

Far Left in Latin America

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CDS 441 Far Right and Left Parties



Latin America



Latin America



LA Political spectrum



- Unequality
- Populism relies upon nationalism or indigenism
- Seduction by charismatic leader able to distinguish from the traditional establishment
- Always men with exception of Eva Perón - LA machismo
- Populist origins are quite different from traditional while elite. (“The Turk” was the nickname of Carlos Menem (Syrian in origin), while Alberto Fujimori was “The Chinaman”, Evo Morales is indigenous, while Hugo Chavez is said to have the native physique of the Venezuelan people, former president of Ecuador, Abdalá Bucaram (parents were Lebanese) Néstor Kirchner (origins are Swiss and Chilean)
- High public support
- Mostly presidential systems without checks and balances
- Fragile party system
- Aim to create “new type of democracy” usually ending with illiberal regime

Latin America



Venezuela: Hugo Chavez 1999-2013



Bolivia: Evo Morales since 2006

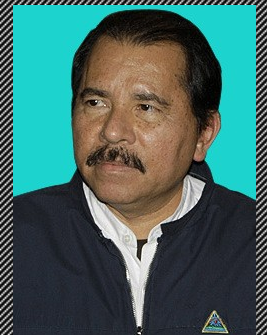
Argentina: Nestor Kirchner 2003-2007, Christina Fernandez de Kirchner since 2007

Ecuador: Raffael Correa since 2007

Cuba - Castro

Nicaragua - Sandinistas and ORtega

Against the USA United we stand
Left populism, socialism and
indigenism



Fidel Castro and Cuba

- **execution** of about 500 police officers and others accused of being agents of the Batista regime
- **land reform**, the nationalization of public utilities and the ruthless suppression of corruption, including closing down the gambling industry and **evicting** the American firms.

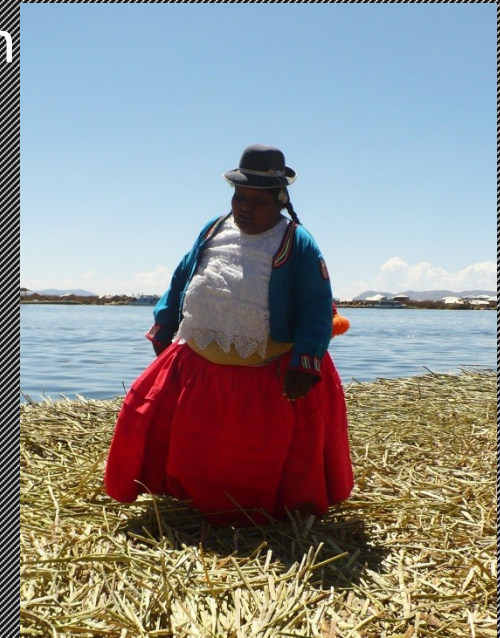
Ernesto Che-Guevara



- an **Argentinian marxist** and one of Castro's closest advisers.
- The coordinator of the economical reforms even having no economical education
- Lost his interest in the internal Cuban affairs for the revolutionary movements in Dominican republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela, Kongo, guinea- Bissau, Angola, Kongo-Brazaville, Mosambik, Algeria, Ghana, Egypt and Ethiopia.....

Social conflict in Bolivia before Morales

- Bolivia is South America's poorest country, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line, and 38 percent in extreme poverty,"
- Bolivia is 2nd after Venezuela with the natural reserves
- 30% Quechua, 30% Mestizo, 25% Aymara, 15% White
- Exploitation of gas resources: capitalisation vs nationalisation
- Coca eradication/cultivation
- Military responses towards strikes
- 1964-85 junta, coups, counter coups, hyperinflation,
- 1985 -2005 transition to (weak) democracy



Bolivia: Evo Morales

- the first Native Bolivian president in history
- announced the increase of the minimum wage by 50%
- nationalizing most of Bolivia's natural gas fields
- nationalised the oil and gas industries, begun redistributing land, cut public sector salaries and hopes to promote some legal uses of coca leaves.
- Some have called the changes in Bolivia a democratic revolution
- close ties to governments in Venezuela and Cuba



Bolivia: New constitution introduced by Evo Morales

Result: All of Mr Morales to stand for re-election in Dec 2009

- **Indigenous rights:** Stresses importance of ethnicity in Bolivia's make-up. A whole chapter devoted to indigenous rights
- **Autonomy:** Power decentralised, four levels of autonomy - departmental, regional, municipal and indigenous
- **Resources:** Sets out state control over key economic sectors, state sovereignty over vast natural gas fields, redistribution of revenues to poorer parts of the nation
- **Judiciary:** Indigenous systems of justice same status as official existing system. Judges will be elected, and no longer appointed by Congress.
- **Land:** New limit on ownership 5,000 hectares (12,355). But measure not retroactive.



Evo Morales administration

- Rise of tensions against redistribution
- Anti-imperialism



Venezuela before Hugo Chavez

1930-1935 until:

- 1935-58 democratisation however interrupted by junta regime, universal suffrage, political parties,
- 1958-1998 transition towards democracy
- Agreement from Punto Fijo - power in hands of two parties AD and COPEI, corporativism, nepotism, high oil revenues flowing through the government, corruption
- 1989 Caracaro protests - protest violently suppressed
- 1992 unsuccessful coup d etat, Chavez imprisoned and becomes national hero



Venezuela: Hugo Chavez 1998-2013



- Bolivarian revolution
- New constitution 1999: **Reform of the judiciary power**, More opportunities for referenda, Stronger presidential power, The role of the state in economy stronger, President can issue the decrees which have the power of law without consultation of approval by the parliament
- The president term was extended to 6 years (5 before) with the right of re-election
- Firstly popularity
- Since 2001 increase in the opposition due to the nepotism, aggressive style, revolutionary extremist rhetoric
- 2002 unsuccessful coup d'etat organized by the opposition with the cooperation of oil company PDVSA, businessmen and USA



Venezuela under Hugo Chavez

- New Constitution severely limits checks and balances
- High government spending on populist policies
- Maintained fixed exchange rate for a long time
- Expanded role of the military
- Nepotism and corruption
- Stronger OPEC relationships → oil prices
- Growing tensions: poverty, crime & corruption



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wsxmod0TSAo> (hugo chavez at un assembly, devil)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlbJW7Bw1uQ> (memorable speeches 2min)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzQCQm77GK4> (last speech 18 min)

Ecuador before Rafael Correa

- 1978 towards democracy
- Weak democracy, permanent crisis
- Correa since 2006, Hugo Chavez his mentor

Ecuador: Rafael Correa

- (1) a **constitutional and democratic revolution**, including a deep reform of state institutions,
- (2) a **moral revolution** through a media campaign and tougher penalties against those guilty of corruption,
- (3) an **economic and productive revolution** against the interests of big business,
- (4) an **education and health revolution** through the creation new social programmes, and
- (5) a **revolution for dignity, sovereignty** and Latin American integration.



Nicaragua - FSLN

- Sandinistas against the Contras supported by the USA
- nationalization of property owned by the Somozas and their supporters;
- land reform;
- improved rural and urban working conditions; free unionization for all workers,
- price fixing for commodities of basic necessity; improved public services, housing conditions, education; equality for women;

Intra-state conflicts and the far left

- Peru- Shining Path
- Colombia - FARC et al
- Venezuela since 2014
- Paraguay: EPP (Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo and splinter Armed Farmers Group ACA since 2005
- Chiapas



Mexico: Zapatistas and Chiapas



- *Zapatista*
- 1994 uprising in Chiapas
- Presidential elections in 2000 and ceasefire
- Subcomandante Marcos



Mexico: Oaxaca

- two armed groups in the state of Oaxaca
- Revolutionary Democratic Tendency - Army of the People (TDR-EP)
- Lucio Cabanas Barrientos Revolutionary Movement
- Both of these are originally splinter groups of the People's Revolutionary Army EPR.
- Neither is considered to have any conventional military capacity

PERU: The communist party of Peru -Shining path

- 1960's
- Abimael Guzman
- Universities, intellectuals
- Marxism-leninism, maoism
- Terrorist activities



PERU: The Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)



- marxist-leninist revolutionary movement formed in 1983
- communist state
- In December 1996 Japanese embassy hostage crisis

COLOMBIA: FARC/EP



- Oldest, largest revolutionary guerilla group
- the military wing of the communist party.
- 12,000-18,000 members
- present in 35-40 percent of Colombia's territory
- terrorist group
- Peace accord 2016
- Alleged ties with Venezuela and Ecuador

Colombia: National liberation army ELN

- Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)
- Revolutionary, marxist, insurgent guerilla
- since 1964
- 3,500 to 5,000 guerrillas.
- Perceived as terrorist group



Colombia: Other guerilla/paramilitary groups

- Ejército popular de liberación EPL
- M-19 Movimiento 19 de Abril
- Movimiento Quintín Lame handed in weapons together with EPL in 1991
- Autodefensas unidas de Colombia UAC - created in 1997 with the aim to unite and centralize all paramilitares.

chinchoneros

- active in the 1980s in Honduras.
- century Honduran peasant leader Serapio Romero (nicknamed *Cinchonero*), who was executed by the Catholic Church in 1865 for refusing to pay taxes.
- The MPL was believed to be linked to other leftist movements in El Salvador, Cuba, and Nicaragua.
- hijacking aircraft, kidnapping, and hostage-taking, often targeting international corporations in Honduras.