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The Coup of 1948:

Jose Bustamante y Rivero became President of Peru in 1945, after winning an election as the spearhead of the National Democratic Front (NDF), a central-left alliance that was heavily associated with the APRA. The first couple of years of Rivero’s government was marred by internal fighting within the NDF, as the APRA sought to extend its influence on Rivero, and Rivero fighting back. On January 7, 1947, Francisco Grana Garland, a businessman who was then chairman of La Prensa, a newspaper that had publicly opposed the APRA, was assassinated. Naturally, the APRA was blamed for the murder, and there were widespread protests against the government. This forced Rivero to dissolve his cabinet—which comprised mainly of APRA leaders—instead appointing a mainly military one. Included in this cabinet was General Manuel Odria, as Minister of Government and Police.

Odria was very anti-APRA. The APRA was leftist, violent, and wanted the sort of revolution every army man generally wishes to crush or at least avoid. In June 1948, Odria, along with the rest of the cabinet, insisted that the APRA be outlawed. He planned to close the organization’s premises and stop the circulation of its newspapers, as well as to arrest and detain its leaders. When President Rivero refused to do this, the entire cabinet resigned. It was thus raised the political crisis between the government and the military. The military planned a coup. For its part, APRA planned a coup itself. APRA left wing-elements came forward and encouraged the rebellion of sailors in Callao, which was bloodily crushed by the army, on 3 October of 1948. Bustamante reacted to this strong showing by the army, as well as to rising reports of unrest within the army (and of plans of a coup) by outlawing the APRA. But by then, it was too late. The military, led by Odria, staged a coup against the government. On October 27, 1948, Odria, at the head of the garrison of Arequipa, rose against the constitutional government of Bustamante Rivero. He called his rebellion as the "Restoring Revolution", which was completed successfully on October 29. General Zenón Noriega assumed the presidency temporarily, until the arrival of Odria from the south. On November 1, Odria took charge as President.
Odria as head of the military junta (1948-50):

From November 1 onwards, Odria assumed control of Peru via the post-coup military junta. From the outset, this government was hard on individual rights, which it did through an internal security agency. It was also particularly hard on the APRA. The chief organizer of this program was Zenon Noriega. The main Aprista leaders were jailed or exiled. Haya de la Torre sought asylum in the Embassy of Colombia, where he remained until 1954. APRA union leader Luis Negreiros Vega was gunned down in an ambush. The Communist Party was also banned. The Congress was closed. The judiciary survived, however precariously. La Junta ruled by decree-laws.

The economy suffered a turn to liberalism, but without going to extremes. The US sent a mission to introduce a free market economic system in Peru. Odria attended the main recommendations of this mission: removal of subsidies, free trade, disappearance of checks, and a plan to balance the budget. On the other hand, the Board granted social benefits to workers, created a National Education Fund exclusively for school construction, and created and funded a National Health Fund. Thus they took the first steps of a vast work that was later fully developed in the constitutional government under Odria.

Constitutional Government (1950 onwards):

To legitimize power, Odria decided to call presidential elections in which he would be the candidate. But there was a formal problem: according to the 1933 Constitution, the citizen who aspired to the presidency was not allowed to be in power while elections happened. Odria solved this problem by making Zenon Noriega the temporary President. He also banned the opposition party (National League for Democracy), and hence ran as the only candidate. Odria was sworn in as constitutional president on July 28 of 1950, before a Parliament also elected by popular vote. Politically he remained in force the Internal Security Act, which severely repressed opponents of the regime, mainly APRA and communists.

Odria’s government was repressive towards political opponents. Interior Minister Alejandro Esparza Zañartu was responsible for arresting and torturing thousands of opponents and exiling hundreds. As usual in this type of governance, corruption championed in all
sectors of the state, in the absence of rigorous controls. The government was faced with the problem of the case for asylum of Haya de la Torre (leader of the APRA) in the Colombian embassy. Odria refused to give him a pass, saying the Aprista leader should account for common crimes before the Peruvian justice system. The headquarters of the embassy was surrounded by trenches and machine guns. The matter was brought before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Finally, the Peruvian government allowed Haya de la Torre came out of the embassy, to send him away to exile. The incident discredited the government of Odria internationally, since the image projected Haya de la Torre as a victim of political persecution.

In terms of economic and financial policy, the Odria government, in general, enjoyed economic stability, due to a reorientation of economic policy towards liberalism, as well as a successful international situation arising from the Korean War, which increased the prices of Peru’s export products (cotton, sugar, metals, wool). The significantly increased tax revenues, money that the government used in its program of public works, apart from its intrinsic value, provided jobs for tens of thousands of workers. The currency stabilized.

**Elections of 1959**

By 1954 there were already signs of the regime breaking down. On 20 July 1955, the editors of the newspaper *La Prensa* prepared a statement demanding the repeal of the Internal Security Act, electoral reform and general political amnesty. This document served as the starting point for the establishment of the National Coalition, led by Pedro Rosello, Manuel Mujica Gallo and Pedro G. Beltran.

A meeting of the Coalition, held in the theater of Arequipa was attacked by thugs in government service, starting a similar protest to the one in 1950. The city was declared to be in a state of general emergency, and there were calls for the dismissal of Interior Minister Alejandro Esparza Zañartu. Unlike what happened in 1950, this time Odria would not send military troops to suppress the revolt and Esparza had to resign in late December 1955, departing into exile. Old leaders started returning from exile.

**Odria’s Personality and Life:**

Odria is fiercely intelligent and shrewd. He was the grandson of a decorated officer of the Peruvian army,
and followed in his grandfather’s footsteps. He graduated at the top of his class at the military academy. He rose rapidly in the ranks of the army, and has become a war hero. During the previous administration of President Bustmante, he was briefly the minister in charge of governmental affairs and police. He took over in a military coup in 1948, but has since resigned the post and been reelected to it in uncontested elections. He is incredibly anti-ARPA, is averse to apristas and has made his mark for his political toughness. Odria has become a popular and forceful figure among many circles.

National Sentiment

Rumors are arising that there are free elections planned. Public protests about authoritarianism coupled with sudden economic ailments in the last 6 years of Odria’s reign have led to unrest, including by labor elements. The Pradist Democratic Movement and the Democratic Youth Front seem to be stronger movements that are gaining steam in the light of economic slowdown, and the National Unity/Democratic Concordance seems to also be a correspondingly growing alliance of other elements of discontent. The MDP is led by Manuel Cisneros Sánchez and Manuel Prado y Ugarteche and is a right wing movement, while the DYF looks to Fernando Belaúnde Terry who is a much more liberal candidate. He famously led a massive protest and was featured in magazines for his role. Of course, six years earlier, in 1950, the opponent candidate of the Democratic League withdrew in the end, and there are questions whether real elections will follow these growing sentiments.

Authoritarian Politics

According to Svolik, authoritarianism faces two main threats: contestation from below and within. Contestation from below involves popular protests, and general mass movements. Revolutions are typically examples of contestation from below. Traditionally, we might think of popular revolts as what

deposes dictators. However, another type of threat to authoritarian regimes is contestation from within. Dictators and authoritarian rulers are always subject to power struggles internally. The “in-group” of rulership is relatively small, as power is concentrated in one, or a group of individuals. In this setting, those who are just outside of the ruling group, but vitally important to the ruling apparatus may desire to enter the in-group. Factions could lead to depositions. A dictator who relies on the military may be overthrown by the military. Such challenges are prolific in history. Therefore, the two challenges facing authoritarian regimes can be characterized by “authoritarian control” which reflects the challenge of controlling “contestation from below,” and “authoritarian power sharing” which reflects the need to balance the forces which contribute to “contestation from within.”

There are two strategies to control contestation from below; namely, they are co-optation and repression. The first strategy involves bringing the leaders of revolts and popular movements into the ruling party. This may also include representing the opponent or minority groups in decision-making processes. This means that the leadership of popular opposition is neutered and the decisions at least have a veneer of being generally egalitarian. By contrast, Svolik calls repression the “evil twin,” where violence and force are used to stop popular movements. However, there is a moral hazard with using force, because the more dependent a regime is on military force to survive, the more susceptible it is to military coups.

Boix suggests that one conflict could arise from rich rulers and poor ruled. The ruling group manages to collect the rents of rulership, and this comes from the ruled. The larger the gap there is, the more the poor ruled are likely to want to take part in the spoils. As an extension of this, Geddes suggests that perhaps the model of authoritarianism is that there are personally revenue maximizing rulers pitted against politically powerless ruled. The rulers want what is best for themselves, and may extract taxes and labor from the people. By contrast the people want public goods. This lack of accommodation could lead to contestation from below.

The problem of authoritarian power-sharing is actually a more critical issue to consider. Svolik estimates that a
supremacy of dictators are overthrown from within, and only a minority are subject to a real populist uprising. The dictator has two strategies to deal with internal revolt. The authoritarian regime can purge and promote individuals within the party to selectively deal with dangerous individuals. It can also distribute rents, and thus share the spoils of ruling with a greater number of people. Of course, democracy is the most extreme form of this, where all people are considered part of government, have participation in lawmaking, and receive benefits of public goods.

Once again we can split authoritarian regime into two types when considering susceptibility to contestation from within. Ironically, regimes with extremely centralized power are more susceptible from revolt from within – the ruler cannot be coerced to share power by any other way except for coup, and the ruler has amassed too much power to deal with in any other way. There are also authoritarian regimes where a dictator may be “first-among-equals” and there is consensus based decision making. These are safer from contestation from within as no faction feels the need to resort to drastic measures in order to achieve their goals.

Sources of Legitimacy

Odría led market-freeing reforms, and generally believes in laissez-faire economic movements. His success in the area of the economy led him to become a popular figure. Import substitution was primarily used as the driver of economic growth, meaning outside imports are blocked off to allow domestic producers to have the room to grow. The idea is to become sufficient in technology. Additionally, he undertook many public works projects, which makes him popular among the common people. However, high public spending led to debt, and social welfare programs’ costs rose faster than could be covered by government income. Furthermore, foreign direct investment was not adequate to evening the trade deficit for Peru. US financial aid also began to diminish over this period. All this led to high inflation levels, leading to wage pressure, which ultimately led to labor strikes and protests mentioned above. This economic pressure has diminished the regime’s legitimacy, as Nathan suggests that resilient authoritarianism requires the people to
Odria Cabinet

believe that the country is headed in the right direction, and the economy can rehabilitate legitimacy in other areas.⁴ On the other hand, though Odría undertook many policies which were populist, there was also rampant corruption. Remembering our model of authoritarianism, combating this corruption would be tantamount to inviting contestation from within. Especially considering the high number of individuals who were military affiliates in the government – also Odría’s power base, there was a tradeoff on domestic legitimacy that was required to maintain the support of corrupt officials.

Positions:

General Zenón Noriega – Minister of War:
A Peruvian politician and general, General Noriega was responsible for the successful coup d’état that placed Manuel Odría into power of the Military Junta that ran the government from 1948-1950. Since Odría could not run for president and hold a position at the same time, when President of Peru for two months. Once Odría was elected, General Norega returned to his position as Minister of War. He is a valuable asset to President Odría and has personal access to him.

Roque A. Saldías – Minister of the Marine:
Roque A Saldías was designated as the Director of the Naval Academy in 1938 by Manuel Prado. During his time there, he made numerous innovations, gaining the praise of many. When he was installed as Minister of the Marine under Manuel Odría, he was tasked with modernizing Peru’s maritime fleet, which he has done so effectively. He is a highly respected military official that knows the intricate working and politics of the closed cabinet circle.

Alejandro Esparza Zañartu – Minister of the Interior
Zañartu is Manuel Odría’s right-hand man. He is directly in charge of the suppression of civil rights in Peru during the Ochenio, through the “Ley de Seguridad Interna”. Through a degree of different tactics, Zañartu has strong control over the nation’s congressmen, and can mobilize local forces in the key cities of the nation. However, every day the contempt towards Zañartu alarmingly increases, and is trusted by no one.

Ernesto Rodriguez Ventocilla – Minister of Foreign Affairs
Rodriguez Ventocilla has served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for Manuel Odría since the creation of the Military Junta in 1948. He studied in the nation’s Naval Academy, later on becoming a sub-director in the future. He served in the war against Ecuador in 1941, and spent a great deal of his life abroad, creating connections that will definitely be helpful in the future.

Federico Díaz Dulanto – Peruvian Ambassador to France
Federico Díaz Dulanto was an extremely successful student at the Naval Academy. Upon graduation, he traveled abroad to
England and France, slowly garnering a cosmopolitan reputation. Later on, he was a representative for Peru in Washington, D.C. In other words, Dulatno had a vast network of contacts that will be crucial to legitimizing the future elections that will take place.

**Juan Mendoza Rodriguez – Minister of Public Education:**

As Minister of Public Education, Juan Mendoza Rodriguez has been able to effectively modernize the department, by increasing the number of schools and reforming the national curriculum. A truly respected man, he is integral to the validity of the governmental transition process that would take place after the elections.

**José Cabrejo Mejía – Minister of Development and Public Works:**

As a close friend of Manuel Odría, José Cabrejo Mejía has been responsible for the massive social works program that has emerged throughout the Ochenio. In other words, Cabrejo Mejía has been tasked with keeping the populace content, ensuring that all their basic needs are met. However, in the time of crisis and elections, Cabrejo Mejía has to think of creative ways to ensure that his previous projects do not fail, and that he can still maintain the support of the people. He works closely with the businessmen of the nation, offering government contacts as he sees fit.

**Coronel Alberto Leon Díaz - Minister of Agriculture**

As Minister of Agriculture, Coronel Alberto Leon Díaz is tasked with regulation, promotion, agricultural research, price supports and agricultural subsidies, plant diseases and invasive species within Peru. He has a unique relationship with the farmer population of the country, and, contrary to many of the cabinet members, is overall respected by the general population. While not close to Odría, this relationship does make him a valuable ally to the government.

**Coronel Alberto Lopez - Minister of Public Health:**

The Minister of Public Health is tasked with the general sanitation, food safety, pharmaceutical services, and mental health treatment of the Peruvian nation. During this specific time period, there has been a noted increase in pharmaceutical companies, many national and international, throughout the country – providing large flows of money. Coronel Alberto Lopez is in charge of this
regulatory framework and is crucial to the development of this sector.

Coronel Augusto Villacorta - Minister of Commerce
The Minister of Commerce is responsible for regulating external trade and promoting the economic growth of the Peruvian nation. With this position, Coronel Augusto Villacorta has much influence over the financial markets, specifically by creating regulations or imposing new trade tariffs. He is an international figure within the cabinet, and has numerous outside connections.

Augusto Romero Lovo - Minister of Justice:
In this current time period, the position of Minister of Justice is a contentious, but central role. Given the enactment of the “Law of Internal Security of the Republic”, the number of criminal arrests has skyrocketed, as more and more people express their opinion against the current administration. As Minister of Justice, Augusto Romero has to be cautious on how he prosecutes people, being strategic and thinking on the long-term.

General Armando Artola- Minister of Labor and Indigenous People: