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Political Developments in Uruguay (1967-1973)

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Abstract

Amid the political developments that took place in Latin America in general and the Republic of Uruguay in particular, which is not an exception to the policy that brought the United States of America into the capitalist and communist conflict, this country part was made part of that conflict and used a military government against the communist tide existing at that time. The ruling policy of the Uruguayan president at that time was after arbitrariness, the multiplicity of decisions, the banning of leftist parties, and the failure to take into account Parliament's decisions through the policy of gagging mouths, expelling professors from universities, and suppressing unions. As far as the economic aspect is concerned, Uruguay followed direct connection with foreign capital, especially the United States of America, and followed the lines defined by the International Monetary Fund. Besides, the government also defined the movement of its business with businessmen, neoliberal technocrats, and extremist Baathist groups. The repressive policy on the political side, the economic crisis and high inflation fueled the social conflict and the emergence of extremist leftist gangs such as the Cubamaru National Liberation Front. This Front consisted of extremist leftist guerrillas, aiming at strengthening the state's tendencies and controlling them. It implemented a harsh policy of repression against the most common social sectors, which at that time was considered strange and a threat to the peaceful stability of the state. Therefore, the persecution of political activists in solidarity with them continued in Uruguay, as in the case of all dictatorships at that time. In June 1968, it represented a painful wound for the country, when the Panekko Seveda governments launched urgent security measures pertaining to the economic situation, including suspending the activities of salary councils, freezing salaries under the pretext of fighting inflation, and the army's intervention in the matter through mass arrests of union leaders and students and those trapped in the streets after the death of the first student. All of this led to the intense tensions between the government and people. On the subject of the attitude of the United States on the current situation in Uruguay, Uruguay was part of the dictatorial governments that the United States of America worked to support and link economically to American security capital. This brought up a deteriorating economic situation, and Uruguay lived during that period a state of economic inflation. This situation negatively affected society in light of the various conflicts hit such society without any solution provided by the government and behind it the United States. The United States acted to protect its interests through the use of armed forces. Such forces gradually besieged the civilian dictatorships that were protecting its interests and ideologies in the backyard, and drove these forces at the forefront of political life.

Keyword: Political Developments , Uruguay, Left parties, Liberation Front

Introduction

The Eastern Republic of Uruguay is not an exception to the process that American capital

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proposed to the various political models developed and implemented in other South American countries. It was to make them wear military uniforms and harmonize their goals in the midst of the Western and Christian struggle against communism at the end of 1967. Following the death of President-elect Oscar Digo Gestido (Wikipedia, 2013), six months after assuming office, his constitutional successor, Jorge Pacheco Areco, (**Jorge, 2013**) (1967-1972), who was Vice President at the time, assumed the presidency of the republic on December 6, 1967. Pacheco quickly took strong measures to stop what he considered to be a deteriorating situation in the country.

His government was characterized by economic crisis and social mobilization. Because the economy had been in crisis for some time, inflation was rampant, leading to high crime rates and sympathy for leftist rebel groups that promised change. Therefore, a week after assuming power, he signed a decree banning the Socialist Party of Uruguay and other leftist organizations and their newspapers, closing the newspapers; *El Sol* and *Época*. Since 1968, Pacheco ruled by decree with rapid security measures directed first against union and student protests and then against the armed left. Pacheco was characterized by the practice of ruling by decree, while putting Parliament aside. President Jorge Pacheco declared a state of emergency on June 13, 1968, gathering powers in the executive branch in exchange for a state of unprecedented passivity by Parliament, which did nothing, expelling liberal professors from universities, and suppressing unions. Hence, he used rapid security measures and laid off workers.

This means abuses of power. The *El pachequismo* was a personal and authoritarian political movement, embraced by the state leadership and the entourage of President Pacheco Arreco, and fueled diverse demands. It sought to justify the tyranny of the state in the alleged restoration of social harmony, the rescue of the “national entity” and the defense of the traditional family with the desire to restore, the establishment of gender, class and generational hierarchies that were threatened by “Marxist penetration” (**Marcos Rey, 2023**).

As far as economic issues are concerned, his government included representatives of the powerful economic groups at the economic level, especially those directly linked to foreign capital, especially the United States of America. It followed the lines set by the International Monetary Fund. Aware of the disintegration of the traditional parties, he also tried to create his own political movement with *El pachequismo* tendencies. Strongly quasi-fascist, to this end Pacheco drew on the messianic character of the armed forces as the embodiment of the nation and fostered ties with business elites, “neo-liberal” technocrats, far-right groups, and vast, barely politicized “silent majorities.” Inspired by the doctrine of national security and anti-political and anti-parliamentary speeches, it contributed to stigmatizing broad social sectors as internal enemies and polarizing the political map based on the division between “democrats” and “totalitarians,” carrying the banner of the liberal right in the Cold War. Pacheco harnessed repressive state apparatuses at will, including the police. And the paramilitary apparatus, although it did not rely on the army as the sole apparatus (Renfrew, 2018).

His repressive policies, as well as the economic crisis and high inflation, fueled social conflict and extreme left-wing gang activity that manifested itself in the form of Tupamaros (Christopher, 2018). In his plan to reorganize state politics, Jorge Pacheco prioritized access to capital, and above all to large American capital, which monopolized later the local market by paying low costs for the production of goods and services that were then sold at high prices. This resulted in a completely unequal process that ultimately led to the collapse of the economy and raised inflation levels to catastrophic numbers, as is the case in all South American countries, in the beginning. The largest part of the bourgeoisie appreciated the work of the

strong president who put a harsh end to the popular mobilization and, above all, who achieved in a few months what no two governments had achieved in ten years: a clear reduction in the real wage of workers in industry, and the elimination of salary councils and collective agreements(Casvova,1977).

To strengthen his tendencies to manage and control the state, he implemented a harsh policy of repression against the most diverse social sectors that were considered at the time to be subversive and a threat to the peaceful stability of the state. The persecution of political activists and those in solidarity with them was continuous in Uruguay, as in the case of all dictatorships at that time. It was consistent directly with the communist enemy, which had to be eliminated through a dirty war that turned into scandals within a few years (Mario,2018).

The authoritarian tendency appeared, which was exacerbated by the measures taken by president Jorge Pacheco. In February 1968, the Movement for the Defense of Freedoms and Sovereignty (MDLS) was formed. The authorities included the University of the Republic with the President of the University, the leaders of the Confederation(Tierra,1969), parliamentarians and prominent figures. The University of the Republic was involved in these events, which It revolves around the degree of disintegration and confrontation that this institution has reached with the traditional party governments on the other hand, and the unprecedented presence of the Democratic Congress Party with the Marxist and centrist parties. Besides, the truth of the invitation initiative came from the Confederation, as well as from a relatively wide spectrum of its participants. This Convergence is merely an indicator of a course of events. In June 1968, a painful phase began in the country's life, when the Pacheco government began implementing urgent security measures, suspending the activities of salary councils, and freezing salaries under the pretext of combating inflation. In the face of protests and massive rejection of his policy, he began to deploy repressive measures against unions and students, and called on the army to the militarization of workers in various unions, public and private, and mass arrests of union leaders and students trapped in the streets (Gentili,2015).

In August 1968, the first student died at the hands of the police. A student named Liber Arce was killed by the police after dispersing a student demonstration, which increased the tension in relations between the government and the people. It was the practical point of anti-tyranny rapprochement (Yaffe,2016). Despite this, Pacheco continued his repressive policy. After the incident with the above student, Tupamaro began more aggressive efforts to undermine the existing regime, including raids on arsenals, arson, political kidnapping with the detention of those who were held in a secret "people's prison," and the assassination of a number of police officers and some others. Moreover, the organization carried out bombings against foreign interests, especially those of Brazil and the United States (Minster ,2018). Jorge Pacheco Areco's assumption of the presidency of the republic at the end of 1967 marked a turning point in the life of the country. In the context of a major economic crisis, his government's plan, which was in the service of the powerful, implied the need for an authoritarian and repressive legal framework to strengthen it. It was the beginning of a process of institutional emptying that led to dictatorship and state terrorism (marchesi, 2012).

On this basis, Parliament was passive, considering the government as a constitutional dictatorship that led to the neutralization of the parliamentary system and its threat due to the excessive powers granted to the executive branch as an entity that enjoys powers above the Constitution. The government's control, which it was mistakenly believed to be constitutional, and was considered the most shameful era when it was unable to initiate a political trial against President Pacheco and his project government, which violated democratic standards and acted

illegally and arbitrarily. In this context, it was a must to place the popular protests and social outbreaks that have enabled organizations that carry out their work using armed methods on spot. Indeed, the state resorted to illegal means to stop the opposition, and with the encouragement of the Ministry of the Interior itself, had police commandos (Death Squad) kill, hide and attack the opposition by placing explosives and carrying out attacks of all kinds, with the assistance of the United States Embassy (Grisoni , 2022).

On this basis, the leftist movement (Tupamaro National Liberation Front) launched a relentless battle against the police and the army between 1970 and 1971. On July 31, 1970, the Tupamaro kidnapped Dan A. Mitroni, an American FBI consultant loaned to the Uruguayan police. Mitroni's specialty was interrogation, and he worked in the capital, Montevideo, teaching police how to extract information from suspects. Ironically, according to a later interview with Raúl Sendek, Uruguayan rebel leader and founder of the leftist movement Tupamaro, the Tupamaro did not know that Mitroni was working in this capacity and thought he was there as a riot specialist and was targeted in retaliation for the student deaths. When the Pacheco government rejected Tupamaro's offer to exchange prisoners, Mitroni was executed, and his death was a huge blow to the United States of America, and many senior officials from the Nixon administration attended his funeral(Sendic, 2023).

In addition to the Mitroni kidnapping, Tupamaro committed several other kidnappings for ransom, including the kidnapping of the British ambassador in January 1971, and held him captive for eight months. The ambassador's release and a ransom were negotiated by Chilean President Salvador Allende. Tupamaro also killed judges and policemen. In September 1971, Tupamaro received great support when (111) political prisoners, most of them Tupamaro, escaped from Punta Carretas prison. One of the prisoners who escaped was Sendek himself, who had been in prison since August 1970. After Tupamaro increased his activity in 1970-1971, the Uruguayan government decided to take more stringent measures. On September 9, 1971, Pacheco ordered the army to suppress all guerrilla activities. To coordinate their anti-guerrilla activities, the armed forces established the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or what is known as the "Military Council," Estado Mayor Conjunto (ESMACO), headed by Gregorio Alvarez, two months before the elections. It was the first military coordination body independent of the usual supervision of the Ministry of Defense. The task of "fighting sabotage" was entrusted to the joint forces (police and army), and hundreds were arrested.

In November 1971, the Tupamaro called for a ceasefire to encourage safe elections. They joined the "Broad" Political Front, a political union of left-wing groups that came together in response to Pacheco's efforts to change the constitution and run for re-election and to defeat Pacheco's candidate, Juan María Bordabere Arocena (David&Other,2011). This coalition was not limited only to the left, but relatively small separate sectors of the traditional parties and the Christian Democratic Party were added. This broad front adopted the necessary national solutions program that took place in the People's Congress, which was the year of the trade union movement. In the 1971 elections, it obtained votes higher than those votes which its members obtained, compared with voters of other parties, and the broad front achieved (20%) of the votes(Maria,A& Buriano castro,2009).

In addition, in 1971, after El pachequismo was accused of numerous irregularities due to her lack of the votes necessary for her victory, it was translated into an electoral alliance, the National Union for Reelection (UNR), which brought together government leaders, rural people, and Coloradans of different origins to promote constitutional reform that would allow the reelection of Pacheco as an act of "general redemption." In the 1971 election, the re-

election proposal was supported by nearly (30) percent of voters and made Pacheco the most voted leader in Colorado. Although the approval for his re-election was not enough, it contributed to the election of his rural candidate, Bordabéri, as president.

This failure marked the beginning of the unveiling of institutions that existed only in form and in an insubstantial way. This matter also opened the doors to a process that brought to light that the political class was willing to allow violations of the constitution and laws (Rilla, 2005). Therefore, the armed forces participated at higher levels in political life after that. Between 1968 and 1971, military expenditures doubled from (13.3%) of the budget to (26.2%), while education expenditures decreased from (24.3% - 16%). Analysts of military tendencies in Latin America indicated that this period was the longest coup on the continent. This is due to the events and military intervention in politics that paved the way for the coup in 1973 (Alain, 1984).

Despite the validity of the resistance that prevailed in the trade union movement, there was a unanimous agreement between the students and the popular activities. It was also impossible for this to happen, and the new sectors joined the fight collectively with the presence of experienced elements, and contradictions arose about how the confrontation with Pacheco's project should be covered. Knowing that these sectors have transcended traditional trends (Maria,A& Buriano castro,2009). In a report issued by the US State Department as part of an analysis of the first strategic document on Uruguay, this report stated in the introduction to paragraph (C) the threat from the Broad Front and the situation of the traditional parties. Because the Broad Front threatens Uruguay's traditional institutions. It is capable Through exploiting the negative factors prevailing in Uruguayan society, the indifference and disillusionment arising from a decade of persistent social and economic problems, and solving the fear of subjugation and civil conflict. The government was also unable to solve the mistakes of the "white and red" systems in an attempt to search for easy solutions to the ills of the entire nation(Jefri ,2022). All such actions provided the Broad Front with ammunition with which to claim that the traditional parties have proven incapable of improving the quality of life in Uruguay to confront these problems. The front was capable of doing so and promised quick action and radical solutions. As a group, the Front cannot blame it for past failures, and often harsh public order economic decisions.

During the year 1972, the Pacheco administration divided the traditional political parties into opposing camps, and did not leave much room for agreement and reconciliation. What was fundamentally missing between the two traditional parties was confidence in their abilities and their recognition that the white majority in this country does not demand success even in everything (Wikipedia,2023).

Despite the fact that the Colorado Party's candidate, Pacheco Bordaberry, won the controversial 1971 election, the Broad Front won enough votes to give its supporters hope between the loss of their top leadership and the defections of those who thought political pressure was the path to change. The Broad Front received approximately 20% of the total votes across the country and 30% in the capital. In addition, the result was described as fraudulent by Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, the "White" National Party candidate, who won more votes than Pacheco's chosen successor, Bordabéri. The National Party's candidate, Wilson Ferreira Aldonati, received the largest number of votes of any individual candidate. However, Colorado's combined vote of 41% exceeded the national combined vote of 40.2% (just over 12,000 votes), and under the electoral system in place at the time. The candidate with the highest results was for the party that won by the most votes was the elected president. As a result, Pacheco's chosen successor, Juan María Bordabéri, became president, although he

personally received about 60,000 fewer votes than Ferreira (Gentili, 2015).

After becoming president on March 1, 1972, the inexperienced Bordaberry had to focus on fighting the Tupamaro, and chose to continue the repressive policies of his predecessor Pacheco. On April 15, 1972, he declared a state of "internal war" and suspended the constitution and individual freedoms, allowing the military freedom to eliminate war forces against the Tupamaros gangs that were terrorizing the country. Torture was used effectively to gather information necessary to disperse the Tupamaro, against union activists, members of the Communist Party of Uruguay, and even ordinary citizens.

On June 22, 1972, the National Assembly decided to investigate allegations of torture and human rights violations by the army, however, the latter refused to cooperate with this investigation and persuaded Bordabéri to form a joint military committee to investigate the corruption of politicians (Carina, 1993).

On July 10, 1972, the new State Security Law entered into force, and allowed political prisoners to be tried before military courts, and army officers assumed more responsibilities in the new government. By the end of 1972, the army had effectively destroyed the Tupamaro movement and their leader, Raul Sendek, was imprisoned. The Tupamaro joined the JCR Revolucionaria, a union of leftist revolutionaries including groups operating in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile. The idea of its creation was for the revolutionaries to exchange information and resources in. By that time, however, Tupamaru was in decline and had little to offer the rest of the rebel leftist factions for the next few years. During the few years in which it was granted extraordinary powers, the military establishment in Uruguay acquired a taste for political power, and began to act independently of civilian authorities(Minster, Tupamaro, *ibid*).

Bordabere tried to limit the military's political powers, but at a meeting on October 19, 1972 with military commanders, Bordabere was presented with an eight-point program in which the army demanded no transfer of commanding officers, military participation in state institutions, independent investigation of military corruption, and military control over the police. On February 8, 1973, Bordabere attempted to assert his authority over the army, and appointed retired General Antonio Francese as the new Minister of National Defense. The Navy initially supported the appointment, while the leaders of the Army and Air Force directly rejected it. On February 9 and 10, they issued public statements in which they demanded radical changes in the country's political and economic system, promising to end unemployment, support local industry, eliminate corruption, implement agricultural reform, and end all forms of terrorism (F. R. U. S. ,1973).

Finally, Bordabere succumbed to the pressure, and on February 12, 1973, he concluded an agreement at Air Force Headquarters with the commanders of the armed forces stipulating that they would share power in an advisory role. A new National Security Council (COSENA) was created, which consisted of the commanders of the army, air force and navy, as well as ministers. National Defense, Interior, Economy and Foreign Affairs, and from then on they came to de facto control the country. By 1973, the president had become a virtual puppet of the military, passing de facto control to the seven-man National Security Council. Under intense pressure from the armed forces, Bordabere abolished Congress, and banned all political parties. Uruguay's democratically elected parliament was dissolved on June 27, 1973, for its resistance to the military regime. Bordabere established a new Council of State and placed the military on the threshold of controlling civil affairs. The new dictatorship was inspired by the Brazilian military government, which claimed that the Cold War justified Use all necessary

means to defeat the left (Paul ,1997).

As for the stance of the United States on the new situation in Uruguay, the Embassy indicated that the agreement between President Bordabere and the armed forces had ended the political crisis with minimal changes in Uruguayan government institutions or their employees, even though the “center of power” had fallen into the grip of Army. The embassy recommended that the United States adopt a “calm stance as usual” on routine interactions between the two governments, but monitor new developments carefully. The US Embassy in Montevideo believed that it might develop that achieving the goals of US policy in Uruguay, at least in the short term, would be easier under the existing regime if military pressures on the bureaucracy in Uruguay made it work more effectively (F. R. U. S. 1973).

Besides, with their appearance on the political scene, the military forces found that conditions were conducive to their emergence, supported in the same way by capitalism, and the economic power of the United States, which saw the civil authority collapsing and chose to protect its interests through the armed forces, which gradually besieged the civilian dictatorships that were protecting their interests and ideology in “extinction.” Also, by placing the armed forces at the forefront of national political life, another process was launched that was equally or perhaps more cruel to the people of Uruguay through the mandate to control the prevailing political situation to confront the leftists who declared their frontal struggle against the state system, and to open the door to the interests of the various institutions of the armed forces. To gradually control the various areas of government, the government and its weak parliament chose to suspend all individual freedoms contained in the Basic Charter, and voted for a state of internal war with the exception of the Broad Front Party, which highlighted the armed forces as the imminent ruling authority for the country(Juan Mario,2018).

From that moment on, the repression became more cruel and systematic, starting with the guerrilla groups that were able to be dismantled from their practical side and isolated from the majority of sectors of the mass movement and spreading little by little to all forms of political and trade union opposition. The constitutional dictatorship became more unconstitutional almost every day, and the structure was put in place in legal brackets also in the name of the war against criminals who threaten the homeland, whether the armed forces or the political authority that is still officially in force, works using all dirty methods in designing the indiscriminate use of physical and psychological torture following a classic process, which occurred in Uruguay more quickly in the context of the political crisis (Pablo , 1977).

In this way, the Uruguayan-style civil-military dictatorship began a cycle in which the absence of representative democratic institutions ended and the armed forces themselves were transformed into a *modus operandi*. The process of dismantling the remaining citadel began to make way for the censorship of the press, the university and other educational centers that foster ignorance and generate collective amnesia, which it still drains Uruguay's memory to this day(Pablo, 1977).

It is worth noting that the political developments in Uruguay during the period extending from 1970 to 1973 began to have their results appear on the ruling political system and the conflict between capitalist and socialist tendencies. Thus, these conflicts found a situation similar to the governments in Chile and Argentina and similar in the same tools that threatened the policy of repression and tyranny that became prevalent in Southern Cone countries. Economic conditions continued to deteriorate, and the military forced Bordabéri to resign on June 12, 1976, and Uruguay remained under military administration until 1985 (Minster, C. ,2018).

During this time, the Uruguayan government joined Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia as members of Operation Condor, although The US Embassy in Uruguay denies that it possesses any evidence to support the allegations of the existence of international arrangements to carry out such assassinations or executions(Documents on South America,1976).

The junta claimed to have come to power to build a “new” Uruguay, to cleanse society of subversion, to restore patriotism and traditional values, and to be its “permanent guardians” (Paul, 1997), as US Ambassador to Uruguay Ernest V. Siracusa posited. Changes in international policies also mean respect for international commitments on the part of the new government in Uruguay (Documents on South America,1976). However, almost all attempts by the military at political and economic re-engineering have failed.

The dictatorship was not a revolutionary movement aimed at pushing citizens toward a new world. The armed forces were after flattening and depoliticizing the political environment in the face of civil unrest. Once in power, an army of technocrats and civilians approached politics from the point of view of the military, with an emphasis on hierarchy, authority, discipline, and solidarity. For the authoritarian elite, democracy meant compromise, Inertia, the substitution of political norms for efficiency, and a myriad of special-interest legislation for a rational integrated plan, "anti-politics" and an aversion to "lazy and petty politics" characterized military rule in Uruguay. But the lack of participation and representative institutions also bedeviled the regime's attempts to form a mass base of support, either through the traditional Colorado and Blanco parties. Or by creating a new official military party, as is the case in Brazil (Paul, 1997).

Conclusions

The study has come up with the following:

The study made it clear that the Eastern Republic of Uruguay was an essential part of the countries that were later included in the Condor Operation, through the performance of state administration during the extended period (1967-1973). It was characterized by political, economic, and social instability. This period was famous for an exclusionary policy of abuse and the lack of treatments for the economic inflation occurring at that time. Despite the fact that elections were held in 1971, President Jorge Pacheco was re-elected again, and the main feature of the state became repression. The stance of the United States of America during this period was demonstrated as a consistent policy in performance and approach by protecting and securing its backyard politically, economically and militarily. It had no role in providing assistance or addressing the deteriorating economic situation and the unstable political system. Therefore, it is later seen that Uruguay joined the Condor Operation as the United States of America.

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administration in 1971 when he handed power to Juan María Bordabere. Who later supported him in the coup, and he died on July 29, 1998 after working as a diplomat.

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