

... confident precedence: magnificent in the intoxicating sweep of his open-weave mantle, the glory of his scars, his hide sandals . . . the arrogant curve of his lip-plug".

inappropriate even where deities are concerned. Indeed, rather than a pantheon of individual characters, the ancient books of the *Mexica* tend to show the interchange of qualities and charac-

teristics by surveying its own sources. Throughout, Clendinnen's guide is the collection of sixteenth-century Nahuatl texts known as the *Florentine Codex*, that great encyclopaedia of Aztec life

and shines through both time and space, co-ordinating daily and seasonal tasks with awareness of the earth's greater fate.

The history of Amazonia is marked by infrequent but dramatic outbreaks of millenarianism in which indigenous communities have become convinced that the present world will soon end, colonists of all kinds will be expelled and the Indians will take over their goods. Such movements have often been syncretic, incorporating utopian elements of Christianity and other aspects of European culture. They have frequently been led by individuals who are either from outside the community or have been extensively involved in non-Indian life.

A remarkable example of such millenarianism appears to have broken out in the central Peruvian Amazon in 1965. In that year, a Marxist guerrilla group, the MIR, was pushed out of the mountains above Huanucayo by an intensive counter-insurgency operation and retreated eastwards, down into the Amazonian foothills. Here they waged a largely ineffectual campaign, assaulting a number of police stations and ranches before they were surrounded by the army. Those who were not killed in battle, died in captivity. Some were shot "while trying to escape", others were rumoured to have been simply thrown out of a helicopter over the forest.

Despite its military insignificance, the episode excited great national interest, and was interpreted by means of a number of deeply entrenched cultural tropes. The leader of the guerrillas, Guillermo Lobatón, was a black professor of philosophy from a humble background in Lima, who had studied at the Sorbonne. He was said to speak seven languages and to have travelled widely in Europe. A photograph of the time shows him posed with a classical statue of Hermes above his head. Convinced of the need for radical change in Latin America, he later went to Cuba,

where he received military training. For many Peruvians, including the young then-leftist Mario Vargas Llosa, Lobatón was a highly romantic figure. But for others, he represented a deep-seated threat, particularly when, after the withdrawal down to Amazonia, he and his men were supported by the local Indian population, the Asháninka.

War of Shadows seeks to draw all the strands of these events together. The authors are anthropologists who, having carried out fieldwork of a conventional kind in an Amazonian community, researching the "deep history" of indigenous mythology, found themselves drawn subsequently into practical matters relating to land titles, health care and agricultural development. This led them to consider the "near history" of recent political events to account for present realities. But, ironically, the more they looked into these events, the more they were cast back on to

mythology to explain them.

For the central thesis of the book is that the Asháninka welcomed the MIR because certain shamanic authorities identified them as spirits sent by *pavá*, the Father Sun, to overturn the world, drive out those who had invaded Indian lands and restore them to their rightful owners. Nor was this the first time that the Asháninka had looked to messiahs from outside. The most celebrated case was that of Juan Santos Atahualpa, probably of Andean Indian origin, who in the mid-eighteenth century led a rebellion in the Peruvian Amazon that effectively liberated it from Spanish control. Subsequently, they had turned to other unlikely saviours, including the notorious nineteenth-century rubber baron, Fitzcarrald, and in the early twentieth century, a North American missionary whose Seventh-day Adventism had a particular attraction to an indigenous people with their own apocalyptic tradition.

In making their case, Michael F. Brown and Eduardo Fernández have produced a highly readable narrative based on a most impressive variety of sources, ranging from obscure historical documents to interviews with many of those directly involved, from both sides of the conflict. From time to time, the account strays perhaps just a little too far down some side-street, but overall it provides an excellent example of how historical scholarship and an awareness of contemporary politics may be combined in a mutually reinforcing way with the insights derived from intimate ethnographic enquiry.

But one doubt remains. Although the progressive invasion of Asháninka land is frequently referred to in passing, throughout the book, the possibility that many Asháninka may have welcomed the MIR, not simply for atavistic cultural reasons, but as a pragmatic response to the colonist invasion, is not systematically considered. A number of leading shamans may have seen Lobatón and his men as reincarnations of the sun god, but how broadly was this view shared? Were there also more mundane reasons for rallying to the guerrilla?

It used to be widely claimed that the involvement of indigenous communities with the Sendero Luminoso movement could be put down to some form of irrational millenarianism. This view – typically associated with advisers to the counter-insurgency campaign – is now vigorously contested by scholars who have personal field experience in the area. Inevitably, this makes one cautious about accepting similar claims with regard to this earlier example of indigenous collaboration with insurgents.

What is not in doubt is that for the Asháninka, the outcome of the MIR campaign was unremittingly tragic. Many Indians were killed, their communities were bombed, and since a good number of Asháninka supported the government, it left a legacy of mutual recrimination. As late as 1989, the MRTA, a guerrilla group which sees itself as the heir of the MIR, murdered an eminent Asháninka leader whom they accused of collaboration in 1965. Other Asháninka leaders have been killed by Sendero Luminoso. Meanwhile the invasion of Asháninka lands by colonists is more intensive than ever before. No wonder, then, if some Asháninka shamans are still convinced that the apocalypse must finally be at hand.

Father Sun strikes back

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Michael F. Brown and Eduardo Fernández

WAR OF SHADOWS

The struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon
280pp. Berkeley: University of California Press.
\$29.95.

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Potosí, Juan Polo de Ondegardo, who chose to settle in the highlands instead of returning to Europe. Repeatedly during the early colonial period, he was appointed governor of Cuzco, the Inca capital. Familiar with the Andean order, he located and burned the hidden mummies of earlier Inca kings. As part of his job at Cuzco, he wrote to the current viceroy: "thus they [the colonial authorities] took away from the Indians the lands which they had at the seacoast which were then granted to particular [European] settlers . . . since the governors did not understand the order prevailing among the Indians.

"And thus during the reign of the marquis of Cañete we took up the matter; since the information I provided turned out to be accurate . . . The province of Chucuito [at the lakeside, 13,000 feet high] was given back to the Indians and the coastal lands which they had owned since Inka times . . . while Juan de San Juan who had been their master, was given some other Indians who had become vacant near Arequipa" (Juan Polo de Ondegardo "Relación del notable daño que resulta de no guardar a los indios sus fueros," in *Colección de libros y documentos referentes a la historia del Perú*, first series, no. 3 n.d.).

A final testimony is from the bishop of the Lake Titicaca region of what today is Bolivia, the Dominican friar Domingo de Santo Tomas. Author of the first grammar and dictionary of an Andean language (1560), he informed Philip II in 1566 about the dispersed settlement pattern of the ethnic groups to his see, according to pre-European patterns. He requested the right to appoint his missionaries wherever "his" parishioners had been settled as far as "thirty and forty and fifty leagues away" (José María Vargas, *Fray Domingo de Santo Tomas. Defensor y apostol de los indios del Perú* [1937], 118).

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MICHAEL F. BROWN and EDUARDO FERNÁNDEZ. *War of Shadows: The Struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1991. Pp. xv, 280. \$29.95.

This sensitive and humanistic book reconstructs the colonial and postcolonial history of the Asháninka (often known as Campa) people's utopian and millennial traditions in what is today Peru's central jungle. Such traditions, Michael F. Brown and Eduardo Fernández suggest, could well have had precolonial roots. Over subsequent centuries, however, they were articulated to, and constantly transformed in dialogue with, the visions and projects of missionaries, messianic or charismatic leaders, and even utopian Marxist guerrillas.

The bulk of the book focuses on the effort by Guillermo Lobatón and other militants from the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement

of the Revolutionary Left, or MIR) to establish a guerrilla *foco* in the central region in 1965. Although the guerrillas established their initial camps farther up in the highlands, around the Comas-Andamarca area, pressure from the Peruvian military soon made Asháninka territory in the jungle a more attractive location. The movement lasted only six months. But the authors demonstrate that the MIR did have significant—if temporary—support among sectors of the Asháninka; that a mere 100 guerrillas forced the Peruvian military to spend approximately ten million dollars and field around 3,000 military and police; and that the actions and ensuing brutal repression left deep wounds among the

The narrative about the guerrilla movement is exemplary in its deep empathy for both *miristas* and Asháninkas, and in its honesty about the limitations of

There is bittersweet irony in the attempt to recover the history of the Asháninka collaboration with the guerrillas at the moment when a new and militarily much more successful insurgency is enveloping Peru. The authors recount attempts to find informants or survivors from 1965, only to discover that they have disappeared in the present conflict. They point out that the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA), competitor of the Shining Path and heir to the *mirista* movement of the 1960s, has assassinated Asháninka leaders allegedly in reprisal for treacheries committed earlier. Throughout the book, the need for confidentiality or protection of informants makes the narrative just a bit vague: villages are not entirely identified, and individual leaders or informants are referred to hazily. The final effect is to weave, around the narrative itself, a similar veil of myth to what Asháninka oral history has woven around Guillermo Lobatón and the MIR.

The cost of this deliberate vagueness, and of the need to use pseudonyms, comes in historical specificity. Shamanic prophecies of millennial rebirth meld into one another: Juan Santos Atahuallpa and his black lieutenant connect to Guillermo Lobatón, himself an African Peruvian from the coast; the belief in Itomi Pavá, the returning messianic god-spirit, is reproduced in Juan Santos, in Lobatón, even in the elusive figure of rebellious fundamentalist David Pent, a North American adventurer and confidence man who was reputed to have gained the trust of some Asháninka and who kept company with the MIR. Yet in the end, little emerges from the narrative that would help us differentiate historically among these different moments in the reconstructed, mythical "ethnographic present."

There are some clues. We are told, for example, that Asháninka shamans are visionaries who make sense of signs, and then convince their people they are right. Conflict of interpretation seems almost built into the process of prophecy; yet the doubters tend to disappear from the analysis. We are also told that some Asháninka headmen made deals with particular

white and mestizo landlords to deliver laborers in exchange for trade goods. What did these headmen think of the MIR, which promised trade goods writ large—the revolutionary transformation of property rights? Did they hasten to attempt control of these transactions as well, to offset competition, or were they among the Asháninka who opposed the guerrillas, or even informed on them? That painful, violent, deep divisions existed among the Asháninka regarding the MIR becomes clear toward the end of the book, when Fernández recounts asking a leader famous for his connections outside the community, as well as for his willingness to kill, what his role had been in 1965. Fernández and his escort barely made it out alive.

In the end, the book has the flavor of a journey along jungle trails, where myth and mist cohabit the dense underbrush and make it hard to see down to the roots. The inevitable secrecy, fear, and danger of the present guerrilla war—both to authors and informants—only add to the excitement, and to the impossibility of ever knowing for sure. Perhaps, for political as well as intellectual reasons, the authors are unable or unwilling to read their Asháninka sources as much “against the grain” as they read Peruvian military reports and U.S. government documents. Such a reading, however, might have helped us out of the jungle mist, at least partially into the sun.

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RONALD C. NEWTON. *The “Nazi Menace” in Argentina, 1931–1947*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1992. Pp. xx, 520. \$49.50.

Ronald C. Newton, a fascinating raconteur, establishes the barely tenable thesis that the Nazi threat in Argentina was dealt with too heavy-handedly. But he pays scant attention to more thoroughgoing considerations of potentially ominous disruptions, including the indirect repercussions in Argentina and elsewhere, that unhindered Nazi or pro-Nazi activities could have entailed. His observations, in effect, are of a conscientious and scholarly quality at their best, yet bewilderingly chatty at their worst. The author’s main plot line begins to unfold with an incipient Nazi movement among German elements in Argentina and ends abruptly with its somewhat illusory demise in an ironic “defeat” by an increasingly phemeral Pan-American movement.

Newton pursues three aims. The first, which he achieves impressively, is to present sociopolitical microstudies of Argentina’s German population under Nazi pressures. His second goal, a definitive discussion of the Nazi Reich’s intentions and capabilities in respect to Argentina, suffers from his overly narrow and biased focus, as he deals here, by necessity, with complex involvements of the United States and Great

Britain. In his third basic aim, Newton becomes so engrossed with real and seeming inadequacies in U.S. policy making as to be carried away with denunciations.

In his microstudies, however, Newton offers vividly convincing group and individual portrayals. Included are descriptions of the plodding and plotting German ambassador and of Jewish refugees, who were doomed frequently to a heart-rending fate. The sketch of a somewhat fictitiously interned crew of a German battleship constitutes an insightful lesson in processes of assimilation. For instance, during their adventures and misadventures, the sailors contributed impressively to an increase in both Argentina’s marriage and birth rates.

Newton involves himself intermittently in his other two, weaker, key enterprises. Standing out episodically are accounts concerning influential Americans who are supposedly imbued with hysteria, ignorance, confusion, petty conspiracy, and naiveté. The Americans also appear to be strikingly vulnerable to the manipulations of British and other vested interests. But qualifying facts and analyses are repeatedly omitted or difficult to extract. Newton could have pointed out traditional as well as more recent germane foreign policy intricacies and dilemmas that chronically and inescapably catalyze controversial stances among American leaders. Notably, these apply to matters of not only national concern but also collective security, human rights, political and economic freedom, curbs on atomic weaponry, and defenses against various tendencies toward totalitarianism, including those of Juan Perón’s Argentina. Instead, Newton marshals his often persuasive findings toward his rather rigid championship of policies of global or hemispheric nonintervention. While these ideals have great merit, they are not infallible, unfortunately.

Some historical analogies are ill-chosen. Policies of U.S. “national self-righteousness” (p. xix) date back at least to the age of Henry Clay and the Era of Good Feelings, not to the epoch of the Mexican War. Comparisons between American policies vis-à-vis Argentina during the 1940s and those toward Saddam Hussain’s Iraq, Manuel Noriega’s Panama, and the Sandinistas’ Nicaragua are of dubious merit. Source materials of impressive quality abound, including memoirs, interrogations, and depositions, and the bibliographical essay is quite informative.

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AMADO LUIZ CERVO and CLODOALDO BUENO. *História da política exterior do Brasil*. (Série Fundamentos, número 81.) São Paulo: Editora Ática. 1992. Pp. 432.

As Brazil moves in the direction of becoming the first industrial power of the southern hemisphere, a comprehensive history of its international relations is certainly needed. Amado Luiz Cervo and Clodoaldo