

**Lisandro Cañón \***

*canonjulio@uniovi.es*

### **Abstract:**

In this study, we historicize the processes that allow us to understand or establish regimes of state terrorism outside the American continent. For this, in each of the sections that make up this work, we make a review of the most structural conditions and the counter-revolutionary tendencies that have been implemented since the second half of the XX century. The adoption of terrorist practices by States does not mean just a change in its legal nature, it is limited to a question of repressive techniques, a specific political phenomenon, an extreme form of capitalist State.

### **Keywords:**

State terrorism, imperialism, dependency

### **Resumo:**

Neste estudo, historicizamos os processos que nos permitem compreender o estabelecimento de regimes de terrorismo de Estado no continente americano. Para isso, em cada uma das seções que constituem este trabalho, fazemos uma revisão das condições mais estruturais e das tendências contra-revolucionárias implantadas ao longo da segunda metade do século XX. A adoção de práticas terroristas pelos Estados não significa apenas uma mudança em sua natureza jurídica, nem se limita a uma questão de técnicas repressivas, é um fenômeno político específico, uma forma extrema de Estado capitalista.

### **Palavras-chave:**

Terrorismo de Estado, imperialismo, dependência

## **State Terrorism**

The era of state terrorism left in its wake its crimes, its concentration camps and the disappeared. This was the toll of dictatorships that, in modifying state structure, implemented a systematic plan of extermination and annihilation. The scope of the power to 'disappear', which was exercised in different countries of the Americas, is a phenomenon upon which one should never stop reflecting. In this regard, numerous studies have thoroughly analysed some of its effects. We ourselves have dedicated some of our research to this topic.

However, here we wish to adopt a different approach. The first step will be an analysis of the roots of state terrorism, to restore it to the historical framework in which it developed. That is to say, we will place it in the global context of the counterrevolutionary interventions that took place after World War II. Although each one of these interventions had their own differences, many of them can be understood as expressions of the state of exception, as defined by Giorgio Agamben (2004). But a clarification is necessary; in these interventions, we find a distinctive feature, which is the ruling classes' always latent and, now, renewed fear of a communist revolution.

---

\* Professor na Universidad de Oviedo. Doutor Internacional em História Contemporânea pela Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Before state terrorism was a reality in the Americas, other forms of the state of exception existed in Europe: Francoism, Nazism, Fascism, Salazarism. All these experiences, as modes of domination<sup>1</sup>, which may or may not have embodied the symbol of radical oppression, contribute to defining the image of the problem. However, our purpose is not to inventory all the processes of establishing states of exception, but rather to historicise the process that, from the second half of the 20th century, took place on the American continent.

This decision determines others. In the first place, there is the consideration of state terrorism as an extreme form of the capitalist state, a particular form of the state of exception, which corresponds to a type of crisis that Gramsci calls: crisis of hegemony<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, such crises and the respective forms of state of exception are phenomena that cannot be isolated from imperialism. Indeed, although the countries of the Americas were not colonies, their history bore the fate of dependency. In other words, countries that were sovereign and politically independent in principle were caught in the economic, military and diplomatic networks of dependency on a metropolis. A distinctive feature in this relationship is the transnational character of the ruling classes, historically allied with the central capitalist powers. This condition made it difficult for them, during the second half of the 20th century, to maintain mono-classist control of society and to establish lasting political hegemony. Undoubtedly, their inability to ensure the conditions of reproduction and institutionalisation of the socio-political order is linked to the ascending process of social struggles and conquests. And if this is true, then no less so is the validity of the idea of revolution, which permeated all instances of social life, from politics to art, and from popular culture to family habits and codes of love.

Another decision: it is essential to recover the centrality of the Truman Doctrine (1947). This, which guided US foreign policy for over forty years, not only entailed the formal acceptance of the United States as a hegemonic power and its will to become the world police but also a declaration of war against communism. However, this war was carefully protected behind a defensive argument; as an indication of this, in 1947 the War Department became the Department of Defense. From that moment, each time a US president presented his budgets, marked by an increase in the defence category,<sup>3</sup> he affirmed that ‘in the face of the threat of aggression’ every dollar invested contributed to reinforcing the defences of ‘free nations’ (a term used to refer to capitalist social formations, regardless of the political regime that governed them). In the 1970s, the Nixon administration would be the one to recognise –as a consequence of the Vietnam War,

---

<sup>1</sup>Gramsci, when conceptualising the full state, proposed a criterion of methodological distinction in how the supremacy of a social group manifests itself: that is, a distinction between dominance and hegemony. The former is expressed in ways that are directly political and, in times of crisis, through direct or effective coercion that tends to liquidate or subjugate adversary social groups. For the notion of hegemony, see quote number 5.

<sup>2</sup> We adopt the concept of organic crisis in the sense of the rupture of a historical bloc: that is, the loss of the capacity of the ruling classes of a society to be accepted as such (hegemonic). Gramsci says: ‘The old intellectual and moral leaders feel the ground slipping from under their feet, ... This is the reason for their reactionary and conservative tendencies; for the particular form of civilisation, culture and morality which they represented is decomposing, and they loudly proclaim the death of all civilisation, all culture, all morality; they call for repressive measures by the State’. (Gramsci, 1973, p. 273).

<sup>3</sup> The US budget for national defence grew from \$11.9 million in 1949 to \$52.8 million in 1963. After this last date, the budget continued to increase, although it becomes difficult to monitor the increase once the US intervention in Vietnam begins.

Japanese and European economic competition and the oil crisis – that anti-communism could not be the only objective of US foreign policy. Of course, this policy was about more than just anti-communism, and it often corresponded with the interests of the military-industrial complex and its main beneficiary: financial capital.

Final decision: in analysing these problems, it seemed urgent to us to remove the history of state terrorism from the ghetto into which academia has enclosed it: that of political violence. In this sense, the works of Walter Benjamin undoubtedly mortally wound, if the expression is permitted, the efforts of violence experts and peace experts, as well as violentology itself. Violentology, entangled in the study of two different types of violence in opposition, places the establishment of a system of state terrorism with the actions of the armed opposition in the same register, which seems to indicate that its formulations disregard Benjamin's ethical-historical studies.

For Benjamin (1992), the law, and the state that is expressed within, is imposed by and from violence, underlining the existence of a permanent state of exception for the oppressed. Even in his reflections on the revolutionary general strike, he emphasised that when the action expresses 'the decision to resume work completely modified and not forced by the state', this prevents it from being affiliated with violence (BENJAMIN, 2006). In this way, Benjamin invites us to think about the forms that the capitalist state can acquire, especially in relation to scientific activity for the critical analysis of social problems. However, majority trends lean in another direction; for example, one of the greatest exponents of American academic thought, Richard Bernstein, in wanting to equate the unequal, establishes a comparative simile between George Bush's pre-emptive wars and the struggle for national liberation in Algeria (BERNESTEIN, 2015).

Such premises account for the structure of this essay, where we will revisit the counterrevolutionary conception that colonised the American states, without losing sight of the fact that this colonisation occurred simultaneously with another process: the development of an increasingly favourable sensitivity to human rights. This was not only because of the Universal Declaration (1948) but also because of the existence of social movements that worked for the recognition of such rights, for their implementation and protection. Understanding this is key because state terrorism was the most serious, systematic and massive violation of human rights in the recent history of the Americas. For this reason, it is essential not to confuse the question of the beginnings of colonisation with that of the origins of state terrorism.

## Part One

The history of state terrorism does not begin with the coups that led to its establishment. To find the deep, structural roots that allow us to understand it, we must observe the way in which the countries of the Americas were inserted into the world economy; the transnational character of the ruling classes; the

development of informal US imperialism in the region; and that many people in these countries experienced their history as that of a struggle against imperialism. Let us review some of these aspects.

When the 19th century was about to end, the process of structuring the nation states, which would shape the map of the American continent, was practically complete. Meanwhile, the primary export model, with the exception of Canada and the United States, which followed different paths, directed the consolidation of capitalism in the Americas. These processes did not entail the rupture of certain economic ties that perpetuated the old colonial dependency in another way and for the benefit of the metropolises and their local partners. This fact defined not only the possibilities and limits of economic growth but also the logic of capitalist production; the formation of new categories and social groups with differentiated interests; and the political model, which was defined by the hegemony of the oligarchies. Whether landowners or miners, depending on the production specialisation of each country, these were the main beneficiaries of a model characterised by a period of strong economic expansion. Although this generated a transformative dynamic, it did not displace the export sector as the axis of growth. While the interests of the different factions of the ruling classes (oligarchies and the bourgeoisie – industrial, commercial and banking) could be contradictory, this did not lead them to confront each other as adversaries.<sup>4</sup>

However, an ever-increasing number of organised peasants and workers did confront the established powers. Without wanting to ignore the differences between the different organisations, we can say that some demanded the opening of the political system and greater participation as well as social and labour improvements; and others aspired to a total change in structures. The oligarchic regimes tackled social conflict by intensifying repressive measures, incorporating new legislation for social control and widening the scope of the education system. Nonetheless, this did not dispel the tensions, which were exacerbated with the crisis of the 1930s. This general crisis of capitalism was a great shock for the export model and oligarchic control.

The crisis was more than an economic event; it created a situation in which the hegemony of the oligarchy began to disintegrate<sup>5</sup>. The export model itself went into crisis, and its consequences reached the state itself, whose opening was necessary to allow broader participation and greater institutional autonomy. In this context, the oligarchies adopted a defensive strategy to keep the economy linked to the foreign sector,

---

<sup>4</sup> Both Gramsci and Poulantzas pointed out the unsuitability of an instrumentalist vision that puts classes into a dualistic, dominant-dominated confrontation. Both thinkers observe the coexistence of various classes and class factions and, therefore, of various dominant classes and factions in which political-ideological determinations are as important as economic ones; in other words, within a class there are autonomous factions but not independent ones. In a context as complex as that of the factions throughout the ruling classes (with their respective economic, social and cultural interests), and by virtue of the divisions and contradictions in their own core and the conflicts they may have with each other, as well as the confrontation with their social antagonists, they need political and discursive mechanisms of legitimation.

<sup>5</sup> Here we use the Gramscian notion of hegemony, understanding it as: the political resolution of economic needs (always keeping in mind that it is not possible to present and expose all fluctuations in politics and ideology as an immediate expression of structure), through the dynamic process of incorporating values, ideas, beliefs and practices into a social order; as part of the same process, and without being able to be separated from it, emerge resistance and questioning (organised or spontaneous); finally, the effectiveness of the process entails symbolic realisation. The latter is associated with the expansive capacity of hegemony, since it is not limited only to political leadership (which could be achieved by increasing coercion to silence resistance), but it is also part of the different ideological and cultural apparatuses. If the ruling class succeeded in creating a common sense that legitimises its status as leader in the social system, imposing itself on dominated groups on the basis of an ideology that justifies and naturalises domination, it would achieve what we could call real hegemony, the ability to direct in an organic and non-administrative and bureaucratic way all the apparatuses of hegemony (BUCI-GLUCSMANN, 1978, p. 52-64).

awaiting the reactivation of the international market. Meanwhile, groups connected to the domestic market saw that the replacement of importation, supported by protectionist measures, could allow industrialisation to take off.

Thus, as an undesired result of the crisis, political movements with pluri-social proposals emerged. If, on the one hand, they proposed moving the role of revitalising the economy and expanding the domestic market to other productive sectors, then on the other hand, they took up some of the traditional claims of the subaltern classes. Their governments embodied an industrialisation project led by the state that, allocating the resources released by the contraction of imports, actively intervened to readjust the economic structure and redirected public spending to stimulate development and the domestic market. In other words, industrialisation in this case owes little to the national business world.

Their proposals to solve the problems of the previous period led them to direct some of the most important social innovations of the 20th century. This did not mean transforming the capitalist system, but making it more rational: in short, strengthening it. Industrialisation by replacing imports seemed to be heading towards a democratisation of capitalism, embodied by the social welfare state, which involved a process of negotiating integration of the working class into the state. The state came to be considered as the essential agent in satisfying their demands and as a space for negotiation. This process meant referring to the state as guarantor not only of the model as a whole but also of political expression in favour of social protection. For their part, the ruling classes expressed their demands with all the more force as their economic power increased and their capacity to use the state for their defence grew. Thus, one of the most transcendent features of this time, with respect to the organisation of relations between state and society, is the successful social institutionalisation through politics that, through the widespread presence of the institutions of political society in civil society, reinvigorated and directed social and political practices in a climate of general consensus.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that the regimes that promoted industrialisation met some of the demands of the subaltern classes and implemented universalist social policies, but it is also true that the hegemony of the ruling classes was never called into question. However, and despite the reformist moderation of many governments, and the fact that they did not renounce traditional repressive methods, a feeling of nascent and irremediable concern was emerging due to the use of a resource, until then neglected, of incredible latent power: social justice. The advances of mass democracy awoke the greatest fears of the ruling classes, which, through the yearning language of their intellectuals, manifested their dread of social overflow: 'the risk of

---

<sup>6</sup> For this characterisation, we start from the Gramscian conceptions of 'state = political society + civil society, that is, hegemony armoured with coercion'. Where, political society is identified with the devices of the state system used to hold a legal monopoly of repression and violence, under the control of institutions of coercion (bureaucratic groups linked to the application of laws, armed forces and police). Civil society, for its part, encompasses the institutions responsible for developing and disseminating symbolic values and ideologies: that is, the apparatus of hegemony, including the education system, the church, political parties, professional organisations, unions, communication media and scientific and artistic institutions, among others (GRAMSCI, 1977, p.291).

being overcome by the revolutionary and Marxist left' (AMADEO, 1954, p. 132). Their pressure for greater control would not only weaken governments but would destroy the very foundations of the regimes.

However, in the 1950s, the first symptoms of the following economic period appeared, characterised by slow growth and deterioration in terms of trade. In the countries that pioneered the replacement of imports through industrialisation – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay – the limitations of the model as a long-term strategy started to become evident. The model had not succeeded in lowering the degree of importation, and growing import needs were satisfied not with domestic savings but with external capital flows and exports of primary goods. In other words, industrialisation as a substitute for importation was not at all able to overcome foreign dependency. On the contrary, within a model characterised by the participation of national capital subjected to patterns of technological dependence and foreign control of primary sectors of exportation, technical and financial assistance from external sources accentuated subordination.

Despite the fact that the US trade and aid policy was an obstacle to industrial diversification, which would enable American countries to accelerate development, their governments continued to encourage it. Thus, in mid-1958, the then president of Brazil, Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961), proposed to the US president, Eisenhower (1953-1961), a new hemispheric policy, known as Operation PanAmerica. According to its own proponent, the policy should be understood as 'a corollary of the general strategy of the West, and among its fundamental purposes the following are particularly outstanding: preservation of the democratic system, based on political and religious freedom and on respect for private ownership and free enterprise' (KUBISTCHEK, 1959, p. 86). By August 1958, all the countries of the continent were debating the *Aide-Mémoire: Programme for the Economic Development of the Continent*. The hopes of the Operation's planners were based on the belief that there was a progressive capitalist alternative to communist industrialisation. The *Aide-Mémoire* synthesised that hope in the language of the Cold War:

a new orientation of continental politics in order to put Latin America through a process of total reevaluation, in a position to participate in the defence of the West ... attempting first, to demonstrate that populations submerged in misery, disease, ignorance, are a dead weight for the Western world and are subject to anti-democratic infiltrations (KUBISTCHEK, 1958).

That was the proposition that served as the basic justification for the Act of Bogotá (1960), that is to say, overcoming underdevelopment should allow for the erection of barriers against the communist revolution: 'recognizing that the preservation and strengthening of free and democratic institutions in the American republics requires the acceleration of social and economic progress in Latin America adequate to meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the Americas' (ACTA DE BOGOTA, 1961, p. 168). Other possible solutions to the situation of underdevelopment and dependency seemed far off – or perhaps not so much? The Bandung Conference (1955) proposed an alternative. But this was, in the eyes of the ruling

classes, the beginning of a ploy to fence in the West, devoted to the abolition of the Christian family, the homeland, nationality and private property.

The variant proposed by the Act deepened the influence of the United States, which allocated \$500 million to technical assistance and loans. This not only saddled capital and the American countries with a heavy debt, but also enabled interference from credit agencies and benefitted the penetration of foreign capital. National industrialisation, based on a mix of private and public capital and regulation, was moving towards a growing concentration of power in transnational organisations and companies. Little by little, the multi-class project was abandoned, and the state became engaged in another, which only expressed the interests of the ruling classes. This was but a symptom of the exhaustion of the ruling classes as such, and of their weariness with attempts to maintain their hegemony.

Under the Kennedy administration (1961-1963), and after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, Operation Pan America was replaced by the Alliance for Progress (1961). This programme more clearly justified US penetration policies under revolution-counterrevolution logic. President Kennedy invited the ruling classes to 'lead the fight for those basic reforms which alone can preserve the fabric of their societies. Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable' (KENNEDY, 1962, p. 41). Following a similar line were the words of Teodoro Moscoso, director for Latin America of the Administration for International Development: '[The Alliance] deserves the support of the privileged, because it is an appeal ... to their sense of self-defence ... they must choose between supporting the objectives of the Alliance or exposing themselves to a destructive Castro-type revolution' (MOSCOSO, 1962, p. 35).

Undoubtedly, the important point is that at the moment when the United States intends to increase its control over the American countries, the ruling classes of these countries are in the process of proposing a thorough revision of the patterns of political organisation of their societies, a restructuring of dependent capitalism. It was a structural change in the functioning of the economy, replacing industrialisation with a new highly diversified primary export model.

In line with this idea is its socio-political counterpart and within it (containing it), the discursive articulation of a hegemony that would seal the return to redistributionist proposals, typical of the industrialist period. Here, the relevant role of the organic intellectuals – civil, ecclesiastical, military – of the ruling classes appears. They were the indispensable authors of the counterrevolutionary discursive-ideological phenomenon that shaped the ways of seeing, being and feeling social life since the middle of the 20th century in the Americas. They not only produced discursive practices but also represented specific social interests, weaving and interconnecting the political and cultural tendencies of different actors involved in the development of a new political order, not of change but of reaction. It was a project that brought together the most reactionary sectors of the Catholic Church; of the armed forces; of the industrial, commercial and

banking bourgeoisie; and the oligarchy. This nucleus of power flatly rejected any secular ideological perspective: atheistic liberalism, anarchism, socialism and, very especially, communism (CAÑÓN, 2018).

One space where this can be observed is the Inter-American Confederation for Continental Defense. Created in 1954, this confederation joined the World Anti-Communist League (1967), giving rise to the Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation (1972). Its members included: politicians, members of political organisations or parties, or their founders; judges; government officials and representatives of multinational institutions; teachers and university rectors; diplomats; priests; businesspeople, industrialists, landowners and bankers; military officials; constituent legislators and drafters of constitutional reforms; labour leaders and Catholic students; journalists, media directors or owners; and war criminals from the Ustaše (Croatia) and the Balli Kombëtar (Albania). Banzer, Stroessner and Videla, who presided over the bloody dictatorships of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina, respectively, were also members (CAÑÓN, 2017, p. 79-99).

## Part Two

Before World War II ended, American diplomacy and business joined forces to guarantee their country's position of hegemonic power. Among other things, they succeeded in drawing the guidelines for a new world economic order. In this sense, the International Monetary Fund – to regulate currency exchange – and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – to promote private investment – are among their most significant achievements.

The circumstances of World War II placed the United States in a pre-eminent position. With arms production – stimulated by the state itself – as the main revitaliser of its economy, and with military supply consortiums occupying the key positions of the economy, expansion and the rate of profit increased constantly. In this context, a high government official, the executive vice-chairman of the War Production Board,<sup>7</sup> Charles Wilson (president of General Electric) ventured the possibility of prolonging the alliance between corporations and the armed forces for 'a permanent war economy' (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 20-01-44, p.1). This decision to channel state resources towards the military-industrial complex not only largely subordinated economic planning to political-military strategy but also fuelled a trend present since World War I and accentuated during the crisis of 1929: direct state intervention in the economy.

Until then, as is well known, the expanded reproduction of capital had not required state intermediation, but that changed when the state joined together with corporations to alleviate the crises of capitalism. To ensure proper functioning of industrial, commercial and financial machinery, the governments of the major powers adopted planning measures, which contributed to the centralisation of

---

<sup>7</sup> Created in 1942, the Board was an agency of the American government that supervised production during World War II. It had the ability to transform industry from peacetime to the needs of war, establishing priorities in the distribution and allocation of materials and services. War Production Board, *Industrial Mobilization for War*.



capital. Simultaneously, while governments tried to regulate the economy, creating a privileged market for monopolies, they used the latter to accumulate capital. It was then that state monopoly capitalism became established.

All of the above and, fundamentally, the alliances between the state and the corporations, between the latter and the armed forces, made the militarisation of the economy viable. As previously mentioned, this was not a momentary phenomenon, limited to World War II. On the contrary, in the following years, the public orders, expenses and revenues of the state (three elements that directly affect economic dynamics) were oriented towards massive rearmament, in view of a potentially unlimited world war conflict.

It would not be entirely accurate to attribute the militarisation of the economy to economic causes alone. This must be considered in relation to the general course taken by US domestic and foreign policy. After the end of World War II, the USSR established itself as an alternative model to capitalism. Faced with this reality, a whole system of propaganda, using the most diverse means (cinema, radio, newspapers, illustrated magazines, schoolbooks, etc.), insisted monotonously on a West threatened by communist danger. Thus, terms such as Soviet imperialism, enemies of democracy, anti-democratic forces and subversion colonised the social discourses of the Cold War.

Of course, this reactionary anti-communism was not the same as that of the liberals of the period. But both variants agreed in the belief that, if they managed to crush the communist movement, capitalism would remain stable. For the ideologues of US imperialist politics, the difficulties of capitalism derived mainly from the action of forces that were outside the system. Even those who acknowledged the fact of the general crisis (that is, the weakening of all their internal forces: economic, political and ideological) attributed it to the presence of the socialist system, and to the communists, who were trying to overthrow capitalism. According to their perspective, the only possible social system was capitalism; the communist movement was inspired from outside and organised by what they called ‘foreign agents’.

It is true that the USSR, in particular, and the communist movement, in general, were opponents of the United States, but the latter did something else; it presented them as a threat, made them its enemies, declared war on them. Indeed, starting with the Truman Doctrine (1947) – the matrix of American foreign policy during the Cold War – the fight against communism became the most important factor in world history. Although the Doctrine intended to give continuity to the US ideal of respect for self-determination, the facts would reveal a very different reality: constant US interventionism to stop independent development.<sup>8</sup>

The first act of this paradox took place when the United States replaced Great Britain as the imperial arbiter in Greece. On the eve of the referendum, by which Greek society would define the political regime to

---

<sup>8</sup>President Roosevelt (1933-1945), Truman’s predecessor (1945-1953), agreed with British Prime Minister Churchill (1940-1945) that respect for self-determination (point three of the Atlantic Charter, 14-08-41), would be one of the principles that would rule in the post-war world. The full text of the Charter can be consulted in Pereira, Juan Carlos – Pedro Antonio, Martínez. *Documentos básicos*, pp. 306-307.

be established (September 1946), an American fleet arrived at Phaleron Bay ‘in order to demonstrate the friendly support of the United States for Greece’ (ABC, 06-09-46, p. 13), as announced by the US embassy. The second act was Truman’s speech *Recommendation for assistance to Greece and Turkey* (12-03-47), where the Doctrine was stated. The speech itself was a request for Congress to authorise military and economic aid (\$400 million) for Greece and Turkey. Most of that aid would go to backing the Greek government – in the face of British withdrawal – in the civil war. It is worth noting that Truman’s speech was a difficult balancing act between the domestic and foreign policy interests of his country. If he wanted the approval of Congress, he had to convince them, on the one hand, that America’s security frontiers were beyond its geographic limits, and on the other, that the Greek civil war demonstrated that communism was a force that threatened security.

Therefore, the contradiction between respect for self-determination and interventionism could exist as long as the communist threat played its part. Truman and his advisers knew this and articulated the speech as a resistance to Soviet expansionism. The former ambassador to Moscow and then presidential adviser George Kennan, in his well-known ‘Long Telegram’ (22-02-1946), had provided the conceptual framework for this.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, President Truman made sending aid ‘a matter that concerns foreign policy and national security’ (TRUMAN, 1947). He made it known to Congress and to the American people that ‘totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States’ (TRUMAN, 1947). In short, the United States should prepare for a long struggle in the face of the irreconcilable nature of its objectives and its philosophy with those of the USSR. In his message, Truman presented the United States and the USSR as two adversaries with antagonistic and irreconcilable concepts of civilisation: ‘One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression’ (TRUMAN, 1947). Undoubtedly, the interest in democracy was genuine, but to elevate it to a political paradigm, communism was presented as follows: ‘The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression’ (TRUMAN, 1947). Already positioned in that point of view, Truman gave his foreign policy the aspect of a crusade: ‘We shall not realise our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples [...] against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes’ (TRUMAN, 1947).

We can say that the Truman Doctrine was not only a projection of American interests towards Europe, but an offensive against communism. It was a new modality in counterrevolutionary policies, which reflected US aspirations to institutionalise its dominance and guarantee the production and propagation of its

---

<sup>9</sup> This telegram presents George Kennan’s theory of a post-WWII worldview where capitalist and socialist spheres of influence emerge; illustrates the actions the USSR will take to gain dominance over the world economy; and suggests solutions to the imminent conflict. The telegram is organised into five sections: basic characteristics of the post-war Soviet perspective; the history of this perspective; its projection on practical politics at the official level; its projection at the unofficial level; and practical deduction from the point of view of US politics.

status of power, holding the reins of political and economic operationalisation. If the Marshall Plan enabled the reconstruction of a socially and materially ravaged area of Europe and the reassembly of European capitalism, then the Truman Doctrine also contributed. Although, as Richard Clogg says, in another way: ‘the meagre resources of the weakened state were not used, as in the rest of Europe, to repair the ravages of war and occupation, but to contain the internal enemy’ (CLOGG, 1998, p. 140).

By October 1949, American resources and assistance had managed to save the monarchical regime and crush the popular insurgency. After the civil war, while military and economic aid continued to arrive, Greece opened up to receive investments from American corporations. The United States gained new markets and access to raw materials and energy sources while preventing hypothetical Soviet access to the Mediterranean. The US analysts evaluated the situation, congratulating themselves on what had been achieved and, even knowing full well what the role of the USSR had been in Greece, stated:

The Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirantsto hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic .... [E]very individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war .... The conflict becomes endemic and will enter the phase of total war. ... The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself (NSC 68, 1950, p. 58).

We insist on this point, contained in Secret Memorandum No. 68 of the National Security Council (14-04-1950), because it enables us to understand how those who carried out the Cold War comprehended it. The formulators of that analysis, which relapsed into Soviet expansionism, posed the conflict in terms that only allowed for a single resolution: annihilation, either their own or that of the enemy. According to the US ideologues, this meant that there were not only two superpowers in the world competing for primacy but also a challenge on a global scale around the very guidelines of the organisation of the state and society. It was a formidable undertaking of social demolition and building.

The Truman Doctrine had its immediate correlate for the Americas: the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. Approved on 02-09-1947, it allowed the United States to advance in the institutional fabric of its influence on the continent. In the case of the Treaty, and unlike in the Doctrine, the United States had to negotiate with the nations involved. The American countries took their precautions; ever since the Venezuelan crisis (1902) – the beginning of the replacement of the European powers in the Americas – US interventions, marked by Big Stick diplomacy, had triggered broad social discontent, manifested in anti-imperialism.<sup>10</sup> Even so, the United States succeeded in its mission to lay the foundations for a hemispheric

---

<sup>10</sup> A recent work that gathers different contributions on the subject of anti-imperialism is: KOZEL, Andres (coord.). *El imaginarioantiimperialistaen América Latina*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2015.

security policy, enshrining as a guiding principle the link between domestic political processes and the international balance of power.

While the Treaty did not contain any provision regarding partial agreements between its members for its application, neither did it prohibit them. In this way, after the enactment of the Mutual Defense Act (1949), the United States was able to get rid of its war surpluses – useless for any future conflict – by selling them to the countries of the Americas. Between 1952 and 1955, the United States signed bilateral agreements with Brazil, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. By virtue of these pacts and the Mutual Security Act (1951), it was able to sell weapons for \$200 million. The bilateral agreements not only served as a stimulus for the arms industry but also allowed the United States to consolidate an area of influence. It should also be noted that the signing of such agreements encouraged hope, among the governments of the region, to obtain financial aid.

### Part Three

Among other aspects, the Truman Doctrine and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance marked a change, on a global scale, in the policies against communism: a shift from containment to defence policies. From that moment on, anti-communism and the war against Marxism set the agenda of the American continent. Indeed, this development is one of the elements that explain the reorientation of state apparatuses towards persecutory state violence. In other words, it resulted in a restructuring of the state, based on the real or perceived interference of cultural values considered alien to the country's traditions, to use repressive force against specific political groups.

In various countries of the Americas (Brazil, Haiti, Peru, Chile, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Bolivia), legislation proposed a block on the participation of communist parties and affiliated organisations.<sup>11</sup> But the aforementioned shift led states to design and implement policies no longer of opposition but of persecution, harassment, systematic repression and annihilation of communism and communists. In this way, little by little, the American states became the agents of rationally directed violence against communists. One aspect of this change can be observed in the ministries of war, which assumed and incorporated the management and coordination of all actions of control and internal repression into their traditional tasks. The Ninth and Tenth Pan-American Conferences (1948 and 1954, respectively) and the Fourth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of American States (1951) are the institutional spaces, of continental scope, that gave way to the counterrevolutionary conception of ending communism that colonised the states.

---

<sup>11</sup>In this regard, the Dominican Republic is an exception; since 1936, under the Trujillo regime, it had begun to systematically eliminate political opposition in general and communism in particular.

The Fourth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of American States, convened by the Organization of American States at the request of the United States, was intended to take measures to ‘uproot the danger that the subversive activities of international communism pose to the American states’ (ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, 1948, p. 160). This ministerial summit was the first of its kind to address and specifically deal with ‘common defence against the aggressive activities of international communism’ (CUARTA REUNIÓN DE CONSULTA, 1959, p. 160). The ministers not only agreed on measures for the economic, military and political defence of the continent, but also committed themselves to modifying the legal system of their countries. In this sense, some of the most substantial modifications are contained in Resolution VIII ‘Strengthening of Internal Security’ (CUARTA REUNIÓN DE CONSULTA, 1959, p. 169-171). This classified communism as a crime and, by extension, activities included within communist operations or, in other words, any actions attributed to communism (from street revolts to civil war, through strikes and insurrection). Communism was established as legally punishable, in the realm of crimes against internal security.

The measures that had existed until that moment – the banning of communist parties – were bans against opponents. Now, the norms no longer responded to a specific and human logic but, through expansion, became norms to safeguard the hierarchical social order. Their nature is not without links to the campaign led by Senator Joseph McCarthy (1950-1956) or to the Internal Security Act (1950), which showed the willingness of the United States to suspend civil liberties, at least of the sectors of the population that enjoyed them. If the United States, in the name of defence and security, was willing to question the validity of political liberalism, how could it not ask the same of other countries? Indeed, the Fourth Meeting entrusted the Pan-American Union (general secretariat of the Organization of American States) with the preparation of the report: Strengthening of Internal Security.

The report, presented in 1953 and inspired by the Internal Security Act, is a compendium of measures targeting ideological repression and the control of thought. The former allowed ‘repressing expressions of opinion, activities or political aspirations’ (DEPARTAMENTO JURÍDICO, 1953). Meanwhile, the latter were measures of control over ‘the press, publications, professorships and functions of teaching in general’ (DEPARTAMENTO JURÍDICO, 1953). In this way, the Organization of American States urged governments to exercise their police powers in order to prevent ‘the infiltration of ideas [and] the subversive action of communism’ (DEPARTAMENTO JURÍDICO, 1953). Incorporated into national legislation, the report’s recommendations enabled the persecution of all those people who, from the spheres of state power, were considered communists. This is a remarkable phenomenon, since it was the states who decided what or who was communist; in other words, the condition of communist would be defined from the outside. The report gave some indications for its identification:

The propagation of subversive doctrines and the circumstances of being a member of an association engaged in such propaganda are the chief elements to be proved in order to determine the classification of ‘agent of international communism’. It is certain that his classification may apply to persons to whom none of these acts may be imputed, as is the case with those who carry on a forbidden activity without apparent connection with subversive movement, but whose intimate and close connection with it may be discovered or shown by some other circumstance. ... When dealing with private individuals, outside of subjecting them to the supervision called for by the circumstances of the case no other measures appear to exist than those that might be applied when such persons incur liability for the commission of any other of the various activities proscribed and punished as subversive (DEPARTAMENTO JURÍDICO, 1953).

In short, it intensified a common reaction against communists, supposed or real, of accusing them of being at the service of Soviet imperialism and trying to neutralise them. This seems to indicate, on the one hand, a certain weakness of the ruling classes to ensure strong social consensus on their leading role and, on the other, an exaggerated fear of the emergence of opposition movements.

In line with this analysis and as the last element in the assessment of the Fourth Meeting, it is worth highlighting Resolution III on ‘Inter-American Military Cooperation’ (CUARTA REUNIÓN, 1951, p. 162-164). It states that ‘the expansionist activities of international communism require the immediate adoption of measures to safeguard the peace and security of the continent’ (CUARTA REUNIÓN, 1951, p. 163). Based on these considerations, the Fourth Meeting requested that the Inter-American Defense Board<sup>12</sup> prepare ‘military planning for collective defense against aggression’ (CUARTA REUNIÓN, 1951).

The Board, on the basis of its evaluation of the world situation, which it considered ‘serious’, and with the observations presented by some of the American states, drew up the General Military Plan for the Defense of the American Continent (1951). This split up the hemispheric security zone created by the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, dividing the continent into strategic subzones and political blocks (DECRETO 263/1958). Subsequently, given ‘the seriousness of the danger in which continental unity and democratic institutions find themselves in the face of the offensive unleashed by communism in America’ (DECRETO 6447/1963), the Plan was revised and updated, through the General Military Plan for the Defense of the American Continent against an Aggression by the Communist Bloc (1957). Each and every one of the member states of the Organization of American States made use of these plans and their subsequent modifications (such as the 1967 Military Plan for the Defense of the American Continent against Internal Subversion Directed and Supported by International Communism, as a Form of Aggression that Does Not Constitute Armed Attack) to define their internal security policies. One of the features that characterise the legal arsenal, which was developed from the Plans, is the increase in coercion and devices to control, follow and repress.

In effect, the practice of coercion became increasingly direct, the police measures unbearable and the repression and institutional violence so massive that at the inauguration of the Fourth Anti-communist

---

<sup>12</sup> Created on 30 March 1942, it provides technical, consultative and educational advisory services on military and defence issues to the Organization of American States.

Continental Congress (1958), the Archbishop of Guatemala, Rossell Arellano, said: 'I am not here to speak with the anti-communists who believe that communism is defeated with bayonets and musketeers, nor with those who believe that being an anti-communist is to exploit the workers and peasants, nor with the bosses who in the name of anti-communism lower workers' wages and steal their social rights' (CONFERENCIA INTERAMERICANA DE DEFENSA DEL CONTINENTE, 1958). The Archbishop's criticism is noteworthy, as it is directed both at the individuals who benefit from exploitation as well as at government repression. As a critique of the conditions of exploitation and the methods applied against the communists, it was a clear attempt to call attention to the onslaught that was taking place in almost the entire geography of the continent. There, investigation commissions against communists perfected the mechanisms of control that, in practice, led to the development of a counterrevolutionary state war machine.

The most important innovations in the infrastructure of social control were found in the echelons of intelligence organisations, under the military sphere. The armed forces organised, restructured and put intelligence services into operation. These services started out at the strategic political level as technical bodies tasked with coordinating and centralising information produced on activities and institutions related to communism. This was done in order, then, to place such services in the planning, direction and supervision of state action in matters of communism, providing governments with all the necessary elements to address internal security matters. In a simile with the Orwellian fantasy of *1984*, the intelligence services acted as Thought Police, controlling and monitoring everyone. They counted on a specific division of 'psychological action', to 'carry out the counterrevolution, reconquer the population; the psychological weapon is decisive to achieving the objective: the conquest of man' (LÓPEZ AUFRANC, 1959, p.630). The psychological actions were aimed at shaping anti-communist sentiment that, in the context of the political discourse of the time, resulted in the proliferation of campaigns in which order and subversion were central concepts. From legislation and social discourses, the narrative and description of a war situation against an internal enemy was established: the subversive.

Returning to institutional spaces, where there was pressure to end communism, we find the Ninth Pan-American Conference (Bogotá, 1948), in which the Organization of American States was created, and within which the US delegation carried out a campaign to 'uproot and prevent' subversive actions. At the Ninth Conference, the United States managed to obtain unanimous condemnation against communism (Resolution XXXII: The Preservation and Defense of Democracy in America), considering it an anti-democratic ideology, irreconcilable with the tradition of the American countries and incompatible with the American conception of freedom (ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, 1948, p. 210-211). Thus encouraged, the United States directed its actions towards the preparation of resolutions to suppress any social, political and cultural movement that, in actuality or presumably, responded to communist interests. Supported by the other American countries, it used this forum and those mentioned previously to achieve its

objectives. The peak of the US campaign occurred in the following Pan-American Conference (1954, Caracas), with the Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States against International Communist Intervention. This had an immediate objective: to weaken and destabilise the Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954). The only vote against the Declaration came from the representative of Guatemala, Toriello Garrido: ‘They wanted to find an easy means to maintain the economic dependence of the American republics and suppress the legitimate desires of their peoples, classifying as “communism” any show of solidarity and economic independence’ (TORRIELO GARRIDO, 1955, p. 289). The Guatemalan delegate did not defend communism but gave a warning about the extent to which communism was used as a justification for maintaining dependence.

The coup in Guatemala (27-06-54), financed by the US administration<sup>13</sup>, established that it was not because of the autonomy that Guatemala acquired in its foreign policy nor because of advances made in the process of social, political and economic democratisation, but because of the conviction that this was dangerous. The initial scenario was one that had tended towards modernising the state and improving the conditions of the subordinate sectors that, during the ‘ten years of spring’ (1944-1954), saw some of their demands satisfied. Now, this would be replaced by a series of transformations: market liberalisation; elimination of restrictions on foreign investment; and the strengthening of the US private sector (exclusive beneficiary of concessions for the exploitation of oil and winner of public contracts for infrastructure).

It would be difficult not to understand the overthrow of Arbenz as a counterrevolutionary intervention, which sought to stop or even reverse the ‘ten years of spring’. However, between the dictatorships of Castillo Armas (1954-1957), Ydígoras Fuentes (1958-1963) and Peralta Azurdia (1963-1966), there are differences that distinguish them. The first two can be understood as transitory authoritarian regimes, since there is no rejection of the democratic state as a form of social organisation in the country, but rather a momentary interruption of the civil and political liberties of the republican regime and an increase in repressive work. Meanwhile, to put an end to the policies that protected incipient industrialisation and the internal market, the third regime started from assumptions that contradicted the fundamental bases of the democratic state. Under this dictatorship, the principle of legality, respect for fundamental rights and jurisdictional control over this were considered as obstacles to achieving the opening of the market, the expansion of production relations and the privatisation of the means of production and state enterprises. Indeed, despite the fact that the two preceding dictatorships reinvigorated the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the state (for example: National Committee of Defense Against Communism [July 1954]; Preventive Penal Law Against Communism [August 1954]; General Directorate of Security [1956]; the reform of the constitution [1956], article 23 prohibition of all those entities that advocate

---

<sup>13</sup> The CIA declassified secret files on its participation in the destabilisation plan and coup in Guatemala. The undercover operation, Operation PBSUCCESS, was the agency's first in the Americas. PBSUCCESS was authorised by President Eisenhower in August 1953, with a budget of \$2.7 million for psychological warfare, political action and subversion, among other components of a small paramilitary war. Later, PBSUCCESS became the model for future CIA activities in the Americas. The files are available online: <<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/docs/doc01.pdf>> [consulted on: 30/12/13]



communist ideology, and article 62 classifying the punishment of any communist or associated action; Organic Law of National Education [1956] to train new generations in ‘opposition to communism’, and also to form ‘good producers and good consumers’ in defence of the interests of the market) to overcome the obstacles, they did not succeed. Thus, during the Peralta Azurdia regime, in order to put an end to opposition and resistance to the socioeconomic transformations, which the ruling classes could not direct, the state was freed from the limitations of the rule of law. This is an extremely serious phenomenon, the scope and consequences of which become unpredictable, since the state failed to preserve the integrity of all those it turned into subjects beyond the network of state obligations. It was the moment of arbitrariness, of resorting to authoritarianism, to direct coercion, coordinating an official and unofficial apparatus to eliminate them, either through state personnel or through agents outside the state body, but whose actions respond to state rulings<sup>14</sup>.

#### Part Four

In every coup, before or after the one in Guatemala, there is one constant: the participation of the armed forces. These, at different times in the history of their countries, actively intervened in the political life of their societies. In many cases they did so directly; in other cases, they acted as pressure groups; most of the time, they were arbitrators or rectors of the political system; and almost always, they served as an instrument of control. However, inscribed in the coordinates of the political, economic and military alignment with the United States, a process began in which the ruling classes re-evaluated and redefined their ties and relations with the armed forces. If in the previous historical cycle, the armed forces knew how to be the custodians of the alliance between the ruling classes and the central capitalist powers, now they were playing a pivotal role in state-class and state-society relations.

The institutional bases for turning to the armed forces, as a mechanism of the state system, remained unscathed, but doctrinal support for their action was changed. Now, under a change in the profile of military interventionism, they will be required to save the nation from communist infiltration. The armed forces prepared for this, under the influence of two doctrinal writings: the Doctrine of National Security and the Doctrine of Modern Warfare (CAÑÓN, 2012). Both redefined how to understand war conflicts, replacing, on the one hand, the confrontation between states with one between individuals and, on the other, the fight for territorial control with one for ideological control of society. At the same time, both doctrines tackled the problem of social conflict and its resolution by modifying the economic structure – in a readjustment of dependent capitalism – while social conflicts came to be considered as an aspect of an ideological war.

---

<sup>14</sup>In Guatemala, the unofficial organisations of the coercion apparatus were known as Death Squads. For a study that examines these as a parastatal entity, see: CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE GUATEMALA. *Guatemala: entre el dolor y la esperanza*. Valencia, Diputació Provincial de València, 1995.

Since the development of the aforementioned Defense Plans, the Inter-American Defense Board pushed not only for the armed forces to assume tasks of repression and control within countries but also to make them an agent in economic and social modernisation. Thus, in 1960, the Board decreed:

The General Military Plan for the Defense of the American Continent recognizes the desirability of doing everything possible to raise the standards of living of the peoples, with the object of effectively combatting Communist propaganda, which tries to exploit the ignorance and poverty of the underdeveloped areas ... The Estimate of the Situation recognizes that 'Often the military establishment of each country can plan a very useful role in economic development' ... The Council of Delegates recommends: A. That the Governments of the American States take into consideration the advisability of employing organs of their Armed Forces, preferably in regions considered to be underdeveloped, in order to: 1. Undertake highway and settlement work ... 2. Broaden the economic bases directed toward raising the standards of living of the peoples; and 3. Educate the native populations in their own surroundings and create reserves of specialized labor for specific types of work (BARBER, 1966, p. 271-272)<sup>15</sup>.

Clearly, the armed forces were thought of as a catalyst for structural changes in the status quo. The aims being pursued were transparent: to prevent the expansion of resistance to the change in state model as well as to limit the scope of action of counter-hegemonic trends. Furthermore, the new orientation of the armed forces, as an instrument of economic and social action demonstrating interest in improving the life of the population, sought to combat the traditional image of the armed forces as allies of the ruling classes and enemies of the people.

This decisive turn crystallised with the First Inter-American Course of Counterrevolutionary War (1961), in which the military cadres of fourteen countries participated (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). The basic objective of the Course was to provide training in the planning, conduction and execution of the counterrevolution. The programme also included the study of Marxist philosophy and techniques to prevent and combat communist infiltration. Brigadier General Carlos Túrolo, director of the Course, insisted that repressive methods should be accompanied by others of an economic and psychological nature, aimed at the subaltern classes, considered vulnerable to the action of communist infiltration: 'repressive laws, on their own, do not eliminate communism, and it is necessary to create an environment that is unfavourable to it' (TÚROLO, 03-10-61, p. 9).

The institutionalisation of counterrevolutionary training was consolidated with the founding of the Inter-American Defense College. Opened in September 1962, the College was in charge of training the new generation of military personnel in counterinsurgency. In bidding farewell to the first class of graduates, US Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson reminded them that 'we cannot be satisfied until communism is gone,' and that they must 'maintain constant and strict vigilance against subversion' (JOHNSON, 1963, p.9).

<sup>15</sup> We must clarify that we have extracted the cited document from the appendix of the referenced book. The title of the document is: Contribution of the Armed Forces to the Economic-Social Development of the Countries, Resolution XLVII of the Inter-American Defense Board, December 1, 1960. Barber, *Internal Security and Military Power*, 271-72.

During the Fifth Conference of Chiefs of Staff of the American Armies (1964, West Point),<sup>16</sup> the Argentine representative, Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía, univocally expressed the formal assumption of the new role for the armed forces:

to actively contribute within its possibilities in cooperation with the civil power ... in the economic and social development of the country ... the general military plan for the defence of the American continent recognises the benefit of striving by all possible means to raise the level of life of the peoples in order to effectively combat communist propaganda, which tries to exploit the ignorance and poverty of underdeveloped environments (ONGANÍA, 1964, p. 751-752)<sup>17</sup>.

It is not merely a coincidence that Onganía's words almost literally echo the arguments raised in the aforementioned Resolution XLVIII by the Inter-American Defense Board regarding underdevelopment paving the way for communism. Nor is it coincidental that, at that time, ministries, secretariats and technical planning offices proliferated throughout the Americas. The planning systems, created through loans from the Alliance for Progress (in fact, they were a US requirement for the signatory countries of the Charter of Punta del Este [1961] to access Alliance funds), should enable, according to the technocrats, the development of the American nations. This development was associated much more with the idea of economic growth, through increased productivity and employee discipline, than with the concept of industrialisation. This new pattern of development was a structural change in the functioning of the economy, which dismantled the model of industrialisation and affected social formations as a whole.

Through planning systems, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development designed and implemented stabilisation programmes, which included fiscal austerity and monetary control. In other words, there was a retraction in public spending that, until that moment, had been responsible for boosting domestic consumption and fulfilling social needs. On the other hand, these policies of restructuring and global integration tended to benefit the growth of privileged enclaves, associated with a reduced class of transnational capitalists, linked to multinationals and foreign banks: the faction of financial capital. Politically, the hegemony of this faction was projected in a state model whose main functions were meant to be: to generate all the conditions for the development of private initiative and to stand in for the private sector only when strictly necessary. In practice, it was a retreat from the state scheme that had consolidated labour and social protection. Obviously, this did not happen without due resistance from the subaltern classes, which saw the improvements they had won evaporate. The deepening class divisions deteriorated the foundations of any social consensus; with financial capital unable

---

<sup>16</sup> Created in 1960 by the armies of Argentina, Ecuador, Panama, Bolivia, El Salvador, Paraguay, Brazil, the United States, Chile, Guatemala, Uruguay, Colombia, Honduras, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Peru, with the aim of becoming a discussion forum for the exchange of experiences between the armies of the American continent.

<sup>17</sup>Onganía, "El gobierno, las Fuerzas Armadas y la comunidad nacional" 751-52.

to develop actions that would broaden its support bases, the ruling classes lost their ability to be accepted as such. The ruling classes as a whole, which did not change the objectives they had set for themselves, in the midst of the hegemony crisis, radicalised the perception of danger with respect to their interests and defended themselves against a common enemy: subversion. Although this did not allow them to overcome internal divisions, it did consolidate the connection between their interests in the political struggle against the subaltern classes. They summoned the armed forces to eradicate subversion, and these responded: ‘as many people as necessary must die in order to achieve the security of the country’ (VIDELA, 24-10-75, p. 1).

## Final Part

The relationships of dependency with the central countries, with their permanence and their changes, marked the historical horizon upon which a great part of the history of the America south of the Rio Grande is inscribed. This had an impact on both how this region participated in the international division of labour and how it intervened in the world market. Dependency was also felt in different degrees: in the evolution of the capitalist cycle (expansion or crisis); in the capitalist structure (substitution of materials; expansion of supply); and in the international dynamics of the system (changes of hegemony between powers and their external needs). Finally, dependency acted on the world view of the dominant classes, which, as a product of the cultural penetration of the different hegemonic centres they allied with, was projected onto the oligarchic state, producing and reproducing an order of dependent economic and cultural relations.

The criticism and questioning of the oligarchic system of domination – due to its restrictive democracy, its unequal wealth distribution and its exclusive social order – crystallised, during the crisis of the 1930s, in a redefinition of intra- and extra-class alignments. The hegemonic instability that this entailed could be overcome, with or without ruptures in the political system, by the intervention of the armed forces, which by maintaining the discipline of the workforce and intervening in the arbitration of political confrontation, facilitated the transition to a system that protected domestic production from free importation. The time periods and ways in which the social welfare states were structured varied from one country to another; for example, the New State of Brazil was not the same as the ‘ten years of spring’ in Guatemala, nor was the Peronism of Argentina the same as the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. Each country had its own rhythm when incorporating social rights, nationalising resources and services, redistributing income and directing public spending to stimulate growth. But, regardless of time, methods and rhythms, what existed was a tendency to identify the state as the guarantor not only of the model as a whole but also of political expression in favour of social protection. Wide sectors of the subaltern classes began to define themselves based on their participation in the political system, considering the state as an essential agent in the satisfaction of their demands and as a space for negotiation.

Although many of the regimes that led these processes were characterised by their programmatic and practical moderation, different factions of the ruling classes perceived them as overly impatient in their reformist zeal. Furthermore, they feared that the capacity for mobilisation achieved by the subaltern classes would encourage the imminence of the communist revolution. This allegation about an eventual subversion of class order was nothing but the social translation of the implicit contradiction of the model: higher wages or more capital. The conflict entered an acute phase in the middle of the 20th century. The period of economic growth was ending, without the ties of dependency having come undone; the ruling classes were impatient to regain mono-class control of society while the United States pushed to establish a security zone.

During the Cold War, the United States, with all its generosity and interest, subordinated the needs of the American countries to the priorities of its corporations. Being, as it was, the most powerful economic power in the history of humanity, and using that power to exercise its dominance, it discouraged the industrialisation of its southern neighbours, applying high tariffs on the importation of processed products and low tariffs for countries that accepted their role as producers of raw materials. In this way, this commercial policy perpetuated dependency and forged the collapse of autonomous development. The Pan-American Operation completed this. The financial aid that resulted from the Operation was, in reality, loans. Furthermore, much of the money contributed by the United States was a subsidy for US companies, since the country receiving the aid was obliged to spend it in the US market. In addition, the stated objective of the aid was to promote a favourable environment for US private investment. The Alliance for Progress followed the same trajectory; the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Galo Plaza, at the annual meeting of owners and directors of North American newspapers (1969) said: 'For every dollar that is paid in taxes in the United States, one third of a single cent (that is, one third of a hundredth) is devoted to "aid" to Latin America. 80% of this aid is offered in the form of loans, which must be paid in dollars and with interest. 0.90 cents of every dollar that the United States gives in aid to Latin America is spent in the United States itself.'

If, on the one hand, both the Operation and the Alliance stopped (voluntarily or involuntarily) independent development, then on the other, they marked an alignment with the political-military strategy of the United States, and this was done in the terms of the Truman Doctrine: avoid the spread of communism, combat it. In this way, the United States and its local allies managed to position communist subversion as the greatest threat to the status quo of the continent. Those responsible for US foreign policy intervened, with the assistance of intellectuals and technicians from the business sector and, of course, with the backing of different actors from civil and political society of the member countries of the Organization of American States. The Organization established that the problem posed by communism 'with respect to our American community is that of survival' (Organization of American States, 1948). This gave new life to former visions of the action of communism, or else produced visions suited to the specific conditions of post-war

contemporaneity. The denunciation of communism as a force that sowed chaos and destabilised order, articulated behind defensive rhetoric, was the message constantly being sent to society. To paraphrase Sartre (1948) regarding anti-Semitism: if the communist did not exist, the anti-communist would invent him. Although, in a lessgnoseological and more practical sense, the anti-communist did: through intelligence and propaganda systems, the anti-communist identified the autonomy of the subaltern classes as part of the subversive enterprise. As Chomsky argues, ‘There’s always an ideological offensive that builds up a chimerical monster, then campaigns to have it crushed’ (CHOMSKY, 2000, p. 32-33). Crushing the subversion was the reason for training the military in counterrevolution. This was but one step forward in establishing a permanent state of internal war, declaring war on civil society.

In this context of the rising counterrevolutionary wave, the transformations that Kennedy proposed, with his developmental rhetoric and his good intentions, were a coup de grace to distributionist policies. The granting of loans was tied to the application of stabilisation programmes that on the one hand, benefitted financial capital – the main financing of the loans – while on the other, they undermined the foundations of an economic expansion based on domestic demand. The new logic of accumulation increased inequalities. Political tension and social instability increased; ‘the forces of anarchy, terror and subversion run through the Americas’, according to the Rockefeller Report (1970, p. 307). This same report lists the benefits of training military personnel from the Americas in the United States, where they learned to be alert to how the communists used ‘the freedoms offered by democratic governments for their own ends’ (ROCKEFELLER, 1970, p. 308). The option for maintaining security and political stability in the region was clear.

As is well known, and as Rockefeller knew, the state has a monopoly on legal violence and, in accordance with this power, has all the legal resources possible to implement repressive measures under the control of institutions of coercion. However, in order for financial capital – increasingly powerful, but without sufficient consensus – to achieve deregulation, the elimination of tariff barriers and the free flow of products, labour and capital, the state became the executor of rationally directed violence to destroy or at least weaken those who it had previously classified as subversives: in other words, to decapitate the autonomy of the subaltern classes. This meant a fundamental alteration in the ethical principles of the state that, on principle, should ensure the integrity of the people. But it is more than a matter of repressive techniques. It is a new model of accumulation and reproduction of capital, which dismantled interrelated sectors and economic regions, with the consequent marginalisation and exclusion of the productive classes that make up the national market. Therefore, the new role attributed to the state and within it to the armed forces, linked to the foreshadowing of a new matrix of political power and the implementation of regressive economic and social policies, leads us to wonder: should we be talking about state terrorism or the terrorist state?

## References

- ACTA DE BOGOTÁ (12 de septiembre de 1960). *El Trimestre Económico*. Vol. 28, No. 109 (1) (Enero—Marzo de 1961), (pp. 168-173).
- AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Estado de Excepción, Homo Sacer, II*, I. Buenos Aires, Adriana Hidalgo, 2004.
- AMADEO, Mario. “Hacia una comunidad hispánica de naciones”. *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*. 59, 1954. (pp. 131-140).
- BARBER, Willard. *Internal Security and Military Power*. Ohio, State Univ. Press, 1966.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Discursos Interrumpidos I*, traducción de Jesús Aguirre. Madrid, Taurus, 1992.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Para una crítica de la violencia y otros ensayos. Iluminaciones IV*. Madrid, Taurus, 2001.
- Bernstein, Richard. *Violencia, pensar sin barandillas*. Barcelona, Gedisa, 2015.
- BUCI-GLUCSMANN, Christine. *Gramsci y el Estado*. Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1978.
- CAÑÓN VOIRIN, Julio Lisandro. “La guerra revolucionaria en la perspectiva de las FF.AA. argentinas”. *Naveg@mérica*. Revista electrónica de la Asociación Española de Americanistas [en línea]. 2012, n. 9. Disponible en <<http://revistas.um.es/navegamerica>>. [fecha de consulta: noviembre 2016]. ISSN 1989-211X.
- CAÑÓN VORIN, Julio Lisandro. “La Confederació Interamericana de Defensa del Continent (CIDC)”. *Rubrica Contemporanea*. [S.l.], v. 6, n. 12, dec. 2017, (pp. 79-99). ISSN 2014-5748. Disponible a: <<http://revistes.uab.cat/rubrica/article/view/v6-n12-canon/36>>. [fecha de consulta marzo 2018].
- CAÑÓN VORIN, Julio Lisandro. *De la crisis de hegemonía al terrorismo de Estado*. Córdoba, Lago Editora, 2018.
- CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE GUATEMALA. *Guatemala: entre el dolor y la esperanza*. Valencia, Diputació Provincial de València, 1995.
- CLOGG, Richard. *Historia de Grecia*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- CONFERENCIA INTERAMERICANA DE DEFENSA DEL CONTINENTE. *Actas del IV Congreso Continental Anticomunista, Tomo I*. México, CIDC, 1958.
- CUARTA REUNIÓN DE CONSULTA. *Cuarta reunión de Consulta de Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores: Washington 26 de marzo - 7 de abril de 1951*. Washington, Unión Panamericana, 1951.
- Decreto Nacional 263/1958, Aprobación del Plan Militar General para la Defensa del Continente Americano. Buenos Aires, 10 de Enero de 1958. *Boletín Oficial*, 30 de Septiembre de 2013.
- Decreto Nacional 6447/1963, Plan Militar General para la Defensa del Continente Americano. Buenos Aires, 1 de agosto de 1963. *Boletín Oficial*, 30 de Septiembre de 2013.
- DEPARTAMENTO JURÍDICO. *Fortalecimiento de la Seguridad Interna*. Washington, Unión Panamericana, 1953.

GRAMSCI, Antonio. Antología. Selección, traducción y notas de Manuel Sacristán. México, Siglo XXI, 1977.

JOHNSON, Lyndon. Discurso del Vicepresidente de los Estados Unidos de América, señor Lyndon B. Johnson, pronunciado el 20 de marzo de 1963, en ocasión de los primeros ejercicios de graduación del Colegio Interamericano de Defensa. Washington, Unión Panamericana, 1963.

KENNEDY, John. “Discurso del Presidente Kennedy, con motivo del primer aniversario de la Alianza para el Progreso” in ALIANZA PARA EL PROGRESO. Alianza para el Progreso: Documentos Básicos. Punta del Este, 1962 (pp. 36-43).

KUBISTCHEK, Juscelino. Operación Panamericana. Compilación de Documentos IV. Río de Janeiro, Presidencia de la República, Servicio de Documentación, 1959.

KUBISTCHEK, Juscelino. Operación Panamericana. Compilación de Documentos III. Río de Janeiro, Presidencia de la República. Servicio de Documentación. 1958.

LÓPEZ AUFRANC, Alcides. “Guerra Revolucionaria en Argelia”. Revista de la Escuela Superior de Guerra. n. 335, octubre diciembre 1959, (pp. 601-630).

Moscoso, Teodoro. “Extractos del del discurso de Teodoro Moscoso – 15 de febrero de 1962” in ALIANZA PARA EL PROGRESO. Alianza para el Progreso: Documentos Básicos. Punta del Este, 1962, (pp. 34-36).

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. A ReporttothePresidentPursuanttothePresident's Directive ofJanuary 31, 1950. NSC 68: UnitedStatesObjectives and ProgramsforNational Security. April 14, 1950. URL <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>> [fecha de consulta octubre 2012].

CHOMSKY, Noam. “El control de los medios de comunicación”, en Noam Chomsky e Ignacio Ramonet, Como nos venden la moto, Barcelona, Icaria, 2000, pp. 32-33.

ONGANÍA, Juan Carlos. “El gobierno, las Fuerzas Armadas y la comunidad nacional (relaciones cívico militares). Palabras pronunciadas por el comandante en jefe del ejército el día 6 de agosto de 1964, en West Point, en oportunidad de realizarse la V Conferencia de los Ejércitos Americanos” in Boletín Público de la Secretaria de Guerra, Tomo II, núm. 3411, Buenos Aires, 1964, (pp. 751- 759).

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, GENERAL SECRETARIAT. IX Conferencia Internacional Americana, Bogotá Colombia, Marzo 30-Mayo 2 de 1948: informe sobre los resultados de la Conferencia. Washington, Unión Panamericana, 1948.

PEREIRA, Juan Carlos - Pedro Antonio, Martínez. Documentos básicos sobre Historia de las Relaciones Internacionales (1815-1991). Madrid, Complutense, 1995, pp. 306-307.

POULANTZAS, Nicos. Poder Político y clases sociales en el estado capitalista. México, Siglo XXI, 1969.

ROCKEFELLER, Nelson. “El informe Rockefeller”. Foro Internacional. El colegio de México, Vol. 10, N° 3 (39) (Enero-Marzo, 1970) (pp. 286-344).

SARTRE, Jean Paul. Reflexiones sobre la cuestión judía. Buenos Aires, Sur, 1948.

TORRIELO GARRIDO, Guillermo. La Batalla de Guatemala. México, Cuadernos Americanos, 1955.

TRUMAN, Harry. RecommendationforAssistancetoGreece and Turkey: AddressofthePresidentoftheUnitedStatesDeliveredBefore a JointSessionoftheSenate and the House of



Representatives, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

TÚROLO, Carlos. “Legislar contra el comunismo”. CLARÍN, Buenos Aires, 03-10-61.

VIDELA, Jorge Rafael. “La guerra a la subversión”. La Opinión, Buenos Aires, 24-10-75.

WAR PRODUCTION BOARD. Industrial Mobilization for War: History of the War Production Board and Predecessor Agencies, 1940-1945, Volume 1. Washington, Bureau of Demobilization, Civilian Production Administration, 1947.

“WPB Aide Urges U.S. to Keep War Set-up”. The New York Times, New York, 20-01-44. [WPB es el acrónimo en inglés de Junta de Producción de Guerra].

*Submissão: 16/12/2021*

*Aceite: 12/01/2022*