.[32] 1982 saw the beginning of a two-pronged approach as SL attempted to gain control of the countryside, by driving governmental authority out, and sought to discredit the government by prompting a draconian overraction to sabotage in the capital city of Lima. In most of its actions Sendero relied on dynamite, as it is relatively easy to obtain from Andean mines, and blowing up electricity pylons with dynamite has become a favorite tactic.

This approach proved successful. In the countryside there was a rash of violent guerrilla activity, with SL claiming "responsibility for over 3,000 guerrilla actions, including sabotage of power lines, bombings and burnings of police stations and municipal buildings, destruction of bridges ... and assassinations."[33] SL's aim was to lacerate communication between the cities and the countryside. Having achieved isolation, SL could begin its task of "reworking Peruvian society" by driving any and all vestiges of central authority from the region. Unsurprisingly, by the end of 1982 Sendero had been able to proclaim most of Ayacucho a 'liberated zone.'

In this respect, Guzman has followed Mao's dicta well. By encircling the cities, he is instituting plans to strangle them economically. Already SL has ordered peasants within its 'liberated zones' to produce only enough to feed themselves. It has forbidden trade of any sort, and has slaughtered cattle and ordered peasant markets shut, at gunpoint.[34] In this area, Guzman and Mao diverge. Mao would have objected strongly to these latter tactics as they tend to intimidate, not to befriend, the

peasantry. These tactics have already caused rebellions amongst segments of the peasantry, and Sendero has had to resort to terror to quell such uprisings. By and large, however, the peasants have not had any choice in their indoctrination, "since they had no choice but to support, or at least coexist with, those who had assumed real power."[35]

Sendero ended its push to liberate more zones by October 1982. Instead, it began establishing a 'legal order' dictated by Guzman in the villages and hamlets already under its control, proceeding to consolidate and organize these areas according to Sendero ideology, urging, for example, self-sufficiency in agricultural production. In this manner, Sendero Luminoso has been able to create power bases within four years. SL does not travel through a village within a zone, it is always in the villages — in the person of the mayor, town council, or fellow worker.[36] Those entering the villages are the government forces who seldom can tell the difference between a guerrilla fighter and a simple peasant, though within the Ayacucho liberated zones, it is easy to disciminate between SL and government forces; "the government troops work from 8 to 8, Sendero keeps watch all night...."[37] These power bases form an important part of Mao's theory, as they provide sanctuary and respite for the insurgent forces. What China had in vastness of territory, Peru has in inaccessibility.

Sendero has also shown remarkable mobility. While the government troops focus their efforts in the Ayacucho region, SL spreads to other Departments, "bringing in a flurry of resignations by local officials."[38] Its level of organization is also impressively developed, as shown by the case of one intermediate cadre, in one Department, knowing days in advance about 'public trials' taking place in another Department.[39] Again, where Mao and Guzman differ sharply is in the reliance Guzman places on the use of terror to neutralize non-supporters and opponents.

## TERROR IN THE ANDES

Sendero Luminoso is a terrorist revolutionary group. It uses terror as a tactic to coerce acquiescence from those who do not support it and to silence those who would otherwise oppose it. In Maoism, guerrilla organizations need the support of the people. Mao compares this to the fish, that is, the guerrillas, needing water to survive. Yet, in practice, it is not necessary for *all* the people to support or reject the guerrillas. In fact, "a large proportion of the people, usually a majority, have no wish to get involved and will conform to the dictates of either side if expressed by a man with a gun."[40]

In other words, the aim of the guerrilla organization is to attract as many people as possible by a 'hearts and minds' campaign, thus gaining legitimacy from the people. It must also, of necessity, neutralize those who do not support it. The gravest danger lies with non-sympathizers who might inform the government about guerrilla activities and plans. It is not uncommon for guerrilla groups to neutralize or terrorize for dissuasive purposes, as one among several options to their avail. This is just what Sendero is doing. It uses terror as a tactic to further its

revolutionary cause. Therefore, it is not a terrorist group in the usual sense. Revolutionary groups use terror as a tactic, whereas terrorist groups use revolution as an excuse. Sendero Luminoso fits the first mould.[41] The death toll in Peru has been increasing steadily since 1980. It is impossible to verify casualty reports since 1982, because the armed forces have imposed a veil of secrecy on its actions. According to estimates in the *New York Times* (July 26, 1983), approximately 1500 deaths occurred before 1983. Another report in the *NYT* (August 18, 1984) estimates almost 2700 deaths in 1983 alone, and a recent *NYT* article (May 18, 1985) claims that as many as 6000 people have disappeared in the war between SL and the government. These estimates do not even take account of the 'common graves' being periodically uncovered in the Andes.

These deaths are the result of the 'dirty war' in which the Peruvian government finds itself. It is precisely this kind of conflict which President Balaunde wanted to forestall and prevent. The main impediments to the successful implementation of the counterinsurgency campaign are the lack of resources for, and training and experience of, the *Guardia Civil* and the military.[42] It seems most of the dead *senderistas* are those who the army had labelled as SL sympathizers. Also, many of the alleged *desaparecidos* (disappeared ones) are SL cadres who have been promoted within the organization and who, therefore, have to go underground in order to administer their added responsibilities.[43]

Sendero Luminoso's use of terrorism is an exemplary model of terrorism as a tool of insurgency movements *à la* Fairburn. In the beginning, SL cadres recruited by befriending and helping the peasantry; in a sense, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. It eliminated the "enemies of the people" through "public trials." Once SL had the tacit or explicit support of the majority of the populace, its cadres stepped up their campaign of disruptive terrorism to, among other things, cause the overreaction of the government. "Some peasants claim that while [SL] kill[s] selected targets, government troops kill anybody who gets in the way."[44] SL's aim is to consolidate its power in the countryside, by creating confusion among the peasantry about the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys.'[45] At that stage, SL begins to use coercive terrorism, attempting to "force obedience to the leadership of the revolutionary movement."[46]

> In both cases [of disruptive and coercive terrorism] the revolutionary object is gradually to destroy direct communication between the central government and the rural population, while at the same time establishing the revolutionary 'parallel hierarchies' of the counter-state as the real power in the countryside.[47]

This is what has occurred in the Andes. The peasant population has been frightened into submission by both the government and SL. However, Sendero retains the upper hand, since, among other things, its terror is more discriminating than the military's: "If we kill, we kill having investigated those who are to die. We are not blind horses...."[48]

The government has encouraged the peasants to resist Sendero's incursions and movements, by offering food and supplies as bounties in exchange for captured, dead or alive, *senderistas*. At the same time, the government has neglected to offer protection to these very same peasants or to train them in methods of self-defense.[49] In other words, the government has left peasants, who choose to side with it, completely unprotected and at the mercy of the brutal methods of SL. The results have been disastrous. In April 1983, 67 peasants who had collaborated with government forces were savagely massacred in Lucanamarca. Earlier, on January 26th, extreme nervousness and fear on the part of the peasants played a major role in the killing of eight visting journalists in the remote village of Uchuraccay. The inhabitants of the village thought the eight journalists were *senderistas* who had come to exact revenge for the killing of seven *senderistas* by the villagers two weeks before.[50]

Consequently, peasants are being driven to abandon their land, without weapons, and to move to the nearest town or city. There, they form civil defense groups, with full knowledge that by doing so they are signing their own death warrants as far as the SL is concerned. Needless to say, these are the acts of desperate men, who have very little hope in the future and live in an anxiety-laden present.[51] This latter condition results in what Douglas Pyke has described as the "collective condition equal to anxiety neurosis on an individual level." It is a quintessential example of psychological terrorism, at work against those who oppose Sendero and its objectives. Caught in the cross-fire of terror, the peasants are being increasingly drawn to those they reckon will provide them with a greater degree of security, namely, Sendero Luminoso.

## CONCLUSION

If Sendero has had such lucid guidance in its struggle thus far, how close is it to achieving its objectives? Not very close. True, SL has had great success in the countryside where its messianic message is easy for the Indians to understand. But Peru is a mostly urban country and, therefore, Sendero will have to modify successfully its message for the city population. It is already doing so, but with far less progress than it has achieved using the countryside version. There are many potential recruits among Lima's disaffected young and among the residents of *Pueblos Jovenes*, the ghettos of poverty. They may be tempted to follow Abimael Guzman who acts according to what he preaches. Here the second impediment to the ultimate triumph of SL emerges. Guzman has not been seen since 1978, although some reports state that he has been sighted. In either case, "he suffers from arthritis and a bad case of psoriasis, a skin disease associated with nerves that may be debilitating him."[52] Sendero could turn out to be a movement without a leader, and one wonders if alternate leadership would provide the same foresighted course and decisions?

Much also depends on the way the government acts. Balaunde's presidency was perilously close to a coup. Señor Alan Garcia Perez, who was inaugurated July of this year, has his hands full, not only with

respect to the Sendero threat, but in regard to Peru's battered economy and massive foreign debt. Danger to Peru's democracy is low only so long as the people continue to have hope in President Garcia's youthful administration. If this hope is dashed and the Sendero violence continues, the military will be tempted to step in and deal more tenaciously with the country's unrest. Sendero must also prove that its guerrilla strategy works. Achievement of SL's goal of causing the collapse of the cities is tenuous at best, since such a strategy would entail broad popular discontent with the government combined with widespread terror.[53] At present Sendero cannot count on either. Unfortunately, Peruvians can well count on Sendero's perseverance and more bloodshed.

**Footnotes**

1. Robert O'Neill, *New Directions in Strategic Thinking* (George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 214.
2. *Directory of Guerrilla Organizations* (Harvester Press, 1983), p. 501.
3. David Scott Palmer argues in his paper, "Rebellion in Rural Peru: The Origins and Evolution of Sendero Luminoso," presented at the National Defense University, Washington, D.C., that the land reform was ineffectual as its 'made in Lima' provisions were unsuitable for the Ayacucho region. There, only 15 to 20 percent of the farmers benefitted from it (p. 23).
4. *The Nation*, February 12, 1984, p. 149.
5. Philip Bennet, "Peru: Corner of the Dead," *Atlantic,* May 1984, p. 28.
6. Michael Posner, "A Shadow Crosses the Shining Path," *Maclean's,* March 14, 1983, p. 24.
7. Bennet, "Peru...," p. 33.
8. Mario V. Llosa, "Inquest in the Andes," *New York Times,* July 31, 1983, p. F23.
9. Bennet, "Peru...," p. 28.
10. For a detailed examination of the Ayacuchan peasantry's conditions and how these may lead to revolt, within a 'subsistence threat' theoretical framework, see, Cynthia McClintock, "Why Peasants Rebel," *World Politics* (October 1984).
11. David Werlich, "Peru: The Shadow of the Shining Path," *Current History* (February 1984), p. 80.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
15. Information procured by the author through personal channels from an Ayacucho educated contact. The University of Huamanga played a pivotal role in the building of popular support, not only through indoctrination, but also by means of its outreach programs. This latter role is explored by Palmer, "Rebellion...," pp. 19-22.
16. Cynthia McClintock, "Peru's Maoist Guerrillas," *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1983), p. 20.
17. Werlich, "Peru...," p. 80.
18. Llosa, "Inquest...," p. 22.
19. Hector Bejar, "Peru 1965...," in *Guerrilla Strategies,* ed. by Gerard Chaliand (Berkeley, 1982), p. 290.
20. Leo Sauvage, *Che Guevara* (Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 243.
21. Geoffrey Fairburn, *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare* (Penguin Books, 1974), p. 359.
22. Werlich, "Peru...," p. 81.
23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*
25. Bennet, "Peru...," p. 30.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Regis Debray, in *Guerrilla Reader,* ed. by Walter Laqueur (New American Library, 1977), p. 214.
28. Walter Laqueur, in *Guerrilla Reader,* p. 12.
29. Abraham Guillen, "Urban Guerrilla Strategy," *Guerrilla Reader.*
30. Fairburn, *Revolutionary...,* p. 359.
31. Llosa, "Inquest...," p. 33.
32. *Revista Oiga,* (Lima), "Como Es y Como Actua Sendero," February 1984, p. 25.
33. *The Nation,* February 12, 1983, p. 164.
34. *NYT,* June 8, 1983, p. A5.
35. Llosa, "Inquest...," p. 23.
36. *Oiga,* "Como...," p. 26.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Werlich, "Peru...," p. 90.
39. *Oiga,* "Como...," p. 24.
40. Richard Clutterbuck, *Guerrillas and Terrorists* (Ohio University Press, 1977), p. 25.
41. The distinction made here is based on discussions between the author and Professor Paul Wilkinson. See also, Fairburn, *Revolutionary...,* p. 348.
42. One Peruvian policeman must protect over 600 people and he has to patrol a 43 square kilometer area. In addition, more often than not he has to share his firearm with a colleague. These data show how unprepared the Guardia Civil is to deal with regular crime, much less to deal with an insurgency. See, *Caretas* (Lima), July 19, 1982.
43. *Oiga,* "Como...," p. 24.
44. *Newsweek,* February 7, 1983, p. 14.
45. *The Sunday Times,* November 25, 1984, p. I25.
46. Fairburn, *Revolutionary...,* p. 350.
47. *Ibid.,* p. 353.
48. Interview with a Sendero column in Huanta, by Abilio Arroyo, in *Caretas,* February 11, 1985.
49. *Oiga,* "Como...," p. 26.
50. *Ibid.* Also, for a narrated account of the Uchuraccay massacre, see Llosa, "Inquest...."
51. *Caretas,* October 9, 1984, p. 16.
52. *NYT,* June 5, 1983, p. D3.
53. See, R.B. Ash, "The Rural Struggle in Latin America," *RUSI* Journal, June 1985, pp. 39-42 for greater detail and analysis of Sendero's revolutionary strategy, especially with regard to SL's fifth and final stage, the collapse of the cities.