

## **UC Merced**

### **TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World**

#### **Title**

Gonzalo in the Middle Kingdom: What Abimael Guzmán Tells Us in His Three Discussions of His Two Trips to China

#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3fz7r65n>

#### **Journal**

TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World, 9(3)

#### **ISSN**

2154-1353

#### **Author**

Rothwell, Matthew

#### **Publication Date**

2020

#### **DOI**

10.5070/T493048194

#### **Copyright Information**

Copyright 2020 by the author(s). This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

## **Gonzalo in the Middle Kingdom: What Abimael Guzmán Tells Us in His Three Discussions of His Two Trips to China**

---

MATTHEW ROTHWELL  
PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF IDEAS PODCAST

### **Abstract**

While thousands of Latin Americans traveled to China during the Mao years (1949-1976) to learn from the experience of the Chinese Revolution, only Abimael Guzmán went on to lead a Maoist people's war in his home country. Chinese records on Guzmán's time in China are closed, but Guzmán has on three occasions talked in some detail or written about his experiences in China. This paper closely examines what Guzmán has said and written in order to better understand this pivotal time in the development of one of the most important figures in twentieth century Peruvian history.

**Keywords:** Global Maoism, Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), Latin Americans in China, Cultural Revolution, Peru, Communism

### **Resumen**

Mientras que miles de latinoamericanos viajaron a China durante los años de Mao (1949-1976) para aprender de la experiencia de la Revolución China, solo Abimael Guzmán llegó a dirigir una guerra popular maoísta en su país de origen. Los archivos chinos sobre el tiempo de Guzmán en China están cerrados, pero en tres ocasiones Guzmán ha hablado con algún detalle o escrito sobre sus experiencias en China. Este artículo examina de cerca lo que Guzmán ha dicho y escrito para comprender mejor este momento crucial en el desarrollo de una de las figuras más importantes de la historia peruana del siglo XX.

**Palabras clave:** Maoísmo global, Sendero Luminoso, latinoamericanos en China, Revolución Cultural, Perú, Comunismo

Thousands of Latin Americans traveled to China during the Mao years (1949-1976) to learn from the experience of the Chinese Revolution. They trained in the political ideology of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and many of them also learned about revolutionary warfare. Of these thousands, one figure stands paramount for the effect that this training had on his home country. I am of course referring to Abimael Guzmán, the founder and leader of the Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path, who traveled to China in 1965 and in either 1966 or 1967, spending seven or eight months there in total between the two visits. Despite the importance that Guzmán's Chinese experiences held for his political formation, there is no in depth account or analysis of his time in China anywhere. In this article, I will see if I can fix that.

## The Texts

There are three texts in which Guzmán gives details about his time in China. None are lengthy, but each one tells a little something different about his China experience. The first, and best known, text is the interview that Guzmán gave to *El Diario* editors Janet Talavera Sánchez and Luis Arce Borja. Talavera and Arce were sympathetic to the Shining Path, and the interview which they conducted with Guzmán in July 1988, toward the end of the Shining Path’s first party congress, was billed as the “Interview of the Century,” and did not feature any critical back and forth between the participants. It was the only interview given by Guzmán before his capture, and was an opportunity for the mysterious leader of the ascendant Shining Path to expound on a wide range of political and ideological themes, as well as to give some brief personal autobiographical details. One question concerned Guzmán’s time in China and whether he had met Mao, and the 538-word answer that Guzmán gave was all we had for many years on his time in China.

The next text to become available where Guzmán discussed his time in China came as part of a series of interviews which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) conducted with Guzmán and Elena Yparraguirre Revoredo between April 2002 and April 2003. In the May 28, 2002 interview Guzmán was questioned on his personal and political development, and in the course of the interview more details came out on his time in China. While these interviews were never published, they have been available for use by researchers since the mid-2000s. Guzmán’s participation in the CVR interviews was somewhat reluctant, and this needs to be kept in mind when reading this text. Some members of the CVR were long-time political opponents of Guzmán, dating back to well before the war, and the Peruvian truth and reconciliation process is notable internationally for excluding one of the major protagonists in the war (the Shining Path) from its deliberations and organized process, except as interview subjects.<sup>2</sup>

The third and final account of Guzmán’s time is in the book *Memorias desde Némesis*, which recounts Guzmán’s life until the eve of the war.<sup>3</sup> Both Guzmán and Yparraguirre are given as co-authors, but the book is written as an autobiographical account by Guzmán. The manuscript was prepared in the mid-1990s by Guzmán (and, presumably, Yparraguirre), but had to be smuggled out of prison during court dates and was released on the internet only in 2014. Editions were then published in France, Mexico, Argentina and perhaps elsewhere. The date of October 12, 1996 is given at the end of the book, presumably as the date the manuscript was completed. However, the Mexican edition of the book contains a prologue by Elena Yparraguirre which gives 1994 as the year when the

manuscript was prepared (10). This text is almost certainly meant as Guzmán's official version of his life, written both for posterity and as ideological guidance for his followers.

A modified version of Guzmán's interview with *El Diario* has achieved wide circulation, and so should be mentioned here. Apparently unsatisfied with the level of detail which Guzmán gave in the *El Diario* interview, in the book *La cuarta espada: La historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso*, Santiago Roncagliolo added a number of details to Guzmán's account. In addition to being pure fabrications, they change the overall meaning of what Guzmán conveyed in his answer. In the interview, Guzmán remarked on how during his military training course in Nanjing, at the end of the class the instructor demonstrated how anything could be made to explode: "we picked up a pen and it blew up, and when we took a seat, it blew up, too (79)."<sup>4</sup> Guzmán's takeaway from this was to keep in mind "what the masses can do, they have inexhaustible ingenuity." In other words, while the passage can be seen as representing a fascination with explosions and violence, Guzmán ends the anecdote by discussing how the Chinese instructor told the class that making odd things explode was a form of ingenuity that the masses of Chinese people came up with during the long course of the Chinese Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

When Roncagliolo changes and adds to this quotation, he makes the instructor say that anything can be a weapon. Not only can pens explode, as in Guzmán's actual anecdote, but they can be used to stab people, trees can be used as swords, and so on. What comes across is more a sense of animal brutality rather than ingenuity in making odd things blow up (70-71). Roncagliolo's book lacks citations, but comparing the text of the original interview with *El Diario* with Roncagliolo's account allows one to see what he took of the original and where he decided to invent new words. While *La cuarta espada* has been widely read, its scholarly pretensions are minimal. Sadly, the account in *La cuarta espada* has been imported wholesale into the recent English language popular history of the Shining Path by Orin Starn and Miguel La Serna, *The Shining Path: Love, Madness, and Revolution in the Andes*. They even name their second chapter, which deals with Guzmán's time in China, "A Tree Can Be a Weapon," mistaking Roncagliolo's invention for Guzmán's actual words (46). As is often the case with the Shining Path, scholars are advised to take accounts by sensationalist writers with a grain of salt and go back to original sources, especially when those sources are well-known and easily available.

In addition to Guzmán's own accounts of his time in China, it is likely that at some future point in time a whole other set of sources will become available, based on Chinese archives. A few years ago, Patricia Castro Obando, a Peruvian professor at Beijing University, found a document in the Beijing University archives relating to Guzmán's time in China. After requesting the document

from the librarian, it was moved to an inaccessible archive, presumably the closed party archive where other records of this nature are held. While Chinese archives dealing with foreign communists who trained in China are totally inaccessible for the foreseeable future, at some point in the future they will probably become available, and when that happens we will probably learn a lot more.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in addition to the three sources on Guzmán’s time in China enumerated above, a lot can be inferred about his experience from the memoirs of other China travelers who had similar experiences. Despite the relative brevity of Guzmán’s own accounts, we know that his experience in China, particularly during his longer stay when he received formal training in politics and military affairs, was shared by thousands of other revolutionaries from around the world (mainly, but not solely, from the Global South). The coincidence in the accounts of many of these other China travelers allows us to make relatively solid assumptions about Guzmán’s own experience.

### **The 1965 Trip**

According to both the CVR interview and *Memorias desde Némesis*, Guzmán was in China from February until July in 1965, with July 22 being given in *Memorias* as the precise date of his return to Lima’s airport (the *El Diario* interview gives no dates at all for Guzmán’s time in China) (Guzmán and Yparraguirre, CVR 17-18; Guzmán and Yparraguirre, *Memorias* 82-85 [2014]).<sup>7</sup> There are two possible sources of confusion on these dates which should be dispensed with. In the CVR interview, while discussing some details of his 1965 trip, Guzmán suddenly states that “in October I had occasion to learn some things in China.”<sup>8</sup> Given the dates that Guzmán clarifies for the 1965 trip a little later in the interview, and which he also repeated in *Memorias*, I believe that Guzmán either slipped into mentioning something from his 1967 trip here, or that he made an error. It is also possible that the transcript is incorrect. The recording which the transcript was made from is terrible, and errors have been found in some of the CVR transcripts of other interviews (the high quality in general of the CVR transcripts is remarkable, given the poor quality of the recordings). A second possible source of confusion on the dates of Guzmán’s 1965 China trip comes from the widely read book *La guerra senderista: Hablan los enemigos*. In this book the author, Antonio Zapata, writes “According to his memoirs, Guzmán returned quickly and directly to Peru in December 1965.”<sup>9</sup> When one looks up Zapata’s citation of Guzmán’s *Memorias*, one can see that Zapata made a mistake (Ch. 1).<sup>10</sup>

Each of the three texts identifies three aspects of Guzmán’s 1965 trip to China which are conceptually distinct. First, Guzmán attended a political school in Beijing. Next, he received military training in Nanjing. Third, there is a certain amount of travel around the country, basically tourism,

that is described, which occurred separate from the political and military training, and which could have occurred at any time during his time in China. There is a fourth aspect to the 1965 trip which is mentioned only in *Memorias*, which concerns learning about the launching of guerrilla warfare in Peru by Luis de la Puente Uceda’s Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria and meeting with the Chinese party to discuss that event.

Let’s start by examining what Guzmán said about the political training. In the *El Diario* interview, Guzmán said:

In China I had the chance, which I would like for many others to have, to be in a school where politics came first, from international questions to Marxist philosophy, they were masterful lessons given by proven and highly competent revolutionaries, great teachers. Among them I can remember the teacher who taught us open and secret work, a man who had dedicated his life to the Party, absolutely to it, a man of many years, a living example, an extraordinary teacher; he taught us many things, he wanted to teach us more but some of us did not want him to, in short, there is everything in life.<sup>11</sup>

In the interview with the CVR, Guzmán only said: “I went to a cadre school, a school that had two parts, the first was political, it began with the study of the international situation and ended with Marxist philosophy, there were several courses.”<sup>12</sup>

In *Memorias*, Guzmán gave a bit more detail:

Eight of us came together in the cadre school on that occasion: three from the Confederación Campesina del Perú, very close with Paredes, three from the Regional del Norte, one from Cuzco, a follower of Sotomayor, and me; among them three members of the Central Committee, one of whom led the delegation (a militant from the north of the country). In the school in Beijing, and in the following order, we studied: international situation, centered on the struggle against revisionism and on proletarian internationalism; general political line, the laws and experiences of the democratic revolution in China; peasant work, the antifeudal struggle for the land developed by the peasantry, principal force of the revolution; United front, the union of the proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the proletariat; Party-building, fundamental problems and principles of Party-building based on the correct political and ideological line; secret work and open work, principles and experiences of clandestinity in party

organization and mass work; mass line, the masses make history and how to mobilize them with consciousness and willingness, learning from them and serving the people with a whole heart; philosophy, starting with contradiction as the only fundamental law of politics for solving the problems of the class struggle, of the Party and the revolution. Eight masterful courses on the extraordinary and inexhaustible experience of the Chinese Revolution led by the Communist Party of China, product of the fusion of Marxism-Leninism with its concrete reality, as well as, mainly, source and application of Mao Zedong Thought, according to the term used in the Sixties.<sup>13</sup>

The excerpt from *Memorias* gives us the subjects of the eight classes. But the question remains, how were they taught? These are potentially very expansive subjects, and could be taught a number of different ways and might use any number of sources. But, these courses were also standardized, so it is reasonable to infer that the description given by someone else who took these classes would at least roughly correspond to how they were taught when Guzmán attended the course. José Sotomayor Pérez, one of the two leaders of the pro-Chinese faction which met with Mao in December 1963 and got the go ahead to form a separate pro-Chinese Communist Party in Peru, had attended a similar course in 1959. In his description, the classes were conducted in the following manner:

The courses covered questions dealt with at length in the works of Mao Zedong and the works of the Chinese leaders: the united front, the peasant question, the mass line, the armed struggle in the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese party in conditions of clandestinity and while legalized, the struggles inside the party, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought. The speakers made a detailed exposition of each of these topics, in two or more sessions, and finally gave an account of books and pamphlets which should be consulted. All, absolutely all, were works by Mao Zedong. (*Leninismo* 48-49)

Given the list of topics covered, it seems likely that Sotomayor's course was almost exactly the same as Guzmán's. If Guzmán's experience was similar to Sotomayor's, then each class consisted of at least two lectures per subject, followed by an orientation on how the topic is dealt with in Mao Zedong's works. Based on the quote that we took from Guzmán's interview with *El Diario* ("Among them I can remember the teacher who taught us open and secret work, a man who had dedicated his life to the Party, absolutely to it, a man of many years, a living example, an extraordinary teacher"), there was probably a separate instructor for each topic. The courses were arranged by the Chinese Communist Party's International Liaison Department, whose records have remained so secret that even the location of its offices during the 1950s to 1970s is still an official secret (Lovell 13). Therefore,

it is no surprise that the identity of the instructors of these classes has also remained secret. If each of the eight topics was covered in "two or more sessions," it seems unlikely that the period spent on political training was more than a month, unless other activities like political meetings and tourism were held between sessions. It is also possible that there was downtime between sessions if the teachers were in demand to teach other groups of foreign revolutionaries, or if they had other party tasks to attend to.

This raises the additional question: were these classes given to the Peruvian comrades alone, to groups of Spanish-speaking communists, or to larger groups of political trainees who each had separate translation staff on hand for translation into their own languages? In 1959, Sotomayor's classes at least included some Ecuadorians, because he mentions a request by the Peruvians and Ecuadorians in attendance that the seminar cover the issue of minority nationalities in China.<sup>14</sup> But, in 1959 a large number of Latin American communist leaders were brought to China in the hopes that they might be won over to China's side in the escalating Sino-Soviet split, and so they were kept together as a group (Sotomayor, *Leninismo* 47-48; Sotomayor, *Revolución cultural* 71). When Guzmán attended his training classes in 1965, it is possible that the Peruvians were kept compartmentalized from others training in China for security purposes. That certainly happened at times, and was probably the norm. For example, Julia Lovell tells the story of Juan (not her informant's real name), who spent two and a half months in Nanjing alone with only his interpreter and eight teachers during his guerrilla training course (310-311). An important difference between Juan and the eight Peruvians in Guzmán's group was that Juan was being trained to go back to his home country and start recruiting for a new group of his own, while the Peruvian Maoists already belonged to a party which had fraternal ties with the Chinese and other parties, and so it might not have been appropriate for the Chinese party to exercise the degree of control over them that it did over Juan. Reflecting on its own negative experience with the Soviet Party, the Chinese Communist Party insisted that fraternal parties treat each other as equals. While clearly this may have been difficult to achieve in practice when the Chinese party was after all giving lessons in politics and war to cadres from fraternal parties, the extent to which this was actually the case surprised many Latin Americans who had felt belittled in the Soviet Union (see, for example, Peralva 24-25).

There were large numbers of foreigners passing through Beijing and Nanjing in 1965.<sup>15</sup> And it's tempting to think of Guzmán sharing a classroom with a cohort of other radicals, such as Pol Pot or the Zimbabwean revolutionary Josiah Tongogara, who were also in China receiving training at the same time (Lovell 4). Based on a wide range of interviews on this subject with Latin Americans and



others who were in China during the Mao years, what seems most likely is that, for security purposes, Guzmán's group of eight Peruvians were kept separate from others for their training courses, but perhaps did come together with others during events, such as banquets, which were often held for foreigners and where a large number of people who were visiting China for different periods of time and for varying purposes might gather for an evening. The travel literature is replete with descriptions of such banquets.

One issue to consider about the quality of the small group experience of Guzmán's delegation is whether the separation of different revolutionary visitors to China had more to do with security for the visitors or with Chinese efforts to exercise control over the visitors. While concern over visitors' security is not incompatible with attempts to control visitors, the two concerns do stem from different motivations and have different aims in mind. There is a tendency in the literature on foreigners in Maoist China to emphasize efforts at control of foreigners.<sup>16</sup> This tendency dovetails with popular prejudices which assume communist dishonesty. And while some degree of 'control,' or 'management,'<sup>17</sup> was certainly involved, security was definitely a major issue. Eduardo Ayllón, who worked on Radio Peking broadcasts to Latin America during the 1970s, describes security as the main issue at the base of restrictions on foreigners in China at the time (Ayllón). After all, many foreigners who went to China could get in serious trouble just for having been to China. And in the case of those being trained in guerrilla warfare, the risks were all the greater. If the cadre training courses were large, then any graduate who turned informant or who was captured and broke under questioning could undermine insurgent forces not only in their own country, but in others as well.

We can infer something about the quality of relations among the eight Peruvians thrown together in the delegation that Guzmán participated in from the *El Diario* interview and from *Memorias*. In the *El Diario* interview, Guzmán complains in the quote given above that while the teacher who gave the lessons on the relationship between clandestine and open political work wanted to teach the Peruvian delegation more, there were others in the group who thought they had learned enough on this topic. Elsewhere in the interview, when asked if he had met Mao while in China, Guzmán responded: "I repeat that I was not lucky enough to meet him; the delegation that I was in made many mistakes and acted with presumptuousness and arrogance, I think that determined that we were not granted that privilege."<sup>18</sup> Meeting Mao was not a particularly uncommon privilege for foreign communist delegations in China, and meeting other well-known leaders such as Zhou Enlai or Zhu De was even more common. These meetings were meant to generate good will among and also to give political capital to pro-Chinese foreigners. The fact that Guzmán's group did not have such a

meeting may just have been due to scheduling difficulties or due to some other trivial matter, but such meetings were common enough that Guzmán's assessment that the Peruvians were denied a meeting with Mao due to squabbling among themselves (and possibly with their Chinese hosts) cannot be dismissed. At the beginning of the extended quote from *Memorias* above, Guzmán identified the members of the delegation as belonging to four different factions of the PCP-Bandera Roja ("Eight of us came together in the cadre school on that occasion: three from the Confederación Campesina del Perú, very close with Paredes, three from the Regional del Norte, one from Cuzco, a follower of Sotomayor, and me"). Soon after the delegation returned to Peru, in November 1965, Sotomayor and his followers would leave PCP-Bandera Roja to form PCP-Marxista-Leninista, mainly over issues of how to analyze the nature of Peruvian society and the strategic issues which ensued from differing definitions. For example, among other doctrinal differences that developed, Sotomayor saw President Belaúnde as representing the 'national bourgeoisie,' and thus representing forces which could be allied with in fighting imperialist domination of Peru, while the Bandera Roja majority saw Belaúnde as representing the big bourgeoisie aligned with imperialism, making him an enemy of the revolution. Over the next few years, the northerners would leave with the formation of the PCP-Patria Roja, and finally Guzmán and his followers would leave Paredes's Bandera Roja to form Sendero Luminoso. Based on the disputatious future ahead for the four factions represented by the eight people in the delegation, one can imagine that there may have been quite a bit of squabbling among them. That Guzmán was still complaining about it decades later makes one think that the Peruvian comrades may have been quite unpleasant company for each other.

The cadre training course continued in Nanjing with lessons in military affairs. In *Memorias*, Guzmán gives a list of classes taken in Nanjing, just as he did for the political classes taken in Beijing:

We attended the military school in Nanjing: people's war, fundamentally its part corresponding to the development of the war on the path of encircling the cities from the countryside; army building, training, structuring and preparing the new type of army to fulfill the political tasks of the Party and the revolution; strategy and tactics, war in its totality according to the stages of its development, its modalities, tactics and forms of combat, especially ambushes and assaults. Three equally masterful courses with their pertinent and indispensable practices; concentrated expression of the experience of the Chinese Revolution, in its main form of struggle, raised by Chairman Mao to the military line of the proletariat.<sup>19</sup>

It is noteworthy that in this passage Guzmán emphasizes essentially theoretical aspects of warfare: the Maoist theory of protracted people’s war; the methods of building up an armed revolutionary force; and concrete issues of formulating strategy and tactics. In the *El Diario* interview, the emphasis is somewhat different. Here Guzmán says:

Then they taught us military questions, but it also started with politics, people's war, then construction of the armed forces and strategy and tactics; and the practical part having to do with ambushes, assaults, troop movement, as well as preparing demolition devices. When we handled very delicate chemical elements, they recommended us to keep ideology in mind at all times and that it would make us capable of doing everything and doing it well; and we learned how to make our first demolition charges.<sup>20</sup>

This passage, particularly when combined with the anecdote which follows and which was quoted earlier in this article regarding how unexpected items were made to explode at the end of the course, places much more emphasis on learning about chemicals and explosives, even though it does reaffirm the importance of the political and ideological aspects of military affairs. Perhaps in 1988 Guzmán was more concerned with signaling his ability to manage practical military affairs (despite his bookish image even at the time), while once in prison he was more concerned to emphasize theoretical leadership and to distance himself from the day-to-day aspects of the armed struggle. Indeed, Guzmán has been careful to disavow personal responsibility for ordering particular military attacks since his arrest.

Regardless of the degree to which bomb-making techniques and other applied aspects of guerrilla warfare were taught in the military part of the cadre training course, there is no evidence that Sendero Luminoso applied any bomb-making techniques that could not easily have been learned in Peru itself, and it is hard to imagine Guzmán, ever the quintessential ideologue, as being the best guide in the most practical aspects of guerrilla warfare. However, there is at least one document from the Shining Path that does connect the tactical aspects of guerrilla warfare applied by the group to Chinese military training. Presumably in order to help train the growing number of guerrilla squads which the Shining Path was forming at the time, in March 1983 the Shining Path’s Ediciones Voz Popular issued *Documentos de información*, which discusses basic practical issues concerning the armed struggle, such as bomb making and the formation of small armed squads and the coordination of tasks in those squads. This document advocates using the tactic of “four groups and a squad,” whereby an armed squad is divided into four different groups with different responsibilities in carrying off an attack: “shock,”

“fire,” “aid,” and “escape.” The document attributes this method of organizing armed groups to Lin Biao, a leading figure first in Mao’s Eighth Route Army and later during the early years of the Cultural Revolution. It seems highly likely that at least the method of organizing guerrilla squads discussed in this document came from the training course in China, although whether Guzmán brought this method back to Peru with him or another Shining Path leader who trained in China is responsible, it is impossible to say without more evidence.

Aside from the political and military cadre training, the other major programmed activity that Guzmán’s delegation engaged in was travel around China, both to see the progress of socialist construction in action, and to see historic sites. In his interview with the CVR, Guzmán finishes his description of the 1965 trip with a brief list of places where he went in addition to the sites of the cadre training course (the list is only semi-coherent, which may be due to the poor quality of the recording which the transcript was taken from): “I had the opportunity to know some things in China, and I was part of them, for the time being important, Shanghai, a great center of the revolution (...), Then Xi’an and Yan’an, important points of the revolution, (...) Guangzhou, a city (...). This gave me a better understanding of Mao Zedong Thought.”<sup>21</sup> What Guzmán is expressing here is how traveling around the country, seeing things in action (socialist construction in Shanghai and Guangzhou) and seeing places where important things occurred (such as Yan’an), made him feel that he had a deeper insight and connection with Maoist ideology. This was the intention of his Chinese hosts, and it appears that this feeling was widely shared by other China travelers. Going around the country and seeing things in action made what Guzmán had just learned feel more concrete, and gave him and other China travelers like him a strong sense of being part of a historical movement with the wind in its sails.

Just as in *Memorias* Guzmán gives a more detailed list of what he studied in the cadre training course, he also gives a much longer list of places that he visited. The way he describes his experience illustrates how this revolutionary tourism inspired him and made him feel connected with the Chinese Revolution:

Jinggang and Yan’an, the forever consecrated monuments in the iron memory of the proletariat and the peoples of the world, inextricably linked to Chairman Mao Zedong and to Maoism. I recall the tireless, massive, heroic struggle of socialist construction: factories, people’s communes, barracks, shopping centers, universities, schools, hospitals and health centers, art galleries and shows; squares and streets, tumultuous hubbub of fresh energy overflowing with optimism and politics in command with its

"three flags": general line of socialism, people's commune and great leap forward, building the new society, socialism, laying the foundations for future communism.

I also recall Beijing, Tienanmen, the historical and legendary square: the monumental facade of deep dark red and Chairman Mao looking out from his imposing portrait, the Museum of the Revolution, the Great Hall of the People framing it and in the center the white obelisk dedicated "To the heroes of the people!" in golden letters of the Great Helmsman's own calligraphy. Tienanmen and the vast sea of masses, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Chairman Mao leading the fight; forests of red flags with hammers and sickles, banners, slogans; workers, peasants, soldiers, women, youth, the Chinese people, a million at a rally roaring "Down with Yankee imperialism!" and proclaiming "We support Vietnam!"; its unfading voice still thunders in my ears. And "The East in Red", an epic of music, dance and songs reliving the long massive battle of the revolution: black clouds of Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal, the epic Long March, Zunyi and the assumption of leadership by Chairman Mao, Yan'an illuminating all of China, the victorious celebration of the people and nationalities in Tienanmen and ending with the Internationale in majestic chorus, and to top it all, artists and thousands of those present, singing the Internationale in a multitude of the languages of the Earth, an indescribable explosive flood of revolutionary fervor. And ... Hangzhou with its incomparable beauty, the calm of the lake, the greenery of its rolling hills, an ineffable paradigm of the Chinese landscape. Finally Shanghai, a huge industrial, working-class and revolutionary city. There I said goodbye, I had arrived in the winter and left in the summer with my soul more on fire in the red sun of the East.<sup>22</sup>

Amidst the long list of revolutionary tourism sites and militant demonstrations, the inclusion of "Hangzhou, ineffable paradigm of the Chinese landscape" toward the end of the list is somewhat jarring. But the inclusion of Hangzhou in Guzmán's itinerary, and its presentation to him by his hosts as representative of China's beauty, is representative of an additional aspect of how China was promoted to foreigners visiting the country. The great beauty and ancient history of China were marshalled as additional appeals, and not without reason. In the friendship societies (officially sponsored solidarity organizations) abroad, a certain part of the membership was drawn to China more out of a general Sinophilia than from political conviction. Even among diehard political supporters of

Maoist China, Chinese aesthetics could form a powerful part of the initial attraction to China. Such was the case with José Venturelli, a Chilean communist artist who worked closely with the International Liaison Department to promote Maoist politics to Latin Americans (Rothwell, "Secret Agent").

When the Cultural Revolution broke out, the tension in China's international solidarity work between promoting Maoist politics and making appeals based on China's culture and landscape came to a head. In Mexico, the Sociedad Mexicana de Amistad con China Popular broke into two rival factions, one of which promoted China's culture and history as the basis of its appeal for solidarity with China, and the other of which focused on Chinese politics (Rothwell, *Transpacific Revolutionaries* 35-39). During a tour organized for Americans in the early 1970s an argument broke out between tour minders over a request by participants to spend time with the Iron Girl Brigade at the model agricultural commune of Dazhai, rather than to take a cruise through the Yangzi Gorges. A cadre who one tour group member recognized as a translator for Jiang Qing (part of the radical Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution Small Group) argued that the Americans should be able to go work at Dazhai for a few weeks, while the more traditional tour minder pushed strongly against it (Newbold).

One other important event occurred during Guzmán's 1965 trip which doesn't neatly fall into either the category of cadre training or revolutionary tourism. While Guzmán was in China, the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria began its short-lived guerrilla war in Peru. In 1962 the MIR had established contact with the Chinese embassy in Havana and by 1965 between 20 to 40 MIR cadre had received training in China, and declassified CIA documents claim that China had promised 50 million dollars in aid to the MIR, of which at least several thousand were delivered. Jan Lust has also claimed that China delivered weapons to the MIR, but it seems more likely that money was delivered that was used to buy weapons (Toledo 149-154; Brown 319). However, the MIR operated on such a tiny budget that if it did receive millions of dollars as the CIA claimed, then it misused the money in a spectacular fashion. More likely, much smaller sums of money were involved, as the CIA is well-known for overestimating and even fabricating claims of foreign aid to Latin American guerrilla groups.

When the MIR armed struggle broke out, Guzmán and the two other Peruvian central committee members present in China with him met with Chinese leaders about the armed struggle. The MIR was not a Maoist organization, and was politically much closer to Guevara's focoist ideas than to Maoism. The standard Maoist critique of focoism is that it attempts to replace mass struggle with the struggle of a small band of heroic fighters, and that it places military affairs above political

affairs. If Maoists argue that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun,” what follows from the famous Mao quote is that “the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party (Mao 552).” Guzmán reports in *Memorias* that in this meeting he weighed in on the MIR saying that “such a guerrilla movement would not prosper because it had no mass base.”<sup>23</sup> In any case, the question of further Chinese support for the MIR, or of PCP collaboration with the MIR, would soon be a moot point, as the MIR was crushed militarily within a few months.

### **The Second Trip**

Ascertaining the dates of Guzmán’s second trip to China presents certain problems. Guzmán gives contradictory dates for the second trip in the CVR interview and in *Memorias*. However, he also discusses the trip in *Memorias* in relation to another event in a way that calls into question his memory of when he traveled. In the CVR interview, Guzmán says that he was in China for “about two months, maybe August and September, but I wasn’t there for the anniversary, for October.”<sup>24</sup> In *Memorias*, Guzmán writes that “my second trip to China was in October 1967”<sup>25</sup> and that “I left Beijing on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution.”<sup>26</sup> The October Revolution refers to the Russian Revolution of October 1917, which actually occurred on November 7, because at the time of the revolution Russia was using the Julian calendar, which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar which most of the world uses. During the CVR interview, it is clear that Guzmán remembered leaving before an October anniversary, but he seems to have been confused about which anniversary he missed. The People’s Republic of China celebrates its founding (National Day) on October 1. Based only on these two statements, it would appear that Guzmán had probably been in China from early October to early November 1967. However, in *Memorias* Guzmán gives a detailed account of attending the Albanian Party of Labor’s Fifth Congress in Tirana before returning to Peru and then being swiftly dispatched to China. The problem is that the Fifth Congress of the Albanian Party of Labor (this is what the ruling communist party’s formal name was in Albania) took place from November 1 to 8, 1966. Given the lucidity of his description of events during the congress in Albania, it seems most likely to me that Guzmán went to China at the end of 1966, not in 1967, and that his memory of missing the anniversary of the October Revolution is because he arrived not long after the anniversary, not because he left just before the anniversary. Additionally, in the *El Diario* interview, Guzmán says that he arrived in China “when the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution started,”<sup>27</sup> which would be a more accurate statement for 1966 than 1967. Given these discrepancies, I think we can safely say that Guzmán went to China for a month or two between November 1966 and November 1967, but

that beyond this approximation it is very hard to be certain without more sources coming to light which don't rely on Guzmán's memory.

The purpose of Guzmán's second trip to China was to deal with party business, but the effect was to expose Guzmán to the Cultural Revolution, with dramatic results for Peruvian history. In both the CVR interview and in *Memorias*, Guzmán reports that he was sent to China to check on why the Chinese Communist Party had cut off its monetary subvention of the Peruvian party (CVR 26; *Memorias* 192 [2014]). Guzmán was informed by the Chinese party that:

Chairman Mao has argued, I was informed, that it is wrong to continue providing economic aid in this way, it is a revisionist form that does not serve the revolution but, on the contrary, damages it; the main form of support is to make and develop the revolution; and that each revolution must be supported by its own efforts, among the masses, thus maintaining itself will maintain self-determination and political independence. That would be the policy that the CCP would follow on this point, from now on.<sup>28</sup>

While this is undoubtedly what the Chinese Communists told Guzmán, it is not the whole story. The Chinese Communist Party did continue giving monetary support to some revolutionary groups around the world during this time period, even as it encouraged others to stand more fully on their own feet and to be more independent by developing and relying on a mass base in their own countries.

In particular, the Chinese Communist Party seems to have cut off money and encouraged self-reliance in response to sectarian, dishonest or careerist behavior among its foreign supporters. As becomes clear as Guzmán's narrative of his conversations with the Chinese Communists continues, the Chinese Communist Party had major doubts about the reports it was getting from visiting Peruvian Maoist leaders about communist activities in Peru:

I discussed the situation of the country, the Peruvian revolution and the PCP with leaders of the Communist Party of China. I gave a presentation to leaders and cadres on those points, followed by questions and an exchange of opinions. On a more circumscribed and higher level, I explained in detail how I saw, mainly, the Party and its prospects. I was told about information presented by leaders of the PCP, including Paredes, as well as positions and expositions that they had given in various visits to China, and I was asked about their veracity. I responded by providing evidence and analyzing realities. In summary, the Party's strength and capacity had been inflated, as well as its influence on the masses and the possibility of generating, at any moment, a



great peasant uprising supported by partisan armed forces. A total and complete lie. I think the Chinese comrades simply confirmed the suspicions they already had; they underlined the responsibility of the leaders and the tasks of the communists, they ended by reflecting on the complexities, difficulties and risks that the Communist Party of Peru was entering into.<sup>29</sup>

What thoughts the Chinese Communist Party’s International Liaison cadres had of the PCP-BR Maoists one can only guess, as here the group’s Organization Secretary (Guzmán) told them that the General Secretary (Paredes) and others had vastly inflated the group’s influence and the possibility of an imminent mass uprising in Peru. One doesn’t wonder that the CCP decided that the PCP-BR was a bad investment, at least for the time being. Many other pro-China organizations had their funding cut off around the same time, so in no way was the PCP-BR particularly singled out when it was told that it needed to rely on its own resources, and that this ultimately would make it a stronger organization. But, to reiterate, Guzmán’s perception that every pro-Chinese foreign group had its funding cut off at this time is not accurate.

But the real significance of Guzmán’s second trip to China lay not with his dealings with the Chinese party in relation to funding issues, but in his witnessing the Cultural Revolution and the lessons and inspiration he took from that experience. His discussion of his time in China during the Cultural Revolution in the three texts allows us to see what he considered important about the experience. In the *El Diario* interview, all Guzmán says about his second visit to China was that “We requested that Mao Zedong Thought be explained to us.”<sup>30</sup> While this isn’t much to go on, it is interesting that having already been through an approximate half year of training in China in 1965, Guzmán was prompted to want to learn more about Mao Zedong Thought by seeing the dramatic events of the Cultural Revolution playing out around him. Implicit here, and this was true for most pro-Chinese communists at the time, was a sense that something new was happening that was not encompassed by what he had previously learned about Mao Zedong Thought and the process of revolution and socialist construction in China. The other two texts give more details about what was involved in this new learning about Mao Zedong Thought.

In the CVR interview, the first concrete thing that Guzmán mentions about the second trip is “we had a chance to go to a book purification, I remember a famous writer, Mao Dun.”<sup>31</sup> It is odd that this was what came first to Guzmán’s mind during the interview. Mao Dun was an internationally celebrated writer who had participated in the 1919 May 4<sup>th</sup> movement, and had served as Minister of Culture until 1965. Like many formerly celebrated progressive writers, his works were attacked as

rightist during part of the Cultural Revolution. That Guzmán highlighted his witnessing the destruction of the books is telling. In the propaganda materials of international Maoism, such events are treated more as embarrassing excesses, not as central themes, of the Cultural Revolution. But here, Guzmán is saying that this event impressed him deeply, and that it informed his own political practice.

In another passage from the CVR interview, Guzmán states that the high level of mass mobilization during the Cultural Revolution also had a major impact on him: "The marches were different, very profound changes, in all fields. Of course, much bigger political changes. When I was there, I was in the same center, with military protection. When I was there in '65 it was conventual, silent; '67 ... '67 was thunderous, at certain times of the day, marches."<sup>32</sup> What was it exactly about this that impacted Guzmán? Was it the military pomp and coordination of the marches, which the world would later see on display in the disciplined cultural productions of Shining Path prisoners? Was it the sense that a socialist society could draw masses of people into political action in order to continue revolutionizing the society, rather than degenerate into a bureaucratic morass? It is hard to say exactly, but whatever it was, people who knew Guzmán remarked that he came back to Peru after his second visit a changed man, energized and on a mission, imbued with a new sense of possibility (Coronel; Tapia 4).

There is one intriguing comment that Guzmán made during the CVR interview regarding the second trip to China which concerns a major change in the quality of his interactions with his Chinese hosts: "things that impressed me, profound changes, from the way in which foreigners were received before and during the Cultural Revolution."<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, Guzmán does not say what these changes were. What we do know, though, is that on his first trip he was part of a delegation that was being trained and shown around China, and that the infighting within this delegation, and whatever else was meant by 'necias petulancias' (translated as 'presumptuousness and arrogance' in the discussion above), were apparent to his Chinese hosts. Here, Guzmán was in China as the representative of a fraternal party, and at least by his own account he engaged in comradely and confidential exchanges with high level Chinese Communists regarding the situation in Peru. If nothing else, this difference in the conditions of the two trips might account for a lot. However, Guzmán generalizes about a change in how foreign guests were treated. While the Cultural Revolution involved many chaotic changes, not all of them due to deliberate changes in policy, it is not clear what Guzmán means here. We have seen above, for example, in the case of the dispute about whether an American delegation would visit Dazhai or the Yangzi Gorges, that there was contention among those charged with liaising with foreign visitors about what were appropriate activities for visiting foreign delegations. But there also

seems to have been a lot of continuity in China's reception of foreign delegations and training of foreign revolutionaries. Guzmán may have just been generalizing from the change in his own experience, or he may have identified a policy change that has gone unremarked in accounts by other travelers to China.

A few more important details about the second trip emerge in *Memorias*. After discussing the issue of his mission to request funds from the Chinese Party, Guzmán went on to discuss what he saw as the really important aspect of his second trip:

But the above was not the important thing about this second trip to China. The main thing was to see and experience something of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution; My first direct contact with it was in Canton and Shanghai, in this, center of the January proletarian storm, a welcome and conversation with leaders of the Revolutionary Committee and, upon arrival, an unforgettable reception by Red Guards for passengers arriving from abroad. It was evident, China was again an immense bloodless revolutionary battleground, of broad masses mainly learning to make the revolution by doing it, exercising various forms of revolutionary violence; with the protection and support of the People's Liberation Army, and under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party led by its only Great Helmsman, Chairman Mao Zedong.<sup>34</sup>

What is most revelatory in this paragraph is Guzmán's meeting with the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee. Shanghai was the political epicenter of the Cultural Revolution, and three of the four members of the Gang of Four, the radical leadership of the Cultural Revolution, were members of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee. Zhang Chunqiao, the chair of the Committee, was later the author of *On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie* and sponsor of other efforts to develop a Marxist political economy of socialist construction which would theoretically explain the rise of a new bourgeoisie within the Communist Party. This idea was a common refrain of the Cultural Revolution, but without the efforts of Zhang Chunqiao the concept would have lacked the theoretical substance necessary for Maoism to travel internationally to the extent that it did, especially after the death of Mao in 1976. Whether or not Guzmán actually met with Zhang is not clear, but it is known that Zhang did make a practice of meeting with foreign communists visiting Shanghai at this time. In any case, Guzmán would have been exposed to a particularly clear and partisan take on the theoretical underpinnings of the Cultural Revolution, ideas which would prove foundational for Guzmán's and other international Maoists' interpretation of the significance of the

Cultural Revolution and in the articulation of post-Mao Maoism (Zhang; Perry and Li; MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 16).<sup>35</sup>

Guzmán goes on to expand on his experience of the revolutionary energy in Beijing on his second trip, as opposed to the quiescence of the city during his 1965 trip:

In Beijing I returned to the same center where I was in ‘65, but much had changed for the better; yesterday’s quiet and almost silent neighborhood had become an area of sharp struggle, with marches, gongs and meetings with ardent slogans and debates. Everywhere, then, the revolutionary spirit burned, overthrowing the old and developing the new, the proletarian. I visited various Red Guard organizations and in all of them we felt, in the vibrant transmission of their experiences, how China, the beloved great socialist homeland, was transformed.<sup>36</sup>

While Guzmán expands here in *Memorias* on the description he gave in the CVR interview of a Beijing convulsed by revolutionary tumult, the most intriguing aspect of this passage is the revelation that Guzmán visited with different Red Guard groups while in Beijing. While on the surface the Red Guards might all seem to be united by reverence for Chairman Mao, the articulation of actual political beliefs by Red Guards was not subjected to the centralized discipline that was standard practice within the Communist Party. In practice, this often resulted in the expression of a variety of different political lines, some sharply opposed to each other. Guzmán would have been highly attuned to the variations in ideological expressions among the groups, assuming that he had an accurate translator with him. It is too bad that, at this point, we don’t know which Red Guards he visited with, but as with the case of his discussions with Zhang Chunqiao’s Shanghai Revolutionary Committee, one can’t help but wonder how the experience affected Guzmán’s own adaptation of Maoism when he returned to Peru.

The only clue that Guzmán gives as to the particular content of his visits with Red Guards comes in the following passage:

The most unforgettable experience of that second trip was the one lived in the Palace of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, great barracks for the Red Guards; in it, from the lips of its own mass protagonists, I drank of the great feat of the highest wave of the world proletarian revolution. And I admired their exhibition, a masterpiece of revolutionary propaganda, the two-line struggle in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: the red line displayed in resounding and brilliant colors and heroic images, at the top; and at the bottom, the black line, in dark and gloomy colors, of grim and crawling characters and defeated revisionist leaders and fallacious “academic

authorities.” In short, a lapidary denunciation and forceful crushing of the bourgeois line, and an epic hymn to the proletarian line.<sup>37</sup>

This passage confirms that Guzmán saw himself as learning from the Red Guards, but sadly tells us nothing new about the content of that learning. In passages like this the most remarkable thing is how stereotyped language can be used to say so little with so many words.

Finally, toward the end of the narrative, Guzmán reveals one last important piece of information, but once again fails to elaborate: “On this second visit to the People's Republic of China, to socialist China, to the China of the Communist CCP and of Chairman Mao Zedong, I requested and received extraordinary presentations on Mao Zedong Thought, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Cuban problem. I took notes from them; they helped our Party a lot.”<sup>38</sup> It would be fascinating to understand more about how the Chinese Communist Party oriented its Latin American supporters on “the Cuban problem.” By 1966, relations between China and Cuba had become fairly antagonistic, as Cuba had decisively sided with the Soviet Union in the Sino-Soviet split. It is not surprising that Cuba would have been a topic of conversation between Latin American Maoists and Chinese Communists, but given the inaccessibility of Chinese archives, Guzmán’s confirmation that such conversations did take place is significant. One only wishes he were more forthcoming about the content of the “extraordinary presentations” that he received on the topic.

## **Conclusion**

One final remarkable aspect of Guzmán’s time in China is just how unremarkable it was. Thousands of other revolutionaries were hosted in China and trained by the Chinese Communist Party. Many of them spent more time there, and enjoyed greater access to the great figures of the Chinese Revolution, including Mao himself. It was China’s goal that many more of them would go back to their home countries and do precisely what Guzmán did. But in Latin America, he was the only one who led a major revolutionary effort. Others, such as Florencio Medrano in Mexico and Oscar Zamora in Bolivia, tried to start a Maoist people’s war and either died or capitulated long before they could gain the traction that Shining Path achieved within months of beginning its armed struggle (Rothwell, *Transpacific Revolutionaries*). When looked at through a comparative lens, Guzmán was the most successful of the many Latin American graduates of China’s training programs.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The CVR spells the name Iparraguirre, and her name can be found spelled that way in many other sources. However, in *Memorias desde Némesis*, which she co-authored with Guzmán, Yparraguirre spells her own name with a Y, so one assumes that is the correct spelling.

<sup>2</sup> A recent and relatively brief assessment of the CVR from the Senderista perspective can be found in the Nov. 2017 document “Comentario al libro *La guerra senderista – Hablan los enemigos* de Antonio Zapata,” pp. 4-11. As of Sept. 12, 2019, this document could be found on the internet at <https://pcp71028.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/comentario-de-antonio-zapata.pdf>. However, the lifespan on the internet of substantial documents representing a recent pro-Shining Path perspective tends to be limited, and addresses sometimes change.

<sup>3</sup> The Peruvian intelligence services have nicknamed the Penal Militar de la Base Naval del Callao, where Guzmán has been imprisoned, Némesis, after the ancient Greek goddess of retribution.

<sup>4</sup> The original text in Spanish of the interview can be found online at [http://www.solrojo.org/pcp\\_doc/pcp\\_0688.htm](http://www.solrojo.org/pcp_doc/pcp_0688.htm) and [https://www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/600\\_digitalizacion.pdf](https://www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/600_digitalizacion.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> For clarity’s sake, here is a longer excerpt from the interview:

“When we were finishing the course on explosives, they told us that anything can explode. So, at the end of the course, we picked up a pen and it blew up, and when we took a seat it blew up, too. It was a kind of general fireworks display. These were perfectly calculated examples to show us that anything could be blown up if you figured out how to do it. We constantly asked, ‘How do you do this? How do you do that?’ They would tell us, don’t worry, don’t worry, you’ve already learned enough. Remember what the masses can do, they have inexhaustible ingenuity, what we’ve taught you the masses will do and will teach you all over again. That is what they told us. That school contributed greatly to my development and helped me begin to gain an appreciation for Chairman Mao Tsetung” (Guzmán, *A World to Win* 79).

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication from Patricia Castro Obando. On the particular challenges of research on the international relations history of the Mao years in Chinese archives, see Charles Kraus, “Researching the History of the People’s Republic of China,” *Cold War International History Project Working Paper* 79 (April 2016). It should be noted that there are counter-trends promoting openness on these issues within Chinese academia. The conference originally scheduled for April 2020 (but now postponed due to the global pandemic) at Shanghai University on the transnational communist movement in Latin America is one example which comes to mind.

<sup>7</sup> Because pagination varies on the various print editions of *Memorias desde Némesis*, I cite the most widely available edition, which is the original which was leaked to the internet.

<sup>8</sup> “en octubre tuve ocasión de conocer algunas cosas en China” (15).

<sup>9</sup> “Según sus memorias, Guzmán retornó rápida y directamente al Perú en diciembre de 1965.”

<sup>10</sup> To be precise, there is no citation for the statement that Guzmán returned in December. However, the citation that Zapata gives for *Memorias* two paragraphs earlier is for the same page on which Guzmán writes that “Arribé al aeropuerto internacional Jorge Chávez el 22 de julio de 1965.”

<sup>11</sup> “En China tuve la posibilidad, que yo deseara para muchos, de estar en una Escuela donde se enseñaba primero política, desde cuestiones internacionales hasta filosofía marxista, eran magistrales lecciones dadas por revolucionarios probados y altamente competentes, grandes maestros. Entre ellos podría recordar al maestro que nos enseñó trabajo abierto y secreto, un hombre que toda su vida la había dedicado al Partido, absolutamente a él, de muchos años, un ejemplo vivo, extraordinario maestro; él nos enseñó muchas cosas, quiso enseñarnos más pero algunos no quisieron, en fin, de todo hay en la vida” (74-75).

<sup>12</sup> “fui a una escuela de cuadros, una escuela que tenía dos partes, una primera política, que comenzaba con el estudio de la situación internacional y terminaba con la filosofía marxista, eran varios cursos” (15).

<sup>13</sup> “A la escuela de cuadros concurremos ocho en esa ocasión: tres de la Confederación Campesina del Perú, muy ligados a Paredes, tres del Regional del Norte, uno de Cuzco, seguidor de Sotomayor, y yo; entre ellos tres miembros del Comité Central, uno de los cuales presidió la delegación (militaba en el norte del país). En la escuela de Pekín, y en el orden que sigue, estudiamos: situación internacional, centrada en la lucha contra el revisionismo y el internacionalismo proletario; línea política general, las leyes y experiencias de la revolución democrática china; trabajo campesino, la lucha antifeudal por la tierra desarrollada por el campesinado, fuerza principal de la revolución; Frente único, la unión del proletariado, campesinado, pequeña burguesía y burguesía nacional sustentada en la alianza obrero-campesina dirigida por el proletariado; construcción del Partido, principios y problemas fundamentales de la construcción del Partido basada en la línea ideológica y política correcta; trabajo secreto y trabajo abierto, principios y experiencias de la clandestinidad de la organización partidaria y de su trabajo de masas; línea de masas, las masas hacen la historia y cómo movilizarlas con conciencia y voluntariedad, aprendiendo de ellas y servir al pueblo de todo corazón; filosofía, partiendo de la contradicción

como única ley fundamental en función de la política para resolver los problemas de la lucha de clases, del Partido y la revolución. Ocho cursos magistrales sobre la extraordinaria e inagotable experiencia de la revolución china dirigida por el Partido Comunista de China, producto de la fusión del marxismo-leninismo con su realidad concreta, así como, principalmente, fuente y aplicación del pensamiento maotsetung, según la denominación de los años sesentas” (83).

14 The request was ignored.

15 For an overall picture of this phenomenon of Latin Americans going to China during the Mao years for political training or as a form of political tourism, see Matthew Rothwell, *Transpacific Revolutionaries: The Chinese Revolution in Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

16 One major source of this emphasis in the Chinese history literature of the past couple decades comes from Jung Chang, *Wild Swans* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 472-473.

17 Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

18 “No tuve la suerte de conocerlo, repito; la delegación en la que me cupo estar cometió muchos errores y necias petulancias, creo que eso determinó que no se nos confiara ese privilegio” (74).

19 “La escuela militar la cumplimos en Nankín: guerra popular, fundamentalmente su parte correspondiente al desarrollo de la guerra en el camino de cercar las ciudades desde el campo; construcción del ejército, formación, estructuración y preparación del ejército de nuevo tipo para cumplir las tareas políticas del Partido y la revolución; estrategia y táctica, la guerra en su conjunto según las etapas de su desarrollo, su modalidades, tácticas y formas de combate en especial emboscadas y asaltos. Tres cursos igualmente magistrales con sus prácticas pertinentes e indispensables; expresión concentrada de la experiencia de la revolución china, en su forma principal de lucha, elevada por el Presidente Mao a línea militar del proletariado” (83-84).

20 “Luego nos enseñaban cuestiones militares, pero también se comenzaba por política, la guerra popular, luego construcción de las fuerzas armadas y estrategia y táctica; y la parte práctica correspondiente emboscadas, asaltos, desplazamientos, así como preparar artefactos de demolición. Cuando manejábamos elementos químicos muy delicados, nos recomendaban tener la ideología presente siempre y que ésta nos haría capaces de hacer todo y hacerlo bien; y aprendimos a hacer nuestras primeras cargas para demoler” (75).

21 All spellings and ellipses given exactly as they appear in the transcript: “tuve ocasión de conocer algunas cosas en China, y formé parte de ellas, por lo pronto importantes, Shangai, un gran centro de la revolución (...), luego Signan y Yenán, puntos importantes de la revolución, (...) Gangzhou, una ciudad (...). Eso me permitió conocer bastante mejor el pensamiento de Mao Tse Tung” (15-16).

22 “Ching Kang y Yenán, los por siempre consagrados monumentos en la memoria de hierro del proletariado y los pueblos del mundo, indesligablemente unidos al Presidente Mao Tsetung y al maoísmo. Rememoro la brega infatigable, masiva, heroica de la construcción del socialismo: fábricas, comunas populares, cuarteles, centros comerciales, universidades, escuelas, hospitales y centros de salud, salas de arte y espectáculos; plazas y calles, hervideros tumultuosos de recia energía desbordante plena de optimismo y política al mando con sus “tres banderas”: línea general del socialismo, comuna popular y gran salto adelante, construyendo la nueva sociedad, el socialismo, poniendo bases para el futuro comunismo.”

“Asimismo vuelve a mi mente Pekín, Tienanmen histórica y legendaria plaza: la monumental portada de denso rojo oscuro y el Presidente Mao desde su imponente retrato, el Museo de la Revolución, el Gran Palacio del Pueblo enmarcándola y al centro el blanco obelisco ofrendado “¡A los héroes del pueblo!” en letras doradas de la propia caligrafía del Gran Timonel. Tienanmen y el inmenso mar de masas, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin y el Presidente Mao guiando el combate; bosques de banderas rojas con hoces y martillos, banderolas, consignas; obreros, campesinos, soldados, mujeres, jóvenes, el pueblo chino, un millón en mitin rugiendo “¡Abajo el imperialismo yanqui!” y proclamando “¡Apoyamos a Vietnam!”; su voz inmarcesible aún atruena mis oídos. Y “El Este en rojo”, epopeya de música, danzas y cantos reviviendo el largo batallar masivo de la revolución: nubes negras de la traición de Chiang Kai-shek, la épica Gran Marcha, Tsunyi y la asunción de la dirección por el Presidente Mao, Yenán iluminando toda China, la celebración victoriosa del pueblo y las nacionalidades en Tienanmen y terminar con la Internacional en majestuoso coral, y en remate mayor todos, artistas y miles de concurrentes, entonando la Internacional en multitud de lenguas de la Tierra, inenarrable inundación explosiva de fervor revolucionario. Y... Hangchow con su hermosura inigualable, la tersura del lago, el verdor de sus ondulantes colinas, paradigma inefable del paisaje chino. Finalmente Shanghai, inmensa urbe industrial, obrera y revolucionaria. Ahí me despedí, había llegado en invierno y partía en verano con el alma más encendida en el rojo sol de Oriente” (84-85).

23 “tal movimiento guerrillero no prosperaría por no tener base de masas” (137).

24 “unos dos meses, puede ser agosto y setiembre, pero ya no estoy para el aniversario, para octubre” (18).

25 “mi segundo viaje a China fue en octubre de 1967” (192).

26 “salí de Pekín la víspera del 50 aniversario de la Revolución de Octubre” (194).

27 “cuando la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria comenzaba,”

28 “Presidente Mao ha planteado, se me informó, que es erróneo seguir prestando ayuda económica de esa manera, es una forma revisionista que no sirve a la revolución sino, por el contrario, la daña; la principal forma de apoyo es hacer y

desarrollar la revolución; y que cada revolución debe apoyarse en sus propios esfuerzos, en las masas, así autososteniéndose mantendrá autodecisión e independencia política. Esa sería la política que en este punto seguiría el PCCh, de ahora en adelante” (*Memorias* 192 [2014]).

<sup>29</sup> “Con dirigentes del Partido Comunista de China traté la situación del país, la revolución peruana y del PCP. Di una exposición a dirigentes y cuadros sobre esos puntos, con las consiguientes preguntas e intercambio de posiciones. A nivel más circunscrito, y de mayor jerarquía, expuse detalladamente cómo veía, principalmente, el Partido y su perspectiva. Me fueron comunicadas informaciones presentadas por dirigentes del PCP, entre ellos Paredes, así como posiciones y planteamientos que habían vertido en diversas visitas a China, preguntándome sobre su veracidad. Respondí aportando pruebas y analizando realidades. En síntesis, se había inflado las fuerzas y capacidad del Partido, así como su influencia sobre las masas y posibilidad de generar, en cualquier momento, un gran levantamiento campesino apoyado con fuerzas armadas partidarias. Una mentira cabal y completa. Creo que los camaradas chinos, simplemente confirmaron las sospechas que ya tenían; subrayaron la responsabilidad de los dirigentes y la tarea de los comunistas, terminaron reflexionando sobre las complejidades, dificultades y riesgos a los que entraba el Partido Comunista del Perú” (*Memorias* 194 [2014]).

<sup>30</sup> “solicitamos se nos explicara el Pensamiento Mao Tsetung” (75).

<sup>31</sup> “tuvimos una ocasión de ir a una depuración de libros, recuerdo a un escritor famoso, Mao Tun” (16).

<sup>32</sup> “Los desfiles eran distintos, cambios muy profundos, en todos los campos. Claro, cambios políticos muchos más grandes. Cuando yo estuve en ese lugar, yo estuve en el mismo centro, con protección militar. Cuando estuve el ’65 era conventual, silencioso; el ’67... El ’67 era estruendoso, a ciertas horas del día, marchas (16).”

<sup>33</sup> “cosas que me impresionaron, cambios profundos, desde la forma de atención en que eran recibidos los extranjeros antes y en la Revolución Cultural” (16).

<sup>34</sup> “Más lo anterior no fue lo importante de este segundo viaje a China. Lo principal fue ver y vivir algo de la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria; mi primer contacto directo con ella se dio en Cantón y Shanghai, en esta, centro de la tormenta proletaria de enero, una bienvenida y conversación con dirigentes del Comité Revolucionario y, en la primera, una inolvidable recepción de los guardias rojos a los pasajeros llegados del extranjero. Era evidente, China era nuevamente un inmenso campo de guerra revolucionaria incruenta, de grandes masas principalmente aprendiendo a hacer la revolución haciéndola, ejerciendo diversas formas de violencia revolucionaria; con la protección y apoyo del Ejército Popular de Liberación, y bajo la dirección del Partido Comunista de China conducido por su único Gran Timonel, el Presidente Mao Tsetung” (193).

<sup>35</sup> The Shanghai Revolutionary Committee was formed after the February 24, 1967 dissolution of the Shanghai People’s Commune, so this is an additional data point on the timing of Guzmán’s trip to China. However, if Guzmán met with the Shanghai city leadership before 1967 he may accidentally have labeled the local party leadership as a ‘revolutionary committee,’ since Zhang was the leader in 1966 as well. As the revolutionary center of the Cultural Revolution, Shanghai had more continuity in leading personnel than other parts of China.

<sup>36</sup> “En Pekín volví al mismo centro en que estuve el año 65, pero mucho había cambiado para bien; el ayer tranquilo y casi silencioso recinto se había transformado en ámbito de aguda lucha, con marchas, gongs y batintines y reuniones de ardorosas consignas y debates. En todas partes, pues, ardía el espíritu revolucionario derrocando lo viejo y desarrollando lo nuevo, lo proletario. Visité diversas organizaciones de guardias rojos y en todas ellas sentíamos, en la vibrante transmisión de sus experiencias, cómo se transformaba China, la querida gran patria socialista” (193).

<sup>37</sup> “La experiencia más imborrable de ese segundo viaje fue la vivida en el Palacio de la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria, gran cuartel de los guardias rojos; en él, de labios de sus propios protagonistas masivos bebí de la grandiosa gesta de la ola más alta de la revolución proletaria mundial. Y admiré en su exposición, obra maestra de la propaganda revolucionaria, la lucha de dos líneas en la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria: la línea roja expuesta en rotundos y brillantes colores y heroicas imágenes, en la parte superior; y en la inferior, la línea negra, en colores oscuros y sombríos, de torvos y reptantes personajes y defenestrados dirigentes revisionistas y falaces “autoridades académicas”. En pocas palabras, una lapidaria denuncia y aplastamiento contundente de la línea burguesa, y un canto épico a la línea proletaria” (193-194).

<sup>38</sup> “En esta segunda visita a la República Popular China, a la socialista, a la del PCCh comunista y del Presidente Mao Tsetung, solicité y recibí extraordinarias exposiciones sobre el pensamiento maotsetung, la Gran Revolución Cultural Proletaria y el problema cubano. De ellas traje notas; sirvieron mucho a nuestro Partido” (194).



## Works Cited

- Ayllón, Eduardo. Personal interview. La Paz, 15 July 2010.
- Brown, Jonathan. *Cuba's Revolutionary World*. Harvard UP, 2017.
- Coronel, José. Personal interview. Ayacucho, 11 September 2006.
- Documentos de Información*. Ediciones Voz Popular, marzo 1983.
- Guzmán, Abimael. “Entrevista al Presidente Gonzalo.” *El Diario*, julio 1988. Rpt. in *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, [https://www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/600\\_digitalizacion.pdf](https://www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/600_digitalizacion.pdf).
- . “Interview with Chairman Gonzalo.” *El Diario*, July 1988. Rpt. in *A World to Win*, no. 18 (1992).
- Guzmán, Abimael, and Elena Yparraguirre. *Memorias desde Némesis*. SM Servicios Gráficos, 2015.
- . *Memorias desde Némesis*. 2014. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, [www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/801\\_digitalizacion.pdf](http://www.verdadyreconciliacionperu.com/admin/files/libros/801_digitalizacion.pdf).
- . Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) interview. Callao, 28 May 2002.
- Lovell, Julia. *Maoism: A Global History*. The Bodley Head, 2019.
- MacFarquhar, Roderick and Michael Schoenhals. *Mao's Last Revolution*. Belknap, 2006.
- Mao Zedong. “Problems of War and Strategy.” 6 Nov. 1938. *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949*. Stuart R. Schram, ed., vol. 6, *The New Stage, August 1937-1938*. M. E. Sharpe, 2004, pp. 548–59.
- Newbold, Monica. Personal interview. New York City, 19 July 2005.
- Peralva, Osvaldo. *O Retrato*. Editora Globo, 1962.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. and Li Xun. *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution*. Westview, 1997.
- Roncagliolo, Santiago. *La cuarta espada: La historia de Abimael Guzmán y Sendero Luminoso*. Debate, 2007.
- Rothwell, Matthew. “Secret Agent for International Maoism: José Venturelli, Chinese Informal Diplomacy and Latin American Maoism.” *Radical Americas*, no. 1, December 2016, pp. 44–62.
- . *Transpacific Revolutionaries: The Chinese Revolution in Latin America*. Routledge, 2013.
- Sotomayor Pérez, José. *Revolución cultural proletaria*. Ediciones Nueva Democracia, 1967.
- Sotomayor Pérez, José. *¿Leninismo o maoísmo?* Editorial Universo, 1979.
- Starn, Orin, and Miguel La Serna. *The Shining Path: Love, Madness, and Revolution in the Andes*. Norton, 2019.
- Tapia, Carlos. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) interview. Lima, 29 June 2002.
- Toledo Brückmann, Ernesto. ... *Y llegó Mao: Síntesis histórica de la llegada del Presidente Mao TseTung al Perú (1928-1964)*. Grupo Editorial Arteidea, 2016.
- Zapata, Antonio. *La guerra senderista: Hablan los enemigos*. Kindle ed., Taurus, 2017.
- Zhang Chunqiao. *On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie*. Foreign Languages Press, 1975.