



Why resistance? Peru

POL 126

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TODAY

Ideology

Support for SP

Resistance to SP

Ideology

The refusal of history

SP ideology (like most rebel ideologies) are abstract, universal theories of change

Powerful for coordinating efforts, defining clear goals, and recruiting/motivating members

But ideology can clash with conditions on-the-ground

Ideological mismatch

In SP ideology, markets are places of exploitation – where peasants exchange for meager wages

importantly, it overlooked the role of markets in mountain life. The trek to town to sell a sack of potatoes or a team of oxen provided a source of income for buying kerosene, soap, school supplies, matches and other essentials; it was also the major social event of the week with the opportunity for visiting, drinking, and even the touch of excitement with the purchase of an ice cream cone or a new cassette of Colombian *cumbias*. The prohibition on going to market proved a catalyst of resentment early on, and even sparked revolt against the Shining Path in the moors of

Banning markets goes over poorly; markets more complex

Racial hierarchies

of ‘*todas las sangres*’. ‘Reading through the documents of the PCP-SL’, as one observer emphasises, ‘one would think that Peru was as homogeneous as Sweden or Japan’.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly in the light of this insensitivity to racial and ethnic questions, the internal organisation of the party in the 1980s and early 1990s still mirrored the Peruvian structure of stratification by colour and class, much as it had in the early years in Ayacucho. The party elite remained mostly white professionals, as was made clear by a widely shown video captured by police of Guzmán and his inner circle dancing to ‘Zorba the Greek’ at a 1991 *fiesta* in a Lima safe house. By contrast, newspaper photographs of arrested fighters disclosed the threadbare clothes and mixed features of youth in the lower ranks of the Shining Path, who came overwhelmingly from the brown-skinned and impoverished majorities. In a reflection of the survival of prejudices of

SP ideology all about class – misses how race (indigenous versus white) shapes social relations

Ideological blinders: Cuba



Che in the Congo, Bolivia

Cuba, Che attempt to replicate success in Congo then Bolivia

Many, poor oppressed miners in Bolivia seemed ripe for rebellion

Local support never materialized, rebellion put down by state

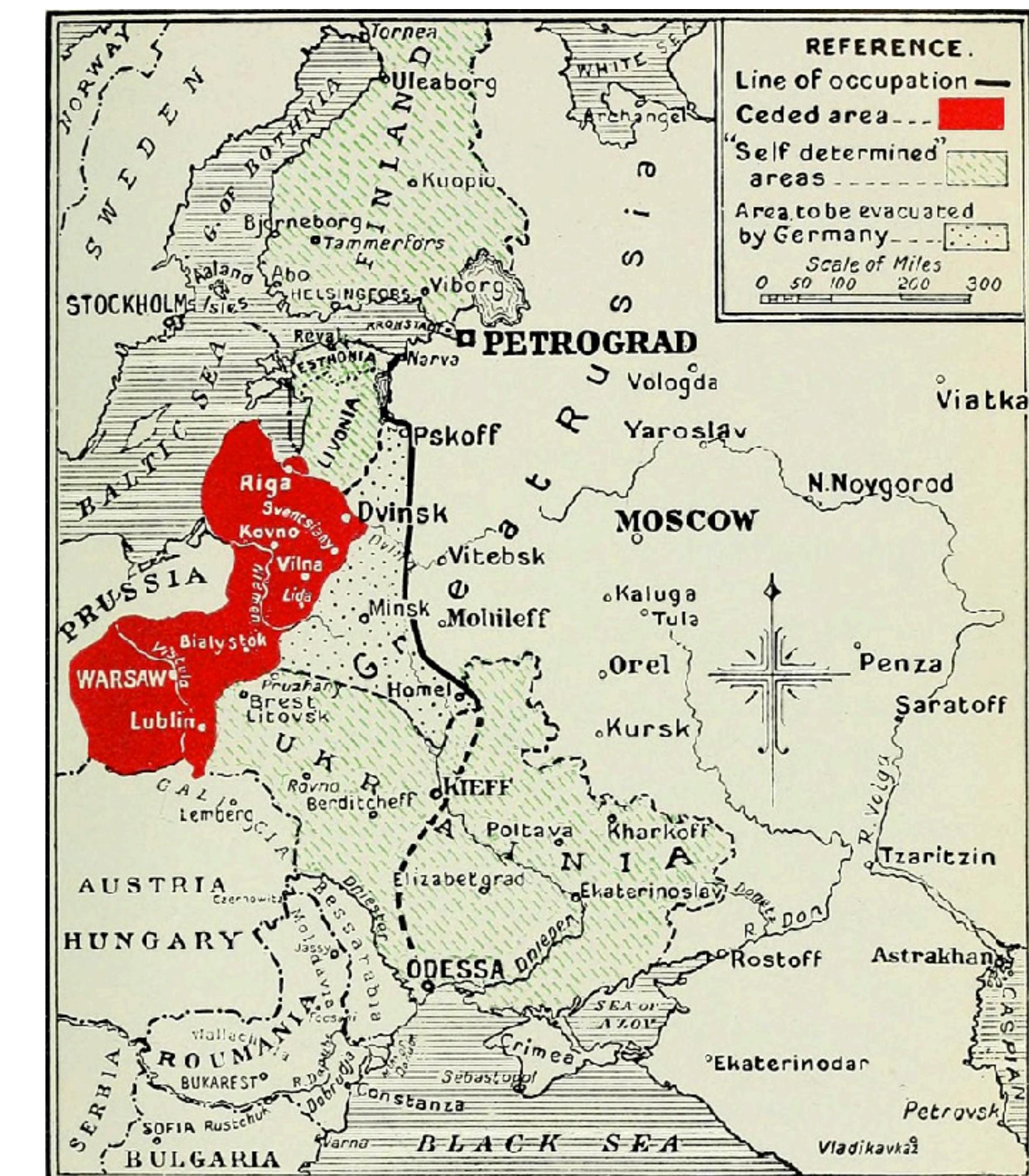


Ideological blinders: Bolsheviks lose Ukraine

WW1 – Germany advancing on weakened, (newly communist) Russia

Bolsheviks debate peace – some believe Europe on verge of communist revolution, hold out → better terms

Delays gives Germany time to advance, Russia loses Ukraine, Finland



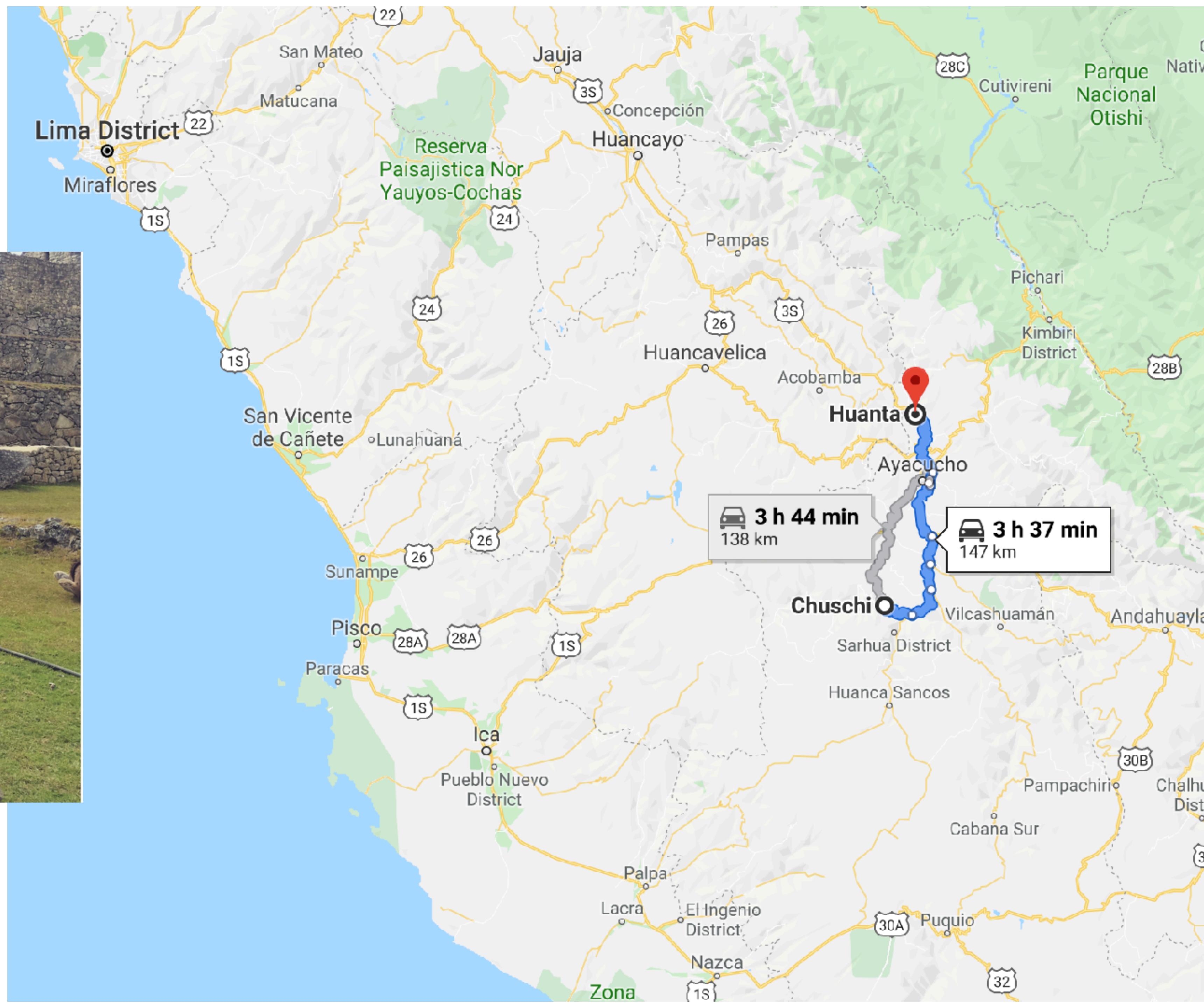
Recap

Ideology plays a prominent role in armed groups

Important functions – but hard to tell if/when cause or instrument

SP – mix of Marx and Mao and idiosyncratic leader

SP ideology seems poorly matched for Peruvian context



Two fates

SP attempt entry into:
Chukchi and Huanta

How does La Serna describe things
going for them at each location?

Success (?) in Chuschi

At the water's edge

SP support

Some peasants did support SP
(mostly: students)

What did support look like?

Recruitment

Spies

Avoiding
detection

Networks

Transport

Why support?

Did peasants support SP because they love dense Maoist philosophy?

What does La Serna argue Chuschi got from SP?

Realities of ideological training

I would wonder, you know, as a little guy[,] . . . ‘What will that be like? Are we going to have planes or something?’ . . . I didn’t really think that I was going to join a revolution just like that. . . . I just repeated what they told me, mostly [out of gratitude for the] care and respect that they rendered me. That was all. That was all, that was all, that was all. . . . [My participation] had nothing to do [with revolution] or carrying guns, not at all. It was just a matter of doing what [the teacher] told me to do, because I thought that it would please him if I did those things.⁴⁴

“The rock of justice”

SP publicly punish/attack local actors to establish dominance

Social deviants

Qalas

Rival community

Often **forgave** transgressors if join SP
(why did villagers like this?)

Key: big mismatch between SP
intentions and local **perceptions**

The mismatch: “deviants”

SP punish deviants to disincentivize
“offenses against the party”

Peasants allow punishment to **correct**
behavior (ex: forgiveness)

Ultimately story of state and
customary **failure**

Qalas

villagers. “They were *qalas*. We *had* to obey them,” he explained. “The *qalas* were the lettered people. They could do anything to you. They could throw you in jail if you didn’t obey them. [They] bossed people around like it was nothing. . . . [They] had other people who took care [of their fields and animals], like: ‘Take care of my livestock,’ you know, and [their workers] would go and get their livestock. That’s who the [*qalas*] were. . . . [The *qalas*] could make or break the village.”⁶¹ Fulgencio offered

Qalas = white/mestizo who dominated local life – sometimes abusive

The Qala mismatch

To SP, “*qalas*” (elites) are class enemies

Yet peasants refused execution (Chipana story);
why?

To SP: deposing/expelling elites is **class warfare**

To villagers: punishing elites was about
restoring balance

Local rivalries

Rivalry between Chuschi and Quispillacct meant one side often supported SP violence against members of other

False or opportunistic accusations (we've seen this before)

Burning the ballot box:
For SP a **renouncing** of elections
For villagers **assault** on rivals

Rebel and civilian interests don't always line up

At the Water's Edge

This analysis of Shining Path has highlighted the ideological disconnect between Shining Path leaders and followers. Whereas PCP-SL leaders demanded justice against a semifeudal social structure, a reactionary nation-state, and capitalist imperialism, Ayacuchan peasants seemed much more concerned with administering justice against moral deviants, illegitimate power holders, and longtime adversaries who had disrupted public order at the local level. Indeed, it was Shining Path's unwillingness to adjust its universalizing, inflexible dogma to local realities that ultimately led to the guerrilla group's downfall. Initially, however, Chuschnicos and Quispillacinos concluded that the potential benefits of Shining Path's external authority and justice system outweighed the potential costs. They were willing to experiment with this new system as long as it redressed these local grievances.

Even when they do, the two might be “speaking past each other”

Resistance in Huanta
To defend the mountaintop

Resistance in Huanta

Informal (?) private militias
(*Rondas campesinas*)

Long history in Peru in places
where state absent

Take up arms against SP
(examples?)

Become key to SP defeat



The original *ronderos* of Huaychao surrounding grave of Senderistas killed during *linchamiento*. Photograph by Oscar Medrano, *Caretas*; reprinted with permission.

Between two fires

Indigenous
communities caught
“between two fires”

Seen by state as likely
rebel supporters

In places where they
resist SP rule, also
victimized



Private militias

Peasants formed *rondas* as a way to:

Resist Shining Path

Send **costly signal** to state – were on the same side

But why not side with SP against state?



What went wrong in Huanta?

Shining Path come in planning to
expel/kill local elites

Partly, to exert own authority

Partly because they thought
peasants wanted this

Why?

The varayoq

Customary elder authorities
(not elected)

Role: punish (alleged) transgressions
(e.g., cattle-rustlers)

Not unreasonable to think peasants
would have grievances w/ them!



Varayoqs of Huaychao with authority staffs. Photograph by Oscar Medrano, *Caretas*; reprinted with permission.

The *hacendados*

Essentially a **feudal** economy

Hacendado gives (meager)
share of produce (no pay)

Hacendados have substantial
control over local's lives

Not unreasonable to think peasants
would have grievances w/ them!



Hacendados

Another reason why Huaychainos did not resent Chávez for his abuses is that they expected nothing better from a mestizo landlord. The following conversation with President Fortunato and *tayta* Esteban illustrates this point:

QUESTION: Did [Chávez] get mad a lot?

ESTEBAN: He'd get mad, because he's an aggressive person.

He's the *patrón*.

FORTUNATO: Everyone was scared of him.

ESTEBAN: People were always looking over their shoulders.

QUESTION: How's that?

ESTEBAN: If he was in a bad mood, people were scared.

QUESTION: What would people say?

ESTEBAN: They respected him.

FORTUNATO: They [respected him] out of fear.¹⁰⁰

He was a man who didn't feed us well; he gives [*sic*] us food that one would give to a dog in four [cattle] hides and only one tiny blanket for all six [*semanero* workers to share] on the cement floor in Huanta. . . . He'd only give us two [ears] of corn per person, and he'd give us very few things to cook ourselves. . . . And after working in the fields [all week] we'd return all the way from Huanta fatigued, having not eaten well [or] slept well; just totally fatigued we'd return.⁸⁷

While perhaps over the top, Chávez's system of justice did not strike Huaychainos as unreasonable. *Mama* Ernestina assured us that Chávez only resorted to the *verga* "for serious offenses."¹¹⁶ President Fortunato and *tayta* Esteban agreed. "[Chávez] ruled the hacienda," said the former. "He was respected because on his hacienda there were no thieves, rapists, or witches, because if there were he would punish people with his whip [made] of a bull's penis."¹¹⁷ Later in the conversation, we asked the

Hacendados abuse their position, are resented

The Shining Path perspective

Local elites were SP's bread and butter

No one likes authorities!

Stark inequities among peasants
and hacendados

To SP, it is **obvious** that peasants would support
violence against local authorities

And yet... they didn't

Why?

Basically culture

Investment in **customary justice**

Feared changes (**gender**)

How did SP justice and
peasant justice **differ**?

Defense of varayoq

Narciso Huamán, the former *rondero* I mentioned above, expressed this sentiment after a night of heavy drinking, coca-leaf chewing, and laughter. At one point in the conversation, Narciso looked me square in the eye and confessed: “You know, Shining Path’s overall message wasn’t really that bad, about punishing wife abusers and cattle rustlers and all. But we couldn’t imagine wiping out our *varayoqs*. What for? They were so vital to our community.” Narciso looked down into his full cup for a brief moment. As he lifted it to his lips, he added in a near whisper, “Who knows, if it wasn’t for all that nonsense about liquidating local leaders, I’d probably be out there right now, fighting alongside [the guerrillas].” As soon as the

Peasants did not want to
lose customary practice

Even the *hacendados*

They did expect landlords to respect peasants' cultural practices, however. According to *tayta* Esteban, Chávez donated various items to help facilitate his tenants' festivities, but he never participated in them.¹⁰² Similarly, when *tayta* Mariano described all the harvest and religious festivals that peasants celebrated throughout the year, he focused on the presence of the customary *varayoqs* in the rituals, saying, "The landlord didn't meddle. 'Just do what you need to do,' he'd tell us." When asked if the estate owner ever showed up during these events, *tayta* Mariano shook his head. "He didn't participate. . . . [He'd just say,] 'Just go and enjoy the fiesta.'"¹⁰³ Rafael Chávez thus understood his boundaries as a nonindigenous power holder. On the one hand, he adhered to cultural expectations of reciprocity by supplying certain goods for the festivities. On the other hand, he never attempted to insert himself into the indigenous rituals, keeping his physical and social distance.

"He was good for the good people, bad for the bad people." "In other words," *tayta* Esteban clarified, "he gave good land to obedient people, but he expelled the disobedient ones with a *chicote* and gave their plot to someone else." President Fortunato reiterated, "He only hit disobedient people with his *chicote* and he loved the obedient ones like a father." "Patrón, patrón," *tayta* Esteban affirmed with a nod of the head. President Fortunato continued, "Also, his tenants obeyed him as if they were his child [*sic*]."¹¹⁹

Peasants had an (imperfect)
equilibrium with *hacendados*

What would SP think?

How might SP respond to “the
hacendado is mostly nice, we want to
keep him around?”

Probably argue the peasants have
false consciousness

And maybe that's not wrong; but armed groups still need to
convince population that revolution is in their interest

Why Huanta and not Chuschi?

Chuschi: peasants want SP justice even if they
don't care about the ideology

Huanta: peasants don't want SP justice

Difference: traditional authority had **eroded** in
Chuschi (probably b/c of migration)

In general, rebels tend to be more successful in
power vacuums

Local customs matter (in Colombia too)

*“The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) were everything in this village. They had the last word on every single dispute among neighbors (...). **They were the ones who ruled here**, not the state.”*

*“[The FARC] wanted to take power over these people and this land. But they couldn't. We had to obey them in certain ways, of course, because they have the weapons. **But we [the peasant leaders] are the authority here. People recognize us as such. They could not take that away from us.** They didn't rule us”.*

RECAP

Rebels want to win over population and have a “story” (ideology) for how to do that

But ideologies can be ill-suited for **local context**

The **strength** of local “culture” can derail plans

Rebels have hard time **adapting** to local realities