

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Desencanto: Land Privatization and Counterinsurgency. The Colombian Armed Conflict from an
Alternative Perspective

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in Latin American Studies

by

Samuel Godoy

Committee in charge:

Professor Christine Hunefeldt, Chair
Professor David Pedersen
Professor Daniel Widener

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University of California San Diego

2022

DEDICATION

*Para todos aquellos que han soñado con un mundo mejor. Por todos los que han perdido la vida
luchando por un mejor futuro.*

*For all of those who have dreamt of a better world. For all of those that have lost their lives
fighting for a better future.*

EPIGRAPH

“The very concept of ‘revolutionary violence’ is somewhat falsely cast, since most of the violence comes from those who attempt to prevent reform, not from those struggling for reform. By focusing on the violent rebellions of the downtrodden, we overlook the much greater repressive force and violence utilized by the ruling oligarchs to maintain the status quo, including armed attacks against peaceful demonstrations, mass arrests, torture, destruction of opposition organizations, suppression of dissident publications, death squad assassinations, the extermination of whole villages, and the like.”

- *Michael Parenti, Blackshirts and Reds: Rational Fascism and the Overthrow of Communism*

“...Colombia has had accessories in crime, primary among them the government of the United States, though Britain, Israel, Germany, and others have also helped to train and arm the assassins and torturers of the narco-military-landowner network that maintains “stability” in a country that is rich in promise, and a nightmare for many of its people.”

- *Father Javier Giraldo, Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*

“The guerrilla was not the cause of the Colombian conflict but rather one of its symptoms, and simultaneously became a contributing factor in the sense that its very existence has provided the ideological substance for the pretext and justification behind state-sanctioned violence and militarization.”

- *Jasmin Hristov, Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*

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ABBREVIATIONS

- FARC-EP – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia -Ejército del Pueblo
- M-19- Movimiento 19 de Abril
- EPL- Ejército Popular de Liberación
- ADO- Autodefensa Obrera
- CNMH- Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica
- AUC- Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
- ELN- Ejército de Liberación Nacional
- UFCO – United Fruit Company
- MAS- Muerte a Secuestradores
- Los Pepes – Los Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar
- UP – Unión Patriótica
- Convivirs- Cooperativas de Vigilancia y Seguridad Privada
- BACRIMS – Bandas Criminales
- TNC- Transnational corporations
- Sintraminercol – Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Empresa Nacional Minera Minercol
- CIDH- Interamerican Commission of Human Rights
- ACCU- Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá
- Codechoco - Corporación Autónoma Regional para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Chocó
- DAS – Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad
- SIJIN – Seccionales de Investigación Criminal
- DIJIN – Dirección de Investigación Criminal e Interpol
- AFAVIT – Asociación de Familiares de Víctimas de Trujillo

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Samuel Godoy

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Professor Christine Hunefeldt, Chair

The South American country of Colombia has received much attention in the last decade. This is due to successes in various global stages. Recently, the entertainment giant, Disney, even

made a movie about the country. However, not much attention has been given to the harsh reality of the country, and its tumultuous history.

For much of the 20th and 21st centuries, the country has been in a deep internal armed conflict that has ravaged through the countryside and has been the cause of many of today's problems in the densely populated urban areas. Traditionally, the armed conflict has been interpreted as the result of the war being carried out by insurgent guerrillas against the state. The official government explanation has historically relied on positioning itself as a victim in a conflict that began in the 1960s with the creation of *campesino* guerrillas, especially the FARC-EP.

Proper research into the history of the country and its present, reveals a much more complex reality. The purpose of this research is to analyze the background of the armed conflict and its continuing patterns in order to understand the systemic causes that led to the prolongation of the conflict and its intensification in the 1980s through the early 2000s.

This research interprets the creation of guerrillas as a response to the violent repression being felt by Colombia's subaltern classes since the beginning of the 20th century. It also reinterprets the role of the state, as it views the modern capitalist state as the amalgamation of power of the political and economic elite. Thus, the main purpose of this investigation is to trace the role of the Colombian state, and therefore its ruling classes, in the conflict.

INTRODUCTION

The highly acclaimed Disney movie ‘Encanto’ was released on November 24th, 2021. The movie, based on the Madrigal family, a family from the *Eje Cafetero* or Axis of Coffee in Colombia, has brought new attention to the country as foreign viewers fell in love with the unique personalities of the characters and with the beautiful, animated images of the South American country. To most new ‘fans’ of the country, it represents a magical land with surreal sceneries. To the majority of those who call Colombia their home though, the land of magical realism has many times been a nightmare. The title of this thesis, ‘Desencanto’, is used in order to bring attention to the reality of the history of Colombia and the violence that regular civilians have had to endure for decades in the country due to the armed conflict.

The armed conflict in Colombia has been one of the longest on-going internal armed conflicts in the contemporary world. Many pin the start of the ‘current’ conflict in the years 1964-1966 when the Colombian government, after being pressured and guided by the U.S. government, repeatedly attacked peasant communities, including the bombing of self-defense peasant populations in Marquetalia, Tolima and surrounding areas. Marquetalia was a rural village that contained around 50 Communist, Liberal, and political outcast families fleeing the extreme violence that had taken hold of Colombia during the period of 1948-1964 called *La Violencia*. It was during this time of continued state violence against the peasant population that the FARC was officially created as a ‘self-defense’¹ peasant group in May 1966. The conflict continued and escalated since, the armed peasant group adopted a more offensive strategy as the decades went by, adopting the rebranded name of FARC-EP; however, the formal armed conflict

¹ The term would later be appropriated by the paramilitary groups in the country, claiming themselves as ‘self-defense’ groups from the FARC and other guerrillas

‘officially’ ended in the year 2016 when the FARC-EP and the government signed the Havana peace accords which demobilized the largest and oldest leftist guerrilla organization in the world. In the ‘official’ or mainstream explanation, the leftist Marxist guerrilla groups have been interpreted as the main cause of the violence that the Colombian population has had to suffer since the conflict started. Hence why the conflict began with their creation and ‘officially ended’ with their demobilization in 2016. According to this perspective, they were a ‘narco-terrorist’ organization following a criminal logic. This view has placed the insurgents as the causal factor of the extreme violence the country has experienced since the mid-20th century, including much of the ‘narcotrafficking’ violence after the 1990s.

The actors in the war are commonly identified as guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the Colombian state, typically with the state fighting against both paramilitaries and guerrillas. However, as will be seen throughout this work, the alliance between the state and paramilitary organizations is undeniable. Many indirect and direct actors have played a key role in the prolongation of the conflict without a proper analysis being carried out as to the structural and systemic causes for their participation. As this research will show and, in spite of the fact that the official government explanation still places the responsibility of the prolongation of the armed conflict in Colombia on the *campesino* guerrilla groups, more recently labeled as ‘narcoterrorist’ guerrilla groups², the great political and economic violence that the population has endured for over 50 years, and which saw a great increase in the mid-80s until the early 2000s, can only be explained by analyzing the violence that has been brought about on the subaltern classes of Colombia, specially the rural population. In virtually every region of the country, the

² These groups include the FARC-EP, the ELN, and the EPL. Additional smaller *campesino* guerrillas existed in the country throughout the 20th century. Urban guerrillas such as the M-19 also existed during this time.

paramilitaries and the Colombian state have acted to favor private transnational capital, which has been historically protected through U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. and Colombian military with ‘counterinsurgency’ strategies. The Colombian State and many Colombian business owners, including illegal commercial enterprises such as cocaine trafficking, had a decisive role in the creation and sustenance of paramilitary forces. As this work will show, displacements through paramilitary and state terrorism have been a key characteristic in the armed conflict in order to privatize land that became national and/or transnational private enterprises usually used to extract natural resources, for raw commodity production, or for land speculation in the market. Increasingly so, this displacement of peasants led to a concentration of land in the hands of few landowners. State and paramilitary violence has also been used to heavily repress dissent in the nation, specifically targeted at labor unions, labor and campesino movements, and grassroots organizations. Furthermore, the main argument presented in this thesis is that the contemporary armed conflict, starting in the 1960s until 2016 and, with many characteristics lasting until today (2022), was the cumulative result of displacements and repressive acts in part of the state and the economic and political ruling class of the country since the beginning of the 20th century.

This research will attempt to historicize the armed conflict to allow for a reinterpretation of the long duration and growing intensity of violence in Colombia. The specific case studies in chapters 2 and 3 mostly focus on the years 1984 to 2002, a heightened and extreme period of violence, especially in terms of massacres and assassinations perpetrated against peasants, workers, and in more general terms, against Colombia’s subaltern classes. The details of violent acts allow the reader a glimpse into the horrendous violence perpetrated against the Colombian population and to understand the systematic patterns that underlie such acts. The years between 1984 to 2002 were purposefully chosen, because they allow to present (and understand) the

Colombian armed conflict through its various stages, as they provide the author and the reader an understanding of the specific mechanisms of violence used against the Colombian population, as well as the historical continuities of political and economic violence.

The 1980s and 1990s were a period of great agony for the Colombian population. In May of 1984, the FARC-EP and the government of President Belisario Betancurt made an attempt at peace by signing the “Acuerdos de la Uribe” peace agreements. During this year, other guerrilla groups such as the M-19, EPL, and ADO signed peace agreements as well. The attempt at peace between the government and the FARC-EP didn’t last very long as the following years marked an increase in violence in all its forms all over the country. The decade of the 1990s was one of the most violent. In fact, the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (CNMH) estimates that from 1996 to 2002 there was a great increase in massacres in the country; 50 percent of the massacres in the period of 1980-2012 occurred during these six years.³ It was also during the 1980s-1990s when cocaine trafficking was incorporated on a mass scale in all aspects of Colombian society. As will be shown, the increment of violence was very much linked to the intensification of land concentration. Although many of the facts and figures go beyond the year 2002, this research focuses on the processes of political and economic prior to 2002, because starting that year another stage in the Colombian armed conflict began with the election of President Alvaro Uribe Vélez, which would merit a separate research.⁴

³ *¡Basta Ya!: Colombia: Memorias De Guerra y Dignidad* (Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013), 51.

⁴ This is due to the reinvention of the National Security Doctrine in the country after the election of Uribe Vélez in 2002. He established what is known in the country as “Seguridad Democrática” (Democratic Security) which was backed by many decrees and laws that reformulated paramilitaries and the armed forces. Much can be learned regarding this topic from the work “Blood and Capital” by Jasmine Hristov as cited in this thesis.

Before beginning with the analysis of the Colombian armed conflict it is important to engage with a few questions regarding the definition of each of the armed groups referenced in this thesis. As previously mentioned, the main actors in the decades long conflict are typically defined as guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the state. But what is the definition of a guerrilla? What is paramilitarism? And what is the relation between the state and both?

It is common to hear the argument that guerrillas are but criminal bands in rural areas; more recently they have been named ‘terroristas’ and, in Colombia, ‘narco-terroristas’. However, by defining guerrillas in such a simplistic manner their political, historical, and social character is lost. Guerrilla warfare has existed since time immemorial. In Latin America for example, movements such as that of the indigenous Mapuches, in what is today Chile, led by Caupolicán in the 16th century against the Spanish Conquistadors, fall in the category of guerrilla warfare. The guerrilla tradition also includes the Tupac Amaru II movement in the 18th century in Peru, the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920, the Sandino movement in Nicaragua in the 1920s and 1930s, and the failed El Salvador revolution of 1932. Guerrillas have also been present outside of Latin America in the 20th century in China, Argelia, and Vietnam. All of these guerrillas had deep rooted social, cultural, political, and economic vindications for which they were fighting. Thus, even if one does not agree with the ideologies, the form or the revolutionary character of these groups, categorizing them simply as ‘criminals’ is a simplification of a much larger and deeper-seated phenomenon.

Historian Richard Gott briefly defines guerrillas as “political organizations that seek by means of armed warfare in the countryside to change the political and social structure of a

country.”⁵ Although this definition is perhaps limited as it excludes urban guerrillas, one can begin to understand that the *raison d’être* of guerrillas is a change in the defining structures of their society, not personal gain through criminal means. Although violence is used by these groups, they are beyond simple criminal associations. This defining feature of the revolutionary character of guerrillas then outlines their relation to the state. In regards to the majority of guerrilla groups in Latin America during the 20th century, they viewed the existing state structures in their countries as part of a political dictatorship through which the dominant economic and political classes sought to impose their interests, in other words, the dictatorship of the dominant classes. Thus, their struggle was against the extant structures that support the existence of the ruling class in their various forms and their hold on the institutions of the state. The violent means adopted by these movements is a response to the also violent repression and exploitation embedded in the structure of their societies. A dialectic of violence.⁶ This dialectic of violence has a long trajectory in the country that will be explored in this thesis, beginning with the land privatizations in the early 20th century.

One of the differences between guerrilla movements in Latin America of the 16th through 19th century in comparison with most of those of the 20th century is that the contemporary guerrillas stood up against their own states rather than against an external occupying force, such as the Spanish Conquistadors and bureaucrats. This is an important distinction because although many of the 20th century guerrillas had deep anti-imperialist sentiments, they viewed the ruling class and the political and economic system that they represented as their main enemy. Thus, it is

5 Gott, Richard. *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*. London: Seagull Books, 2008, xxiv.

6 This does not deny that some of its members may join for the simple reason of participating in acts of violence. However, as a collective unit the purpose is beyond simple criminality.

important to highlight the class element when speaking about guerrillas. It is also important to understand that the class element is represented in the state, because the guerrillas interpret the state as having been usurped by the economic elite, leaving the majority of society outside of the decision making process.

In his book “De Moncada a Chiapas” Daniel Pereyra describes the guerrilla movements in Latin America in the 1960s as movements which included different sectors of society including campesinos, large sectors of the low-middle class, artisans, students, professionals, urban wage workers, and intellectuals. Their different struggles convened in the armed struggle against the formal right-wing dictatorships or quasi-dictatorships installed in the countries during the 20th century: the workers fought against extreme exploitation and the illegalization of union activity, the campesinos struggled for land, and students for their right to education and alongside the intellectuals for democratic freedoms. In some cases such as in Venezuela, Guatemala, and Brazil, members of the armed forces joined such movements to recuperate their sovereignty from imperialist interference through the ruling class of the countries. The combination of struggles led these movements to armed struggle as their last resort to vindicate their rights.⁷ Almost every Latin American nation experienced some kind of guerrilla struggle in the 1960s; many of the movements were formed right after the events of 1959 in the Caribbean.

The victory of the ‘26 de Julio’ movement led by Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1959 was key in galvanizing many guerrilla movements throughout Latin America. The Cuban example led many to believe that a social revolution was possible in their countries just as they saw it happening on the Caribbean Island. Although the majority of these movements did not follow

⁷ Pereyra, Daniel. *Del Moncada A Chiapas: Historia De La Lucha Armada En América Latina*. Buenos Aires: RyR, 2011, 33.

suit and failed within a few years, the Cuban experience reverberated throughout Latin America. Wickham-Crowley has written extensively on the wave of guerrillas that followed the Cuban Revolution referring to ‘cultural diffusion’ as one of the main reasons for the spread of guerrillas after 1959.⁸ The diffusion of specific revolutionary ideas in regard to the Cuban Revolution led to the ‘foco’ style of guerrillas which interpreted the guerrilla organizations as the center of the revolution, where the general development of the revolutionary change would stem from and, then, the masses would spontaneously incorporate themselves. From 1958 to 1970, this was the method chosen by most of the guerrilla movements, due to Cuba’s success, albeit most of them disappeared during this time.

Writing about Colombia specifically though, Wickham-Crowley makes an important distinction. The FARC-EP, the oldest guerrilla in the continent until their official demobilization in 2016, was the only guerrilla during this time that did not fit with the ‘cultural diffusion’ thesis regarding the Cuban revolution. The author is clear in pointing to the preceding period of *La Violencia* as the reason for the birth of this group; their birth was due to the horrible violence experienced by the population during this period and it was a direct response by the rural populace.⁹ This points to the continuities in the Colombian armed struggle which one could argue does not begin in the 1960s rather it is a continuation of that old struggle which, as the first chapter will mention, began much earlier in the 20th century.

Further, it is quite common to hear that guerrillas are but spontaneous criminal phenomena, disregarding their historical facets and the structures that support the political and

8 Wickham-Crowley, Timothy. “Two ‘Waves’ of Guerrilla-Movement Organizing in Latin America, 1956–1990.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 1 (2014): 215–42.

9 Ibid, 219.

economic violence that took over the country and which the guerrillas were a consequence of. This is not to say that the guerrillas have not added to the lived experience of violence by Colombians; however, it is to say, once again, that the guerrillas represent a complex phenomenon that must be understood in its historical context, not as arising out of a vacuum. Guerrillas have also been the excuse used by the state and the elite to increase the militarization of society which has had terrible consequences for the civil population, as will be seen in the Trujillo Massacre chapter. With this in mind, it is important then to understand the definition of paramilitarism and its role regarding the state and guerrillas.

The term ‘paramilitarism’ is a widely used one in Latin America. However, it is sometimes used without properly understanding the nuances in the term. As others have done, such as Father Giraldo, a proper analysis of the term begins with looking at the word itself. Giraldo uses the prefix ‘para’ to understand three characteristics of the term: approximation, transposition, and deviation or irregularity. Thus, using this first analysis, ‘paramilitaries’ can be described as armed groups that are in some way or another, depending on the historical context, adjoining to the military institutions of the state, but at the same time are in constant motion in their relationship with the military, sometimes closer than others, and, often, function in an irregular manner outside of the relationship with the military.¹⁰ In this way also, paramilitaries must be understood outside of the simplified notion of private criminal groups.

Several definitions have been offered by scholars working on the topic of paramilitarism. Adam Jones defines the groups as ‘private and/or state affiliated organizations that use violence and intimidation to target and/or eliminate groups and individuals seen as subversive of the

¹⁰ Giraldo, Javier. *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*. Monroe, Me: Common Courage Press, 1996, 77.

social, political, and economic order.”¹¹ With this definition, an important aspect is highlighted which is the combination between ‘state affiliated’ and ‘private’ regarding their associations. As will be seen in the first chapter, in Colombia, the contemporary paramilitaries emerged as legal groups of armed civilians working together with the state, and then, as the state deemed it necessary to separate itself from the actions of the paramilitaries, at least in public, the groups transitioned to existing in a constant motion with private actors and the state. In other words, the existence of paramilitaries relied on the relationship they had with private actors as well as their relationship, more clandestinely as time went on, to the state. Julie Mazzei identifies a triad of forces that come together to provide resources for the emergence of paramilitaries: factions of economic elite who provide finances, training sites, and other organizational and administrative necessities, factions of the political elite who provide the political and legal cover, purpose, and leadership, and factions of military who provide arms training, and leadership.¹² The relationship between these groups and paramilitaries is more clearly understood in this manner as it is sometimes “of the state” and sometimes “not of the state”. A useful addition to this definition is that offered by Edelberto Torres Rivas¹³ when he states that paramilitary groups are ‘military bodies’. Although violence is alluded to in Jones’ definition, it is important that this also be added to the analysis of paramilitaries as their military purpose points to the militarization of society and the involvement of civilians in the armed conflict. It is not solely a war against

11 Jones, Adam. “Parainstitutional Violence in Latin America.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 46, no. 4 (2004): 127–48, 130.

12 Mazzei, Julie. *Death Squads or Self-Defense Forces?: How Paramilitary Groups Emerge and Challenge Democracy in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 22.

13 Torres-Rivas, Edelberto, “Epilogue: Notes on Terror, Violence, Fear, and Democracy”, in *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, eds. Koonings, Kees, and Dirk Kruijt. (London: Zed Books, 2000), 292.

guerrillas, it is a war against anyone, guerrilla or not, who is going against the established social order.

The protection of the established order by those private and state actors through paramilitary violence is thoroughly documented and analyzed in a collection of essays edited by Martha K. Huggins, entitled “Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America”. In this volume, vigilantism is defined as “conservative violence designed to create, maintain, or recreate an established socio-political order.”¹⁴ The analysis places paramilitaries as part of this larger framework of conservative violence against those seemingly not aligned with the established order. It also adds the notion of not just protecting the established order but, perhaps most importantly, ‘creating’ it. As Huggins points out, “it is a direct outgrowth of contemporary state and social organization, which includes Latin American national states’ relationship to, and dependency upon, international capital.”¹⁵ This contribution to understanding paramilitarism is key as it gives a clue as to how to interpret their emergence and their continuation. It also refutes any ‘cultural’ explanations that disregard the concrete historical structures that gave birth to paramilitaries in Latin America.

Much research regarding paramilitarism has focused on counterinsurgency, including parts of this thesis, however, not many researchers have paid attention to the relations between paramilitarism and capital. In her comprehensive work, “Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism”,

14 Huggins, Martha K., ed. *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence*, (New York etc.: Praeger, 1991), 3.

15 Ibid, 14.

Jasmin Hristov points to the centrality of the capitalist system in the emergence and reproduction of paramilitary groups:

“In the case of Colombia, the state outsourced violence by arming civilians for the interest of certain sectors of society, and later on allowed this sector (that is, the economically dominant classes) to create their own armed groups. This is not illogical, since the state is allied with the wealthy classes and the latter in turn have access to political power. After all, as Miliband (1973) powerfully argues, state institutions function to protect and serve capitalist interests. The state’s role is to sustain the current economic order. In an order characterized by class inequality, the state can never be neutral since it prioritizes the interests of one class over another. Right-wing armed groups continue to operate not because the state is willing but unable to eliminate them, rather, the state allows them to exist because this arrangement contributes towards preserving the capitalist system. Hence, paramilitarism is a strategy of the state-capital alliance, rather than the unintended outcome of a state that is incapable of limiting the access of private groups to armed force.”¹⁶

As can be seen, it is extremely crucial to understand the economic function that the paramilitaries serve. To go back to understanding paramilitaries as part of the ‘creation’ of the ‘established order’, these groups have been used to displace and dispossess millions of people from their lands and many of these lands have then translated into the accumulation of capital for the landed elite through the extraction of natural resources and/or the production of raw commodities or food staples. The putting in place of paramilitaries is not only a political and social move, as counterinsurgency approaches clearly show, it is economic as well.

Some authors have described portions of the paramilitary’s economic role. However, they often fall short in the process. Mary Kaldor cited in Adam Jones (2004;130) states that paramilitary groups secure financing “through plunder and black market or through external assistance including illegal trade in arms, drugs or valuable commodities such as oil and diamonds”; Adam Jones then adds “one cannot understand the survival and strategies of right-

¹⁶ Hristov, Jasmin. *Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*. Pluto Press, 2014, 55.

wing paramilitaries in Colombia, for example, without reference to the drugs and other illegal contraband that have long supported their murderous activities.”¹⁷ In these two arguments, the key characteristic pointed out by authors such as Hristov is missing. Although the statements are partly true, cocaine and contraband trafficking play an important role in paramilitary funding activities, it is just as important to point out that without the support and financing from national and transnational ‘legal’ capitalist corporations paramilitaries would not be able to function the way they do in Colombia. The close relationship between corporations and paramilitaries, specifically in Colombia, has been part of the creation and maintenance of the capitalist social, political, and economic order. As shown in chapter 2, be it bananas, petroleum, or carbon, all essential to the global capitalist world market, we see industries involved in the financing of paramilitaries with the final objective of accumulating land and capital.

Paramilitaries then can be more clearly identified as non-static armed groups that move within a certain radius of state control, sometimes closer to it, sometimes further away from it, but always in some relationship to it, a relationship which directly translates to an alliance with the economic elite in their quest to maintain and protect the established order, and within it, the expansion and maintenance of their wealth and privileges. Paramilitaries are political, social, and economic in nature as they seek to get rid, through any means necessary, of everyone perceived to be the enemy. Thus, an incessant war is put in place against guerrillas, but most importantly, against the civil population. It is this war against the civil population that this thesis seeks to historicize and understand.

¹⁷ Jones, Adam. “Parainstitutional Violence in Latin America”, 130.

As previously mentioned, this research interprets the state as a main source of violence against the Colombian civil population. The role of the state in the armed conflict can not be underscored as it is in that amalgamation of power that one finds the political structure for the continuation of systemic violent practices against civilians. In this interpretation, the state plays the fundamental role of being the cohesive element of the contradictions and the division of power in the dominant capitalist mode of production. In other words, the state is given the role of absorbing or ‘cushioning’ the antagonistic economic interests of the different social classes in society.¹⁸ In order to carry out this function, the state has been promoted as being ‘above’ society or above individual and class interests. This has allowed for its continuation through the legitimacy given by society. However, what this thesis seeks to accomplish is to show that the concept of the capitalist state and its development is carried out through violence, Colombia being one of the main exemplary nations for this.

Furthermore, the political function of the state is interpreted as following the interests of the dominant economic class – which at the same time share the state or are the same as the dominant political class. As such, the patterns of violence that will be seen in the following chapters are the means through which these interests have been followed in Colombia. In this way, the predominant role of the state in society in the cohesion of antagonistic interests to achieve an established order follows its determinant role in the social formation, which is the economic realm.¹⁹ As can be seen, this thesis does not follow the traditional interpretation of the modern capitalist state as the place where the materialization of the will or desire of the ‘nation’

18 Poulantzas, Nicos. *Poder Politico y Clases Sociales En El Estado Capitalista*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Ed., 1974, 49.

19 Ibid, 58.

occurs. This erroneous interpretation impedes a true understanding of the reality of the composition and function of the modern capitalist state and its role in the class contradictions present in today's society. By erasing the class character of the state, it becomes almost impossible to associate the state with social classes and class struggle. Instead of viewing workers as the support for capitalist modes of production, they are interpreted as 'individuals-subjects'. For example, it is due to the labor of workers that the capitalist class can generate surplus value. Surplus value being one of the main characteristics of the capitalist mode of production. Without the labor of the worker, in other words, without the worker as a support for the structures set in society, the profits made by capitalists would not exist. However, by making all civilians into 'individuals-subjects' the class character present in the development of the state is erased. In order to comprehend this more deeply, chapter 1 of this thesis allows the reader to comprehend the historical patterns that the Colombian state has followed through the 20th century leading up to the armed conflict and its development. Chapter 2 of this thesis allows the reader to understand how the state has served this economic purpose by enacting laws, passing decrees, displacing millions from their lands, and using paramilitaries to clear all obstacles for the economic interests of the dominant classes. Chapter 3 allows the reader to grasp more fully why and how the state has used its monopoly on violence to rid the country of those not following the order created to protect the economic goals, and therefore the political as well, of the dominant classes through counterinsurgency strategies.

It is important to underline that this thesis does not pretend to explain all expressions of violence in the country. It seeks to understand the patterns and structures that underpin the political and economic violence coming from paramilitaries and the state against the subaltern classes and those seeking a transformation of the established social, political, and economic

order. However, there is a culture of violence that has accompanied almost three generations of Colombians. People find violence everywhere and have learned to respond, interact with, and eventually survive amidst it all. Common robberies and assaults, trivial quarrels which end up in deaths, organized urban crime, and much else is part of what we may call the culture of violence.

What's more, cocaine trafficking seems to be the a priori explanation for all ills in Colombia. One frequently hears the argument that cocaine trafficking violence accounts for most of the violence the Colombian population has suffered. However, as Padre Giraldo points out, many other factors account for the enormous increase in violence during the 1980s and 1990s. Two of the worst years, 1989 and 1990, registered 2,969 "politically motivated murders, not counting deaths in combat between the military and guerrillas". Meanwhile, during the same period, drug related violence resulted in 227 murders.²⁰ What this thesis intends to accomplish is to give a historical record of the factors that are at the root of the Colombian armed conflict, and, therefore, of its prolongation and its escalation in the 1980s through the early 2000s, namely: the privatization of lands through force by paramilitaries and forces of the state for the benefit of transnational and national capital and the creation and support for counterinsurgency doctrines which interpreted all civilians to be 'potential *guerrilleros*' who need to be kept in check. All of those not aligned to the capitalist-right wing order established in the country were treated as the 'internal enemy' that had to be fought against: campesinos, indigenous communities, Afro-Colombian communities, union leaders and members, leftist political parties, grassroots

²⁰ Giraldo, Javier. *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*, 20.

organizations, LGBTQ+ communities, and anyone who sought a change in Colombian society in favor of the masses, in favor of *la gente del común*.

The first chapter provides a brief history of the political and economic violence preceding the decades of our case studies. It also explores and analyzes one of the most used documents in trying to make sense of the subject through statistics, that is the investigation done by the CNMH entitled “¡Basta Ya! Memorias de guerra y dignidad”. This history will help with understanding the patterns of violence against the Colombian population on the part of the state, the paramilitaries, and the role of U.S. imperialist practices, while also exploring the data on the violence caused by guerrillas against the civil population. The latter is important to mention because the armed conflict has also led to many forms of violence coming from the guerrillas against the civil population. However, this type of violence will not be the focus of this thesis as it has been thoroughly documented by many authors and the narrative has been exploited by the elite owned mass media channels in the country, for the exact same reason, namely to protect the established order. Chapters 2 & 3 both contain the cases used to describe the violence against the population of the country. The former lays out some of the cases where transnational corporations have benefited from state and paramilitary terrorism as well as cases where they have been directly involved in said terrorism. The latter will explore the term ‘counterinsurgency’ more in depth and its role in the armed conflict through the violence committed by paramilitaries and their alliances with cocaine traffickers and state security forces through the case of the massacre of Trujillo, Valle del Cauca. Some tentative closing remarks and some thoughts in conversation with the current situation will close this research in Colombia’s still very uneasy existence.

CHAPTER 1: THE BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

The internal war in Colombia has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions displaced. In order to understand this violence, the CNMH was founded in the year 2011 as a government institution in charge of compiling data, analyzing documents, and creating investigative reports about the armed conflict in the country. One of their most important works, *Basta Ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad*,²¹ contains statistics which can be used to begin to understand the multiplicity of violence and the different modalities of violence used by the various actors in the conflict. It estimates that between 1958 and 2012 over 218,094 people were killed in the armed conflict.²² The figure becomes even more gruesome as 81% of all victims during this time were civilians not involved in combat. Additionally, Colombia is the country with the most internally displaced people in the world, surpassing countries such as Sudan in Africa or Iraq in the Middle East, with over 7.7 million internally displaced persons accounted for in 2018, more than the entire population of Costa Rica or El Salvador.²³ This number has increased since.

21 Although many human rights organizations in Colombia agree that the data compiled by the CNMH is of much importance to the understanding of the conflict, some argue that the governmental institution has failed to recognize many of the victims' testimonies and have failed to engage and incorporate them in the interpretations of the conflict.

22 This figure continues to increase as more investigations are conducted. The most recent finding as of March 2021 was through the special court created by the peace agreements in 2016, the Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz. Although previously the General Prosecutor's Office had identified 2,248 cases of extrajudicial executions of civilians presented as guerrilla combatants by the armed forces – known as 'false positives' in the country – from 1988 to 2014, investigation 'Case 003' found that the figure is 6,402 from 2002 to 2008. Some human rights organizations claim the number is closer to 15,000.

23 Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados. "Hay Más Víctimas De Desplazamiento Forzado En Colombia Que Número De Habitantes En Costa Rica." UNHCR.

The situation in Colombia when it comes to displacement is extremely tragic. Although this is a problem that continues until today, even after the 2016 peace accords between the guerrilla group FARC-EP and the government, it isn't a new problem or of just the last decade. According to government statistics, which usually reflect conservative estimates, in just one year, from 1985 to 1986, over 350,000 people were displaced from their lands. From 2001 to 2002, there were over 590,000 displacements.²⁴ This chapter will first delve into the different direct actors in the armed conflict and their roles in the violence experienced by the population through the *Basta Ya!* statistics and will then lay out a history of the armed conflict in Colombia and its different stages, before the contemporary expressions of violence and through the beginning of the 21st century. It will also explore the continuous role and the effects that U.S. imperialist practices have had in the country throughout the 20th century.

The unspeakable acts of horror which the Colombian population has had to endure for decades has come at the hands of different direct actors in the conflict. The state through its repression apparatuses such as the military, the police, and intelligence agencies, the paramilitaries working in conjunction with the institutions of the state as well as their alliances with cocaine trafficking cartels, and the different guerrilla organizations spread throughout the country. Much of the violence related to the armed conflict has been perpetrated in rural areas of the country; 87% of all displacements have occurred in rural areas.²⁵ This has added a dimension of invisibility and insensibility on the part of the majority of Colombians living in the main urban

24 Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas. *Informe Nacional de Desplazamiento Forzado en Colombia 1985-2012*. (Bogotá: Junio, 2013).

25 *Una nación Desplazada: Informe Nacional Del Desplazamiento Forzado En Colombia*. Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2015, 16.

centers. Although they are aware of the violence that has ravaged the country, as they have also lived the effects of state repression and have faced every day insecurity such as the common violence present in all of the cities, most aren't aware of the extent, the history, and the nature of the violence experienced by rural communities.

The data collected in the *Basta Ya!* report reflects how the different actors in the war have tried to attain their political and economic goals. Although this thesis will focus on paramilitary and state violence against civilians, one can not ignore the violence that has resulted from an armed conflict of over six decades involving guerrilla warfare. The continued forms of violent repression by the state gave birth to different guerrilla organizations in the mid-20th century that responded to the violence by taking up arms to protect themselves but also as an attempt to participate in the political process. As will be explored below, the subaltern classes of the country were closed off from participating in the political process through different methods, pushing many to consider the armed struggle as the only way to participate in building a different society.

The guerrillas have used different tactics that have also caused displacements and violence against civilians. Through most of the contemporary armed conflict, the guerrillas perpetrated crimes aimed mostly at large landowners, the commercial bourgeoisie, and multinationals. Especially during the late 90s and early 2000s though, the expansion of the armed conflict also led to an increased number of victims of the guerrillas. This is especially true in the case of attacks against private property. Out of a total of 5,138 cases identified by the *Basta Ya!* report, 84.1% can be attributed to guerrillas. Although these types of attacks were mainly against local and regional elites and their properties, as the conflict swelled there were also some indiscriminate attacks to property regardless of social class. This is also true in the cases when

attacks included explosives in public spaces resulting in harm to citizens, especially after the mid 1990's. Out of a total of 95 such cases identified by the report, 82% can be attributed to guerrillas. Additionally, the guerrillas used a widespread tactic of placing landmines in the countryside which has left a deep wound in Colombian society, causing over 2,000 deaths throughout the armed conflict. Kidnapping was another tactic used mostly by guerrillas. It is noteworthy that the later stages of the conflict, after the 1990's, were marked by a more indiscriminate use of such violence. From 1970 to 2010 there were a total of 27,023 victims of kidnapping of which 90% can be attributed to guerrillas.²⁶

The paramilitaries, as well as the armed forces of the state by their explicit and implicit participation or omission of information, participated in some of the most gruesome atrocities experienced by the Colombian population. Their most used tactics were those of selective assassinations, massacres, and torture. It is estimated that in the years 1981-2012 there were over 150,000 victims of assassinations, however, in only 9.8% of the cases has the Registro Unico de Victimas (RUV) been able to identify the assailant. In the registry of the CNMH, there are a total of 23,161 targeted assassinations out of which 38.4% can be attributed to paramilitaries, 27.7% to unidentified armed groups, 16.8% to guerrillas, 10.1% to the military or police, and 6.5% to unknown assailants. These numbers are somewhat misleading though as paramilitaries had confessed over 25,757 homicides by December 2012.²⁷ Also misleading is the figure attributed to the military or the police, as UN Special Rapporteur Phillip Alston stated that the impunity

²⁶ However, the term 'kidnapping' does not include 'arbitrary detentions' by the police, intelligence agencies, and armed forces, a form of 'kidnapping' carried out by the repression apparatus of the state and a key tactic in counterinsurgency practices since the 1970's. Many of those 'arbitrary detentions' by the state ended in forced disappearances. One of the first reported cases by the CNMH was that of Omaira Montoya, a leftist leader disappeared in Barranquilla by state forces on September 9th, 1977.

²⁷ *¡Basta Ya!: Colombia: Memorias De Guerra y Dignidad*, 32.

rate in cases of assassinations by security forces of the state was nearly 98.5%.²⁸ The massacres that occurred²⁹ in rural communities in Colombia during this time were mostly perpetrated by paramilitaries, once again with explicit or implicit participation of the armed forces. From 1980 until 2012, the CNMH recorded 1,982 massacres³⁰. Of these, 58.9% are attributed to paramilitaries, 7.9% to state armed forces, 17.3% to guerrillas, and 14.8% to unidentified armed groups. However, the report itself states that outside of the 7.9% attributed to state armed forces, presumed responsibility of state armed forces is also associated with the paramilitaries through omission of information, convenience, and logistical support for the massacres carried out.³¹ The connection between paramilitaries and the state during this time is unassailable. In a free confession on February 25th, 2009, one of the main leaders of the paramilitary group AUC, Salvatore Mancuso, stated that the maximum commander of said group, Carlos Castaño, was always very clear about the pressures the paramilitaries had coming from ‘above’. The “upper ranks” of the military were pressuring them to not leave dead bodies behind that could eventually be counted and augment the numbers. The bodies had to be disposed of in order not to ever be found, especially when carrying out massacres and assassinations in areas where the military was

28 *Deuda Con La Humanidad 2: 23 Años De Falsos Positivos*, Bogotá: Banco de Datos CINEP, 2011, 7.

29 These massacres in rural areas have not stopped as of March 2021. In the year 2020, the UN confirmed 76 massacres throughout the country. The majority of victims have been ex combatants of the demobilized FARC, community leaders, union leaders, and human rights defenders. January 2021 continued this trend with more than 12 massacres. Since the ‘peace agreements in 2016, Human Rights Watch has recorded the assassinations of 261 FARC ex-combatants and over 400 human rights defenders and community leaders.

30 The exact number of massacres occurred in the country during this time is still inconclusive. In another report, the same institution, the CNMH, reported 2,505 massacres during the period of 1982-2007.

31 *¡Basta Ya!: Colombia: Memorias De Guerra y Dignidad*, 47.

present.³² As a consequence, it is extremely difficult to gather figures and the attribution of massacres and assassinations by paramilitaries and armed forces.

The use of cruelty and torture was also a widespread tactic used by paramilitaries and the repression apparatus of the state. As the cases of study in this thesis will show, some of the cruelest practices one can think of were perpetrated against civilians in the framework of ‘counterinsurgency’ tactics. Beheading, the dismembering of victims while they are alive, evisceration while alive, castration, and burning with acid were all employed. The report found that 63% of cases of torture were perpetrated by paramilitaries, 21.4% by unknown assailants, 9.7% by the armed forces, and 5.1% by guerrillas. However, the extent of the use of torture is also hard to measure in the Colombian armed conflict. Most recently, Salvatore Mancuso began to reveal the Nazi practice of the usage of crematory furnaces to torture and disappear their victims.³³

To understand the contemporary dynamics of the armed conflict in Colombia though, one must analyze the historical circumstances which underpin the violence of the period studied. As one can see by the report, the 20th century was a period filled with violence in Colombia, with the violence in the earlier part of the century having many of the same characteristics of the violence suffered by the population in the late 20th century, albeit under more developed structures and with added actors. There is a continuity of violence enacted by the elite ruling classes of the country in their different forms, landowners, large business owners, and

32 Cote Lozano, Jhoan Sebastián. “Hornos Crematorios De Las AUC, El Capítulo De Horror Del Que Quiere Hablar Mancuso.” *El Espectador*, February 16, 2021.

33 Redacción Judicial. “Los Hornos Del Horror En El Catatumbo.” *El Espectador*, May 9, 2009.

transnational corporations, including cocaine traffickers in the late 20th century, amalgamated in the power of the state, who have used official institutions, such as the military and the police, to privatize land, accumulate capital, and maintain the status quo in the country. U.S. imperialist policies have also added to the violence through ‘counterinsurgency’ strategies as well as their implicit and explicit cooperation with the military, police, intelligence units, and paramilitaries. The contemporary expressions of this violence, which can be said to have begun in the early years of the 20th century, were met by organized armed resistance starting in the 1950’s through self-defense *campesino* associations which led to the creation of the FARC-EP, as well as other armed insurgencies such as the ELN and EPL, responding to state violence, imperialism, and domination by the elite ruling class. The multiplicity of violent actors, military, police, paramilitary associations, cocaine traffickers, and guerrilla organizations led to a multiplication of the violence experienced by the Colombian population.

The privatization of land was a main conditioning of this violence. During the late 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century, the Colombian agrarian frontier was being expanded by *colonos*. These were campesinos leaving the highlands due to economic hardships or political tensions in search of vacant land (*terrenos baldíos*), mostly in the temperate areas and lowlands, to cultivate their own crops and establish their homes. Until 1850, 75% of the Colombian territory was considered uninhabited public land.³⁴ The national government passed several laws that in theory were meant to benefit the colonos, that is, to obtain titles to the vacant lands they had occupied and cultivated. However, in practice, very few colonos received titles to their lands. By 1917, outside of the coffee region of Antioquia and Caldas, only 638 families

34 LeGrand, Catherine. "Colonization and violence in Colombia: perspectives and debates." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue Canadienne Des études Latino-américaines Et Caraïbes* 14, no. 28 (1989): 5-29, 6.

received titles to the lands they had opened for cultivation and habitation.³⁵ The lack of land titles on the part of the campesinos meant that these newly opened lands, ready for production, were of great interest to investors looking to expand their enterprise, obtain a workforce, and benefit from the incorporation of Colombia to the export market that had occurred in the late 19th century. As historian Catherine Legrand points out, this is exactly what occurred; from 1827 until 1931, 84% of all concessions of land were granted to haciendas of 500 or more hectares.³⁶ The colonos that were living on these lands were either turned into tenants or salaried workers of large landholdings, or were simply kicked out of the lands by local and regional authorities. The dynamic between colonos looking for independence on vacant lands and capitalists looking for productive lands and an agricultural workforce led to a series of conflicts that began in these early years of the 20th century and continued for the remaining decades.

Similarly, the late 1910s and 1920s were marked by repression against any form of protest on the part of the working and campesino class, as well as by the beginning stages of the consolidation of U.S. dominance in Colombia. Various incidents occurred in which local authorities shot and killed or injured several protesters in different cities such as Cartagena and Bogota during the years of 1918-1919. On the 7th and 8th of January of 1918, laborers from the Cartagena-Calamar railroad petitioned an increase of their salaries and a reduction of the working day from the U.S. corporation, the United Fruit Company (UFCO).³⁷ Five laborers were killed by the police in these strikes and the city of Cartagena was put under a State of Siege, the

35 LeGrand, Catherine. *Colonización y Protesta Campesina En Colombia (185-1950)*. Translated by Hernando Valencia G. Bogotá, Colombia: Empresa Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1988, 58.

36 Ibid., 79.

37 Loruy Flórez, María Bernarda. "La Protesta Popular En Cartagena 1900-1920" *El Taller de la Historia* 3, no. 3 (October 2011): 85–108, 100.

first of its kind in the history of the country; this response set the precedent for the UFCO massacre 10 years later.³⁸ In Bogota, on the 16th of March of 1919, 10 artisans, one of the predominant professions in the city at the time, were killed by the military and the Presidential Guard during a march in the city's center; 50 more would be wounded and 300 arrested. Even during these times, the Colombian government blamed these deaths on “anarchists and socialists attempting to take over the Presidential Palace”,³⁹ much before any socialist guerrilla forces were formed. The repression against any form of civil protest during this time marked the beginning stages of the idea of an ‘internal enemy’ which had to be combatted with violence; an idea which permeated Colombian society during the 20th century, championed by U.S. expansion in the latter part of the century, and meant the legitimization of the use of violence by the state and paramilitary forces against civilians.

It was also during this decade that Colombia established its longest lasting foreign policy, which could be argued lasted all throughout the 20th century and is still in effect today.

Conservative President Marco Fidel Suarez (1918-1921) coined the phrase *Respice Polum* (“To look to the North”) in an effort to emphasize the importance of U.S. influence in the country. In his personal writings he wrote:

“I dared to say that Colombia should embrace as its international theme of conduct the phrase ‘to look to the North’, referring to the U.S., whose relations must be for us the first and one of the most attended to, for evident reasons.”⁴⁰

38 Colombia. Ministerio de Gobierno. “Memoria Del Ministro De Gobierno Al Congreso De 1918.” Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1919, xx.

39 Vega Cantor, Renán. “La Masacre Artesanal Del 16 De Marzo De 1919 En Bogotá.”

40 Suárez Marco Fidel. *Sueños De Luciano Pulgar*. Bogotá: Ediciones de la Revista Bolivar, 1954.

In tandem, the U.S. dollar became the dominant currency guiding Colombia's economy. The country experienced an increasing presence of the United States in terms of private investments in industries such as mining, petroleum extraction, and banana production. From 1913 to 1929, U.S. private investments increased by 12,927% in Colombia, compared to a 2,605% increase in Chile and a 350% increase in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole.⁴¹ The increasing presence of the U.S. also came through government commissioned 'diplomatic economic missions' to 'modernize' the country. During this decade – from 1923 to 1929 – Edwin Walter Kemmerer from Princeton University worked as an advisor from the IMF in the Andean countries of South America. His recommendations, and the easiness with which they were accepted by the Colombian ruling elite, would be key in cementing Colombian dependency on the U.S. by allowing a much easier access to U.S. capital and goods in exchange for an almost complete dependence on the U.S. for capitalist development in Colombia. Transnational corporations benefitted right away as a result of these policies. By the late 1920's, roughly half of all the banana lands in Colombia and a lion's share of its sales were controlled by the UFCO and around half of all U.S. direct investments were in the petroleum industry, which ended the decade accounting for 20% of exports for the country.⁴² These economic changes would go hand in hand with an extreme repression of the labor movement, most markedly in the banana producing and distributing sector.

The 1920s ended with the passage of the 'Ley Heroica' or Law 69 on October of 1928 which limited the freedom of assembly and expression and gave the government the power to

41 Drake, Paul W. 1979. "The origins of United States economic supremacy in South America: Colombia's Dance of the Millions, 1923-33" Working paper 40, Latin American Program, The Wilson Center, Washington, D.C., 8.

42 Ibid., 19.

repress in case people became involved in protests that “violate the laws that regulate them” and against those who promoted “the abolition of private property” and/or the “institution of the family”. Anyone guilty of these “crimes”, “be it through discourses, screams or threats in public spaces or with writing or copies...” would be prosecuted. The effects were immediately felt by labor movements throughout the country. On the 5th and 6th of December of the same year, the Colombian military opened fire against over 3,000 laborers who were protesting in the town of Cienaga, in the Santa Marta region, which was part of the banana production area that had been received by UFCO thanks to the Kemmerer Mission. The protest was against low wages and the working conditions on the United Fruit Company controlled plantations. The exact number of workers killed by this act of state terror is unknown however, at least 1,000 protestors were killed during those two days. In a telegram dated 5th of December of 1928, the ambassador from the U.S. in Colombia at the time, Jeffrey Caffery, was proud to communicate to the State Department that the Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs had ensured him that they would be sending additional troops to give “adequate protection to American interests involved.”⁴³ The ambassador went as far as calling on the U.S. to send a warship to stand by in order to protect United Fruit Co. investments. After the massacre, the ambassador reported: “I have the honor to report that the Bogota representative of the United Fruit Company told me yesterday that the total number of strikers killed by the Colombian military exceeds one thousand.”⁴⁴

The following decade was characterized by an even deeper dominance of U.S. economic interests over Colombia. The 1930’s began with the election of Liberal President Enrique Olaya

43 Telegram from Jefferson Caffrey to Secretary of State of United States. December 6th, 1928. Santa Marta. Original document in appendix A.

44 Telegram from Jefferson Caffrey to Secretary of State of United States. No. 71. January 16th, 1929. Bogotá. Original document in appendix B.

Herrera, previous ambassador to the United States during the 1920's. This was a shift in Colombian politics, giving birth to what is known as the Liberal Republic. Conservatives had been in power since the end of the 1800's. After meetings in Washington D.C. with the Secretary of Treasury at the time and petroleum tycoon, Andrew W. Mellon, Olaya's pro-U.S. administration was in charge of consolidating the Barco Concession, one of the largest land concessions for petroleum extraction at the time, an estimated one million acres to the Gulf Oil Company, of which Andrew Mellon was one of the founders and largest stakeholders.⁴⁵ President Olaya affirmed that his visit to the U.S. included conversations with Secretary of State Andrew Mellon who assured him that conceding the Barco Concession to U.S. petroleum companies would guarantee several opportunities for Colombia's 'economic progress' and its financial restoration.⁴⁶ The concession quickly translated to a loan from the National City Bank of New York to the Colombian government. In 1936, the Gulf Oil Company sold the concession for \$10-15 million dollars to Socony-Vacuum – part of Standard Oil of New Jersey, owned by the Rockefellers – and Texaco. Not only did the concession mostly benefit North American corporations and further increase the dependency of the Colombian government on the U.S. for development, but it also included the displacement of indigenous communities in the Catatumbo region and repression and exploitation of the workers of the refineries.⁴⁷

Between 1938 and 1939, a 400 km. pipeline was constructed by the North American petroleum corporations through indigenous territory in the region. On November 13th, 1939, Life

45 "U.S. Business Opens the Great New Barco Oil Fields in Colombia." *Life Magazine* 7, no. 20, November 13, 1939, 16.

46 Cantor Renán Vega, and Peña Aguilera Mario. *Obreros, Colonos y Motilones: Una Historia Social De La Concesión Barco, 1930-1960*. Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia: Fedepetrol, 1995, 106.

47 *Ibid.*, 124.

Magazine proudly wrote about how the builders of the Barco pipeline, all in the hands of U.S. companies, had to fight off ‘Motilone Indians’, “... probably the most unfriendly savages in the Western hemisphere”⁴⁸ hinting to the violence and displacement of the indigenous population in the Catatumbo region when U.S. interests started operations on their territory. As cited by Renan Vega, a publication in the North American newspaper, “The Tropical Sun”, even suggested attacking the Motilones with asphyxiating gases and explosives.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the area was then populated with Colombian workers of the petroleum companies supervised by North Americans, giving rise to towns such as Tibú and El Tarra in Norte Santander. The whole area of the Barco Concession was controlled by the U.S. petroleum companies, with little to no state infrastructure in place for the communities. Homes began being constructed by the workers throughout the hills of the concession, only to be removed later by the U.S companies. In an interview in 1989, Sebastian Lopez, an ex-laborer in the area since 1938, stated: “The times came to an extreme when [workers] would make their homes to survive, with six or even eight children, there in Tibú, and the next day from 7 am until later, the small homes would start falling, being demolished by tractors and then came fires.”⁵⁰

Arbitrary labor conditions were also put in place by the foreign companies. The working day began at 5 am and ended at 6 pm with a 15-minute break for a lunch in the middle of the day; a lunch which the workers described as not even apt for pigs, many times full of worms. The companies also fired any workers who dared to ask for better wages and – even more so –

48 “U.S. Business Opens the Great New Barco Oil Fields in Colombia.” *Life Magazine* 7, no. 20, November 13, 1939, 16.

49 Cantor Renán Vega, and Peña Aguilera Mario. *Obreros, Colonos y Motilones*, 49.

50 Asociación para la promoción social alternativa minga & fundación progresar (2008). Memoria: *Puerta a la esperanza. Violencia sociopolítica en Tibú y el Tarra Región del Catatumbo 1998–2005*, 32.

any workers who began unionizing or organizing.⁵¹ This type of exploitation and repression tells a long story of how much control U.S. companies had over Colombian territory and workers.

Furthermore, U.S. control in Colombia was not only manifested through territorial concessions during this time. Starting in the 1940s, during the years of World War II, the FBI had complete access to all the secret archives held by the Colombian police and any information held by the national government regarding national security. The U.S. also sent secret agents of the military as “consul assistants” who used airplanes of the private petroleum companies Socony Vacuum and Tropical Oil Company to patrol the Colombian plains.⁵² On June 9th, 1942, in a letter to the Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War at the time, wrote that there existed a gentleman’s agreement between the United States and Colombia by which the U.S. Army and the Marine had ample authorization to operate on Colombian territory and in Colombian waters without a special permit.⁵³ The ‘gentleman’s agreement’ was a secret agreement between the Colombian president, Eduardo Santos, and the U.S., with no prior knowledge by the Colombian congress. Ambassador Spruille Braden believed Colombian cooperation needed to be acknowledged and compensated for, as no other nation in the continent had been as cooperative during this time. This led to the approval of a request by the Colombian president of a sixteen-million-dollar loan, in addition to giving the Colombian military 10 coastguard ships, 60 to 80 war airplanes, 50 thousand rifles, and enough ammunition to increase

51 Cantor Renán Vega, and Peña Aguilera Mario. *Obreros, Colonos y Motilones*, 268.

52 Galvis, Silvia, and Alberto Donadio. *Colombia Nazi 1939 - 1945; Espionaje alemán, La cacería Del FBI, Santos, López y Los Pactos Secretos*. Medellín, Colombia: Hombre Nuevo Ed, 2002, 73-74.

53 Ibid, 85.

the armed forces of the country from 11,000 to 15,000.⁵⁴ It was during these years that Colombia entered one of its bloodiest period, what is commonly known as *La Violencia* (1946-1964).

Many different interpretations exist regarding this period. Historian David Bushnell interpreted *La Violencia* as based on historical party rivalries; Bushnell states: “there is, then, good reason to regard the inherited partisan rivalry of liberals and conservatives as the most important single cause of *La Violencia*.”⁵⁵ Although historical rivalries did exist between the two parties, the Conservatives going as far as creating civilian militias known as ‘pajaros’ or ‘Chulavitas’ to target sympathizers of the Liberal party, different Colombian historians such as Jairo Estrada Alvarez and Renan Vega Cantor have noted that the period of *La Violencia* encompassed great economic changes in the nation which are usually ignored by treating the period as one of interparty violence between Liberals and Conservatives. According to this view, the elites of the country imposed new methods of social control and ended labor and campesino movements that had been established in the decades prior, such as the Gaitanismo movement, put in motion by the ‘radical’ liberal politician Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, assassinated on April 9th, 1948.⁵⁶ According to historian Gonzalo Sanchez, Gaitanismo was the force that brought together and to the public arena many of the subaltern voices at the time. The multiplication of these voices in the previous years was a key reason for the escalation of violence against Colombia’s

54 Ibid, 305.

55 Bushnell, David. *The Making of Modern Colombia: a Nation in Spite of Itself*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2003, 206.

56 Estrada, Jairo. “Acumulación capitalista, dominación de clase y subversión. Elementos para una interpretación histórica del conflicto social y armado.” *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia: Comisión de Historia del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*. Bogotá: Ediciones Desde Abajo, 302.

working class, especially in the countryside.⁵⁷ It was also during this period of *La Violencia* that the Colombian population changed drastically from being mostly a rural population to an urban one. According to government statistics, in the year 1938 Colombia's rural population was 70.9%, in 1951 61.1%, and in 1964 it was only 47.2%.⁵⁸ This shift came as the result of an unprecedented period of violence in which well over 200,000 people were killed, two million displaced, and 390,000 plots of land abandoned in the country, in less than 20 years.⁵⁹ The violence experienced in the rural areas went hand in hand with an increasing privatization of land; between 1931 and 1945 there was an average privatization of 148,263 acres per year, from 1946 to 1954 this figure increased to 370,658, and finally from 1955-1959 the average privatization of land per year was 926,645 acres.⁶⁰

In the Department of the Valle del Cauca, the perpetrated violence and privatization led to the formation of a new agricultural-proletariat, made up of peasants who were forced to abandon their lands, and, then, found themselves working for the large sugar latifundios or *ingenios* as they are known in the country. Transnational capital also benefitted from the displacement of campesinos in the Valle del Cauca. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the North American giant, Nestle, with its Colombian subsidiary, CICOLAC, was granted plots of land to establish their milk industry in the town of Bugalagrande, in the north of the Department, while also monopolizing the milk industry in the area. Horrible massacres occurred in the towns

57 Sánchez Gómez Gonzalo. *Guerra y política En La Sociedad Colombiana*. Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 1991.

58 Giraldo, Javier. "Aportes sobre el origen del conflicto armado en Colombia, su persistencia y sus impactos." *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia: Comisión de Historia del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*. Bogotá: Ediciones Desde Abajo, 434.

59 Ibid, 15.

60 LeGrand, Catherine. "Colonization and violence in Colombia: perspectives and debates", 13.

surrounding the new transnational enterprise such as in Barragan, Betania, and Ceilán. Many of the families living on self-sustainable farms were massacred in these towns, their homes burnt to the ground, and then the lands were sold to cattle farmers, who sold their produce to the newly established Nestle-Cicolac multinational.⁶¹

Furthermore, in the year 1957 the Frente Nacional (1957-1974) was created by the elite ruling class of Colombia, a political agreement between the Liberal Party and the Conservative party by which they agreed to alternate presidential power as well as to distribute parliamentary positions among the two parties. The Frente Nacional has traditionally been interpreted as the agreement that brought the ‘interparty’ violence occurring in the country during *La Violencia* to an end. However, a more detailed look shows how it “officially” shut off from Colombian politics any alternative movements, while at the same time the exclusion and violence against campesinos and workers continued. In the wake of continued fierce repression in the 1940s through the 1960s, land concentration in the hands of large landowners accelerated. By 1960, around 75% of rural land belonged to latifundios of 50 hectares – 123 acres – or larger.⁶²

Simultaneously to the Frente Nacional, an extremely limited agrarian reform was put forth by President Alberto Lleras Camargo – the first president of the Frente Nacional – and a small minority in the Liberal party through Law 135 of 1961. The reform, one of the first to be part of the ‘Alliance for Progress’ initiatives in Latin America by the Kennedy administration to contain the advancement of ‘communism’ in the region, was created with no participation from those who would supposedly benefit from it. Although the law was pushed by a minority of

61 Aprile-Gnisset, Jacques. *Urbanización y Violencia En El Valle*. 2nd ed. Cali, Colombia: Programa Editorial Universidad del Valle, 2017, 113-116.

62 United Nations Program for Development. *Colombia rural. Razones para la esperanza. Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2011*. Bogotá: UNHDI-UNPD, September, 2011, 221.

Liberals who saw the agrarian problem as the main problem in the country, no campesinos took part in the creation of the law and only a few benefitted from it.⁶³ The law was ultimately overturned by the Acuerdo de Chicora in 1972 and subsequent laws in 1973 and 1975, in which members of government, large landowners, and other members of the ruling class stopped any attempts to redistribute land by making sharecropping a legitimate form of production. This act would guarantee that large landowners would not be subjected to the redistribution of their landholdings.⁶⁴ According to Mariano Arango, from 1962 to 1982 out of the 800,000 rural families with no ownership of land in the agricultural census of 1970 a maximum of only 62,851 families or 7.9% obtained any land.⁶⁵ The result of this historical exclusion, as well as the violence, against the rural population was the creation of autonomous enclaves of campesinos or what are commonly, and perhaps erroneously, known as ‘independent republics’ in areas such as Marquetalia, Tolima and others of the Upper Magdalena Valley to protect themselves against military attacks. During this time, the U.S. government actively recommended to the Colombian government to establish paramilitary forces.

In February of 1962, a special survey team from the Army Special Warfare Center in Fort Bragg, led by General William Yarborough headed to Colombia to make a set of recommendations following their survey work in the country. The recommendations of the survey team included psychological warfare operations in which the U.S. Army would participate together with the Colombian Army, selecting and training military as well as civilian

63 Ibid., pg 222

64 Fajardo, Dario. “Estudio sobre los orígenes del conflicto social armado, razones para su persistencia y sus efectos más profundos en la sociedad colombiana.” *Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia: Comisión de Historia del Conflicto y sus Víctimas*. Bogotá, 2015: Ediciones Desde Abajo, 389.

65 Ibid, 388.

personnel for clandestine operations in the country, and paramilitary or terrorist activities against suspected “communist” proponents. Specifically, in regards to this last point, the document states: “It should be backed by the United States.”⁶⁶ Such recommendations were carried out by the Colombian government, going as far as bombing the campesino population of Marquetalia in the year 1964, in what is known as “Operación Marquetalia”, leading to the creation of the self-defense guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). A U.S. Army telegram sent from the Bogota embassy shows how much involvement the U.S. had in this bombing, coordinating the helicopters sent from the U.S. for the attack as well as coordinating the psychological and ground operations carried out by the Colombian armed forces in Marquetalia.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the creation of a modern paramilitary force was expanded by the Colombian government. A National Committee of Military Civic Action was tied to groups of armed peasants established by the military to maintain direct control over rural areas. Networks of clandestine civilian informants in rural areas were also established who were in direct contact with the paramilitary groups and the military, especially the Military Intelligence Battalion. Further, Decree 3398 of 1965 allowed the Colombian government to use all civilians for military endeavors, just as had been proposed by the Yarborough mission. This decree was turned into law, Law 48 of 1968, making the paramilitary death squads a permanent part of Colombian society.

66 Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Meetings and Memoranda. Special Group (CI): Subjects: Fort Bragg team visit to Colombia, March 1962, Secret Supplement, pg. 36. Accessed at: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKNSF/319/JFKNSF-319-003>

67 Embassy Bogota to Department of State, Telegram 715, May 8, 1964. Original document available in Appendix C. Accessed at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20030429155223/http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/lazodearborn8may1964.htm>

The actions of the Colombian government, strategized and propelled by the U.S., in Marquetalia in the 1960's, as well as the language employed in the Yarborough recommendations, created in Colombia a formal concept of an 'internal enemy' that needed to be subdued by force through counterinsurgency strategies. Thus, out of a total of 196 months of the Frente Nacional, 126 months were spent in a State of Siege, granting the military special powers to 'guarantee the security of the nation'. However, this "security" translated into daily deaths of union leaders, workers, students, and peasants – almost one every 24 hours during the Frente Nacional. As documented by the "Comite de Solidaridad con los Presos Politicos", the number of deaths and disappeared during this time may never be known due to the number of 'anonymous deaths' that occurred during the 16 years of the bipartisan agreement.⁶⁸ The 'internal' enemy, in the country commonly referred to as 'subversives', manifested itself ever more presently after the end of the Frente Nacional.

The number of protests increased to numbers never reached in contemporary Colombian history, from 1975 until September of 1977 there were 1,696 protests, with 1975 showing the highest number of manifestations. Only accounting for the union sector there were 182,763 strikers in 1975, 103,450 in 1976, and 187,349 up to September 1977.⁶⁹ The protests ultimately led to a national civic strike on September 14th, 1977, composed of salaried workers, unions, students, leftist political parties, urban dwellers, peasants, and indigenous populations.

68 Villegas Arango, Jorge, and Gerardo Rivas Moreno. *Libro Negro De La represión, 1958-1980*. Bogotá, Colombia: Fundación para la Investigación y la Cultura, 1980, 23.

69 Archila Neira, Mauricio. "El Paro Civico Nacional Del 14 De Septiembre De 1977. Un Ejercicio De Memoria Colectiva." *Revista de Economía Institucional* 18, no. 35 (2016): 313–18, 315.

The unparalleled participation of millions of Colombians in the strike alarmed the repression apparatus of the state. Within one year of the national civic strike, on September 6th, 1978, Decree 1923 also known as the “Estatuto de Seguridad” or “Security Statute” was put in place by President Julio Cesar Turbay. The Estatuto de Seguridad resembled the ‘Ley Heroica’ of the 1920’s by limiting freedoms of expression and manifestation, however, it additionally followed the Yarborough recommendations of militarizing social conflicts and gave the military judicial powers resembling those of the Southern Cone during the military dictatorships of the 70’s and 80’s. Although the Estatuto de Seguridad was derogated in 1982, Law 48 of 1968, which established the foundations for paramilitary groups, was still in effect until 1989.

Additionally, the late 1970’s and the following decades were characterized by the full incorporation of Colombia into the international economy of cocaine trafficking. This pushed the Colombian conflict and violence to unprecedented levels; if the 1960’s and 1970’s were characterized by widespread levels of resistance from the Colombian subaltern classes, the following years were characterized by a new wave of state repressive actions through the military with the Estatuto de Seguridad and through paramilitary organizations funded by members of the elite class and a booming cocaine trafficking economy. In the year 1981, the organization MAS (Muerte a Secuestradores) was created by drug traffickers, landowners, and businessmen from the Middle Magdalena region to advance and protect their economic interests in the area. This organization was also tied to the state and to international corporations.

In 1982, the Bárbula Battalion and Capitan Oscar de Jesús Echandía of the armed forces met with regional elites of the Puerto Boyacá region, including representatives from the Texas Petroleum Company, in order to carry out the plans stated in the Yarborough mission and subsequent paramilitary planning in conjunction with the MAS. The money came from cocaine

traffickers, landowners, and other businessmen, and was used to support the military to carry out its “cleansing” tactics against anyone suspected of being a subversive or a “communist proponent”. Among the paramilitaries trained by the military through the MAS were the Castaño brothers who years later became the leaders of the largest paramilitary group in the nation, the AUC.⁷⁰ The creation of the MAS was the beginning of a new wave of paramilitary groups that became prominent all over the country in the 1980s and resulted in a further deterioration of the nation’s situation.

After the failed peace agreements of La Uribe with the FARC-EP in 1984, the paramilitary groups gained new strength through their alliance with cocaine traffickers and began an all-out war against the civil population who were labeled as ‘subversives in civilian clothes’. Following the MAS, paramilitary groups such as Muerte a Abigeos (MAOS), Castigo a Firmantes o Intermediarios Estafadores (CAFIES), Los Tangueros, Autodefensas del Magdalena Medio, Los Carranceros, Autodefensas del Cesar, among many others began their ‘cleansing’ activities alongside the military and the national police. It was not until 1989 through decree 1194 that the Colombian government declared paramilitaries illegal, however, by this time hundreds of paramilitary groups had been created. During the presidency of Barco Vargas from 1986-1990, at least 200 paramilitary organizations had been identified in the country.⁷¹

In one concrete case, Los Tangueros, a cocaine trafficking paramilitary group headed by the Castaño brothers out of their hacienda of ‘Las Tangas’, were trained by members of the military on how to shoot, make bombs, and ambush enemies. On January 14th, 1990, this group

70 *Colombia's Killer Networks: The Military-Paramilitary Partnership and the United States*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996. Accessed at: <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1996/killer2.htm#26>

71 Velásquez Rivera, Edgar de Jesús. Historia del paramilitarismo en Colombia. *História*, v. 26, no. 1, (São Paulo: 2007), 134-153, 139.

massacred 42 people in the town of Pueblo Bello, Urabá, which caused a massive exodus from this area. The empty lands were then bought by the cocaine trafficking paramilitaries.⁷² This dynamic was repeated in many regions and as a result made cocaine traffickers some of the largest landowners in the country. The massive displacement by cocaine trafficking paramilitary groups or paramilitaries with links to cocaine traffickers resulted in a transfer of lands to these groups making them part of the landowning elite. It was a type of counter agrarian reform. According to *El Tiempo*, government estimates concluded that in the 1980's and 1990's cocaine traffickers became owners of at least 5% of the exploitable land in the country, with some estimates arguing it was at least double that amount.⁷³

U.S. foreign policy during this time also had detrimental effects in the country, adding to the violence during the armed conflict. In their search for the leader of the Medellin Cartel, Pablo Escobar, a special Task Force made up of a secret Delta Force of the U.S. Army, Navy Seals, DEA, and clandestine intelligence operations team, trained the Bloque de Búsqueda (Search Block) of the National Police from 1989-1993. During this time, the Search Block worked together with the paramilitary group Los Pepes (Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar), also created by one of the Castaño brothers, Fidel Castaño, to capture Escobar. As unclassified documents of the U.S. government show, before Escobar's killing by the Search Block in 1993, the U.S. was already aware that intelligence was being shared by the Search Block with Los Pepes.⁷⁴

⁷² *War without Quarter: Colombia and International Humanitarian Law*. New York : Human Rights Watch, 1998. Accessed at: https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/reports98/colombia/Colom989-04.htm#P1112_256775

⁷³ Redacción *el tiempo*. "El Narcotráfico Tiene Más De Un Millón De Hectáreas De Tierra, Dice La Contraloría." *El Tiempo*. n.d.

⁷⁴ Directorate of Intelligence, "Alliances of military convenience", Latin American Military Issues, number 3, March 1993, CIA Declassification FOIA, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 243, Washington D.C.

Additional investigations have shown that the cooperation between the Search Block and Los Pepes went much further than just sharing intelligence. They also benefitted from the training by the Delta Force as the strategies used by the paramilitaries resembled those being taught in secret to the police. Witnesses indicated that not only were the police and Los Pepes carrying out joint operations but that it was Los Pepes giving the orders instead of the police. There was also explicit cooperation between the U.S. forces in Colombia and Los Pepes as Delta Force members were actively participating in many of these joint operations with the Search Block in addition to many DEA members of the group going as far as declaring themselves “admirers of Los Pepes”.⁷⁵

These alliances had long lasting consequences on the Colombian population by further increasing the reach of paramilitary groups in virtually every region of the country. Although Los Pepes were waging battles against Pablo Escobar and his associates, they were being led by the Castaño brothers who were at the same time enacting the counterinsurgency strategies of the Cold War against “communism”. The convergence between cocaine trafficking paramilitary groups and the forces of the state led to what is known by many in Colombia as the genocide of the UP (Union Patriótica).

The UP is a political party that came out of the peace agreements of La Uribe between the government and the FARC-EP in 1984. Its goal was to allow for a transition of the demobilized members of the FARC-EP into electoral politics. Although the peace agreement failed, due in large part to the violence against the UP, the political party became the largest

⁷⁵ *"Falsos Positivos" En Colombia y El Papel De La Asistencia Militar De Estados Unidos 2000-2010*. Bogotá: Movimiento de Reconciliación (FOR) y la Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados Unidos (CCEEU), 2014, 33-35.

alternative in electoral politics in the country in the late 1980's. In the presidential elections of 1986, with only a few months of campaigning, the candidate of the UP, Jaime Pardo Leal reached the highest votes by a leftist or progressive party in Colombian history with 4.5% of the vote or 328,752 total votes. Although the UP obtained few votes compared to their Liberal and Conservative counterparts, it represented a growing alternative to the traditional ruling elite in Colombian politics, especially in rural areas. In the Department of Meta, they received 22.5% of the presidential vote, in Caqueta 24%, in Guainía 36.8%, in Vichada 41%, in Arauca 49.5%, and in Guaviare 71.7%.⁷⁶ The regional character of the success of the UP in national elections translated to victories in local and regional elections.

In their first local elections in 1986, 325 council members of the UP were elected in 167 municipalities and in 30 of these they won majorities in the councils. It was also during this time that the elections of mayors of municipalities by popular vote was enacted in Colombia, in the first election in 1988, the UP and the coalitions they were part of won 107 mayor races.⁷⁷ Their success as a heterogeneous progressive organization, made up of various sectors of society, communists, radical liberals, labor unions, and student organizations, made them a key target for the counterinsurgency strategies of the state and paramilitaries. Once again, following the pattern of closing off peaceful political organizing for subaltern classes and enacting the violent aggressions on “communist proponents” designed by the U.S. imperialist agenda in the decades prior.

⁷⁶ *Todo Pasó Frente a Nuestros Ojos: El Genocidio De La Unión Patriótica 1984-2002*. Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018, 58.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 71.

From 1984 until 2002, year in which their status as a legal political entity was revoked by the National Electoral Council, the UP had 6,201 victims of violence out of which 4,153 were victims of assassinations, massacres, or disappearances. This means that throughout that time period of 18 years there was a fatal or disappeared victim of the UP every 33 hours.⁷⁸ The violence against the UP reached its highest points in the years 1986 to 1988, coinciding with their regional electoral success in many areas of the country, as well as its zenith in the years 1995-1997, coinciding with the further expansion of the paramilitaries and their consolidation into groups with national reach. As with the violence suffered throughout the decades of the 20th century, most victims were part of the subaltern classes of the country. In the cases where the occupation of the victim is known, 41.8% were peasants, fishermen, or agricultural workers and 40.6% were laborers of the working class.⁷⁹ The victims were also the leaders of the UP. Their first presidential candidate, Jaime Pardo Leal was assassinated in 1987, the year following their first presidential elections. In the year 1990, in the months prior to the presidential elections, Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, the second presidential candidate of the UP, was assassinated in the airport El Dorado of Bogota.

The genocide of the UP fits in the categories of what was proposed by the decades of counterinsurgency strategies since the mid-20th century. The paramilitary and terrorist activities against ‘communist proponents’ established in the 1960’s after the Yarborough mission went hand in hand with the training of military and police for ‘counter-narcotic’ strategies. As can be seen, the two can’t be separated. In the same years that U.S. special military and intelligence teams were training police and military units to “fight the war on drugs”, the same police and

78 Ibid, 108-109.

79 Ibid, 137.

military units were working together with paramilitaries in order to exterminate any movements that challenged the status quo. Out of the 2969 cases in which a perpetrator against a UP member has been identified, it was found that 94.1% were perpetrated by paramilitaries or agents of the state; 71.5% by paramilitaries, 16.4% by military or police, and 6.2% by paramilitaries and military or police working in conjunction.⁸⁰

Although paramilitaries were made illegal in 1989, their role in counterinsurgency strategies of the state continued in different forms. The explicit cooperation of the state with paramilitary death squads was given a new level of obscurity by the passage of the “Estatuto de Vigilancia y Seguridad Privada” or “Statute of Vigilance and Private Security” on February 11th, 1994. This statute allowed for private and public entities to create groups of ‘private security’ in case of “threats to their safety and/or private property”. By the end of 1994, the authorized groups were operating under the name of Cooperativas de Vigilancia y Seguridad Privada or Convivirs in short.

As will be seen in the next chapter, specifically in the case of the links between Chiquita Brands and paramilitaries, the Convivirs were a key part in the consolidation of the largest amalgamation of paramilitary associations into the national organization of the AUC. Coinciding with the creation of Convivirs was the creation in 1997 of the AUC, the largest and most violent paramilitary organization in the country, led by the Castaño brothers – the same brothers trained by the military during the creation of the MAS in the early 80’s as well as the creators of Los Pepes. The AUC was created to bring together the many paramilitary organizations scattered around the country. Although they were divided into local fronts, they were the first paramilitary

⁸⁰ Ibid, 147.

organization with a national reach. In this way, counterinsurgency strategies had taken different forms by the 1990's: from the usage of police, military, and intelligence agencies of the state to the legal private associations of the Convivirs, to the 'illegal' paramilitary organization of the AUC. All of these forces converged in the 1990's, making it the most violent decade in the history of the contemporary armed conflict. 70% of large massacres, of 10 people or more, accounted for by the *Basta Ya!* report were perpetrated from the years of 1996 to 2004.⁸¹

However, and as will be the focus of the next chapter, these forces associated with counterinsurgency were not used solely for those purposes. Similarly to the period of *La Violencia* in the mid-20th century, the violence also had an economic logic behind it through the privatization of lands. The massive displacement of civilians brought with it another period of the concentration of ownership of land. In 1996, 0.4% of landowners possessed nearly 44.6% of the rural area in the country. By the year 2001, this number was increased to 61.2% of the rural area.⁸² Thus, the processes of privatization through dispossession that had been occurring in the nation since the prior decades were accelerated with the creation of Convivirs and the creation of a national paramilitary organization in the AUC. Their use of unthinkable strategies of violence against civilians was key in their consolidation of territories and the concentration of ownership of lands for the elite ruling class of the country.

In the Department of Valle del Cauca, the AUC paramilitaries started their reign of terror in 1999. From that year on, until the year 2004 which marked the beginning of their demobilization, they committed at least 73 massacres and assassinated over 1,200 people. Many

81 *¡Basta Ya!: Colombia: Memorias De Guerra y Dignidad*, 50.

82 Bermúdez Rico, Rosa Emilia, Enrique Jaramillo Buenaventura, Luis Fernando Barón porras, and Ana Lucia Paz Rueda. *Poblaciones y Territorios En Disputa*. Cali: Universidad Icesi, Fac. de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, 2009, 84.

of those assassinated ended in ‘fosas comunes’ or ‘common graves’ in which the bodies of hundreds were buried together, many still to be found.⁸³ This was a common practice of the AUC in order to hide the unimaginable acts that were carried out against civilians. It is estimated that during excavations in the years 2006 and 2007, 1,157 ‘common graves’ were found in the country, some containing a few bodies to others containing hundreds.⁸⁴ As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this type of erasure has added a level of invisibility to the armed conflict as the majority of the population in the urban areas don’t see the crimes committed by the paramilitary groups.

Thus, the 21st century began with the election of Alvaro Uribe Velez to the presidency of the country in the year 2002. His deeply rooted anti-communist, anti-guerrilla stance won the hearts of many Colombians, as many, especially in the larger cities, perceived the threat of the FARC-EP as the greatest threat to their security. During his government, Uribe installed his version of the national security doctrine of counterinsurgency called “Seguridad Democrática” or “Democratic Security”. Many in the country at the time interpreted Uribe as a sort of savior of the nation. So much so that in 2010, after his two terms, he left office with one of the largest ratings of favorable opinion of any Latin American president, reaching 80%. However, as time has passed, the Colombian public has been able to discover the underpinnings of the “Seguridad Democrática” and the cruelty with which it was carried out. Today, in the year 2021, Uribe has a favorable opinion rating of 20%.⁸⁵ This shift in popular opinion has come as many aspects of the

83 Editorial. “Que No Se Repita” *El País*. August 1, 2009.

84 Pérez Poveda, María Victoria. “Hallazgo De Fosas Comunes En Colombia. El Tiempo De Las Víctimas: Tributo a La Memoria Del Dolor y Posibilidad De Reconciliación Nacional.” *Revista Criminalidad* 50, no. 1 (May 2008): 351–70.

85 Invamer S.A.S, *Abril y Mayo 2021, Medición #142*, 2021, distributed by Invamer S.A.S. Survey available at: <https://www.valoraanalitik.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-05-Invamer-Poll.pdf>

“Seguridad Democrática” policies have come to light, such as the practice of extrajudicial killings carried out by his government, also known as ‘falsos positivos’, which are now estimated to be at least 6,402 civilians from 2002-2008, and his deep links to paramilitaries.

Although not interpreted by many at the time as such, his presidency from 2002-2010 was the pinnacle of the paramilitarization of Colombia and its deep influence in all spheres of the state. However, his links with paramilitaries and cocaine traffickers go much deeper than his national security doctrine during his presidency. Previously, in 1991, Alvaro Uribe Velez appeared in a confidential report from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency that labeled him as a “politician and senator dedicated to collaboration with the Medellin Cartel at high government levels”. It also labeled him as a close personal friend of Pablo Escobar.⁸⁶ His personal relationship with cocaine traffickers was also associated with their operations. Several journalist investigations have linked him as being responsible for granting aircraft licenses to the Medellin Cartel in the 1980s. Even Jhon Jairo Velasquez, a.k.a Popeye, Escobar’s most famous sicario or hitman, revealed in an interview that it was Uribe who authorized the landing strips for Escobar during that time.⁸⁷ His relationship with paramilitary groups is also now widely known. As governor of Antioquia from 1995-1998, he propelled and authorized a plethora of Convivirs in the department, many of which were headed or integrated by known paramilitary members.⁸⁸ Additionally, various ex paramilitary leaders have mentioned Uribe in their confessions to the Colombian judicial system. According to these confessions, Uribe was deeply involved with the

⁸⁶ Original declassified document available in appendix D. Accessed through National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB131/index.htm>

⁸⁷ Akerman, Yohir. “Las Licencias De Uribe”, *El Espectador*. April 28, 2018.

⁸⁸ Comisión Colombiana de Juristas. “Todas las Convivir eran nuestras.” *Boletín No. 27: Serie sobre los derechos de las víctimas y la aplicación de la ley 975* (June 20th, 2008).

AUC. Juan Guillermo Monsalve, an ex-paramilitary leader, confessed that Uribe was involved with an undocumented massacre committed by the group in San Roque, Antioquia; he expressed that Uribe was the one that coordinated the military actions by several blocks of the paramilitary group.⁸⁹

Furthermore, as president, Uribe negotiated a demobilization agreement with the AUC that was finalized in 2006. Though this process marked the “official” end of the largest paramilitary organization in the country, it marked a remaking of counterinsurgency practices and gave obscurity to the historical alliance between state and paramilitaries and even the existence of paramilitaries, which are now referred to under the ambiguous label of BACRIMs or *Bandas Criminales*. A label which masks much of the political and economic structure that back up these counterinsurgency death squads such as the ‘Águilas Negras’ or ‘Rastrojos’ today. The obscurity of these groups has also added an erasure to the paramilitary history of the country by framing the problem as one due to common criminality and not a systemic and structural problem of the society.

As can be seen, the armed conflict in Colombia has a long history that goes beyond the usual explanation of using the erroneously labeled “narco-terrorist” guerrillas as a scapegoat. Although the guerrillas have participated and have in many cases caused violence in the country, the majority of massacres, assassinations, and tortures have been carried out by paramilitaries and the state through their repression apparatus. This is not to say that other types of violence, like kidnappings for example, mostly caused by guerrilla forces, haven’t affected the Colombian

⁸⁹ “Los ‘Paras’ Que Han Salpicado a Álvaro Uribe” *Verdad Abierta* , September 22, 2011.

population greatly, however, it does give the public a more realistic understanding of the complex armed conflict and the violence that has existed in the country. It also greatly explains the historical causes of the armed conflict and why the violence against social activists, community leaders, and campesinos continues today even after the demobilization of the FARC-EP. Throughout the 20th century the ruling class of the country used violence in order to privatize lands, proletarianize campesinos, and maintain the status quo. Although one can't draw a straight line between the paramilitary groups in the 1940s, such as Los Pájaros, and for example the AUC in the 1990s, what can be interpreted is the structural and systemic use of violence by the ruling classes in order to subdue the subaltern classes in favor of their economic and political goals. The factors laid out above help explain the reasoning behind the 'senseless' notion of the violence that ravaged the country throughout the 20th century.

Additionally, the common interpretation of the role of the U.S. in the Colombian armed conflict must be re-examined. As shown, U.S. imperialism throughout the 20th century in the country has had costly effects; it has been a detrimental factor that has had continuous consequences. The historical combination of the economic goals of U.S. private transnational enterprises with geopolitical strategies of the U.S. state, as can be seen by the readiness of the U.S. ambassador to call in war ships during the banana massacre in 1928 and the usage of planes of private petroleum corporations by the U.S. armed forces in the 1940s, were later intertwined with 'counterinsurgency' policies with destructive consequences. One of its most important consequences was the creation of paramilitary forces and the 'counterinsurgency' policies that ensued in the country for the following decades. Paramilitary forces sprung up all over the Colombian territory, benefiting transnational corporations, landowners, private national corporations, and cocaine traffickers. The training by U.S. clandestine intelligence teams of

Colombian state security forces tied to paramilitaries in the 1980s and early 1990s was key in the expansion of such groups leading to thousands of assassinations and hundreds of massacres of Colombians.

Chapter 2: Violence and Transnational Capital: The cases of Serrania de San Lucas, El Cerrejón, the Cacarica River basin, and Chiquita Brands International

In many ways, Colombia can be understood as a microcosm of the larger capitalist system and its formation. As Karl Marx and David Harvey both argue, the story of capitalism is a story of violent expropriation. The ideas about ‘good morals’ and ‘Christian ethics’ as the guiding principles of capitalism are rejected in this perspective, because the reality of everyday life for the majority of those under the capitalist system tells a very different story. As Marx states, capital came into being through “letters of blood and fire”; it was a violent and cruel process. The population was deprived of the access to the means of production, especially land, and was denied any chance of reproducing daily life besides selling their labor as a commodity.⁹⁰ Although those initial stages of capital formation were approximately 400 years ago in Western Europe, appropriation and privatization are recurring characteristics of capitalism as it expands to unexploited territories, just as it was in its initial stages in England with the enclosures of the commons. As Rosa Luxemburg argues in her work “the accumulation of capital”, ‘primitive accumulation’, for example the enclosure and privatization of commonly owned lands, is a reoccurring aspect of expanding capitalist societies; it is a permanent factor in the peripheries in the trajectory of capitalism. Capitalists’ constant search for lands in the peripheries to control and make a profit, lies at the very heart of the armed conflict and the processes of political and economic violence in Colombia.

⁹⁰ Harvey, David. *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*. Edited by Jordan T. Camp and Chris Caruso. Pluto Press, 2020, 114.

The goal of this chapter is to explain how the intensification of the armed conflict in the 1980s through the early 2000s was in large part a consequence of the reproduction of the global capitalist system.⁹¹ The mindset behind the ‘reproduction’ of the capitalist system in this specific historical moment is most commonly referred to as ‘neoliberalism’. This process of capitalist reproduction, which by the end of this chapter one will be able to conclude is an extremely violent one, is documented with specific case studies that portray the reality of the processes the Colombian subaltern classes, especially in rural areas, have been subjected to.

The violent processes have been carried out by the Colombian state and the paramilitaries. The latter profess themselves to be ‘self-defense’ forces fighting ‘a war against communism and terrorism’ by ‘protecting the nation from guerrillas.’ However, it is important to understand that paramilitaries have worked with an economic, political, and social logic behind them. In the economic realm they have served the global capitalist order to further Colombia’s role as an exporter of raw commodities and natural resources. The former characterized much of the early to the late 20th century and the latter much of the late 20th century until now. This connection between the economic world and the armed conflict in Colombia is evidenced by the deep relations between multiple transnational corporations (TNCs) and the paramilitaries, to the point that some TNCs became some of the founders or main contributors of financial and material support for the paramilitaries.

Before looking at the case studies that portray the violent process of land dispossession for the benefit of capital accumulation, it is important to understand the larger global capitalist

⁹¹ I consider it ‘reproduction’ as the imposition and dominance of capitalist structures in the country have been ongoing since the late 1800s. I say ‘ongoing’ as it is a process which has sought to encompass the nation as a whole including the land, the people, and the resources, into the capitalist system until today.

context as it was in this context that the relations between local capitalists, TNCs, and paramilitaries flourished.

The global economic context of the 1980's through the 2000s was one of reinvention for a capitalist system that had seen difficulties during the 1970's. The decades following the Great Depression and World War II had witnessed Keynesian compromises by states in the economic sector, meaning that the public sector enjoyed plenty of support economically, mostly in Europe but to a certain extent also in the U.S. There was much more control in the movement of capital; capital flows and investments as well as tariffs in the trading system during these times were much more conservative. Capitalist expansion, to a certain extent, was restricted. During the late 1970s much of the anti-corporate legislation that had been implemented throughout the U.S. and Europe was done away with. Capital was able to expand its control of state institutions and policy much more efficiently following the fall of the Bretton Woods Agreement in the 1970s, which had been in place in part as a measure of global capital control since the end of WWII. The Bretton Woods Agreement was consistent with this period of Keynesian economics throughout major world capitalist centers.⁹² Further, there was a crisis of overaccumulation in the global centers of capital which was resolved through the global expansion of the market. The 'spatial fix' to the combination of crises in the centers of capital accumulation subjected countries like Colombia to the liberalization of their markets allowing for the expansion of TNCs.⁹³ Although foreign investment was certainly present in Colombia before, it was not until the decades after the 1980s that it reached unprecedented levels.

92 However, much more so in Europe than in the U.S.

93 Harvey, David. *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*, 14; O'Connor, Dermot, and Juan Pablo Bohórquez Montoya. "Neoliberal Transformation in Colombia's Goldfields: Development Strategy or Capitalist Imperialism?" *Labour, Capital and Society / Travail, Capital et Société* 43, no. 2 (2010): 85–118, 93.

To put it into perspective, this happened in the very first decades after the U.S. had consolidated its power in the capitalist world after 1945 (WWII). Although in hindsight it seems like a long time, the reality is that the period of prosperity that the U.S. experienced during those years after the consolidation of the country as the global capitalist superpower was a honeymoon stage that needed a revival by the 1970's. This revival came by way of expansion in the 'free' global market; the imposition of an overarching 'free-trade' that benefited U.S. interests globally. This latest reproduction of the capitalist system came to be known as the 'neoliberal' era.

It can be argued that the first experiment was Chile in 1973, where neoliberalism was established through violence at the hands of the dictator Augusto Pinochet, who counted on the open support of Chile's ruling class and, most certainly, of the expanding superpower, the U.S. Together these forces established the economic, political, and social order necessary for the accumulation and expansion of capital. A similar scheme was repeated throughout Latin America by sustaining dictatorships and quasi-dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s. The economic project carried out by the 'Chicago Boys', as the group of economists in charge of the Chilean economy was known due to their ties to the University of Chicago, was a complete success for capital accumulation, return on foreign investment, and growth rates.⁹⁴

The 1980's were characterized by a shift in economic policy through a complete economic revolution that was anchored in the apology of free markets, the imposition of global 'free trade', in addition to precarious employment conditions, free international flow of capital,

94 Harvey, David. *Spaces of Global Capitalism*. London: Verso, 2006, 12.

disengagement of state from economic affairs, the privatization of public and state entities, and the expansion of the capitalist international order across the world, especially after the breakdown of the Soviet Union.⁹⁵ The neoliberal expansion across the globe has followed to this day different patterns depending on the historical and present context of each of the nations touched. For most Latin American countries, it has meant a varied set of impositions and violence against subaltern populations and those defending their lands and the traditional ways in which people relate to the territory and the environment around them. In Colombia's case specifically, it has meant an extreme use of violence over a long period of time counting on the support of its ruling classes to impose the neoliberal order on the entire nation.

Repercussions of this kind of violence can be observed to this day. When one looks at the protests in Chile in 2019 it is undeniable that the security forces of the state committed egregious acts of violence against the population over the months long protests. However, the ruling classes' and the state's responses to the continued protests of Colombians since 2019, and in particular since the national strike of the 28th of April of 2021, have been unspeakable. A report by the Unidad de Investigación y Acusación de la Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz found that Colombia was the second deadliest country for protesters in the world after Myanmar with the death of a protester occurring every 36 hours in 2021.⁹⁶ As has been documented in this thesis, this sort of violence is not by far new; it follows the patterns of violence that have characterized the country's economic and political relations for much of the country's history. However, the

95 Duménil, Gérard, and Dominique Lévy. "The Economics of US Imperialism at the Turn of the 21st Century." *Review of International Political Economy* 11, no. 4 (2004): 657–76, 659.

96 Redacción Justicia. "Colombia, Segundo País Del Mundo En Tasa De Muertes En Protestas: JEP." *El Tiempo*, July 1, 2021.

establishment of the neoliberal order in the country followed this pattern of violence and has cemented itself through extreme levels of repression and displacement.

The shift in economic policy brought over by the neoliberal restructuring of Colombia, as part of the ‘Washington Consensus’ for Latin America, resulted in a great increase of foreign direct investment (FDI). In fact, by 2005, immediately following some of the most violent decades in the country’s recent history and at a time when it still was passing through one of its most violent moments, the country had the highest FDI in South America, even surpassing Mexico. FDI investments in Colombia began seeing an upward movement in the 1980s, followed by an overall increase in the 1990s, with yet another significant increase after 2002.⁹⁷ By 2009, FDI amounted to \$7.2 billion, almost a \$5 billion increase from its figure of \$2.34 billion in 2000. Seventy five percent of these direct investments were in oil, gas, and minerals.⁹⁸ Simultaneously, the national defense budget became the largest government expenditure, and the military body increased from a total of 167,000 members in the early 1990s to 441,000 in 2008.⁹⁹

Although Colombia had been an exporter of natural resources since much earlier than the late 20th century, for example with the Barco Concession mentioned in chapter 1, it wasn’t until the neoliberal restructuring of the country that Colombia’s role in the global capitalist order became that of mainly being an exporter of natural resources. The extractive nature of Colombia’s role in the neoliberal project is undeniable. From 2002 to 2007, oil became the

97 Richani, Nazih. “Colombia: Predatory State and Rentier Political Economy.” *Labour capital and society* 43, no. 2 (2010): 119–141, 129; O’Connor, Dermot, and Juan Pablo Bohórquez Montoya. “Neoliberal Transformation in Colombia’s Goldfields”, 91.

98 Richani, Nazih. “Colombia: Predatory State and Rentier Political Economy,” 128.

99 Hristov, Jasmin. *Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*, 7.

largest export earner. Coffee decreased from accounting for up to 60 percent of exports of the country in 1986 to 6 percent in 2007. Coal on the other hand has surged. By 2001 coal had overtaken coffee as Colombia's second largest export. By 2010, mining and oil represented 60 percent of total exports.¹⁰⁰ The country is estimated to now have around 40 percent of its national territory being used for mining and energy exploitation with some departments having most of its territory in the hands of foreign investors.¹⁰¹

If, for example, we look at gold, one can see how the neoliberal shift has taken place. Foreign-owned mining in Colombia was not commonplace for most of the 20th century. Traditional 'folk-mining' was the norm during this time. So much so that in the late 1970s, 95 percent of gold production was a combination of small artisanal producers and micro level gold entrepreneurs.¹⁰² However, in 1987, a report recommended FDI to develop large-scale mining in tandem with rising prices in the international market. By 1994, the percentage produced by small producers had decreased to 80 percent, the rest being produced by 30 large and medium companies.¹⁰³ In 1996 a World Bank report called for reform in the mining sector, similar to Pinochet's in Chile. By 2001, after the mining code change, which will be described later on, Colombians could not mine on public lands, authorization was now required.

As had been the case during the first impositions and domination stages of capitalism in different parts of the country earlier in the 20th century, the Colombian state and the ruling

100 Richani, Nazih. "Colombia: Predatory State and Rentier Political Economy.", 134.

101 Hristov, Jasmin. *Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*, 84.

102 O'Connor, Dermot, and Juan Pablo Bohórquez Montoya. "Neoliberal Transformation in Colombia's Goldfields", 99.

103 Ibid, 100.

classes now embraced the neoliberal agenda with fervor. The transformation saw the privatization of state-owned firms, legislative reforms to promote corporations' access to natural resources, including gold, and the removal of tariffs and other barriers on capital. This made the country's economy look good on paper and in international indexes, growth figures, and even production increased. However, profits remained in the hands of TNCs, not in the hands of workers or communities producing the raw commodities necessary for the creation of many products of daily consumption around the world.

Although the neoliberal agenda was exported from the imperialist core to the peripheries, the state played a key role in shaping the response to the transnational 'prospects for the accumulation of capital.'¹⁰⁴ As such, one of the arguments of this thesis is that the Colombian state has optimized the conditions in the country for the accumulation of capital by TNCs through extreme violence and collaboration with paramilitaries. The extraction of natural resources becoming one of the main exports of Colombia and the need to obtain land to reach these resources, was one of the main reasons for the increase of political and economic violence in the country. The expansion of the paramilitary has followed the violent logic with which the Colombian state and its controlling dominant classes have historically created the conditions for the development and reproduction of capitalism. The neoliberal restructuring that began in the 1980s and saw its apex in the 90s and 2000s, combined with the history of counterinsurgency in the country, resulted in a deadly combination for the subaltern classes, especially the rural population. The alliance between the Colombian state and the TNCs has allowed for capitalist

104 Harvey, David. *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*, 81.

exploitation in faraway lands¹⁰⁵ that have been optimized for capital accumulation by force through military and paramilitary action. Of course, the transnational aspect of the exploitation of land, humans, and resources makes it so that the profits of said exploitation travel back to the capitalist centers.

Although the U.S. has never physically occupied Colombia with its troops in an all-out military intervention, the domination of the country has been carried out in other ways. Just as in other parts of the world, TNCs now carry the U.S. flag with them and “huge and growing flows of income are drawn from the world and contribute to the remuneration of capital in [the U.S.].”¹⁰⁶ Older forms of colonial ruling are mostly extinct; however, colonialism was just one form of imperialism. What is a constant in imperialist relations is the imposition of governments, in the dominated country, prone to the development of conditions favorable for the interests of the imperial core.¹⁰⁷

Thus, much of the political and economic violence on the side of the state and the paramilitary that is described here is not merely a response to groups of ‘guerrilla narco-terrorists’ but rather represents an imposition of an economic system, neoliberalism, a system that is part of a larger global economic system in which Colombia has played a peripheral role through the production of primary raw commodities such as coffee, palm oil, and bananas and, more recently, the extraction of natural resources such as petroleum, coal, and gold. The imperialist imposition of this economic model, carried out mostly by the U.S. throughout the

105 For example, all of the corporations that will be spoken of in the study cases below. All of them were based outside of Colombia, yet they accumulated capital through the exploitation of Colombian soil.

106 Duménil, Gérard, and Dominique Lévy. “The Economics of US Imperialism at the Turn of the 21st Century.”, 658.

107 Ibid, 660.

20th and 21st centuries, has, directly and indirectly, shaped the armed conflict. It is not that imperialism, and its manifestations in Colombia, began in the 1980s, rather the expressions, as documented in the previous chapter, have evolved over time.

It has been thoroughly documented, and as will be seen in the following cases, that displacement has been used as a strategy by paramilitaries to make the land profitable by selling it to national landowners or TNCs. As documented by O'Connor and Bohorquez, the displacement of populations from their lands is a characteristic of the capitalist order that has positive consequences for capitalist investors. Forced displacement is also used to create a pool of available workers. Authoritarian repression is also used in order to obtain this pool of precarious workers for low wages in the extraction of natural resources. Many are forced into becoming cheap laborers or to flee to larger towns and cities to find employment. Many of those that end up in cities find themselves in the precarious informal sector with no opportunities at a dignified life. Not all displaced peasants become part of a formal 'proletariat' though, only few do. However, the precarious labor conditions allow for the maximum exploitation possible with minimum responsibilities for the mostly large TNCs. Additionally, not all of the political and economic violence, not all of the displacement is to grab land, sometimes it is simply to deunionize workers. The Chiquita and Coca Cola cases¹⁰⁸ are emblematic in this sense.

The cases presented in the remaining of this chapter will elucidate on how the process of capitalist expansion and optimization of conditions for capital accumulation are related to an intensification of the armed conflict. Specifically, these cases will show the violence that the population of the country has had to suffer to be absorbed by the ever growing and expanding

108 Information on the Coca Cola case in Colombia isn't found on this thesis, however, more information can be found through: http://killercoke.org/crimes_colombia.php

capitalist system. The expropriation and privatization of lands and commodification of labor went hand in hand with increased levels of violence against the civil population.¹⁰⁹ As perfectly summarized by O'Connor and Bohorquez, "as with the capitalist transformation of agricultural production, the acceleration of capitalist transformation in the mining sector involves the violent expropriation of rural producers."¹¹⁰

Serranía de San Lucas. Bolívar: Gold

Precious metals abound in the south of the department of Bolivar, yet its population has lived in great misery for decades. And, their situation was made even worse due to the incursion of transnational capital, which included the advent of paramilitaries into the department, displacements, and a new mining code for the whole country. In fact, this is only one example of the great violence caused by mining multinationals in the countryside. Around two million internally displaced persons come from mining regions, according to research done by Sintraminercol.¹¹¹ Additionally, in the year 2002, when Alvaro Uribe Velez took office, the departments with the highest increase in human rights violations were also those that had the

109 It is important to note that I am not stating that displacement and land privatization began in Colombia in the 1980s, rather that it has been a continuous process in Colombian history, at the root of much of the political and economic violence that has existed and still exists in the country today, which saw an upsurge in the 1980s with the imposition of the global capitalist, neoliberal order. This has been a process which indigenous, afro-Colombian, and mestizo campesino communities have had to suffer for centuries now

110 O'Connor, Dermot, and Juan Pablo Bohórquez Montoya. "Neoliberal Transformation in Colombia's Goldfields: Development Strategy or Capitalist Imperialism?", 102.

111 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination: How U.S. Corporate Power Is Destroying Colombia*. Translated by Aviva Chomsky. Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 2005, 85-86; Sintraminercol is the abbreviation for Colombia's mining worker union Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Empresa Nacional Minera Minercol, Ltda. which is a part of the larger Funtraenergetica Federacion de Trabajadores Minero-Energeticos and the C.U.T. Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia, one of the largest worker unions in the country.

highest concentration of mining: Antioquia, Bolivar, Norte de Santander, Santander, and Cesar.¹¹²

The recent history of mining in these areas starts with the period of *La Violencia* in which many of the miners and residents of the surrounding zones had fled the *municipios* facing great violence and had established themselves in the Serrania de San Lucas in the south of the department of Bolivar. Here they took up small and medium scale mining as their form of sustenance. However, unbeknown to the miners, in the year 1950 a French mine owner in the zone had sold ten mines to a man named Juan de Dios Illera.¹¹³ After Illera's death in the 1970s, his family petitioned to legally take over the mines that became known as Private Property 026. However, the family did not possess any of the documents required by Colombian law to claim private property, namely: "[translation own] law 20 of 1969 states that if one is claiming private property over the subsoil, one must first provide and support a title from the Spanish crown, if not, then an administrative judgement from the dispute, in this case the State Council, which recognizes the private property. Secondly, that one must not have ceased the exploitation of the mines or petroleum wells for more than 6 months because if so, then the property automatically goes back into the hands of the Nation without any authority declaring so."¹¹⁴ The Illera Palacios family did not even know the location of the mines. Nonetheless, the family continued in their attempts to legalize the property.

In 1992, the Ministry of Mines and Energy visited Private Property 026 and concluded that "[own translation] after going through the whole area, there was no evidence of any mining

112 Ibid, 86.

113 Ibid.

114 Silva, Shameel Thahir. "El Código De Minas: Una De Las Rodillas Temblorosas Del Establecimiento. El Caso De Guamocó." Agencia Prensa Rural, March 27, 2009. <https://www.prensarural.org/spip/spip.php?article2080>.

activity performed by the plaintiffs” and that “in light of this fact, it was not necessary to locate through routes and distances any mines belonging to the plaintiffs due to a lack of the existence of these”. Additionally, the report recommended “to legalize the mining areas occupied by the miners in the central sector of the Serrania de San Lucas and to collaborate with them through technical and social assistance”¹¹⁵ These recommendations were attended by the Colombian government which then instituted Royalty Law 141 of 1994. The royalty law imposed a production tax on petroleum and mineral extraction and in turn, gave the miners 2 years to legalize their mining sites. This resulted in the establishment of over 90 mining associations, just in the southern Bolivar region, that started litigation to legalize the possession of the mines.¹¹⁶ Although many of these claims were recognized by the State, some of the richest mines of the area were purposefully not legalized, exactly the areas in the Serrania de San Lucas that the Illera Palacios family was after... and the family would not do it alone.

On January 30th, 1995, the family decided to contract lawyer Luisa Fernanda Aramburo Restrepo. At the time, Aramburo Restrepo was working with a Canadian subsidiary of the U.S. transnational company Conquistador Mines named Corona Goldfields. Furthermore, less than two months later, on March 21st 1995, the family signed a contract which gave exclusive rights of exploration and exploitation of the mines in Serrania de San Lucas for 25 years to a company called Minería San Lucas Ltd.¹¹⁷; a company which was created on March 17th, 1995 with a mere \$500 in capital as initial investment by lawyer Luisa Fernanda Aramburo Restrepo and a U.S.

115 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 120-122

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid, 124-127.

citizen named James David Greenbaum from Las Vegas, Nevada.¹¹⁸ Just a few months later, on July 21st, 1995 the lawyer created a Temporary Partnership that was contracted by the Minister of Energy and Mines, Rodrigo Villamizar, in order to create a new mining code that would be presented to the Colombian congress in 1996. Additionally, since the year 1996, the Canadian government, through CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and CERI (Canadian Energy Research Institute), was involved in providing assistance to the Colombian government in creating a new mining code.¹¹⁹ However, the 1996 mining code proposed by lawyer Aramburo Restrepo, was not approved. This was due to wide protests from miners and peasants across Colombia and an international campaign led by Sintraminercol and Amnesty International.¹²⁰ Massive repression against Colombia's mining population in the Serrania de San Lucas followed on its heel.

On April 25th, 1997, a large paramilitary force came into the region and took over the mining town of Rio Viejo, Bolivar.¹²¹ After forcing the residents out into the streets and whipping many of them, they targeted their first victim.

“When they identified Juan Camacho Herrera, a member of the Agro-mining Association of the South of Bolivar – a grassroots organization that represents poor miners who engage in artisanal mining... -- they assassinated him with seven gunshots. They then beheaded him with a machete. They carried his head through the town and kicked it around. Finally, they nailed it to a post with his face looking towards the Serrania de San Lucas. Facing the stupefied residents they told them that they were planning to take control of this mining zone”¹²²

118 Ibid, 47 and 99.

119 Martinez, Mario, Juliana Peña, Marcela Calle, and Fabio Velazquez. “La Normativa Minera En Colombia.” Movimiento Mesoamericano contra el Modelo extractivo Minero. Fundacion Foro Nacional por Colombia and Brot Fur die Welt Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, October 2013, 11.

120 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 39.

121 Caribe, Centro Regional Del. “Paras dan látigo en el sur de bolívar.” El Tiempo. El Tiempo, April 30, 1997. <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-531190>.

122 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 24.

But the violence was far from over; this was just the first day of a large paramilitary takeover of the area. After these paramilitary operations, there were several more in nearby towns such as San Pablo, Simití, Santa Rosa del Sur, Pueblito Mejia, Tiquisio, San Blas, Monterrey, Puerto Rico, La Pacha, Morales, Moralito, and Arenal. Over ten towns were destroyed, more than 1,000 homes burned to the ground, over 400 people massacred, and over 35,000 were displaced due to these paramilitary operations¹²³.

The great violence that the mining towns in the south of Bolivar experienced in 1997 led them to start several mobilizations. One was to the U.S. embassy in Bogota as they knew that the lawyer Aramburo Restrepo worked for Corona Goldfields, which, as expressed above, was a Canadian subsidiary of the U.S. corporation Conquistador Mines.¹²⁴ And the other target was Barrancabermeja, the city known as the Oil Capital of Colombia due to its oil refineries. Many of the displaced communities from the south of Bolivar, had fled to Barrancabermeja. Even there, though, many of them, especially those involved in unions, were declared military targets by the AUC.¹²⁵ The first massacre of the displaced miners from Serrania de San Lucas in Barrancabermeja occurred in May of 1998. Initially, there were 11 people assassinated and 32 more kidnapped. Later on, 25 of the 32 would be assassinated as well.¹²⁶ The situation forced the newly elected president, Andres Pastrana, to visit Barrancabermeja and speak to the leaders of the manifestations. On October 4th, 1998, the president met with the leaders and made promises

123 Ibid, 51.

124 Ibid, 51.

125 Piccoli, Guido. *El Sistema del pájaro: Colombia, Laboratorio De Barbarie*. Bogotá: ILSA, 2005, 204.

126 Reyes, Elizabeth. "La Masacre Del 16 De Mayo De 1998 En Barrancabermeja." Agencia Prensa Rural, May 16, 2010. <https://prensarural.org/spip/spip.php?article4023>.

to fight against the paramilitaries, cut any ties found between militaries and paramilitaries, and provide social aid in the area. The president's promises were left on paper and on the stage where the president had stood.¹²⁷ The following month, two of the most important leaders of the protests in the area, Edgar Quiroga and Giraldo Fuentes, were disappeared and murdered,¹²⁸ in fact, the majority of the representatives of the communities facing the violence were either disappeared or exiled.¹²⁹

As all of this massacring, displacement, and disappearing was occurring, the Colombian oligarchy was planning a new attempt at rewriting the mining code that had failed in 1996. From that failed attempt on, they would make sure that the miners and peasants would not get in their way of allowing TNCs to exploit some of the richest mines in Latin America. As investigations from Sintraminercol show, in the years 1996 and 2001, the years of the proposed mining legislations, there was a 1000% increase in homicides, forced disappearances, injuries, torture, and arbitrary detentions. In 2001, the number of homicides rose to 1667 in mining municipalities, double the average that was calculated from 1995 to 2002. And in the year 2002, although homicides decreased, the number of arbitrary detentions rose exponentially from 605 in 2001 to 2300 the following year.¹³⁰ None of this mattered to Bill Richardson, the Secretary of Energy under Bill Clinton 1998-2000, when he stated in Cartagena in 1999: "The United States and its allies will invest millions of dollars in two areas of the Colombian economy, in the areas of mining and energy, and to secure these investments we are tripling military aid to

127 Pastrana Arango, Andres. "Visita del Presidente Pastrana a Barrancabermeja -4 de octubre de 1998". *Youtube* video, 20:36, June 2nd, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3VM9iHITe0>

128 "Hallan muerto a líder campesino." *El Tiempo*. December 7, 1999. <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-951232>.

129 Piccoli, Guido. *El Sistema del Pájaro*, 205.

130 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 86; figure 1 of thesis.

Colombia”¹³¹ in complete disregard of the known links between military forces in Colombia and paramilitary death squads. What was needed in Colombia in order for ‘the United States and its allies’ to be able to exploit the mines of the country was a new mining code. The new mining code would follow the same pattern as the one attempted in 1996. Former President Andres Pastrana would assign the job to a Temporary Partnership created by a group of lawyers, Martinez Cordoba and Associates, the only difference being that this law firm represented half of the mining companies with legal operations in the country, including Ladrillera Santafe, a company that belongs to the family of President Andres Pastrana and which had his cousins, Ricardo Uribe Arango, Carlos Andres Uribe Arango, and Andres Uribe Crane, on the board of directors. Additionally, this company was the second largest financial donor to his presidential campaign.¹³²

Ultimately, the new mining code, created by the Temporary Partnership Martinez Cordoba and Associates, was presented as law on August 15th, 2001, as Law 685 of 2001. Although the population of southern Bolivar was already devastated due to the massacres and displacements, the new law would change the mining regulations at the cost of millions of displacements in Colombia and for the great benefit of transnational capital. For example, Article 5 completely contradicts the protection of communal land created by the 1991 Constitution in Article 63 as it clearly states that the minerals in the soil and subsoil in all the Colombian territory belong to the state with disregard of the communal ownership of land. Chapter XVII of the law extends mining concessions to 30 years; however, the allowed extensions make it possible to hold a concession for a total of 72 years and gives preference to the contracted party

131 Ibid, 32.

132 Ramirez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 132-141.

to renew the concessions again once that period is over. Additionally, and again to the detriment of the Colombian population, chapter XXII contains a tax reform which greatly benefits TNCs. In this chapter, Article 227 changes the royalty tax to a mere 0.4 percent on minerals collected from the Colombian subsoil. In the case of minerals like coal the change was from 10 percent royalty tax to 0.4 percent. The following article, Article 228, allows for the royalty tax to be fixed for the entire concession and Article 231 prohibits the addition of new taxes to said concessions. On November 1st, 2001, Decree 2353 of 2001 was passed which regulates the 0.4 percent royalty tax on minerals collected from mines in the country.

In mining municipalities, on average per year during the time of the first paramilitary actions in the area in 1995 to the year 2002, there were 828 homicides, 142 forced disappearances, 117 people injured, 71 people tortured, 355 death threats, and 150 arbitrary detentions. There were a total of 433 massacres with a total figure of 6,626 homicides during those 8 years.¹³³ As was to be expected, following the violence against the Colombian population and the rewriting of the mining codes, transnational capital benefitted right away in different areas of the country.

El Cerrejón Mines, Guajira: Coal

A few months after Decree 2353 of 2001, the Consortium Cerrejón Zona Norte (CZN) – composed of the British mining companies BHP Billiton and Anglo American, and the Swiss mining company Glencore received complete concessions to explore and exploit one of the largest open pit carbon mines in the world, where it is estimated that 60 percent of the carbon produced in Colombia comes from, El Cerrejón. By late 2002, the consortium of these conglomerates of mining had gained concessions by the Colombian government to all of the

133 Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 116.

Cerrejón, the North, the South, and the Central zones. Additionally, the Patilla area which is estimated to have 65 million tons of reserves of coal was also granted to the consortium.¹³⁴ After the consortium had been granted the concessions, they changed their name to Carbones del Cerrejón Limited, or Cerrejón.¹³⁵

The Cerrejón mine is located surrounding what was once the town of Tabaco. The displacement of this community started on August of 2001 and all of the inhabitants of the town were violently displaced by January 28th, 2002.¹³⁶ ¹³⁷ The 1,200 inhabitants of the town were displaced, their homes were burnt, the town completely destroyed, and many suffered violent acts, in part, from the Colombian military.¹³⁸ As stated by lawyer Dora Lucy Arias, “the incidence of the State and the company in the displacement of the territory is very evident.”¹³⁹ In this case, it is estimated that over 70,000 indigenous people were displaced in the departments of Guajira and neighboring Cesar due to these mining concessions.¹⁴⁰ Even with all of these burdens, the governmental investment for Indigenous communities in the country, named, the

134 *La Inversión Extranjera En América Latina y El Caribe 2002*. Santiago de Chile: United Nations, 2003.

135 “Cerrejón, Minería Responsable: Aliados Para El Progreso De La Guajira.” Cerrejón, n.d. <https://www.cerrejon.com/>.

136 “Tabaco, Colombia: Still No Justice after 18 Years.” London Mining Network, August 9, 2019. <https://londonminingnetwork.org/2019/08/tabaco-colombia-still-no-justice-after-18-years/>.

137 Hernandez Cuellar, Edward Harvey. “Minería y Desplazamiento: El Caso De La Multinacional Cerrejón En Hatonuevo, La Guajira, Colombia (2000-2010), ‘Nuestra Tierra Es Nuestra Vida.’” *Revista Ciencia Política Universidad Nacional*, April 4, 2018.

138 Vicente, Ana, Neil Martin, Daniel James Slee, Moira Birss, Sylvain Lefebvre, and Bianca Bauer. “Minería En Colombia: ¿a Qué Precio?” *PBI Colombia*, November 2011, 32.

139 Ibid, 32.

140 Ibid.

Plan of Integral Aid for Indigenous Communities, between 1982 and 2002 was approximately five million dollars or the equivalent of two and a half days of carbon production in the mine.¹⁴¹

Additionally, the usage of water by the mine has caused the death of over 5,000 children in the Guajira department due to the lack of water; with temperatures in the Guajira rising to between 35 and 42 degrees Celsius.¹⁴² However, water for the mine abounds, as they use 17 million liters of water per day and, “due to the fact that the water of the river is contaminated daily with the dust from the carbon, the subterranean wells that are used by other communities are also contaminated. Sources of water such as Aguas Blancas and Tabaco are now used for mining activity and sources of water such as Bartolico and Araña de Gato have disappeared.”¹⁴³ Cerrejón, though, proudly announces on their website their efficient management of water supply. Emphasizing their commitment to the communities surrounding the mine, in the year 2018 they delivered 27.2 million liters of water to communities around the mine, or the equivalent of a maximum of 2 days’ worth of water used for mining purposes in Cerrejón.¹⁴⁴

Cacarica River Basin, Chocó: Wood

Furthermore, the mining industry was not the only one that benefitted from the violence imposed on the Colombian population. The logging industry took its own share from the passage of Law 685 of 2001 as Article 235 states that mining companies that invest in logging projects

141 Ibid, 36.

142 Palomino, Sally. “La Comunidad Que Se Muere De Sed.” *El País*. May 22, 2015. https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/05/22/actualidad/1432256383_171660.html.

143 “Mina De Carbón Del Cerrejón Usa Diariamente 17 Millones De Litros De Agua.” Organización No a la Mina, April 7, 2016. <https://noalamina.org/latinoamerica/colombia/item/15459-mina-de-carbon-del-cerrejon-usa-diariamente-17-millones-de-litros-de-agua>.

144 “Gestión Integral Del Agua: Cerrejón: Minería Responsable.” Cerrejón, n.d. <https://www.cerrejon.com/index.php/desarrollo-sostenible/medio-ambiente/gestion-integral-del-agua/>.

will receive complete tax exemptions for 30 years. Coincidentally, in the years prior to the new mining code, and in the same years as the paramilitary violence occurred in the south of Bolívar, there were massive displacements in the department of Chocó, which has a population that is 82% afro-descendent¹⁴⁵ It is estimated that over 250,000 afro-descendants have been displaced from their collectively owned territories.¹⁴⁶

One such case was presented to the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights (CIDH in Spanish) as Case 12,573, Marino Lopez and others (Operación Genesis) vs Colombia.¹⁴⁷ It was presented by the afro-descendants and ancestral inhabitants of the Cacarica River basin who had been displaced by “Operation Genesis”, in the municipality of Río Sucio, Chocó. The Cacarica River feeds into the larger Atrato River and the Cacarica basin is located in the lower Atrato River.¹⁴⁸ The communities surrounding the basin total 23. All of these communities practiced a subsistence economy; and, before the joined military and paramilitary operations, they had reached a level of well-being for the community which satisfied their rights to a home, adequate food, and health care. They were self-sufficient communities. “[translation own] before the displacement we lived a good life because we had hens, pigs, and cows to feed ourselves and with this we subsisted without difficulty. We would also organize sporting events between the communities.”¹⁴⁹ This was the communities’ own achievement, with the state’s utter absence.

145 *Indicadores Básicos en Salud: Choco, Colombia – 2008*. Centro de Conocimiento de Colombia. Organización para el Bienestar y la Equidad Social (ORBES) ed. Organización Panamericana de la Salud. Bogotá, Colombia: 2010.

146 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia, Caso 12.573*, 14.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid., 14-15.

149 Ibid., 18.

Their land and territory were everything to these communities “[translation own] ancestrally we have lived off of the land, a patrimony left to us by our grandparents and that we have known how to take care of. It isn’t just anything, it is like our mother, something valuable, that you feel, that you can take care of, analyze, enjoy. They were virgin lands until a very short time ago when we came to them due to our mobility and the need to find a place in the land.”¹⁵⁰

Before Operation Genesis, the armed conflict had already reached the community of the Cacarica basin. In the years 1996 and 1997, the FARC had reached the towns of Salaquí, Truandó, Cacarica, and Riosucio. Additionally, around the mid-1990’s there were some dissidents of the demobilized guerrilla group EPL that acted in the jurisdiction of the municipalities of Apartadó, Turbo, and surroundings. In spite of this, various testimonies from the community express that the FARC only had a passing influence in the zones and that the EPL never had any important armed presence.¹⁵¹ The paramilitary presence in the area started at the beginning of the 1990’s with the ACCU under the Castaño brothers and in which the former Captain of the National Army, Carlos Mauricio Garcia alias “Doble Cero” also participated.

The first paramilitary incursion in the Department of Chocó occurred on the 10th of February of 1996 in the north of the department in Ungía. Over 90 men took over the municipality for 3 days. On the 17th of February of the same year, there was a second paramilitary operation that took over the town of Acandí. Starting that year, paramilitary operations expanded throughout the department. However, these paramilitary operations wouldn’t have been possible without the cooperation of the XVII Brigade of the Colombian

150 Ibid., 17.

151 Ibid., 20.

Army as Fredy Rendón Herrera, alias ‘El Aleman’, a well-known paramilitary leader, would testify “towards the end of 1995 and part of 1996 when I was the [paramilitary] commander in the Urabá zone there were operatives coordinated with the XVII Brigade under Rito Alejo del Rio.”¹⁵² During the whole year the paramilitaries harassed community members, stealing from them, disappearing some of them, and assassinating some of them. This caused shortages in the community as the population was afraid of wandering outside or traveling on the river, which was, and is, their only means of transportation. From the north of the Chocó, the threats of a large paramilitary operative reached down to the Cacarica basin.

By the end of the year, many families had been displaced up and down the Atrato River due to violence, threats, and the economic blockade caused by the paramilitaries. On December 20th, 1996, as a prelude to Operación Genesis, paramilitaries went into the municipality of Rio Sucio, raiding and sacking homes along the way. During what is known as “la toma de Riosucio” five people were disappeared and assassinated, one of them was the mayor of Riosucio. Following the terrorist acts, the paramilitaries controlled the access to the municipality from the north of the river and to the south, all in conjunction with the Colombian Army.

Fredy Rendon Herrera, ‘El Aleman’, paramilitary commander at the time, in his testimony said:

“the operative, for example, which brought the incursion of troops from the Frente Chocó and Frente Arles Hurtado to take over the municipality of Riosucio on the 20th of December of 1996, counted first with the coordination of the National Police... I went all the way there with the company of [paramilitary leader] Mr. Hasbaun sent by the Castaños, to coordinate the eventual entrance of the groups in that municipality and also... a meeting took place with the head of intelligence of the XVII Brigade at that

152 Ibid., 21.

time, Coronel Plazas, to coordinate what would be the non-interference of the army in the development of this operation to the municipality of Riosucio.”¹⁵³

Another paramilitary leader, Raul Hasbaun, was also clear in his testimonies on the links between paramilitaries and the Commander of the XVII Brigade of the Colombian Army, Rito Alejo del Rio,

“not only the general but also like I have been stating before many of the members of the brigade... I would dare to say that without a list of the generals since 1996 until 2004, the dates of my belonging to this organization that this coordination, I repeat was not only with general del Rio but with all of the generals of the brigade or commanders of the XVII Brigade.”¹⁵⁴

These paramilitary operations would take the lives of at least 17 people in the first 9 days of 1997 and cause the displacement of over 200 people from Riosucio. Additionally, a report from the local Catholic Church found dozens of decapitated bodies in the Atrato River. Over 70 people were murdered in the months of December 1996 and January 1997.¹⁵⁵ Just one month following the paramilitary operations in the area, a military operation displaced thousands. As in the previous scenarios, the main beneficiary of this heightened violence was the transnational capital that now proceeded to use the land and extract its resources.

All of the preceding operations were preludes to what is known as Operation Genesis and Operation Cacarica. Operation Genesis was a military operation between the 24th and 27th of

153 Ibid., 23.

154 Ibid., 23.

155 Ibid., 23.

February of 1997.¹⁵⁶ On February 27th, 1997, paramilitaries of the Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá (ACCU) raided the basin of the Cacarica River, in an operation that would last more than 10 days and in which the paramilitaries ordered the displacement of all of the communities surrounding the basin. The paramilitary operation was called Operation Cacarica. Operation Genesis and Operation Cacarica, the former a military operation and the latter a paramilitary one, were carried out jointly and with the knowledge of the governor of Antioquia at the time, and future president of Colombia (2002-2010), Alvaro Uribe Velez. As the defense attorney for Rito Alejo del Rio would bring up in court, “During the development of Operation Genesis, the governor of Antioquia at the time, Alvaro Uribe Velez, had permanent communication about the development of the operation with the person in charge of the operation Mr. general Rito Alejo del Rio Rojas and with the rest of the authorities.”¹⁵⁷ Fredy Herrera ‘El Aleman’ additionally testified that there were meetings between the paramilitary leadership, including himself and Raul Hasbun, and commander Rito Alejo del Rio, “the object of the meeting was to talk about the subject of the operation that we [the paramilitaries] would develop for the taking of Riosucio on the 20th of December of 1996 and the following Operation Genesis.”¹⁵⁸ The simultaneous operations used much of the same equipment. For example, the paramilitaries used the military frequencies to communicate, frequency 14.000. They also used

156 Pbicolumbia. “The Case of Operation Genesis vs. Colombia.” PBI Colombia (English). Peace Brigades International, January 11, 2017.

157 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia*, Caso 12.573, 27.

158 Ibid., 27.

the radio frequencies of the company Maderas del Darien S.A.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, the helicopters used by the military to bombard the population were also used to transport paramilitaries.¹⁶⁰

At approximately 7:45 am on February 24th, 1997, the first bombs were fired near Salaquí and Cacarica, followed by bursts of fire. This first operation lasted three hours; various planes flew over the area, dropping more bombs. Hundreds fled the Cacarica territory; the following morning the terrorist attack from the air recurred, with military planes once again flying over the area and dropping bombs, became still more evident when, amidst the chaos, delegates from the community went to talk to the military general in charge who presented himself with the name ‘Salomon’. On their way to the general, they first encountered a security team of about 100 men with the distinguishable ACCU bracelets on their arm, then they encountered another security team but this time they were wearing distinguishable military Brigade XVII insignias, they encountered the last security team before reaching ‘Salomon’ which was made up of men wearing ACCU and Brigade XVII gear.¹⁶¹ When the leaders were able to talk to the commander they made clear their desire to stay in the territories and their willingness to relocate momentarily while the conflict in the area was resolved, they even made clear that there was no guerrilla presence at the moment. However, after Salomon had talked to another general in the operation, his response was: “you must leave the territory.”¹⁶², a clear, straightforward threat. In later meetings with military and paramilitary generals, they were all given three days to leave. On the

159 “Exparamilitar Asegura Que Maderas Del Darién Financió a Las Auc.” VerdadAbierta.com. Verdad Abierta, March 4, 2019. <https://verdadabierta.com/paramilitar-asegura-que-maderas-del-darien-financio-a-las-auc/>.

160 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia, Caso 12.573*, 29.

161 Ibid., 32-33.

162 Ibid., 23.

26th of February, the Brigade threw grenades and bombs against the population, once more. They burnt down homes and public spaces, and, that same day, about 60 paramilitaries entered the Bijao hamlet causing another mass exodus from the community.¹⁶³ On this paramilitary operation, they went into Marino Lopez's home while he was working the land and take his identification card. He remained in hiding for the rest of that day but went to check on his children the next day. The paramilitaries found him. The following is an eye witness' testimony of the events that followed:

[Translation own] The armed men said: "you have to leave the town today". To this, Marino replied: "didn't you tell us we had 3 three days?" Without answering the question, 2 of the 12 armed men grabbed him by the arm and he asked to be let go. They then forced him to take off his shirt and boots and climb a coconut palm tree. He did so, brought down coconuts, peeled off the skin of the coconuts and gave each one of them a coconut ready to drink. While the armed men drank the water, Marino put on his boots and asked them to give him back the documents they had taken a day earlier, as they were necessary for him to be able to travel to Turbo [where the community was to be displaced to]. The armed men responded "you unashamed guerrilla, now you come asking for your documents, why didn't you have your papers with you?" He said he was a peasant, that all he did was work, that he didn't carry his documents with him because he could lose them in the fields or get wet with the rain or the river. One of the armed men pushed Marino and said to him: "why don't you ask your mother for your papers? [an insult in Colombia], while another said: "you look like you're a guerrilla fighter". Marino was clear once again that just like everyone there, he was not a guerrilla fighter, that they worked the land and were peasants and that if they were looking for guerrillas, they would have to go somewhere else because there was no guerrilla in the territory. The armed men reacted and kicked Marino; they obligated him to take off his boots once more, tied his hands behind his back, kicked him again, let him free, and pushed him again towards the river. We were separated by about 20 or 30 meters. After pushing him, one of them took out a machete and swung it to cut off Marino's head. Marino lifted up his shoulder and received the machete there and he started to bleed very heavily. After the machete attack, Marino threw himself on the river which didn't have much water. The armed men saw him and screamed "if you leave it will be worse." Marino then came back towards the men in the river bank, one of the assassins extended his arm to which Marino responded by extending his left arm as well to be helped out of the river. As soon as he grabbed his hand, the armed man took advantage and cut his head off with the machete. After his trunk was on the river bank, they cut off his arms at the height of his elbows, both legs at the height of his knees, and then opened up his belly and let his body

163 Ibid., 35.

*roll towards the river. The hands were stuck in a branch of a tree that had fallen, his head was brought like a trophy on the palm of his hands and then they took it to a large patio where there were 30 militaries and paramilitaries saying “look the son of a bitch has the face of a monkey.” When Marino’s head fell to the ground, they started kicking it like a soccer ball between them, they made passes with it for about 10 minutes”*¹⁶⁴

News of the assassination quickly spread and hundreds of members in the surrounding communities fled the zone as quickly as they could with nothing but clothes on their backs. During the first four months of 1997, due to the military and, continued, paramilitary operations against the afro-Colombian population, between 15,000 and 17,000 people were displaced from the communities in the region of the lower Atrato River.¹⁶⁵ The displacement and violence was followed by granting the now unoccupied land to large corporate enterprises.

The geographical space in which the Cacarica basin is located is among one of the most humid in the world; it also has one of the largest concentrations of diverse species. Because of this, the National Natural Park los Katios, where the Cacarica River is located, was declared as a patrimony of humanity and a reserve of the biosphere by UNESCO in 1994.¹⁶⁶ However, due to the incursion of private enterprises and the deforestation caused by them it was declared a heritage site in danger from 2009-2015.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the displacement of over 15,000 people benefitted the company Maderas del Darien S.A., a subsidiary of Pizano S.A., as they were able to start cutting down trees to obtain wood since 1998. The extraction started by the company was developed in the hamlets of La Balsa and San Jose de Balsa, where a paramilitary base had been

164 Ibid., 35-36.

165 Ibid., 24.

166 UNESCO World Heritage Centre. “Los Katios National Park.” UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/711>.

167 “Anexo: Patrimonio De La Humanidad En Peligro.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, July 5, 2019. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anexo:Patrimonio_de_la_Humanidad_en_peligro.

established during the operations in late 1996 and early 1997 inside the territory of the afro-Colombian communities.¹⁶⁸ As is recognized by different environmental and social non-profit organizations such as Semillas and Comision Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, there were no military confrontations between the guerrillas and the military, indicating no palpable guerrilla presence in the area, but what is definitely clear to the organizations and the community is that there was an intensification of the irrational extraction of wood by the company Maderas del Darien since 1998.¹⁶⁹

Previous to their successful incursion into the resource rich lands, Maderas del Darien went to the displaced communities offering its administrative support for the processing of the collective titling of the lands, working together with some members of the local development agency (Codechoco) in order to obtain the permits for the extraction of wood in the regions.¹⁷⁰ Here it is important to remember that the locations where Maderas del Darien developed its extraction were la Balsa and San Jose de Balsa, locations where paramilitary operations had been set up as well.¹⁷¹ Further, the former paramilitary leader, Fredy Rendon Herrera alias ‘El Aleman’ stated in his testimony that the company Maderas del Darien contributed to the financing of the Bloque Elmer Cardenas of the ACCU, which operated in the area. Dairon Mendoza Caraballo, a former member of this paramilitary death squad, stated that since 1997, the logging company contributed twenty million Colombian pesos monthly for the sustenance of

168 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia*, Caso 12.573, 23.

169 “¿Ecocidio Certificado? Pizano S.A., En El Territorio Del Bajo Atrato (Chocó).” Semillas. Grupo Semillas, January 23, 2006. <http://www.semillas.org.co/es/ecocidio-certificado-pizano-s-a-en-el-territorio-del-bajo-atrato-choc>.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

the paramilitary block.¹⁷² Furthermore, there have been six different Verification Commissions that have verified the illegal, illegitimate, and irrational deforestation done by Maderas del Darien S.A. and the concomitant paramilitary control in the zone.¹⁷³ Pizano S.A., the parent company of Maderas del Darien, responsible for the funding of paramilitaries, was presided by Enrique Camacho Matamoros, a member of the Board of Directors of the Investment Fund for Peace (Fondo de Inversión para la Paz, FIP)¹⁷⁴, a governmental institution which was created in the wake of Plan Colombia through Decree 1813 of 2000 for ‘investing in peace initiatives’¹⁷⁵; 100% of the wood extracted from the Chocó by Maderas del Darien is commercialized by Pizano S.A. and 75% of their products are commercialized in the United States.¹⁷⁶ However, it wasn’t only Maderas del Darien S.A. and Pizano S.A. that benefitted from the displacement of thousands in the region.

After having established their paramilitary operations in La Balsa, the paramilitary leaders also started their own extractive enterprise. They did so with the help from members of the Community Council of the Cacarica Basin.¹⁷⁷ A Strategic Alliance was formed between the

172 “Exparamilitar Asegura Que Maderas Del Darién Financió a Las Auc.” VerdadAbierta.com. Verdad Abierta, March 4, 2019. <https://verdadabierta.com/paramilitar-asegura-que-maderas-del-darien-financio-a-las-auc>; Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia, Caso 12.573*. Cacarica, Chocó and Bogota D.C., 2012, 53.

173 Ibid., 59.

174 “Enrique Camacho Matamoros Es El Nuevo Presidente De Millonarios.” *El Tiempo*. May 16, 2014.

176 “GREENPEACE Se Pronuncia Frente a La Deforestación En El Cacarica.” Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, March 14, 2006. <https://www.justiciaypazcolombia.com/greenpeace-se-pronuncia-frente-a-la-deforestacion-en-el-cacarica/>.

177 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia, Caso 12.573*. Cacarica, Chocó and Bogota D.C., 2012, 52.

legal representative of the Council, Jesus Adan Quinto – later killed on the 8th of April of 2014¹⁷⁸ – and the legal representative, at the time, of the company C.I. Multifruits, Ltda., Carlos Nikolai Strumberg, for the planting of vegetables, fruits, palm oil, rubber, and plantain in the territory of Collective Ownership of Cacarica. A territory collectively owned by the afro-descendent communities in Cacarica. Multifruits was created in the year 2001; paramilitary leaders such as ‘El Aleman’, with his brother Jairo de Jesus Rendon Herrera under the name of ‘German Monsalve’ and his other brother Daniel Rendon Herrera alias ‘Don Mario’, participated in the company.¹⁷⁹ Over 20,000 hectares were granted to the company, which equals about 25% of the Collective Territory, for 8 years with possible extensions of up to 50 years, with the option of extending the contract after these 58 years. The territory is located in the communities of Balsita, San Jose de Balsa, Varsovia, and Bendito Bocachico, with possible extensions into 23 other communities belonging to the Communitary Council of the Cacarica River basin.¹⁸⁰ The paramilitaries were clear in their objective as they stated to community members, in front of international observers, in 2001: “now to plant palm and coca... these lands are ours, and there will be a lot of money.”¹⁸¹ The legal representative, and, general manager, as well as shareholder of 25,000 stocks of the company was Juan Manuel Campo Eljach; one of the 11 members of the national directive of the Conservative Party¹⁸² and nephew of Rodolfo Campo Soto, who was the

178 Mora, Alejandra Bonilla. “Fiscalía Llama a Juicio Al Excongresista Juan Manuel Campo Por Temas Ambientales.” *El Espectador*. June 14, 2018.

179 “Un alto dirigente de Uribe beneficiado de los paramilitares.” Colectivo de Abogados Jose Alvear Restrepo, January 2, 2007. <https://www.colectivodeabogados.org/UN-ALTO-DIRIGENTE-DE-URIBE>.

180 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). *Caso Marino López y otros (operación Génesis) Vs. Colombia, Caso 12.573*. Cacarica, Chocó and Bogota D.C., 2012, 63.

181 *Ibid.*, 23.

182 “Un alto dirigente de Uribe beneficiado de los paramilitares.” Colectivo de Abogados Jose Alvear Restrepo.

General Director of the Incoder (Colombian Institute of Rural Development) – the institution responsible for distributing lands to the rural sector during Alvaro Uribe Velez presidency. Juan Manuel Campo was called to trial by the national prosecutor for the case of Multifruits on December of 2017.¹⁸³ It is important here to mention the links between paramilitary activity, paramilitary enterprise, and transnational capital. In the year 2005, Del Monte Fresh Produce signed a contract with the company Multifruits in order to export 52 tons of plantain into the U.S. and European markets. Del Monte Fresh Produce didn't deny having a contract with Multifruits and stated that they bought their produce from various agents in the port of Turbo, port that Multifruits used for shipping their products.¹⁸⁴

Chiquita Brands, Úraba: Plantains/Bananas

Transnational food production corporations have also caused great violence in Colombia. One main beneficiary of fruit production in the country, specifically the production of banana, has been the U.S. international corporation Chiquita Brands International. Although this is not a chronological history of Chiquita's involvement in Colombia, one can not ignore the long dark history of the banana giant in the country. The name Chiquita Brands is a modern adaptation of the infamous American corporation the United Fruit Company (UFCO). As in many other countries in Latin America, during the early and mid-20th century the United Fruit Company controlled a large part of the fruit market that was produced in the region.

183 Mora, Alejandra Bonilla. "Fiscalía Llama a Juicio Al Excongresista Juan Manuel Campo Por Temas Ambientales." *El Espectador*. June 14, 2018.

184 "Un alto dirigente de uribe beneficiado de los paramilitares." Colectivo de Abogados Jose Alvear Restrepo, January 2, 2007.

The United Fruit Company never disappeared though, it simply expanded and changed names. In the year 1970 UFCO merged with AMK Corporation, and it would now be called United Brands Company; this company then changed their name to Chiquita Brands International in the year 1990¹⁸⁵. In Colombia, Chiquita Brands funded the armed conflict since the late 1980s up until at least 2004. Since 1989 up until 1997 Chiquita Brands made payments to the leftist guerrilla groups FARC, ELN, and EPL through transactions that included benefits for the company in the regions of Urabá and Santa Marta. Documentation has been discovered for payments from October 1991 until 1996 which total an estimated \$856, 815 in those 5 years to these specific groups¹⁸⁶. The level of cooperation with the guerilla groups went beyond simple extortion payments as was claimed by Chiquita¹⁸⁷. As is shown in the following memo from 1994, it is stated that “the Turbo General Manager told me that the Guerrilla groups are used to supply security personnel at the various farms.”¹⁸⁸ Chiquita Brands was using the Colombian armed struggle in order to benefit their investments in the country by allying with whichever armed group controlled the zone.

However, in the mid to late 1990s after the FARC and other guerrilla forces lost control and the paramilitary took over the area where Chiquita operated, the banana giant began making payments to the newly formed paramilitary group AUC. Their involvement with paramilitary

185 “¿Chiquita Repite Historia De 1928?” El Espectador, March 18, 2007.

186 Navarrete, Tatiana, Michael Evans, and Juan Diego Restrepo E., eds. “Chiquita Papers Document over \$800,000 in Payments to Colombian Guerrillas.” National Security Archive, May 11, 2017. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/colombia-chiquita-papers/2017-05-11/chiquita-papers-document-over-800000-payments-colombian-guerrillas>.

187 Kenard, Matt. “Chiquita Made a Killing from Colombia's Civil War.” Pulitzer Center, January 27, 2017. <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/chiquita-made-killing-colombias-civil-war>.

188 Original declassified document available in appendix E. Accessed through National Security Archive. Washington, DC: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB340/19940104.pdf>

groups would be much greater than it ever was with guerrilla groups and became key for the exponential paramilitary expansion in the country in the late 90s and early 2000s. Many payments also occurred in the region of Santa Marta. Indeed, money flowed to other paramilitary zones in the country, such as the Bloque Norte¹⁸⁹. According to paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso, all the banana companies of the Urabá region met at the end of 1997 in order to name Raul Hasbun as their representative to the AUC; he became the commander of the Bloque Bananero of the AUC. The pact agreed to in this meeting was made between Chiquita, Banacol, Uniban, Proban, and Del Monte¹⁹⁰

Testimonies from other paramilitaries such as El Aleman and Raul Hasbun provided evidence that it was not only Chiquita that contributed to paramilitary death squads but also all of the big banana companies in the region including four Colombian companies: Uniban, Banacol, Sumisa, and Bagatela and three U.S. companies: Proban (Dole), Conserva (Del Monte), and Banadex (Chiquita). Payments were made through Convivirs, especially the Convivir Papagayo, which was created and promoted during the time that Alvaro Uribe Velez was the governor of the department of Antioquia – where part of the Urabá region is located¹⁹¹. The testimony of paramilitary Leader Jorge 40 would also show that 13 Convivirs in different municipalities of the Urabá region were used as facades for the AUC to receive funding: San Juan de Urabá (La Palma), Necoclí (Costa Azul), Turbo (Convitur, campes, una nueva luz), Carepa (La guayaba, Papagayo), Chicogordó (Palma Real, Chicogordo Alegre), San Pedro de Urabá (Girasoles),

189 “¿Chiquita Repite Historia De 1928?” El Espectador, March 18, 2007.

190 “Pacto Con Bananeras y Asesinato De Sindicalistas.” Nuevo El Siglo. May 15, 2007.

191 López, Claudia. “¿Indignados Con Chiquita!” El Tiempo. September 25, 2007.
<https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-2667419>.

Apartadó (Coopchuridó, Tagua del Darien), Mutatá (Coembera)¹⁹². In one example, the Convivir Papagayo received payments from the banana companies at three cents per dollar of each box exported. Sometimes the banana companies actually allowed for the Convivirs to withdraw these three cents per box directly from the company's bank accounts, showing the deep association between them¹⁹³. From 1997 until 2004 there were more than 472 million boxes exported from the Urabá region. This equates to 13.6 million dollars. Chiquita was responsible for 17 percent of the total shipment of boxes at that time which corresponded to 2.3 million dollars in payments to the Convivir Papagayo; Chiquita recognized \$1.7 million in transactions.¹⁹⁴

Transactions with the AUC landed the corporation in a DC District Court where they settled on a plea deal in the year 2007 for engaging in transactions with a specially-designated global terrorist. The multinational corporation was fined \$25 million by the court for payments to the AUC¹⁹⁵; no money was ever given to the families of victims of the perpetrated violence. The large payments to the paramilitary groups was disguised in company reports as “donations to citizen reconnaissance group made at request of Army” and “donations for security services.”¹⁹⁶ In several investigations, the reports even show that about a dozen executives and employees of

192 “¿Chiquita Repite Historia De 1928?” El Espectador, March 18, 2007.

193 “Raúl Hasbún a Juicio Por Contribuciones De Bananeras.” VerdadAbierta.com, December 3, 2008. <https://verdadabierta.com/raul-hasbun-a-juicio-por-contribuciones-de-bananeras/>.

194 López, Claudia. “¡Indignados Con Chiquita!” El Tiempo. September 25, 2007. <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-2667419>.

195 United States of America v Chiquita Brands International, Inc (District Court of District of Columbia March 13, 2007).

196 Original declassified document available in appendix F. Accessed through National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB340/19970000-19980000.pdf>

Chiquita knew about the payments to the AUC between 1995 and 2003.¹⁹⁷ However, the support from the banana giants to the paramilitary forces in Colombia wouldn't only be financial, it also involved material support.

On November 7th of 2001, the Colombian subsidiary of Chiquita, Banadex, was responsible for unloading and storing over 3,000 AK-47 and four million cartridges for the AUC from their cargo ship Otterloo. The paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño defined this moment as one of the key moments of the armed conflict in Colombia and one that allowed the paramilitary group to expand all over the country.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, the relation between cocaine shipments by paramilitaries through Chiquita's cargo ships has also been of concern in Colombia. The computer of paramilitary leader 'Jorge 40' contained documents detailing cocaine shipments to Europe through banana cargo. The prosecutor's report states that "According to our intelligence reports, the company used for these shipments is named Chiquita."¹⁹⁹ Additional evidence has shown that seven of the multinational's cargo ships had been involved in shipments of cocaine hidden in bananas; over 1 ½ tons of drugs worth over \$33 million. Two of the cargo ships are named 'Chiquita Bremen' and 'Chiquita Belgie'.²⁰⁰ The many ways in which paramilitaries and banana multinationals benefitted off each other resulted in some of the most violent times for the population of the northwestern region of Colombia.

197 Gómez Maseri, Sergio. "Chiquita Dio Nombres y Montos Pagados a Los 'Paras' y a Las FARC." El Tiempo, April 29, 2009.

198 "Banana 'Para-Republic'." VerdadAbierta.com, October 21, 2008. <https://verdadabierta.com/banana-para-republic/>.

199 "¿Chiquita Repite Historia De 1928?" El Espectador, March 18, 2007.

200 "A indagatoria, tres directivos norteamericanos de Chiquita Brands Inc." VerdadAbierta.com, December 9, 2009. <https://verdadabierta.com/a-indagatoria-tres-directivos-norteamericanos-de-chiquita-brands-inc/>

Between the years 1997 and 2004 the paramilitaries in the Antioquian Urabá caused over 60,000 displacements. In 1997 alone, over 15,000 people were displaced from the Bajo Atrato area between Antioquia and Urabá.²⁰¹ Between 2000 and 2001, the municipality of Apartadó, in the Gulf of Urabá was the most displaced community in Colombia. In the year 1997 alone there were 2,482 armed incursions of paramilitaries in Urabá, however, this zone would also be used as a launching ground for massacres elsewhere as it was from this region that the planes flew out to the department of Meta in order to commit the infamous Mapiripan massacre in 1997.²⁰² Ever Veloza, alias HH, commander of the Bloque Bananero and Bloque Calima of the AUC confessed to over 1,800 killings done by paramilitary groups he commanded in the regions of Urabá, Valle del Cauca, and Cauca. All of it was only possible with the funding from banana corporations in the Urabá region such as Chiquita.²⁰³

Although Chiquita ‘officially’ left the country in 2004 after its links with paramilitaries were discovered, investigations claim that Chiquita never left the country and that it kept funding paramilitaries.²⁰⁴ According to the Prosecutor’s office, two firms took over Chiquita’s operations in the country, Invesmar S.A. and Olinsa. Invesmar S.A. was a company based out of the British Virgin Islands and owned by an international conglomerate led in Colombia by Banacol S.A.. Banacol continued making payments to Convivirs from 2004 until 2007; in total it paid around 3

201 “Cacarica: 22 Years of Resistance.” International Center for Transitional Justice, n.d. <https://www.ictj.org/node/25112>.

202 “Banana 'Para-Republic'.” VerdadAbierta.com, October 21, 2008. <https://verdadabierta.com/banana-para-republic/>.

203 Redacción El Tiempo. “Confesiones De Paras Ahorraron Unos 20 Años De Investigaciones.” El Tiempo, December 16, 2007.

204 Redacción Judicial. “Chiquita Sigue En Colombia.” El Espectador, December 6, 2009.

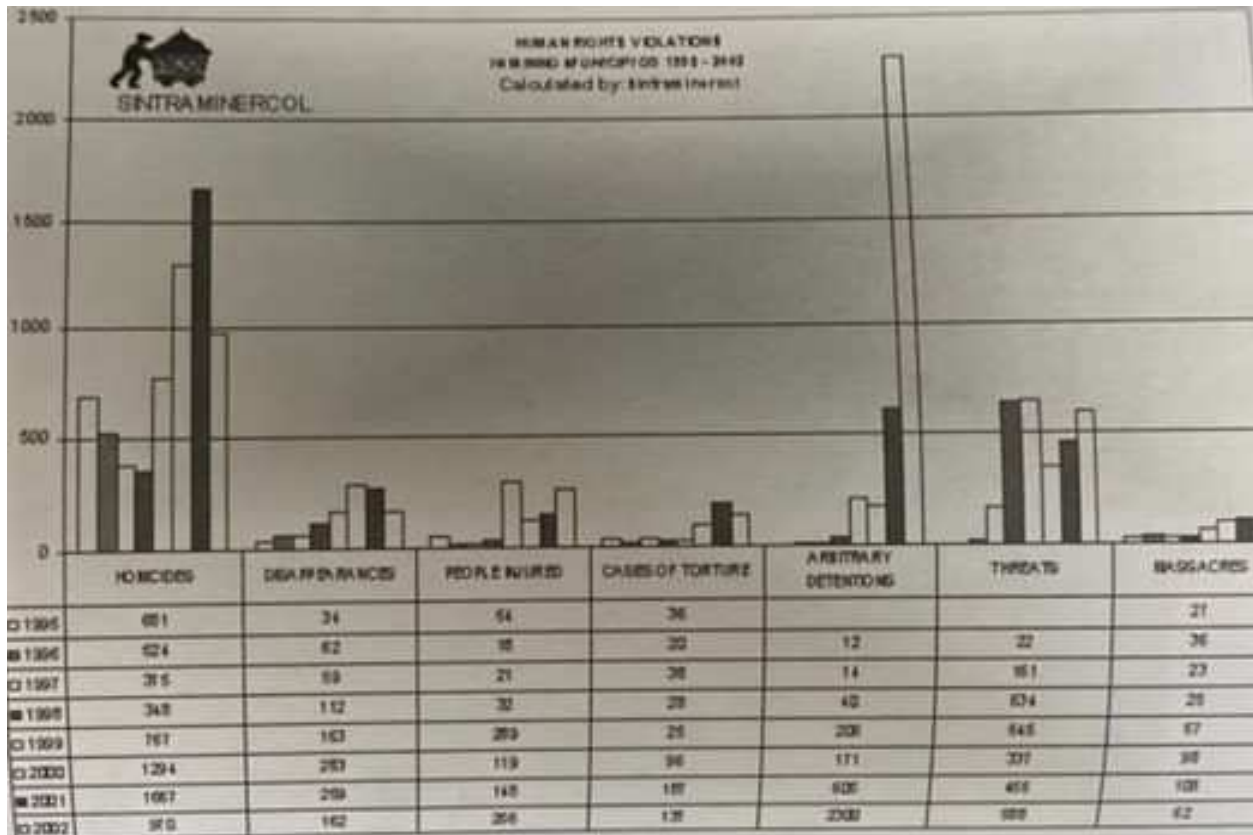
billion Colombian pesos (\$1,311,000 dollars as of November 2005) to Papagayo and other security firms controlled by Raul Emilio Hasbun.²⁰⁵

The second firm, Olinsa, Operación Logística Integral was created on April of 2005 by Gloria Andrea Cuervo Torres, an ex-employee of Chiquita. It was founded with \$20 million Colombian pesos (\$8,700 dollars). Soon thereafter the banana giant invested over one billion pesos (\$437,000 dollars) for the purchase of equipment. Chiquita even supplied Olinsa with five million dollars from 2005 to 2008. The links between the two companies were so clear that almost 99 percent of Olinsa's annual operations were financial and commercial activities whose main client was the conglomerate controlled by Chiquita brands. In 2007, Olinsa earned \$10,891,000,000 Colombian pesos for their provision of services out of which \$10,763,000,000 were generated in businesses with Chiquita.²⁰⁶

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid.

Table 1: Human rights violations in mining municipalities, calculated by Sintraminercol (2005)²⁰⁷



²⁰⁷ Ramírez Cuellar, Francisco. *The Profits of Extermination*, 86.

CHAPTER 3: Counterinsurgency, Paramilitaries, and Cocaine Traffickers: The Massacre of Trujillo

The term ‘counterinsurgency’ is one commonly heard of when speaking about Latin American history. It specifically refers to the strategies used to defeat insurgencies that threaten the ‘nation’ and its institutions. As such, counterinsurgency has been widely used throughout the history of Latin American countries. The advancement of technology, as well as speeding globalization, led to an “omnipresent counterinsurgent infrastructure”²⁰⁸ in the continent which was furthered by U.S. geopolitical interests in the region in the mid to latter part of the 20th century. Even in the 19th century, the U.S. had already experimented with counterinsurgency strategies in foreign countries that followed its interests through “nation-building”. In the 20th century, the North American empire began creating or fortifying centralized intelligence agencies that set up the backbone of counterinsurgencies in the continent for decades to follow.²⁰⁹ In Colombia, as a complement to optimizing conditions for capital accumulation through displacement, the counterinsurgency tactics, known as the National Security Doctrine, pursued in the 20th century have simultaneously been used to establish and maintain the ‘national order’ advanced by the state and its ruling classes. This chapter will give a wider context to counterinsurgent violence and its impact in the armed conflict, and it gives a detailed account of an emblematic case, The Massacre of Trujillo, which resembles hundreds of cases during the 1980s through the 2000s, all in different scale but just as tragic. The case of the Massacre of Trujillo will elucidate how the National Security Doctrine was carried out at an individual level

208 Grandin, Greg, and G. M. Joseph, eds. *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010, 3; a more in-depth history of the creation and development of Colombia’s intelligence services and its links to the U.S. can be found in: Galvis, Silvia, and Alberto Donadio. *Colombia Nazi 1939 - 1945; Espionaje alemán, La cacería Del FBI, Santos, López y Los Pactos Secretos*.

209 Ibid, 3.

and the suffering of hundreds of victims whose tragic deaths have been forgotten or ignored by the majority of Colombians.

In attempting to understand the National Security Doctrine and its counterinsurgent nature in Colombia, it is beneficial to look at other cases that have been through a similar path. If one looks for example at Guatemala and El Salvador, two countries that also lived through horrific armed conflicts that lasted decades, one can see that the counterinsurgency tactics enacted in Colombia involved more than a national drive for terror. Although each case obviously has its own idiosyncrasies, the general counterinsurgency doctrines in the continent followed general patterns. This is in large part due to the fact that, as mentioned throughout this research, it followed the geopolitical interests of the U.S. empire and those of the ruling classes in each country. The influence and push of the U.S. in the continent for governments to establish strict counterinsurgency measures led to the materialization of the concept of an ‘internal enemy’ in basically every country in Latin America. The enemy, or threat to the nation, wasn’t to be found in foreign powers attempting to colonize new territory but from rebellious or revolutionary citizens inside.

Just as in Colombia, the strategies in the two Central American countries followed the same patterns of violence against the civil population. During the period of 1979 to 1985, the military efforts in the counterinsurgency war in Guatemala were systematically used against social movements seeking reform or radical political, economic, and social change. Strategies such as the complete annihilation of social movements both in the rural and urban sector, strengthening of the military and their increased involvement in social activity, and paramilitary units known as ‘Patrols of Civil Self-Defense’ or (PACs) were created and systematically used

throughout the country.²¹⁰ In El Salvador, similar tactics were used. The ‘Nationalist Democratic Organization’ was a paramilitary organization that by the 1970s had reached 100,000 members spread in intelligence and military operations. Other paramilitary organizations popped up throughout the 1980s.²¹¹ The two Central American cases show that there have been systematic counterinsurgency strategies put in place throughout the countries of Latin America which have generated great violence against the civil population. Colombia is no exception.

As was seen in the first chapter, the ‘counterinsurgency’ doctrine established in Colombia has a long history which combines the native and historical repudiation, from important sectors of society, especially in the ruling class, for grassroots movements that seek redistributive revindications and social justice, and the implementation of ‘internal security’ measures, proposed and strategized by the U.S., since the 1960s.²¹² The contemporary reproduction of counterinsurgency tactics in the country – more commonly known as the ‘National Security Doctrine’ – can be understood as having different cycles. Sociologist Vilma Liliana Franco Restrepo identifies three cycles which are helpful to comprehend how the National Security Doctrine was established and developed. She identifies the first cycle beginning with the passing of Decree 3398 of 1965 where paramilitarism was legalized.²¹³ It is important here to establish, once again, as it is commonly missed by many writing about Colombian history, that this decree was passed after several military ‘missions’ from the U.S. which recommended the creation of

210 *Guatemala Memoria Del Silencio*. Guatemala: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999, 183-186.

211 Hristov, Jasmin. *Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*, 40.

212 The interpretation carried out throughout this research is that the counterinsurgency strategies violently carried out by the state through its security forces and paramilitaries from the 1980s through the 2000s were a contemporary reproduction of a national phenomenon that has occurred through the majority of its history as a sovereign nation, not a brand-new creation of the late 20th century

213 For a more detailed history of this decree refer to chapter 1 on this thesis.

‘paramilitary’ forces in accordance with the wider hemispherical geopolitical goals of the U.S. empire during the Cold War. The relationship between the U.S.’ global ‘anti-communist’ stance and the Colombian state was solidified as Colombia was the only Latin American country to send troops to aid the North Americans in carrying out the counterinsurgency war in Korea in the 1950s. The Colombian military intensified its role as a frontline in the global fight ‘against communism’. As Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfredo Vazquez Carrizosa explained in hindsight:

“During the Kennedy administration, Washington took great pains to transform our regular armies into counterinsurgency brigades, accepting the new strategy of the death squads... it is the right to fight and to exterminate social workers, trade unionists, men and women who are supportive of the establishment, and those who are assumed to be communist extremists.”²¹⁴

One of the main features of the counterinsurgent transformation in the 1960s was the creation of an official ‘internal enemy’ identified as the recently formed Marxist guerrillas and ‘their supporters’, more widely understood as anyone seeking social justice and redistributive revindications; anything or anyone that ‘smelled of communism’. Further, extreme measures such as ‘State of Sieges’ became increasingly more common, the powers of the military were greatly expanded in their control of social mobilizations, and the civil population began being mobilized and organized by the state through the military into ‘self-defense units’ or paramilitary units.

The second cycle identified by Franco Restrepo is from 1978 to 1982. As previously documented in the first chapter of this thesis, there were mass mobilizations that took place in the mid to late 1970’s which resulted in increased counterinsurgency strategies and a new cycle

214 Giraldo, Javier. *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*, 10.

in the reproduction of the National Security Doctrine. This period is also a key period as it includes the passage of the Statute of Security of 1978 which greatly increased military involvement in social matters and expanded even more the organization of the civil population in the rural side into paramilitary groups. As cited by Franco Restrepo, the Manual of General Instructions for Counter guerrilla Operations of 1979 stated the need to organize ‘self-defense’ units in small rural villages across the nation so that they would cooperate in an ‘active manner in the struggle’ against the insurgent groups.²¹⁵ From here on, the state decentralized its monopoly of power by creating small paramilitary units throughout the country, many alliances began being created by paramilitary units in different regions and with different actors. It is during this period that transnational and national corporations, cocaine traffickers, landowners and politicians began to be even more involved with these groups. The creation of armed groups of civilians, officially ‘separate’ from state institutions, also made the state seem neutral in the armed conflict. Consequences of the actions of such armed groups were not placed on the state. This allowed the first experiments with organized paramilitary strategies of *tierra arrasada* or ‘scorched earth’ – in a Vietnam style – to begin to take hold such as in Puerto Boyacá and Magdalena Medio.²¹⁶ Impunity from crimes committed by paramilitaries using such strategies led to their increased activity against grassroots organizations, political parties, and any social group seeking reform or radical change. The definition of internal enemy was enlarged to include

215 Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliana. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*. Bogotá D.C.: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2009, 264.

216 The ‘scorched earth’ technique was also widely used in Guatemala to annihilate social movements. For more information refer to source in bibliography: Guatemala Memoria Del Silencio. Guatemala: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999; For more information on the first experiments of ‘scorched earth’ in Colombia in Puerto Boyaca and Magdalena Medio please refer to: Gallego, Carlos Medina. *Autodefensas, Paramilitares y narcotráfico En Colombia: Origen, Desarrollo y consolidación. El Caso "Puerto boyacá"*. Bogotá: Editorlal Documentos Periodísticos, 1990.

all civilians involved in such groups as legitimate targets for participating in the guerrilla's tactic of 'combination of different forms of struggle'; the population was interpreted to be the 'unarmed' arm of the guerrillas. Increasingly so, civilians began being labeled as 'insurgent civil population'.²¹⁷

From the mid-1980s forward, cocaine traffickers and their cartels became increasingly more involved with paramilitary groups as they shared common interests such as the acquisition of land and the control of the local rural population. The narco-paramilitary conquest of many regions led to the creation of permanent civilian armies and small 'para-states' where everything was controlled by the existing parainstitutionality in the specific regions.²¹⁸ The existing parainstitutionality in the country, which left no institution of the state untouched, allowed for cocaine traffickers to use organized paramilitary groups to defend their capitalists interest while advancing the goals of the counterinsurgency war by funding the illegal armed groups of the state. As Hristov writes, "unlike armed groups dedicated strictly to the cartels' operations, paramilitary groups exist not to sustain a particular illicit activity, but rather the entire existing politico-economic system."²¹⁹ As such, the paramilitaries acquired a new breath in an internal conflict that at the time had already been carrying on for over 20 years.

With this in mind, the third cycle is from 1989-1994, which also encompasses the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the imposition of the neoliberal order in the country. During this time, guerrillas also began a more offensive tactic which led to a multiplication of violence

217 Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliana. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*, 265.

218 Gallego, Carlos Medina, and Ardila Téllez Mireya Astrid. *La Violencia Parainstitucional, Paramilitar y Parapolicial En Colombia*. Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia: Rodríguez Quito Editores, 1994, 50.

219 Hristov, Jasmin. *Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism: Violent Systems of Capital Accumulation in Colombia and Beyond*, 146.

in the country. Paramilitarism was declared illegal, however, its existence remained plausible through various decrees and the organizational and material strength they had acquired in the previous years.²²⁰ To add to this, the military institution was given huge boosts from the U.S. empire in its objective of hemispheric control. From 1984 to 1992, 6,844 Colombian soldiers were trained by the U.S. through military programs and, in the 1990s, Colombia became the nation with the largest U.S. military training program in the hemisphere.²²¹ It is during this cycle, and the following years, that many large-scale massacres begin taking place as a common occurrence in the country.

As the case of Trujillo will show, many of these massacres, and the different forms of violence against the subaltern population in general, were committed against civilians that were specifically seeking redistributive vindications in the economic sense, organizing themselves in unions, cooperatives, and other collective enterprises, and seeking social justice. The National Security Doctrine based itself on, and increasingly more so as time went on, heavily militarizing any collective manifestation and labeling any social protest as being led and organized by ‘guerrilleros in civilian clothes’, especially in the rural areas of the country. Under the umbrella of fighting a war against rebel armed groups, the state and its paramilitary arm brutally punished all expressions of protest and/or collective organizing by committing massacres, selective assassinations, disappearances, and forced displacements.

The ‘counterinsurgency war’ was then a defense of the political, social, and economic goals that were declared as ‘order’ by the ruling classes, which by the mid-1980s in Colombia included the cocaine trafficking elite and the solidification of the neoliberal order. Any attempt

220 Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliána. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*. 267.

221 Giraldo, Javier. *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*. 12.

to change the order, to seek political and economic democratization or any participation in actions that threatened the established 'order' were seen as 'insurgent' and declared military objectives that 'threatened national security'. As such, the discourse surrounding social manifestations was one of criminalization. This became the justification of military actions against them as they were interpreted as mechanisms used by rebel forces to gain control of territory. Repression became not just a strategy used against rebel forces but, and perhaps in a more important way, against all expressions of protest in part of the subaltern population. The justification for this was found in the nature of the guerrilla struggle.

In the guerrilla struggle, support from the subaltern population is a key objective. This is seen for example in the way an ELN founding member described their beginnings:

“ the peasants were tired of promises and fed up with deceit, and with waiting peacefully for elections to better their ever worsening position. Their grandfathers had died as serfs, so had their fathers, and if thing went on like this, a similar fortune would await their sons. There is no other solution: they are ready to support the armed struggle... the repressive forces of the government were on the alert, they had had many years' experience of reactionary violence... Naturally we had previously studied at length the real situation of our country. This showed us that the road we were taking so firmly and decidedly was the just one and the only one. But apart from these objectively analyzed factors, we had the support of the peasants...”²²²

Further, the strategy of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) of the 'combination of all form of struggle' since the 1960s which included the armed struggle, as well as influencing the civil population, was interpreted by those propelling the National Security Doctrine as an indication of the tactics needed to be used in order to protect the 'national order'. The civil population became the main target of the National Security Doctrine as they were the key to the success of a radical change or any real reform in the country to the detriment of the interests of

222 Gott, Richard. *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*, 238.

the state and its ruling classes. Since the main objective of the armed insurgents was to gain the sympathies and support of the population, so did counterinsurgency strategies become primarily targeted at civilians, specifically the subaltern population. However, the main strategy wasn't one of gaining the sympathies through actions of the state, it was the extermination of the groups organizing in communities.

As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, the strategies of the 1980s onward followed the same principles under which they were created two decades earlier. A 1967 U.S. Counterinsurgency manual stated that "society itself is in war and the resources, motives, and targets of struggle are found almost completely in the local population."²²³ Continuing down the same line of thought, the doctrine established in the 1980s followed the idea of 'taking the water from the fish', a famous metaphor to indicate that if the civil population was taken away from the insurgents, then it would be successful. All social bases needed to be dealt with, at all costs. Complete towns were labeled as 'subversive' towns, and 'legitimate' military targets.²²⁴ As a result, violence in part of the state and paramilitaries against the civil population became a regular occurrence and the main strategy used to fight the armed conflict against the guerrillas.

In order to fight this counterinsurgency war, and as legally established in the 1960s, the state sought it necessary to involve the civil population not just as a target of war but also as 'self-defense' or paramilitary units that would bring order and control to far rural areas. So much so that military manuals from the early 1980s through the late 1980s still systematically emphasized the principal role of the military institution as the "organization, instruction and support of 'self-defense' units"; the goal was for the units to be 'self-sufficient' and the providers

223 Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliána. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*, 504.

224 Ibid, 501-502.

of safety in their regions.²²⁵ The military institution was in charge of providing the paramilitaries with weapons for war, transporting weapons for paramilitaries, exchanging intelligence, combining and training troops, planning and executing missions, recruiting paramilitaries from military institutions, and even creating military security rings for paramilitary operations.²²⁶ Further, the creation of paramilitary units since the 1960s was based on a deep fear in part of the ruling classes and the state of anything that resembled revolution or even reform. As such, this fear guided the decisions to be made in regard to the ‘internal enemy’ and their manifestations in civil society such as strikes, protests, and any union or collective political activity. The paranoid conception of the ‘internal enemy’ as hiding in plain sight – as civilians – established the bases for the militarization of society and the criminalization of any social protest. The military, and, due to its close relation, the paramilitaries, became the institutions in charge of dealing with civil protests and collective citizen demands.

To this end, the National Security Doctrine historically relied on legislative measures. Under constant ‘State of Sieges’ or ‘States of Internal Commotion’ the state eliminated any judicial control over military tasks, allowed for individual and mass arbitrary detentions without trial, and suspended constitutional rights. Such legislation became so commonplace that much of the backbone of the counterinsurgency war became the enactment of such repressive measures. In attempting to justify the repressive legislative acts as necessary in order to protect the *patria*, the Minister of Defense in 1995 went as far as stating “if what we’re seeing is that [the guerrillas] ignore the right to life, is it not be worth it to run some small risks to make possible

225 Ibid, 228.

226 Ibid, 230; Hristov, Jasmin. *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009, 88.

the protection of that right?”²²⁷ This constant push to ‘do what is necessary’ in the advancement of counterinsurgency strategies, regardless of the ‘small risks’ involved, was one of the main reasons to pursue the paramilitary route in order to bypass constitutional rights, even after repressive measures had already passed through legislation. In this way, the creation and sustenance of paramilitary forces followed a clear logic of furthering the class interests of the state, its ruling classes, and the ‘national order’ established to protect said interests.

Due to this fact, the National Security Doctrine contradicted the ‘self-defense’ maxim preached by its proponents. A paramilitary leader stated in the 1990s: “see they aren’t crimes though. We have had to pick up a rifle to protect the rights of millions of Colombians.”²²⁸ The defense of the tragic events that have followed the doctrine have mostly been defended by arguing that it was the rebel guerrilla forces that initiated the ‘assault on society as a whole’ and that any violence that has come from the state or paramilitaries has been collateral damage as a result of protecting the Colombian population from guerrillas. As the initial aggression came from the insurgents, then all of the resulting violence is their responsibility. With this logic, all responsibility of crimes committed was avoided. However, as was documented in chapter 1, not only did counterinsurgency doctrines exist in the country before any formal insurgent groups were created, but they also existed to act in what Franco Restrepo calls a “preventative-punitive” way. Preventative in that it is used in order to prevent changes to the established order through different means and punitive in that it is also in retribution for past assaults on part of the guerrillas. This is evident by the constant usage of extreme violence against unarmed civilians

227 Statement by the Minister of Defense, Juan Carlos Esguerra in the newspaper *El Colombiano*, Medellin, September 21st, 1995, pg 16A, as cited by: Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliana. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*, 104.

228 Statement by paramilitary leader, Salvatore Mancuso, on *Noticias RCN*, August 5th, 2003. As cited on: Franco Restrepo, Vilma Liliana. *Orden Contrainsurgente Y dominación*, 57.

and the extension of the concept of the ‘internal enemy’ to include even those that pose no risk to the lives of those carrying out and supporting the National Security Doctrine. Due to the expansion of the concept of an ‘internal enemy’, punitive violence as retaliation and punishment for past clashes with guerrilla groups in part of paramilitaries also became commonplace. All of those participating in collective actions were interpreted to be the same as a *guerrillero*. Any violence against them was violence against the guerrillas. Additional to the individual punitive reasoning for violence, which in the interpretation of this thesis is not the main reason for the existence of paramilitaries, instead of ‘self-defense’, the doctrine has been carried out with the specific purpose of placing high costs on any radical political activity, any semblance of collective organizing, and of political opposition, and it has acted to force the abandonment of collective and associative goals of entire communities, especially in the rural sector.²²⁹

The creation of an ‘internal enemy’, meaning anyone that fought for human rights or social justice, meant that violence against those that fit the category was justified as they “were working together with the terrorist guerrilla”. This way of looking at the civil population for decades, allowed for massacres such as that in Trujillo to take place without much attention being paid to them by the general public, especially in the main urban centers. The result has been not only historical amnesia but also the invisibility of such events; not only that these massacres have been forgotten by the general population, but also that they have existed in oblivion, with many in the country not ever knowing that such events have taken place. However, by taking a look at the events as they unfolded from the perspective of the victims, one can see the wider implications of the case. A systematic pattern of incessant violence in part of the state against a population seeking a better and more just life, constant stigmatization for

229 Ibid, 511.

participating in collective actions, and the use of the extreme in order to create fear and destroy all collective forms of expression of grievances that go against the interests of the ruling class and the state.

The Trujillo Massacre

The Trujillo Massacre refers to a series of selective homicides, forced disappearances, tortures, and massacres carried out in the municipalities of Trujillo, Riofrío, and Bolívar, all in the Department of Valle del Cauca, between the years 1986 and 1994. The Massacre is described by human rights groups in Colombia as a “continued massacre” in order to place emphasis on the extreme social, political, and cultural violence that the community faced during that consecutive stretch of time. The horrible events were possible due to an alliance between the state’s counterinsurgent forces represented in the military and the police, paramilitaries, members of the business sector, and the cocaine traffickers Diego Montoya and Henry Loaiza. Although the state’s armed forces acted under a ‘counterinsurgent’ umbrella in order to ‘protect the Colombian population from guerrilla forces’ throughout the country, the crimes committed by this alliance followed a systematic pattern experienced by the subaltern populations of Colombia. This pattern manifested itself through social cleansing, dispossession of lands, political persecution, and the elimination of witnesses.²³⁰ Thus, when one examines this case one must be aware of the systematic repression going on in the country at the time. The Trujillo Massacre didn’t occur in a vacuum; between the years 1982 and 2007 there were over 2505 massacres in the country.²³¹ Furthermore, The Trujillo Massacre followed the systematic use of paramilitary forces against campesino communities with valuable resources, land, and labor power and against a community

230 *Trujillo Una Tragedia Que No Cesa*. Colombia: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2011, 37.

231 *Ibid*, 15.

with redistributive revindications and social justice organizing. As one will be able to understand by the end of this chapter, this continued massacre didn't occur simply because there were violent criminal groups in the area – the state's monopoly of violence wasn't put in place against the criminal paramilitary and cocaine trafficking groups there – it occurred against a community that had a recent history of political activism and had started heavily organizing collective enterprises in order to become a self-sustainable community and receive better services from the state. This aspect of the violence is supported by evidence of the victims' occupations. The majority of victims were either campesinos or day laborers (54.2%), small business owners (16%), or carried out other occupations such as police inspector, political leadership positions, and religious workers (4.8%).²³² The political aspect of the violence must not be underscored either as 74.5% of all cleared cases from 1988 to 1994 have been labeled as political violence cases; in 1990 the number reaches 95.5% of all cleared cases. In other words, the cause of persecution was political – specifically with counterinsurgent goals in mind – meaning that it was against those perceived by the government to be 'supporters of guerrilla groups'.²³³ From 1988 to 1994, this community had 342 victims of selective homicide, torture, and forced disappearance – or more than one victim per week, every week for six years.²³⁴

Although the Trujillo Massacre is understood as a period of extreme violence extending from 1986 until 1994, the intensity of the violence varied from year to year. In the years between 1986 and 1989 there was an increased number of victims of political violence which reaches a climax in the period from 1989 to 1990. The number of victims extends until the year 1994

232 Ibid, 48.

233 Ibid, 45.

234 Ibid, 17.

although decreasing from its apex since 1990.²³⁵ Two specific types of violence that were used in Trujillo – selective homicides and forced disappearances – account for over 80% of the political violence experienced by the community, the former accounting for 67.7% of victims and the latter 13%. Furthermore, both forms of violence follow a continuity as most disappearance victims were assassinated but the bodies weren't found. As with the other cases exposed in this work, it is in the alliance between State forces and paramilitary forces that one can find most of the responsibility for the unthinkable violence lived in Trujillo.²³⁶ Throughout the period of the Massacre (1986-1994) it is estimated that the armed forces and the police were involved in at least 34.7% of the selective homicides and disappearances that have been cleared and another 31% can be attributed to paramilitary or cocaine trafficking organizations. However, these numbers could be much higher as many cases have not been cleared. This number reaches its highest point in the year 1990 in which 51% of such cases cleared can be attributed to armed forces and police and 40.8% of the cases to the criminal organizations.²³⁷ Additionally, according to the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, the Trujillo Massacre was characterized by the unprecedented and systematic use of extreme forms of torture that were then be repeated across the country, perhaps most famously “the use of chainsaws to dismember victims while they are alive, burning iron introduced into the bodies of victims while alive, and the application of salt to open wounds...other methods of torture used were water jet suffocation, hammering of fingers and lifting off nails.”²³⁸

235 Ibid, 42.

236 Redacción Justicia. “Ordenan Recapturar a 2 Coroneles Por Masacre.” *El Tiempo*. July 13, 2010.

237 *Trujillo Una Tragedia Que No Cesa*. Colombia: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2011, 45.

238 Ibid, 21.

Coincidentally, the Trujillo Massacre starts during a period in which the popular sectors of the region were seeking forms of political and economic organizing to meet their needs as the traditional political groups had neglected them. During this time, on September of 1985, Father Tiberio Fernandez Mafla was named the parish priest of Trujillo, which led to the propagation of popular initiatives for the people of Trujillo.²³⁹ He created a Pastoral Plan which was elaborated after investigations done by professionals, universities, and research centers in order to understand the needs and the concrete situation of the community. “In 5 years he promoted over 20 communitarian enterprises, between rural and urban ones, where people started realizing the value of grassroots organizing”²⁴⁰ One of his last projects in his last year of life was described as follows:

“since one of the objectives of the parish is to elevate the lives of the peoples, this program promotes the organization of communities in different associative forms: cooperatives, pre-cooperative groups, associations, urban and rural microbusiness, etc. In this way, currently, we have promoted 10 microbusinesses and another 10 are being developed which group over 500 people with minimal resources in the parish.”²⁴¹

Father Tiberio Fernandez was disappeared on the 17th of April of 1990, however the political acts of violence in Trujillo had started much before that.

Since the year 1987, ‘social cleansing actions’ had been carried out by paramilitary groups in all 42 municipalities of the Department of Valle del Cauca. These ‘social cleansing actions’ not only included homeless people, people of different gender and sexual identities, but it also included leaders of popular sectors, union leaders, and laborers from recently created

239 Díaz A., Jaime H. “Corporacion Podion.” PODION, n.d. <http://podion.org/es/protagonistas/Sacerdotes/tiberio-fernandez-mafla>.

240 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*. Bogotá: Justicia y Paz, 1991. Pg. 1-2.

241 *Ibid*, 2.

communal enterprises.²⁴² The following year, 1988, brought with it various assassinations and an increase of forced disappearances and tortures of campesinos and activists in the region of Trujillo, Tulua, Riofrio, Bugalagrande, Bolivar, Andalucia, and Zarzal.²⁴³ On the 2nd of November of 1988 in Trujillo, Carlos Enrique Mejia Escobar, a participant of the 1988 national strike, was assassinated by paramilitaries using an F-2 police vehicle; the assassination took place a few blocks away from the police station with no reaction from the police units.²⁴⁴ Union leaders in the region were also experiencing political violence due to their activism. Jorge Eliecer Agudelo Bermudez, the Metalworkers Union Prosecutor of Palmira was detained by the Codazzi Battalion of the III Brigade of the military on the 3rd of February of 1989. On the 24th of November, he was burned with acid, mutilated, and then killed.²⁴⁵ At the time of his illegal detention, various high executives of Industrias Metalicas de Palmira S.A. (Metal Industries of Palmira S.A.) had threatened him stating that he had connections with the guerrilla group ELN.²⁴⁶ The government sponsored death squads disappeared and assassinated entire families in Trujillo such as the family of Ligia Palacio Velez; Ligia was assassinated on the 29th of January of 1989, her son Vicente Palacio Patiño was assassinated on the 30th of April of the same year, and her other son was disappeared on the 30th of July.²⁴⁷

242 Ibid, 3.

243 Ibid, 3.

244 *Deuda Con La Humanidad: Paramilitarismo De Estado En Colombia 1988-2003*. Bogotá, Colombia: Banco de Datos de Violencia Política, 2004, 24.

245 Ibid, 31.

246 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 66.

247 *Deuda Con La Humanidad: Paramilitarismo De Estado En Colombia 1988-2003*, 32.

Due to the increased violence in the preceding years, a communal meeting was held in March of 1989 in order to bring attention to the problems in the area; various communities from other municipalities were also present. A key point was reached by the campesinos in these meetings, “in the petition document the communities included the titling of lands to campesinos, especially to the residents in the more mountainous part, which is adjoined to the Department of Chocó”²⁴⁸ and they decided they would march on Saturday the 29th of April of 1989 in order for their petitions to be heard. As quickly as it was announced, “landowners and ranchers of the region, politicians from the traditional political parties, civil and military authorities, didn’t waste time in qualifying the organizing of the campesinos as managed by subversive groups”²⁴⁹ and even qualified Father Tiberio as an ideologue of the guerrilla group ELN.²⁵⁰ In this way, the protest and all of its participants were delegitimized and stigmatized. In the days following the announcement of the protest, the zone was completely militarized including anti-narcotics police, troops from the Palace Battalion from Buga, Valle del Cauca, and various intelligence organisms; the troops were also sent to different communities in the region and in some such as Venecia, the community experienced break ins and physical abuse from the organisms of security of the state. Many campesinos from the area were threatened and warned that if they participated in the protests they would be detained; military patrols even went as far as filling the street that communicates Trujillo with staples and nails.²⁵¹ At about 11 am on the day of the march, around 2,500 people found themselves surrounded by military forces in the central park

248 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 3-4.

249 *Ibid*, 4.

250 Gallo, Ivan. “El Sacerdote Que Mataron Dos Veces.” *Las2Orillas*. February 11, 2015. <https://www.las2orillas.co/el-sacerdote-mataron-dos-veces/>.

251 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 3-4.

in the urban locality of Trujillo; they carried food and supplies with them but the military forces took all of it away from them and didn't allow the Red Cross or members of Civil Defense entrance to the mobilizations. The abuse from the authorities became so evident that hundreds of members of the community that weren't part of the protests started to become agitated and were going to join but a large group of around 200 soldiers stopped them.²⁵² At around 4:30 pm the same day, two large trucks filled with anti-narcotics police reinforced the others; F-2 agents – the intelligence force of the police – oversaw the task of taking pictures and identifying the protesters. Later, a member of the squad began shooting in the air and a grenade exploded next to the park while they also shot the electric transformers, interrupting electricity for the municipality in its totality.²⁵³ The tension during the march marked the year to come and would begin the apex of the violence lived in Trujillo.

The march unleashed a new stage of terror for the population of the Trujillo region. Many families were forced to leave their homes and lands due to the fear created by paramilitaries and the security organisms of the state. Manuel Alarcon, President of the Blackberry Picker Association was forced to leave the area as his home was raided and he was illegally detained twice by the military. Alberto Blandon, member of the parish and rural teacher, was detained by F-2 agents on the 12th of August of 1989 and accused of being a guerrilla member. After being set free, he was then searched for again by agents, and, following that, an individual pretending to be part of the ELN offered him protection from the paramilitary forces, however, the

252 Ibid, 4.

253 Ibid, 6.

individual was later recognized on a visit to Trujillo in December of 1989 as one of the bodyguards of the governor of Valle del Cauca.²⁵⁴

The terror lived by the communities in the region in 1989 and 1990 was systematically put in place by three distinct military operations or plans: ‘Operacion Relampago’ (Operation Flash of Lightning), Plan Democracia 1990 (Plan Democracy 1990), and ‘Plan Pesca (Plan Fishing)’. ‘Operacion Relampago’ began on the 1st of march of 1990 in which various homes were raided in the neighboring municipalities of Cali and Yumbo, which led to the detention of over 50 union leaders. Those detained were workers from Curtiembres Titan (tannery industry), union members of Siderurgica del Pacifico (steelmakers industry), Goodyear and other companies, directors of the CUT (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores), members of the Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners (CSPP), and activists from the political organization A Luchar.²⁵⁵ All of them were accused of belonging to the guerrilla group, Union Camilista Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (UC-ELN). They were tortured by members of the III Brigade of the national army under Brigadier General Manuel Jose Bonett Locarno. “They were taken to solitary places, where the agents shot in the air to terrorize the detained, made to stand up without food, blinded and handcuffed, they were given different drugs and then beaten, they were threatened with being buried alive, tortured physically and mentally they were then interrogated going through the installations of the Pichincha Battalion, the offices of the B-2 (old intelligence unit of the military), offices of the D.A.S (Administrative Department of Security), as well as the SIJIN (Section of Criminal Investigation of the police).”²⁵⁶ Later that same month,

254 Ibid, 8-9.

255 Ibid, 16.

256 Ibid, 16.

various of the activists were photographed next to an arsenal that had been supposedly found, it was presented as a successful hit against the ELN, a few days later 6 of them were released.²⁵⁷ That same day, Judge 76 of Penal Military Instruction expedited an order to raid homes of activists in Trujillo.²⁵⁸ On March 7th around 7:30 am various homes were raided in Trujillo and many inhabitants were illegally detained and not registered in any records. One of them was Harvey Vargas Londoño, who was disappeared with his brothers 24 days later.²⁵⁹ Another activist, Climaco Mosquera Barbosa, was taken to Cali after his home was raided and 55 days later disappeared after leaving the National Prosecutor's Office in Cali.²⁶⁰ Additionally, a trial was put in place against those activists that were accused of being guerrilla members. The lawyer who guided and defended the victims, Alirio de Jesus Pedraza Becerra, was disappeared by the state's security forces in Bogota.²⁶¹

'Plan Democracia 1990' was developed by military forces in order to 'guarantee the right of suffrage' against the threats represented by the 'UC-ELN campaign against the electoral process'.²⁶² The plan included continuous military operations during the month of March of 1990 in the communities of Cristales, Venecia, El Tabor, and others. In Zonadora, Trujillo, at around 10 p.m. armed men went to find Marco Antonio Peña, a campesino from Trujillo, he was taken

257 Colprensa- El País. "Liberados Sindicalistas." *El Universal*. April 14, 1990.

258 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 17.

259 "Harvey Vargas Londoño." *Vidas Silenciadas. Vidas Silenciadas - Base de Datos de Víctimas Silenciadas por el Estado en Colombia*. <https://vidassilenciadas.org/victimas/36844/>.

260 "Clímaco Mosquera Barbosa." *Vidas Silenciadas. Vidas Silenciadas - Base de Datos de Víctimas Silenciadas por el Estado en Colombia*. <https://vidassilenciadas.org/victimas/8091/>.

261 *Pedraza Becerra v. Colom.*, Case 10.581, Inter-Am. C.H.R., Report No. 33/92, OEA/Ser./L/V/II.83, doc. 14, corr. 1 (1992).

262 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 21.

out of his workplace, tortured, and later killed. Due to the testimony of the police inspector in charge of picking up the dead body, it was proven that the Operatives Commandant of North Zone of Valle del Cauca, Tenient Coronel Libardo Diaz Ortiz, of the National Police, was present during this homicide.²⁶³ Further, on the 9th of March the command of the III Brigade emitted order No.02 or “Plan Repliegue” which established the continuation of military operations under ‘Plan Democracia 1990’ in Trujillo and its surrounding communities.²⁶⁴

Around the same time in March of 1990, ‘Plan Pesca’ was put in place which was described as a plan to send troops to areas of military interest while registering suspects and selectively capturing them with the end goal of avoiding detection.²⁶⁵ An emphasis was also placed on the elements of surprise, quickness, and aggressiveness. As Order of Operations No. 009 showed on the 20th of March of 1990: “the operation consists of occupying the area by infiltration, installing sites of observation, placing checkpoints, elaborating census’, and various activities that will facilitate control of the area... operations must be based on combat intelligence in surprise, quickness, and aggressiveness.”²⁶⁶ Later that month, on the 25th of March of 1990, after having received news that the ELN was situated in the mountainous region of Venecia, Lieutenant Coronel Hernan Contreras Peña immediately sent his troops in order to establish an advanced command post in the Trujillo region. The command post was established in a zone labeled La Granja in between the community of Andinapolis and Salonica; the property

263 Ibid, 22; “Clímaco Mosquera Barbosa.” *Vidas Silenciadas. Vidas Silenciadas - Base de Datos de Victimas Silenciadas por el Estado en Colombia.* <https://vidassilenciadas.org/victimas/36810/>.

264 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 23.

265 Burbano Abadia, Layla. *La Masacre de Trujillo vista por el Diario El País en Cali.* Cali: Universidad del Valle, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Económicas, 2018, 20.

266 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 24.

belonged to the famous cocaine trafficker Diego Montoya.²⁶⁷ These troops were headed by Mayor Alirio Ureña Jaramillo.²⁶⁸

The violence reached its apex between the 29th of March and the 17th of April of 1990, during these dates the Trujillo community experienced the assassination of local priest Tiberio Fernandez, a key member of the community responsible for helping the campesino community start their own collective enterprises and small businesses such as bakeries, cabinetmaking, stores, locksmithing, and blackberry, coffee, and lulo cultivations.²⁶⁹ His assassination however was reported by the police and the DIJIN (Dirección de Investigación Criminal e Interpol) as one that fitted under the dynamic of the armed conflict represented by leftist forces such as the ELN and non-identified right wing forces, prescribing an insurgent identity to the priest and justifying his assassination – and the acts of violence during this time as a whole – as a defensive act against auxiliaries of the guerrilla forces represented in the ELN.²⁷⁰ Similarly, the catalytic events of the 29th of March were be framed as ‘counterinsurgency acts’ against guerrilla members in the Trujillo region.

Further, the detailed events of the Trujillo Massacre were able to be discovered due to the testimony of Daniel Arcila Cardona. Only through this testimony, a year after the tragic events of 1990, did people start understanding what was truly going on in Trujillo; his testimony revealed the clear alliance between the police (Trujillo and Tulua police departments), armed forces

267 Ibid, 36.

268 Ibid, 24.

269 Alvarez, Juan Miguel. “El Asesinato Del Padre Tiberio” *El Espectador*, April 17, 2010.

270 *Trujillo Una Tragedia Que No Cesa*. 51-52.

(Palace Battalion), and paramilitary and cocaine trafficking organizations.²⁷¹ Daniel Arcila was a 24-year-old that had served in the military and had been trained in counterinsurgency warfare. After his military service at the San Mateo Battalion, he entered a network of informants that provided intelligence services to the military establishment.²⁷² During the time of his involvement as an informant, his brother was killed and he was wounded so he decided to flee the zone to the nearby Department of Valle del Cauca, more specifically to the Trujillo municipality.²⁷³ Once in Trujillo, he presented himself to Mayor Alirio Ureña of the Palace Battalion and he was put to work as an informant in the Trujillo area with the specific mission of finding and informing the military and police where the guerrilla was hiding their guns. He was given 100 pesos for every weapon found. Daniel Arcila was present during the events on the 29th of March of 1990 and his job had been to closely follow the movements of the insurgents that had started firing back at the military after they attacked the campesinos. On the 30th of March, his intel was used to search for the weapons in the homes of the campesinos, he accompanied them wearing a face mask. That same day, Daniel Arcila identified a 17 year old minor as a guerrilla member and the minor was taken to the command post. Daniel Arcila's testimony of this event made the close relationship between paramilitaries and the military evident: "7 uninformed men arrived in a Toyota truck with a Sergeant from the Palace Battalion...they came down with R-15 rifles, machine guns, pistols, each had three weapons, they said they belonged to the 'Auto-defensas' (or 'Self-Defense groups, another name for

271 Citizens of Trujillo. *Tiberio Vive Hoy: Testimonios De La Vida De Un Martir*, Tiberio Fernandez Mafla, 2003, 9.

272 *Trujillo, La Otra Versión*. 12. Vol. 12. Banco De Datos De Derechos Humanos y Violencia Política. Bogotá D.C.: Cinep/Programa para la Paz, 2014, 15.

273 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 32.

paramilitary groups) and that they were in the command post. The captain then gave the guerrilla member to the Sergeant [of the military battalion] and told him to take him there...”²⁷⁴ Once at the command post, the minor was interrogated by Mayor Urueña and he was threatened with a flame thrower and with other torture mechanisms. The supposed guerrilla combatant was then given a list of hundreds of campesinos in which he identified many and to which he added more to. On the 31st of March, at around 11 p.m. a group of about 30 armed men was sent from the command post in La Granja to the community of ‘La Sonora’ in order to detain and search the homes of those members of the list provided by the minor.²⁷⁵

Daniel Arcila was one of the men driving the armed group to the location. Unsurprisingly, he later affirmed that some of the vehicles used belonged to security organisms of the state.²⁷⁶ The group included uniformed military personnel, paramilitary members, and paramilitary leaders. One of these leaders present was a man called “El Tio”; according to different testimonies, he was in many meetings with military Major Urueña Jaramillo. In this way, the military forces and the paramilitary death squads began the takeover of Trujillo and its surrounding communities on the night of the 31st of March and early morning of 1st of April of 1990, working also alongside the police authorities in the Trujillo area, as Daniel Arcila testified: “one block away from the police station in Trujillo, the police saw us but they didn’t do anything... we passed right next to the police station.”²⁷⁷

274 Ibid, 35.

275 Ibid, 37.

276 Ibid.

277 Ibid, 38.

On that night of the 31st of March, the communities of El Tabor and La Sonora were left with no electricity. As if foreshadowing the dark events to follow, both communities were left in complete darkness while three different trucks filled with armed men paraded through the streets in search of their victims. The first victim to be taken from their home was Mr. Ramiro Velazquez Vargas, the armed men surrounded his home, took him from the inside, beat him, tied him, and took him in their truck.²⁷⁸ They then proceeded to the home of the Arias family – the night before this family had suffered the death of their newborn baby due to a convulsion caused by the firing of bullets near the home. The armed men surrounded the home and threatened to throw bombs if they did not open, after beating and assaulting the family members the military men took Rigoberto Arias Prado, Fernando Arias Prado, Arnulfo Arias Prado, Evereth Arias Prado, and Jose Vicente Gomez.²⁷⁹ Also on that night, one of the members of the first commission sent to verify the events of the 29th of March and police inspector of the community of ‘El Tabor’, Luis Fernando Fernandez Toro, had decided to spend the night with his friend Ricardo Alberto Mejia as he was afraid for his and his family’s life. However, at 2 am on the 1st of April, the home of Ricardo Alberto was surrounded by armed men threatening to throw bombs if the door wasn’t opened. Ricardo and Luis were taken from the home and the family’s car was disabled by the armed men.²⁸⁰ Additionally, the armed group went to the home of Esther Cayapú de Arboleda , a 59 year old campesina, accused her of being a guerrilla member and took her and one of her children. These campesinos, plus others, were taken to the command post ‘La Granja’ to be tortured.

278 Ibid, 39.

279 Ibid, 40.

280 Ibid, 41.

In his testimony, Daniel Arcila tells a detailed story of the tortures and who committed them. He stated that military Major Alirio Urueña Jaramillo ate breakfast with the paramilitary leader called “El Tio” right before committing the tortures. The locations were carefully chosen between different haciendas, ending at hacienda Villa Paola, which belonged to the cocaine trafficker Henry Loaiza. Villa Paola was chosen as one of the ending locations due to its proximity to the Cauca River in order to get rid of the bodies.²⁸¹ Daniel Arcila drove a dump truck filled with the bodies in sacks. In one sack they threw the torsos and in the other they threw the heads.²⁸² Just as with the commission that verified the events of the 29th of March, the civilians that had decided to look for the bodies of the disappeared were threatened with being killed. Father Diego Villegas, who was involved in rescuing the dead bodies of the disappeared, stated that he received death threats from the perpetrators saying that they didn’t want any evidence of the deaths or disappearance of the victims, including the dead bodies.²⁸³ The terror lived by the community had not ended there.

During this time, Father Tiberio Fernandez had been the target of attempts against his life. It was on the 17th of April of 1990 that he was disappeared and later killed. On the 17th he was on the way back from the nearby municipality of Tuluá coming from the funeral services of, Abundio Espinosa, a fellow campesino, with his niece Alba Isabel, the architect Oscar Pulido, and the employee Norbey Galeano. About 25 kilometers away from Tuluá, a group of armed men in trucks were getting ready on the side of the road. In the moments after passing them, the occupants of the car were disappeared. It wasn’t until 20 hours later that their disappearance was

281 *Trujillo Una Tragedia Que No Cesa*, 61.

282 *Ibid*, 58.

283 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 59.

confirmed, when he didn't attend a hearing he had with Ernesto Gonzalez Caicedo, the governor of the Department of Valle del Cauca.²⁸⁴ The Father was taken to Villa Paola and was forced to see the tortures and assassinations of his companions before being tortured; he was forced to see his niece being sexually abused and her breasts cut off.²⁸⁵ On the 19th of April, the parish's white Daihatsu Rocky vehicle used to transport Father Tiberio was found next to the Cauca River. That same day, in the neighboring municipality of Bolivar, two decapitated and mutilated bodies matching the descriptions of Oscar Pulido and Norbey Galeano had been seen floating in the water, however, it wasn't until Monday April 23rd when the body of Father Tiberio was found by a campesino who dared to go in the water to rescue it.²⁸⁶ The body was found in horrific conditions:

“[the body was] without its head, the thorax and abdomen were open, he was mutilated and castrated, with the worst signs of cruelty... the identity of the body was fully confirmed”²⁸⁷

It is important to note once more that the crimes committed against Father Tiberio were against the man who was responsible for the crime of ‘elevating the lives of the peoples’ in Trujillo and starting the recent campesino associations created that were challenging the economic and political order in the area. In one clear scenario of the Father's commitment to the people of Trujillo – and perhaps one of the moments that sealed his future death by the

284 Ibid, 62.

285 *Trujillo Una Tragedia Que No Cesa*, 61.

286 The campesino was later assassinated for rescuing the body of Father Tiberio Fernandez from the river. *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 69.

287 Ibid, 64.

government's death squads – during the march of April 1989, the father defended the protesters against the repressive forces stationed in Trujillo, as a testimony from a young protester showed:

“the police hit them and people were very scared. The father defended them, he would go out with a microphone and defend the people. He would then pray.”²⁸⁸

Although an analysis of Father Tiberio's life and engagement with the community falls outside of this work, it is important to remember his work in the community as it was this work which made him, and the region of Trujillo, a target for the government's death squads. Below are some testimonies highlighting the father's work in the community:

“part of his life he gave to creating communal microenterprises so that the families could get out of their precarious living situation... he was a happy and sincere person with great humility... I still remember him with his apron out in the plaza helping make empanadas, inviting the community to buy in order to help the poor members of the community.”²⁸⁹

“he was a very cooperative priest in the community, in our municipality while he was with us he dedicated himself to us, he helped the youth to have employment and personal growth. And with the single mothers he helped them build communal enterprises out of which still exists one named “Las Pioneras”... ever since he was so tragically killed our municipality has been very stagnant.”²⁹⁰

“because we knew the father, we compare him with fire because he gave color to poor people and he always preferred us.”²⁹¹

His commitment to the people of Trujillo was also shown in one of his last sermons, his words were:

“if the spilling of my blood contributes so that the peace that we so badly need in Trujillo will appear and flourish then I will gladly pour it.”²⁹²

288 Citizens of Trujillo. *Tiberio Vive Hoy: Testimonios De La Vida De Un Martir, Tiberio Fernandez Mafla*, 7.

289 Ibid, 19.

290 Ibid, 61.

291 Ibid, 63.

292 Ibid, 137.

Furthermore, the Cauca river not only served as the grave site for Father Tiberio and his companions, it served as a mass grave site for the perpetrators to hide the horrific crimes against the population of the north of el Valle del Cauca. A civilian from the area that helped in rescuing the bodies testified that from the months of November of 1989 until April of 1990 he saw approximately 70 bodies floating in the waters of the Cauca. Another testimony counted 15, 20, or more, cadavers found floating in the Cauca River between the dates of Wednesday, April 4th and Monday April 9th of 1990.²⁹³

Although the period of the massacre runs up to 1994, the precarious situation in Trujillo has never ceased. Even though it falls outside of this work, it is important to mention the continuities since the Massacre. On the 11th of November of 2000, 300 paramilitaries went into Trujillo as the terrified population could only watch.²⁹⁴ During this time, the paramilitaries set up checkpoints in which they granted permissions of who could come in and out of zones such as La Sonora – the same place where the apex of the massacre took place in the year 1990. Different reports in the year 2004 showed that new armed groups had been working in the area alongside the violent activity of the Norte del Valle drug Cartel.²⁹⁵ Some of these groups, made up mostly of demobilized and non-demobilized paramilitaries, include Los Rastrojos and Los Machos; these groups, among others, are still present in the region and in many other parts of the country as well. Concretely, Los Rastrojos are mostly present in the north of the Valle del Cauca department in Trujillo, Tuluá, Buga, Andalucía, and Bugalagrande.²⁹⁶ Additionally, in the years

293 *Trujillo Bajo El Terror: 1989-1990*, 65-69.

294 *Trujillo, La Otra Versión*, 205.

295 *Ibid*, 186.

296 *Ibid*, 188.

2011 and 2012 their presence was confirmed by special Councils of Security of the municipality stating that they charge taxes, control the zone of Puente Blanco, Playa Alta, and La Sonora, and they transit the streets of Trujillo freely.²⁹⁷ During the year 2012, various young civilians were assassinated and tortured in ‘social cleansing campaigns, one of the threats was put it in the following words:

[approximate translation] “be careful because we have you as targets... We have a list with the first neighborhood. The organization has decided it be so, this cleansing is necessary. We will start very soon, we ask the society for forgiveness if they fall as innocent victims. This is only for a few months.”²⁹⁸

In this way, the violence against the inhabitants continues. Including violence against the monument which stands in memory of the massacre of Trujillo. The “Parque Monumento” has been set on fire and profaned 4 times since its construction in June of 2002.²⁹⁹ On the 25th of March of 2014, the walls of the monument were desecrated with graffiti against the human rights association supporting the victims of Trujillo AFAVIT (Asociacion de Familiares de Victimas de Trujillo) stating “you leave or else you will be chopped. Defenders of shit, sons of bitches”; leaders of this association were also threatened during that time with different phone calls in which the callers said to them “the massacre is just about to begin” or “death to AFAVIT” or “there will be heads floating in the river.”³⁰⁰ As this shows, the violence against the monument has also been reflected in the continuing violence against those participating in the construction of the memory of the Trujillo Massacre. As mentioned before, although the intensity of the massacres decreased, they never fully ceased. Those trying to bring justice and memory to the

297 Ibid.

298 Ibid, 189.

299 Ibid, 73.

300 Ibid, 191.

horrible violence are some of the new victims. One of the founding members of AFAVIT, Alba Mery Chilito Peñafiel of 68 years of age, who had lost 4 of her family members to the events of 1990 – including her daughter and son-in-law – was assassinated by paramilitaries on the 7th of February of 2013 in Trujillo. Additionally, on the 29th of June of 2013, a new massacre occurred in which 4 members of AFAVIT were killed in the vicinity of Cerro Azul in the municipality of Trujillo.³⁰¹

If one is to ask a *caleño* about the many famous kidnappings carried out by the guerrillas in the department of Valle del Cauca, many will know of the events. The violent acts carried out by guerrillas are engrained in the memories of the majority as the state and the elite owned traditional media made sure to exploit the narrative of the ‘savage and barbaric terrorist guerrillas.’ However, and even though in many cases using more extreme violence and in larger numbers, many, if not the majority of *caleños*, have never heard of the massacres that occurred all over the Valle del Cauca department sometimes just one hour way from the capital.

As the case of Trujillo shows, the National Security Doctrine established and carried out in Colombia since the 1960s must be a point of critical analysis if one is to understand more clearly the armed conflict that has torn the country for decades. The paramilitary strategy as one of the main strategies of the counterinsurgency war created the bases for the violence experienced by hundreds of communities around the country. The process of violent expropriation of lands and of violently dealing with social movements became an integral part of the functioning of the Colombian state. To add to this, the unthinkable amounts of capital brought in by cocaine traffickers after the 1980s was a catalyst in the reproduction of violent

301 Trujillo, *La Otra Versión*, 112.

counterinsurgency processes. The cocaine traffickers involved in massacres such as Trujillo acted under the same 'anti-communist' logic installed in the National Security Doctrine; this logic continued guiding paramilitary groups that became completely tied to cocaine traffickers and their fortunes. Hence, the Massacre of Trujillo followed the same patterns as others that occurred at the same time: extreme violence against a population with social, economic, and political revindications they were fighting for and clear established collective goals for their community and its transformation. However, this didn't benefit the large landowners and the cocaine traffickers of the zone that equated the community's grievances with *guerrillero* activity. The only answer was death.

CONCLUSIONS

The persisting violence against those seeking serious reforms in the country, against those seeking social justice, redistributive justice, against those protecting human rights and the rights of nature, against the indigenous, afro-Colombian, and mestizo campesinos protecting their lands, against the LGBTQ+ community, against all progressive movements, against all of those that deviate from the status quo and from the established order has shaped Colombian society since even before the contemporary armed conflict and has continued doing so until today, as can be seen by the extreme violence suffered by the Colombian population during the protests of 2021. Although the armed conflict is currently interpreted as being a thing of the past, it is imperative to analyze the current situation through a historical lens to understand how these patterns of state violence have been reproduced in the country for decades. As of June 26th 2021, almost 3 months after the beginning of the protests on April 28th, the NGO Temblores reported 44 homicides by state security forces, 29 more homicides in pending verification, 1617 victims of physical violence, 82 victims of ocular wounds, 228 victims of firearms, 28 victims of sexual abuse, and 2005 arbitrary detentions.³⁰² This refutes the argument that the presence of guerrillas was the reason for the violence against the civil population during the armed conflict, as the threat of a guerrilla takeover of the state has disappeared.³⁰³ Instead, what can be concluded is that the creation of guerrilla forces in the mid-20th century was a response to the processes of displacement and violence against the civil population that had been occurring in the country for

³⁰² “Comunicado a La Opinión Pública y a La Comunidad Internacional Por Los Hechos De Violencia Cometidos Por La Fuerza Pública De Colombia En El Marco De Las Movilizaciones Del Paro Nacional.” Temblores ONG. Temblores, June 28, 2021. <https://en.temblores.org/comunicados>.

³⁰³ The ELN guerrilla still exists, however, they are a minor threat to the country as a whole and are mostly present in a few departments. There are now ‘dissident’ forces of the FARC that have detached themselves from the peace agreements due to the non-fulfilment of the signed accords by the state and the constant assassination of demobilized ex-guerrilla combatants by paramilitary forces.

decades already. That response by a section of the Colombian population, mostly by campesinos, which nonetheless was violent and added to the violence experienced in the country overall, developed the conflict to a point of stalemate in which both the state and the main guerrilla, the FARC-EP, sat down to put an end to the decades long conflict. However, the systematic patterns of state violence that gave birth to the armed conflict in the first place have continued in the country despite the Havana agreements in 2016. What can be concluded is that the ‘contemporary’ armed conflict from the 1960’s until 2016, with many interpretations such as the one in this thesis arguing that it has not completely ended, was another stage in the violent development of the Colombian state. The violence used during this time was a continuation, although with new and varying dynamics, of the violence that took place during *La Violencia* in the 1940s through the 1960s. Those dynamics of violence began being developed earlier in the century through land privatizations.

The historical privatization of public or already inhabited lands since the late 19th century, began a process of displacement in the country which has not stopped and continues until 2021. These historical displacements, documented in chapter 1, also became the main way in which the Colombian state and its ruling classes expanded the territory available for the incorporation of Colombia into the capitalist export market. The expulsion of millions of Colombians from their lands, the following dismay found in the towns and cities they migrated to, and the state violence against the civilian population during the first decades of the 20th century continuing until the period of *La Violencia* in the late 1940s through the 1960s led to an armed political response by fed up campesinos and the subaltern population in general through the creation of guerrilla forces. During this time, the native hate for leftist progressive movements – seen in the way the first large protests of the 1910s and 1920s were repressed –

mixed with U.S. imperialist practices after the second world war to create modern paramilitaries as a way to rid the country of obstacles for ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ and as a way to win the Colombian territory for the capitalist western world during the Cold War. By doing so, paramilitaries became the main way to carry out the expansion of territory available for capitalist exploitation. Hand in hand with the opening up of territory for capitalist gain through land concentration, the paramilitaries also historically became the main strategy used to silence those voices going against the status quo and the capitalist order.

Although the armed conflict is usually interpreted as one of criminal bands against the state, the cases in this thesis have shown that the armed conflict is a complex phenomenon that is not explained as easily. The many types of violence which the Colombian population has lived with for decades is not explained by a single logic. As mentioned earlier, there are criminal bands around the country that exist with a criminal logic to rob, abuse, and control territory through violence. There’s also unorganized crime that occurs on an everyday basis virtually in every city. What is true though is that political violence has functioned with certain logics and under systematic patterns. The study cases presented are proof that the armed conflict, its prolongation and intensification, and the violence it caused to civilians, was in large part a consequence of processes of control and domination in part of the Colombian state and its ruling classes, with the constant support of the U.S. empire. Thus, what this thesis attempted to portray is that both guerrillas and paramilitaries are outside the notion of private criminal groups. Guerrillas have worked as violent political organizations against the state and its development in the country and paramilitaries, the focus of this thesis, have functioned as violent political organizations that helped create and protect the established capitalist order throughout the 20th century. In the case of paramilitaries, their deep relationship with the state and its ruling classes

made them a key institution supported by transnational and national corporations, medium and small national enterprises, cattle ranchers and landowners, right-wing politicians, the armed forces, the national police, national intelligence units, and cocaine traffickers.

U.S. involvement was also a crucial part of the armed conflict which is many times ignored. It is usually interpreted that U.S. involvement in Colombia began with Plan Colombia and its detrimental effects in the beginning of the new millennium. As this research showed though, U.S. involvement has had a long and controversial history in the country. The important investments and profits made by large U.S. transnational corporations since the beginning of the 20th century and the willingness of the Colombian ruling classes to follow U.S. interests in the country, made Colombia a key strategic partner for hegemonic U.S. control of the Western Hemisphere. Consequently, the unfavorable conditions for capitalist growth in the country before and during the time of *La Violencia* led the U.S. to propose the creation of modern paramilitary forces as well as increasing the strength of the armed forces, police, and intelligence units. It is following this proposal that paramilitary violence became a permanent part of the lives of Colombians. Furthermore, as manifested in chapter 3, the armed forces of the country, perhaps the armed forces with the grossest and largest human rights violations in the hemisphere, have been largely trained by the U.S. The Colombian intelligence service, a key institution used for counterinsurgency strategies, was also developed under U.S. assistance for civilian surveillance in the mid-20th century. With the growing protests and resistance movements in the 1970s, the Colombian state put all of these mechanisms into motion against the civilian population, resulting in an intensification of the violence that civilians suffered during the decades of the 1980s through the 2000s.

In a broader sense, Colombia is the perfect example of the violence inherent in the establishment and maintenance of capitalism as an economic, political, and social system. The violence experienced in Colombia is similar to that in other Latin American countries with connected histories and similar paths in the establishment of the capitalist order. In the economic sense, violence was used in order to privatize lands which became the initial motor of capital accumulation as well as the initial source of cheap labor as landless peasants became wage workers.³⁰⁴ In contrast with the development of capitalism in countries such as England in the 16th century and beyond, where the profits used from the enclosure and privatization of land were used for the industrialization of the country, in Colombia the majority of the profit made by foreign transnational corporations has left the country. The little that has stayed has been mostly distributed among a small minority of elites in the country, as inequality indexes show.³⁰⁵ The further neoliberal turn in the 1990s intensified these processes even more as privatization became the rule of thumb and the Colombian economy became more reliant than ever on the extraction of natural resources. In the political and social sense, the National Security Doctrine developed was used to keep the population in line with the goals of capital accumulation and the continuing domination of the state by the ruling classes. The state has used all of its repressive abilities to

³⁰⁴ As mentioned in chapter 2, it is important to keep in mind that for the peripheries in the global capitalist order the creation of a cheap labor force through land dispossession doesn't necessarily mean that all of the displaced campesinos will become 'urban proletariats' or part of the working force. In Latin America for example, only a few of those dispossessed become urban or rural proletariats and the majority are left to survive to their own means. This partly explains the phenomenon of the large 'informal' sector in the continent. The informal sector is composed of all of those workers not being covered by employment laws due to the fact that either 1) companies hire them 'under the table' and therefore have few, if any, rights 2) work on their own means by mostly selling products such as DVDs, CDs, sunglasses, clothes, candies, by selling street food, and performing many other precarious occupations to survive. The majority of these workers are not covered in any way for medical insurance, employment benefits, retirement benefits or any other rights enjoyed by the workforce in the 'formal' sector. Specifically in Colombia, it is estimated that 47.5% of the workforce falls in the category of 'informal' workers.

³⁰⁵ The latest reports have found that Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world. In October of 2021, the World Bank reported that Colombia is the 2nd most unequal country among OCDE countries and occupies the same spot in all of Latin America after Brazil.

keep the country in line with the interests of transnational and national corporations, resulting in much of the violence experienced by the Colombian population. Violence has been used in the political process for example against the UP political party as they were a threat to the established capitalist order. The violence inherent in the capitalist system is seldom mentioned in studies, however this thesis shows how these violent processes have developed through time in a specific space. As documented by chapter 2, FDI increased simultaneously as did political violence in the country; the largest investments were made in oil, gas, and minerals, industries heavily involved in the usage of paramilitaries to displace thousands of communities, as seen by the study cases presented.

Questions for further research

There is still much to be analyzed about the Colombian armed conflict and its continuing consequences on Colombian society. Two types of questions arise: the first is related to the historical debt with the victims of the persistent and incessant state violence. The unearthing of disappeared bodies must also be accompanied by an effort to unearth the history that made that violence possible and the history of how that was carried out. Many efforts are being carried out in the country in order to meet this goal, this thesis was an attempt to add to this body of research. However, many questions remain, for example, how was the National Security Doctrine carried out in each of the departments, with their different dynamics and development? Through what political processes did paramilitarism seep into the political sphere creating the contemporary “parainstitutionality” or “parapolitica” extant in the country? What was the role of other major economic powers such as the countries of Western Europe on the armed conflict? How have Colombians responded in general, and more specifically, resisted, state violence against their communities? The second type of questions that arise are those related to the

present conditions in the country. As once can see, displacements, state violence, and paramilitarism are still a constant part of daily life in Colombia. This reality also begs further research to understand for example the current relationship between state institutions and paramilitary groups such as Aguilas Verdes and Rastrojos. There are also pending questions regarding the involvement of the U.S., Canada, and Western European countries in the peace process in Colombia since 2016. Also, what political and economic decisions have been made as an attempt to cater to transnational corporations from the 'global north' as Colombia deepens its role as an exporter of natural resources? What types of violence have these decisions generated? Further, the regions previously controlled by the FARC are now being incorporated into the national territory, unlike previously as they were seen as peripheries occupied by guerrillas. The study of many of these areas may elucidate even more the relationship between the state, the violent development and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, and the creation and maintenance of paramilitary forces to protect the established capitalist order.

APPENDIX A

Telegram from Jefferson Caffrey to Secretary of State of United States. December 6th, 1928. Santa Marta. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20060518193941/http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/cotie6dec1928.jpg>

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
 LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS
 DEC 7 1928
File
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM GRAY

Santa Marta
 Dated December 6, 1928.
 Rec'd 3:50 p. m.

Secretary of State, **DEC 8-1928**
 Washington, D. C.

URGENT.

December 6, 5 a. m.

Martial law in banana zone and Santa Marta province declared by Colombian Government last night. Demonstrations against the Government were held and broken up by the few soldiers in Santa Marta. Feeling against the Government by the proletariat which is shared by some of the soldiers is high and it is doubtful if we can depend upon the Colombian Government for protection. May I respectfully suggest that my request for the presence within calling distance of an American war ship be granted and that it stand off subject to my call and that the United Fruit Company wireless station in Santa Marta, call letters UJ, be used as we are without telegraphic communication and there is no other means of communication with Santa Marta. It is admitted that the character of the strike has changed and that the disturbance is a manifestation with a subversive tendency.

COTIE

CSB

WP
 821.5045
 note
 821.72
 821.74
 821.615.16

*Tel to Am Consul
 at Santa Marta
 12/7 - sum
 9*

LH

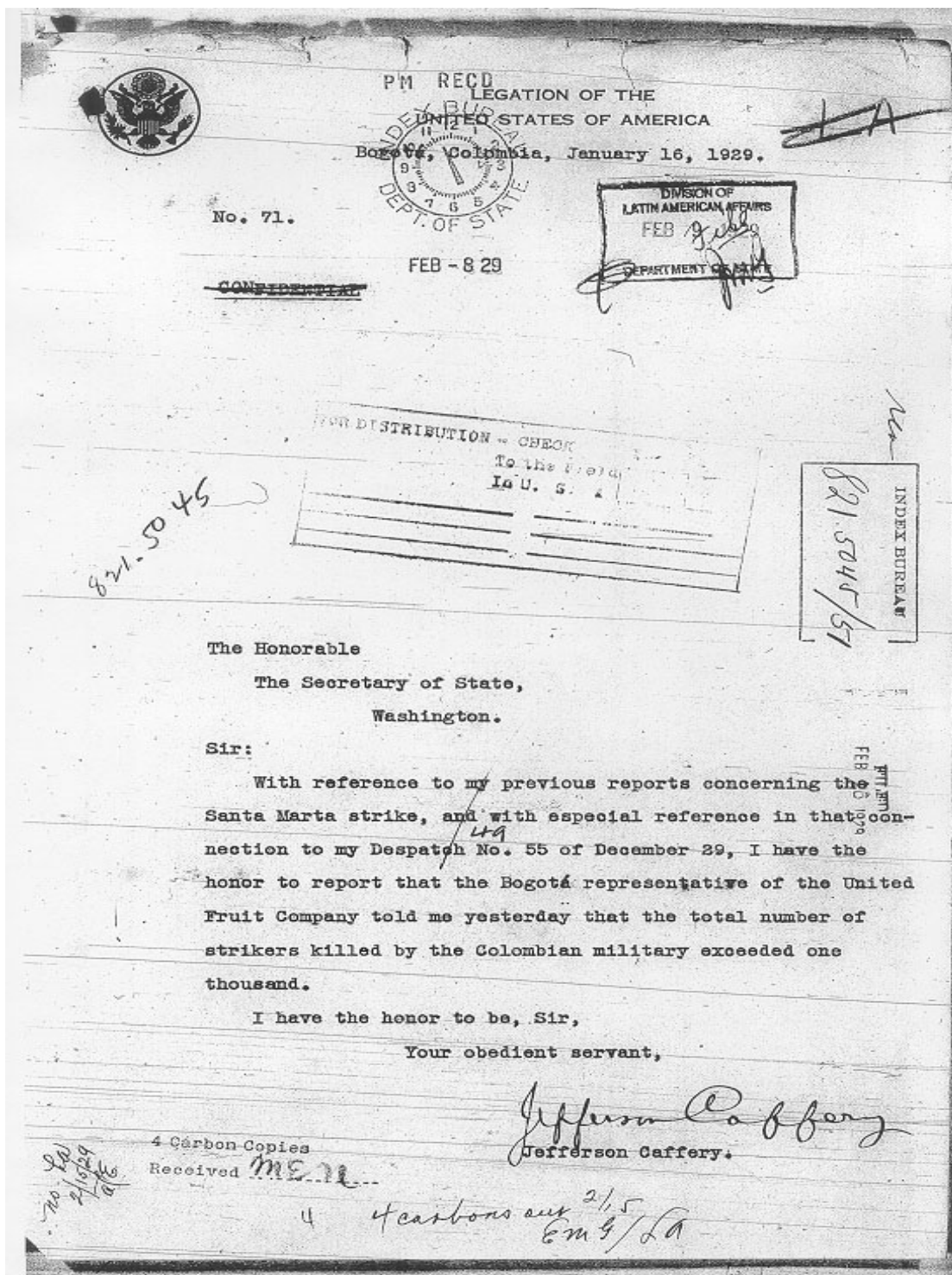
821.5045/26
 RECORDED
 INDEXED

FILED
 DEC 23 1928

APPENDIX B

Telegram from Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State of United States. No. 71. January 16th, 1929. Bogotá.
Available at:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20060518193840/http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/caffery16jan1929.jpg>



APPENDIX C

Telegram from Embassy of Bogota to Department of State, Telegram 715, May 8, 1964. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20050105111458/http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/lazodearborn8may1964a.jpg>

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *VND 459008*
By *M/NARA* Date *5/1/05* Reproduced at the National Archive

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

MESSAGE

PRIORITY
P 082321Z *MAY 64*

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO DOD

P 081545Z *MAY 64*

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUCKHC/CINCLANT

RULPAL/USCINCSO

MAY 64 OK

STATE READDRESSES FOR DEFENSE
PARAPHRASE NOT REQUIRED
REF BY MSG NUMBER IN
DECLASSIFIED COPY PROHIBITED

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS:
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR 5200.10

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 1013 INFO CINCLANT
UNN CINCSO UNN FROM BOGOTA MAY 8 4PM
FOR CINCSO AND POLAD CINCSO

DEPT PASS DOD

REF STATE/DOD MESSAGE 715

IN VIEW CONFUSION EXISTING ABOUT TIME GOC MILITARY BEGAN
THINK SERIOUSLY MOUNT MARQUETALIA CAMPAIGN, WE QUERIED ARMY
COMMANDER GENERAL FAJARDO PINZON THIS SUBJECT AT SOME LENGHT.
OUR QUESTIONS PROMPTED BY STATEMENT IN REFTEL SUCH PLANNING
"IN COURSE FOR MONTHS" PRIOR EQUIPMENT REQUESTS. NOT
HAVING SO REPORTED, THIS CAME AS SURPRISE.

DA IN 285139

APPENDIX C: CONTINUED

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 11N 25-26218
By: MM NARA Date: 5/1/85

Reproduced at the National Archives

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

MESSAGE

NONETHELESS, WE WISH REITERATE AND EMPHASIZE OUR PREVIOUS POSITION THAT UNDUE DIVERSION HELICOPTERS FROM REGULAR BANDIT OPERATIONS FOR MARQUETALIA CAMPAIGN WOULD BE RISKY AND UNWISE. FURTHERMORE, HELICOPTERS BEING REPAIRED CONUS PROBABLY WILL NOT BE BACK UNTIL AUGUST. THEREFORE, AN INCREMENT OF THREE HELICOPTERS NEEDED SOONEST. GENERAL FAJARDO AND HIS COLLEAGUES PARTICULARLY STRESS THIS POINT, NOTING THAT THE SOONER ADEQUATE FORCE CAN BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN MARQUETALIA EARLIER THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE FINISHED-- AND AT LESS COST LIVES, EQUIPMENT AND MONEY.

ON RADIO EQUIPMENT AND L-20'S, WE ARE PREPARED RECOMMEND GOC PURCHASE AND/OR DIVERSION WHERE POSSIBLE. CHIEF MILGRP BELIEVES GOC MILITARY MAY BE ABLE STRETCH EXISTING RESOURCES AND MAKE MODEST PURCHASES IF NECESSARY TO PROVIDE REASONABLE LOGISTICS, AND WE WILL THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATE THIS POSSIBILITY. NEEDLESS TO SAY, OUR ADOPTION OF THIS POSITION WILL PRESENT PROBLEMS WHICH WE HOPE TO OVERCOME, PROVIDING HELICOPTERS MADE AVAILABLE QUICKLY.

BASIC PROBLEM REMAINING IS HOW SOON HELICOPTERS PROGRAMMED FY 1965 CAN BE DELIVERED. YOUR 715 SUGGESTS SOMETIME NEXT FISCAL YEAR, BUT WE SUBMIT AGAIN THAT NEED EXISTS NOW. MILITARY UNITS ALREADY IN POSITION MARQUETALIA AND ADJOINING REGIONS AND HAVE BEGUN CIVIC ACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS. COMMUNISTS AND OTHER EXTREMISTS HAVE CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY "DEFEND MARQUETALIA". THERE EVEN REPORTS OF AS YET UNDETERMINED VERACITY

DA IN 285139

PAGE 3

APPENDIX D

1991 U.S. declassified document linking Uribe with cocaine trafficking cartels. Available at: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB131/index.htm>

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~NOFORN, UNCLASSIFIED~~

THROUGH MEXICO INTO THE US.

68. PRITAM ((SINGH MAUR)) - A HINDU TRAFFICKER WHO, AS OF SEPTEMBER 19, 1990 HEADED A TRAFFICKING GROUP WHICH TRANSPORTED MEDELLIN CARTEL COCAINE THROUGH MEXICO INTO THE US. DOB 471212.
69. ADMAN ((KHASHOGGI)) - AN INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFICKER WHO ALLEGEDLY HAS SOLD ARMS TO THE COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKERS, ESPECIALLY TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL.
70. FIDEL ((CASTRO MEJIA)) - ALIAS "RUMBO". CHIEF OF AN ASSASSIN GANG WHICH OPERATED IN COLOMBIA IN THE SERVICE OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL, IS LINKED TO VARIOUS MASSACRES IN ANTIOQUIA, CORDOBA, AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO REGION OF COLOMBIA.
71. LOUIS ARTURO ((FONTECHA CANACHO)) - AN EX-DAS AGENT WAS SENT BY DAS TO ATTEND A PERSONAL SECURITY COURSE AT THE FBI ACADEMY IN THE US. IN 1983, IN MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA, FONTECHA MURDERED TWO DAS AGENTS TO AVOID EXPOSURE OF HIS TIES TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. ON JULY 22, 1988 HE WAS ARRESTED IN BOGOTA AT HEROIN LABORATORY AFTER HAVING FLED FROM MEXICO WHERE HE KILLED TWO MEXICAN BORDER POLICEMEN. THE FOLLOWING 7 INDIVIDUALS ARE MEMBERS OF FONTECHA'S GANG.
72. HARVEY ((CANO)).
73. ARMULFO ((SONZALEZ)).
74. JOSE GUILLERMO ((QUINONES)).
75. ELIAS ((CRUZ CIFUENTES)).
76. MARIO SILVESTRE ((LOZANO CASTAÑO)).
77. OSAR ((HERRERA)).
78. ALVARO ((URIBE ARAQUE)).
79. PABLO ((ESCOBAR GAVIRIA)) - THE MAXIMUM CHIEF OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL WHO BEGAN AS AN ASSASSIN AND NOW IS IN CHARGE OF THE BIGGEST MULTI-NATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD. ESCOBAR IS WANTED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND THE US HAS REQUESTED HIS EXTRADITION FOR MULTIPLE CRIMES. ESCOBAR HAS REPORTEDLY PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS MURDERS OF HIGH RANKING COLOMBIAN PERSONALITIES SUCH AS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CARLOS MAURO BOYCE, THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE RODRIGO ((LARA BOMILLA)), DIRECTOR/EDITOR OF THE "EL ESPERADOR" NEWSPAPER, GUILLERMO ((CANO)) AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LOUIS CARLOS ((GALANI)). DOB 491201.
80. YAIR ((KLEIN)) - RETIRED ISRAELI ARMY COLONEL, MERCENARY AND EXPERT IN MILITARY TACTICS. KLEIN SENT ADVISORS TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL TO TRAIN THE CARTEL PARAMILITARY FORCES AND SELECTED ASSASSIN TEAM LEADERS ON HOW TO UNLEASH WAVES OF TERRORISM IN COLOMBIA TO DESTROY LAW, ORDER, AND UNDERMINE DEMOCRACY WITH THE MULTIPLE MURDERS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN COLOMBIA. KLEIN ALSO FACILITATED THE TRANSPORT OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION, TO THE CARIBBEAN AND SOUTH AMERICAN AREAS, WHICH EVENTUALLY SURFACED IN THE POSSESSION OF THE COLOMBIAN CARTELS AND COLOMBIAN GUERRILLA FORCES.
81. BERTA INEZ ((MEJIA DE SERNA)) COLOMBIAN POLITICIAN AND ASSEMBLYWOMAN FROM ENVIGADO, COLOMBIA WHO WAS ARRESTED IN 1990 FOR LENDING ASSISTANCE TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. THIS POLITICIAN IS A DIRECT COLLABORATOR WITH PABLO ESCOBAR.
82. ALVARO URIBE VELEZ - A COLOMBIAN POLITICIAN AND SENATOR DEDICATED TO COLLABORATION WITH THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AT HIGH GOVERNMENT LEVELS. URIBE WAS LINKED TO A BUSINESS INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES IN THE US. HIS FATHER WAS MURDERED IN COLOMBIA FOR HIS CONNECTION WITH THE NARCOTIC TRAFFICKERS. URIBE

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APPENDIX D: CONTINUED

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HAS WORKED FOR THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AND IS A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA. HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN ESCOBAR'S POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TO WIN THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT PARLIAMENTARIAN TO JORGE ((ORTEGA)). URIBE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE POLITICIANS, FROM THE SENATE, WHO HAS ATTACKED ALL FORMS OF THE EXTRADITION TREATY.

83. ALVARO DIEGO ((MONTOYA)) - A POLITICIAN AND INDUSTRIALIST FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUIA HAS BEEN LINKED TO PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA. HE HAS BEEN INVESTIGATED FOR SUCH LINKS AND HAS ACTED AS AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA.

84. GUIDO ((PARRA MONTOYA)) - A CARTEL LAWYER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUIA, COLOMBIA AND FRIEND OF PABLO ESCOBAR. THIS LAWYER HAS SERVED AS AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE "EXTRADITABLES" AND HAS ALSO FOUGHT AGAINST THE EXTRADITION OF COLOMBIANS TO THE US. HE WAS DETAINED BY THE COLOMBIAN 4TH ARMY BRIGADE DUE TO HIS LINKS TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL.

85. SANTIAGO ((LONDONO WHITE)) - INDUSTRIALIST AND POLITICIAN FROM ANTIQUIA, COLOMBIA WHO IS A FRIEND OF PABLO ESCOBAR. LONDONO AND HIS BROTHER BECAME FAMOUS FOR BECOMING MILLIONAIRES BY MEANS OF CONSTRUCTING MANSIONS FOR THE MEDELLIN DRUG LORDS. HE HAS SERVED AS AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE CARTELS AND THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT.

86. DIEGO ((LONDONO WHITE)) - INDUSTRIALIST, ARCHITECT, AND POLITICIAN FROM ANTIQUIA, COLOMBIA WHO BECAME A MILLIONAIRE CONSTRUCTING MANSIONS FOR THE MEDELLIN DRUG LORDS. HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE NAME OF THE "EXTRADITABLES". DIEGO WAS ALSO INVESTIGATED BY THE COLOMBIAN 4TH ARMY BRIGADE OF MEDELLIN FOR HIS TIES TO THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. HE AND THOSE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED WERE NEGOTIATORS FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE SON, DIEGO ((MONTOYA)) OF PRESIDENT BARCO'S SECRETARY, GERMAN ((MONTOYA)).

87. JOSE ((GALINDO ESCOBAR)) - NARCOTICS TRAFFICKER AND PILOT FOR THE MEDELLIN CARTEL WHO HEADS A LARGE SCALE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING NETWORK IN MONTREAL, CANADA. HE WAS ARRESTED THERE IN 1985 AND SENTENCED TO 22 YEARS IN PRISON. ALSO CAPTURED WERE A GROUP OF ASSASSINS SENT TO CANADA TO RESCUE GALINDO. DOB 51112.

88. FERNANDO ((MENDOZA IRIBARRILLO)) - A COMPANION OF JOSE GALINDO. HE WAS ALSO A PILOT WHO TOGETHER WITH JOSE GALINDO HEADED A LARGE SCALE NARCOTIC RING IN CANADA. HE WAS ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO 22 YEARS IN PRISON IN CANADA.

89. CARLOS ((VIVES)) - A COLOMBIAN ACTOR INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WHO HAS WORKED WITH HIS UNCLE, IGNACIO ((VIVES ESCOBARRIA)), A POLITICIAN AND THE CURRENT (1990-1992) MAYOR OF SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA. IGNACIO VIVES WAS PREVIOUSLY SENTENCED FOR CORRUPTION AND IS A WELL KNOWN NORTH COAST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKER IN THE SERVICE OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL.

90. ALONSO DE JESUS ((VAQUERO)) - ALIAS "VLADIMIR". HE IS CHIEF OF A SELF-DEFENSE GROUP AND HAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS MASSACRES IN COLOMBIA. VAQUERO HAS KILLED LEFTIST SYMPATHIZERS IN COLOMBIA AND HAS CARRIED OUT VARIOUS MURDERS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL.

91. JAIME EDUARDO ((REUDA SOCHA)) - AN EX-FARC (REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA) GUERRILLA. AFTER TAKING CONTROL OF THE MONEY OF THE SUBVERSIVE GROUP, HE ABANDONED THE GROUP AND ASKED

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APPENDIX E

Declassified document from Chiquita proving their links to guerrillas and paramilitaries. Available at: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB340/19940104.pdf>

3

4

MEMORANDUM

Chiquita Brands International

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - PRIVILEGED CLIENT-ATTORNEY INFORMATION

TO: [Redacted] Esquire DATE: January 4, 1994

FROM: [Redacted] PHONE: [Redacted]

SUBJECT: Reportable Payments in Colombia and Manager's Expense Payments

This memo documents my understanding of the Turbo and Santa Marta Divisions' transactions that are reportable on the Statement of Policies and Procedures and Manager's Expense summaries. Also, I will include my understanding of the Divisions' handling and reporting of payments for security purposes and payments to the respective trade association. This information is based on inquiries of local Management and through my observation of documents that were made available to me. This memo with attachments will constitute our working papers related to this area. ~~Our professional standards require that we document the work that we perform.~~ *AND TEL*

We limited the scope of our testing and the related procedures performed to disbursements and certain corporate compliance areas. ~~This was the first internal audit review at the location in approximately ten years.~~ Our work primarily consisted of a disbursement sample, review of policies and procedures, and discussions with management, since this engagement constitutes a disbursement review. We did not perform detailed substantive testing of balance sheet values and compliance testing beyond the disbursement-related systems. Had we performed additional procedures or had we performed a complete audit of each of the aforementioned entities, other matters may have come to our attention that would have been reported in this memorandum and detailed in the related working papers.

Statement of Policies and Procedures Disclosures

Based on discussions I had with each of the General Managers at both of the Divisions, the only reportable transactions to governments, governmental agencies, governmental employees, political parties, or political candidates that they were aware of are the donations totalling \$1,441 at Turbo and \$444 at Santa Marta for the period January 1, 1993 through October 25, 1993, as outlined in Exhibit I. I noted no other reportable transactions from my review of the entity. I discussed the nature of reportable payments with them. They seem to better understand and committed to properly report the payments that constitute a reportable transaction. *THESE ITEMS WERE REPORTED SEPARATELY BY OUR INTERNAL AUDIT RESULTS OF OUR DISBURSEMENTS. LED TO IN EARLY 1994.*

I understand, based on my discussions with Management and based on my review of documents

more to find

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CHIQUITA NSD 6446

APPENDIX E: CONTINUED

[REDACTED]

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - PRIVILEGED CLIENT-ATTORNEY INFORMATION

Memorandum to [REDACTED] sq.
January 4, 1994
Page 2

Management made available to me, that the Manager's Expense Account at both Divisions largely consists of guerilla extortion payments made by the Security Department through our intermediary or Security Consultant, Rene Osorio. I understand that the Security Consultant is our contact with the various guerilla groups in both Divisions. Management in Santa Marta advised me that all extortion payments, referred to as "citizen security" by Management, are currently handled through the Security Department, either [REDACTED] in Medellin, and recorded in the respective Division's accounting records in an account named "Gastos de Seguridad Ciudadana". I understand that these payments are not supported by any receipt by any outside recipient and are being expended as a Company expense. Totals of such payments were \$110M at Turbo and \$3M at Santa Marta for the period January 1, 1993 through October 25, 1993. These amounts have been expensed via the Manager's Expense Account in 1993.

The Turbo General Manager told me that the Guerilla Groups are used to supply security personnel at the various farms. This is not practiced at the Santa Marta Division.

I was told by a member of management that such payments to guerilla groups are considered illegal by the Colombian government, and that penalties include 70 year jail terms for individuals found guilty in a court of law.

Through October 1993, the Divisions are in a loss position for financial and tax purposes of \$2.3 million for Turbo and \$6.1 million for Santa Marta. Therefore, local Management is not very concerned that they are expensing these payments without supporting documentation. Management believes that the loss situation the divisions are experiencing would mitigate the lack of documentation for the payments, in the event that the Divisions are audited by local tax authorities. ~~Nevertheless, I believe that Management should explore other means in order to record these payments outside the Colombian entities' books due to the extremely high personal risk this presents to local Management.~~

I have included schedules (Exhibits II through IV) of the manager's expense accounts for both divisions for the period January through October 1993. I have agreed these to the general ledger activity and noted only two differences with a zero net effect. Both of the differences were at the Turbo Division, which I have documented on Exhibit II.

INVESTIGATION OF CONCERNS
Trade Associations

② Both Division belong to trade associations that represent the respective areas in promoting the region's bananas, in improving the general infrastructure, and coordinating the facilitation of government services, and promoting overall safety in the region. The involvement in and

[REDACTED]
[Handwritten notes]

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APPENDIX F

Declassified Chiquita document proving payments to military and Convivir groups as "donations to citizen reconnaissance groups." Available at: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB340/19970000-19980000.pdf>

**SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS
STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF FEBRUARY 19, 1979
APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 1998**

COUNTRY/COMPANY	DESCRIPTION	1979	1980	1981	1982
COLOMBIA		11,000	68,107	104,071	28,240
Banorte	Service Operations				
COSTA RICA		170	1,200	1,420	800
Cobol	Service Operations	0	10	20	750
Chiquita Brands	Marketing/Trusted Fund	1,000	2,000	3,000	4,000
Chiquita Land Company	Service Operations	0	700	700	0
Chiquita Fruit	Shipping Operations	1,000	4,000	8,100	8,240
	Subtotal				
ECUADOR		0	0	0	0
Banorte	Service Operations				
GUATEMALA		1,000	200	1,200	1,000
Chiquita	Service Operations				
HONDURAS		140	300	400	1,070
Agropecuaria Rio Claro	Processed Service Products	0	1,000	14,700	20,000
Chiquita	Service Operations	500	300	1,200	2,000
San Felipe/El Para Operations	Oil Palm Subsidies	20,000	20,000	7,000	40,000
Tela Rubiel	Service Operations	4,000	4,000	8,000	7,000
	Subtotal				
PANAMA		10,700	100,000	177,100	20,400
Chiquita Land Company	Service Operations	400	0	400	1,000
Polymex Services, S.A.	Plastic Products	10,300	100,000	176,700	19,400
	Subtotal				
UNITED STATES		0	100	0	0
Chiquita Brands International, Inc.					
TOTAL PAYMENTS		21,900	202,610	374,000	100,500

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APPENDIX F: CONTINUED

SUPPORT INFORMATION TO SUMMARY REPORT

QUARTERLY REPORT OF PAYMENT
STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOURTH QUARTER, 1997 (US\$)

COUNTRY	SUBSIDIARY	AMOUNT (US \$)	GOVERNMENT BRANCH	DESCRIPTION/COMMENTS
Colombia	Banadex	83,945	Convivir	Donation to citizen reconnaissance group made at request of Army.
		5,483	Army and Police Officials	Donations for security services.
		11,143	Political Candidates	Campaign contributions (including airplane tickets and campaign materials).
		445	Civic Associations	Charitable donations.
		783	Trade, Customs, Tax, and Agricultural Officials	Christmas gifts.
		132	Foreign Trade Commission	Expenses related to meals provided during meetings to discuss banana issues.
		<u>101,932</u>		
	Total Payments			

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