An Ember of the Shining Path: A Content and Text Analysis of the Peru People's Movement's "Sol Rojo" Magazine

Matthew A. Hughes
US Army, matthewallenhughes@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/ijoss

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, Latin American History Commons, Peace and Conflict Studies Commons, Spanish Literature Commons, and the Terrorism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/ijoss/vol3/iss1/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Security Studies by an authorized editor of Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository.
AN EMBER OF THE SHINING PATH: A CONTENT AND TEXT ANALYSIS OF THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT’S SOL ROJO MAGAZINE

Matthew A. Hughes
Foreign Area Officer (Western Hemisphere), United States Army

Captain Matthew A. Hughes is a U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer assigned to the Western Hemisphere. He is currently a Master of International Public Policy student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. His research interests include the study of terrorism, intelligence disciplines, Latin American political economy, and international security. He has published one book and several articles on these themes. He holds a MA in Intelligence Studies from American Military University and a BS in Arabic/Spanish with a minor in Terrorism Studies from the United States Military Academy.

Email: matthew.a.hughes22.mil@mail.mil

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not reflect the official position of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.
**Introduction**

Between 1979 and 1993, the most active region for terrorism in the world was Latin America.\(^1\) Left-wing terrorism dominated this period, characterized by groups intent on overthrowing capitalist systems, replacing them with Marxist-Leninist models through revolution. The Shining Path in Peru was one such group whose brutal tactics tallied over 4,500 terrorist attacks\(^2\) and some 31,000 fatalities\(^3\) between 1980 and 2000. The Shining Path’s carnage shook Peruvian society. Despite a crackdown by the Peruvian Government that removed group leadership and toppled the organization in the early 1990s, vestiges still exist seeking to overthrow the government and influence societies through propaganda.

**The Shining Path and Splinter Cells**

The *Partido Comunista del Perú – Sendero Luminoso* [Communist Party of Peru – Shining Path], more commonly known as simply the Shining Path, was founded in 1969 under the leadership of Abimael Guzmán, a former philosophy professor at San Cristóbal of Huamanga University in Ayacucho, Peru. The small group, an offshoot of the Communist Party of Peru, quickly grew to around 500 members by 1980,\(^4\) when members initiated a guerrilla war in which their militant actions disrupted elections, imposed a justice system in rural areas with limited governmental presence and influence, and gained territorial control in the Andean highlands. Despite the Peruvian


\(^4\) “Shining Path.”
Army entering the region in 1982, the group continued to wage terrorism and grow, reaching as many as 3,000 members in 1990.\textsuperscript{5}

Newly-elected President Alberto Fujimori then carried out radical and controversial policies that led to an authoritarian period during which he transformed the government response to the Shining Path insurgency. In one such effort, the government established, armed, and trained groups of rural peasants called \textit{rondas campesinas} [peasant patrols] (known as \textit{Comités de Autodefensa} [Committees of Self-Defense] after they gained legal status in 1991\textsuperscript{6}), which grew in number to 7,226 committees by 2005.\textsuperscript{7} The number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Shining Path quickly dropped in the early 1990s (Figure 1) as the Peruvian Government sent troops into Shining Path strongholds and support zones and captured group leaders, including Guzmán in 1992. Guzmán later asked his followers to broker a peace deal with the government, which led the Shining Path to break into various factions based on loyalties. Some

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{terrorist_attacks_peru_shining_path_1978-2016.png}
\caption{Terrorist Attacks in Peru by the Shining Path, 1978-2016}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
Note: 1993 statistics are incomplete due to retrospective data collection challenges, as mentioned in the GTD Codebook.
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{5} “Shining Path.”


factions endured after 2000, still adhering to Maoist tenets and, in some cases, perpetrating attacks against security forces. Most splinter cells exist in the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro River Valley (VRAEM) region, totaling an estimated 450 members in 2020, but a separate group persists in the Huallaga Valley, and other factions, such as the Peru People’s Movement, exist in small numbers in some foreign countries.

The Peru People’s Movement and Sol Rojo Magazine

The Movimiento Popular Perú [Peru People’s Movement], or MPP, has been described as ‘El Nuevo Sendero [Luminoso]’ [The New Shining Path] and the new front or faction of the Shining Path on account of its revolutionary philosophies, techniques, and membership that includes former members of the Shining Path. According to Luis Alberto Sánchez, Director of the non-governmental organization Waynakuna Perú, this new front for the Shining Path began with the magazine Sol Rojo [Red Sun], a ‘gaceta terrorista de nivel internacional’ [international terrorist gazette].

He explained that the magazine’s authors are former members of the Shining Path who decided to turn in their weapons after Guzmán was captured in 1992, but instead of

---

8 “Shining Path,” InSight Crime.
9 Whereas English translations are used for most terms in this article, the Spanish version of this magazine title will be retained throughout the article, which is wholly focused on text analysis of the magazine’s editions in the Spanish language.
12 “Nuevo Frente de Sendero Luminoso [New Front of Shining Path].”
surrendering themselves to Peruvian authorities, fled the country in 1993 and 1994 to claim asylum status abroad.\textsuperscript{13} Sánchez has also recently explained that members of the MPP are spreading propaganda in favor of the Shining Path throughout the world, including in Peru (to a lesser extent than elsewhere), Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, the United States, and Europe.\textsuperscript{14} They publish writings and hold rallies and conferences to recruit, disseminate disinformation to justify atrocities committed by the Shining Path, and promote unity among communist groups seeking people’s war.

The first edition of \textit{Sol Rojo} was published around 1993-1994, and around two editions have been released per year since then. The MPP maintains a website\textsuperscript{15} focused on the \textit{Sol Rojo} magazine, but there is no publicly-accessible mechanism tracking site views or file downloads to assess the extent of distribution. This study analyzes content and text from 30 editions of \textit{Sol Rojo}, as the remainder of the 49 published editions are not accessible online.\textsuperscript{16} The corpus contains nearly 700,000

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{14} “Crisis Económica y Pobreza [Economic and Poverty Crisis].”
\textsuperscript{15} http://www.solrojo.org/. There is also an English version of the site at http://www.redsun.org/
\textsuperscript{16} Editions comprising the corpus are available for download at http://www.solrojo.org/.
\end{flushleft}
words from editions spanning 21 years (Figure 2), rendering a large sampling size and strong dataset for the identification and analysis of trends, key characteristics, and psychometric properties.\textsuperscript{17}

**Evolution of *Sol Rojo* Content over Time**

Comparing content from individual editions of *Sol Rojo* to determine their similarity with other editions reveals that there are four distinct groupings. Figure 3 depicts a dendrogram (a diagram resembling a tree to represent similarities and differences among bodies of text) with clades (branches) representing clusters of similar *Sol Rojo* editions (represented by leaves, or the terminal end of each clade).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Sol Rojo</em> Edition</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
<th>Word Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>May-99</td>
<td>12016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sep-99</td>
<td>22807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mar-00</td>
<td>24056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sep-00</td>
<td>24973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>26265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>21232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>May-05</td>
<td>22499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mar-06</td>
<td>29880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Feb-07</td>
<td>30314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29*</td>
<td>Dec-07</td>
<td>48973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jun-08</td>
<td>24092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Apr-09</td>
<td>26456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Oct-09</td>
<td>35567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mar-10</td>
<td>28734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Jun-10</td>
<td>16818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dec-10</td>
<td>26701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Oct-11</td>
<td>24488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Apr-12</td>
<td>15678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Dec-12</td>
<td>22074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Jun-13</td>
<td>15582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Dec-13</td>
<td>24105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>17565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Mar-15</td>
<td>17925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Jan-16</td>
<td>19483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Dec-16</td>
<td>24355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Oct-17</td>
<td>21280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Nov-18</td>
<td>16872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Aug-19</td>
<td>20547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Mar-20</td>
<td>15051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Dec-20</td>
<td>20478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Word Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>698864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Edition 29 includes a supplement published separately from the same month.*

\textsuperscript{17} Calculations for psychometric characteristics were performed utilizing J.W. Pennebaker, R.J. Booth, R.L. Boyd, and M.E. Francis, Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count: LIWC2015, Austin, TX: Pennebaker Conglomerates, 2015, www.LIWC.net. The Spanish LIWC2007 Dictionary successfully categorized an average of 74.96 percent of words in the corpus, producing reliable results for further analysis.
This hierarchical cluster analysis renders four distinct clades—labeled α, β, γ, and δ—which reveal a correlation between document similarity and publication date. This corpus characteristic indicates that central themes and characteristics of the magazine’s text changed over time. Clade α contains editions 16-19 in smaller clades, along with the simplicifolious (single-leafed) 26th edition. Clades β (editions 23-24, 27-33, and 35), γ (34, 36-45), and δ (46-49) adhere even more to this chronological distinction between clusters.

Content analysis of these clades reveals predominant themes by publication period, some unique and some overlapping with other time periods. Figure 4 displays a Venn diagram listing translated key terms and themes among these four clades.

---

Abimael Guzmán’s Diminishing Influence

*Sol Rojo* often mentions four leaders through quotations, references to their ideologies or adherents of their schools of thought, strategic direction, or historical significance. Marx, Lenin, and Mao are three major leaders—their political theories and schools of thought bear their names and form the basis of Communist ideologies in South America. German socialist revolutionary Karl Marx (1818-1883) advocated for

---

19. Top words and themes, and their relative frequencies among clades, determined through analysis using Lexos and Infranodus.
20. There are occasional references to Abimael Guzmán’s school of thought (‘*pensamiento gonzalo*’) in *Sol Rojo*, but not nearly to the degree or extent of Marx, Lenin, and Mao.
societal development through class conflict, manifested as conflict between the bourgeoisie ruling class and proletariat urban working class. Russian revolutionary and politician Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) developed a variation of Marx’s political theory calling for a government run by the proletariat wherein the working class runs enterprises. Mao Zedong (1893-1976), or Chairman Mao, was a Chinese communist revolutionary whose philosophy was a variety of Marxism-Leninism. Maoism focused on social revolution wherein the popular masses, or peasants in the working class of a pre-industrial society, bring about progressive change by supplanting the form of government with Communism. Abimael Guzmán (1934-), is another prominent figure cited frequently in Sol Rojo. Generally referred to in Sol Rojo and other Communist publications by his nom de guerre Presidente Gonzalo [Chairman Gonzalo], Guzmán led the terrorist organization in a Maoist insurgency against the Peruvian government in the 1980s and into the 1990s, until the National Directorate Against Terrorism captured him in Lima on September 12, 1992. Even in his important role in regional conflict, Guzmán did not reach the level of ideological innovation or originality of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. He claimed to have synthesized Maoism into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, an evolved form of Marxism-Leninism with universal applications.21 In this way, he was not on equal footing with the three original ideologs, reflective of his placement below Marx, Lenin, and Mao in the header on Sol.

---

Rojo’s website (Figure 5). Guzmán’s speech and writings popularized the term “people’s war,” representing the Maoist concept of a protracted struggle dependent on popular support to draw the enemy into rural areas for mobile and guerrilla warfare. This and other Maoist concepts endured as central themes of Sol Rojo content, as reflected by these concepts appearing in high frequency within each clade displayed in Figure 4.

The placement of other key terms displayed in Figure 4 reflects Guzmán’s diminishing influence in the textual content of Sol Rojo. The term Presidente Gonzalo appeared in high frequency in Clades α, β, and γ, but faded after 2018 and the editions in Clade δ. In addition, there were frequent references to pensamiento gonzalo [“Gonzalo Doctrine,” or Abimael Guzmán’s school of thought] in earlier editions of Sol Rojo, as illustrated among Clade α themes. References to Guzmán’s ideological contributions dissipated after 2000, though, as commentary gradually shifted from the sphere of domestic conflicts, where his doctrinal principles had application to a broader, global perspective, where his ideas lacked relevance.

As references to Guzmán gradually faded, principles of Marx, Lenin, and Mao endured in Sol Rojo publications. Figure 6 displays normalized occurrence rates for references to Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Guzmán within editions of Sol Rojo over time. As the figure illustrates, Guzmán was occasionally cited or referenced the most among these ideologs in early editions, but eventually, he became the least referenced leader.

Figure 6: Prevalence of References to Communist Leaders in Sol Rojo, 1999-2020

---

22 This differentiation among ideological leaders is not unique to Sol Rojo. The homepage for the Brazilian Communist blog Servir ao Povo com Todo Coração [Serve the People with All Your Heart], accessible at https://serviraopovo.wordpress.com, contains a sidebar displaying five leader portraits, which includes the same first row of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, followed by a second row with Abimael Guzmán and Pedro Pomar (1913-1976), a founding member of the Communist Party of Brazil.
Resurgence of Feminism as a Theme and Recruitment Device

Female membership in the Shining Path and the Peru People’s Movement has been a key focus for these groups’ propaganda efforts. The Shining Path and MPP have encouraged women to participate in the “people’s war” as a way for rural and lower-class women to have their voices heard and reject supposed norms of inequality pushed by foreign imperialists. They have also stressed the need for women to serve in leadership capacities, as reflected in figures gathered by the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación [Truth and Reconciliation Commission], an entity established by President Alejandro Toledo to investigate human rights abuses associated with internal conflict in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s, which found that 56 percent of Shining Path’s Central Committee was female.23

---

Sol Rojo carries out much of the recruitment style and focus outlined in strategic documents produced by the Shining Path Congress, or governing body. One such document outlined recruiting efforts for the “people’s war,” which it stated should focus on workers (the class directing all revolutions), women (half of the world), youth, children, intellectuals, and the poor masses of city slums.24 Through Sol Rojo, the MPP has sought to fulfill this recruitment guidance, particularly aimed at mobilizing the working class and, at times, women.25

Feminism is a predominant theme in Clades α (specifically, with an article dedicated to the emancipation of women through the Communist Party in edition 26) and δ. Content focuses on recruitment, explaining how women are central to the popular struggle against oppression and exploitation. The topical group of class and women, related to an article on feminism, comprises eight percent of edition 26’s content. In this article, writers attacked “bourgeois feminism,” which they asserted, under the banner of spreading democracy, pushes modern imperialist culture onto primitive cultures of women in the third-world.26 They alleged this model clashes with “proletarian feminism” by focusing on sexual freedom rather than revolution, and individual freedom instead of class and Party.27 Although magazine editions between 2006 and 2016 did not include themes related to women’s rights or feminism, photos

---

25 A separate communist publication associated with the MPP, El Maoísta [The Maoist], seems to be more tailored for recruiting youth for the “people’s war.”
26 “Feminismo proletario: La Emancipación de la Mujer Bajo la Dirección del Partido Comunista [Proletarian Feminism: The Emancipation of the Woman under the direction of the Communist Party],” Sol Rojo 26 (May 2005), 27.
27 “Feminismo proletario: La Emancipación de la Mujer,” 27.
and propaganda images in the magazine continued to feature women united under a literal banner or flag of communism, or below images of the four leading ideologs. These themes reemerged around 2016 and generally focused on criticisms of “bourgeois feminism” in political campaigning within the United States. \(^{28}\)

\textit{The Changing Face of the Enemy: The State, Imperialist Yankees, and Superpowers}

Topics outlined in Figure 4 reflect the gradual shift in focus from grievances with the Peruvian Government toward disdain for foreign powers. Early editions criticized President Fujimori and his style of governance. In edition 16, for instance, \textit{Fujimori} is one of the most influential elements\(^{29}\) and, linked to \textit{fascista} [fascist] and \textit{régimen} [regime], accounts for 13 percent of the edition’s content. Figure 7 displays a network diagram for edition 16’s 150 most frequent nodes (words) with \textit{Fujimori} selected, revealing the name’s centrality in the edition through contextual links to other words (displayed through lines to other) and topical communities (represented by other colors), with words not directly linked grayed out.


\(^{29}\) As identified using the Jenks elbow cutoff algorithm to identify nodes (words) within the network diagram with significantly greater influence (linking distinct topical communities) than other nodes. On this, see notes under “Most Influential Elements” in the graph analytics display of https://infranodus.com/textmining/methods.
The network diagram reveals derogatory terms and criticisms, typical of allegations and perceptions about Fujimori among far-left groups. As one node and connector show in the diagram, *Sol Rojo* content labeled him a *proimperialista* [pro-imperialist], or lackey for the United States, foreshadowing the next main target of animosity after Fujimori’s removal in 2000.
In successive editions, Sol Rojo content focused more on perceived imperialist actions by the United States. Through criticisms and the use of derogatory terms like Yankee and imperialists to describe Americans, content attacked the legitimacy of U.S. actions abroad. Allegations about U.S. Government motives included terms like exploitation and rapacious to criticize investment or capitalism, or genocide to describe interventions or conflict. Idioms and expressions, such as yankee imperialism being a ‘tigre de papel [paper tiger]’ or a ‘coloso con pies de barro [colossus with feet of clay],’ convey these writers’ philosophical perspectives that U.S. foreign policy will inevitably flounder and demonstrate to a global audience why capitalism is not viable. Terms and parts of speech vary, but these publications harmoniously portray Yankee imperialism as a common enemy of peoples across the world.

A frequent target of this anti-imperialist rhetoric is security cooperation, defined as:

All Department of Defense interactions with foreign security establishments to build security relationships that promote specific United States security interests, develop allied and partner nation military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide United States forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations. 32

Writers attempt to portray the United States as a nation intent on exploiting foreigners for maximum gain and spreading presence through troop movements and by occupying foreign soil. Sol Rojo content links security cooperation activities to imperialist agendas

30 "¡Los pueblos de Palestina, Irak y Afganistán vienen derrotando el plan yanqui! [The peoples of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan are defeating the Yankee plan!]," Sol Rojo 31 (April 2009), 29.
31 "Los mismos contendientes de la primera y segunda Guerra mundial están preparando una nueva tercera guerra mundial interimperialista [The same contenders from the first and second World war are preparing a new third inter-imperialist world war]," Sol Rojo 23 (March 2003), 19.
in order to discredit U.S. efforts to improve regional security, strengthen alliances, or enhance partner capacity. *Sol Rojo* texts demonstrate that this anti-imperialist theme often based on security cooperation has endured through time, spanning over 21 years of published content. Although Clade α texts did not discuss imperialism as frequently as other clades, edition 16 (the oldest text sample within the corpus) mentioned this topic in reference to allegations, such as one about U.S. activities at the Peru-Ecuador border promoting a navigation agreement that is a ‘*puerta con llave maestra para la futura intervención militar yanqui, directa o a través de terceros* [door with a master key for future Yankee military intervention, direct or through third parties].’

Around 2010, content continued to target the United States, but the aperture broadened to criticize other nations that writers believed to threaten national sovereignty and culture. Even with this expanded list of antagonists, writers reminded readers that the U.S. remained the key adversary. For instance, edition 48, published in March 2020, featured criticism of Spanish foreign investment in banking, telecommunications, and construction sectors, deriding the actions as imperialism, but quickly stated ‘*[l]o que no significa que el imperialismo yanqui haya dejado de ser el blanco principal de la revolución; el principal explotador y opresor económico y político del país* [this does not mean that Yankee imperialism is no longer the main target of the revolution; the main exploiter and economic oppressor and politician of the country].’ The article went on to reiterate disdain for security cooperation efforts, specifically criticizing the alleged maintenance of Yankee military bases on Peruvian soil, an influx of United States troops into Peru, military ‘cooperation’ agreements with the Yankee superpower, and

---

the invitation of the U.S. Army South Commanding General to the Peruvian Army leadership to visit the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), where the superpower trains soldiers, police, and civilians from all Latin America. Such criticism is consistent with their strategic focus to resist perceived encroachments on sovereignty.

Generally, however, content after 2010 grew to condemn three particular superpowers: the U.S., Russia, and China. Sol Rojo content casts a wary image of Russia and China, grouping them with the U.S. as the three imperialist superpowers imposing their policies abroad and meddling in South American affairs. Condemnation concentrates on examples of perceived intervention, interference, or intrusion in South America to the detriment of citizens. For instance, edition 47 highlights Russian support for Maduro, recounting financial assistance in the form of loans and lines of credit, weapons sales, and activity with the Venezuelan energy sector. Criticism of foreign direct investment to control domestic production echoes once widely-shared sentiments about Peru’s political economy from decades ago when rural populations advocated for import substitution industrialization, sentiments which remain central to the magazine’s denunciations of foreign meddling. In this spirit, recent content drew

---

35 “Situación nacional [National Situation],” 10-11.
36 While these remain the focus of anti-imperialist and -superpower criticism, Sol Rojo content has also recently condemned Spanish investments in communications, finance, energy, petroleum, and services and construction sectors. Similarly, content criticized United Kingdom investments in mining, finance, communication, and energy sectors. On this, see “Anexo [Annex],” Sol Rojo 48 (March 2020), 15.
37 On this, see “Editorial,” Sol Rojo 48 (March 2020), 3, 6, 16, and 19.
38 “Aplicar el Maoísmo para Unir a los Pueblos del Mundo bajo Dirección Proletaria contra Todos los Imperialistas! [Apply Maoism to Unite the People of the World under Proletarian Leadership against All the Imperialists!],” Sol Rojo 47 (August 2019), 16.
attention to U.S. investment in mining, industry, and service sectors. Sol Rojo also mentioned Chinese investment in industry, finance, and mining sectors, and called attention to the state-owned China Three Gorges’ purchase of the hydroelectric plant in Chaglla and expansion of Shougang Hierro Perú—Peru’s only iron producer—which happens to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Chinese steel group Shougang Co. Sol Rojo commentary and analysis reflects writers’ increased application of open source tools for research, as they include annexes with charts and figures drawn from various sources to support their assertions about foreign meddling and negative effects on Peruvians.

Waning Levels of Militancy

Figure 4 illustrates a shift in violent themes and forms of defiance discussed in Sol Rojo over time. Content within Clade α involved more direct and hostile confrontation, often centered on themes of combat or militarization, whereas text contained in other (later) clades emphasized resistance instead of armed aggression or violence. This shift reflects external pressures on the Shining Path and affiliate groups that caused membership and support to shrink. As combative strength diminished, propaganda evolved to characterize an enduring struggle that relied more and more on ideological resistance rather than armed conflict. Writers sought to retain relevance amidst circumstances limiting their readers’ abilities to support or engage in the types of conflict from decades past.

40 On this, see various articles in Sol Rojo 48 (March 2020), along with a list of sectors with U.S. foreign investment in “Anexo [Annex],” 15.
Earlier editions of *Sol Rojo* contained summaries of actions by the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* [People’s Liberation Army], listing agitation and propaganda, combat by guerrilla fighter patrols with military and police forces, and executions.\(^{42}\) Such descriptions of specific attacks or events, however, dissipated over time as membership shrank and the number of perpetrated attacks decreased. In terms of psychometric properties, the usage of words reflecting anger showed no pattern or trend over time, but words associated with *death* appeared with less frequency as commentary shifted away from violent attacks or calls for combative actions. This was not a consistent decline, as some editions constituted outliers, but it was gradual, reduced to figures in 2020 that were nearly 64 percent lower than figures in 1999.\(^{43}\)

Even so, the MPP believes in the inevitable collapse of capitalist models and the role of people’s war in this eventuality. This may be more succinct in the MPP leadership committee’s article in *El Maoísta* [The Maoist], a recent publication containing articles and messages contributed by various Communist groups across the world, wherein this Reorganization Committee closes by stating that through cultural revolutions, humanity will continue to march toward ‘*su meta final, el siempre dorado comunismo*’ [its final goal, the ever-golden communism].\(^{44}\)

---


\(^{44}\) Comité de Reorganización [Reorganization Committee], “Frente Único y Nuevo Estado/Nuevo Poder en Lenin y la Revolución Rusa [United Front and New State/New Power in Lenin and the Russian Revolution],” *El Maoísta* 2 (October 2018), 100.
Conclusion and Future Study

While access to earlier editions of *Sol Rojo* would produce a more comprehensive analytical product, the 30 available editions are sufficient to show trends, unique features, and even psychometric properties depicting the nature of *Sol Rojo* content and the MPP’s objectives. The magazine’s content reflects clear ties to philosophies and doctrines propagated by the Shining Path in the 1980s and 1990s. Commentaries show strong disdain for perceived imperialist actions taken by foreign countries in various sectors of the Peruvian economy and society, but there is little threat of this content inciting violence against entities associated with those foreign actors. Text analysis reveals few clear shifts in psychometric properties over time, but a follow-up study of this content using a future version of Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) that incorporates measurements for four summary variables—analytic, authentic, clout, and tone—may provide additional insights regarding target audience, writer profiles, deception, and polarizing speech.

*Sol Rojo* reflects the enduring Maoist philosophies of the Shining Path and a quest to maintain relevancy and influence. The *Sol Rojo* magazine is a remnant of Maoist ideologies that blazed through rural Andean regions and gave rise to the Shining Path decades ago, but this ember is part of a dying fire that is unlikely to spark fervor in a new generation fulfilling its call for “people’s war.” This may, in part, explain the MPP’s initiative in distributing *El Maoísta*, poised to influence a younger reader base.

---

45 The LIWC2015 version incorporates algorithms for these four summary variables for certain languages, such as English and Brazilian Portuguese. Spanish is not one of those, but that may change in future versions of LIWC.
A comprehensive text analysis of *El Maoísta* magazine may yield more information about the MPP’s recruiting style and focus, as well as predominant propaganda themes. Although only one of two published editions is currently available online, it offers a sizeable corpus of nearly 120,000 words to analyze. A study of the evolution of the magazine would not be possible with only one addition, but a comparison to *Sol Rojo* could reveal different target audiences based on themes, linguistic characteristics, and other factors.
References


“Algunas Acciones del Ejército Popular de Liberación [Some Actions by the People’s Liberation Army].” Sol Rojo 23 (March 2003).


“¡Aplicar el Maoísmo para Unir a los Pueblos del Mundo bajo Dirección Proletaria contra Todos los Imperialistas! [Apply Maoism to Unite the People of the World under Proletarian Leadership against All the Imperialists!].” Sol Rojo 47 (August 2019).


“Confirman que hay Vínculos Entre Sendero Luminoso y el EPR, Publica un Diario en Perú [They Confirm that there are Links Between the Shining Path and the EPR, Publishes a Newspaper in Peru].” EFE. 29 November 1996. As cited and copyrighted by Excelsior. Mexico City, Mexico. 30 November 1996. http://www1.udel.edu/leipzig/texts1/exa30116.


“Los mismos contendientes de la primera y segunda Guerra mundial están preparando una nueva tercera guerra mundial interimperialista [The same contenders from the first and second World war are preparing a new third inter-imperialist world war].” Sol Rojo 23 (March 2003).

“¡Los pueblos de Palestina, Irak y Afganistán vienen derrotando el plan yanqui! [The peoples of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan are defeating the Yankee plan!].” Sol Rojo 31 (April 2009).


