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FROM PROTEST SONG TO SOCIAL SONG:  
MUSIC AND POLITICS IN COLOMBIA, 1966-2016

by

JOSHUA KATZ-ROSENE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017

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From Protest Song to Social Song: Music and Politics in Colombia, 1966-2016

by

Joshua Katz-Rosene

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music  
in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy.

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## ABSTRACT

From Protest Song to Social Song: Music and Politics in Colombia, 1966-2016

by

Joshua Katz-Rosene

Advisor: Peter Manuel

Based on archival and ethnographic fieldwork in the cities of Bogotá and Medellín, this dissertation documents the development of *canción protesta* (protest song) in Colombia in the 1960s, and tracks its evolution in subsequent decades. At the turn of the 1970s, songwriters affiliated with a grassroots *canción protesta* movement in Bogotá used music as a vehicle for disseminating leftist political ideology and extolling the revolutionary guerrilla groups that had formed in the Colombian countryside in the preceding years. However, *canción protesta* was an urban phenomenon that emerged in tandem with other countercultural currents, and their confluence in the late 1960s facilitated the rise of a commercial variant of protest song in the 1970s, the reception of which was politically mixed. By the 1980s, many activist-musicians were breaking away from what they viewed as the crudely propagandist song texts of the prior decade. To make sense of protest song's shifting guises, I situate them in broader discourses of and about resistance, emphasizing the ways in which the resistant dimensions of oppositional music have been discursively articulated in changing political contexts.

During the 1990s, the category of *canción social* (social song) began to replace the term *canción protesta* in public discourse. While *canción social* generally denotes the same music that was formerly labelled as *canción protesta*, it embraces a wider range of artists and carries different associations. One of the central arguments of the dissertation is that the terminological shift from *canción protesta* to *canción social* represents a profound transformation, over the

course of five decades of civil conflict, in Colombian society's relationship with the idea of pursuing political change through armed resistance.

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Several people who are not mentioned elsewhere in the dissertation facilitated my research directly or indirectly, and I owe them a debt of gratitude. Claudia Ramírez, manager of Grupo Suramérica, coordinated my interview with the ensemble's members, as well as repeated visits to their headquarters to consult their extensive documentary trove. Martha and Norberto from the Escuela Nacional Sindical in Medellín provided an initial introduction to protest music in the City of Eternal Spring, and put me in touch with key musicians. At the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH), María Teresa Salcedo expedited my affiliation as Visiting Researcher and organized a presentation of my research, which resulted in invaluable feedback and new contacts. Julio Bonilla supplied a solid orientation to the world of Andean music-making in Bogotá.

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I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my mother, Sheila Katz, who has everything to do with the following pages. She had her own long-time involvement with Colombia and its politics: decades after teaching Spanish at the Universidad Industrial de Santander in Bucaramanga, in the late 1960s, she made solidarity with beleaguered Colombian trade unions a pillar of her work at the Canadian Labour Congress. Sheila was also a participant in the transnational *nueva canción* (new song) movement, which is thoroughly intertwined with Colombian protest song. She collaborated in an editorial capacity on Chilean *nueva canción* singer Ángel Parra’s album *Tierra Prometida* (Promised Land), which he recorded in Toronto in 1974 to raise funds for a human rights organization in Chile. In the mid-1980s, she helped organize a Canadian tour of the *Cantata centroamericana* (Central American Cantata), a large-scale work that came out of the *nueva canción* movement in Costa Rica. My mom also contributed to this study in indispensable ways: Her airline points enabled one of my research trips. The activists she connected me with in Bogotá and Medellín were pivotal to my early

research progress. When we coincided in Colombia one summer, she invited me to join her on a trip to a union event in Puerto Gaitán, which gave me important insights into contemporary oppositional organizing in Colombia. She regularly forwarded me relevant news articles, many of which I cite below. The celebration of completing this project is made bittersweet by not having her to share it.

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## INTRODUCTION

Across North America, undergraduate students in so-called “world music” courses are likely to encounter the term *nueva canción* (new song). This pan-Latin American movement of leftist political music originating in the 1960s is covered in many of the textbooks that are frequently employed in these types of courses. Its affinities with the American folk-protest movement of the same era likely enhance its teachability for instructors who must devote a class unit to Latin American music, but may not have expertise in the region’s musical cultures. Those of us who undergo graduate training in Latin American ethnomusicology typically dive more deeply into *nueva canción*, assimilating a great deal of information about the historical and political processes around which it developed, and about its progenitors in the Southern Cone and Cuba. Having read up on the different nodes of the transnational *nueva canción* network that sprang up in different parts of the continent, from Mexico to Costa Rica to Peru, I stated in my proposals for preliminary research towards this dissertation that I would be studying *nueva canción* in Colombia. The consent forms I handed out to interviewees on my first fieldwork trip to Colombia informed them of this fact.

However, when I arrived in the capital, Bogotá, in June of 2011 to begin research, I quickly learned that I would have to revisit my terminology. On my very first night, a knowledgeable musician to whom I was introduced recited the names of artists and ensembles that he considered to belong in the category he called *canción protesta* (protest song). I would encounter this phrase repeatedly in the ensuing weeks. While I was aware that the term *canción protesta* had once been used in Cuba and the Southern Cone, I believed that it was an outmoded moniker that had not outlived the glorious sixties. Hearing it spoken authoritatively by numerous

musicians in Colombia, and coming across it time and again in archival sources, signalled to me that this was a category that was still salient there, and to which I needed to pay close attention.

I soon became aware that yet another label for this type of music was in wide circulation: *canción social* (social song). Record stores I visited had “canción social” sections wherein one could purchase compilations bearing such titles as *The Golden Age of Social Song*. I came across advertisements for concerts featuring *canción social*, and the media used the term to classify a wide range of artists. Confusingly, *canción social* seemed to be applied to much of the same music that had been designated as *canción protesta* in the 1960s and 1970s, and some people appeared to use the categories interchangeably. Only a few weeks into my first visit, I began asking everybody I interviewed about these categories: When did *canción social* begin to be used? Where did it come from? Are *canción protesta* and *social* the same thing?

As I began to grapple with these questions, I was also struck by the remarkable diversity—in terms of musical style, generational identity, political orientation, and lyrical content—of the musical acts that were grouped together under the banners of *canción protesta* and *canción social*. Amateur musicians, such as Communist Youth activist Alejandro Gómez, who set political texts to the melodies of popular songs and performed them in contexts associated with the Communist Party in the late 1960s, were the pioneers of *canción protesta* in Colombia. A sizeable proportion of their songs extolled the guerrillas fighting the government in the countryside. Artists like Ana y Jaime, who had gotten their start in that politicized setting but went on to distribute their rock-influenced music via commercial channels in the early 1970s, are the most widely known exponents of *canción protesta*; in the twenty-first century, they were reclassified under the heading of *canción social*. Activist musicians, who, in the late 1970s and 1980s, consciously rejected the political language that typified the first wave of *canción protesta*,



also came up in discussions of these categories; many of them formed ensembles, such as Canto al Pueblo and Nueva Cultura, that turned to the study and performance of rural Colombian genres. During the same period, ensembles like Grupo Suramérica and Illary immersed themselves in the brand of Andean music promoted by Chilean *nueva canción* groups. Although many of their songs were purely instrumental—those that did have lyrics offered light social commentary—these ensembles have come to be very closely associated with *canción social*. The two musicians that joined together as Iván y Lucía in 1983 came of age just as the *canción protesta* movement was dying out, and the pair sought new directions for their sound and texts. Nevertheless, many of Iván y Lucía's songs reflected the intense political violence the country was experiencing, and the duo occupies an important niche in the *canción protesta-social* lineage. An eclectic assortment of musicians and ensembles that came on the scene in the 1990s and 2000s—from Medellín pop-rocker Pala, to Bogotá's peace activist-in-chief, César López—have also earned the *canción social* label. How could these disparate-seeming groups and musical inclinations, I asked myself, be part of the same phenomenon called *canción protesta* or *canción social*?

## **Situating Musical Protest and Resistance: Goals of the Dissertation**

### ***A Missing Piece***

This dissertation represents an attempt to answer the questions set out above concerning the definitions and socio-musical characteristics of the categories *canción protesta* and *canción social*. In so doing, a fundamental goal of this dissertation—the first of four outlined below—is to register the heretofore undocumented history of *canción protesta* in Colombia. As alluded to above, the politically charged musics emanating out of the Southern Cone and Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s, which conventionally come together under the rubric of Latin American *nueva*

*canción*, have received a great deal of scholarly attention. Certainly, musicians in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay were among the first to establish cohesive movements of socially conscious music in middle-class, urban milieus, and Cuba became an early hub for the transnational *nueva canción* network.<sup>1</sup> Given the international notoriety of the Cuban Revolution, along with the hardline military dictatorships in the Southern Cone that sought to contain its influence, it is understandable that political musics in these countries have been well-studied.<sup>2</sup> Researchers have also begun to chronicle the branches of *nueva canción* that surfaced in other Latin American nations, many of them inspired by their counterparts in the Southern Cone and Cuba. Articles, books, and dissertations on *nueva canción* in numerous countries have provided us with a continental perspective while documenting the specific conditions under which oppositional musics developed, and in many cases declined, in different places.<sup>3</sup> An in-depth account of what was happening in Colombia during these tumultuous years is conspicuously absent.

It need not be stated that the Colombian context is unique in Latin America. Each nation experienced distinct patterns of demographic and political change, insurgency, and repression, among other factors related to the emergence of protest music movements. Nevertheless, the early rise of the guerrilla phenomenon in Colombia relative to other Latin American countries, as

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<sup>1</sup> The Argentinean corollary of this movement was launched as the *nuevo cancionero argentino* (literally, new Argentine songbook) in 1963, while different terms were used in Uruguay before musicians there settled on *canto popular* (popular song; see Milstein 2007). For the sake of simplicity, I use the term *nueva canción* when referring to artists from the various Southern Cone nations. In Cuba, this music was institutionalized in the state-sponsored Nueva Trova Movement. I use *nueva trova* (also translatable as new song) when referring specifically to the Cuban figures affiliated with it.

<sup>2</sup> The literature on *nueva canción* in Chile, Argentina, Cuba, and to a lesser extent, Uruguay, is vast. Good recent overviews on the Southern Cone can be found in Vila (2014), while Díaz (1994) and Moore (2006) remain authoritative sources on Cuban *nueva trova*.

<sup>3</sup> These include studies on Bolivia (Luft 1996; Paredes Ruiz 1984), Peru (Oliart 1984; Ritter 2012), Ecuador (Peralta Idrovo 2003), Venezuela (López Osorio 2014; Martín 1998), Costa Rica (Cortés 2001), Nicaragua (Scruggs 2002, 2006; Sturman 2012), El Salvador (Almeida and Urbizagástegui 1999; Kirk 1984), Mexico (Madrid 2013; Pacheco 1994), the Dominican Republic (Pacini Hernández 1991) and Puerto Rico (Malavet Vega 1988).

well as its persistence long after the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of communist guerrillas elsewhere (Pizarro Leongómez 2011), make it an ideal site in which to study the development and evolution of repertoires that were (and to some extent still are) thoroughly linked to the leftist ideals that initially fuelled the rebels. Moreover, *canción protesta* and *canción social* constitute a formidable component of recent Colombian musical history. The adoption of rock music and the consolidation of enduring folklorist movements in the main cities of the interior were connected to these categories, and numerous important figures from the worlds of popular music, cultural administration, and music research were involved with, had ties to, or have otherwise been influenced by them.

### ***Discourses of Resistance***

As was the case with *nueva canción* in other countries, Colombian *canción protesta* was originally cultivated in the 1960s in spaces associated with the Marxist Left, at a time when fledgling guerrilla groups were beginning to carry out armed action against the state. The activists and musicians involved with *canción protesta* thus positioned this type of music as a form of struggle against the exploitative capitalist system imposed upon them by elites, who maintained their political domination through a severely curtailed democracy, and who were aligned with the greater interests of US imperialism. I use the word “struggle” here as a standard translation for *lucha*, the Spanish term that leftist ideologues uttered repeatedly to denote the different modalities of resistance through which they sought to achieve their political goals.

The field of “resistance studies” (Lilja 2016:680) has proven imperfect when it comes to studying music that, as part of a tangible political movement, is unambiguously intended to articulate resistance against a dominant force. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that much contemporary writing on resistance (e.g. Johansson and Vinthagen 2016; Sivaramakrishnan

2005) builds on James Scott's (1985) seminal inquiries into "everyday" forms of resistance, which he describes as uncoordinated, small-scale, and often unrecognizable actions that challenge the established order. Scott set out to theorize "everyday resistance" in the first place precisely as an antidote to what he viewed as the disproportionate scholarly focus on overt and coordinated types of resistance—revolutions and the like. Researchers have subsequently debated whether everyday acts should even qualify as resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004). Nevertheless, Scott's conception of everyday resistance, which stands in contrast with openly confrontational and organized action, has been to a considerable degree mapped on to the scholarly notion of "resistance" in its unqualified form. This conflation is evident, for instance, in Dave Laing's (2003:345) distinction between "protest songs," which he defines as "explicit statements of opposition," and the "coded or opaque... expression of dissidence" found in "music of resistance." Eric Drott (2015:174) appears to take a similar view when he writes: "Unlike resistance, which encompasses the sporadic interventions of individuals, social movements are sustained, collective initiatives."

What is clear for my purposes is that if, by definition, everyday resistance has "no Leninist conspiracy behind it" (Scott 1985:31), then the models used to study it may be of limited use for examining a musical repertoire that was strongly informed by Marxist-Leninist theory, as was the case with Colombian *canción protesta* of the late 1960s. Dan Rabinowitz (2014:483) arrived at a similar conclusion in his study of what he calls the "contemporary metropolitan protests" (CMP) that erupted around the world in 2011:

The significant dissimilarities between the circumstances, participation profiles and modus operandi of CMP and those prevailing in the situations on which resistance theory were modelled thirty and forty years ago, through [*sic*] the limitations of applying resistance theory to CMP into even more dramatic relief.

Rather than using resistance as an optic for interpreting expressive culture, then, I follow David McDonald's (2013:28) lead in seeking to "interrogate the discursive tactics that imbue acts of resistance with their particular meanings." I see the advent of *canción protesta*—a socially constructed category through which oppositional music could be defined—in 1960s Colombia as bound up in discourses of and about resistance. *Canción protesta* developed in the same fora in which vigorous discussions were had about other forms of resistance, from electoral campaigns, to strikes, land invasions, and armed insurrection. There are in fact parallels between the discourses of resistance that framed the creation of *canción protesta* and academic analyses of resistance. In establishing the musical category and repertoire of *canción protesta*, participants of the movement and the broader public came to view certain types of songs as acts of resistance that were integral to organized political activity, while social commentary in other types of music, which are not normally associated with the category, were relegated to the "pre-political" sphere of "everyday" resistance. Political leaders and commentators also debated the role that art should play in the revolutionary struggle—in other words, its potential to be resistant. Actually, these *were* academic discourses. Most of the artists and activists who initially propelled *canción protesta* were university students or were involved with political groups that were reading the very same texts—predominantly in the Marxist tradition—that have profoundly shaped the modern social sciences. Instead of imposing a subjective distinction between "music of protest" and "music of resistance," by focusing on the discourses within which the resistant dimensions of *canción protesta* were actuated in Colombia, we can better make sense of its entrance into the commercial arena, as well as activist-musicians' shift away from what they viewed as crudely propagandist song texts at the dawn of the 1980s. While many artists turned to peasant and folk styles to express a more symbolic (or "opaque") type of resistance to the capitalist system, they

did so after painstakingly elaborating ideologically based rationalizations for their changes in lyrical and musical approaches. With all of this in mind, the second goal of the dissertation is to analyze the musics that have been denominated as *canción protesta* in Colombia in relation to the discourses of resistance that accompanied their production.

While music and musicians are undoubtedly the focus of this dissertation, it also aims to use music as a lens for understanding political history in Colombia. *Canción protesta* arose at the end of the 1960s in tandem with the fervent socialist ambitions that were unleashed throughout the continent by the Cuban Revolution. The armed conflict that erupted between the Colombian state and Marxist guerrillas in the mid-1960s was complicated in the 1980s by the entanglement of right-wing paramilitaries and powerful drug cartels. Guerrilla groups' misguided operations, along with their incursions into extortion, kidnapping, and drug-trafficking, undermined their popular support and seeded an ever-deepening weariness of revolutionary rhetoric. The systematic persecution of leftist activists from the 1980s on and a wave of terrorism directed by the cartels in the early 1990s fueled an increasingly broad push for peace. Hope that negotiations initiated in 1998 between the government and the largest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC), would bring an end to the decades-long conflict turned into disillusionment when the talks failed in 2002. Improved security for certain segments of the population through the 2000s led to a cautious optimism, which was bolstered by the resumption of negotiations in 2012.

It is against this backdrop that the term *canción social* gradually emerged, appearing in the titles of a series of CD compilations in the late 1990s and becoming an established genre—with several large-scale concert events based around it—by the end of the 2000s. While *canción social* has largely come to replace *canción protesta* in the general lexicon and refers to much of

the same music, it embraces a wider range of artists and carries different associations. The third objective of my dissertation is thus to elucidate how the change from *canción protesta* to *canción social* represents a significant shift in the discourses within which musicians and the public have defined the resistant dimensions of oppositional music, through “historically changing structures of power” in Colombia (Abu-Lughod 1990:42). In fact, I argue that this terminological change signals a profound transformation in Colombian society’s relationship with the idea of armed resistance over a half century of war.

### ***The L=ARM Fallacy***

My focus on the discursive practices through which categories like *canción protesta* and *canción social* were constructed is consistent with the tripartite approach Rob Rosenthal and Richard Flacks (2012:27-8) propose for the study of music in social movements. These sociologists argue that any potential political meanings, associations, and effects of a piece of music must be assessed by examining the interaction between its transmission and reception, as well as the context within which these occur (see also Peddie 2012:xiii). In the chapters that follow, I pay close attention to these three levels of analysis by highlighting the perspectives of songwriters I interviewed, as well as commentary appearing in promotional materials and media reports and expressed by peer musicians; in each chapter, I devote a fair amount of space to the political-historic contexts within which the socio-musical processes I discuss took place. Rosenthal and Flacks adopt this approach to circumvent an assumption they believe has been surprisingly tenacious in academic and popular writing on political music, which they term the “Lyrics equal Audience’s Received Meaning” (L=ARM) fallacy. The materials I present in this dissertation further undermine this equation on a couple of fronts.

For starters, lyrics alone will not help us to account for why a song on a romantic theme, for example, may become a staple of a repertoire of socially conscious music. This limitation comes into fuller relief in the transnational arena of *nueva canción*, as citizens of different nations united under a “pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism” (Bodiford 2007:62) mapped a web of political associations onto artists’ output that could depend on the songwriter’s national origin, the listener’s local context, and the regional political events receiving greatest attention at any particular moment, among other factors. Cuban *nueva trova* star Silvio Rodríguez has raised these points when speaking about the political symbolism that his followers projected onto his songs:

People adapted my songs to their reality, to their needs. ... And it never annoyed me that they did so. It never bothered me, for example, that they would declare that one of my songs was a text against [Chilean dictator Augusto] Pinochet when it was merely a poem for a girlfriend I had. Many times, what was not political was interpreted as such.<sup>4</sup>

A musician I spoke with in Medellín acknowledged this dynamic from the receiver’s perspective: “All of us who listened to [Rodríguez] in that era tried to find the political signs in all those songs. Always. So, whoever heard ‘Ojalá’ said it was a song about Pinochet. Of course not! I mean, not at all. His political songs were much less metaphorical.”

Music scholars have foregrounded numerous examples in which a single song can trigger diverging political interpretations among disparate groups. An emblematic case is Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the USA,” which was intended as a critique of US policy, but was widely construed as a patriotic anthem (Rosenthal and Flacks 2012:92).<sup>5</sup> Closer to Colombia, Kevin O’Brien Chang and Wayne Chen (1998:3) reported that fighters on both sides of the Nicaraguan

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<sup>4</sup> *Semana*, May 25, 1993. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Spanish-language texts, interview transcripts, and song lyrics are my own.

<sup>5</sup> For another other compelling North American example, see Mann 2012.



civil war during the 1980s listened to Bob Marley, since “each side saw itself as fighting oppression.” My aim, however—and herein lies the fourth goal of the dissertation—is to show how a body of music came to evoke nearly diametrically opposed political ramifications for the *same* group of people over time, and how these associations were encoded in musical categories. Argentine protest singer Facundo Cabral neatly encapsulated the type of radical transformation to which I am referring here in an anecdote he related in 2007. While Cabral, who had a strong following in Colombia, was speaking about a regional political context, the change in perspective that he described was echoed by numerous Colombian musicians with whom I spoke:

One day in El Salvador some guy told me: “Some years ago, listening to you, I joined the guerrillas. Some years later, listening to you, I left the guerrillas.” He was narrating my life. Because we changed together: I did not join the guerrillas but was a career provocateur. ... Now I know that differences can be reconciled, that I don’t need to finish you off to hold a strong view.<sup>6</sup>

### **Fieldwork and Methodology, History and Ethnography**

The field research for this dissertation was carried out in Colombia over the course of five visits, ranging in length between two weeks and four months, between June 2011 and January 2015. Although the bulk of my work was concentrated in Bogotá, I also spent a significant amount of time in the country’s second largest metropolis, Medellín, and I travelled to other cities of the Colombian interior as relevant performance events arose or to do one-off interviews. In addition to my work in Colombia itself, I conducted in-person interviews with Colombians residing in Toronto and Paris, and spoke to key musicians in Barranquilla (Colombia), Spain, the United States, and Venezuela via telephone and Skype.

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<sup>6</sup> *Gatopardo*, No. 83, 2007.

Building on a phrase Gage Averill (1997:xxii) coined to denote the genre of his monograph on Haitian popular music, Jonathan Ritter (2006:46) has described an “ethnographically informed social history” as a research study that draws “upon both historical sources and ethnographic work to simultaneously make sense of the past and convey its place in the present.”<sup>7</sup> I adopted the idea of an ethnographically informed social history as a guiding methodological principal from the outset. In part, my fieldwork consisted of the trademark activities of ethnographic research: formal, recorded interviews and informal conversations; audio, video, and photographic documentation of musical events; and participant-observation as a musician in an ensemble and other settings. However, most of the songwriters, singers, duos, and ensembles discussed in this study reached their peak levels of activity prior to the onset of the twenty-first century, and my work consequently has a strong historical focus. I spent much of my time in the field consulting primary sources, listening to recordings, and viewing concert footage at several libraries in Bogotá and Medellín. I scanned consecutive issues over many years—in some cases, decades—of major newspapers, as well as leftist and cultural publications such as *Voz Proletaria*, *Documentos Políticos*, *Tribuna Roja*, *Alternativa*, and *Cromos*. Many of the people I interviewed had diligently preserved personal collections that included concert programs, posters, and press clippings from their careers that I would not have come across elsewhere. These documents proved indispensable to piecing together the historical narratives I present below.

Approaching my research as an ethnographically informed history has helped me navigate several challenges relating to the reliability of oral and documentary sources. I realized

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<sup>7</sup> David McDonald (2013:12) presents his research in similar terms, describing it as “an ethnographic history of Palestinian protest song [that] situates historical understanding of political events within the legacies and frameworks of contemporary meaning.”

early on that the value of some of the interviews I conducted would be limited by the comprehensible difficulty my interlocutors experienced in recalling events that had occurred, in some cases, over forty years earlier. The hazards of relying uncritically on such testimonies also became apparent in my conversations with musicians that had enjoyed some media exposure, and thus gave semi-regular interviews. In preparing for a meeting with a particular person (or group), I watched and listened to prior interviews with them. I was often surprised, after asking my own questions, to have them recite the same information, using many of the same exact words and phrases as they had in the earlier interviews. Clearly, these prominent artists had settled on somewhat standardized accounts of certain aspects of their careers that merited further scrutiny. On the other hand, the authority of primary printed sources was challenged when I was leafing through one musician's collection of documents from his ensemble's past. When I came to a newspaper advertisement for a performance by the group at the National University, the musician told me the concert never actually happened, since the university had been shut down due to student protests.

It is by now a truism in the ethnographic disciplines that our written representations can amount at best to highly informed "interpretations" of the cultural phenomena we observe (Geertz 1973); we must settle for, or perhaps aspire to, penning "partial truths" (Clifford 1986). Nevertheless, I have aimed for the highest degree of historical precision by triangulating between the statements of musicians, journalists, and other figures in the past and present, archival documents and recordings, and my observations of performances and other experiences during the fieldwork period. Employing an ethnographic perspective on the study of times and settings I did not live through also opened avenues for a type of experiential historical understanding. For instance, several musicians told me about the thrill of performing folkloric music for throngs of

supportive students at the León de Greiff concert hall at the National University in Bogotá in the 1970s and 1980s. Having attended a 2014 performance at that venue of *bullerengue*, a traditional music and dance genre from the Atlantic coast region that had the packed hall of rowdy students up from their seats and dancing, I feel I may have witnessed a semblance of the electric ambiance these musicians depicted.

### ***Political Discourse in (Highland Urban) Colombia and the Ethics of Attribution***

In the years preceding my fieldwork, much of the news coming out of Colombia centered on the violent persecution of human rights defenders, union organizers, and other leftist activists. Having informed myself about the complicated political climate, I was concerned when I began interviewing activist-musicians that they would be reluctant to speak about politically sensitive matters. I soon found that most did not hesitate to talk openly about their political views past and present, as well as their stances on controversial issues. Nevertheless, in a few cases, interviewees specifically pointed out that certain things they mentioned were “off the record,” and one musician asked that I not publicize his ensemble’s prior involvement with a now-demobilized guerrilla group, even though that information had been published elsewhere. I felt it was important in writing this text to go beyond honoring the small number of explicit requests for confidentiality and to err on the side of caution with regards to the oral histories people generously shared with me. As such, throughout the dissertation I alternate between citing the individual sources for particular data or quoted words by name, and presenting them anonymously. While my consultants’ safety was the single most important factor influencing my decision on this front, I also weighed whether knowledge of the specific identity behind any given quote would significantly enhance the contextual frame for the reader. In many cases, I felt

that giving credit to musicians' unrivaled authority on the subject at hand, by citing them personally, was the ethical choice to make.

### ***Researcher's Positioning***

A brief word is in order on my subjective positioning as a researcher into the *canción protesta* - *canción social* complex in Colombia. I am not Colombian and have no Colombian heritage; I first set foot in the country in 2005. However, for the portion of my childhood that was spent in San José, Costa Rica (1982-1991), I was socialized into the same Latin American socialist cosmopolitan community to which many of the Colombian musicians and activists I discuss here belonged. My parents were involved with various leftist solidarity initiatives during our time in Costa Rica and collaborated directly with musicians in the *nueva canción* scene there. I grew up listening to much of the same internationally known *nueva canción* music as my Colombian counterparts, likely ascribing to it many of the same political aspirations—hopes for the Sandinista project in Nicaragua, for example, or the struggle to restore democracy in Chile. When I revisited my parents' cassette collection from those years, I came across a tape with the music of Nueva Cultura, one of the Colombian ensembles I mention in this study. In this respect, when I heard or read about performances that Colombian musicians gave at events to build solidarity with the people of El Salvador, or about what the music of Argentine and Chilean *nueva canción* icons Mercedes Sosa and Inti-Illimani meant to them, I could relate on a personal level. Notwithstanding these shared cultural references, the artists that conformed the Colombian *canción protesta* movement generally did not enjoy the international reach that their *nueva canción* contemporaries in the Southern Cone and Cuba did, and their trajectories corresponded to developments that were specific to the Colombian context. It has been fascinating to undergo a

vicarious socialization into the cultures in which they created their art and tried to advance their political ideals.

## **Outline of Chapters**

While the dissertation basically unfolds in chronological order, there is substantial overlap between the time periods addressed in successive chapters. I begin chapter 1 by describing the Coco de Oro Festival of Protest Song held on the Colombian island of San Andrés in 1971. Richly detailed contemporaneous reports on the Festival provide an excellent vantage point from which to register the apparent inconsistencies that resulted from the confluence of three countercultural streams in the late 1960s. Before turning to an account of these interrelated streams, I lay out the turbulent historical setting that frames their emergence in the late 1950s and 1960s. I then go on to describe the eruption in 1958 of the rabbleroising avantgarde literary movement known as *nadaísmo* (literally, “nothingism”) and the rise of a rebellious rock and roll culture through the 1960s in the *nueva ola* (new wave) scene. The focus of the chapter is the consolidation of a grassroots *canción protesta* movement in Bogotá—and indeed, the very appearance of the musical category—with the founding of the National Protest Song Center in 1968. More broadly, my aim in this chapter is to analyze the correspondences and discontinuities in the discourses of resistance that were built up in relation to each of these countercultural currents, and to show how their convergence towards the end of the 1960s set the stage for the flowering of a commercial form of *canción protesta* in the 1970s.

Several of the musicians I spoke with for this project maintained that *canción protesta* of the 1960s-70s largely served as a vehicle for spreading leftist political propaganda. Many asserted that the music articulated support for guerrilla groups, and they justified this claim by pointing to the frequent appearance of the word *fusil* (gun) in song texts. Significantly, there was

consensus that composers began eschewing these characteristics in the late 1970s. I thus felt that a thorough comprehension of the textual traits of early *canción protesta* was a prerequisite to understanding why many musicians had come to disavow this type of music in later years. While I noted above that a direct equation can be rarely drawn between a song's lyrics and its political significance, this was in fact a repertoire in which the composer's intended message in a song, along with audiences' interpretations of it, could often be deduced from its text. In chapter 2, then, I undertake a detailed exegesis of the turn-of-the-seventies *canción protesta* repertoire, identifying its central themes and highlighting the extent to which protest song texts condensed the rhetoric that predominated in Colombian Marxist discourse. Tying in recent scholarship on music, violence, and radicalism, I conclude that a substantial portion of the repertoire helped sustain a key base of support for the principle of violent resistance.

I examine the music that most Colombians think of as *canción protesta* in chapter 3. While the line between "grassroots" and "commercial" forms of *canción protesta* was sometimes blurry, the political stances of artists that entered the commercial arena were more mixed than those of activists in the grassroots movement, and the music the former disseminated via the mass media experienced more complex processes of reception. I thus take a close look at the trajectories of four high-profile acts that were branded with the *canción protesta* label in the 1970s and analyze their musical output. While these musicians received backing from the media industry and experienced no obvious interference from officialdom into the middle of the decade, by the late 1970s the range of opportunities available to them was narrowing. I link these changes to increasing political repression issued under near-constant State of Siege powers, which were invoked in part in response to the audacious actions of a second-generation, urban-focused guerrilla organization, the M-19.

Throughout the 1970s, members of leftist organizations debated the position that music and art should hold in the political struggle. Over time, the instrumentalist view held by most political leaders, in which music served as a tool to communicate party ideology and build revolutionary consciousness, alienated many musicians who no longer wished to sacrifice aesthetic concerns to “good politics.” In the first part of chapter 4, I describe activist ensembles’ transition away from the earlier approach to protest music, which was referred to as *panfletario* (literally, “pamphletary”—i.e. political pamphlets in verse), in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This trend would only continue as public perceptions of guerrilla groups worsened, and as political and cartel-related violence escalated rapidly as of the mid-1980s. In the latter part of the chapter, I profile the work of Iván y Lucía, a duo that represents an important stream of socially conscious music during this period. Although Iván y Lucía’s origins lay in the embers of the *canción protesta* movement, the pair were part of a loosely knit network of musicians that were labelled as exponents of Colombian *nueva canción*, and they carried out their vision of forging a radically new poetic and sonic palette while still bearing witness to the challenging times in which they lived.

In chapter 5, I attempt to get to the bottom of the terminological shift from *canción protesta* to *canción social* that has occurred gradually over the past decades. By tracking appearances of these terms in printed documents from 1966 to the present, I am able to provide a detailed accounting of when and how the *canción social* label emerged. Parsing out the definitions and associations that Colombians ascribe to this category proved to be a somewhat more complicated task. Nevertheless, I interpret the significance of the change from *canción protesta* to *canción social* in light of steadily declining support for the idea of achieving social change through violent means. This chapter allows me to draw on ethnographic components of



my research, as I provide a glimpse into what performances of *canción social* were like in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The initiation of peace negotiations in 2012 between the government and the FARC constituted the major political development of this period.

The dissertation concludes with an assessment of how the transformation from *canción protesta* to *canción social*, along with the story it tells about changing discourses of resistance in Colombia, square with the monumental political developments that have taken place around the globe over the last fifty years, particularly as experienced in the Latin American context. In the concluding chapter, I also relate my findings to research on the legacies of *nueva canción* in Latin America, and to the study of “protest music” more broadly. I relay the most recent developments in the government’s peace negotiations with the FARC in a brief epilogue.

### **A Prequel to *Canción Protesta***

Although *canción protesta* was only established as a musical category in Colombia in the late 1960s, a handful of songs composed before that time were adopted into the *canción protesta* repertoire and celebrated as the movement’s foundational works. To set the stage for the discussion that follows, I conclude this introductory chapter with an examination of two songs that are frequently cited as primordial Colombian protest songs.

More than one person I spoke with informed me that José A. Morales’ (1914-78) famed *bambuco* “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” (Yesterday They Threw Me Out of Town) was the first protest song in Colombia.<sup>8</sup> Hernán Restrepo Duque (1991:22-3) has acknowledged that this is a widely held claim, though he argued that a *bambuco* from the 1920s titled “El trapichero” (The Cane Miller) is the true bearer of this status. “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” was entered in the

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<sup>8</sup> The *bambuco* is the most frequently performed genre of *música andina colombiana* (Colombian Andean Music), and is considered by many to be Colombia’s national dance.

Festival of Colombian Song in Villavicencio in 1962, and although its notoriety likely stems from that event, there is some murkiness concerning how it fared in the contest. Restrepo Duque wrote that the song has been “promoted” as the winning number at that first edition of the festival, and indeed a program for the 1987 Festival of Colombian Song lists it as such.<sup>9</sup> According to a close friend of Morales, however, the song did not in fact earn first place (quoted in Restrepo Duque 1991). Bermúdez (1999) has suggested that “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” was precluded from receiving top billing at the festival “precisely because it distanced itself from the idyllic and nativist language used by those who, from the city, idealize the peasant just as the Europeans had done centuries earlier with the American ‘noble savage.’” Concerning the song’s text, he wrote that it “denounced in direct language and full of peasant slang the injustices of the yet-to-be-overcome servile condition of the peasant in many regions of the country”:

Ayer me echaron del pueblo  
 Porque me negué a *jirmar*  
 La sentencia que el *alcaide*  
 A yo me hubo de implantar  
 Porque tuve con mi mano  
 Al patrón que castigar,  
 Cuando quiso a mi *familia*  
*Llegámela* a irrespetar

Yesterday they threw me out of town  
 Because I refused to sign  
 The sentence that the mayor  
 Imposed on me  
 Because I laid hands on  
 The boss to punish him  
 When he tried to treat my family  
 Without respect

Porque uno es pobre y carece  
 De fincas como el patrón  
*Tan* creyendo que por eso  
 También nos falta el honor  
 Entonces hay que enseñarles  
 Que en cuestiones del amor  
*Toitos* somos iguales  
 Y tenemos corazón

Because one is poor and lacks  
 The farmlands of the landlord  
 They believe  
 That we also lack honor  
 So we must show them  
 That in matters of love  
 We are all the same  
 And we all have hearts

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<sup>9</sup> XXIV *Festival de la canción colombiana*, program notes, Villavicencio: Instituto de Cultura y Turismo del Meta, December 4 to 7, 1987.

Ayer me echaron del pueblo  
Mañana yo he de *golver*  
Porque ahí dejé el rancho  
Mis hijos y mi mujer  
Y Diosito que es tan *giüeno*  
Me tendrá que perdonar  
Por lo que hice y lo que haga  
En defensa de mi hogar

Yesterday they threw me out of town  
Tomorrow I must return  
Because I left my shack there  
My children and my wife  
And my sweet God who is so merciful  
Will have to forgive  
Everything I did and may do  
In defense of my home<sup>10</sup>

Musicians involved with the *canción protesta* movement of the early 1970s evidently integrated “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” fully into their repertoires, and it has remained an important item in the *protesta* / *social* catalog. It was published, for instance, in an anthology of protest songs that activists compiled in 1971, titled *Guitarra y fusil* (Guitar and Gun).<sup>11</sup> The protest singer Eliana recorded it in the early 1970s, and her version made it onto a compilation record titled *Canciones de protesta* (Songs of Protest). When SINTRA VA, the union of workers for the national airline, Avianca, issued an LP to commemorate the organization’s fortieth anniversary in 1981, they included “Ayer me echaron” alongside Jaime Caicedo’s “La bala” (The Bullet)—another key contribution to Colombian *canción protesta*—and the Chilean *nueva canción* anthem “El pueblo unido” (The People, United). I found Eliana’s version, as well as the one by the renowned duo of traditional Colombian Andean music, Garzón y Collazos, on compilation CDs I came across in 2014 that bore little indication of their provenance other than an attribution on the cover to “Izquierda Viva” (Living Left; one CD was titled *Comrade!*). As I shall argue in chapter 2, the justification of retributory violence set forth in the text of “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” was a fundamental theme in grassroots *canción protesta*.

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<sup>10</sup> Varney’s (1999:95) translation of this text served as a starting point for my own.

<sup>11</sup> It should be stressed that for some, “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” is also part of the “national” songbook. It figures in Restrepo Duque’s (1991) *Las cien mejores canciones de Colombia* (The 100 Best Songs from Colombia) and Rico Salazar’s (1988) *Las canciones más bellas de Colombia* (The Most Beautiful Songs from Colombia).

Although José A. Morales does not appear to have been personally involved with the *canción protesta* movement, the figure most closely linked to the song “A la mina” (To the Mine), Leonor González Mina, traversed along its peripheries in her early career. Some details about her history are thus worth mentioning here. Born in 1934 in the region of Jamundí, Valle del Cauca, González Mina launched her artistic career in the early 1960s in the nearby city of Cali, where she performed in 1964 with Argentine *nueva canción* progenitor Atahualpa Yupanqui (Restrepo Duque n.d.-b). Her leftist sympathies were manifest in a 1966 interview, in which she stated that she admired Fidel Castro for rebuking US dominance, but tellingly chose to remain silent when asked what she thought about the FARC commander known as “Tirofijo” (Sure shot). Regarding three *bambucos* she had just recorded, she stated: “They have a content that is true for an entire people that has been exploited amidst injustices.”<sup>12</sup> González’s name began popping up in the Colombian Communist Party’s newspaper, *Voz Proletaria* (Voice of the Proletariat), in the late 1960s. In 1968, the publication praised her performance for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet youth organization Komsomol, held at the headquarters of a union of Colombian beer factory workers, and highlighted the “social content” of her music.<sup>13</sup> Less than a year later, *Voz* informed its readership that González had been invited to tour in the Soviet Union itself.<sup>14</sup>

Leonor González Mina, who had by this time earned the stage name “La Negra Grande de Colombia” (The Great Black Woman of Colombia), was loosely involved with *canción protesta* in Bogotá in the early 1970s. A musician who helped found the National Protest Song

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<sup>12</sup> *Cromos*, October 31, 1966. This article reported that González Mina, an Afro-Colombian, was leaving the country to reside in Spain due to obstacles placed in her way by the media, though it is unclear whether these problems resulted from her political orientation or from the virulent racism she faced.

<sup>13</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, November 21, 1968.

<sup>14</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, August 28, 1969.

Center referred to her as “an important performer of protest song,” and reported that she had performed at the protest song coffeehouses held at the Center (Gómez 1973). González Mina and Eliana sang on a “protest music” record made by Rodrigo Álvarez, another artist that was tangentially affiliated with the movement. Her recording of the song “Campesino de ciudad” (Peasant in the City) was included on a compilation LP titled *Social – protesta*, on which her voice appears alongside the greats of Hispano-American *nueva canción*. González herself apparently felt a special affinity for Argentinean *nueva canción*, recording songs by Argentine composers such as María Elena Walsh, Armando Tejada Gómez, and Horacio Guarany.<sup>15</sup> In her monograph on *nueva canción* in Venezuela, Gloria Martín (1998:23)—herself a representative of the movement—lists González Mina and Pablus Gallinazo as the Colombian artists who were doing similar types of work in the 1970s.

The song with which Leonor González Mina is most closely identified is “A la mina,” a piece from the Pacific coast region that González’s manager (and then-husband), Esteban Cabezas, arranged, and which she subsequently recorded and popularized. Similar claims to those made about “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” being the first protest song in Colombia have also been made about “A la mina.” Likely indulging in a degree of intentional hyperbole, Restrepo Duque (n.d.-a) wrote that “the rise of protest song in Colombia began when Leonor González Mina recaptured ‘To the Mine I Shan’t go.’”<sup>16</sup> Eduardo Cabas de la Espriella, a former musical director for González Mina, similarly told a reporter that the singer was “the first woman

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<sup>15</sup> These songs appear on her self-titled LP (Vol. VI) and *Recital de Leonor González Mina*.

<sup>16</sup> Restrepo used here the longer form of the song’s title (“A la mina no voy”), which I have seen employed elsewhere.

to interpret the first true protest song Colombia had: ‘La mina.’”<sup>17</sup> I was informed that Leonor González Mina does not forswear such claims (Benavides, personal communication).<sup>18</sup>

“A la mina” is said to have been derived from a folk song from the Iscuandé region of the Pacific coast (Miñana Blasco 1982:38).<sup>19</sup> In a presentation before the National Meeting of Folklorists, Afro-Colombian folklorist Teófilo Potes (1975:17) spoke about having come across documentation relating to the history of “La mina,” as well as a record that included a song by that name, in Iscuandé.<sup>20</sup> Sung from the vantage point of a black slave miner who expresses resistance to his forced labor and the racist ideology upon which it is founded, the text offers little room for interpretation. Communist Youth activist Alejandro Gómez Roa (1973) described it as “a lament of miners in Chocó [department in the Pacific coast region<sup>21</sup>] against the exploitation they suffer in the gold mines,” while a writer for the mainstream newspaper *El Tiempo* wrote about it: “In the most beautiful protest song of the continent, [the black man] refuses to continue hauling gold to pay for white supremacy ... and in this invitation to revolt there is a demand for liberty.”<sup>22</sup> Given González Mina’s flirtations with the Communist Party, it is perhaps not surprising that “people said that it had socialist content”; according to the singer,

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<sup>17</sup> “Leonor González Mina, una artista precursora de la cultura del Pacífico,” *El País*, May 22, 2016, <http://www.elpais.com.co/entretenimiento/cultura/leonor-gonzalez-mina-una-artista-precursora-de-la-cultura-del-pacifico.html>.

<sup>18</sup> To reduce textual clutter, citations of personal communications shall henceforth be marked “p.c.” A full list of interviews is included in appendix B.

<sup>19</sup> The Pacific littoral is home to the largest concentration of African descendants in Colombia. As evoked in “A la mina,” their ancestors were brought there as slaves for mining, which remains an important economic activity in the region. Historically isolated due to geographic factors, and neglected by the state because of deeply entrenched racism, the Afro-Colombian communities of the Pacific lowlands have suffered from high rates of poverty and a dearth of basic services. This situation has been compounded in recent decades by the disproportionate displacement of Afro-Colombians from their lands by armed actors in the civil conflict (see Dennis 2011; Dixon 2008).

<sup>20</sup> However, Potes appears to have told anthropologist Norman Whitten (1967:5) that the song was “new,” and didn’t have the long history that is often attributed to it.

<sup>21</sup> Following the French convention, in Colombia a department (*departamento*) is the largest political-administrative unit—the equivalent of a state or province in other countries.

<sup>22</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 20, 1971.

this and other songs provoked persecution against her.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Potes was himself imprisoned when he performed the work in Bogotá in 1961 because it was alleged to have been “communist” in character.<sup>24</sup> About the depiction of brutal exploitation conveyed in the lyrics, Potes (1975:18) concluded: “This is the reality of the Colombian people, which when it is put on stage, they say it is communism.”

“A la mina”  
(Arr. Esteban Cabezas)

[Solo]  
Aunque mi amo me mate  
A la mina no voy  
Yo no quiero morirme  
En un socavón

[Coro]  
Don Pedro es tu amo  
Y él nos compró

[Solo]  
Se compran las cosas  
A los hombres, no  
Y aunque mi amo me mate  
A la mina no voy

[Coro]  
Tú eres su esclavo  
[Solo]  
No, mi señor  
Y aunque me aten cadenas  
Esclavo no soy

“To the Mine”

[Solo]  
Though my master will kill me  
To the mine I shan’t go  
I don’t want to die  
In a mine shaft

[Chorus]  
Don Pedro is your master  
And he bought us

[Solo]  
One can buy things  
But humans, no  
Though my master will kill me  
To the mine I shan’t go

[Chorus]  
You are his slave  
[Solo]  
No, sir  
Though they tie me in chains  
A slave I am not

<sup>23</sup> *El Diario La Prensa*, June 15, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Soon after this incident, Potes also performed the piece at the presidential palace for President Alberto Lleras Camargo, who intervened to reduce the folklorist’s sentence (Potes 1975:18).

En la mina brilla el oro  
Al fondo del socavón  
El amo se lleva todo  
Al negro deja el dolor  
El blanco vive en su casa  
De madera, con balcón  
Y el negro en rancho de paja  
Con un solo paredón

In the mine, the gold shines  
At the bottom of the cave  
The master takes it all  
Leaving the black man with pain  
The white man lives in his house  
Made of wood, with a balcony  
And the black in his straw shack  
With only one wall

Cuando vengo de la mina  
Cansado del barretón  
Encuentro a mi negra triste  
Abandonada de Dios  
Y a mis negritos con hambre  
¿Por qué? Esto pregunto yo  
Y aunque mi amo me mate  
A la mina no voy<sup>25</sup>

When I come from the mine  
Exhausted from the pickaxe  
I find my woman sad  
Abandoned by God  
And my children hungry  
Why? That's what I ask  
Though my master will kill me  
To the mine I shan't go

Like “Ayer me echaron del pueblo,” “A la mina” was thoroughly incorporated into the *canción protesta* repertoire, appearing in two protest song anthologies published in the early 1970s, as well as on the aforementioned *Canciones de protesta* compilation.<sup>26</sup> Several activist-musicians I spoke with referred to it. Notably, “A la mina” is one of the few Colombian songs to have been folded into the Latin American *nueva canción* canon, having been performed and recorded by well-known Chilean *nueva canción* ensemble Quilapayún since 1969.<sup>27</sup> In Colombia, the song was also taken up by acts that were on the margins of *canción protesta*. Rock

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<sup>25</sup> The Spanish text reproduced here is based on the one provided by Miñana (1982:38) and cross-referenced with González Mina's recording, from her LP *Cantos de mi tierra y de mi raza* (Songs from my Land and my Race). Although González sings it solo, the text is conceived as an exchange between the protagonist-soloist and a chorus. I have not found a definitive genre designation for González Mina's rendition of “A la mina.” In her recording, the song unfolds at a moderate tempo in duple time, with accompaniment rhythms that hint at Afro-Caribbean salon-derived forms. González's solo voice is accompanied by a studio orchestra, with very light percussion.

<sup>26</sup> While it may be coincidental, it is symbolic that “A la mina” and “Ayer me echaron del pueblo” frame this compilation, serving as the lead and closing tracks, respectively.

<sup>27</sup> *Alternativa*, November 1, 1976. According to Javier Rodríguez Aedo (2016:72-3), the musicians of Quilapayún learned the song from a printed anthology of Latin American political songs (Franco-Lao 1970 [1967]) during the Paris stop of their 1968 tour.



outfit Columna de Fuego adapted “A la mina” in their song “La joricamba,” first released in 1971 (Pérez 2007:89); in 1981, the duo Viajeros de la Música (Musical Travelers) “shouted the rebellion of ‘though my master will kill me to the mine I shan’t go’” with indigenous miners in Bolivia.<sup>28</sup>

“Ayer me echaron del pueblo” and “A la mina” clearly struck a chord with politicized activists in the late 1960s. Sung from the perspectives of individuals from subjugated groups—the rural peasantry of the highlands and Afro-Colombians on the coast—these kinds of songs voiced precisely the type of revolutionary consciousness activists hoped to spread through their protest songs. As we shall see further on, however, in their own newly composed texts, urban protest musicians focused on the collective (and often violent) action through which they believed the conditions of capitalist exploitation decried in these texts could be overcome. I will thoroughly examine the textual character of the *canción protesta* repertoire of which these two songs were key pillars after describing the movement’s origins in the heady 1960s, a task to which I attend in the following chapter.

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<sup>28</sup> *El Tiempo*, November 10, 1981. Viajeros de la Música also recorded the song for their 1978 LP *Nuestra América* (Our America).

## CHAPTER 1. Countercultural Movements in the Late 1960s and the Emergence of Protest Song in Colombia

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1971, the second Coco de Oro (Golden Coconut) Festival of Protest Song began amidst controversy on Colombia's offshore island department of San Andrés in the Caribbean Sea. In the lead up to the festival, some of the participants had taken to calling each other "bourgeois"—a dreaded epithet among a certain sector of *canción protesta* fans.<sup>29</sup> Much of the discord revolved around the makeup of the panel of judges for the festival's central event, the competition for best protest song. The well-known singer Eliana had registered her displeasure with the festival's "commercialization" and conditioned her participation on the removal from the song-contest jury of representatives from the government. Santiago García, the director of the Communist-Party identified Casa de la Cultura (House of Culture) in downtown Bogotá was slated to be a judge, and he too voiced his opposition to the functionaries' presence. One columnist asked pointedly:

What on earth is the Minister of Interior doing at a protest festival? How can impartiality be ensured in the adjudication if an official and officious defender of the establishment is voting on the songs? ... Amongst the judges there is not one but several delegates from a government that is not truly revolutionary. They will ensure that the chosen songs won't be "very strong" and that the state of siege will extend itself over the works presented.<sup>30</sup>

The writer was referring here to a security statute, enacted in early 1971 in response to mounting student, labor, and peasant protests, which banned any political gathering that might "disturb the peace" (Archila Neira 2003:105; Gallón Giraldo 1979:94). He or she may have wondered how

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<sup>29</sup> As Beltrán (2002:170) notes in his discussion of the politically charged atmosphere at the National University in Bogotá of the 1960s and 1970s, where *canción protesta* found a key constituency, "the term 'bourgeois' was so stigmatizing that most students made enormous efforts to rid themselves of any marks or attitudes that might be interpreted as bourgeois."

<sup>30</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 16, 1971.

one particular song being entered in the contest, “Destino la guerrilla” (Destination: The Guerrillas), would fare if the politically restrictive conditions the state of siege decree engendered were to be invoked. The song’s text unambiguously celebrates the handful of Marxist guerrilla groups that had been established in the late 1960s and were then waging battle on the Colombian state. A short, repeated refrain specifically references Camilo Torres Restrepo, the legendary priest who joined the National Liberation Army (ELN) and was martyred during his first confrontation with the military in 1966:

Caminando, caminando	Marching, marching
La guerrilla es un amor	The guerrilla is love
Echan pata que da miedo	Their gait strikes fear
Viva la revolución	Long live the revolution
[...]	[...]
Si lo que más yo quería	If the army grabbed
El ejército enganchó	What I loved most
Me levanto un guerrillero	I’ll wake up a guerrilla fighter
Viva la revolución	Long live the revolution
Si el ejército del grande	If the army of the mighty
No respeta la nación	Doesn’t respect the nation
Tiren bombas de colores	Throw bombs of color
Viva la revolución	Long live the revolution
Caminando, caminó	Marching, he marched
Caminando Camilo	Marching, Camilo

Notwithstanding the conspicuously incongruous invitations to the Minister of Interior, the governor of Cundinamarca department, and the superintendent of San Andrés to serve on the festival jury, the larger composition of that body was in keeping with the festival’s multidimensional character. Along with Santiago García, several other prominent figures had been tapped to round out the panel: Gonzalo Arango, the provocative founder of the *nadaísmo*

movement; Hernán Restrepo Duque, manager of the important Colombian record label, Sonolux; and managers and journalists from the leading newspaper *El Tiempo*.<sup>31</sup> The musical offerings were likewise varied. The most prominent artists to represent Colombia in the competition were Pablus Gallinazo, the composer of “Destino la guerrilla,” and the duo Ana y Jaime. Both acts had been involved with the grassroots *canción protesta* movement that had recently flourished at Bogotá’s Casa de la Cultura, but they were also working with the media industry that had been built up around the late-1960s *nueva ola* (new wave) rock and roll scene to promote their music. The convergence of *canción protesta* and *nueva ola* at this juncture was evident in other aspects of the festival. One observer highlighted the link by suggesting that the event was geared towards young *melenudos* (long-haired men), a term that had been employed over the last half decade to denote *nueva ola* musicians and fans; *nueva ola* star Harold was billed to perform as a special guest.<sup>32</sup> Adding to the festival’s incoherent quality was the fact that pop singers with no prior relation to the world of *canción protesta*, such as Carmenza Duque, were also guest performers. Moreover, the festival was held at the upscale Teatro Hollywood and was forecasted to attract television personalities. The expensive cost of admission (50 pesos) caught the attention of at least two reporters, who suggested that it favored access to the middle classes at the expense of the “common people [*el pueblo*]” “to whom the message should be directed.”<sup>33</sup>

The polemic around the participation of government dignitaries and businesspeople on the jury continued to rear its head as the competition passed into its final stages and in the

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<sup>31</sup> It is difficult to ascertain exactly who ended up conforming the jury, since disparate configurations were listed in the coverage as the festival progressed and the makeup may have varied on different days. See *El Tiempo*, June 26; July 16; July 17; July 18; July 23, 1971.

<sup>32</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 16, 1971. Another reporter noted the ubiquity of *melenas* (long hair) on the flight that ferried many of the participants over to San Andrés (*El Tiempo*, July 23, 1971).

<sup>33</sup> *El Tiempo*, August 20, 1971; July 23, 1971.

festival's aftermath.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the concerns of those who had warned of potential censorship of politically edgy songs appear to have been justified. The members of the Colombian duet Los Piscis claimed that the festival's president had censored their song "Hambre, pan, guerra y paz" (Hunger, Bread, War, and Peace) because it was "too strong." According to the song's composer, its most defiant lyrics stated, "The children ask for bread and from hunger they shall die," and "the men ask for peace and war they are given."<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, one of Ana y Jaime's entries, "Ricardo Semillas," fared well in the contest. Written by the militant leftist poet Nelson Osorio Marín, the song recounts the plight of a *campesino* (peasant) organizer—possibly one linked to a guerrilla group (M. Osorio Marín, p.c.)—who is murdered while preaching to his comrades that the land they work should belong to them, and, by implication, not to a wealthy landowner who exploits their labor (see text in chapter 3).

While the festival jury engaged in the task of determining what kinds of songs would be prizewinning in a high-profile protest song contest, reporters who covered the event on the ground clearly felt that the compositions performed did not live up to the festival's billing. Noting that the locals in the audience were displaying favoritism towards the hometown contestant, singer Christopher, a journalist by the pen name of Samuel suggested that the organizers "should explain to the public that the most important criterion for qualifying is the

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<sup>34</sup> One journalist who had served as juror argued that in the future "the jury should not be composed of people who hold official posts but rather by young people, preferably intellectuals and artists" (*El Tiempo*, July 23, 1971). While expressing a similar concern about the jury's constitution, another writer for *El Tiempo* questioned the entire premise of the song contest: "In this type of festivals the first thing that should be abolished is the competition for trophies. But furthermore, the jury should be made up of people who are not involved in areas that can feel affected by protest, since the poetry cannot be subject to restrictions" (*El Tiempo*, August 20, 1971). Although Pablus Gallinazo initially defended the festival's character before Eliana's accusations (*El Tiempo*, July 16, 1971), he later proposed that a "popular jury" should have been created from members of the audience that would have equal voting power to the "official" jury. This was necessary, he opined, because the latter included "members of record companies and others who in one way or another are biased, commercially or politically" (quoted in *El Tiempo*, July 18, 1971).

<sup>35</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 17, 1971.

content of the song.” The songs with which Christopher was competing, he wrote, “despite being very pretty, are of a sentimental type more than protest.”<sup>36</sup> Samuel had similar things to say about Gallinazo, whose songs “did not have the level of protest that was expected from him.”<sup>37</sup> Another of Samuel’s gripes was that few of the participants worked seriously in the field of protest song. Rather, many seem to have quickly penned songs in that vein in order to visit San Andrés, a popular beach destination for Colombian tourists from the cool highlands. He thus reasoned that Ana y Jaime, who won third place in the competition with a song titled “Obreros” (Workers), ought to have taken first place because their main line of artistic work throughout the year as “protest singers” earned them a good amount of “authenticity.”<sup>38</sup> His final appraisal of the festival was summed up pithily in the title to his last article on the event: “San Andrés Festival, More Song than Protest.”

*El Tiempo* writer Alegre Levy, who in fact served on the jury, echoed many of Samuel’s concerns, complaining that the first night of performances was “simply deplorable” because it featured a random-seeming assemblage of artists singing songs “that had everything except for themes of protest.” He also agreed that the content of Christopher’s songs “bordered on the corny,” while contrarily asserting that Venezuelan artist Manuel de la Roche “brought a true song of protest titled ‘Café y petróleo’ [Coffee and Oil].” This was likely the type of song that would earn the graces of Levy’s colleague and fellow adjudicator Enrique Santos Calderón, who he said was “firm in his intention to only award those songs with protest contents.” Levy concluded his roundup of the festival by expressing his hope that future editions would be more

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<sup>36</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 19, 1971.

<sup>37</sup> *El Tiempo*, August 20, 1971.

<sup>38</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 18, 1971.

consistent with what he apparently saw as the proper ethic of *canción protesta*: “We hope that next year there will be more protest, more *pueblo*, and less establishment.”<sup>39</sup>

In the end, the Golden Coconut for best protest song went to Sergio Torres, a little-known singer from Bogotá, for his *cumbia* “No trabajo más” (I Will Work No More). Given Levy’s and Santos’ statements about the kinds of songs they favored, one can imagine that they played a key role in pushing “No trabajo más” into the top slot. Consistent with much of the repertoire of grassroots *canción protesta* (see chapter 2), the song’s text outlines a straightforward Marxist protest against capitalist and neo-colonial exploitation.<sup>40</sup>

No trabajo más	I will work no more
Pa’ ningún patrón	For any boss
Solo espero ya	Now, I only hope
La Revolución	The revolution comes
[...]	[...]
Trabajando arando la tierra	Working plowing the land
Pa’ sembrar el algodón	To plant the cotton
Mientras las utilidades	While the profits
Las disfruta mi patrón	Are enjoyed by my boss
Trabajo en las petroleras	I work in the oil fields
Con ese calor minero	With that heat of the mines
Las empresas extranjeras	The foreign companies
Se llevan nuestro dinero	Take all our money

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<sup>39</sup> *El Tiempo*, August 20, 1971.

<sup>40</sup> “No trabajo más” was included in the 1971 songbook *Guitarra y fusil* (Guitar and Gun). The song evidently made an impression on Jaime Valencia of Ana y Jaime, who recalled that it had won the Coco de Oro and sang a fragment during an interview over forty years later (“Entrevista Ana y Jaime,” YouTube video, 15:30, interview of Ana and Jaime Valencia with Pilar Hung on the television program *Generación R*, Cali TV, uploaded March 28, 2011, <https://youtu.be/LPc746Sk97Q>).

In a final puzzling moment, perhaps fitting for such a contradictory event, the trophy for best protest song was awarded by the ambassador of Guatemala, a country that was ruled at the time by a hardline coronel who ruthlessly persecuted the leftist opposition.<sup>41</sup>

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The extensive reporting of the 1971 Coco de Oro Festival—no other single event related to *canción protesta* of the 1960s or 1970s received as much coverage—provides us with a comprehensive perspective on the vectors of *canción protesta* only a few years after this category was established in Colombia. In expressing their strong feelings about what kinds of artists and songs should participate in a festival of protest song, what kinds of people should judge them, and what kinds of audiences were best suited for their messages, the musicians, journalists, and jurors who were disappointed by the alleged scarcity of bona fide protest were articulating the tenets of a core discourse on *canción protesta*. Yet, the fact that these people were prompted to express those sentiments in the first place is evidence that they were coming up against competing understandings of the genre. Indeed, the diversity of the festival's organizers, performers, prospective judges, and attendees, which contributed to the inconsistencies that sparked the heated commentary, attests to the confluence of several countercultural currents and their attendant discourses.

In this chapter, I describe the emergence of three countercultural tendencies that captured the attention of a wide swath of youth in Colombia's biggest cities in the 1960s: *nadaísmo*, *nueva ola*, and *canción protesta*. I pay special attention to the similarities and differences in the ways that the leaders of these movements conceived of resistance and the ideal means to bring

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<sup>41</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 21, 1971.



about social, cultural, and political change. Certainly, there were fundamental tensions between the ways that those at the nuclei of these movements shaped their resistant postures. The communist activists that originally cultivated *canción protesta* were particularly critical of what they viewed as the disingenuous revolutionary discourses and tactics associated with other countercultural fields. Nevertheless, the reciprocal admiration and interaction amongst exponents and adherents of different streams was undeniable, and the reality for most urban youth—especially in the university sector—was of a generalized and multidimensional countercultural environment in which a variety of expressive outlets were available.

Many of these dynamics were on full display at the 1971 Coco de Oro Festival. The event, as well as the substantial attention conferred upon it by the mainstream media, were also indicative of the transition that *canción protesta* was undergoing in the early 1970s from a grassroots movement to a commercially viable phenomenon sanctioned to varying degrees by government officials. Ultimately, in this chapter I want to show that *canción protesta*'s shift into the commercial ambit was facilitated by the convergence of these countercultural currents in the late 1960s, even as this change alienated many of the music's earliest supporters. Before moving on to a discussion of these storied cultural developments, however, an overview of the historical context within which they occurred is warranted.

### ***La Violencia* and the First-Generation Guerrillas**

Colombians have been grappling with the spectre of *La Violencia* (The Violence) in one form or another through the entirety of the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. While the period of ten-plus years of sectarian political violence known as *La Violencia* has been labelled a “civil war” between the country's two principal political parties, the Liberals and Conservatives (Holmes, Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Curtin 2008:47), that characterization

discounts the waves of common criminal activity and personal score-settling that the broader framework of political violence unleashed (Dudley 2004:7; Palacios 2006:136-8). The beginning point of *La Violencia* is usually positioned symbolically on the historical timeline at April 9, 1948, the date on which Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, whose socialist-tinged rhetoric had been garnering him enormous popularity, was assassinated in Bogotá. Gaitán's murder sparked the *Bogotazo*, several days of mass riots in the capital that spread to other towns and spiraled into incessant fighting between the Liberals and Conservatives. While party leaders jostled for power in the capital, in rural areas armed militias and local police units affiliated with either side carried out horrific massacres upon each other. Because entire municipalities had become associated with one of the two parties, the political violence left a growing number of civilians dead in its wake. Much of the conflict that followed Gaitán's death, however, was actually an outgrowth of Conservatives' attempts—through violent means—to extend their political dominance to municipal posts after regaining the presidency in 1946. Taking a longer view, some historians trace this spate of violence back through the War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902) and on to the very genesis of the two-party system in the mid-nineteenth century. While the 1958 power-sharing agreement known as the National Front provides a convenient ten-year mark at which to peg the end of the inter-party conflict, Carlos Palacios (2006:165) points out that residual violence continued into the early 1960s, and the military was engaged in a sustained effort during these years to eliminate the host of guerrilla groups and criminals that had taken part in the warring. The twenty-year period from 1945 to 1965 that he allocates to *La Violencia* encompasses the outermost start and end dates accepted by other scholars. In any case, all estimates of the number of deaths attributed to the conflict reach the hundreds of thousands,

and the comparable figure of Colombians who left their rural homelands for the swelling cities substantially altered the nation's demographics (Stoller 2008; Otálvaro 2009).

Given the bloody legacies of military regimes in other Latin American countries, it is ironic that it took a coup by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1953 to bring about a temporary respite from the violence in Colombia. Rojas' ascendance to power was peaceful and welcomed by most factions of the Liberal and Conservative parties, although supporters of ousted Conservative president Laureano Gómez were understandably opposed. Balancing the distribution of key political appointments to Conservatives with an amnesty for Liberal guerrillas, Rojas enjoyed a significant drop in the *Violencia*-related death toll by his second year in office. Nevertheless, the military and police forces under Rojas committed atrocities and aggressively pursued self-defense groups allied with the Communist Party, which Rojas outlawed, as well as other opponents (Dudley 2004:19). As the regime wore on and became more repressive, the levels of violence resurged and supporters of the two establishment parties became wary of Rojas' maneuvering not only to remain in power but to create a "Third Force" in national politics. In May 1957 Rojas handed power over to a military junta while leaders of the Liberals and Conservatives hammered out a deal for a return to civilian rule by a bipartisan coalition.

On December 1, 1957, ninety-five percent of voters approved a plebiscite authorizing the creation of the National Front (Frente Nacional, FN), a revised system of constitutional governance that provided for equal representation of Liberals and Conservatives in legislative bodies. The alternation of the presidency between the parties every four years was inscribed in the agreement shortly after, and the entire package of bilateral cooperation was allotted a duration of sixteen years (Archila Neira 2003:90; Palacios 2006:155-6). Certainly, the pact paved

the way for a drawing down of the capitalized *Violencia*, the central axis of which was the enmity between the now-reconciled parties. However, this reduction was achieved in part by rebranding the lingering violence in the earlier part of the FN as conventional criminality or anti-state insurrection (Stoller 2008). The marginalization of political forces outside the traditional two parties, which was built into the very fabric of the FN, was compounded by the broader Cold War context. With the triumph of the Cuban Revolution only one year after the Front was officially initiated in 1958, the containment of the “communist phantom” became a priority of successive FN presidents (Archila Neira 2003:93). Indeed, starting in the mid-1960s, the front lines in the Colombian conflict were redrawn between the Colombian military and a handful of newly coalesced leftist guerrilla groups.

According to Palacios (2006:190), the revolutionary guerrillas that emerged in the 1960s evolved out of Liberal/Communist militias active during *La Violencia*, and were a symptom of the political Left’s efforts to find outlets for its opposition to the Liberal-Conservative monopoly of the National Front. In the turbulent years following the *Bogotazo*, Liberal and peasant-led resistance groups in certain areas—especially in the eastern plains—had already taken on a “redistributive, revolutionary character” (Stoller 2008). In Tolima department, southwest of the capital, peasant self-defense guerrillas were formed under heavy Communist-Party influence to protect several semi-autonomous land colonization zones, and many of these refused Rojas Pinilla’s amnesty offer. Facing pressure to take action against the Communist-associated “independent peasant republics” that continued to exist in the central-southern interior region in the early 1960s, in 1964 President Guillermo León Valencia ordered a large-scale offensive with US military assistance. Although the army succeeded in displacing the armed peasants, the attack spurred the latter to shift from a geographically fixed positioning to a mobile strategy, and from

defensive tactics to proactively revolutionary ones. The area of Marquetalia, Caldas, where legendary peasant-fighter Manuel Marulanda Vélez operated, was one of the main targets of the 1964 campaign. Taking advantage of the symbolism afforded by the state's decision to deploy 16,000 soldiers against less than fifty peasant fighters rather than invest in the region's social and economic welfare, Marulanda helped found the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1966 from the regrouped peasant guerrillas. "Tirofijo" (Sure Shot), as Marulanda was known, became the organization's commander, and he guided the FARC's growth into a well-organized, disciplined, and multi-front force with strong ties to the Communist Party (Holmes, Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Curtin 2008:52-4; Palacios 2006:192-3; Richani 2013:58-60).

Che Guevara's revolutionary theories strongly influenced the creation of the other two first-generation guerrilla organizations, the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (Ejército Popular de Liberación, EPL). In their early years, both groups established rural zones of peasant support—*focos*, in Guevarian terminology.<sup>42</sup> Founded in 1964 by urban middle-class revolutionaries that had received military training in Cuba, the ELN's original stronghold was in the mountainous and jungle areas of Santander department. To the present day, the organization's most celebrated member is the priest-turned-revolutionary Camilo Torres Restrepo. Pressured out of the Catholic Church for his espousal of Marxist teachings, Torres joined the ELN in 1965 and died during an ambush on an army patrol in Santander in early 1966 (Brett 2009). The EPL was established in 1967 as the armed branch of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (Partido Comunista Marxista Leninista,

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<sup>42</sup> Based on his experiences in Latin America, and especially Cuba, the French theorist Régis Debray popularized Guevara's *foco* theory in his 1967 book *Revolution in the Revolution?* The theory contended that small guerrilla groups fighting a national army in rural areas could ignite the conditions for broadly supported revolution. After Che's defeat in Bolivia, Debray admitted that the *foco* approach had overlooked key political and military factors (Wickham-Crowley 1992:313).

PCML), a Maoist faction that broke away from the Communist Party of Colombia (Partido Comunista de Colombia, PCC) following the 1964 split between Soviet and Chinese communist currents internationally. The remote Urabá region of Antioquia department was where the EPL sought to foment a “prolonged popular war” as conceived in Maoist ideology (Palacios 2006; Zimmering 2009a).

One group from which the embryonic guerrillas were able to recruit new fighters was the university student movement. A common saying among student organizers during this period was “irse para el monte” (head for the hills), a phrase that evoked the remote forested mountainous areas where the guerrillas were ensconced (Beltrán 2002:169; Tirado Mejía 2014:359). The student movement had been experiencing a precipitous radicalization since the Rojas dictatorship. Accounts of its activities during the 1960s show a continuous cycle of student protests, occupations, sit-ins, strikes, and solidarity actions that were met by authorities with university shutdowns, police and military takeovers, prohibitions of student organizing, blanket states of siege, and much less frequently, negotiations aimed at addressing students’ demands. The myriad issues that catalyzed students to action included inadequate funding, unequal distribution of resources among public universities, intervention from foreign interests and political appointees in curriculum design, autocratic governance structures, and reactions to domestic social and political developments and international events. After students at the National University in Bogotá apprehended President Carlos Lleras Restrepo in a sit-in during a 1966 visit to the campus with Nelson Rockefeller, the university was shut down and student organizations banished via a special security statute. The repressive response, however, sent student leaders straight into the open arms of radical parties’ youth wings, and student organizing was dominated thereafter by the Communist Youth (Juventud Comunista, JUCO) and rival leftist

groups. Student movement activity reached an initial peak in 1971, the year in which mass protests at the Universidad del Valle in Cali turned deadly, sparking demonstrations of solidarity at public and private institutions across the nation; by April, 60,000 students were on strike and eleven universities temporarily closed (Acevedo Tarazona and Samacá Alonso 2013; Archila Neira 2003; Tirado Mejía 2014).

Notwithstanding the identity that the student movement had carved out for itself by the mid-1960s as being broadly in line with *la izquierda* (the Left), student organizing at public universities was wracked by immutable differences between different factions, a reflection of divisions between leftist parties outside the university arena (Archila Neira 2003:276; Vargas Velásquez 1994). William Beltrán (2002) has drawn parallels between the intransigence of political student groups at the National University in the capital during the 1960s and 1970s and the forms of Catholic dogmatism that had formerly dominated Colombian life (see also Archila Neira 2003:299). While a student who did not identify with the Left might have faced ostracism, leftist organizations—the most prominent of which were the Soviet-oriented JUCO, followed by the Maoist Patriotic Youth (Juventud Patriótica, JUPA), and the Trotskyite Socialist Bloc—directed most of their invective at each other.

As I began to describe above and will elaborate upon below, much of the activism evinced among university students at this time was bound up in international countercultural trends that had to do with other things besides carrying out a communist revolution: “Many youth practices were not only reactions to a national political crisis but rather were part of a phenomenon that transcended borders; Western youth manifested their inconformity through irreverence, social and political rebelliousness, and the sexual revolution... etc.” (Beltrán

2002:162). Various segments of urban Colombian youth also exhibited their cultural and political resistance through new music genres and other forms of artistic expression.

### *Nadaísmo*

*Nadaísmo*, ... more than a late manifestation of our feeble aesthetic avantgarde, was the protest by intellectuals of plebeian origins against the official culture that had given moral licence to the mechanisms of political violence. ... The *nadaístas*' insolence had been incited by the political violence in a society that sanctified—with blessings, prayers, and rosaries—the rituals of mutilation, disfigurement, and incineration that repeated themselves without mercy. (Loaiza Cano 2004:86)

As historian Gilberto Loaiza Cano makes abundantly clear in his appraisal, the *nadaísmo* (literally, “nothingism”) countercultural and avantgarde literary movement, which arose in Colombia in 1958, was in no small measure a response to the sectarian political violence that had wracked the nation over the preceding decade (see also Lagos 1977:102). In fact, the movement’s very launch was tied to political events that marked the drawing down of *La Violencia* and the initiation of the National Front. In 1957, *nadaísmo* founder Gonzalo Arango had been a substitute delegate to the National Constituent Assembly that was intended to extend Gustavo Rojas Pinilla’s populist dictatorial regime. When Rojas resigned in May of that year amidst growing opposition, Arango travelled to Cali, where he sought refuge from the backlash against Rojas supporters being experienced in his home city of Medellín (Romero 1988:35). It was in Cali that Arango penned the *Nadaísta* Manifesto, which he published upon his return to Medellín in 1958. In this foundational text, Arango proposed that *nadaísmo* was a “condition of the revolutionary spirit” that aimed to discredit all facets of the “established order,” and he foregrounded the poetic domain as the front on which the battle with Colombian society would



be waged.<sup>43</sup> Arango put his advocated break with tradition into practice by burning all his books in a plaza in central Medellín. The movement, largely made up of middle-class youth, would gain its initial notoriety through publicity stunts of this ilk.

The quote at the head of this section alludes to an institution that was the target of some of the *nadaístas*' greatest ire in their early years: the Catholic Church. Known for its deeply conservative tendencies and links to the dominant political parties, the Colombian Church has even been accused of fomenting bloodshed during *La Violencia* (Dudley 2004:21). In the decades leading up to the 1960s, its control over social and political life in Medellín, where *nadaísmo* first took off, was all-encompassing (Tirado Mejía 2014:212). The *nadaístas* set out to attack this symbol of the status quo from the get go. In a vitriolic letter to the 1959 National Congress of Catholic Writers, Arango cited the economic, intellectual, and moral poverty endured by the Colombian people after "five hundred years of 'Catholic thought'" as a key motivation behind the group's attack on Catholicism. Later that year, a group of *nadaístas* interrupted mass at the Basilica of Medellín, trashing communion wafers and smoking cigarettes, and were duly chased by an angry mob (Romero 1988:40-1).

The *nadaístas*' repudiation of the culture imposed by elites associated with Colombia's traditional political parties and the Church unquestionably overlapped with leftist ideology. Gonzalo Arango once mused that if the leftist Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán had not been murdered, *nadaísmo* would not have been created, and those who became its adherents would instead be doing his revolutionary bidding (Romero 1988:34). Yet in their aspiration to not leave

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<sup>43</sup> It should be stressed that, from the outset, Arango sowed contradiction and existential crisis into the very fabric of *nadaísmo*. In the Manifesto, he thus declares that the movement's end goal is unimportant, that its adherents are "impotent" vis-à-vis their "enemies," and that writing poetry is the "most useless act of the creative spirit" (quoted in Romero 1988:36-8). The *nadaístas*' emphasis on literary production as a site for "political" intervention is not surprising, given the intellectual backgrounds of most Colombian politicians in the twentieth century (see Loaiza Cano 2004).

any received truths unquestioned, *nadaístas* were intentionally ambiguous with respect to organized politics and refrained from offering prescriptions for the social ills they condemned. As the *nadaísta* poet Eduardo Escobar wrote, “*Nadaísmo* doesn’t have anything to say with respect to the conflict between capitalism and communism. ... It is not directed at the working or peasant masses, and by its very ideology and aesthetic lacks a socializing message” (Escobar 1976:8, quoted in Tirado 2014:210).<sup>44</sup> Needless to say, there is an irreconcilable discrepancy in this statement with the fundamental premises of Marxism, an understanding of which the Colombian Left sought to communicate above all to said working and peasant masses. In an assessment of *nadaísmo* on the occasion of the movement’s twentieth anniversary, Escobar would later state: “Our relationships with the Left have ranged from complicity in our work, to our indifference and our open rejection of it.”<sup>45</sup> However, Escobar went on to stress that the *nadaístas* had been resolute on key political issues, including in their unwavering support for the Cuban Revolution. Moreover, when conceptual leader Arango did a reading at the inauguration of a Colombian Navy ship presided over by President Lleras Restrepo, the negative reaction from fellow *nadaístas* was unequivocal (Romero 1988:66). The *nadaísta* author and protest singer Pablus Gallinazo, discussed at length below, also decried Arango’s move towards mysticism in the late 1960s, which in his words “signified a distancing from daily and practical struggle.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The *nadaístas*’ position in this respect was perhaps akin to the “anti-politics” practiced by Rastafarians. Gilroy (2005:242) describes this stance in the following terms: “The need for politics is proclaimed in the very same breath that actually existing politics is denounced. This anti-politics ... is defined precisely through its disavowal of the politics we have inherited and which we reject because they offer only repeated unfreedom and yet deeper injustice.”

<sup>45</sup> *Alternativa* 207, April 9, 1979.

<sup>46</sup> *Alternativa* 207, April 9, 1979.

Given their irreverence towards institutions and figures of all intellectual and political stripes, as well as their strident style, it is unsurprising that the *nadaístas* were themselves the objects of much critique. While condemnation from the clergy and elites was predictable, leftist writers and activists who may have reserved sympathies for *nadaísmo*'s anti-establishment track criticized its scandal-driven approach for not truly departing from bourgeois values (Pedersen 1971:267; Tirado Mejía 2014:211). For the writers of the PCC's newsweekly, *Voz Proletaria*, Arango's mingling with government and military officials at the unveiling of the Navy vessel confirmed their suspicions that the *nadaístas* were nothing more than petit-bourgeois reactionaries.<sup>47</sup> Escobar countered these types of views, which continued to appear in the leftist press, by arguing that the Left couldn't comprehend the revolutionary proposition in *nadaísmo*'s "affirmation of the body, of life, the land, love, and rejection of absolutes."<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, he credited the movement for initiating a politicization of Colombian youth that would continue through the 1960s; many observers concur with this understanding of *nadaísmo*'s significance (e.g. Tirado Mejía 2014:215).

In their efforts to undermine all facets of Colombian tradition, the *nadaístas* evinced a "fierce cosmopolitanism" (Romero 1988:39) and constructed their nonconformist stance with guidance from foreign literary and philosophical luminaries (Pedersen 1971:355). Fundamental influences included Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism (Gaitán 1989:49; Lagos 1977:102) and the surrealist movement (Romero 1988:77-8). From the early 1960s on, however, various currents of the US counterculture exerted an increasing impact. When poet Elmo Valencia joined the Cali *nadaístas* in 1960 after having studied in the United States, he contributed his knowledge of the

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<sup>47</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, November 14, 1968.

<sup>48</sup> Critical evaluations of *nadaísmo* can be found in *Alternativa* 101, October 4, 1976 and *Alternativa* 207, April 9, 1979; Escobar's response was quoted in the latter issue.

American beatniks. By the mid-1960s, the *nadaístas*' struggle to disrupt repressive conventions around dress, hair length, sexual relations, and other daily customs found resonance in Euro-American hippie culture. Several prominent *nadaístas* would go on to champion the hippies' mass-mediated cultural emissaries (e.g. the Beatles, Bob Dylan), and many of them experimented with drugs.<sup>49</sup> This kinship helps explain the movement's burgeoning attraction to the rock and roll music with which hippies were associated.

### ***Nueva Ola, Hippies, and Rock***

During the same years that provocative intellectuals in Medellín and Cali were laying the foundations of *nadaísmo*, rock and roll music arrived in the capital and quickly spawned a robust culture through which young people contested similar norms to those that the *nadaístas* sought to upend. Like the initial gestures of *nadaísmo*, the first traces of North American rock and roll in Colombia date to the late 1950s. The film *Rock Around the Clock*, with music by Bill Haley and the Comets, premiered in Colombia in 1957. The wild behavior exhibited by the film's young audiences shocked the wider public (Riaño-Alcalá 1991). Around this time, a Colombian of Scottish ancestry named Jimmy Raisbeck—freshly returned from studies in the United States—began playing North American rock and roll music on a radio program he started on the Nuevo Mundo station. Among the small number of broadcasters that took up the disc-jockey format Raisbeck pioneered in Colombia for rock and roll, Carlos Pinzón became a leading figure and used his position at Nuevo Mundo's Monitor program to promote rock and roll records and youth-oriented films (Pérez 2007:27-9; Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014).

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<sup>49</sup> Armando Romero's (1988:63) description of the Festival of Vanguard Art, which the *nadaístas* organized from 1964 to 1969 to compete with Cali's Festival of National Arts, provides a sketch of the bohemian lifestyle this cohort cultivated. Following an array of conferences, poetry recitals, plays, and art exhibitions, the festival culminated in a bacchanal of "much disorder, jazz and poetry, cinema, drunken stupors, marijuana, sex, and laughs."

Sowing the seeds for the development of a local Spanish-language rock scene, radio stations began playing Mexican and Argentinean bands that recorded translated covers of rock and roll hits from the United States.<sup>50</sup> In Argentina, the term *nueva ola* had been coined around the turn of the 1960s—possibly by personnel at the multinational RCA recording company—to describe the new rock and roll styles and their local exponents (Manzano 2010:19, 35). Given that these artists figured prominently in the playlists of the first radio stations to devote substantial airtime to rock and roll, *nueva ola* came to be used generically for all of the rock-derived music they broadcast (Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014). As the audience for *nueva ola* grew in Colombia, radio outlets started bringing foreign artists for concerts. In 1964, the former leader of the pioneering Mexican rock and roll band Los Teen Tops, Enrique Guzmán, gave a momentous performance in Bogotá (*ibid.*; see Zolov 1999:91).

In 1963, Carlos Pinzón started a new *nueva ola*-centered channel for the national broadcaster, Caracol. Radio 15, as the new station was baptized, was soon taken over by Alfonso Lizarazo, who extended its footprint to the cities of Medellín, Cali, Bucaramanga, and even coastal Barranquilla, thus transforming it into a formidable cultural institution that is said to have introduced the music of the Beatles and Rolling Stones to Colombia. Lizarazo inherited from Pinzón a program on Radio 15 called *El show de los frenéticos*, which did live broadcasts of a talent search on Saturdays. In 1965, the show *El club del clan* was created following the same format on Radio Cordillera, and a television spin-off was instituted the following year.<sup>51</sup> Programs like these quickly became the main vehicles through which *nueva ola* musicians began their careers. Popular bands and singers released records through *El club*'s partnership with the

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<sup>50</sup> Mexican and Argentinean groups were also fundamental referents for early rock aficionados in other parts of Latin America, such as Puerto Rico (Santiago 1994:49).

<sup>51</sup> *El club del clan* was inspired by a show of the same name that had appeared briefly in Argentina in 1962-63 (Manzano 2010).

Sonolux label, or on Estudio 15, a label created specifically for artists featured on Radio 15 and its television offshoot.

The first Colombian rock and roll bands were formed in the early 1960s. When Mexican singer Fabricio performed in Bogotá in 1962, local bands Los Dinámicos and Los Rebeldes were deemed experienced enough to be included on the bill. In the same year, Los Daro Boys released what is thought to be the first record by a Colombian rock and roll band, and the formation of groups outside the capital followed with Cali's Los Demonios in 1964. Intermingling among the small community of rock and roll musicians resulted in frequent line-up changes that coalesced under ephemeral band names, but two of the most important and longer-lasting groups were Los Speakers, active between 1963 and 1969, and Los Flippers, which started out around 1964 and published its last LP in 1982. Los Speakers and Los Flippers are also considered to have advanced the development of Colombian rock by moving away from translated versions of Anglo-American rock and roll songs and towards original compositions. Along with the growing number of well-known bands, several young solo artists rose to stardom in the mid-1960s, becoming ambassadors for the *nueva ola* movement.

Through to around 1968, there appears to have been little classificatory distinction made between the different types of artists that were grouped together at the most general level in the category of youth-oriented music that was taking the country by storm. An article in *Cromos* magazine in late 1966 highlighted *nueva ola*'s dominant position in the Colombian recording industry, specifically mentioning the singers Lyda Zamora, Óscar Golden, and Harold, along with bands Los Flippers and Los Yetis, the latter of which was Medellín's foremost

representative in the movement.<sup>52</sup> The homegrown rock-and-roll music of the mid-1960s was also known in Colombia as “go-gó” and “ye-yé” music, terms that were purportedly derived from commonly sung exclamations in English-language rock (Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014). Press accounts of the trend used these appellatives, which were also applied to the music’s performers and fans, interchangeably with *nueva ola*.<sup>53</sup> Analysts seem to agree, however, that towards 1967-68, the more staid sounds of *nueva ola* began to be distinguished from the more ideologically nonconformist and musically progressive orientation of rock musicians who were trying to keep up with international developments. As Umberto Pérez (2007:65) writes:

It is important to clarify that by then [1967-68] *nueva ola* was differentiated from rock. To the former belonged especially the soloists and the crowd from *El club del clan*; the songs were not very rebellious or oppositional, and they distanced themselves from the accelerated rhythms of rock and were more palatable to adult ears. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that even though there was a musical difference between *nueva ola* and rock, a fraternity joined musicians from the two tendencies.

Notwithstanding Pérez’s insinuation that authentic rock music was guided by a fundamentally rebellious spirit—and this is a recurring trope in the historiography of Colombian rock—the political character of early rock and roll culture in Colombia (including its guise as *nueva ola*) was decidedly mixed. In the mid-1960s the *nueva ola* music-culture celebrated a youthful hedonism that was lived out at the weekend dances around which the movement came

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<sup>52</sup> *Cromos*, November 21, 1966. In the same year, Leonor González Mina told an interviewer that *nueva ola* was receiving a disproportionate level of promotion, as it “suppresses our music almost completely on the radio and on television” (*Cromos*, October 31, 1966).

<sup>53</sup> For example, journalists and their informants often conflated “ye-yé” or “go-gó” (these terms appeared variously with or without accents or hyphens) music and ensembles with *nueva ola* music (*El Tiempo*, September 4, 1966; *El Espectador*, December 3, 1966; *Cromos*, August 7, 1967). The musicians interviewed for a piece titled “What is Ye-Ye?... What is Go-Go?” (*El Espectador*, December 1, 1966), which sought definitions to the monikers that were apparently mystifying “journalists and adults” at the time, expressed their preference for “go-gó” over “ye-yé,” and the former descriptor indeed became more commonplace in the following years. There may have been an element of gender bias to this inclination, since some sources suggest that “go-gós” and “ye-yés” were the male and female participants, respectively, in this cultural phenomenon (Vélez 1999:185; Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014).

to revolve. As Eduardo Arias (2000:112) put it, “I don’t think the music from that time carried any more significance than ‘we are young and want to have fun in our own way.’”<sup>54</sup> The middle- and upper-class backgrounds of many *nueva ola* practitioners and followers similarly served to undermine its oppositional credentials. Before he came to fully embrace the potential for *go-gó* music to channel *nadaísta* ideas, Gonzalo Arango characterized the culture as such: “The *ye-yé* are a generation that shake off the nothingness of their bourgeois life. It is a pity that it doesn’t lead to anything. It is a generation that doesn’t even rebel in a creative manner. ... They stay dancing in the same impotent hell, with no exit towards liberty.”<sup>55</sup> The Wallflower Connection, a band formed by the offspring of US citizens residing in Colombia, got their start performing at private events hosted by the US embassy and oil companies (Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014). Within bands, political positions varied widely. In response to an interviewer’s question about whether they supported a revolution in Colombia, one member of Los Flippers stated that they “play to forget about social issues,” while another indicated that he favored a Cuban-style revolution.<sup>56</sup> A group of young rock musicians that claimed to be behind an impending artistic “revolution” in 1967 appear to have posited a conscious contrast between their own approach and the strategies of resistance favored by the Left. A representative of the group told a reporter at *El Tiempo* that in “music, painting, songs, and sculpture, we are going to realize a pacific revolution, without strikes, protests, or anything of the like.” The fifteen bands (including Los Flippers and Los

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<sup>54</sup> See also Cepeda Sánchez 2012:80; Fernández L’Hoeste 2004:182; Giraldo Ramírez 1997:16. This perspective resonates with the “discourse of contained rebellion” that Zolov (1999:103) ascribes to Mexican rock of this era.

<sup>55</sup> *Cromos*, December 12, 1966. Arango would later suggest that participation in the go-go movement was a vehicle for the transcendence of class identities. About the members of Los Yetis, he wrote: “They all come from the Antioquia [department of which Medellín is the capital] bourgeoisie, although personally they are the negation of the bourgeois spirit; they are something else: they are simply go-gós” (*Cromos*, August 28, 1967).

<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, the interviewer specified that by “revolution” he was referring not to “minute changes in style, but to social ones” (*Cromos*, November 28, 1966). A similar ambivalence towards politics on the part of certain members of Los Yetis can be noted in their interview with Gonzalo Arango (*Cromos*, August 28, 1967).



Speakers) that were apparently on board with this proposition sought to create songs “that are not of protest, with which the problems faced by contemporary youth can be made known.”<sup>57</sup>

The indispensable role of the mainstream media industry in promoting *nueva ola* must also be factored into an analysis of its political bearing. Musicians with leftist sympathies like those from the Young Beats recognized that their involvement in commercial media programs, such as those created by Carlos Pinzón and Alfonso Lizarazo, was not always in line with their beliefs (Moreno 2003). By the mid-1960s, politicians of various stripes, business executives, and media figures began frequenting the top establishments featuring live performances of the music, including La Bomba, which was co-owned by Pinzón and other television personalities and thus attracted other people from their socio-economic stratum.<sup>58</sup> During these years the cultural pages in *El Tiempo* were peppered with advertisements for numerous “go-gó” matinées at *discotecas* (nightclubs), where popular bands held residencies.<sup>59</sup> *Nueva ola*’s widespread appeal and the marketing potential that advertisers saw in its connection with youth culture—including any perceived “rebellious” qualities—became evident when a firm hired by Nestlé to market their Milo beverage concocted the “Milo a go-gó” tour in 1967. Organized by Lizarazo, the tour brought *nueva ola* stars Los Speakers, Los Ampex, Harold, Óscar Golden, and a go-gó dance troupe led by Katty Chamorro to most of the departmental capitals in the country over the course of nearly seventy well-attended shows (Pérez 2007:61-3).

On the other hand, the young people involved with *nueva ola* and rock clearly espoused a form of generational protest through which they aimed to challenge, like the *nadaístas*, traditional notions about dress, the length of men’s hair, sexuality, and music (López de la Roche

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<sup>57</sup> *El Tiempo*, April 27, 1967.

<sup>58</sup> *Cromos*, December 12, 1966. According to Joe Nárval (2002:111), even the daughter of President Lleras could be spotted at the posh Infierno a Go-Gó club, although she refrained from dancing.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. *El Tiempo*, December 17, 1966; see Pérez 2007:51.

1994:72-5; Pérez 2007:55). While these contestations on the cultural front did not purport to disrupt the overall political or economic order, conservatives clearly perceived a threat to their cultural hegemony. During the mid- and late 1960s, police constantly harassed rock and roll's practitioners and fans, and authorities frequently condemned their lifestyles. In Medellín, a campaign was launched with the slogan "Contribute to the tidying of Medellín: shave a long-haired youth"; police were in the habit of apprehending the *melenudos* that were known to be *nueva ola*'s primary constituency and shaving their heads (Londoño 2014:70). In fact, members of Los Speakers were detained by police in downtown Bogotá in 1968 for no other apparent reason than having long hair (Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014).<sup>60</sup> In some instances the urban youth that made *nueva ola* their musical emblem organized collective acts of resistance against the denigration they experienced from the dominant culture. In late 1966, the prominent DJ Jaime Guerra Madrigal was compelled to organize a march in Medellín to protest the vilification of "go-gós" and "ye-yés" by authorities there, and a similar demonstration was held in Bogotá the following year by long-haired men, along with women in mini-skirts, who demanded respect for their rights to free expression.<sup>61</sup> As is made clear by the fact that a figure from the music world spearheaded such an undertaking, the association between these acts of protest and the rock music that anchored the culture was inescapable. A journalist for *El Tiempo* reinforced this link when he wrote that numerous "Colombian 'Beatles'" invaded the newspaper's offices to register their protest after a hippie in Bogotá was victim of a forced haircut by a "traditionalist" police officer.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ricardo Waldmann (p.c.), a musician involved with the rock scene in Bogotá in the early 1970s, corroborated these findings: "[The police] would take you in for the sole reason of having long hair."

<sup>61</sup> *El Espectador*, December 9, 1966; *El Tiempo*, February 12, 1967, cited in Cepeda Sánchez 2012:19.

<sup>62</sup> *El Tiempo*, April 11, 1969.

The progressive social values championed by *nuevaoleros* shared at least a superficial affinity with leftist political ideals, and there was some overlap between the rock and roll community and the world of leftist militancy. Members of the band the Young Beats—an important Bogotá group that formed in 1966 and titled the only LP they issued *Ellos están cambiando los tiempos* (a loose translation of Bob Dylan’s “The Times They are a-Changin’”)—had close ties with leftist artists and activists, rehearsed at the Colombo-Soviet Cultural Institute, and conveyed political messages in their songs (Moreno 2003). As the 1960s drew to a close, the hippie movement arrived in Colombia and became closely associated with rock music (Tirado Mejía 2014:174). According to Pérez (2007:78), the Colombian hippies repudiated the Conservative and Liberal parties *and* the communists, though they reserved sympathies for Camilo Torres and the ELN (see also Mesa 2001:104). Evidence that certain segments of the hippie population supported the general aims of Marxist insurgent groups may be seen in the fact that the hippie underground newspaper *Olvídate* published the EPL’s first manifesto in 1967 (Pérez 2007:77). Moreover, the guerrillas counted *nuevaoleros* and hippies amongst their ranks. An ELN leader who coordinated the hijacking of a domestic flight in 1967 claimed that the drummer of Los Speakers was a member of his organization and participated in the airliner’s rerouting to Cuba in protest of that nation’s expulsion from the Organization of American States (Behar 1985:112). An eventual leader of the M-19 guerrilla group, Otty Patiño, first sold t-shirts and posters in a small shop in the *pasaje de los hippies* (“hippie way”) in Bogotá (Moreno 2006). Accounts of the 1970 Festival de la Vida (Festival of/for Life), one of the first major rock festivals held in Bogotá, provide one barometer of the Colombian hippie movement’s political orientation as it reached its zenith in the early 1970s: the image of Che Guevara was pervasive

on attendees' clothing, and performers sang about him and co-revolutionary Fidel Castro, as well as workers' strikes.<sup>63</sup>

## **The Grassroots *Canción Protesta* Movement in Bogotá**

### ***A Founding Figure***

The Communist activist and amateur musician Alejandro Gómez Roa (1935-2014) was pivotal in the development of *canción protesta* in Colombia. Upon joining the Communist Youth in 1957, Gómez initiated a long-time affiliation with Communist-Party politics, which he would later nurture through his strong relationship with Cuba (Díaz-Granados 2014). A singer and songwriter who often accompanied himself on the accordion, Gómez began interpreting songs from the Spanish Civil War in the late 1950s (Gómez 1973), and soon thereafter learned “revolutionary anthems” through people involved with protest song movements in Chile and Cuba.<sup>64</sup> Gómez is best known for his role in writing the refrain from which the song “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!” (Cuba Yes, Yankees No) derives its name. According to Colombian poet José Luis Díaz-Granados (2014), who later collaborated with Gómez at the Colombian Center for Solidarity with the People, the music for the song was adapted from a *vallenato* tune by Alejo Durán titled “Cachuca bacana.” I have not located a recorded version of “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!” sung by Gómez or any other that might be thought of as an original. Nevertheless, covers recorded by the Italian group Canzonere Internazionale in 1972 and the Italian rock band Stormy Six in 1974 demonstrate that the refrain “Cuba sí, Cuba sí, Cuba sí, Yanquis no” is clearly derived from “Cachuca bacana”; in the refrain of the latter, Durán exclaims, “Jaime sí, Jaime sí, Jaime sí, y Alejo no.”

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<sup>63</sup> *El Espectador*, June 28, 1970; *El Tiempo*, June 28, 1970.

<sup>64</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, August 13, 1970.

While “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!” was sung in Bogotá at early demonstrations in support of the Cuban Revolution (Gómez 1973), Gómez appears to have become identified as the song’s principal author when he travelled to Havana in 1960 for the First Latin American Youth Congress. Over fifty years after the fact, on the occasion of Gómez’s death in 2014, there may have been some mythologizing as to how the song was popularized in Cuba. By one account, Fidel Castro, leader of the newly installed socialist regime, visited the hotel where Gómez was staying and heard him singing it. At the Congress’ closing ceremony, Castro lost his voice as he was set to give his address and asked that “the Colombian with the accordion take the microphones” (Emanuelsson 2014). While delegates from across Latin America were present at the event, posthumous claims of the song’s global popularity are perhaps exaggerated. The impact of “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!” seems to have been greatest among Cubans themselves, who clearly found in the refrain a pithy motto bolstering their struggle against US efforts to destabilize the country. Cuban state entities acknowledged Gómez’s musical contribution to revolutionary sloganeering, along with his dedication to promoting solidarity with the communist nation, at various junctures in his life. His passing was reported in *Granma*, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, and commemorated by the Cuban embassy in Bogotá (Escamilla, p.c.).<sup>65</sup>

Although “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!” is largely an ode to the Cuban Revolution, one of its verses exalts the Revolution’s early gains by drawing a comparison with the situation in Colombia:

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<sup>65</sup> “Fallece cantautor revolucionario colombiano Alejandro Gómez Roa,” *Granma*, September 10, 2014, <http://www.granma.cu/cultura/2014-09-10/fallece-cantautor-revolucionario-colombiano-alejandro-gomez-roa>.

En Colombia las escuelas  
Se convierten en cuarteles  
En Cuba ya se acabaron  
Esos malos procederres

In Colombia the schools  
Are turned into barracks  
In Cuba those awful things  
Have come to an end

Having been a student organizer in Bogotá during the 1950s and an activist in various capacities with the PCC, Gómez was clearly invested in advancing the leftist political agenda in Colombia. In May 1964, Gómez was serving a prison sentence for participating in protests against US-led military exercises on Colombia's Atlantic coast, when the government launched its offensive against the peasant self-defense groups that would go on to form the FARC.<sup>66</sup> Gómez duly composed the song "Himno a Marquetalia" (Anthem for Marquetalia) in homage to the *campesino* fighters. Nevertheless, many of Gómez's songs address major events elsewhere in Latin America and beyond, as can be appreciated in titles like "Resiste, Chile, resiste" (Resist, Chile, Resist), "Canto a Palestina" (Song for Palestine), and "Nicaragua vencerá" (Nicaragua will Triumph).

### ***The National Protest Song Center***

Although he was never well-known beyond leftist circles in Colombia for his music, Alejandro Gómez did play an important role in jump-starting the grassroots *canción protesta* movement in Bogotá in the late 1960s. Gómez was one of the handful of young musicians who helped establish the National Protest Song Center (Centro Nacional de la Canción Protesta, CNCP) at the Casa de la Cultura in the city's downtown. The idea for the foundation of a protest song center, and indeed, for the cultivation of a distinct category of music by that denomination, appears to have come from Cuba (Gómez 1973). In 1967, the Casa de las Américas (Americas House) in Havana hosted the International Protest Song Meeting, a festival that brought together

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<sup>66</sup> *Documentos Políticos* No. 40, May, 1964.

performers from eighteen countries and led to the creation of a Protest Song Center at the Casa de las Américas itself (Díaz 1994:126-33; Ossorio 1967:181).<sup>67</sup> Although Colombia was not represented at the Meeting, it is likely that Alejandro Gómez and other PCC activists who had established ties with Cuba in the early 1960s transmitted news about what was happening there.<sup>68</sup>

According to an interview Alejandro Gómez gave to the Casa de las Américas' music bulletin in 1973, the CNCP grew out of the activities of a small group of musicians that performed at union, university, and community spaces in the mid-1960s (Gómez 1973). These artists, who were the first to be designated by the *canción protesta* label in Colombia, worked in conjunction with the PCC and JUCO, and some of the earliest mentions of the term appear in *Voz Proletaria*. A report in that publication in November 1967 on the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution stated that Pablus Gallinazo, who read his poetry at the event, was "perhaps the best exponent of the new trend christened as protest song."<sup>69</sup> Several months later, the singers Eliana, Juan Sebastián, and Aída Pérez performed at a "recital of protest songs" held in conjunction with an exposition of Vietnamese drawings at the Casa de la Cultura.<sup>70</sup> Only a week later, the latter two were once again named as the representatives of *canción protesta* performing at a demonstration of solidarity with the people of Vietnam organized by the Communist Youth. Amidst rampant cries along the lines of "Die Yankee

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<sup>67</sup> The Uruguayan delegation to the Meeting founded the Uruguayan Center for Protest Song soon after the event (Pellegrino 1999:108). While I don't believe that a comprehensive genealogy of the term "protest song" would greatly enhance our understanding of developments in Colombia, it is worth noting that the Cubans appear to have adopted it from the United States (see Díaz 1994:119-25; Vila 2014:3).

<sup>68</sup> While he was closely involved with the CNCP and the *canción protesta* movement in general, Gómez appears to have been absent from Colombia during the precise time the Center was getting off the ground (see Díaz-Granados 2014).

<sup>69</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, November 16, 1967. Salazar Giraldo (1985:92) wrote that Pablus Gallinazo "is considered to be the first Colombian composer of protest music."

<sup>70</sup> *El Tiempo*, February 22, 1968.

aggressors,” at that event the musicians “issued an invitation with their songs to propel the fight against the warmongers of the world.”<sup>71</sup>

The National Protest Song Center was officially inaugurated on April 24, 1968, and *Voz* noted that its goal was “to create a movement that would bring together through songs a vast sector of nonconformist youth.”<sup>72</sup> Despite the institutional air evoked by its name, in the first year and a half of its existence the loose assemblage of individual musicians involved with the CNCP continued their work in a similar fashion to the years leading up to its founding. While they gave recitals at the Center itself, they continued to be called upon to perform for the cultural segments of events organized by or of interest to the Communist Youth, as when Juan Sebastián “was in charge of the protest song” at the Second Festival of Peasant Youth in Viotá, Cundinamarca, in October 1968, or when Aída Pérez performed at the inaugural ceremony for the Latin American Meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth a year later.<sup>73</sup>

The years 1968-69 were clearly the gestation period for several initiatives launched at the CNCP beginning in 1970. As early as January of that year, the CNCP began to host weekly *peñas* (coffeehouses) for “poets, singers of ballads [*baladas*], protest song, and folkloric music,” following the featured theater presentation at the Casa de la Cultura on Saturday nights.<sup>74</sup> The CNCP’s *peñas* were modeled in part after the now-renowned Peña de los Parra (Gómez 1973), founded in Santiago, Chile in 1965 by Isabel and Ángel Parra, offspring of Chilean *nueva canción* progenitor Violeta Parra (Morris 2014:22). In 1968, the Chilean playwright Gustavo Gac

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<sup>71</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, February 22, 1968; *Voz Proletaria*, March 7, 1968. Nelson Osorio Marín also read his poetry at both of these events.

<sup>72</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, April 25, 1968.

<sup>73</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, October 17, 1968; *Voz Proletaria*, October 9, 1969. In 1968, Aída Pérez, who along with Juan Sebastián was one of the most active members of the CNCP in these early years, also attended the Ninth World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia, Bulgaria, winning third place in the “protest song” competition (*Voz Proletaria*, August 8, 1968).

<sup>74</sup> Ads for the *peñas* appear in successive issues of *Voz Proletaria* in early 1970 (January 15; February 5; February 12; February 19; April 9).



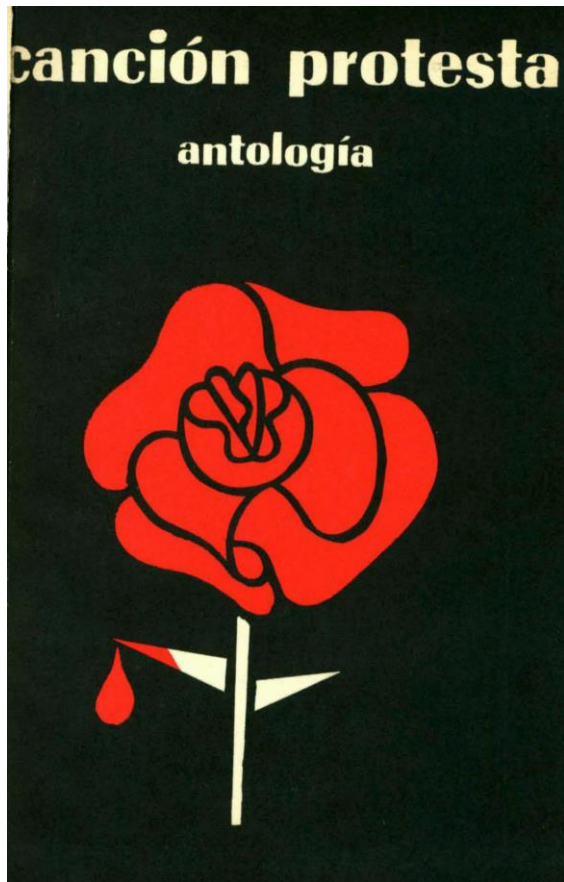
Artigas and Colombian actor-musician Perla Valencia, who had toured a music and poetry show from Chile to Colombia, established themselves as integral members of the Casa de la Cultura and relayed their knowledge of the Chilean *peña* milieu in which *nueva canción* was flourishing.<sup>75</sup>

Gac and Valencia were involved with other important projects that marked the growth of *canción protesta* in Colombia. In 1970, they published an anthology of protest song texts from Latin America, the United States, and Europe with support from several unions (Gac Artigas and Valencia 1970). The image on the cover of the book—a rose with a bloody thorn (see figure 1-1)—indicates that by this time those involved with *canción protesta* in Bogotá were keyed in to related developments elsewhere in Latin America: it is the same artwork (with altered colors) that was originally created for the poster promoting the 1967 International Protest Song Meeting in Cuba (Goldman 1995:144) and appeared on the recordings that were issued from it. As can be appreciated in the artwork for Isabel and Ángel Parra’s records from this time, the same image was used in the Peña de los Parra logo. Three of the songs from Gac and Valencia’s anthology were also included on a record released by the CNCP and the Communist Youth, also in 1970. The recording, which was simply titled *¡Canción Protesta!!!*, featured Valencia’s interpretations of two songs by JUCO executive committee member Jaime Caicedo alongside compositions by Juan Sebastián, Alejandro Gómez’s “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!,” and a tune celebrating the PCC’s forty years of existence, for which Gómez composed the music.

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<sup>75</sup> See Flores 1994:145; Suplemento Juventud, *Voz Proletaria*, August 13, 1970.

Figure 1-1. Cover of Gac and Valenica's *Antología de canción protesta*



In September 1970, the CNCP hosted the First National Protest Song Festival. Gac, Valencia, Juan Sebastián, and actor Patricia Ariza organized the weeklong festival, which also featured works of “protest theater” and “protest film.”<sup>76</sup> The organizers clearly hoped the event would be a vehicle for disseminating their political-artistic work to a larger audience: They invited musicians from several Latin American countries, programmed recitals at union halls, universities, schools, and in working-class neighborhoods—these were some of the most sacred performance contexts for the grassroots *canción protesta* movement—and sought to have them broadcast on radio and television. They planned to issue a compilation record from the best

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<sup>76</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 16, 1970.

songs performed.<sup>77</sup> While it is unclear whether there was actually substantial participation from foreign artists or whether the organizers achieved their other objectives, at least two dozen local performers participated, and one of the concerts drew an audience of around 300 people.<sup>78</sup>

The flurry of activity initiated at the CNCP in 1970 continued into early 1971, when the Center worked with other artistic organizations and unions to reframe the weekly *peñas* as “Workers’ Saturdays.” The goal of this series of performances, which were to culminate in a “big meeting of artists and workers,” was apparently to generate interest in the leftist political rhetoric advanced by the musicians and actors involved with the Casa de la Cultura among the constituency they often evoked in song texts and theatrical presentations—the revered *obrero* (worker). Whereas the regular cost of admission at the *peñas* was 10 pesos, and 5 for students (Gac Artigas and Valencia Moncada 1970), union-affiliated workers were offered entry to Workers’ Saturdays for only 1 peso. A folkloric troupe from Chile performed at the first event, which was described as the “Meeting of Workers and Intellectuals.”<sup>79</sup>

## Divergent Discourses

In my overview of *nadaísmo*, I described the uneasy relationship between *nadaístas* and the political Left. Subsequently, I pointed to evidence demonstrating that some in the *nueva ola* and hippie movements sympathized with certain aspects of leftist politics; on balance, though, the class origins and diverging political stances of their constituents, as well as the primordial role of the media in *nueva ola*’s development, gave rise to discourses that were in tension with those espoused by the leftist activists that initially fostered *canción protesta*. Indeed, there were

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<sup>77</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, September 10, 1970.

<sup>78</sup> The roster of performers included Perla Valencia, Juan Sebastián, and Alejandro Gómez, along with several artists who will be discussed below, such as Ana y Jaime, Eliana, Norman y Darío, Jorge López, and Kemel George (*Voz Proletaria*, September 24, 1970).

<sup>79</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, February 18, 1971.

unbridgeable fault lines between the ways that adherents to each of these countercultural streams conceived of resistance to the dominant culture and political-economic system. According to Medellín “rockologist” Jorge Giraldo Ramírez (1997:15), *nadaísmo* occupied a sort of middle ground between hippie and leftist cultures:

The differences between the three expressions (leftism, *nadaísmo*, and rock) were enormous and obvious. While the first two had some degree of organization and ideology, rock appeared as an amorphous and confusing phenomenon. ... However, only *nadaísmo* understood the significance of that youthful manifestation and in some manner of speaking became connected with it through ties of friendship and small literary contributions. ... The communists and other revolutionary groups did not understand the phenomenon and placed it in the traditional categories of imperialist penetration and alienating trend. ... In that era the hippie message of peace and love did not square with the recent tragedy of Camilo Torres and the torrent of armed revolution that traversed the country.

In fact, even though collaborations between *nadaístas* and *nueva ola* musicians—for example, in the work of Los Yetis—have been cited as having injected a degree of social consciousness into the rock scene (Valencia 1997:130), for some leftists the rapprochement between the two camps was further proof of *nadaísmo*’s empty revolutionary rhetoric. As one well-known actor involved with the EPL put it, in building ties with *nueva ola* the *nadaístas* had “removed their masks of false rebellion to unite with the reactionary go-gó.”<sup>80</sup>

Comments such as these exemplify the deep suspicion with which many militant leftists viewed *nuevaoleros* and hippies, as Giraldo Ramírez and other observers have noted (e.g. Arias 2000:114).<sup>81</sup> Members of leftist political parties may have recognized the futility of harnessing rock fans’ politically ambiguous proclivities in spaces where the two interacted, such as the 1968 First Assembly of Youth in Rebellion. That event featured speeches by leaders from the youth

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<sup>80</sup> *Cromos*, August 14, 1967.

<sup>81</sup> A similar dynamic existed in Mexico (see Zolov 1999:176)

wings of various political parties and was supposed to showcase performances by Eliana and Los Flippers. However, after the police prohibited the musicians from bringing their instruments into the venue (the National Capitol building), the event nearly came to a close due to the “mass exodus of long-haired youths.” A writer from *Voz Proletaria* criticized the majority of go-gó music fanatics in the crowd, but suggested that those young people in whom one could “appreciate revolutionary sincerity, who enthusiastically applauded Camilo Torres and Che Guevara,” should “seek the true revolutionary path that mobilizes youth in the fight for the conquest of power under the direction of ... the Communist Party.”<sup>82</sup>

If the organizer of the legendary 1971 Ancón rock festival, remembered as Colombia’s Woodstock, is to be believed, leftists went beyond simply trying to discredit the hippie rock movement verbally. Gonzalo Caro “Carolo” claimed that “members of a political movement”—he later specified that he meant the “*mamertos* of the JUCO”—distributed political propaganda at the event alleging that authorities in Medellín had allowed the event to take place in order to distract the public from the critical issues the country was facing.<sup>83</sup> The activists, who accused Carolo of being an agent of the CIA, then bussed in prostitutes and homeless people from the city center to the festival and gave them liquor to prove upright citizens’ concerns about the inherent depravity of the tens of thousands of hippies that descended upon the city to attend the festival. Ironically, Carolo himself identified generally as a leftist, had been previously involved with the JUCO and the left-of-center ANAPO party, and was derided as a “communist agitator” by some on the right (Mesa 2001).

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<sup>82</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, October 3, 1968.

<sup>83</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 21, 1971; Vicente Peña 2001:145-6. *Mamerto* is a derogatory term for leftists, especially those affiliated with the PCC (see chapter 2).

As can be seen in the foregoing discussion, the Left's critique of *nueva ola*, hippies, and rock hinged on four principal axes. For one, at a time when many radicals were seeking immersion in local peasant cultures, rock's foreign roots allowed them to simplistically dismiss it as a symptom of American imperialism.<sup>84</sup> Secondly, as Giraldo Ramírez stated, most hippies deviated from revolutionary groups in terms of their positions on armed insurrection. Coverage of the hippie movement in 1971 emphasized its participants' collective obsession with "peace" and insinuated that rather than resort to violence, the hippie youth of the day protested by "thundering on guitars and drums, howling refrains, repeating, insisting on a beat as if with it they were hitting somebody."<sup>85</sup> In the flurry of newspaper articles written about the controversial Ancón festival, for instance, the hippies attending the event were characterized as "rebellious youth" for whom the festival was a "cult for peace"; they belonged to "the new generations that have resolved to exchange rocks and 'Molotov' bombs for a guitar."<sup>86</sup> As we shall see in chapter 2, the metaphor of exchanging weapons for musical instruments was also quite salient in the grassroots *canción protesta* repertoire and in the discourse that informed it, except that it was usually reversed: the contrasting image of trading in a guitar for a gun was representative of communist groups' broad support for guerrilla violence as an agent of political change.

The passage quoted above from *Voz*'s commentary on the First Assembly of Youth in Rebellion attests to the last two disjunctures in the discourses of resistance elaborated in the leftist and hippie blocs. The reporter's contention that "the true revolutionary path" lay in the "conquest of power" speaks to the elemental conflict that existed between, on the one hand, the

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<sup>84</sup> As Araña (1988:26) illustrates, folk-protest artists in Mexico made similar claims about rock.

<sup>85</sup> *Cromos*, February 8, 1971.

<sup>86</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 14, 1971; *El Espectador*, June 18, 1971. Los Speakers' song "Si la guerra es buen negocio, invierte a tus hijos" (If War is Good Business, Invest your Children) is one whose unambiguous title encapsulates the hippie stance.

Marxist approach to class struggle that communists advocated, and on the other, the generalized “atmosphere of resistance and of criticism towards dominant values” in the hippie movement and among the youth generation more broadly (López de la Roche 1994:73-4).<sup>87</sup> As Fabio López de la Roche (*ibid.*) has written:

In contrast to the oppositional leftist groups preoccupied with the issue of power and characterized by a great interest in politics, hippies’ concerns centered on daily life. Young leftists and hippies and other people close to these countercultural groups “could be friends, but they weren’t on the same page [*no estaban en lo mismo*].”<sup>88</sup>

Finally, the suggestion that the Communist Party was the best route through which to work towards revolutionary change speaks to efforts by the Party, factions that split from it, and their youth wings to monopolize oppositional practices. Whereas the phenomenon of *canción protesta* had remained closely linked to the Communist sphere of influence in the popular zeitgeist through to about 1970, by 1971 the press was identifying rock concerts and the Coco de Oro festivals as key loci for *canción protesta*: Ancón would feature “the principal ensembles of protest music,” or the “world of strident music and protest songs,” as described in two different accounts.<sup>89</sup> As we shall see below, some PCC activists responded to the commercialization of their musical colleagues at the Protest Song Center by challenging those artists’ belonging to the very category of *canción protesta*.

In retrospect, the Left’s general refusal to engage constructively with the culture that emerged around rock music seems misguided when one takes stock of rock’s trajectory into the

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<sup>87</sup> This dynamic was not unique to Colombia, of course. In Argentina, for example, “leftist observers underlined the dangers that the ‘new wave’ presented to any project of social transformation” (Manzano 2010:47).

<sup>88</sup> Regarding the specific daily customs over which countercultural youth struggled in the late 1960s, López mentions religious traditions, familial authority, modes of social mobility, the role of women, sexual relations, and for hippies, drug use and the trend towards individualism.

<sup>89</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 14, 1971; *El Espectador*, June 18, 1971.

1970s. Several Colombian historians have noted that as rock music began to split from *nueva ola* in the late 1960s, its oppositional character became more pronounced. Aside from the *nadaísmo*-influenced Los Yetis, an oft-cited example of this transition is The Speakers' 1968 album *En el maravilloso mundo de Ingeson* (In the Wonderful World of Ingeson). Drummer Roberto Fiorilli, who had previously played with Los Young Beats, said that the record represented an effort to catalyze a "consciousness-building concerning international sociopolitical concerns" (quoted in Wilson 2013:30). Leftists' condemnation of the rock world is all the more poignant given the latter's precipitous decline in the following years, due in no small measure to attacks from conservatives. Some analysts have proposed that the "weekend shows in the main bars in the city and the support of the media ... vanished when rock, besides for singing about love and dancing, began to be critical of everything around it" (Wilson 2013:30). Yet, the fact that rock musicians may have voiced anti-establishment protest in their song lyrics was only one among a host of factors that contributed to its downturn. For Giraldo Ramírez (1997:18), rock music had been tolerated in Medellín as long as it was circumscribed in upper-class spaces. The 1971 Ancón festival, which was organized independently by a group of hippies, symbolized the music-culture's transcendence of class boundaries. Religious authorities in Medellín responded to Ancón with unrestrained criticism of the hippies, whose free love and use of drugs were said to sully the city's virtuous character, and they slandered Mayor Álvaro Villegas Moreno for permitting the festival to take place. In the days after the event, Villegas resigned and the national security service ordered the hippies that remained in the city to leave. Rock music went underground and the climate in the ensuing years was such that in 1973 Carlos Santana was



prohibited from performing in the city (*ibid.*).<sup>90</sup> In Bogotá, the hippie movement that had helped propel rock music abandoned its nerve center around Calle 60 in the face of police harassment and stigmatization by the press; some hippies attempted to form communes on the city's outskirts (Fernández L'Hoeste 2004:183; Pérez 2007:110; Riaño "Sant-Jordi" 2014).

### Countercultural Currents in the Late 1960s

Notwithstanding the ideological rifts that existed between the three countercultural streams and were at times diligently patrolled by hard-core leftists, starting in 1967 figures from the *nadaísmo* movement, the *nueva ola* scene, and grassroots *canción protesta* intermingled frequently. The relationship between *nadaísmo* and *nueva ola* was particularly fruitful during this period. Finding a counterpart for their resistance to traditional customs in the “go-gó” phase of *nueva ola*, *nadaísta* poets and writers strove to make their mark on the popular music scene. The highlight of the *nadaísta* Festival of Vanguard Art in Cali in 1967 was a concert titled *Átomos a go-go para la paz* (Atoms in Go-go for Peace), which brought together the country's “principal go-go artists” and coincided with the launch of *Estudio 15* in the city.<sup>91</sup> Lauding the “marriage” that was effectuated between the two cultural streams through this performance, one of *nadaísmo*'s leading figures in Cali, the poet Jotamario, said at the time that “go-go [music] is *nadaísmo* in movement.”<sup>92</sup> Soon after the event, Gonzalo Arango published a long essay extolling go-gó's revolutionary qualities, highlighting its affinities with *nadaísmo*, and looking

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<sup>90</sup> Zolov (1999) describes a remarkably similar trajectory for another Woodstock-inspired rock festival in Mexico, held the same year: the 1971 Avándaro Festival was criticized from both the Left and the Right, and the controversy it generated led to an intense government crackdown on rock music.

<sup>91</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 14, 1967. The event featured Los Yetis, Los Demonios, Eliana, Harold, Kenny Pacheco, Pablus Gallinazo, Gonzalo Arango, Juan Nicolás Estela (former member of Los Yetis), and Katty Chamorro's ballet.

<sup>92</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 16, 1967.

forward to the “new directions” in which *nadaísta* poets would take the go-gó movement with their “protest songs and love ballads.”<sup>93</sup>

As the hippie-associated rock scene developed at the dawn of the 1970s, the mutual esteem between its participants and *nadaístas* was also palpable. The press noted Jotamario’s presence in the audience for the 1970 Festival de la Vida.<sup>94</sup> A few months later, police arrested the *nadaísta* poet and “fifty hippies” outside a venue where American rock band Hope had been scheduled to perform until the City of Bogotá’s Section on Narcotics Prevention and Control prohibited the concert.<sup>95</sup> Among those apprehended was the owner of a “hippie establishment” who had earlier been jailed for selling posters showing an illustration of Christ with the inscription: “Wanted for sedition and for conspiring against the legitimately constituted government. Friend of the *Nadaístas* and other deadbeats.” The image, which had originally been published to commemorate *nadaísmo*’s tenth anniversary, was considered “disrespectful to the Catholic religion.”<sup>96</sup> As this incident demonstrates, hippies and *nuevaoleros* had an appreciation for the ground the *nadaístas* had broken for them in terms of flouting social taboos. Indeed, Alfonso Lizarazo has pointed to the way in which *nadaísmo* and the rock movement worked in tandem to create what he considered to be one of the greatest periods of cultural change in the nation’s history (Riaño “Sant-Jordi” 2014). Not entirely satisfied with launching the careers of numerous *nueva ola* stars, in the late 1960s Lizarazo created a program on Radio 15 called *Libro 15* (Book 15) for *nadaístas* and other “rebellious” writers to read their work, and he hosted debates on contemporary youth culture (Nárval 2002:113).

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<sup>93</sup> *Cromos*, August 7, 1967. The article also announced that Gallinazo, Jotamario, and Elmo Valencia had recently become involved with the *nueva ola* program *El club del clan*.

<sup>94</sup> *El Espectador*, June 28, 1970; *El Tiempo*, June 28, 1970.

<sup>95</sup> The concert did eventually take place at another venue (*El Tiempo*, October 11, 1970).

<sup>96</sup> *El Espectador*, June 3, 1970.

The link between *nadaísmo* and *nueva ola* went beyond a reciprocal admiration and comingling in particular spaces, however, and into the realm of actual musical collaboration. In 1967 Jotamario recorded a single for Discos Fuentes in Medellín with Los Ampex as his backing band (Riaño “Sant-Jordi” 2014). During this period, the celebrity *nueva ola* singer Eliana recorded at least a couple of albums of songs written by *nadaístas*, with titles that explicitly referenced the movement, such as *Canciones de la nada* (Songs from Nothing, ca. 1967) and *La internacional nadaísta* (The Nadaísta International, ca. 1968).<sup>97</sup> About the former, Gonzalo Arango wrote that it “fuses two generations: *nadaísmo* and go go, poetry and music.”<sup>98</sup> Among the more popular songs that emerged from this partnership was Pablus Gallinazo’s “Santa Claus no trae muñecas” (Santa Claus Doesn’t Bring Dolls), which appears to be sung from the vantage point of a poor child who maintains a glimmer of hope that her Christmas wishes will be fulfilled.<sup>99</sup> More representative of the nihilistic side of *nadaísmo* is “Canción del futuro” (Song of the Future), a poem by Arango that references atomic bombs, concentration camps, and graves in Vietnam, and whose refrain exclaims: “Joy, joy, my friends! They will kill us all.” All these pieces are in a light surf-rock style in moderate tempo, with a basic instrumentation of electric guitar, electric bass, and drums.

Another key artistic association between *nadaístas* and *nuevaoleros* was the one formed between Gonzalo Arango and the Medellín rock band Los Yetis.<sup>100</sup> The godfather of *nadaísmo*

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<sup>97</sup> Based on the information I have been able to piece together about these recordings from scant print references from the era in which they were released and more recent web posts by record collectors, *Canciones de la nada* was a shorter extended play record (*compacto*), while *La internacional nadaísta* was a twelve-song LP (see *Cromos*, June 12, 1967; July 3, 1967; February 5, 1968; April 15, 1968).

<sup>98</sup> This quote is taken from what appears to be a manuscript about the recording typed by Arango, which also indicates that Harold did the musical arrangements; see “Gonzalo sobre Eliana,” digital image, posted to Flickr by Nadaísta, August 2, 2013, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/89185403@N05/9424456777/>.

<sup>99</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 15, 1967; *Cromos*, June 12, 1967.

<sup>100</sup> Riaño “Sant-Jordi” (2014) wrote that “Gonzaloarango [a format in which Arango’s artistic name sometimes appeared] has been the most important link between literature and rock in Colombia, to the point that he has erased the boundary between them.”

came to work with the group through his relationship with the family of Yetis member Norman Smith. Arango had close ties with Smith's mother, an artist, and he stayed with the family during his sojourns in Medellín; likewise, Arango's intellectual influence on Norman, which preceded the formation of Los Yetis, was concretized during the latter's stopovers in Bogotá on the way to and from boarding school in Trinidad and Tobago (Smith, p.c.). Shortly after Los Yetis performed at the Festival of Vanguard Art in 1967, Arango published an in-depth profile of the band, in which he continued his campaign of glorification for the "go-gó" generation, positing it as a counterpoint to the violent means through which many in Colombia had worked out their frustrations in recent times: "All of that wild fury that expressed itself in an aimless violence was embodied in the go-go spirit. ... From then on, that generation did not express its protests through arms, but through art." In a seemingly contrived segment at the conclusion of the piece, Arango asked the band why they didn't write protest songs. In response, band member Juan Nicolás Estela told Arango that if he wrote one for them they would record it. The song that resulted was "Llegaron los peluqueros" (The Barbers Have Arrived), which was included on the Yetis album *Vol. 2*.<sup>101</sup> According to Yetis singer Juancho López, the song's text, which includes the line "Die barbers, long live long hair, the revolution," voiced one of male *nuevaoleros*' most urgent demands: the right to grow flowing manes. As amusing as this posturing may seem today, let us recall that men's locks were key sites of social control and resistance at that time.<sup>102</sup> In fact, the song was duly censored from the radio by the Ministry of Communications (Londoño 2014:80).<sup>103</sup> The LP of "*nadaísta* protest songs" that Arango suggested would arise from their

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<sup>101</sup> *Cromos*, August 28, 1967.

<sup>102</sup> Long hair was referred to by some as the "uniform of insurrection" (quoted in López de la Roche 1994:67).

<sup>103</sup> The band's members were also reported to have been excommunicated from the Church as a result of their participation in the Milo a Go-Go performances in Medellín, where there were alleged to have been cases of sexual assault in the audience (Arroyave 1997:81; Giraldo Ramírez 1997:18; Londoño 2014:45; Smith, p.c.).

alliance, which was to be titled *Canciones para darle a la guerra el Premio Nóbel de la Paz* (Songs with which to Give the Nobel Peace Prize to War), did not ultimately materialize. Nevertheless, Los Yetis did include the song “Mi primer juguete” (My First Toy), which was penned by *nadaísta* poet Elmo Valencia, on their 1968 album *Olvídate* (Forget It) (Londoño 2014:81).

Musicians involved with the CNCP also set *nadaísta* poetry to music, though they clearly preferred texts that were more aligned with the ideas fostered by leftist political groups. Three poems by different *nadaísta* poets to which Juan Sebastián set music were included in Gac and Valencia’s (1970) *canCIÓN protesta* anthology. Arango’s “Tomás el Contento” (Happy Tomás) recounts the story of Tomás, who is conscripted to “defend Wall Street in Vietnam” (see an excerpt from the lyrics in chapter 2); once at war, Tomás dreams of his red shirt, a trademark of the *nadaístas* (Tirado Mejía 2014:215). With horrifically vivid imagery, Humberto Navarro’s “Los juguetes de los niños del Vietnam” (The Toys of Vietnam’s Children) contributes to the musical chronicling of the devastation wrought by the US military in Vietnam—a common theme in Latin American protest music. Jotamario’s “Después de la guerra” (After the War) reflects the writer’s growing entanglement with the hippie movement.

While the musical production described thus far in this section resulted for the most part from collaborations between artists from the three countercultural streams, their momentary confluence was embodied in a single artist. In 1966, Pablus Gallinazo shared the first prize in the *Nadaísta* Novel Competition for his book, *La pequeña hermana* (The Little Sister), and he quickly became a key figure in the *nadaísmo* movement (Pedersen 1971:363). In the same year, Gallinazo established himself as an important player in the *nueva ola* scene with his composition “Boca de chicle” (Bubblegum Mouth), which became a massive hit via its interpretation by

*nueva ola* idol Óscar Golden.<sup>104</sup> As we have seen, Gallinazo was also involved during the gestation period for the National Protest Song Center around this time and proved his communist tendencies by performing at the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Gallinazo was the featured musician at a “Disco-Club” session the Casa de la Cultura hosted in April of 1967, perhaps influenced by the proliferation of *discotecas* in the capital.<sup>105</sup>

There were a few other instances in which the main constituency for *canción protesta* opened spaces for the protagonists of *nueva ola* during its heyday. According to the annalist of Colombian rock history David Moreno (2003), in 1966 the JUCO invited go-gó groups to perform during a cultural week in the Policarpa Salavarrieta neighborhood, and Los Young Beats performed at the Casa de la Cultura in 1967. Above, I also cited the mix of political activism and go-gó music that was supposed to have been showcased at the First Assembly of Youth in Rebellion.

*Nueva ola* stars were themselves drawn to the increasingly popular field of *canción protesta*. An in-depth profile of Óscar Golden in 1967 focused on the artist’s statements in support of the genre. The article noted that Golden, who said that he identified with the *nadaístas*, had recently recorded his first protest song, titled “Ideas cortas, cabellos largos” (Short Ideas, Long Hair).<sup>106</sup> Purported to convey a message of “protest against the Congress,” a single lyrical fragment in the text (“seated in the Congress with arms crossed”) does seem to challenge politicians’ indifference to their constituents’ problems (see Cepeda Sánchez 2012:35). However,

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<sup>104</sup> *El Espectador*, December 14, 1966. Gonzalo Arango described the song, which appears, on the surface, to express a yearning for sensuality, as being “at the same time a *nadaísta* poem and a ‘go-gó’ rhythm” (*Cromos*, August 7, 1967). It is important to note that for young people at that time such allusions to eroticism were interpreted as forms of resistance to what many people I spoke with viewed as a puritanical culture. A middle-aged man I met at a Pablus Gallinazo concert in 2013 told me that while he didn’t see *nadaísmo* as an inherently revolutionary movement, for him the song “Boca de chicle” was oppositional because of its sexual overtones.

<sup>105</sup> *El Tiempo*, April 29, 1967.

<sup>106</sup> *Cromos*, July 10, 1967.

it is ironic that Golden's version was fashioned from what appears to be a misguided translation of French singer Johnny Halliday's song of the same title ("Cheveux longs et idées courts"). Halliday's original mercilessly poked fun at the young generation, and especially their musical representatives, whose main vehicle for changing the world was growing their hair and singing trite slogans—there was no reference to any political entity.<sup>107</sup>

### ***Canción Protesta* Goes Commercial**

While some leftists and *canción protesta* supporters made modest efforts to open spaces for unaffiliated countercultural phenomena in the late 1960s, a small group of militant activists challenged the "revolutionary sincerity" of *nadaísmo*, *nueva ola*, and the hippie movement. The *nadaístas*, for their part, promoted a rejection of any sort of political dogmatism, including those forms practiced by communists, although some of its exponents were clearly on board with leftist ideals. Several prominent *nadaístas* were drawn to the rebellious energies of *nueva ola* and hippie rock. Certain segments of the latter two scenes were built around a "bourgeois" hedonism and a proclaimed devotion to peace. Nevertheless, many of the youngsters involved with them sympathized with the political principles advocated by activists within the *canción protesta* movement based out of the CNCP—some would even go on to join guerrilla organizations.

As I hope can be appreciated in the preceding summary, the reality on the ground for most urban youth was quite fluid.<sup>108</sup> Young people evincing a wide range of political interests and involvements, as well as an array of artistic preferences, moved in and out of various countercultural and oppositional spaces. Their allegiances to particular musicians or

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<sup>107</sup> *Billboard*, May 28, 1966; Portis 2004:146.

<sup>108</sup> Zolov (2008) paints a similar picture for 1960s Mexico, and argues more broadly that historians should view revolutionary and other countercultural movements in 1960s Latin America as complementary axes of the "New Left."

ensembles—or, in the case of the artists themselves, to particular contexts of performance and production—shifted in turn. In the final section of this chapter, I demonstrate how this dynamic environment paved the way for *canción protesta* to move beyond its original grassroots constituency and become a commercially viable and mass-mediated cultural product.

A brief look at the experiences of two high-profile musical acts that came out of the grassroots *canción protesta* circuit will help illustrate this transition. At the same time that they were becoming some of the most active performers at the CNCP during its peak years of activity (ca. 1969-1971), the duos Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime were also nurturing roots in the world of commercial *nueva ola*. Norman Smith and Iván Darío López had been members of Medellín's Los Yetis before they moved to Bogotá around 1969 to pursue studies in advertising. Once in Bogotá, Norman y Darío performed frequently at the *peñas* held at the Casa de la Cultura and occasionally at other events organized by the artist-activists that ran it. They established a relationship with Nelson Osorio Marín, “one of the first poets in Colombia that cultivated the genre of protest song” (Miñana Blasco 1981:32), and composed music for several texts he wrote. Neither Smith nor López had any formal ties with a political organization. Smith's (p.c.) recollections of that period are a vivid testimony of the variegated political ambiance within which the pair created their brand of *canción protesta*:

We were living in Bogotá and, you know, the left-leaning tendencies, because we were mad and we wanted to talk about it and be like all the other revolutionaries and people that wanted to make things better for the poor people. ... I guess it was pretty political. I mean, you're either from the oligarchy or you weren't. So I wasn't from the oligarchy. Other people were a lot more intense and had more structured feelings and thoughts about why they were doing what they were doing. ... We were kind of floating with all these different people, thinking kind



of the same but not adhering to one particular calling or flag; it was a time when everybody was being adventurous.<sup>109</sup>

Norman y Darío used the contacts they had made with Los Yetis to establish connections with the media industry, working closely with Alfonso Lizarazo and performing on his *nueva ola*-oriented television show, *Estudio 15*. In their brief time as a duo, they recorded a mini-LP and full-length LP with CBS. The mini-LP includes two song texts written by Nelson Osorio, the Norman y Darío original “El eco” (The Echo), and “Romance de la deserción evitada” (Romance of the Averted Desertion), a song written by a member of Cali’s Socialist Song Brigade, Kemel George. Smith told me that several of these songs were “an ode to Che Guevara,” although only “Etcétera, etcétera, etcétera” (with lyrics by Osorio) includes direct references to the legendary revolutionary.<sup>110</sup> Osorio’s (1976:76) poem “Juntos” (Together) comprises a verse suggestive of violent uprising by the subjugated classes. The physical copy that I obtained of this recording confirms that this type of music was appreciated by leftist intellectuals: stamps on the record sleeve indicate that it once belonged to the “Club Máximo Gorki.” One can safely assume that this group had some kind of relationship with the PCC, given that it was named after the pioneer of socialist realism in Soviet literature, operated at the Colombo-Soviet Cultural Institute, and had its activities advertised in *Voz*.<sup>111</sup>

The full-length LP, titled *Las primeras protestas* (The First Protests), appears to fall more in line with *nueva ola* productions of the time. Lizarazo served as artistic director for the recording, and *nueva ola* mainstay Harold was in charge of the arrangements; two Pablus

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<sup>109</sup> In comparing his time in the *canción protesta* scene as part of Norman y Darío to the world of *nueva ola* as part of Los Yetis, López said that the former “was much more revolutionary; more about revolution than peace” (quoted in Giraldo Ramírez 1997:15).

<sup>110</sup> “Etcétera, etcétera, etcétera” appears under the title “Palabras” (Words) in Gac and Valencia’s (1970) anthology and in the songbook *Guitarra y fusil*.

<sup>111</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, February 12, 1970.

Gallinazo compositions are included on the album. The brief liner notes focus on the modern quality of the music, positioning the record's contents as "a challenge to traditionalism."

However, when I asked Smith if the work Norman y Darío did with Lizarazo had less of an element of "protest" than the work based at the CNCP, he replied: "No, that was a combination of the protest stuff, the funny stuff, the fun stuff, and the young persons' stuff."

While evidence of the exact chronology in archival sources is scant and my consultants' memories have faded, it appears that the sibling duo Ana y Jaime became involved with the *canción protesta* scene at around roughly the same time as Norman y Darío. In fact, Ana Valencia (p.c.) recalled that the latter introduced her and her brother to the *peñas* at the CNCP, which they began to attend religiously. The pair were very young when they were beginning their musical careers—in 1969, Ana turned thirteen and Jaime turned sixteen—a factor that helped garner them attention among the crowd that frequented the Casa de la Cultura. Like Smith and López, the Valencia siblings were not associated with any political party, but rather were drawn to the general oppositional climate fostered at the CNCP:

There we learned social songs that sort of denounced something, that told a story. ... Perhaps we were quite young but we liked what we were narrating; we liked the songs they sang; we thought they were pretty. We thought they worked well or that people understood the message that was being conveyed (Valencia, p.c.).

Attendees of the *peñas* were quite taken with the duo, giving them records and teaching them songs from *canción protesta* movements in other Latin American countries. It was at the CNCP that Ana y Jaime came across the work of Venezuelan Alí Primera and Chilean Víctor Jara, whose songs they later recorded; they were among the privileged few who saw Jara perform at the Casa de la Cultura during a tour in 1971 (*ibid.*; Jara and Contreras Lobos 1978:80). Nelson Osorio also approached the young musicians to ask if they would set his texts to music, and some of their best-known songs resulted from their collaborations with him. While Ana y Jaime were

integrating themselves into the movement based at the CNCP, however, Alfonso Lizarazo was simultaneously grooming them for the commercial market, inviting them to perform on the talent shows he broadcast on radio and television, and preparing them to record their first LP in 1971 (Pinilla 1980:171).

As I have been describing, the CNCP community fully embraced Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime at first.<sup>112</sup> When Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime were not originally included in the lineup for the first Coco de Oro Protest Song Festival in 1970, activists at the Center wrote the festival organizers a letter protesting their exclusion and criticizing the singers that had been invited—including former CNCP darling Pablus Gallinazo, as well as Eliana—for benefitting from promotion by commercial record labels. Alejandro Gómez stated that the festival “could not be the expression of what Protest Song is. [The organizers] chose singers that never had anything to do with this movement and in an impromptu fashion learned several protest songs, which for them was an unknown genre.”<sup>113</sup> Ana y Jaime and Norman y Darío, the latter of which Gómez called “one of the best, if not the best young duet there is in Colombia,” did ultimately perform at the festival. Like its subsequent iteration the following year, though, this first staging of the protest song festival in the tourist mecca of San Andrés was rather bizarrely construed. Organized by *nueva ola* singer Leonardo Álvarez during peak season, one of the festival’s aims was to raise funds for the construction of a Catholic chapel on the island, and the song contest jury thus included a local priest, along with San Andrés superintendent Pedro López Michelsen (brother of soon-to-be president Alfonso), leftist writer Jaime Mejía Duque, and Gonzalo

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<sup>112</sup> Both groups are listed as key performers at the CNCP, alongside Perla Valencia, Juan Sebastián, and Alejandro Gómez, in *El Tiempo*’s (June 11, 1971) assessment of the important cultural work undertaken at the Casa de la Cultura in its five years of existence.

<sup>113</sup> Suplemento Juventud, *Voz Proletaria*, August 13, 1970.

Arango.<sup>114</sup> In addition to Ana y Jaime, who were said to be representing “Bogotá’s Casa de la Cultura,” Norman y Darío, Gallinazo, Eliana, *nueva ola* star Harold, and a German artist named Rolf were billed to perform at upscale venues.<sup>115</sup> Given Gómez’s concerns about the dearth of authentic protest promised at the event before Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime were added to the roster, it is ironic that a report on the festival highlighted the fact that Gallinazo “sang for the people who fight in the guerrilla, fully conscious of his confidence in violence as a means to bring about transformations”—this was a position Gómez likely shared.<sup>116</sup>

Norman y Darío split up in 1971 when Smith moved to the United States, and the ensemble thus did not have the opportunity to define a long-term trajectory. Ana y Jaime, however, continued to shift over to the commercial media infrastructure that had been set up for *nueva ola*, while still retaining their labelling as exponents of *canción protesta*. And so it was that Ana y Jaime came to be featured contestants, with Pablus Gallinazo, at the 1971 Coco de Oro Festival. As described in the introduction to this chapter, the festival lineup also included *nueva ola* musicians and artists with no prior relation to *canción protesta*. In contrast to the CNCP’s efforts to appeal to working-class people by lowering the cost of entrance to the *peñas*, admission for the Coco de Oro performances was prohibitive for that population. Rather, the event seemed to attract *melenudos* and television personalities. The 1971 Coco de Oro Festival centered around a song contest that a leftist dramaturge, the founder of *nadaísmo*, local businesspeople, figures from the mainstream music industry and media, and government officials were invited to adjudicate. Many observers questioned the presence of emissaries of the “establishment” on the jury for a protest song competition, and there were allegations that its

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<sup>114</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 3, 1970; see Nárval 2002:122.

<sup>115</sup> An earlier newspaper profile on Rolf clarified that, despite having long hair, he was not a hippie nor were his ballads protest songs (*El Tiempo*, June 12, 1969).

<sup>116</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 4, 1970; *El Tiempo*, August 9, 1970.

make-up led to censorship of prospective contestants. Nevertheless, some of the judges had ideas about what a protest song should be that seemed to be in line with those of CNCP activists, and songs from the grassroots *canción protesta* repertoire ultimately fared well.

In my view, the numerous contradictory aspects of the 1970 and 1971 Coco de Oro festivals and the controversies they engendered were manifestations of a collision of competing countercultural discourses. As a more generalized youth counterculture constructed from this amalgam came to the fore, many actors outside the CNCP community began to stake their claims on *canción protesta*. Clearly, the conception of *canción protesta* that was projected through the festivals had diverged greatly from the vision that had been cultivated through the work at the CNCP. Unsurprisingly, artists that had been involved with the CNCP and participated in these commercial enterprises lost some favor among the more politically defined voices in the grassroots movement. In a 1973 interview, for instance, Alejandro Gómez said about Ana y Jaime that while it was important that the group included song texts by Nelson Osorio on their albums, “unfortunately, they became independent [from the CNCP] and commercialized. ... It is a collaboration, let’s say, with protest song.” Summarizing his take on acts like Ana y Jaime and Gallinazo, he complained: “In our view, this is a protest song in quotes, commercialized by record companies that want this type of song to be the one that is heard as protest song, while the truly committed songs, the revolutionary songs, are completely ignored by such companies” (Gómez 1973).

Gómez’s concern was not entirely misplaced. What has come to be known most widely as *canción protesta* in Colombia since that time is the highly mediatized version he decried. When I asked people during my fieldwork if they were familiar with any Colombian exponents of *canción protesta*, most respondents over the age of about twenty-five mentioned Ana y Jaime,

and a slightly lower percentage knew about Gallinazo. The popular singer Eliana was also increasingly branded with the *canción protesta* label in the early years of the 1970s. Like the crooner Luis Gabriel, who came on the scene at this time and became associated with this category, Eliana worked closely with the media industry to disseminate her music. The commercialization of *canción protesta* also took the wind out of the grassroots movement's sails. Despite the increasing number of channels created by the artists affiliated with the CNCP between 1967 and 1971 to showcase the brand of *canción protesta* they had been promoting, the Center's vitality declined in the following years. By August of 1973, Gómez reported that the *peñas* had become "monotonous" and suffered from a lack of organization; only two had been held that year. He pointed to Norman y Darío's dissolution and Ana y Jaime's move into commercial territory as decisive factors contributing to the *peñas*' decline.<sup>117</sup> In fact, the very existence of the CNCP was compromised. The few remaining active members, which now included the ensemble Los Hermanos Escamilla, changed the institution's name to the Center for Popular Arts and Culture.<sup>118</sup> Working now with the Colombo-Cuban Friendship House, the group shifted its focus more squarely to Colombian folkloric musics from diverse regions (Gómez 1973). Although this new institutional framework appears to have been ephemeral, as I have not seen or heard any other mention of it, the change in orientation signaled an approach taken by many musicians looking to communicate a socially conscious message in the late 1970s, as will be discussed in chapter 4.

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<sup>117</sup> Gustavo Gac, who had played a leading role at the CNCP, also left Colombia for his native Chile soon after Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government came into power there in 1970 (Flores 1994:146).

<sup>118</sup> In late 1971, the Casa de la Cultura also changed its name to "La Candelaria," after the downtown neighborhood in which it stood (*El Tiempo*, October 16, 1971). The Teatro La Candelaria continues to operate today.

Interestingly, in broadly concurring with Gómez's opinions, Pérez (2007:103-4) argues that the rock movement overshadowed the commercial variant of *canción protesta* in its counterhegemonic legitimacy:

Commercial success caused protest song musicians who were connected with the recording industry to be absorbed by the system so quickly that those who weren't fell into oblivion. ... In contrast to protest music, Colombian rock, which from the beginning opposed itself to established norms, did not permit that the establishment absorb it, but rather, it increasingly distanced itself from the system, to the point of almost isolating itself.<sup>119</sup>

As I see it, however, Gómez's and Pérez's theories about corporations conspiring to stamp out genuine musical resistance in *canción protesta* were overly simplistic. Gómez's contention that record labels only promoted a watered-down type of protest song belies the facts that there was a fair amount of overlap between the protest songs played on the media and those that appear in the songbooks compiled by leftist activists, and that some labels pushed their artists to release songs that were more explicitly political than they otherwise may have. Moreover, Pérez's notion of being "absorbed by the system" does not square with a comprehensive analysis of the diverse personal, artistic, and political trajectories of the *canción protesta* musicians who achieved "commercial success," nor of the complex processes of reception for their music. I offer such an analysis in chapter 3. Before examining commercial *canción protesta*, however, it will be helpful to have a better understanding of the actual music produced within the grassroots movement. It is to that repertoire that I turn in the following chapter.

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<sup>119</sup> Araña (1988:33) makes a similar claim about protest music and rock in Mexico. For him, the glaring chasm between government institutions' open embrace of the protest music movement, in contrast to the severe censorship of rock, shows that the former "isn't, after all, so resistant, so marginal, nor so countercultural as some of its practitioners claim."

## CHAPTER 2. “The Fighting Spirit of the Gun”: The Grassroots Protest Song Repertoire

Through the poetry of their songs, they proclaim the partisan propaganda of revolutionary socialism, and in that way make of their song a beautiful and effective tool for political work.

– Socialist Song Brigade, liner notes to *Breaking the Silence*

Peasant, student, and worker

Let us go together

When the trumpet that calls us sounds

Our fight is to triumph or die!

– Anthem of the Workers, Students, and Peasants’ Movement

(quoted in Díaz Jaramillo 2010:9)

During the early 1970s, leftist activists debated the role of art in their political work. In 1970, for example, a writer proposed to the Communist Party’s main organ, *Voz Proletaria*, that it should devote more coverage—at least one page per issue—to arts and literature, citing the importance of these expressive forms in past revolutionary processes. The *Voz* editors replied in print that they did not make a strict distinction between political and organizing work on the one hand, and cultural and artistic work on the other, but betrayed their instrumentalist view of the latter when they stated that it should be “aimed at mobilizing cultural workers towards revolutionary political organization.”<sup>120</sup> Another opinion piece in the same publication about the political theater scenes at the Casa de la Cultura and the Cali Experimental Theater suggested that rather than presenting working-class audiences with “a political meeting on a stage,” these troupes should strive to produce works that will “appear [to such audiences] as something of their own.” Notwithstanding the columnist’s contention that the working classes should play greater roles in the production of revolutionary art, the underlying aim of all this activity was ultimately to cultivate a “working class enriched through art in its class consciousness.”<sup>121</sup> For a time,

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<sup>120</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, June 25, 1970.

<sup>121</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, April 9, 1970.



ideologues from various Maoist factions expressed similar views on the purpose of political art (Archila Neira 2008:184). In a 1972 speech, the Secretary General of the Independent Revolutionary Workers' Movement (Movimiento Obrero Independiente Revolucionario, MOIR), Francisco Mosquera, asserted: "Revolutionary art must be put to the service of the people. All of our works, all of our songs, all of our poems must be directed towards a single goal: to serve the people, to motivate them in their struggle, to educate them, to organize them, and to prepare the material conditions for the triumph of the revolution."<sup>122</sup> As an increasing number of activists came to view art as a political tool, several organizations established cultural wings. A handful of groups emerged bearing names such as Socialist Song Brigade, Common Front for Art and Literature, Cultural Front, Revolutionary Art Workers, and Cultural Brigade (Marulanda 2012; Molano 2004; Ochoa 1996:152).

In this chapter, I zero in on the music that was composed amidst these kinds of discussions. Given that leftist leaders clearly saw art as a vehicle for disseminating their ideology, I assess the ways in which the repertoire of the grassroots *canción protesta* movement absorbed the major themes that dominated Marxist political discourse in Colombia at the turn of the 1970s. In order to identify salient topics and tropes in the repertoire, I examined 110 Colombian protest songs printed in three anthologies of the era. After identifying recurring themes and rhetorical patterns, along with other notable traits, I carried out a quantitative analysis of key terms to substantiate my initial hunches. While the findings I present below unsurprisingly demonstrate strong correspondences between Latin American revolutionary discourse and the textual syntax of *canción protesta*—for example, in the idealization of workers, peasants, and students—I also uncover subtler, yet important tendencies. For instance,

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<sup>122</sup> *Tribuna Roja*, March 21, 1972; I accessed *Tribuna Roja* through digital reproductions of issues from the 1970s and 1980s on the MOIR's website (<http://tribunaroja.moir.org.co/>).

there is evidence in a few compositions that songwriters even used “protest songs” to spread propaganda against rival leftist camps. More significantly, while the large number of songs that extol the guerrillas was consistent with the revolutionary fervor that swept the continent over the preceding decade, my investigation shows that the movement was particularly preoccupied with the violent dimensions of the guerrilla struggle. In this respect, the repertoire condenses justifications that communist groups issued in their defense of guerrilla warfare; it exemplifies the paradox between the Colombian Left’s support of revolutionary violence, on the one hand, and, on the other, its condemnation of violence perpetrated by other actors. Finally, a close inspection of grassroots *canción protesta* lyrics reveals a subset of the repertoire that foregrounds imagery connecting music, specifically, to the armed struggle. Here too, though, conflicting depictions of the music-violence link in different songs reflected leftists’ inconsistent stances on the use of force by revolutionary guerrillas, the Colombian military, and the US imperialist behemoth. Given the pervasiveness of violent imagery in the repertoire and the ways in which it is deployed, I conclude that a substantial proportion of protest songs may be seen as incitements to violence (Johnson and Cloonan 2009). As such, *canción protesta* was an integral component of the culture that built up and sustained support for the concept of armed insurrection as a path towards political change.

Unfortunately, audio recordings from the grassroots *canción protesta* circuit of the late 1960s and early 1970s are hard to come by. The LP produced by the Socialist Song Brigade (Brigada Socialista de la Canción)—an ensemble affiliated with the Trotskyite Socialist Bloc in Cali—is one of the only non-commercial recordings from the period that I have been able to obtain (see figure 2-1). Artists like Norman y Darío, Ana y Jaime, Pablus Gallinazo, and Eliana did release a few of the songs included in the anthologies under study on commercial recordings,

and Los Hermanos Escamilla later recorded others for albums that were published by labor unions. Although these recordings provide us with a more complete appreciation for the musical character of a small number of works, we must base our understandings of most songs in the repertoire primarily on readings of their texts. While I argued in the introduction to this dissertation that political meaning cannot be simplistically deduced from song lyrics, I believe that an analysis of *canción protesta* texts is an acceptable starting point in the case at hand. Words mattered a great deal to activists who were chiefly concerned with art's political utility—the energy they spent reproducing and anthologizing the movement's sung poetry in a series of songbooks speaks strongly to its importance. Protest songs were specifically intended to distill and diffuse “partisan propaganda,” and it is for this reason that musicians later came to deride this type of music as *panfletario* (“pamphletary”—i.e. little more than a political pamphlet in verse). In fact, the disproportionate focus on lyrics, to the detriment of other aesthetic parameters, was what drove many activist-musicians to abandon the *panfletario* mode of early *canción protesta*. By foregrounding lyrical aspects in this chapter, I prepare to make sense not only of that phenomenon (chapter 4), but also of socially conscious artists' rejection of one of *canción protesta*'s predominant associations—support for the guerrilla endeavor—in the era of *canción social* (chapter 5). Notwithstanding my general focus on textual analysis, where possible I point to interpretations of particular songs that have appeared in print or have been stated by my interlocutors, and throughout the chapter I try to elucidate the broader thinking about the production of protest music.

Figure 2-1. Cover of the Brigada Socialista's LP *Rompiendo el silencio*



In presenting a musical corpus pertaining to “grassroots” *canción protesta*, I am aware that I am setting up a distinction from the music of the commercial scene (to be discussed in the following chapter). This division can, in fact, be viewed as an “emic” one. As we saw in chapter 1, for some people involved with the National Protest Song Center (CNCP), musicians’ collaborations with commercial recording and media companies significantly undermined their authenticity as voices of protest. Commenting on the movement that evolved from grassroots *canción protesta* in the late 1970s, Carlos Miñana Blasco (1994) also makes clear that activist-musicians set up a fundamental boundary between their own activities and those that involved the mass media of the “oligarchy.” In retrospect, however, the shifting line between the grassroots and commercial ambits was quite blurry. Acts like Pablus Gallinazo, Norman y Darío,

and Ana y Jaime enjoyed support from grassroots circles at the same time that they were establishing professional careers in the music industry. Likewise, the singer Eliana maintained a presence in the mainstream media through the mid-1970s even as her musical output became increasingly polemical.

### **Workers, Peasants, and Students in Leftist Discourse**

Before proceeding to the exegesis of *canción protesta*'s most important rhetorical attributes, it will be instructive to explore the broader discourses of the Colombian Left from which songwriters drew primary ideological inspiration.

As they elaborated their own brands of Marxist political philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, Colombian leftists absorbed developments from the dominant currents of international communism while responding to local particularities. Along with the emergence of diverse types of social movements during the 1960s and 1970s, the Maoist influence helped broaden the narrowly focused *obrerismo* ("workerism") that had characterized orthodox Marxist thinking in Colombia (Archila Neira 2003:63-4; 2008:177). As is well known, the class struggle between the industrial working-class proletariat and the means-of-production-owning bourgeoisie lies at the very core of classical Marxism. Lenin had viewed the Russian peasantry as a sort of agrarian proletariat that could be marshaled into joining workers in a communist revolution. For his part, Mao saw peasants as the main revolutionary force for China, further elevating the focus on the peasantry in Marxist-Leninist discourse. This emphasis found an especially strong foothold in Latin America, after peasants played a key role in the Cuban Revolution. In Colombia, the preeminence accorded to workers and peasants differed somewhat depending on whether organizations adhered to Soviet or Chinese models, but all leftist

organizations made these class categories central to their political-economic analyses.<sup>123</sup> Like their political forebears, most Colombian communists subscribed to the idea that a vanguard party formed by intellectuals uncompromised by the proletarian mindset was required to lead workers and peasants towards revolution (Makhova-Gregg 2011; Jian 2005).

As noted in chapter 1, the highly agitated student population was crucial in advancing oppositional agendas during the 1960s and 1970s. Although Marxist thought took hold tenaciously at public universities in the late 1960s (Archila Neira 2003:63), the role for students in the revolutionary process presented a conundrum in Marxist theory. Given that communists did not define the student body as a separate class in terms of the means of production, they did not view it as the ideal group to carry out the revolution or even, theoretically, to act as its political vanguard. University-based political organizations did, however, position themselves as the intellectual wings of the movement that would help orient the worker and peasant masses towards revolutionary consciousness (Acevedo Tarazona and Samacá Alonso 2013:218).

The creation of the Workers, Students, and Peasants' Movement (Movimiento Obrero Estudiantil y Campesino, MOEC) in 1959 was symbolic of the orientation of what Archila (2003:278) calls the "new Left" in Colombia. Initially formed as the Workers and Students' Movement (MOE) by student leaders that had participated in protests of a government-imposed hike in public transportation fares, the group's members formalized their concerns for *campesinos* (peasants) by adding a "C" to its acronym within its first year of existence. In its early days, the MOEC's principal stated objective was to unify "the peasant, worker, and student forces, as well as those from the middle and popular classes from all the political parties and

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<sup>123</sup> López de la Roche (1994:65) describes the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (PCML) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), both Maoist in orientation, as *campesinista* ("peasantist") organizations.

ideological currents, in a united front to fight for the authentic social revolution in Colombia” (quoted in Díaz Jaramillo 2010:40).

As Timothy Wickham-Crowley (1992:23) writes, the scenario of an exploited peasantry that rises up against its oppressors “has more to do with revolutionary poetry than with the realities of the first stage of contemporary Latin American guerrilla movements, which takes place typically in urban areas in the milieus of universities and party politics.” Indeed, despite the constituencies implied in its name and the fact that it counted some representatives of the working class and peasantry among its membership, the MOEC’s leadership was dominated by former student leaders and middle-class activists that had been marginalized from the Colombian Communist Party (Díaz Jaramillo 2010:36). The relationships between vanguardist organizations and the groups they claimed to represent, however, varied greatly. In the 1950s, the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) had far stronger participation from peasants than workers, and the FARC was exceptional among Latin American guerrillas for the peasant origins of its leadership.<sup>124</sup> By contrast, middle-class students played a much bigger role in the formation of the National Liberation Army (ELN) and EPL (Wickham-Crowley 1992:23, 37-40, 331-2; Díaz Jaramillo 2010:80). Although Maoist groups enjoyed some involvement from the working classes, their leadership was dominated by young, middle-class men (Archila Neira 2008:166). Generally speaking, leftist leaders’ dogmatic fidelity to theoretical understandings of the revolutionary process separated them from the subaltern populations they sought to mobilize, and whose realities they made little effort to comprehend (Archila Neira 2003:298-300).

Nevertheless, as Wickham-Crowley implies, peasants, along with workers and students, took center stage in Latin American revolutionary discourse, becoming the objects of veneration

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<sup>124</sup> Archila 2003:278; Castañeda 1993:75. The proportion of non-*campesinos* in the FARC increased over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s (Pizarro Leongómez 1991:202).

in speeches, writing, poetry, and song. In the early years of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro frequently positioned this trifecta at the forefront of the revolutionary project. In a 1962 statement, for example, he affirmed that “socialism has been forever strengthened by the blood of our workers, peasants, and students” (quoted in Medin 1997).<sup>125</sup> In other cases, Castro appended to these groups a litany of other subjugated peoples, such as blacks, Amerindians, women, the elderly, etc. (see Martínez Rueda and Urquijo 2006:473-77). Numerous examples of this type of language—with verbatim exultations of workers, peasants, and students—can be found in the MOIR’s newspaper, *Tribuna Roja* (*Red Tribune*; the MOIR, in fact, was a Maoist splinter group of the MOEC that became an important political force on the Colombian Left in the 1970s).

Readers familiar with Latin American culture will have doubtlessly encountered the pervasive use of the term *el pueblo* (the people) in the region’s political discourse. In the 1960s-70s, Latin American leftists frequently invoked *el pueblo* to represent the amalgam of subordinate groups in whose name revolutionary politics were being marshalled (Carrillo Rodríguez 2014:234). This usage had clear roots in populist discourse from prior decades, in which a fundamental distinction was posited between the oligarchy and the rest of society—the people (López de la Roche 1994:129). Colombian Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was renowned for this type of dualistic oratory (de la Torre 1992).<sup>126</sup> *Nueva canción* musicians in the Southern Cone and Central America frequently referred to *el pueblo* to denote an imagined subaltern community that was primed for revolt against the oligarchic enemy (Bodiford 2007;

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<sup>125</sup> On a related note, the Spanish Communist Party claimed in its own historiography that its ranks were “formed from the first moments by young laborers and students, workers, peasants, and vanguardist intellectuals” (Ibárruri 1960:27).

<sup>126</sup> Ana Teresa Torres (2009) found strikingly similar tropes in her detailed analysis of Bolivarian Revolutionary discourse in early twenty-first-century Venezuela.



Fairley 1984:109; Judson 2002), and we shall see below that Colombian songwriters did not eschew this discursive device.

## **Violence Justified**

If workers, peasants, and students—at times symbolized conjointly as *el pueblo*—were the revolution’s central protagonists in the leftist imaginary, by the late 1960s it had been established that the primary means for these groups to throw off the shackles of capitalist exploitation was guerrilla warfare. As anticolonial revolutions raged in Africa, during the 1960s the Latin American Left was increasingly drawn to the prospect of guerrilla insurgency as the most expedient option for overturning deeply unequal class relations and bringing an end to despotic dictatorships. As Castañeda (1993:16) writes: “For more than a decade, the urban, middle-class, university-educated, politicized youth of an entire continent was mesmerized by the armed struggle”.

No event was as pivotal in shaping leftists’ perspectives on armed insurrection as the Cuban Revolution. The triumph of Castro’s guerrillas over the Batista dictatorship in 1959 “redefined revolutionary possibilities in Latin America” (Wickham-Crowley 1992:32) and began to erode the non-violent stances formerly taken up by Communist parties throughout the region. From the moment they ascended to power in Cuba, revolutionary leaders Fidel Castro and Che Guevara championed armed struggle as the only viable path for the implantation of socialist systems across the continent (Castañeda 1993:72).

In Colombia, the political Left’s relationship with guerrilla violence has long been fraught. Facing repression from Conservative government forces in the early days of *La Violencia*, the PCC issued a directive stating that peasant groups under its influence should arm themselves against “reactionary forces” (quoted in Dudley 2004:8; see also López de la Roche

1994:150). However, this militaristic activity was positioned as *autodefensa* (“self-defense,” see Vieira and Harnecker 1988), and in 1956 PCC leaders endorsed the position taken by the twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, which dictated that attempts to seize power be undertaken through democratic and peaceful methods (Osterling 1989:186; Pizarro Leongómez 1991:150). The PCC’s Congress of 1958 re-asserted its *autodefensa* posture. Yet by the early 1960s the Party had elaborated a new thesis inspired by Lenin’s assertion that communist movements’ strategies were contingent on their particular circumstances. The new philosophy became known as *la combinación de todas las formas de lucha* (the combination of all forms of struggle), and with it the Party proposed that its agenda should be advanced simultaneously through electoral politics and armed struggle (Dudley 2004:8; Vieira and Harnecker 1988; Pizarro Leongómez 1991:166-8; Ruiz 2009). The PCC’s close links with and idealization of the FARC in its embryonic phase are ample evidence that a considerable proportion of its followers embraced the armed option.

The PCC’s *combinación* ethic, which ultimately afforded space for more conventional forms of political action, clashed with the more militarist vision emanating from Cuba, as well as the increasingly influential Maoist current. Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez (1991:200-1) notes that the PCC’s presentation on the *combinación* approach at the 1966 Conference in Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, held in Havana, displeased the Cubans and other attendees who had adopted a “Guevarian” mindset. Disagreements concerning the primacy of armed struggle also persisted within the Party itself, and its subsequent split into multiple factions was partly attributable to divergent tactical views. As Winifred Tate (2007:96) has observed: “Even for the majority who never actively participated in violent guerrilla training or

attacks, the *opción armada* (armed option) remained the major fault line of political life, against which all activism was judged.”

One of the largest dissident groups to emerge locally in tandem with the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s was the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (PCML). The Maoist PCML differentiated itself from the Soviet-line PCC largely based on its rejection of the *combinación* strategy—its adherents promoted armed struggle and preached electoral abstention (Archila Neira 2008:156; Vieira and Harnecker 1988:31). These types of divisions within the Left became acrimonious. Maoist organizations berated the traditional Communists for their purportedly “revisionist” stances (Archila Neira 2008:169).<sup>127</sup> Student activists in the Socialist Bloc, for their part, accused both the JUCO and the JUPA (the MOIR’s youth branch) of a “reformist” attitude because their members believed a bourgeois revolution was a prerequisite to the establishment of socialism (Acevedo Tarazona and Samacá Alonso 2013:216).<sup>128</sup> Though epithets such as “traitors,” “reformists,” and “revisionists” were traded freely between leftist factions, the insult *mamerto*, literally meaning something along the lines of “idiot,” was generally reserved for those associated with the PCC. The term *mamerto* came to be synonymous with PCC and JUCO activists who, in their openness to pursuing political change through the electoral system, were thought to have maintained too close ties with the bourgeoisie (Beltrán 2002:171).<sup>129</sup> The appellation was integrated into such expressions among the Maoist camp as “I prefer death to

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<sup>127</sup> According to PCC Secretary General Gilberto Vieira, the PCML’s armed branch, the EPL, “dedicated its propaganda to attacking the Communist Party; it is their principal enemy: ‘the revisionists’ and ‘the traitors,’ etc. ... The EPL were our enemies to the death.” (quoted in Vieira and Harnecker 1988:15).

<sup>128</sup> It bears mentioning that just as the PCC continued to be plagued by internal ideological conflicts, so too did the dissident camps that split off from it suffer further splintering (Osterling 1989:186-7).

<sup>129</sup> When issued by people outside the Left, *mamerto* also connoted PCC/JUCO members’ propensities to eschew fun in favor of disciplined study of and participation in political activism.

being a *mamerto*.”<sup>130</sup> Representatives of the PCC countered by accusing “ultra-leftist” sectors of dividing the revolutionary movement by attacking the Party with help from the all-too-eager “pro-government and reactionary press.”<sup>131</sup> They attempted to bolster the ideological purity of the *combinación* strategy by pointing out that Marx and Lenin had long ago rejected abstentionism.<sup>132</sup>

Leftist organizations may have disagreed about whether they should seek socio-political transformations through legal channels while guerrilla groups affiliated with them were waging war on the state. They also espoused different revolutionary strategies, from immediate uprising to preliminary organizing work (Archila Neira 2008:154); from the *foco* of Guevara and Debray to the prolonged popular war of Maoist conception (Tate 2007:96). In almost all cases, however, supporters of the guerrillas faced the need to present explicit rationalizations for their recourse to violence. Extending the parallel that Beltrán (2002) draws between the dogmatism of student political organizations and Catholic devotion, Acevedo and Samacá (2013:220) point out that “the justification of the use of political violence” was a key tenet in the quasi-religious code elaborated by revolutionary youth.

Significantly, the principal rationale for guerrilla struggle was contingent on the paradox of upholding revolutionary violence while decrying the different types of violence exercised by those in power. The differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence thus became a central axiom of leftist discourse regarding the guerrilla insurgency. Early on, PCC leaders had framed the origins of the *combinación* approach as an inevitable result of the violence of the “dominant classes.” They attributed the creation of the FARC directly to “the

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<sup>130</sup> The original phrase was “primero muerto que mamerto” (quoted in Archila Neira 2008:153). Over the years, *mamerto* would come to disparagingly denote naïve young activists of all leftist stripes.

<sup>131</sup> *Documentos Políticos* No. 97, January-February, 1972.

<sup>132</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, April 9, 1970.

policies of official violence” that had led to the massive military attack on peasant strongholds in Marquetalia, thus ascribing to this group a fundamental moral legitimacy (Pizarro Leongómez 1991:195). MOIR leader Francisco Mosquera articulated a trope that appears to have been well worn on the Left when he concluded a lengthy speech in 1972 by exclaiming: “We will respond to reactionary violence with the revolutionary violence of the organized masses.”<sup>133</sup> For leftists, it was not only the physical violence meted out by state forces that provided a rationale for a guerrilla counterattack. As a group of progressive religious leaders influenced by liberation theology (known as the Golconda Collective) declared in 1968, armed struggle was justifiable when used in “defense of another violence committed against man, who is denied his fundamental rights—that is to say, institutionalized violence” (quoted in Zuleta and Sánchez 2009:82).

Related to the paradox of championing some forms of violence while denouncing others was that of fighting (violently) for peace. Statements made in 1965 by the leaders of guerrilla contingents that would ultimately make up the FARC exemplify the awkwardly contradictory statements that resulted from this paradox: “In the same manner that we have ardently and passionately defended the peace, we will demonstrate what we are capable of if war is imposed on us” (quoted in Pizarro Leongómez 1991:198). Comments by the long-time Secretary General of the Communist Party in a 1988 interview further illustrate the ways in which leftists legitimated the violence of the revolutionary project through reference to the violence of hegemonic actors, as well as the paradox that inevitably arose when they proclaimed that they strove for peace in the same breath that they extolled the violent means to achieve it:

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<sup>133</sup> *Tribuna Roja*, March 21, 1972. As Acevedo and Samacá (2013:210) note, student activists coined a nearly identical expression— “in the face of reactionary violence, revolutionary violence” —in response to the repression directed specifically at political organizing on campus.

Now, at the same time that we speak of peace, we say that popular violence is necessary in the face of militarist violence: In the form of self-defense, in the form of guerrilla movements. On no occasion do we cease to justify and defend the existence of the guerrilla movement as a response by the Colombian people to the violence of the oligarchy. And, in that sense, we do not believe that the flag of peace will disarm the people's combative spirit. (Vieira and Harnecker 1988:47)

## **The Grassroots *Canción Protesta* Repertoire**

### ***A Tale of Two Songbooks***

As stated above, recordings from the grassroots Bogotá-based *canción protesta* movement of the 1960s and 1970s are generally unavailable. Nevertheless, several anthologies of protest songs compiled by people involved with the movement reveal a great deal about the music that was performed at the National Protest Song Center and other spaces where protest singers made appearances. In what follows, I examine key lyrical themes in a body of 110 Colombian protest songs printed primarily in two books: the *Antología de canción protesta* (Anthology of Protest Song) that CNCP organizers Gustavo Gac Artigas and Perla Valencia edited in 1970; and a songbook titled *Guitarra y fusil* (Guitar and Gun), published by Ediciones Punto Rojo (Red Point Editions) in 1971. I based my analysis on these volumes because both were published in Bogotá and include introductory passages that helps contextualize their contents; in both collections, composers and countries of origins are well-labeled, and pieces penned by Colombian writers constitute the largest national block.<sup>134</sup> In 1973, Gac and Valencia published another compilation in Chile, which was titled *Antología de canciones de lucha y esperanza* (Anthology of Songs of Struggle and Hope); I include in my analysis the four songs by Colombian composers from this edition that did not appear in either of the earlier anthologies.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> In the discussion below, I focus exclusively on songs that were composed at least in part by Colombians.

<sup>135</sup> Unlike the other two books, which contain little “musical” information, in their 1973 publication Gac and Valencia included melodic transcriptions for a handful of songs from each country.

To be sure, it is likely that many more songbooks circulated in the grassroots circuit. I have come across and examined other monographs, including one titled *El 41 cancionero popular* (The 41<sup>st</sup> Popular Songbook), which was published in 1971 to commemorate the forty-first anniversary of the PCC. While this volume includes sixteen texts that were also printed in the other anthologies, its editors provided no authorship or country of origin designations for any of the songs. The same is true for *Una canción nueva, ven canta* (A New Song, Come Sing), published in Medellín (n.d.).

In the previous chapter, we saw that some of the earliest performances of *canción protesta* in Bogotá took place in settings linked to the Communist Party and Communist Youth, and were frequently written up in the PCC's newspaper. Activists from these organizations were crucial in establishing the grassroots movement's base at the CNCP and were active composers of protest songs. People involved with *canción protesta* and PCC organizing, such as Alejandro Gómez, had strong ideas about what protest songs were supposed to be like, and even journalists in the mainstream media (like the *El Tiempo* reporters on the jury at the 1971 Coco de Oro Protest Song Festival) echoed their ideas.

Indeed, several aspects of the *Antología de canción protesta* (henceforth referred to as *Antología*) attest to its origins in the Communist Party's sphere of influence. The volume's connection to the grassroots scene centered at the CNCP was made abundantly clear in the book's inside cover, on which appears a full-page advertisement for the Saturday *peñas* that took place there. The section devoted to Colombian works was dominated by songs written by some of the main artists involved with the CNCP—Juan Sebastián, Alejandro Gómez, Nelson Osorio, Norman y Darío, and Ana y Jaime. In the brief introduction to the collection, Gac proclaimed that *canción protesta* communicated Lenin's prophecy of emancipation from “waged slavery,”

and he quoted Marx.<sup>136</sup> These attributes alone would not have automatically placed the publication squarely in the PCC camp, in contrast, say, to a rival leftist current. However, we learn in a second preface that the anthology was in fact put together in advance of a conference sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth; the JUCO was the main link in Colombia to that international organization.<sup>137</sup> The compilation also includes eight compositions by JUCO leader Jaime Caicedo, one of which criticizes local adherents of Maoism while promoting the PCC. Titled “Guerrilleros de café” (Guerrillas of the Café), the song parodies a young Maoist who talks up the revolution while sitting in cafés, and who, in the final instance, travels to Paris instead of joining the guerrillas. After referencing the enmity between leftist factions in the line “He sits and dreams awake / of gutting a *mamerto*,” the final stanza preaches:

No creas en Mao ahora	Don't believe in Mao today
Ni mañana en el Incora	Nor in the INCORA tomorrow
Y si quieres más movida	If you want more action
El Partido te convida	The [Communist] Party invites you <sup>138</sup>

If the *Antología* betrays its origins in the PCC / JUCO ambit, there are clear signs that the editors of *Guitarra y fusil* were closer to Maoist groups. A quote from Mao, in which he states that “art and literature should not serve but the people,” figures as the epigraph to the prologue. As can be appreciated in its title, the overall tone of *Guitarra y fusil* is somewhat more aggressive than the *Antología*. The dedication to “those who take up arms for the liberation of their people” reinforces this initial impression. At least one song in the collection expresses the perspective of dissident communist organizations on pursuing political change via the electoral

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<sup>136</sup> The quote from Marx was also reproduced in the blurb advertising the *Antología*'s publication in *Voz Proletaria* (June 4, 1970).

<sup>137</sup> The songbook *El 41 cancionero popular* was similarly the product of activists involved with the JUCO. Opening with a Spanish version of “The Internationale,” that volume also includes the “Anthem of the World Federation of Democratic Youth,” a certain “Canción de la patria soviética” (Song of the Soviet Homeland), and “Guerrilleros de café” (see below); its publication was advertised in *Voz Proletaria* (July 29, 1971).

<sup>138</sup> The INCORA was the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform, created by the government in 1961.



system; its title, “Viva la abstención” (Long Live Abstentionism) and last line, “I prefer to organize to foment revolution,” require little interpretation.<sup>139</sup>

*Guitarra y fusil*’s connections to the Maoist sector are evidence that although the *canción protesta* activity linked to the PCC was particularly well documented, activists and musicians involved with other radical groups also participated in the movement. In chapter 1 I noted that *nadaístas*, *nuevaoleros*, and rockers engaged with *canción protesta* to varying degrees, even though outspoken figures from all of these movements sometimes set up discursive boundaries between them. By the same token, it appears that the professed divisions between musicians and spaces associated with different strains of militant leftism belied the camaraderie, mutual appreciation, and intermingling of politically committed artists and their entourages. Certainly, songs like “Viva la abstención” and “Guerrilleros de café” demonstrate that songwriters spent some of their energy condensing the propaganda that leftist organizations directed against one another in their lyrics. Another example of this tendency can be found in a track from the Socialist Song Brigade’s independently produced LP. Titled “El revisionista” (The Revisionist), the song amounts to little more than a musicalized diatribe against the “revisionists” of the PCC. Amidst the litany of epithets that the Maoists and Socialist Bloc frequently aimed at the traditional Communists, the implication that the “electoralist” revisionists would trade their guitars for Russian balalaikas is a clear swipe at the PCC’s alleged blind devotion to the Soviets:

El revisionista pro-imperialista	The pro-imperialist revisionist
Suele andar en listas centro- derechistas	Tends to be on center-right lists
Es oportunista, no es de corazón	S/he is opportunist, and insincere
Cuando arden las papas deja la cocina y se pasa al salón.	When the potatoes burn s/he flees the kitchen for the parlor.

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<sup>139</sup> It is similarly tempting to read the statement in the introduction proposing that the volume is an “homage to those who fight FOR REAL for the oppressed” (original capitalization) as a jab at PCC supporters’ refusal to focus exclusively on armed struggle.

Revi, revi, revi, revis a cantar  
Balalaikas por guitarras [buscará]  
Y sus dulces notas acompañarán  
Su preferida canción que dice así:

Revi, revi, revi, revis, s/he will sing  
Balalaikas for guitars s/he will [seek]  
And his/her sweet notes will accompany  
His/her favorite song that goes like this:

Revisemos a Lenin y a Marx  
Pa' poder evitar  
Que las masas lleguen al poder  
Pues su fuerza nos va eliminar.

Let's review Lenin and Marx  
So as to prevent  
The masses from coming to power  
As their strength will eliminate us.

El revisionista electoralista,  
Por confusionista se cree izquierdista  
Suele ser artista para [mendigar]  
Rubros y consignas al revisionismo  
internacional.

The electoralist revisionist  
Confusedly thinks him/herself a leftist  
S/he tends to make an art out of [begging]  
For headings and slogans from international  
revisionism.<sup>140</sup>

Yet when I spoke with Kemel George, the main songwriter behind the Socialist Song Brigade (though not the composer of “El revisionista”), the ideological schisms he recalled were contradicted by his memories of collaborating with artists who were closer to the PCC/JUCO circuit.<sup>141</sup> For instance, when I asked if he ever attended musical events at the Casa de la Cultura in Bogotá, George pointed out that it was linked to the Communist Party, and then proceeded to state:

KG: So we never went there. We only went to their theater works because Santiago García was a good friend of mine in that era; he liked my songs, so we sang and did theater. So, we went, but the Casa de la Cultura and the Teatro de la Candelaria, that was something different—from another current.

JKR: And because it was from another current you did not mix with them?

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<sup>140</sup> I transcribed this song's Spanish text from the audio recording and cannot guarantee its accuracy. The lyrics in square brackets indicate best guesses of words that were difficult to decipher. I suspect that “revi” is an abbreviation of *revisionista*.

<sup>141</sup> After he and his comrades were laid off from their teaching positions at Cali's Universidad del Valle in 1972, George spent some time in Bogotá.

KG: Absolutely. Never.

In fact, George's songs were quite popular in the grassroots milieu and appear to have transcended party affiliations. His compositions were already well known in the Bogotá scene by 1970—the same year George himself performed at the First Festival of Protest Song at the Casa de la Cultura—as eight of them appear in Gac and Valencia's *Antología*. A JUCO activist recalled that a representative from the Socialist Bloc in Cali performed George's songs at JUCO leader Jaime Caicedo's home on a visit to Bogotá in 1971 (Londoño Bozzi 2011). Clearly, people in the JUCO's orbit were receptive to his music.

Ricardo de los Ríos (p.c.), one of the founders of the MOIR's house band El Son del Pueblo (chapter 4), remembered that the National Union of Opposition (Unión Nacional de Oposición, UNO), a short-lived initiative for leftist unity that came together for the 1974 elections (Archila Neira 2003:288), provided another forum for cooperation between musicians affiliated with competing groups:

I was the singer of the MOIR, and there was a group from the Communist Party that had a duet, and when there was an alliance between the Communist Party and the MOIR at one time—it was called the National Union of Opposition—the three of us got together; all three of us were the musical group of the UNO. So, that kind of thing happened. (de los Ríos, p.c.)

As I see it, the preceding descriptions can be translated into an abstract model of the grassroots *canción protesta* movement that would be represented by a Venn diagram: each intersecting circle would symbolize the political-cultural ambit of a distinct organization, while the substantial area of overlap would constitute the common nucleus of Colombian *canción protesta*. Indeed, such a core is discernible in the two songbooks I have been discussing. Notwithstanding their apparent association with adversary leftist factions, their content is not substantially different in character. Many texts from the Latin American *nueva canción*

repertoire and several Spanish political songs are included in both anthologies. The *Antología* and *Guitarra y fusil* also share sixteen Colombian protest songs, which might be viewed as some of the most representative from the repertoire.<sup>142</sup> These include Alejandro Gómez’s “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!,” Pablus Gallinazo’s “La mula revolucionaria” (The Revolutionary Mule), Norman y Darío and Nelson Osorio’s “Palabras” (Words), and several songs each by Kemel George and Jaime Caicedo. It is of particular note that the editors of *Guitarra y fusil*—who presumably had Maoist sympathies—reproduced compositions by staunch Soviet-line Communists Gómez and Caicedo, as well as those of Trotskyite Socialist Kemel George.

A final note, before proceeding, concerns musical style. Based on an audition of the few pieces from the songbooks that were recorded, as well as of the original tunes whose texts were altered to create protest songs, one must draw the conclusion that *canción protesta* was thoroughly heterogenous in terms of musical genre and style.<sup>143</sup> The repertoire included songs in a wide variety of genres: the rock-influenced ballads of Norman y Darío, Ana y Jaime, and Eliana; Pablus Gallinazo’s highly stylized takes on Andean Colombian rhythms; Mexican *ranchera* in Jaime Caicedo’s “La bala”; Cuban and Spanish styles in songs based on “Guantanamera” and the Spanish revolutionary song “La tortilla”; and several texts set to a variety of traditional airs from different Colombian regions, in such styles as Andean *bambuco*, *pasillo*, and *guabina*, Atlantic-coast *porro*, and *galerón* from the plains region.<sup>144</sup> Although I

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<sup>142</sup> There is in fact greater overlap—twenty-two Colombian songs—between *Guitarra y fusil* and Gac and Valencia’s 1973 publication. Fifteen texts are common to all three volumes, and four of those were also compiled in *El 41 cancionero popular*.

<sup>143</sup> The practice of *contrafactum*—i.e. replacing the text of a well-known song with a political one—has been documented as a common compositional approach for oppositional, radical, and totalitarian movements around the world seeking to ingrain their ideas amongst existing and prospective followers (see Pieslak 2015; Turino 2008).

<sup>144</sup> This diversity appears to stem, in part, from the music composed about guerrilla conflict during *La Violencia*, as people in highly affected areas in the highlands and plains set verses to songs in local traditional genres, as well as to well-known Mexican *corridos* (Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda, and Umaña Luna 1962:218).

maintain here that conveying a political message was of greater importance to songwriters in the grassroots movement than what genre they chose as a conduit for that message, there were some voices on the periphery that had some input on this matter. In 1971, for example, a writer in *El Tiempo* argued: “Our protest songs should be *bambucos*, just as those from Argentina are *bagualas*, those from Chile are *cuecas*, and those from Brazil are *sambas* and *bossa novas*.”<sup>145</sup>

### ***Talkin’ Bout a Revolutionary Song***

Before examining what musicians said *in* their protest songs, it is worth remarking briefly on what they (and others) said *about* them. In the previous chapter, I remarked that certain jurors at the 1971 Coco de Oro Festival were disappointed by the lack of “protest” in the songs that were entered in the contest, though they did not explicitly articulate what traits actually made a good protest song. Likewise, I described how activist-musicians such as Alejandro Gómez discounted the sentiment of “protest” that artists like Ana y Jaime and Pablus Gallinazo advanced primarily because of their collaborations with the commercial media. However, Gómez and others involved with the movement did go into more detail about the roots and motivations they ascribed to *canción protesta*, as well as its principal thematic associations. In characterizing the types of songs on which the group that evolved out of the CNCP focused, Gómez (1973) clearly laid out the notion that the struggles of peasants and workers were of utmost concern to protest singers, as was the guerrilla insurgency:

Calls to the guerrilla struggle, to the peasants’ struggle, are also taken (even by unknown composers), to songs that we later pick up. This Center’s work is very important: collecting popular songs that the peasants sing there in their work, in their union, in their agrarian association, and which are subsequently integrated into the popular repertoire; the ones that talk about the struggle of the workers, for example, about the strike.

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<sup>145</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 23, 1971.

Other activists who had been involved with the CNCP or wrote about the music its affiliates performed described this brand of *canción protesta* in very similar terms. In the introduction to the *Antología de canción protesta*, for instance, Gac wrote that “the protest song, the proletarian song, the committed song ... emerges from the inner depths of our community, from the struggle in the factory, in the countryside, in the hills, and makes itself heard in the guerrilla encampment, in the university, in the squatter settlements.” Gac was clearly echoing Gómez’s emphasis on workers and peasants here—represented respectively by “the factory” and “the countryside”—but he also addressed the indispensable constituency for *canción protesta* among the student population (“the university”). A writer covering the First Festival of Protest Song for *Voz* added that *canción protesta*

sings for all of the exploited workers of Latin America, channels the heartbreaking cry of the tortured and landless peasant, expresses with hope the arrival of a new day, or, in the magnificent music and voices of Norman y Darío and the beautiful poetry of Nelson Osorio, highlights the heroic significance of a guerrilla commander and sings to Manuel Marulanda Vélez.<sup>146</sup>

While statements like the above obviously resort to a degree of hyperbole, there were some who evaluated the purposes of and rationales for *canción protesta* somewhat more soberly. Nelson Osorio, for example, said that in *canción protesta* “there is a tool of struggle that is used with well-defined goals: to show the people [*pueblo*], to the point that it is possible to do so in a song, aspects of the reality that surrounds us.” He argued that the music was justified “by the social, economic, and cultural conditions to which we are subjected; political persecution, the popular struggle at different levels, hunger, illiteracy—in brief, the realities that have been imposed upon us and that we want to completely overhaul” (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1981:32). It is perhaps ironic that the accomplished poet behind numerous well-known protest songs was

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<sup>146</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, September 24, 1970.

less poetic in his description of the art than many others, yet he was most certainly referencing the same groups invoked consistently by the people quoted previously: the peasants and workers who needed to gain cognizance of their subjugation; the students who would help “show the people” their reality; and the guerrillas engaged in armed struggle to “overhaul” the unequal system on all of their behalves.

### ***The Sacred Threesome: Workers, Students, and Peasants***

Earlier in the chapter I highlighted the centrality of workers, peasants, and students in Marxist-inspired discourse in Latin America, and I noted that these subaltern groups were often bracketed together under the populist rubric of *el pueblo*. As we have begun to see, participants of the *canción protesta* movement postulated that the struggles of workers and peasants, especially, were primordial sources for their songs. Indeed, workers, peasants, and students figured prominently as protagonists in a significant proportion of the 110 songs analyzed. The term *obrero/a* (along with synonyms *trabajador[a]* or *peón*) appeared in twenty-four songs (22%); *campesino/a* or *labrador* (farmer) in twenty-three (21%); and *estudiante* (or *universidad*) in eight (7%). Thirty-five of the songs surveyed (32%) contained at least one of these terms, though it was often implied that the song’s narrator or central character belonged to one of these categories even if it was not explicitly referenced; this was the case, for example, with the peasant leader profiled in Nelson Osorio’s text for “Ricardo Semillas” (see lyrics in chapter 3), or the embittered worker who denounced his/her exploitation in “No trabajo más.” The word *pueblo* appeared in twenty-nine songs (26%), excluding cases where it literally referred to a village (as in José A. Morales’ “Ayer me echaron del pueblo”).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Table 2-1 shows the incidence of the different key terms analyzed in this chapter.

While songwriters may have mentioned workers, peasants, and students tangentially in their lyrics, there are several texts in which the plight of one of these groups constituted the central theme. The song “Obreros,” for example, recounted the misery of urban proletarian laborers whose fortunes would be undoubtedly reversed with the coming of the revolution.<sup>148</sup>

Obrero de ciudad	Worker in the city
Vienen a trabajar	They come to work
A pico y pala van	With pick and shovel they go
Sudando sin parar.	Sweating without stopping.
[...]	[...]
Obreros de ciudad	Workers in the city
Ciudades fabricar	Cities to build
Ciudades que tú mismo	Cities that you yourself
No puedes disfrutar.	Cannot enjoy.
Obreros de ciudad	Workers in the city
El día llegará	The day will come
Con la revolución	With the revolution
Y todo cambiará.	And everything will change.

Similarly, the six songs in the second appendix of *Guitarra y fusil* all concerned the organizing undertaken by a specific sector of workers. Set to familiar pre-existing tunes by “the teachers of Bogotá,” several of these texts appear to have been written in support of a national strike—the “Himno del paro de maestros” (Anthem of the Teachers’ Strike) is a representative title from this subsection.<sup>149</sup>

In the same spirit of concise song-naming that produced the title of “Obreros,” a song by the title of “Campesino” appeared in both of Gac and Valencia’s anthologies, *Guitarra y fusil*,

<sup>148</sup> “Obreros” is attributed to the duos Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime in *Guitarra y fusil*.

<sup>149</sup> There was, in fact, a national teachers’ strike in early 1970 (Archila Neira 2003:141).



and *El 41 cancionero*.<sup>150</sup> Although no authorship for the song was provided, it was indicated that the text was sung to the melody of the Mexican song “Pajarillo barranqueño” (Riverbank Bird).<sup>151</sup> Clearly seeing “Campesino” as a representative example of the repertoire, *Voz Proletaria* printed the song’s complete lyrics in conjunction with its 1970 profile of the *canción protesta* phenomenon, and described it as a “beautiful anthem that sings about the difficult life of the Colombian peasant.”<sup>152</sup> One can see common threads in “No trabajo más” (I Will Work No More, see excerpt in chapter 1), “Obreros,” and “Campesino,” all of which presented simplistic Marxist analyses of workers’ and peasants’ alienation from the fruits of their labor. Similarly, the authors of each text proffered “revolution”—either explicitly or implicitly—as the mechanism that would redress these groups’ exploitation.

“Campesino”<sup>153</sup>

Campesino, campesino  
Campesino colombiano  
Que bonitas tierras tienes  
Lástima que sean del amo.

Pero dime campesino  
Si esas tierras son del amo  
Por qué nunca lo hemos visto  
Trabajando en el arado.

[...]

“Peasant”

Peasant, peasant  
Colombian peasant  
What lovely lands you have  
Too bad they are the master’s.

But tell me peasant  
If these lands are the master’s  
Why have we never seen him  
Working the plow?

[...]

<sup>150</sup> Another song titled “El campesino” (“The Peasant”), by Nelson Osorio and Norman y Darío, also appeared in Gac and Valencia’s (1973) *Antología de canciones de lucha y esperanza*.

<sup>151</sup> It does appear, in fact, that the text of “Campesino” was modeled loosely on that of “Pajarillo barranqueño.” However, the version of “Campesino” recorded by the Pasto group Raíces Andinas for the CD *Lo mejor de la canción social* (The Best of Social Song, 2002) contains verses identical to those in the anthologies and yet is executed as an Ecuadorean *sanjuanito* with different music to that of “Pajarillo barranqueño.” Peralta Idrovo (2003:108) writes that this song was collected in the Ecuadorean province of Cañar and first recorded in 1971. Unfortunately, I can offer no further clarity on this discrepancy.

<sup>152</sup> Suplemento Juventud, *Voz Proletaria*, August 13, 1970.

<sup>153</sup> A slightly different version of the song from the one reproduced here, which is taken from *Guitarra y fusil*, appeared in the *Antología*.

Campesino colombiano  
Compañero de combate  
Vamos pronto a liberarnos  
Del sistema dominante.

Colombian peasant  
Comrade in combat  
We will soon liberate ourselves  
From the dominant system.

Con la hoz el campesino  
Corta cañas y malezas,  
Pronto cortará cabezas  
Para limpiar el camino.

With the sickle the peasant  
Cuts cane and weeds  
Soon he will cut off heads  
To clear the way.

Although university students, along with their generational and class peers, were in fact the primary composers, performers, and patrons of *canción protesta*, they were a lesser presence in the songs themselves. Students appeared in song texts mainly in exhortations for them to join *obreros* and *campesinos* in the revolutionary struggle. A representative example of how this idea was executed musically can be seen in the song “Estudiantes, compañeros” (Students, Comrades), which was composed by the Esfera Theater Group, an artistic troupe made up of student followers of the MOIR (Marulanda 2012).

[Estrillo]  
Estudiantes, compañeros  
Vamos todos a luchar  
Brazo a brazo con el pueblo  
En pos de la libertad.

[Refrain]  
Students, comrades  
Let us all go to fight  
Arm in arm with the people  
In pursuit of liberty.

Ven, hermano campesino,  
Y guiados por los obreros,  
Vamos juntos al combate  
Para hacer un mundo nuevo.

Come, peasant brother  
And guided by the workers,  
Let us go jointly into battle  
To create a new world.

### ***The Guerrillas***

In the song lyrics quoted thus far, the collective body through which workers, peasants, and students would forcibly subvert the standing order was not specified. As we saw above, however, in their descriptions of *canción protesta*, most participants of the movement were unambiguous

in portraying the guerrilla enterprise as complementary to the struggles of workers, peasants, and students, and in emphasizing that it was key subject matter for the repertoire. Indeed, the terms guerrilla or *guerrillero/a* (or, in one case, *guerrero*) appear in twenty-six (24%) of the 110 songs studied, and songwriters often referenced the guerrillas without specifically using these words. The composers of protest songs at the turn of the 1970s clearly had a penchant for writing veritable anthems for the guerrillas. Songs with titles such as “Me voy para la guerrilla” (I’m Joining the Guerrillas, by Jaime Caicedo), “Guerrillero colombiano” (Colombian Guerrilla Fighter), “A los guerrilleros” (For the Guerrilla Fighters), and “Amor de guerrillero” (Love of a Guerrilla Fighter, by Gustavo Gómez Ardila) all championed the sacrificial might of unnamed guerrilla groups from the vantage point of a current or prospective fighter.<sup>154</sup> In the song “Soy guerrillero” (I am a Guerrilla Fighter), to cite yet another example, the narrator proclaimed pride in his/her identity as a peasant guerrilla combatant:<sup>155</sup>

No le tengo miedo a nadie Porque nací guerrillero; Yo sólo siento valor De los pies hasta el sombrero	I am not afraid of anyone Because I was born a guerrilla fighter I only feel courage From my feet to my hat.
Si en el combate me matan Recoge la carabina Y sobre mi cruz que diga “Guerrillero del Tolima.”	If they kill me in combat Pick up the rifle And write on my cross “Guerrilla fighter from Tolima.”
De arriba vienen los “chulos” Y de abajo ya han vola’o; Adelante dejan sangre Y atrás el rancho quema’o	The <i>chulos</i> come from above <sup>156</sup> And from below they have flown Ahead they leave blood And behind our burned ranch house

<sup>154</sup> Gustavo Gómez Ardila was a composer of art music and Andean Colombian music, as well as a music teacher; he appears to have been based in Bucaramanga (Salazar Giraldo 1985:52).

<sup>155</sup> Appearing in *Guitarra y fusil*, “Soy guerrillero” is labelled as a “Colombian song” that is sung to the music of “La guabina tolimense,” though the more widely known song title is “Soy tolimense” (I am from Tolima).

<sup>156</sup> Literally meaning vultures, *chulos* was a pejorative term used for police forces, army fighters, and Conservatives during *La Violencia* (González-Rodas 1968:307; Rodríguez Ruiz 2014; Henderson 1985:325).

Yo soy campesino puro  
Y no empecé la pelea  
Pero si me buscan ruido  
La bailan con la más fea.

I am pure peasant  
And I didn't start the fight  
But if they want trouble  
They'll dance with the ugliest one.

Another group of songs, which included Alejandro Gómez's "Himno a Marquetalia" (Anthem for Marquetalia) and the unattributed "Noches de Marquetalia" (Marquetalia Nights), specifically referenced the legendary birthplace of the FARC. The refrain of the former is sufficient to demonstrate the general flavor of these texts:

Marquetalia, Marquetalia, Marquetalia  
Desde la cordillera central  
El ejemplo y vanguardia de la lucha  
Por nuestra Liberación Nacional.

Marquetalia, Marquetalia, Marquetalia  
From the central mountain range  
The example and vanguard in the struggle  
For our National Liberation.

One particularly well-known song in this vein was Jaime Caicedo's "Cuchilla de San Pablo" (San Pablo Ridge); it appeared in *Guitarra y fusil*, both publications by Gac and Valencia, was included on the *¡Canción protesta!!!* record issued by the JUCO, and was later recorded by Los Hermanos Escamilla.<sup>157</sup> Alejandro Gómez (1973) stated that the song "refers to a battle by the comrades from the FAR[C], which took place in a region ... called just that, San Pablo Ridge, where the revolutionary forces took down a significantly high number of soldiers and even officers." "Cuchilla de San Pablo" celebrated the FARC guerrillas in a somewhat more poetic fashion than many of the songs listed above, evoking the organization's peasant fighters through reference to the locales in which they were based (e.g. Planadas and Natagaima; see Pizarro Leongómez 1991:179, 191). In his text, Caicedo used metaphor to represent the longed-for

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<sup>157</sup> The version Los Hermanos Escamilla recorded with Raúl Rosero's orchestra appears to be a highly stylized *guabina* from Tolima Department. Given that the Cuchilla de San Pablo is located in Tolima, this would have been an appropriate choice of genre for Caicedo. I am grateful to ethnomusicologist Carlos Cuestas for guiding me towards this identification.

triumph of revolution as a “good harvest,” and he subsequently compared it through simile to a “Sunday dance”:

[Estribillo]

Ay cuchilla de San Pablo  
Caminos del sur de Atá  
Pena en la niebla subiendo  
Al cielo la libertad.

Yo vide al nacer el día  
Cerquita de los luceros,  
Poblarse la serranía  
Con miles de guerrilleros.

Campesinos de Planadas  
Paisanos de Natagaima  
La estrella es una cosecha  
Que madura en la montaña.

Que si ustedes la recogen  
Ha de ser buena cosecha  
Como un domingo de baile  
Como una copla fiestera.

[Refrain]

Oh, San Pablo Ridge  
Roads in the south of Atá  
Sorrow in the mist rising  
To the sky, liberty.

I saw at the break of day  
Close to the stars  
The hills become filled  
With thousands of guerrilla fighters.

Peasants of Planadas  
Friends from Natagaima  
The star is a crop  
That ripens in the mountain.

Which, if you gather  
Will be a good harvest  
Like a Sunday dance  
Like a joyful couplet.

## El monte

Another rhetorical device that many songwriters used to represent the rebels was topographical terminology evoking the remote mountainous areas where the first-generation guerrillas carried out the bulk of their operations. In chapter 1 I mentioned that activist students of this era referred to the act of joining the guerrillas colloquially with the phrase “*irse para el monte*” (head for the hills). In leftist parlance, *el monte* (the hills) became a stand-in for guerrilla activity. Although the texts excerpted in this chapter clearly demonstrate that composers did not feel strongly compelled to disguise their praise for armed insurrection against the state in their lyrics, *el monte* and *montañas* (mountains) figured prominently as complementary metaphoric tropes for the

guerrillas in their compositions. These two terms predominated, but synonyms such as *loma*, *cerro*, and *serranía* also appeared, and we saw in the stanza quoted from “Himno a Marquetalia” that the action was located squarely in the central *cordillera* (mountain range) of Colombia.

Twenty-two songs (20%) contained at least one of these terms.<sup>158</sup>

I have identified three principal metaphorical functions for the *monte* complex in grassroots *canción protesta*. In the first, we have the poetic manifestation of the phrase described above, in which “heading for the hills” unambiguously denoted joining the guerrillas. Stanzas from two songs amply illustrate this usage:

“Cielito del monte”  
(Norman y Darío)

Sé que estarás muy solita cielito  
Porque p’al monte me voy  
Yo me pierdo entre las balas, cielito  
Tú en tu mulita te vas.

“My Darling of the Hills”

I know you will be lonesome, my darling  
For off to the hills I go  
I will disappear amongst the bullets, my darling  
You go on your little mule.

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“Coplas colombianas”

Coge el machete  
Empúñalo bien,  
Coge el machete  
Y al monte con él.

“Colombian Couplets”

Grab the machete  
Grip it well,  
Grab the machete  
And to the hills with it.

In the second metaphorical device related to the symbolism of *el monte*, the mountains were portrayed as the germination ground for the guerrilla movement. We saw in “Cuchilla de San Pablo” how Jaime Caicedo depicted the *montaña* as the optimal environment for sowing and harvesting the seed of revolution. Other writers took this metaphor a step further, describing this

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<sup>158</sup> I did not include in this count cases in which these words were employed as straightforward topographical references with no apparent relation to the guerrillas.

topography as the sites where the guerrillas' ranks would swell and revolutionary martyrs would take on mythical proportions. In the repertoire selection examined here, excerpts from an eponymous elegy for Camilo Torres and a song likely dedicated to Che Guevara exemplify this approach well:

<p>“Camilo” (Canción colombiana)</p> <p>Ay, que gloriosa es la lucha, Camilo Tú vas en nuestra garganta Ejército de los pobres, Camilo En el monte se agiganta.</p>	<p>“Camilo” (Colombian song)</p> <p>Oh, how glorious is the struggle, Camilo We carry you in our throats Army of the poor, Camilo Enlarges in the hills.</p>
<p>“Está lloviendo muerte en la montaña” (Nelson Osorio / Juan Sebastián)</p> <p>Está lloviendo toda la montaña Muriendo en sangre todo lo pasado Y tú asciendes enorme Y tú asciendes gigante.</p>	<p>“It’s Raining Death on the Mountain”</p> <p>It’s raining on the whole mountain All the past dying in blood And you rise up enormous And you rise up a giant.</p>

Once the preparations for revolution have reached maturity in their mountainous Petri dish, the guerrillas ultimately bring it down from the highlands for the benefit of all—this is the third variation on the *monte*-guerrillas-revolution poetic amalgam. In Pablus Gallinazo’s “La mula revolucionaria,” it was the beast of burden ridden by Che Guevara (referred to here by his Bolivian nom de guerre, Ramón) that literally carried a revered revolutionary, and figuratively brought revolution, down from the hills:

<p>Baja una mula del monte, Viene montando Ramón Mula revolucionaria, Baja la revolución.</p>	<p>A mule descends from the hills, Mounted by Ramón The revolutionary mule, Revolution descends.</p>
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### ***Revolutionary Heroes***

The allusion to Ernesto Che Guevara in “La mula revolucionaria” will come as no surprise to students of Latin American history. Che became a martyr for the Left in 1967 when he was assassinated while leading a guerrilla campaign in Bolivia. The man and his exploits were subsequently glorified by numerous songwriters associated with the *nueva canción* movement in different countries (Bodiford 2007:82). While another legendary figure, the Colombian priest and ELN fighter Camilo Torres, also received some attention from composers in other Latin American countries (Barzuna 1997:148), he was the most frequently mentioned revolutionary hero in the Colombian *canción protesta* repertoire. I quoted above from a song bearing Torres’s first name as its title, and there were in fact two different texts titled after him in *Guitarra y fusil*; the title of the song “Cura de negra sotana” (Black-robed Priest) also directly alluded to the famed pious guerrilla. Torres’ name appeared in nine songs, whereas Che figured in six, and Fidel Castro in four. FARC founder Manuel Marulanda was a figure that was particular to the Colombian repertoire, and he was referenced in four songs.

Songwriters deployed these historic figures’ names in song texts for a variety of purposes.<sup>159</sup> In several examples they were invoked as revolutionary models, as can be observed in another stanza from the song “Camilo” and one from the song “En las montañas” (In the Mountains):

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<sup>159</sup> Although I will not expand on the topic here, one important way in which composers evoked key revolutionary figures was by constructing revolutionary genealogies that connected contemporary guerrilla leaders to the protagonists of earlier emancipatory struggles in Latin America. Torres (2009) and Coronil (2011) have shown these genealogies to be common tropes in Latin American revolutionary discourses, while Largey (2005:328) has described a similar discursive process in Haitian folklore and politics as “recombinant mythology.”



“Camilo”

Animados por tu ejemplo, Camilo  
Y la fe en nuestro pueblo  
Seguros de nuestra suerte, Camilo  
La liberación o muerte.

“Camilo”

Driven by your example, Camilo  
And the faith in our people  
Sure of our luck, Camilo  
Liberation or death.

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“En las montañas”  
(Gustavo Gómez Ardila)

De los bravos combatientes  
Siguen el ejemplo vivo  
Y luchan como lucharon  
Fidel, Guevara y Camilo.

“In the Mountains”

Of the brave combatants  
They follow the living example  
And they fight as have fought before  
Fidel, Guevara, and Camilo.<sup>160</sup>

For those storied *guerrilleros* who perished in battle, their status as martyrs whose legacies lived on were also foregrounded, as in the following excerpt from “Cielito del monte”:

Todo camino en la vida, cielito  
Tiene un destino y un fin  
Todo Camilo en la vida, cielito  
Muere un ratito no más.

Every road in life, my darling  
Has a destiny and an end  
Every Camilo in life, my darling  
Dies for a moment and no more.

In his song “El aparecido” (The Apparition), Chilean *nueva canción* progenitor Víctor Jara described Che in mythical dimensions, writing that he “opens pathways through the mountains” and that “the eagle gives him flight” (see Schechter 2009:417-21). Nelson Osorio portrayed Manuel Marulanda in a similar fashion in his poem “Manuel,” which was musicalized by Norman y Darío.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Given that the song speaks of the Colombian context, and that Ardila also composed the other song titled “Camilo,” I suspect that the Camilo referenced here is indeed Torres, and not the Cuban revolutionary hero Camilo Cienfuegos.

<sup>161</sup> While this text is titled “Manuel” in *Guitarra y fusil* and in Gac and Valencia’s (1973) second anthology, it appears under the title “Botas-trepando” (Boots Climbing) in one of Osorio’s (1976) own books of poetry. In fact, another poem bearing the title “Manuel” appears in the latter collection, and it is labelled as having had music composed for it by Grupo “La Candelaria” and arranged by Eliana, who recorded it. Although I cannot

El hombre se llama Manuel  
Y pudo llamarse atarraya  
Llamarse pudo emboscada  
Pudo llamarse metralla.

The man is named Manuel  
And he could have been named cast net  
He could have been named ambush  
He could have been named machine gun.

Manuel el hombre conoce  
Los caminos que hay que andar  
Conoce el alma del monte  
Y la ausencia de la sal.

Manuel the man knows  
The paths that need to be trodden  
He knows the soul of the hills  
And the absence of salt.

### ***Violent Imagery***

Thus far, we have examined songs that referred in somewhat general terms to “revolution” and “struggle.” Some of these texts spoke about the exploitation of workers and peasants, as well as the resistance in which they were being incited to engage alongside their comrades from the student sector. Others celebrated the guerrilla fighters who were at the forefront of the revolutionary movement, referencing the rebels through associated place names, quasi-mythical heroes, and the symbolism of *el monte*. Significantly, several of the songs quoted above also begin to demonstrate a thread that ran through a large proportion of the *canción protesta* repertoire. From the premonition of peasants cutting off heads in “Campesino,” to the mentions of rifles (Soy guerrillero), bullets (Cielito del monte), and machetes (Coplas colombianas), it is evident that violent imagery was quite prevalent in this body of work. In fact, some of this imagery was a holdover from the period of *La Violencia*: at least two of the songs printed in *Guitarra y fusil*, “Guerrillero colombiano” and “Soy guerrillero,” had previously appeared in *La Violencia en Colombia* (The Violence in Colombia), the comprehensive analysis of the

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verify if Norman y Darío recorded the song that is quoted here (“Manuel”), the musician Jorge Chona mentioned it and sang the opening line during my interview with him.

phenomenon published by the National University's Faculty of Sociology in 1962 (Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda, and Umaña Luna 1962:218-9).<sup>162</sup>

Just as people close to the *canción protesta* movement alluded to the thematic centrality of workers, peasants, students, and the guerrillas in their comments about the music, they also acknowledged that the revolutionary struggle's violent dimensions were reflected in the repertoire. Alejandro Gómez (1973), for instance, described the context within which musicians involved with the CNCP engaged in compositional activities in these terms:

To compose we count on the powerful incentives that are provided to us at each moment by the popular struggle, both in the city as in the Colombian countryside, where it has traditionally been violent; the armed struggle, which has been going on there for years; and the heroic deeds of the peasants in our agricultural regions.

After insinuating that guerrilla fighters were key composers of “revolutionary songs” and would chant them “behind the mountain bushes that serve as their trenches,” the introduction of *El 41 cancionero popular* similarly went on to state that “in this entire selection there is a testimony of struggle, of sacrifice, and of combatant blood.”

To wit, sixty-four of the songs surveyed—just shy of sixty percent—contained at least some explicit reference to a weapon or an act or consequence of war.<sup>163</sup> The term *fusil*, which can refer specifically to a rifle but more generally to any kind of gun, carried particular symbolic value, appearing in fifteen songs, but composers also opted to reference other weapons (besides those already mentioned), such as *rifle* (rifle), *escopeta* (shotgun), *pistola* (pistol), *ametralladora* (machinegun), *metralleta* (submachinegun), *granada* (grenade), and *plomo* (lead); the terms *arma* (weapon) and *armado* (armed) also figured in several songs, as did *disparo* (shot). On top

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<sup>162</sup> “Guerrillero colombiano” is labelled in that publication as “Himno guerrillero” (Guerrilla Anthem).

<sup>163</sup> I have included in this total a small number of texts whose sole reference to violent conflict is the appearance of the words *guerrilla* or *guerrillero/a*.

of the description of “cutting off heads,” several other acts of war and violence appeared: *asesinato* (assassination), *matar* (kill), *emboscada* (ambush), *batalla* (battle), *combate* (combat), *guerra* (war), and *violencia* (violence).<sup>164</sup> The actors of war were no less conspicuous: *soldado* (soldier), *tropa* (troop), *ejército* (army), *batallón* (battalion), *pelotón* (platoon), *combatientes* (combatants), and *aviones de guerra* (warplanes). Songwriters often used the word *sangre* (blood) to symbolize violence or simply to indicate one of its by-products, and references to *muerte* (death) similarly abounded.

**Table 2-1: Incidence of key terms in the grassroots *canción protesta* repertoire**

Term	Incidence (out of 110 songs total)
any weapon / act of war	64 (58%)
<i>obrero</i> , <i>campesino</i> , or <i>estudiante</i>	35 (32%)
<i>pueblo</i> (the people)	29 (26%)
<i>obrero</i> (worker)	24 (22%)
<i>guerrilla</i> / <i>guerrillero</i> (guerrilla fighter)	26 (24%)
<i>campesino</i> (peasant)	23 (21%)
<i>monte</i> (hills)	22 (20%)
<i>fusil</i> (gun/rifle)	15 (14%)
<i>estudiante</i> (student)	8 (7%)
Camilo Torres	9 (8%)
Che Guevara	6 (5%)
Fidel Castro	4 (4%)
Manuel Marulanda	4 (4%)

<sup>164</sup> While the term *lucha* (literally, struggle or fight) often denoted armed guerrilla campaigns in these texts, I did not include it as a key term indicative of violent imagery in my search because it can also refer to non-violent types of resistance.

Given that violent terminology and imagery were pervasive across a wide range of song texts, it is to be expected that writers used them in many different ways. In the following section, I shall identify certain themes that corresponded to broader trends in leftist discourse of the time. For the moment, the lyrics from Alejandro Gómez's song "A luchar" (To the Fight) provide a representative example of the type of language composers employed when they did not opt for the relative subtlety found in, for example, "Cuchilla de San Pablo." In contrast to the latter, which alluded to the possibility of violence only through mention of the "thousands of guerrilla fighters" amassed in the hills, the narrative of "A luchar" centered squarely on active, violent combat:

A luchar, a luchar Que el mañana cerca está	To the fight, to the fight For tomorrow is near
Lleva siglo y medio el enemigo Acosando con sus sombras al obrero Y robando su sol al campesino Y la sangre sembrando de más sangre	For a century and a half the enemy has been Pursuing the worker with its shadow And stealing the sun from the peasant And the blood sowing more blood
Empuñando su fusil el guerrillero El camino por fin ha señalado Muchos hombres del combate no volvieron Pero siguen trabajando amaneceres	Grabbing his rifle the guerrilla fighter Has finally signalled the way Many men did not return from combat But they continue working daybreaks
[...]	[...]
Al combate con ansiedad de combate Que la paz lograremos con victoria Los caídos en batalla nunca mueren Siguen vivos en la lucha popular	To combat anxious for combat For we will achieve peace with victory Those fallen in battle never die They live forever in the popular struggle

### Rationalizations of Violence

In the introduction to this chapter, I described how in the early 1960s the PCC adopted a strategy its adherents called “the combination of all forms of struggle,” whereby they advocated for action on the guerrilla front to complement their more conventional political organizing. Notwithstanding this tactical shift away from the Party’s earlier endorsement of strictly non-violent means for seizing state power, its *combinación* ethic was out of step with the Maoist abstentionist position, which fully prioritized the insurgency. Although bitter divisions within and between leftist organizations hinged on the primacy of the armed struggle, activists from across the spectrum of leftist groups supporting the guerrillas explicitly justified the latter’s recourse to violence as a tool for achieving social and political change. Unsurprisingly, such rationalizations inevitably ran into the contradiction of celebrating revolutionary violence while simultaneously critiquing the violence exercised by state actors. Leftist ideologues thus frequently distinguished between what they viewed as legitimate revolutionary violence and illegitimate “reactionary” violence. A similar paradox arose when guerrilla leaders and backers spoke of fighting violently for peace.

Given the relationship we have already observed between leftist discourse and the textual character of *canción protesta*, it may not be surprising that these ideas too were distilled in song lyrics. In fact, there was a precedent for the justification of retaliatory and “defensive” violence in the two songs I cited in the dissertation’s introduction as precursors to, and foundational works of, *canción protesta*—both were included in the songbooks being analyzed. In José A. Morales’ “Ayer me echaron del pueblo,” the peasant narrator chronicled an episode in which he had to “punish” his boss “with [his] hand” for disrespecting his family. In the song’s final lines, the protagonist asked God to forgive him for “Everything I did and may do / In defense of my

home.” While the version of “A la mina” popularized by Leonor González Mina portrayed the violence that the white master committed upon the black miner, it did not refer to any retaliatory act. However, folklorist Guillermo Abadía Morales has stated that “in some versions [of the song] a dramatization is laid out in which the vengeful murder of the boss, by the son of the slave who died in the rough work of the mine, is justified” (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1982:38).

Several other songs in the *canCIÓN protesta* repertoire portrayed violence as a direct result of the wrongs inflicted upon the peasant and working classes. In contrast to “Ayer me echaron” and “A la mina,” in which the acts of retribution for those wrongs were carried out by individuals, in the majority of song texts the consequent use of force was backed by the collective oppressed masses, and it was usually executed by the guerrillas. Such a trajectory was implied in “A luchar,” quoted above, where the “enemy’s” mistreatment of the worker and peasant in the first stanza gave way to a guerrilla fighter signalling the path towards corrective action in the second. Pablus Gallinazo’s “Cinco balas” (Five Bullets) was another song that displayed this type of rhetoric, although Gallinazo connected the oppression to which *campesinos* were subject with their decision to take up arms *en masse* somewhat more explicitly:<sup>165</sup>

Por todo lo que me hicieron  
Lo que hacen y lo que harán  
Voy a tomar el fusil  
Con diez campesinos más

For everything they did to me  
What they do and what they will do  
I’m going to grab the rifle  
Along with ten more peasants

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<sup>165</sup> Gallinazo recorded this song in a stylized *bambuco* rhythm. Mexican *nueva canción* musician Oscar Chávez also recorded “Cinco balas,” making it one of the few protest songs of the era by a Colombian musician to be recorded by a foreign artist.

Que si lo tomó Bolívar  
Antes lo tomó Galán  
Y a mí que soy de esta tierra  
No me da miedo pelear

For just as Bolívar took it  
So before him did Galán<sup>166</sup>  
And I who am from this land  
Am not scared of fighting

Que me llamen bandolero  
No me importa si hay que ver  
Qué cara puso la niña  
Cuando se lo dije ayer

They can call me a bandit  
I don't care if I must see  
The expression on my girl's face  
When I told her yesterday

Le dije niña me marchó  
Con los hombres a pelear  
Y en el beso de partida  
Me dio cinco balas más

I told her sweetheart I'm leaving  
With the men to go to fight  
And with her goodbye kiss  
She gave me five bullets more

Another common justification for the guerrillas' engagement in violence was the notion that the subalterns on whose behalf they fought were powerless in the face of state-issued aggression. Such an idea was conveyed in lines like "because the guerrilla fights for the unarmed people," from the song "Nada sé" (I Know Nothing). In fact, condemning the violence of local state actors and US imperial interests was a key function attributed to early *canción protesta*. As I described in chapter 1, musicians affiliated with the CNCP during its gestational stage often performed at events aimed at building solidarity with the people of Vietnam; in such settings, their songs were deployed "to raise the fight against the warmongers of the world."<sup>167</sup> While criticism of the US military was especially discernible in songs concerning Vietnam, songs like "Canción del labrador" (Song of the Farm Worker) foregrounded the links between the Colombian armed forces and their US sponsors. Before proclaiming "Guerrilla fighter, there will be no one who can oppose you," the text set up the conditions that made the guerrilla struggle necessary:

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<sup>166</sup> José Antonio Galán was the leader of a pre-independence revolt against the Spanish in 1781, and enjoys special prominence among leftists as one of the primordial symbols of the people's fight for emancipation.

<sup>167</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, March 7, 1968.



Campesino colombiano  
Perseguido y explotado  
Por la casta en el gobierno  
Que sin tierra te ha dejado

Colombian peasant  
Persecuted and exploited  
By the governing class  
That has left you without land

[...]

[...]

Pero el criminal gobierno  
Ése de la oligarquía  
Tus poblados, campesino  
Bombardeaba el otro día  
Con dineros de la Alianza  
Esa que es para el Progreso  
Que organiza la matanza  
Ay, Colombia, no hagas eso.

But the criminal government  
That of the oligarchy  
Your villages, peasant  
It bombed the other day  
With money from the Alliance<sup>168</sup>  
The one that is for Progress  
That organizes the slaughter  
Oh, Colombia, don't do that.

If guerrilla supporters' paradoxical endorsement of revolutionary violence and condemnation of state violence was *implicit* in the foregoing example, the distinction between legitimate and unjust forms of violence was made *explicit* in other songs. By way of illustration, a stanza from the song "Servimos al pueblo" (We Serve the People), by the Esfera theater group, reads as if it had been extracted directly from a Maoist political pamphlet; it reproduced, almost verbatim, the line about reactionary violence quoted above from MOIR leader Francisco Mosquera's speech, and touted the beginning of the Maoist "prolonged popular war":

Ven explotado, ven oprimido  
A la violencia reaccionaria  
Vamos a enfrentar,  
La de las masas organizadas  
Para la justa, inevitable  
Guerra popular,  
Ven estudiante, ven campesino  
Que ya el combate prolongado  
Va a empezar

Come ye exploited, come ye oppressed  
We will confront  
The reactionary violence  
With that of the organized masses  
For the just, inevitable  
Popular war  
Come student, come peasant  
For the prolonged combat  
Will now begin

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<sup>168</sup> The song alluded to the Alliance for Progress program that US President John F. Kennedy instituted in 1961 with the aim of thwarting the repetition of a Cuban-style revolution elsewhere in Latin America (Leonard 2008).

The protest song that most powerfully articulated the paradoxical position of Colombian leftists vis-à-vis guerrilla and state violence was “La bala” (The Bullet). Written by Jaime Caicedo, “La bala” was something of a hit of the grassroots *canción protesta* repertoire. It was included in *Guitarra y fusil* and both of Gac and Valencia’s compilations, and a section of the song was quoted in a *Voz* column advertising the *Antología*.<sup>169</sup> The Colombian group Los Hermanos Escamilla later recorded “La bala,” while Víctor Jara released it as a single and performed it with some altered stanzas at a 1973 concert in Havana (Jara 1973). In its poetic structure, “La bala” evinced many of the characteristics of the Romance-derived Mexican *corrido*. Consistent with the latter form, the numerous stanzas recounting the trajectory of the protagonist (a bullet) took on the quality of an epic ballad. Similarly, the narrative arc generally followed that of the *corrido* with its introductory stanza, description of events occupying the bulk of the text, and a farewell stanza that stated the moral of the story (Avila 2013). The versions recorded by Los Hermanos Escamilla and Jara reinforced the song’s *corrido* identity, as they were executed as a Mexican *ranchera* in simple triple time.

“La bala” encapsulated many of the key discursive elements identified above for the *canción protesta* repertoire. Typical of numerous other songs, we find that workers and peasants figured prominently; certain lines concerning these groups—for example, “the vanguard in the struggle / Is the working class”—could have easily been lifted directly from PCC doctrine. The guerrillas (“of the mountain,” no less) also appear conspicuously here as the most appropriate recipients of armaments; references to Marulanda and Marquetalia indicated that the guerrilla group being praised was the FARC—the one linked with the PCC. Of course, the fact that the text revolved around a bullet meant there was much in the way of violent imagery.

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<sup>169</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, June 4, 1970.

As quickly becomes clear in reading the text, “La bala” was fundamentally a parable on legitimate and illegitimate uses of force. In the second stanza, Caicedo juxtaposed the bullet’s noble origins as a product of the working class with its cooptation and nefarious uses by the police. The bullet begins its journey to regain virtuous status in the fourth stanza: narrating in first person, it describes how it deserted Conservative paramilitary forces (*chulos*) to enlist with the heroic FARC guerrillas. There is a notable contrast between the third stanza, where the bullet bemoans that it was used to kill innocent peasants, and the penultimate one, where it declares that it will always be prepared to defend the Communist Party.<sup>170</sup> The central lesson is communicated concisely in the song’s final lines:<sup>171</sup>

Voy a contarles la historia	I’m going to tell you the story
Sobre la bala, sobre la bala	About the bullet, about the bullet
Y de lujo de detalles	And in an abundance of details
Voy a hacer gala, voy a hacer gala.	I’ll make a show, I’ll make a show.
Y le darán la razón	And you will surely agree
Ay, si usted se empeña, si usted se empeña	Oh, if you try, if you try
En comprender la experiencia	To understand the experience
Que ella le enseña, que ella le enseña	That it teaches, that it teaches
[Estribillo]	[Refrain]
La bala se dispara, ay se dispara	The bullet is fired, oh it is fired
Ay se dispara	Oh it is fired
La bala se dispara, ay se dispara	The bullet is fired, oh it is fired
Se disparó	It was fired

---

<sup>170</sup> Notably, the editors of *Guitarra y fusil* opted to exclude this verse referencing the Communist Party. The version they printed instead contained verses reaffirming support for the armed struggle. This fact again reinforces the impression that the songbook was compiled by Maoist activists.

<sup>171</sup> A journalist for *Voz* summarized the song’s theme by writing that the song spoke “with simplicity and beauty of the future of the working class and of its children, oftentimes sacrificed by the incorrectly used bullet” (*Voz Proletaria*, September 24, 1970).

En las manos del obrero  
Nació la bala, ay nació la bala  
Y cuentan que fue un bandido  
Que la hizo mala, que la hizo mala  
Preguntaron a la bala  
Que qué decía, que qué decía:  
Lo malo es que me utiliza  
*La polecía, la polecía*

Me usaron para matar  
Ay al campesino, al campesino  
Pero hallaron resistencia  
Los asesinos, los asesinos.  
Esto que digo señores  
No es condolencia, no es condolencia,  
Fue lo *mesmo* que ocurrió  
Ay, en la violencia, ay en la violencia

Me deserté de los chulos  
Con mucha maña, ay con mucha maña

Y me alisté en la guerrilla  
De la montaña, ay de la montaña.  
Soy del Estado Mayor  
Ay de Marulanda, de Marulanda  
Con los bravos compañeros  
De Marquetalia, ay de Marquetalia

[...]

En la lucha proletaria  
Por mucho tiempo, ay por mucho tiempo  
Ha de llegar el obrero  
Hasta el parlamento, hasta el parlamento.  
En la lucha que tenemos  
Siempre estoy lista, siempre estoy lista,  
A defender al Partido  
Ay el Comunista, ay el Comunista

In the hands of the worker  
The bullet was born, oh the bullet was born  
And they say it was a bandit  
Who made it evil, who made it evil  
They asked the bullet  
What it said, what it said:  
What's wrong is that I'm used  
By the police, by the police

They used me to kill  
Oh, the peasant, the peasant  
But they met resistance  
The assassins, the assassins.  
What I say, folks  
Is not condolence, is not condolence  
It was the same thing that happened  
During *La Violencia*, during *La Violencia*

I deserted from the *chulos*  
With great deception, oh with great  
deception  
And I enlisted in the guerrilla  
Of the mountain, oh of the mountain.  
I'm on the General Council  
Oh, of Marulanda, of Marulanda  
With the brave comrades  
From Marquetalia, oh from Marquetalia

[...]

In the proletarian struggle  
For much time, oh for much time  
The worker is destined to reach  
The parliament, the parliament.  
In the fight at hand  
I'm always ready, I'm always ready,  
To defend the Party  
Oh of the Communists, oh of the  
Communists

La bala nos advirtió  
Y no es la primera, y no es la primera  
Que la vanguardia en la lucha  
Es la clase obrera, es la clase obrera.  
Y acabando con la bala  
Ella no es mala, ella no es mala  
Todo depende de cuándo  
Y quién la dispara y quién la dispara

The bullet warned us  
And it wasn't the first, it wasn't the first  
That the vanguard in the struggle  
Is the working class, is the working class.  
So finishing up with the bullet  
It isn't bad, it isn't bad  
It all depends on when  
And who fires it, and who fires it

As I have noted, leftist leaders frequently articulated the paradoxical idea that they were advocating for armed conflict as a means to a just peace. This precept was expressed in a few songs. In the last stanza of Alejandro Gómez's song "A luchar," quoted above, we came across the verse "To combat with the anxiety of combat / For we will achieve peace with victory." In another example, Guillermo Bernal proposed in his composition "Compañera" (Comrade) that a sustainable peace was not possible while the working classes endured the various types of violence wrought upon them by the state; only an armed counter offensive offered the prospect of a utopian peace:

No podemos compañera  
Hablar de paz, no podemos  
Mientras el hambre y las balas  
En mortales emboscadas  
Se junten contra la gente  
Que de sol a sol trabaja

We cannot, [female] comrade  
Speak of peace, we can't  
While hunger and bullets  
In fatal ambushes  
Join together against the people  
That work from dawn to dawn

[...]

[...]

Sigue recogiendo drogas,  
Vestidos y municiones  
Y explicando las razones  
De la lucha desatada  
Que al final, disfrutaremos  
De una paz enamorada

Continue gathering medicine,  
Clothes and ammunition  
And explaining the reasons  
For the uncontrolled fight  
That in the end, we shall enjoy  
A love-filled peace<sup>172</sup>

<sup>172</sup> The idea expressed in the song's final stanza might be described, in Carillo Rodríguez's (2014:235) terms, as "the figuration of [militancy] as an ethos of love." Carillo notes that this trope was common in Southern

While the contradiction of going to war to bring about peace emerged within individual songs, this tension is also palpable when one looks at the repertoire as a whole. Contrasting the numerous texts that laud the bravery and impending triumph of guerrilla fighters in combat, several songs express an ambiguous, if not outright negative, perspective on war. A distaste for the consequences of war was especially apparent in several songs about Vietnam, such as “El soldado Hanoi” (Hanoi Soldier) and “Los juguetes de los niños del Vietnam” (The Toys of Vietnam’s Children), but the sentiment also came through in songs like “Yo no quiero ir a la guerra” (I don’t Want to go to War), which was co-authored by CNCP regulars Juan Sebastián and Valentina Tobón Kielland, and later recorded in a light folk-rock style by Ana y Jaime.

### Music and Violence

In a 1967 manifesto titled *Crear dos, tres... muchos Vietnam* (Creating Two, Three... Many Vietnams), Che Guevara declared that the global socialist revolution would be carried out by men who were “ready to intone tragic songs, with the staccato of machine guns, and new cries of war and victory” (quoted in Anderson 2010:688). Evidently, this type of imagery linking music to armed struggle was not uncommon in the internationalist discourse coming out of Cuba during the 1960s and 1970s—a time when the Cuban regime was providing moral and material support for communist guerrillas throughout the continent. In 1973, the Casa de las Américas in Havana published a special edition of its *Boletín de música* (Music Bulletin) that reproduced transcripts of talks and performances given by Chilean *nueva canción* icon Víctor Jara during the 1972 Meeting of Latin American Music, held in the Cuban capital. The issue was titled “Víctor Jara: A Guitar, a Gun,” and the following words of Casa de las Américas founder Haydée Santamaría

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Cone *nueva canción* of the same era, and suggests that, along with the “aestheticization of guerrilla warfare,” it “contributed to the production and circulation of revolutionary political desire.”

served as an epigraph: “We have to work in the area of music. All together, reaching towards battle—a battle that can convert a guitar into a rifle.” Jara himself raised the notion of transforming guitars into guns when he said, “I think that the authentically revolutionary must lie behind the guitar, so that the guitar becomes an instrument of struggle that can also fire like a gun” (Jara 1973).

Certainly, musicians with political proclivities in other times and places have metaphorically conflated musical acts and instruments with weaponry, and the guitar seems to lend itself especially well to this type of rhetoric. During the World War II years, American leftist singer Woody Guthrie’s guitar was famously emblazoned with the slogan “This Machine Kills Fascists.”<sup>173</sup> The tradition of linking music (or poetry) to revolutionary violence appears to have been particularly strong in Latin America. Another couplet quoted in the epigraph to “Víctor Jara: A Guitar, a Gun” was one penned by Cuban independence hero José Martí, which reads:

Mi verso al valiente agrada	My verse pleases the valiant one
Mi verso breve y sincero	My brief and sincere verse
Es del vigor del acero	Has the vigor of the steel
Con que se funde la espada	With which the sword is cast

More contemporaneously, the Uruguayan *nueva canción* luminary Daniel Viglietti worked the line “The American guitar / Fighting, learned to sing” into his song “Canción para mi América” (Song for My America), first released in 1963. Of course, Viglietti attended the 1967 Meeting of Protest Song in Havana, and returned there for the 1972 Meeting; Jara and the Cubans would

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<sup>173</sup> The idea of folk song as a political “weapon” was prevalent among activists and musicians in the American Old Left of the 1930s and 1940s (see Denisoff 1973; Lieberman 1989; Roy 2010). However, while their conception of music as a “weapon of propaganda” was similarly at play in some of the imagery linking music to weapons evoked by Latin American songwriters—and obviously resonated with the Colombian Left’s positions on art’s role as a tool of political struggle—it differed somewhat from the senses in which music was equated with the actual weaponry of guerrilla warfare, as discussed in this section.

have been very familiar with his music. Brazilian musician Marcos Valle's 1968 song "Viola enlunada" (Moonbathed Guitar) recalled both Martí's and Viglietti's poetry in verses like "The hand that strums a guitar / If necessary makes war," and "On a moonbathed night the guitar / In the countryside is like a sword." As Ridenti (2009:219) notes, "few songs were as expressive of revolutionary Brazilianess." Towards the end of the 1970s, the Nicaraguan sibling musicians Carlos and Enrique Mejía Godoy resurrected the guitar-gun link with their album *Guitarra armada* (Armed Guitar). Released in 1978 as the Sandinista guerrilla campaign against the Somoza dictatorship neared victory, several songs on the recording provided instruction on how to use weapons that the Sandinistas typically employed (Landau 1999:242; Scruggs 2002:65; Ureña 2008:282).

Colombian artists in the *canCIÓN protesta* movement clearly picked up on this kind of imagery. One need look no further than the very title and cover of the songbook *Guitarra y fusil* to appreciate the salience of the "guitars-to-guns" trope. The main focus of the cover is a red guitar framed on both sides by mirror-image drawings of silhouetted figures hoisting machine guns into the air, their barrels penetrating the instrument's sound hole (see figure 2-2).<sup>174</sup> The editors of the volume spelled out the intended symbolism of the illustration in the introduction, where they defined "revolutionary art" as "a guitar that has learned to fight; that doesn't limit itself to register events but also takes on the fighting spirit of the gun"—they then went on to quote Guevara's statement about intoning tragic songs to the cackle of machine guns. When authorities in Bogotá cancelled a performance by Eliana and Los Flippers at the First Assembly of Youth in Rebellion in 1968, one of the organizers similarly told a reporter that "the government considers modern music to be subversive and fears that electric guitars will be

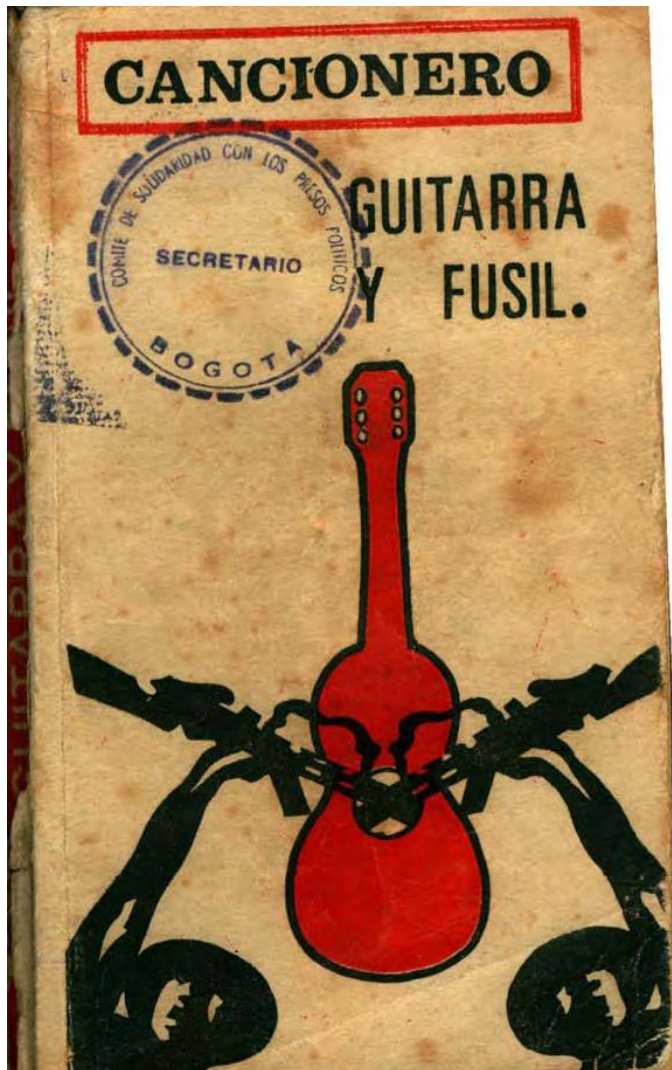
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<sup>174</sup> The wide brimmed hats the figures donned were likely intended to signal their *campesino* identity.



transformed into machine guns.”<sup>175</sup> The same year, an audience member at a performance by Pablos Gallinazo asked if he and the *nadaístas* intended to make revolution with music, to which Gallinazo replied: “Revolutions have never been made with guitars, but from an electric guitar one can easily move on to a submachine gun. It all depends on the tone and the point of view with which the guitar is played.”<sup>176</sup>

**Figure 2-2. Cover of *Guitarra y fusil***



<sup>175</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, October 3, 1968.

<sup>176</sup> *Cromos*, February 5, 1968.

Given the prevalence of such imagery connecting musical elements to violence in the wider Colombian and Latin American leftist discourse, it is not surprising that it found its way into protest songs. In their statements, Guevara, Santamaría, Jara, and the Colombians just cited presented the notion—with varying degrees of explicitness—that musical instruments and gestures were complementary to armaments in the guerrilla struggle. This idea came across in several songs in the *canCIÓN protesta* repertoire. In “Zamba de Víctor” (Víctor’s Zamba), a text dedicated to the martyred Chilean singer and set to the music of “Zamba del Che”—a song Jara popularized—writer Nelson Osorio evoked Jara’s own statements concerning the guitar’s role in the revolutionary fight:<sup>177</sup>

Continuaremos la marcha	We shall continue the march
Llevando al cinto la patria	Carrying the nation in our belts
Rodeada de guitarras,	Surrounded by guitars,
De experiencias y metrallas	By experiences and machine guns

Osorio, in fact, was particularly prone to constructing metaphors in which music was posited as integral to or conflated with armed action. In another text eulogizing Che himself—the song “Palabras”—Osorio may well have been referencing Guevara’s famous comment when he likened the guerrilla commander’s musical vocalizing to shrapnel:

Y tus voces	And your words
Que no eran palabras;	Which weren’t words;
Eran la guerra,	They were war,
El grito fundido en el plomo	The scream merged with lead,
Tus cantos metralla	Your songs shrapnel
Barriendo la lepra	Sweeping away the plague <sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> This song, which Eliana recorded for her album *Píntela como quiera* (Call it What You Will), did not in fact appear in the song anthologies on which I base the bulk of the analysis in this chapter, as is the case for one other song discussed below (“La gente de la gran ciudad”). Given that they were composed by, or in collaboration with, people who were connected to the grassroots scene, and whose other texts were included in those volumes, I feel it is appropriate to mention them here.

<sup>178</sup> Interestingly, Norman y Darío did not sing the lines “Your songs shrapnel / Sweeping away the plague” in their recording of the song for the mini-LP they released on CBS.

One notable sub-trope within the theme of music's complementarity with oppositional violence is the image of the *guerrillero/a* singing to his or her weapon. Both Osorio and Gallinazo depicted their guerrilla-fighter protagonists doing just that:

“Juan”  
(Nelson Osorio)

Arriando el sol con los dedos  
Viene el hombre devorando  
Los alambres del sendero  
Cantándole una tonada  
A su fusil guerrillero

“Juan”

Lowering the sun with his fingers  
The man comes along devouring  
The fences along the path  
Singing a tune  
To his guerrilla-fighting gun

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“La gente de la gran ciudad”  
(Pablus Gallinazo)

En la quebrada en que el abuelo  
Hizo un bambuco para ti  
Hoy se remoja el pie cansado  
Y hace su canto a su fusil

---

“Folks from the Big City”

In the ravine in which your grandpa  
Composed a *bambuco* for you  
Today he soaks his tired foot  
And sings to his gun

Curiously, protest songwriters did not, to my knowledge, incorporate the notion of a guitar being transformed into a gun directly into their lyrics, even though the idea was clearly on the minds of many involved with the movement. Nevertheless, the related idea of trading in one's guitar (or guitar-like instrument) for a gun did emerge in a couple songs. The anonymous writer of “Un fusil y mucha rabia” (A Gun and Lots of Rage), who set his/her text to José A. Morales's *bambuco* “Un tiple y un corazón” (A *Tiple* and a Heart), proposed that musical instruments in fact played second fiddle, so to speak, to actual weapons in the revolutionary endeavor:<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> The *tiple* is a variant of the guitar that was developed in Colombia and has become a national cultural symbol. It is a primary instrument in Colombian Andean music.

Cuando yo tenía mi tiple  
No podía defenderme  
Lo cambié por un fusil  
Por si nos quieren joder

When I had my *tiple*  
I couldn't defend myself  
I exchanged it for a gun  
In case they want to screw us

Needless to say, this portrayal of musical life being rather incompatible with armed self-defense contrasted somewhat with the music-violence nexus conveyed in the songs excerpted previously. Although guerrilla groups like the FARC had musical anthems composed for them and cultivated their own musical cultures, the idea that guerrilla fighters had to abandon their musical pursuits upon joining the insurgency had its place in the leftist zeitgeist. In her memoirs, for instance, a former member of the M-19 guerrillas made the analogy of temporarily leaving her cello behind in favor of a gun to symbolize her time as a *guerrillera* (Grabe 2000:369).

There is one final song from the *canción protesta* repertoire in which a guitar is traded in for a gun. Written by *nadaísmo* father-figure Gonzalo Arango and musicalized by Juan Sebastián, “Tomás el Contento” (Happy Tomás) recounted the story of a conscript (Tomás) sent to fight in Vietnam. While the text’s central theme was the sacrifice of frontline soldiers (“the generals exchanged his life for a tin medal”) in the “defense” of capitalism, it also presented Tomás as a long-haired “go-go” whose guitar was forcibly exchanged for a gun:

A Tomás que era un go-go  
Cambiaron su guitarra por fusil  
Y lo enviaron a defender el capital  
Pobre Tomás... pobre Tomás.

For Tomás who was a go-go  
They exchanged his guitar for a gun  
And they sent him to defend capital  
Poor Tomás... poor Tomás.

Tomás, tenía melena  
Pero mala puntería.  
No pudo acompañar una canción  
Con un fusil.  
Pobre Tomás... pobre Tomás.

Tomás had long hair  
But bad aim.  
He couldn't accompany a song  
With a gun.  
Poor Tomás... poor Tomás.

[...]

[...]

Jubilados, con gota y en olor de dignidad	Retired, with gout and the smell of dignity
En batalla mueren los soldados	The soldiers die in battle
Como Tomás el Contento	Just like Happy Tomás
Que sacrifican su vida y su guitarra	Who sacrifice their lives and their guitars
Por el honor del general.	For the general's honor.
Tomás se fue al Vietnam	Tomás went to Vietnam
Pobre Tomás... pobre Tomás.	Poor Tomás... poor Tomás.
La guerra mató su melodía	The war killed his melody
Aunque cantaba canciones por la paz	Though he sang songs of peace
Pobre Tomás... pobre Tomás.	Poor Tomás... poor Tomás.

In strong distinction with the sentiments and song-lyrics discussed above, the guitar-to-gun conversion depicted in “Tomás el Contento” was unquestionably immoral. Earlier in the chapter, I highlighted the contradiction between protest songs that justified guerrilla violence and those that expressed a negative view towards war. Analogously, the positive music-violence link presented in several songs can be juxtaposed with the way in which violence was portrayed in “Tomás el Contento” as extinguishing its protagonist’s progressive youthful energy, which was unambiguously symbolized in the lyrics by his musical inclinations.

### **Conclusion: *Canción Protesta* and Violent Resistance**

In this chapter, I have attempted to illustrate the diverse ways in which musicians in the grassroots *canción protesta* movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s lived up to leftist leaders’ ideals of using music as a propagandistic tool; artists even communicated propaganda directed against rival leftist factions in their songs. Matching the broader discursive emphasis in Marxist circles on the revolutionary subjectivity of peasants, workers, and students, key figures in the movement conceived of *canción protesta* as both arising from and serving these principal

constituencies, and they figured prominently in song texts. Just as the PCC and other political organizations ramped up their support for the various guerrilla groups with which they were affiliated, so too did protest songwriters devote numerous texts to the rebels' exploits. Some composers openly extolled the guerrillas in terse language, while others employed poetic devices and symbols to conjure and glorify the insurgents.

My analysis of 110 protest songs revealed that violent imagery related to the conflict between the guerrillas and the state constituted a dominant theme in the repertoire, with violence-associated terminology cropping up in 58% of the songs surveyed. Several texts parroted the slogans leftists coined to justify the guerrillas' recourse to armed action, while others differentiated between legitimate guerrilla violence and the unwarranted use of force by the Colombian and US militaries—a paradox that circulated in the wider discourse. Like prominent Latin American revolutionary figures and stalwarts of the transnational *nueva canción* movement, Colombian songwriters constructed imagery in which music was conflated with or presented as beneficial to revolutionary violence. Contrasting the rather ebullient terms in which people connected to *canción protesta* discussed the idea of moving from guitars to guns, the single song that portrayed this shift as abhorrent—the gun, in this case, was in the service of US Cold-War policy—speaks yet again to activists' divergent stances on violence depending on who the perpetrators were.

Given the prevalence of songs making the case for guerrilla violence in this repertoire, it is worth briefly considering the musical culture of the urban Colombian Left during the period in question in relation to recent scholarship on music and violence. In their book *Dark Side of the Tune: Popular Music and Violence*, Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan (2009) outline four basic types of relationships that may exist between music and violence: music accompanying violence,

music as incitement to violence, music as arousal to violence, and music as violence. Based on their nuanced definitions of each of these types, I contend that a large proportion of the *canción protesta* repertoire may be seen as a form of incitement to violence. As these writers (*ibid.*:95) suggest, musical incitement to violence may range from overt directives to subtler “peer-group validation of violence as a social option”; we saw Colombian protest songs that fall at different positions along this spectrum. Crucially, Johnson and Cloonan also emphasize the distinction between incitement and excitement. There is in fact no clear correlation, they argue, between incitement and actually engaging in an act of violence (arousal to violence). Complementing my claim that one must proceed with caution when looking for political meaning or intentionality in song lyrics, moreover, their work asserts that the “musical ‘texts’ which most frequently actually cause violence, contain no message or intent of incitement to that end.” Rather, “sonority and non-musical context” appear to be more important factors in enabling a causal link between musical phenomena and bellicosity (*ibid.*:139-40). In this respect, music that could incite someone to support or eventually even decide to join an armed group might be very different from the music a guerrilla fighter listens to, say, before going into battle.<sup>180</sup>

Did songs like “Me voy para la guerrilla” (I’m Joining the Guerrillas), “A luchar” (To the Fight), or “Un fusil y mucha rabia” (A Gun and Lots of Rage) directly influence young university students to pack up their guitars and *tiples*, head to *el monte*, pick up a gun, and begin firing at the Colombian army in order to combat the oppression of workers and peasants? I have no evidence that any particular protest song or collection thereof was the primary motivation for

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<sup>180</sup> It is important to stress that the music discussed in this chapter may not have had much in common with the music that actual Colombian guerrilla fighters listened to or produced themselves. While certain members of guerrilla groups who hailed from urban movements would likely have been familiar with the *canción protesta* repertoire, the musical cultures of first-generation guerrillas have not been well studied and I cannot expand on the topic here.

individual urban activists to take the dramatic step of signing up with the guerrillas.

Nevertheless, there can be little question that the broader leftist subculture fostered by members of different organizations—and in which *canción protesta* played a relatively important role—inspired some activists to join a guerrilla group. As Margaret Kartomi (2010:474) has noted, performing arts are key media for the ideas that undergird the popular support guerrilla movements require to survive. More importantly, for a time this subculture helped sustain a broad base of support for the very principle of armed revolution. If Pablus Gallinazo's (p.c.) testimony is any indication, this was precisely his and other protest songwriters' intention: "I went through a phase of writing songs of incitement to the armed struggle, or at least recognizing the validity of that struggle."

I have proposed that songs denouncing the oppressive violence committed by the "others" of the revolution—the bosses, the oligarchy, the army, the *yanquis*—were indicative of many Colombian leftists' contradictory stances on violence. The juxtaposition of songs championing guerrilla violence with those condemning war—in the songbooks produced within the movement, as well as in the performance spaces where they may have been played side by side—also speak to the convergence of the different countercultural streams described in chapter 1. As discussed, there was a degree of intermingling between artists affiliated with the CNCP and those who were closer to the hippie movement and its cult of peace. I would further argue, however, that this characteristic of the *canción protesta* repertoire represents a more sweeping and enduring tension in the Left's engagement with violence as a means for pursuing social and political change. That is to say, radical leftists of the 1970s did not apparently see any contradiction in supporting guerrilla violence as the very antidote to the "reactionary" violence they decried, and as a way to forge a utopian peace; many in the PCC/FARC realm adhered



doggedly to the infamous *combinación* approach. As the conflict gained layers of complexity through the years—with guerrilla groups’ incursions into kidnapping, extortion, and drug-trafficking, as well as the involvement of right-wing paramilitaries and drug cartels—ignoring this paradox became untenable for an increasing number of people. In chapter 5, I will describe how the composers and fans of some of the protest songs discussed above have come to regret their endorsement of such music in light of the subsequent history of the Marxist guerrilla groups.

I wrapped up my analysis of the *canción protesta* repertoire by highlighting how artists involved with the movement frequently alluded to the guitar, which in actuality provided the musical scaffolding for most protest songs, as a medium for the bellicosity of a gun, as well as a gateway to the actual act of taking up arms. In their texts, songwriters likewise portrayed music as a beneficent partner to armed action. In my view, the prevalence of imagery linking music to armed struggle was a manifestation of artists’ attempts to work out their own places in the revolutionary project. In the introduction to this chapter, I noted that the role of art in political movements was an important topic of debate on the Left. One can easily imagine scenarios in which politically committed musicians might have questioned whether their musical contributions to the revolution measured up to those made by activists who were sacrificing their lives in the guerrillas, or even doing hardcore organizing among workers and peasants. Alejandro Gómez, who participated extensively in PCC work beyond the sphere of *canción protesta*, made this point when he classified music as one spoke in the Party’s *combinación* strategy:

In our country we have to combine all the forms of struggle, and furthermore, to participate in the whole process. Because of that, people cannot dedicate themselves solely to the creation or performance of music, but they must combine their activity as political leaders with the artistic one. (Gómez 1973)

The idea conveyed in “Un fusil y mucha rabia,” in which a *campesino* professed that s/he needed to trade his/her *tiple* for a gun in order to actualize his/her newfound class consciousness, resonated with thoughts Víctor Jara expressed when he said he would leave the guitar for a gun if necessary to defend the Popular Unity government in Chile, shortly before the 1973 coup that cost him his life (Jara 1973).

By way of a conclusion to this chapter, I might note that future research comparing Colombian *canción protesta* to well-documented musical repertoires of oppositional and revolutionary movements throughout Latin America could yield rich insights concerning their uses of music as propaganda and incitement to violence. Based on a cursory appraisal, the music of Colombian leftists in the 1960s and 1970s seems to share greater textual affinities with cases in which active and popular guerrilla campaigns were underway, than with those in which guerrilla groups were more marginal. In the first category, I would place the music connected with guerrilla movements in various Central American nations during the 1970s and 1980s (Almeida and Urbizagástegui 1999; Judson 2002; Scruggs 2006), and the music of the Maoist Shining Path insurgency in 1980s Peru (Torres Arancivia 2010). In the second camp, I would include: much of the output from the *nuevo cancionero argentino* (Carrillo Rodríguez 2014:231); the music of many Chilean *nueva canción* musicians who were closer to the Chilean Communist Party’s peaceful stance than to the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, which supported armed struggle (Morris 2014:23); and, ironically, the post-revolutionary songs of Cuban *nueva trova*. Interestingly, the musics in the latter grouping would come to exert a growing influence on activist musicians in Colombia, as will be discussed in chapter 4.

### CHAPTER 3. Protest Song in the 1970s: From Commercial Viability to Censorship

On a sunny afternoon in July 2014, I sat with the singer-songwriter Luis Gabriel at a café in the middle-class Bogotá neighborhood of La Soledad. In the early 1970s, Luis Gabriel earned a spot in the Colombian music industry composing, recording, and performing pop ballads, but a strain of satirical social commentary in a handful of his songs pushed him into the margins of *canción protesta*. Following up on our first interview a few weeks prior, I was meeting with Luis Gabriel so that he could show me a couple dozen photographs he had preserved from the height of his musical career. By and large, the photos attested to the modest level of fame he had reached while cultivating the dual image of romantic crooner and protest singer—he described many of them as being *de farándula* (from/for the celebrity world/entertainment business). As we flipped through the pictures, many of which were taken by prominent journalists or photographers, the artist rattled off a long list of celebrities that appeared with him: Carlos Pinzón, the radio and television stalwart that had helped launch *nueva ola* in Colombia; Gloria Valencia de Castaño, the “first lady” of Colombian television; Alfonso Lizarazo, the media impresario that had promoted Ana y Jaime and numerous other acts; celebrated Colombian composer Jorge Villamil; *nueva ola* stars Kenny Pacheco and Lyda Zamora; Argentine protest singer Facundo Cabral; and many others. The photographs documented Luis Gabriel’s performances on Colombia’s most important television revue programs, including *Mano a mano musical* (Musical Head to Head) and *Sábados felices* (Happy Saturdays), as well as in other high-profile venues, from the Media Torta in downtown Bogotá, to the national finals to select a representative for the OTI song festival, and even a showing at Carnegie Hall.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> The OTI festival was an international Eurovision-like competition with participation from member states of the Telecommunications Organization of Iberian America.

**Figure 3-1. Luis Gabriel receives an award from the Association of Colombian Broadcasters in the mid-1970s, as Gloria Valencia de Castaño (first from right) and radio announcer Juan Harvey Caicedo (second from right) look on (photographer unknown; Luis Gabriel Naranjo Arce personal collection)**



Contrasting with most of the photographs in which Luis Gabriel appeared cleanshaven and in the company of media personalities, two of the prints showed the artist with a beard, and alone. The first of these that we came to seemed rather unremarkable. Sure, the (seemingly well-trimmed) facial hair was a different look, but the singer was, as usual, neatly dressed and flashing his charming smile. Yet, for Luis Gabriel, the distinction was fundamental, marking a turning point in his career and life. “This was the first photo with a beard that I got taken after the intimidations. Do you remember?” he asked, referring to the story he had told me about having run into problems with the security apparatus in the late 1970s, “That was my first photo

with a beard.” The other picture in this pair found the singer “with the beard so unkempt that the people from *Sábados felices* made fun of me. I was very tense. They called me Old Christ, since I looked like an old Christ” (see figure 3-2). There was a third photograph showing a haggardly bearded Luis Gabriel getting the autograph of (the even hairier) French singer Georges Moustaki during a chance encounter on the streets of Bogotá. When I pointed out that it was taken during his “bearded” era, Luis Gabriel said, “Yes, by this point I had major problems.”

**Figure 3-2. A bearded Luis Gabriel, circa 1981 (photo by Thierry Gaytán; Luis Gabriel Naranjo Arce personal collection)**



\* \* \*

Unlike other exponents of *canción protesta* who received attention from the mainstream media—e.g. Pablus Gallinazo, Ana y Jaime, and Eliana—Luis Gabriel had not been involved with the grassroots movement centered around the National Protest Song Center (CNCP) in the

late 1960s. His name is thus less closely associated with the category than those other artists. Nevertheless, the trajectory outlined in his photo collection, and in his description of its contents, is emblematic of *canción protesta*'s broad arc through the 1970s. Around the turn of the 1970s, Ana y Jaime and Pablus Gallinazo had established connections with the popular music industry at the same time that their music was applauded by activists in the grassroots milieu. The commercial strain of *canción protesta* that they subsequently launched enjoyed a significant level of exposure in the early 1970s, and set the stage for the media success that Eliana and Luis Gabriel achieved through the mid-1970s while releasing increasingly polemical material. As the decade progressed, however, many of these artists were subject to increasingly severe efforts to restrict their work, and their careers faded.

In this chapter, I analyze the body of Colombian music from the 1970s that was labelled *canción protesta*, recorded by commercial enterprises, and disseminated and publicized through mainstream media outlets. In the first part of the chapter, I profile the careers of Pablus Gallinazo, Ana y Jaime, Eliana, and Luis Gabriel, documenting their political stances and examining the production and reception of key protest songs from their repertoires. Although some of these artists' music had a following among militant leftists in the grassroots movement—and indeed, a portion of it was written by them—its diffusion to other audiences meant that its reception was more complex than was the case for the music that did not transcend grassroots circles. As I illustrate, certain musicians' undefined political positions, along with musical catalogs that included many non-protest songs, contributed further to the varying interpretations and mixed legacies of this grouping of artists and their songs. In the latter part of the chapter, I take stock of the incidence of censorship on commercial *canción protesta* in the mid- and late 1970s. Even though the increase in the frequency and intensity of musical

censorship through the 1970s correlates to a rise in political repression in Colombia, I argue that artists' dissimilar experiences with censorship were partly attributable to the deliberately unpredictable conditions engendered by a near-constant State of Siege.

### **State of Siege, the M-19, and Political Repression**

On April 19, 1970, Colombians went to the polls to elect the president who would preside over the final term of the National Front (FN). Although the power-alternating agreement between the Liberals and Conservatives ensured that the head of state would be chosen from the ranks of the latter, the election was contested between the official candidate, Misael Pastrana Borrero, two dissident aspirants, and former dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who was backed by the ANAPO (National Popular Alliance) movement he founded in 1961. The ANAPO had been sponsoring candidates with increasing success through the 1960s and had become an important oppositional force in congress, bolstered by its populist rhetoric. The first reported tallies in the 1970 race showed Rojas ahead of Pastrana, but the reigning administration of Carlos Lleras Restrepo suddenly prohibited the press from reporting results that had not been officially sanctioned. Claiming that the FN regime was facilitating electoral fraud to prevent a Rojas victory, ANAPO members took to the streets to demonstrate. In response to the unrest, ostensibly, Lleras expanded a regional State of Siege decree to encompass the whole nation and imposed a curfew while the vote count continued. It was soon announced that Pastrana won the elections by a narrow margin (Ayala Diago 2006; Gallón Giraldo 1979:82-3; Osterling 1989:101-2; Palacios 2006:189).

The events surrounding the 1970 election and its aftermath were symptomatic of several interrelated political currents that will underpin my discussion of *canción protesta* in the 1970s. For one, the unhesitant recourse to “exceptional” powers under State of Siege proclamations was

characteristic of successive Colombian governments through the entirety of the FN era and until the constitutional reform of 1991 (Tate 2007:40). The almost perpetual State of Siege conditions demonstrated that the political establishment was unable to sustain its rule without severely curtailing its citizens' civil and political liberties. Secondly, the allegations of electoral fraud were indicative of the exasperation that those outside the Liberal-Conservative elite felt in trying to bring about change and widen the political field through electoral politics (Osterling 1989:300). Indeed, the "stolen" elections inspired a faction of the ANAPO to seek political influence by forming the most important of the second-generation Colombian guerrilla organizations: the April 19 Movement (Movimiento 19 de Abril, M-19; Vargas Velásquez 1994:121).

In his exhaustive analysis of the application of the State of Siege in Colombia, Gustavo Gallón Giraldo (1979:23) found that between 1958 and 1978 governments ruled under State of Siege legislation approximately seventy-five percent of the time. It is thus unsurprising that close investigation reveals only a small correlation between, on the one hand, acute threats to peace and security, and on the other, the timing and modes of implementation of the special security rules. It was apparent, for instance, that numerous measures adopted in the decrees of April 21, 1970, had little relation to the temporary post-electoral upheaval, even if they were prompted by the instability; rather, they served to consolidate the military's power over civil society. Authorities' invocations of specific large-scale protests and disruptions—not to mention the insurrectionary guerrillas—to justify the imposition of martial law obscured its true objectives: impeding oppositional sectors from organizing and voicing their discontent by restricting their freedom of assembly, movement, expression, and collective action (see also Ayala Diago 2006:180; Palacios 2006:135). The State of Siege, Gallón Giraldo (1979:125) concludes, was a



tool employed by the “dominant classes” to pre-emptively undercut any potential threat to their continued rule.

Successive regimes refined the deployment of State of Siege powers and became increasingly harsh in their efforts to identify and punish violators. In 1971, authorities detained students who violated security dictates in Bogotá’s Santamaría bullfighting ring, foreshadowing an approach employed by the Chilean military during the coup d’état in that country two years later; disappearances of political activists began under López Michelsen’s presidency (1974-78) (Archila Neira 2003:105, 112). Political repression via the State of Siege reached a new high with the government of Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978-1982). Gallón Giraldo (1979:148) describes Turbay’s first year in power as a “constitutional dictatorship,” and his rule was marked by the widespread use of torture (Archila Neira 2003:113; Tate 2007:73). While Turbay imposed a special Security Statute only a month into his term, a spectacular action in Bogotá by the M-19 on New Year’s Day, 1979, provided the military with an excuse to make sweeping use of its provisions.

Following the disappointment of the 1970 elections, members of the Socialist ANAPO—a splinter group that broke off from the larger organization—founded the M-19 guerrilla group together with former FARC fighters. In its early days, the M-19 differentiated itself from the FARC, EPL, and ELN by prioritizing actions in urban areas. Its leaders cultivated a “Robin Hood” image and garnered popular support by hijacking delivery trucks for milk and other foodstuffs, which they then distributed in poor neighborhoods. After establishing a reputation for headline-grabbing actions, in late 1978 the rebels began work on their most audacious operation to date. For more than two months, militants dug a tunnel to the military’s largest arms warehouse in the Bogotá area, the Cantón Norte, and on January 1, 1979, they proceeded to steal

some 5000 weapons (Osterling 1989:300-7; Zimmering 2009c). The security establishment, which until then had not considered the M-19 to pose a serious threat, reacted swiftly and abrasively. Taking advantage of its special powers under the State of Siege, the military rounded up thousands of people and detained them in torture camps (Tate 2007:82).

In a 1982 issue of *Index on Censorship*, Colin Harding (1982:27) reported that the M-19's connections to the urban, university-educated middle class bolstered those in the Turbay regime who wanted to adopt some of the drastic measures taken against intellectuals and artists by dictatorial powers in the Southern Cone. In fact, a disquieting development in the sweeps following the raid on Cantón Norte was that the security apparatus pursued artists and intellectuals suspected of sympathizing with the guerrillas or simply of espousing leftist views. Persecution continued after the M-19's occupation, in February 1980, of the Dominican embassy, and was ramped up when a contingent of Cuban-trained fighters "invaded" the southwestern Pacific coast the following year. Poet Luis Viales and sculptor Feliza Bursztyn were apprehended in raids in 1981—the latter was accused of liaising between the M-19 and Cuban officials—and renowned writer Gabriel García Márquez sought asylum in Mexico amidst rumors that he might be targeted for alleged financial support of the organization, not to mention his avowed ties with Cuba (Bell-Villada 2010:57; Harding 1982; Palacios 2006:197).

## **On Censorship**

In the book *Policing Pop*, Martin Cloonan makes the case that scholars of popular music must delineate precisely what they mean by "censorship" when they claim to be writing about instances of it, before proffering his own definition of the term: "Censorship is the process by which an agent (or agents) attempts to, and/or succeeds in, significantly altering, and/or curtailing, the freedom of expression of another agent with a view to limiting the likely audience

for that expression” (Cloonan and Garofalo 2003:15). Because popular music is by its very nature intended to reach a mass audience, any effort to prevent it from doing so necessarily entails a case of censorship. In order to analyze examples of alleged censorship, Cloonan further insists that we must diagnose the levels at which censorship is operating; these include: *prior restraint*, which occurs when a record company decides to not release an artist’s music, effectively circumscribing their audience; *restriction*, as when media outlets prohibit the airplay of certain songs; and outright *suppression*, usually through intervention of a government entity that is attempting to “enforce a moral and/or political code” (*ibid.*:19). As we shall see below, *canción protesta* in Colombia was subject to all three types of censorship during the 1970s.

The extensive artistic censorship that occurred under military dictatorships in the Southern Cone in the 1970s and 1980s has provided many of the paradigmatic examples in the historiography of late-twentieth-century Latin American culture. While the harassment, media exclusion, detention, exile, and assassination of leftist musicians in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay (as well as Brazil) were more widespread and ruthless than in Colombia, analyses of musical censorship in those countries can shed light on the Colombian case. One of the most often-cited examples of censorship from the region is the supposed prohibition of Andean music and instruments following the 1973 coup in Chile because of their pride of place among the *nueva canción* musicians that had supported the rise to power of deposed socialist President Salvador Allende. Finding that upon closer inspection there was no documentary evidence for an official ban on Andean music, Laura Jordán (2009:81) argues that “the execution of such a proscription was based on the clandestine exercise of repression, making use of fear tactics, and that the documentary ‘obscurity’ is in keeping with the rather incoherent behavior that characterizes state terrorism.” As has been noted in other repressive regimes (Favoretto 2014:72;

Masliah 1993; Thram 2006:77), the lack of clarity surrounding the sources for directives about musical restrictions, the precise nature of those restrictions, and the punishment for their transgression, in dictatorial Chile, all contributed to a generalized climate of fear and, in turn, a tendency towards self-censorship. In other words, arbitrary-seeming acts of *suppression* by official bodies may precipitate non-governmental actors to apply *prior restraints* and *restrictions* on musical expression, and may cause artists to alter their activities and output, even if they have not been directly targeted.

If we consider the censorship of oppositional culture in 1970s Colombia through this prism, we may observe that incidents of censorship may not line up precisely with specific directives issued under, or the timing of, State of Siege declarations. Rather, they may have been enabled by the “incoherent” character of such regulations.

### **Commercial *Canción Protesta***

In chapter 1, I described how the duos Norman y Darío and Ana y Jaime, both of which had been well-received at the CNCP, took advantage of the media infrastructure that had been built up around *nueva ola* to secure wider audiences for their music. I detailed the contradictory characteristics of the 1970 and 1971 Coco de Oro Protest Song Festivals, which resulted, in part, from the convergence of musicians, songs, and ideas from grassroots *canción protesta* with those associated with the *nueva ola* and rock countercultures. Notwithstanding the fact that some activists affiliated with the CNCP condemned the commercial nature of these festivals and criticized artists that distributed their protest music via mercantile networks, this music is what most Colombians think of as *canción protesta*.

The “commercial” vein of *canción protesta* enjoyed a strong presence in the mainstream media during the 1970s, a fact that is corroborated by numerous sources. I already quoted above

from the work of Pérez (2007:103-4), who remarked upon the “commercial success” of “protest song musicians who were connected with the recording industry.” Hernando Cepeda Sánchez (2012:34) likewise notes that *canCIÓN protesta* found “significant spaces and commercial support for its diffusion.” A recent magazine article about the early musical influences of Colombian pop superstar Carlos Vives observed that the early 1970s was a “period in which protest song was a big hit, with various exponents that were played frequently on the radio, like the sibling duo Ana y Jaime (Valencia), and Pablus Gallinazus” (Arias 2014). Iván Benavides (p.c.) confirmed that “during the 1970s protest music did have rotation. Pablus Gallinazo was played, Ana y Jaime was played, Norman y Darío was played on the stations.”<sup>182</sup>

As I wrote in chapter 2, the distinction I make between grassroots and commercial *canCIÓN protesta* movements has a strong basis in the contemporaneous discourse of the era. People I interviewed during my fieldwork reaffirmed this division. Recalling his work in the Colombian music industry in the 1970s, for example, Humberto Moreno spoke of the “commercial movement of protest song,” in which he squarely placed Ana y Jaime, Gallinazo, and Luis Gabriel. Efraín Franco (p.c.), a musician who was part of the activist ensemble Canto al Pueblo (see next chapter) pointed to media exposure as a fundamental distinguishing criterion between two different, albeit at times intersecting, domains of *canCIÓN protesta*:

Ana y Jaime were part of a commercial phenomenon and Pablus Gallinazo also, so people in that period, from that generation, we learned those songs and sang them at meetings and with friends. We knew “Ricardo Semillas” and “Café y petróleo” and the songs [Ana y Jaime] sang, but we never included any of these songs in our performances. They were never part of our repertoire because we recognized that that music was played on the radio and came out on television. It

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<sup>182</sup> While Gallinazo’s artistic surname appears in that format on his albums and in most early press coverage, the variation “Gallinazus” has been used frequently in the intervening years, and many now identify the artist as Pablus Gallinazus. Gallinazo told me he prefers the original, and suspected that the alteration resulted from the fact that people were embarrassed to call him *gallinazo* (buzzard).

was like a more innocuous protest music because, well, it came out there; people sang it but it sort of lost the meaning. ... From Pablus Gallinazus we also sang “La flor para mascar” and “La mula revolucionaria,” but more in circles of friends and such, not in the major performances with big audiences. There we did all these other songs.

If radio and television were primary vehicles for the dissemination of commercial *canción protesta*, by Franco’s standards, live performances in political spaces constituted one of the defining attributes of the grassroots, more genuine form: “They called what Ana y Jaime did protest song, but from a critical perspective, in hindsight you might say, no, Ana y Jaime’s was the radio version because they weren’t at any strike, or in a neighborhood, or in a community.”

Journalistic coverage of *canción protesta* in the early 1970s attested to its primary location in the commercial arena, and reflected the mixed politics woven into the form. Major outlets like *El Tiempo* had reported on the *canción protesta* festivals and *peñas* taking place at the CNCP.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, by 1971 coverage of this category was beginning to allocate greater focus on the Coco de Oro festivals, and on those artists who moved beyond the grassroots scene. A 1974 article in *Arco* illustrates how cultural observers attempted to make sense of the inherent paradoxes enmeshed in the commercial *canción protesta* trend:

Radio and television are now the sources in whose most unexpected nooks one finds the tunes that incite rebellion, rather than revolution. All of the youth’s excess energy is immersed in that feverish wave of protest song, which has a greater ability to motivate than the communist manifesto or Castro’s speeches. ... The protests are not directed only at the exploitation in the system but against all the holes of humanity that consumer society has opened. ... All the recording companies and their clientele in the discotheques have done is understood the phenomenon and they take advantage of it following the rules of the consumer society.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> E.g. *El Tiempo*, February 21, 1968; July 16, 1970; June 11, 1971; July 24, 1971; October 16, 1971. *Canción protesta* performances in other locales, such as the La Mama Theater, were also occasionally advertised in the paper’s arts and culture listings (e.g. *El Tiempo*, July 22, 1971).

<sup>184</sup> *Arco* 167, December, 1974.

In what follows, I seek to make my own sense of “commercial” *canción protesta*. Taking each of the movement’s four main exponents in turn, I examine the artists’ personal backgrounds and political positions, their interactions with the music industry and media, compositional motivations and practices, representative examples from their musical output, and the reception and legacies of their work. These acts clearly navigated the same “scene,” working with many of the same songwriters, producers, and media personalities. For instance, all but Pablus Gallinazo (as far as I know) recorded songs written by Nelson Osorio, while Ana y Jaime and Eliana both covered Gallinazo’s works; Luis Gabriel, Gallinazo, and Ana y Jaime all collaborated with Alfonso Lizarazo. While the four artists’ large repertoires are variegated and cannot be easily characterized as a whole, a significant proportion of their recorded material bears the imprint of the arrangement style for international balladry, with orchestral arrangements complementing each act’s distinct musical frameworks. Nevertheless, their differing artistic influences, levels of politicization, and individual histories contributed to the complex matrix that was Colombian *canción protesta*.

***Pablus Gallinazo: “A Flower to Chew on”***

From his artistic beginnings in the 1960s to the present day, the singer-songwriter Pablus Gallinazo (né Gonzalo Navas Cadena) has made little effort to obfuscate his strong political views. As he recounted from the stage at a rare concert appearance he made in July 2013 in Bucaramanga, Santander, Gallinazo was involved for a time with the Liberal Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal, MRL), a socialist faction of the Liberal Party during the 1960s whose youth wing helped form the ELN (Palacios 2006:188; Vargas Velásquez

1994:120).<sup>185</sup> When Gallinazo became an integral member of the *nadaísta* movement with his win in the Nadaísta Novel Competition in 1966, *nadaísmo* figurehead Gonzalo Arango gave Gallinazo the secondary nickname “El Comandante” (The Commander) because of his strong leftist political views. As one supporter commented in 1971, the chosen artistic surname of *gallinazo* (buzzard) symbolized the musician’s “indiscreet devotion to defiance, rebellion, and ignominy.”<sup>186</sup>

Earlier in the dissertation, I noted that Gallinazo was a pioneer of *canción protesta* in Colombia, was involved with the grassroots movement at the CNCP in its early days, and established a reputation for writing lyrics that sympathized with the guerrillas. I also proposed that inasmuch as they foregrounded violent imagery and presented rationalizations for guerrilla violence, several of his texts exhibited rhetorical traits that were thoroughly in line with the grassroots repertoire. When I spoke with Gallinazo at his airy home in a middle-class neighborhood of Bucaramanga in 2013, he told me he had staked out a clear position for himself on the use of violence to right social injustices while studying law at the elite Externado University in Bogotá. In 1968, he told an audience member at one of his recitals that the main theme of his protest songs was “violence ... and by violence I mean everything related to salaries below 500 pesos.”<sup>187</sup> Thirty-five years later, Gallinazo (p.c.) explained that his “thesis was ‘if hunger kills, killing due to hunger is a legitimate defense,” and he pointed to the song “Ni flores ni peces” (Neither Flowers nor Fish) as one that encapsulated this philosophy. In the refrain, the song’s narrator states:

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<sup>185</sup> Gallinazo’s song “La gente de la gran ciudad” (Folks from the Big City) concerns students at Santander Industrial University who were part of the MRL and later perished in one or another guerrilla group.

<sup>186</sup> *El Tiempo*, March 24, 1971.

<sup>187</sup> *Cromos*, February 5, 1968.



Aquí te traigo lo que pude traer	Here I bring you what I could bring
Será muy poco, y no es para comer	It isn't much, and it's not edible
Traje el revólver y la carabina con esta canción	I brought a revolver and a rifle with this song
Para que veas que si no hay comida	So that you see that if there's no food
De alguna manera la consigo yo	I'll get some somehow

As I mentioned in chapter 2, Gallinazo's song "La mula revolucionaria" (The Revolutionary Mule) was very well-known in the grassroots circuit. Its lyrics were printed in the three protest song anthologies from which I derived the repertoire selection. The song is a straightforward ode to Che Guevara and other lesser-known soldiers who gave their lives waging battle in Marxist-inspired guerrilla groups throughout Latin America (Cepeda 1996). Although Norman y Darío included a cover of "La mula revolucionaria" on the LP they recorded for CBS, it was Gallinazo's song "Una flor para mascar" (A Flower to Chew on) that—building on his earlier success with the *nueva ola* hit "Boca de chicle" (Bubblegum Mouth)—helped project his name into the mainstream. If "Mula" was representative of Gallinazo's inclination to extol revolutionary guerrillas in his songs, "Flor" was emblematic of his preoccupation with the complementary themes of social and economic injustice. Eliana (p.c.), who also recorded the song, described it as "a lament of someone who can't find work," and indeed, the text unambiguously lays out the travails of a narrator-protagonist living in abject poverty. In the song's final strophe, Gallinazo addresses a topic that recurs throughout the Latin American *nueva canción* repertoire (Barzuna 1997:173-6)—the role of the Christian religious establishment in perpetuating economic inequalities:

El reloj se ha dañado  
Pero el hambre despierta  
Son las seis y en la puerta  
Oigo un hombre gritar  
Vendo leche sin agua  
Vendo miel, vendo pan  
Y dinero no hay

[Estribillo]

Por eso salgo siempre a caminar  
En busca de una flor para mascar  
Pensando que a la vuelta de la tarde  
El trabajo que sueño ya es verdad

Y recorro el camino  
Reconozco al mendigo  
Siento que vive en mí  
Como el sol sobre el trigo  
El sencillo estribillo  
Que una vez le aprendí

[Puente]

Y yo camino y no termino :||  
Seré yo así o es que  
El camino no tiene fin

Tengo los pies cansados  
Mi boca está reseca  
Son las seis en la iglesia  
Oigo el cura mandar  
Que tengamos paciencia  
Que templanza clemencia  
Que Dios proveerá

The clock is broken  
But the hunger wakes me  
It's six o'clock and at the door  
I hear a man shout  
I'm selling milk without water  
I'm selling honey and bread  
But money there's none

[Refrain]

And that's why I always go out to walk  
In search of a flower to chew on  
Thinking that upon my return in the evening  
The job I dream of will come true

And I walk the road  
I recognize the beggar  
I feel that s/he lives in me  
Like the sun on the wheat  
The simple refrain  
That once I taught her/him

[Bridge]

And I walk and keep walking :||  
Is that who I am or is it  
That the road has no end

My feet are tired  
My mouth is dry  
It's six o'clock and in the church  
I hear the priest command  
That we must have patience  
That temperance and mercy  
That God will provide

Unlike "La mula revolucionaria," "Una flor para mascar" did not appear in either of Gac and Valencia's anthologies or the *Guitarra y fusil* songbook. I thus did not include it in the

grassroots *canción protesta* repertoire I delimited for analytical purposes in chapter 2.<sup>188</sup> CNCP activist Alejandro Gómez (1973) explicitly voiced the kind of rationale that may have led to its exclusion from these volumes:

Pablus Gallinazo, who participated [in the CNCP] in the first phase, became independent and began to record albums that were somewhat commercial. Initially, his songs were radical. But subsequently, he started to write songs like “Principito gamincito” [The Little Street Urchin Prince] and “Una flor para mascar,” which won some festivals of so-called protest song—even though protest singers were not the only ones who participated in them—that took place in San Andrés as fundraisers for a church. In reality they did not interpret the real sense of protest song, since the problems were treated in a patronizing or paternalistic manner, not as a denunciation. The [lyrical] content in the songs was no more than a kind of whining about a child abandoned in the streets, or about unemployment, as in ‘Una flor para mascar,’ which has been quite popularized and has even become known internationally.

On the other hand, “Una flor para mascar” did make it into the songbook *El 41 cancionero popular*, which was put together by supporters of the Communist Party, and can therefore be said to form part of the fringes of the grassroots repertoire. Moreover, at least some militant leftists associated “Flor” directly with the youthful revolutionary promise of the late 1960s. As long-time M-19 member Vera Grabe (2000:33) wrote in her memoir about that era:

In Colombia young people fought against the antiquated direction of their Party and revolutionary youth founded the modern guerrilla organizations. ... Camilo Torres joined the guerrilla and fell in combat. The *nadaístas* trampled on vestigial relics in the Cathedral of Medellín. Many did not comprehend their actions, but almost of all of us sang “La flor para mascar” with them.

For his part, the former Minister of Education Abel Naranjo Villegas proposed that by focusing on the true social costs of capitalism, “Una flor para mascar” was emblematic of the way in

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<sup>188</sup> Curiously, a song by the title of “Cansado de mascar flores” (Tired of Chewing Flowers), which was attributed to Gustavo Gómez Ardila, and contained lines of text that were remarkably similar to “Una flor para mascar,” was printed in *Guitarra y fusil*, and that song was part of my analysis. Although Gallinazo (p.c.) referred to that version as a “quasi-parody,” I cannot speculate as to the circumstances behind the resemblance.

which the “new” phenomenon of *canción protesta* diverged from previous musical styles that were primarily concerned with romance. In “Flor,” he stated, “a situation of vital necessity is put forth, and not a personal sentiment.”<sup>189</sup>

As mentioned, “Una flor para mascar” travelled beyond the activist world and even the broader population of leftist-by-association university students. The song’s major break came when it took first place in the second Bogotá International Song Festival (II Festival Internacional de la Canción de Bogotá, FICB) in 1971. By Gallinazo’s account (p.c.), “Flor” triumphed in the festival against all odds. Eliana, who had been slated to perform it, withdrew her participation only days prior, and it was passed on to the Chilean *nueva ola* singer Carlos Contreras.<sup>190</sup> The song contest jury, which was not sympathetic to *canción protesta*, was apparently pressured into awarding the song the top prize when the audience sang along with the catchy refrain during Contreras’ performance. As a result of the victory, the famed Caravelli Orchestra recorded “Flor” for CBS records in France.<sup>191</sup> It also appears to have propelled the song onto national radio. A journalist following the Tour of Colombia cycling race the same year noted: “The music in fashion in the small towns is the same that plays at all hours in the capitals. You can’t hear much more than ‘Una flor para mascar,’ Pablo Gallinazo’s prize-winning song at the Bogotá International Song Festival. ... It is another miracle of the transistor.”<sup>192</sup> Eduardo Arias (2015) mused that “Flor” was an “alternative national anthem” in the early 1970s whose refrain was widely known. When Eliana included her recording of the song on her LP *La voz del*

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<sup>189</sup> *Arco* 167, December, 1974.

<sup>190</sup> Eliana told me in an interview that she did not participate with the song because she did not like the arrangement. See also *El Tiempo*, June 26, 1971.

<sup>191</sup> *El Espectador*, June 18, 1971.

<sup>192</sup> *El Tiempo*, May 5, 1971.

*amor y la protesta* (The Voice of Love and Protest), the issuing record label thought it worthwhile to print “Includes Una flor para mascar..!” on the album cover:

**Figure 3-3.** Cover of Eliana's LP *La voz del amor y la protesta*



Gallinazo’s recording of “Flor” was released on an eponymous LP on the Discos Orbe label, and featured a sparse instrumentation of acoustic and electric guitars, electric bass, and organ. Alfonso Lizarazo produced the record, which also included “La mula revolucionaria” and “Cinco balas,” and rock guitarists Arturo Astudillo and Norman Smith performed on it. Soon after the FICB win, “Flor” was arranged as a *cumbia* and recorded by Los Graduados and Billo’s Caracas Boys. While the Venezuela-based Caracas Boys orchestra was part of the “old guard” of *música tropical* bands focusing on Colombian *costeña* music in the style of Lucho Bermúdez, the Antioqueño Los Graduados helped propagate a simplified and modernized variant of this

music in the late 1960s that was called *chucu-chucu*.<sup>193</sup> This style, which was influenced musically and imagery-wise by rock and roll, was marketed widely by domestic record labels and was very successful commercially, especially among the middle classes in the large cities of the interior (Wade 2000:167-71; Waxer 2002:61). The Caracas Boys and Graduados versions are remarkably similar, both employing the same main horn riff—based on the melody of the original chorus—and simplified *cumbia* beat.

In general terms, “Una flor para mascar” did not evince the predominant textual characteristics I identified for grassroots *canción protesta* in chapter 2. In contrast to the discursive modes Gallinazo adopted in several other compositions—those that Alejandro Gómez may have labelled as “radical”—the songwriter did not collectivize his downtrodden protagonist’s hardships in order to link them to Marxist class struggle, nor did he offer “revolution” or any other organized resistance as a remedy to the injustice portrayed; the guerrillas and their guns are a conspicuous absence in the song’s text. The fact that “Flor,” rather than Gallinazo’s harder-hitting protest songs, was his biggest hit thus may have validated cynics’ beliefs that the music industry was intolerant of overt expressions of resistance. Nevertheless, “Flor” did generate some oppositional credibility, and it is likely that it became linked in some people’s minds with his other songs. As such, in spite of Gómez’s direct reference to thematic concerns about “Una flor para mascar,” I contend that it was not primarily the song’s lyrics—nor those of other Pablus Gallinazo songs—that alienated Gallinazo’s former accomplices at the CNCP. Rather, I believe that its wide circulation via commercial circuits, especially in the form

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<sup>193</sup> *Música costeña* (literally, coastal music) is a broad category that includes a wide gamut of styles from the Atlantic/Caribbean coast region (*la costa*); mass-mediated forms of *música costeña* are often glossed as *música tropical*.

of covers by other artists, inherently violated a boundary they had set around their conception of the category of *canción protesta*.

The trajectory of Pablus Gallinazo's most famous song has meant that its legacy, and by extension that of its author, straddle the sometimes-blurry line between the historiography of *canción protesta* and the memorialization of the 1960s-pop counterculture. "Una flor para mascar" was inevitably included on compilations of Gallinazo's and Ana y Jaime's hits, which were given titles like *Canción protesta: Grandes éxitos de los 60s* (Protest Song: Greatest Hits of the '60s, 1996). In the era of *canción social*, the song earned spots on compilations such as *Canción social: De la protesta a la propuesta* (Social Song: From Protest to Proposal, 2000). However, "Flor" also appeared alongside "Boca de chicle" and numerous other *nueva ola* and early rock and roll songs of a non-protest variety on the LP *Nostalgia de los 60's* (Nostalgia for the '60s, n.d.) and the CD *Recordando y añorando los revolucionarios años 60s* (Remembering and Longing for those Revolutionary '60s, 2000). Eliana's recording of the song can be heard on the 1998 compilation *Baladas* (Ballads), whose cover image consists of a couple embracing in a row boat.

### ***Ana y Jaime: "Coffee and Oil"***

As discussed in chapter 1, Ana y Jaime were active participants of the *peñas* held at the Protest Song Center in the years 1969-1971. Their involvement with the CNCP exposed them to music by artists who became icons of the Latin American *nueva canción* movement, and led to their songwriting collaboration with the militant leftist poet Nelson Osorio. It is thus not surprising that their debut album, *Diré a mi gente* (I Will Tell my People, ca. 1971), was dominated by songs that exhibited the hallmarks of the grassroots repertoire: the album's title track, with a text written by Osorio, evokes the hardships of *campesinos* and the wrongs committed upon them by

military forces; Venezuelan *nueva canción* musician Ali Primera's "Dispersos" (Dispersed), glorified the model of armed insurrection taken up by the likes of Camilo Torres; Uruguayan *nueva canción* titan Daniel Viglietti's "A desalambrar" (Let's Take Down the Fences) addresses inequitable land distribution.<sup>194</sup>

The track listing for *Diré a mi gente* also included two of Ana y Jaime's best-known songs. Written by Osorio, the text of "Ricardo Semillas" concerns peasant land struggles, and many people have recognized the political sentiment it voiced.<sup>195</sup> Vera Grabe (2000:49) reports that an ad-hoc ensemble she formed with other activists in the early 1970s performed "Ricardo Semillas," along with the pertinent tune "A la mina," at an event for carbon miners. A musician in Medellín described the song to me as "very oppositional [*contestataria*], very leftist in its time," citing the song as evidence that Ana y Jaime's work was "straight up protest [music]." After explaining that he and his cohort of activist-artists downgraded Ana y Jaime's status in the classification of *canción protesta* because of their media presence, Efraín Franco (p.c.) immediately interjected: "Although the text of 'Ricardo Semillas' is really one of protest [*reivindicación*], isn't it?"

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<sup>194</sup> Although "A desalambrar" is a *nueva canción* classic that was also recorded by Víctor Jara, many Colombians are most familiar with Ana y Jaime's rock and roll version.

<sup>195</sup> In the song's title, the word "Semillas" (seeds) figures as Ricardo's surname and evokes the metaphor carried through in the lyrics, in which Ricardo's words—and indeed, his very being—are likened to seeds.



“Ricardo Semillas”  
(Nelson Osorio / Ana y Jaime)

Ricardo reunió a los hombres  
Y les habló con despacio  
Palabras verde-esperanza  
Teñidas de sal y selva  
Les dijo: la vida es nuestra  
También es nuestra la tierra  
Y las palabras que traigo  
Son semillas también nuestras

La aldea ese día nuevo  
Amarró el sol al recuerdo  
Y sintió que el aire tibio  
Se llenaba de sucesos:  
Un disparo cortó el viento  
Con sed de sangre emboscada  
Y Ricardo dobló el cuerpo  
Sin terminar la palabra  
Ricardo murió ese día  
Hermano de hombre y semilla  
Murió mirando la vida  
Que entre sus manos moría

“Ricardo Semillas”

Ricardo gathered the men  
And spoke to them slowly  
Words of green-hope  
Tinged with salt and rainforest  
He told them: this life is ours  
And so is the land  
And the words that I bring  
Are our seeds

The town on that new day  
Tied the sun to memory  
And felt that the warm air  
Was filling with happenings:  
A shot cut through the air  
With the thirst of a bloody ambush  
And Ricardo doubled over  
Without ending his speech  
Ricardo died that day  
Brother of man and seed  
He died looking at the life  
That perished in his hands

If “Ricardo Semillas” was a song that enjoyed dissemination via the commercial media while continuing to resonate strongly in the activist community, “Café y petróleo” (Coffee and Oil) had a slightly lesser connection to grassroots *canción protesta*. Along with Gallinazo’s “Una flor para mascar,” the song was one of the most widely known in the *canción protesta* genre in the early 1970s (Arias 2015).<sup>196</sup> Although the song was published in *Guitarra y fusil*—along with “Ricardo Semillas” and “Diré a mi gente”—it generally lacks the thematic trademarks of the grassroots repertoire. The lyrics juxtapose neighboring nations Colombia and Venezuela’s

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<sup>196</sup> Ana y Jaime heard “Café y petróleo” at the 1971 Coco de Oro Festival, where it was performed by its original author, Venezuelan musician Manuel de la Roche.

shared historical bonds—flags sporting the same three colors; Simón Bolívar as liberator from Spanish rule—with symbols of their distinct cultural identities: Colombia’s coffee production, *cumbia* music, and aguardiente liquor, versus Venezuela’s oil reserves, *joropo* music, and rum; typical expressions from both nations are also alternated. In the years leading up to 1971, the two countries had been involved in an acrimonious dispute over maritime sovereignty in the Gulf of Venezuela / Coquivacoa (Vázquez Carrizosa 1983:398), and Ana Valencia (p.c.) saw in the text the articulation of a Latin Americanist sentiment that pervaded leftist circles at the time the song was popularized. As she described it, the song “spoke of the conflict between Colombia and Venezuela, and ... says it’s easier to join your oil, my coffee, and do something better, because I think basically we always wanted to fight to get South America ahead.” Jaime would later state that the “song proposes that we are fighting amongst ourselves while somebody else makes off with the products.”<sup>197</sup> Their interpretations reaffirm my perception that the author intended the Colombia-coffee / Venezuela-oil metaphors to represent national natural resources ripe to be auctioned off to foreign corporations—i.e. the fictional “Coffee Petroleum Company” mentioned in English in the text. It was this dimension, perhaps, that led a journalist covering the 1971 Coco de Oro to describe “Café y petróleo” as “a true protest song.”<sup>198</sup>

Ana y Jaime’s first recorded version begins with a simple riff played in unison on an electric organ and electric bass. The drums join in on the same rhythm, then give way to the triple-time verse, on which electric guitars help to outline a straightforward chord progression. The form of the text consists of a single verse and extended refrain, during which the time signature shifts to a duple-time rock feel:

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<sup>197</sup> “Entrevista con los cantantes,” YouTube video, interview with Ana and Jaime Valencia, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toi499c5KVA> (video deleted).

<sup>198</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 23, 1971.

Tu patria es mi patria  
Tu problema es mi problema  
Gente, gente  
Tu bandera es mi bandera  
Amarillo oro  
Azul sangre azul<sup>199</sup>  
Y el pobre rojo sangra que sangra  
Que sangra que sangra

[Estribillo]  
Café y petróleo  
Cumbia del mar  
Joropo del llano  
Aguardiente y ron  
Hola chico, ala coca-colo  
Cónchale vale  
¿Cómo son las vainas?  
A cinco el saco  
A locha el barril  
¡Vendo, vendo, vendo, vendo, vendo,  
vendo!  
¿Quién da más? ¿Nadie da más?  
Entonces vendido a la Coffee  
Petroleum Company

Simón Bolívar, libertador  
Murió en Santa Marta  
En Caracas nació

Porque no importa donde se nace  
Ni donde se muere  
Si no donde se lucha

Your homeland is my homeland  
Your problems are my problems  
People, people  
Your flag is my flag  
Golden yellow  
Blue blood blue  
And the poor red that bleeds  
That bleeds that bleeds

[Refrain]  
Coffee and oil  
Cumbia of the sea  
Joropo of the plains  
Liquor and rum  
*Hola chico, ala coca-colo*  
*Cónchale vale*  
*¿Cómo son las vainas?*<sup>200</sup>  
The sack sells for five  
The barrel's at eight  
Selling, selling, selling, selling, selling,  
selling!  
Going Once, Going twice  
And sold to the Coffee Petroleum Company

Simón Bolívar, the Liberator  
Died in Santa Marta  
In Caracas, he was born

Because what matters is not where one is born  
Nor where one dies  
But rather where one fights

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<sup>199</sup> The original text here was the more logical “azul mar azul” (blue sea blue), which was incorrectly transcribed for Ana y Jaime’s first recording of the song (“Entrevista Ana y Jaime,” YouTube video, 15:30, interview by Pilar Hung on the television program *Generación R*, Cali TV, uploaded March 28, 2011, <https://youtu.be/LPc746Sk97Q>). They rectified this error when they re-recorded it for their 1999 CD *La huida* (The Escape).

<sup>200</sup> The untranslated lines are a series of colloquial greetings used in Colombia and Venezuela.

Maintaining the overall tone set on *Diré a mi gente*, Ana y Jaime’s next album, *Este viento* (This Wind, ca. 1972), was built around three political texts written by Nelson Osorio—these were the only tracks on the album whose lyrics were printed on the back cover. During an interview on Cali TV on the occasion of a tour Ana y Jaime were doing in 2015, Jaime Valencia was unequivocal in stating that the album’s title track would have been understood, at the time of its release, as a call to armed revolution.<sup>201</sup> In the text’s central metaphor, Osorio represented the guerrillas as winds-of-change, and the refrain centers around the imagery of a lover’s gun/rifle. As we have seen, this was a commonly used trope in grassroots *canción protesta* to denote the guerrilla struggle:

Este viento, amor,	This wind, love,
Que conmigo en la montaña está	That is with me in the mountains
Que contigo en la batalla está	That is with you in battle
Silbando siempre esta nueva canción	Whistling always this new song
Tu fusil, amor,	Your rifle, love
Es la música más libre bajo el sol	Is the freest music under the sun
Es sangre y es futuro del amor	It is blood and the future of love
Tu fusil, mi amor	Your rifle, my love

There can be no question that in channeling the politically defined postures of Nelson Osorio Marín, Alí Primera, Daniel Viglietti, and Víctor Jara—Ana y Jaime popularized the latter’s song “Ni chicha ni limoná” (Neither One Thing nor the Other) in Colombia—the duo’s music took on a leftist hue. A former M-19 revolutionary associated Ana y Jaime with the politically charged cultural panorama that reigned at the National University in the early 1970s, and included the greats of Latin American *nueva canción*, Bogotá’s independent theater scene, and the adulation of figures like Che, Camilo Torres, and Mao (Vásquez Perdomo 2005:28).

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<sup>201</sup> “UNA ENTREVISTA DIFERENTE CON ANA Y JAIME,” YouTube video, 31:06, interview by Pilar Hung on the television program *Generación R*, Cali TV, conducted in March 2015, <https://youtu.be/ZZdRL896vOI>.

During that time, a reporter covering the 1971 Coco de Oro lauded the artists for being authentic voices of protest, and another journalist writing in 1975 asserted that Ana's "tender voice ... attacks the powerful from the acetate of her records."<sup>202</sup>

Yet the political image the young musicians projected was counterbalanced by their own politically ambiguous stances. The writer just quoted made his or her claim despite eliciting the following responses to interview questions for the pair:

Jaime: Our song has no political color. It is simply a denunciation.  
[...]

Interviewer: Your songs are considered political, or of protest. Have you defined yourself politically?

Ana: I don't like talking about politics. I consider myself an ordinary woman of my time. But I'm not blind and know that things are happening. My song is not political nor of protest. It is simply a message.

Ana and Jaime's elusiveness with regards to their personal politics was reflected in the heterogeneous makeup of their repertoire. As Ana stressed in her interview with me: "We've always sung songs of all kinds, not necessarily social songs. ... It was always that way. It was like that on all the records. ... For example, we sang very pretty love songs, so people remember them as much as 'Ricardo Semillas' and 'Café y petróleo.'" A recent retrospective of Ana y Jaime on the website of RTVC, the national public broadcaster, similarly recalled that "protest and love were their central themes."<sup>203</sup> Notwithstanding the many songs on *Diré a mi gente* that would have been of interest to *canción protesta* enthusiasts, the album also included translated covers of "Love Story" (the theme from the film of the same name) and the Italian rock ballad

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<sup>202</sup> *Revista Antena*, December 20, 1975.

<sup>203</sup> "Ana y Jaime: Su mensaje, su música, su memoria," *Señal Memoria*, RTVC, April 30, 2016, <http://www.senalmemoria.co/articulos/ana-y-jaime-su-mensaje-su-musica-su-memoria>.

“Nina Nana”—an entry in the 1971 Sanremo festival.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in addition to the Nelson Osorio tunes that were the focus of *Este viento*, Ana y Jaime recorded Spanish versions of the country-rock tune “Mr. Bojangles” and the Bee Gees’ “Melody Fair” for that record. The duo maintained a similar thematic distribution on their subsequent releases.

Certainly, this significant component of Ana y Jaime’s output connected the group to the worlds of mainstream *nueva ola* and rock. Alfonso Lizarazo produced the albums *Diré a mi gente*, *Este viento*, and *Ana y Jaime* (1977), and prominent *nueva ola* guitarists Arturo Astudillo and Harold performed on them. Ana y Jaime’s music circulated regularly on commercial radio, and they appeared on shows like *¿Qué hace la juventud?* (What are the Youth up to?) and *Mano a mano musical*, where they appeared alongside pop singer Claudia and Luis Gabriel.<sup>205</sup> The group continued to maintain ties with the rock world through the mid-1970s, performing at rock festivals like the 1976 Festival de la Amistad (Friendship Festival), where they shared the stage with Colombian rock legends Los Flippers, Génesis, and Gran Sociedad del Estado (see figure 3-4).

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<sup>204</sup> *Billboard*, March 6, 1971.

<sup>205</sup> Valencia, p.c.; *El Tiempo*, August 12, 1975. The notes to the 1989 LP *Canción protesta* state that Ana y Jaime “appeared on every musical television show there was.”

**Figure 3-4. Poster for the 1976 Festival de la Amistad (Ricardo Waldmann personal collection)**



It is crucial to note, however, that it was not only the lighter side of Ana y Jaime's repertoire that drove their high profile in the media. The duo's protest songs with clear allusions to leftist politics were also popularized through industry channels. Writing decades later on Ana y Jaime's status as "idols" in the early 1970s, a journalist remarked that their music figured prominently in radio stations' programming "despite the fact that many of their tunes were protest songs, like 'Ricardo Semillas.'"<sup>206</sup> The inclusion of "Este Viento" and "Ricardo Semillas" on hits-of-the-year compilations released by major record companies in the early 1970s clearly shows that those songs had a strong presence on commercial mass media.<sup>207</sup>

Given Ana y Jaime's early involvement with the CNCP, their connections with *nueva ola*, their own apolitical stances, the bifurcated nature of their repertoire, and the commercial

<sup>206</sup> *El Tiempo*, October 30, 1991.

<sup>207</sup> "Ricardo Semillas" was included on the Famoso/Codiscos release *Lo mejor del '72* (The Best of '72), while "Este Viento" made it onto the same label's *Exitometro Vol. 8* (Hitometer Vol. 8). Information on these releases is available from the website of the Quindío Music Museum (<http://www.museomusicalquindio.com/>).

success they achieved, it is not surprising that—much like Pablus Gallinazo—their oeuvre has been remembered in different ways (see Nárval 2002:124). On one hand, they are often held up as “true standard bearers of protest and its most faithful interpreters” (Vélez 1991). Recalling, as many left-of-center artists I spoke to did, that some of the compositions Ana y Jaime performed championed the armed struggle, one musician I spoke to went so far as to make up the adjective *guerrillongas* (openly expressing support for the guerrillas) to describe them. It may not be surprising to learn that the producers of a special May Day program on Colombian National Radio in 2016, which discussed the topic of *canción protesta*, chose to lead it off with an Ana y Jaime tune.<sup>208</sup>

On the other hand, an article announcing Ana y Jaime’s return to the stage in 1982 after some years of absence billed their performance as a special event for “lovers of romantic music”—no mention was made of *canción protesta*—and they have become integral figures in the historiography of the *balada* in Colombia alongside mostly apolitical crooners.<sup>209</sup> Referring to the duo, musician Ricardo Waldmann (p.c.) stated: “So they go hand in hand with Óscar Golden, Harold, Billy Pontoni, Marisol, Vicky, and Fausto—in sum, with that *nueva ola* group; with Spanish-language rock and ballads.” Songs like “Café y petróleo” may be found today on mp3 compilations such as *Recuerdos de ayer – baladas* (Memories of Yesterday – Ballads), which ambulant entrepreneurs peddle on the streets of downtown Bogotá. Some observers also point to Jaime’s move to writing advertising jingles and music for popular television shows as a factor that further undermined Ana y Jaime’s claim to the “protest” label. At a concert of theirs I

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<sup>208</sup> Interestingly, however, the programmers did not opt for obvious choices like “Ricardo Semillas” or “Café y petróleo,” but rather the innocuous-seeming “Historia de amor” (Love Story). One can see through this selection how certain “non-political” songs can be imbued with political significance by virtue of the associations ascribed to its performers and other items in their repertoires.

<sup>209</sup> *El Tiempo*, February 5, 1982; see Vélez (1999).



attended in a large, packed theater in Bogotá in 2011, just as many people—if not more—sang along with the jingles Jaime performed (including one for Coca Cola) as with their old *canción protesta* hits.

### ***Eliana: Call it What You Will***

While Pablus Gallinazo maintained a fairly consistent political track in his work, and Ana y Jaime gradually became distanced from the politics of grassroots *canción protesta* as the years passed, the singer Eliana became progressively more militant in her musical approach in the course of her brief professional career. Eliana (Gloria Bongcam) started out singing what she (p.c.) called *canción normal* (“normal” song) and dabbled for a time in *canción romántica* (romantic song). She began to forge her identity as a “rebellious” singer through her work with the *nadaístas* in the late 1960s.

Like Ana y Jaime, Eliana appears to have had one foot in the pop world and another in the world of grassroots *canción protesta* for a time. She performed with musicians affiliated with the CNCP as far back as 1968, and participated in the First Festival of Protest Song hosted by the Center in 1970.<sup>210</sup> By 1971, a profile on the artist in *El Tiempo* called Eliana “possibly the most distinguished protest singer of the moment in Colombia. ... She knows what she is protesting.”<sup>211</sup> At the same time, an article in *Cromos* earlier that year described her as “the most sought-after singer and the one with the most possibilities,” with no mention of her protest orientation.<sup>212</sup> She was a regular performer on television (Nárval 2002:109) and released a steady stream of records with the Sonolux label.

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<sup>210</sup> *Voz Proletaria*, September 24, 1970

<sup>211</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 18, 1971.

<sup>212</sup> *Cromos*, February 22, 1971.

During our interview at her home in the middle-class Modelia neighborhood of Bogotá, Bongcam pointed to two foundational events that contributed to the development of her social and political consciousness. The first was hearing Argentine *nueva canción* progenitor Atahualpa Yupanqui's song "Preguntitas sobre Dios" (Questions about God), which questions the existence of God in light of widespread human exploitation. For Bongcam, the text offered a new perspective on her own religious upbringing and apprised her to the realities of life for many on the South American continent. The second catalyst for her politicization was accompanying her husband, the well-known journalist Elkin Mesa, on a visit to a slum. These episodes prompted Bongcam to begin a search for songs that would fulfill her newfound desire to "help contribute to there not being so much misery" (Bongcam, p.c.).

Although she was branded with the *canción protesta* label early on, Eliana's records increased in their political content through the initial years of the 1970s. Her first album for Sonolux, *Tómame para ti* (Take me for Yourself, ca. 1970), was, as the title might suggest, largely made up of romantic ballads. The title of the subsequent release, *La voz del amor y la protesta* (The Voice of Love and Protest, ca. 1971), similarly alluded to the division in its contents. While the second side of the record was dedicated to love songs, the first led with Gallinazo's "Una flor para mascar," followed by "La cosecha nueva" (The New Harvest). Written with Raúl Rosero and appearing in *Guitarra y fusil*, the text of "La cosecha nueva" advocated for the rights of *campesinos* to invade arable lands in order to provide for their families. Eliana's next album, *Romántica y rebelde* (Romantic and Rebellious), showed a similar thematic distribution.

The last two commercial LPs Eliana released demonstrate her progression as a socially committed artist. With *Semillas y canciones que caminan* (Seeds and Songs that Roam, 1974),

Eliana initiated her own association with protest poet *par excellence* Nelson Osorio on the two first tracks. In “Semillas que caminan” (Seeds That Roam), Osorio represented Camilo Torres, Che, and Chilean socialist President Salvador Allende as the immortal seeds from which Latin America’s future would bloom. “Nunca apuntes a este lado” (Never Aim this Way) implores a soldier to never aim at any members of the sacred triumvirate of communist-inflected discourse: the workers, students, and peasants who fight for freedom from their oppression. As was the case on her other LPs, Eliana recorded songs from the Latin American *nueva canción* repertoire for *Semillas*, including Alí Primera’s “Las casas de cartón” (Cardboard Houses) and Daniel Viglietti’s “Camilo Torres” (originally titled “Cruz de luz” [Cross of Light]).

While all the songs on *Semillas y canciones que caminan* save for one had an obvious social or political theme, on *Píntela como quiera* (Call it What You Will, ca. 1975) Eliana’s protest quotient reached one hundred percent. Osorio penned half of the songs on the album, several of which were musicalized by acclaimed Colombian *música llanera* (music from the plains region) artist Arnulfo Briceño. In table 3-1, I provide a brief synopsis of each of the record’s twelve tracks, per my interpretation of their texts, and I will discuss the album’s most infamous song, “La jugada del mundial,” in greater detail later in the chapter.

**Table 3-1. Synopsis of songs on Eliana's LP *Píntela como quiera***

Song	Composer(s)	Synopsis
“Píntela como quiera” (Call it What You Will)	Nelson Osorio / Arnulfo Briceño	Many ignore problems faced by populace, deny validity of workers’ strikes and peasant rebellion; narrator has defined her stance, channeling the people’s will in her voice.
“Zamba Colombia”	Nelson Osorio / Eliana	Colombia is a land of alienated workers, embittered people, browbeaten miners; the song is offered to the narrator’s people ( <i>pueblo</i> ) so that they may sing and tear down fences.

“Manuel”	Nelson Osorio / Grupo “La Candelaria”	Ode to heroism and immortality of a guerrilla fighter (likely FARC leader Manuel Marulanda).
“Ay mi Chile” (Oh, my Chile)	Nelson Osorio / Arnulfo Briceño	Chile has been taken over and injured by foreign-backed, fascist vultures, but the people’s spirit will endure.
“Cuál de ellos es usted” (Which Side Are You on?)	Adaptation of Chilean folklore by Eliana	There is a fundamental distinction between two types of Colombians—exploiters and workers; asks laborers of all kinds to choose a side, noting the workers’ struggle has begun.
“La jugada del mundial” (The Playing of the Cup)	Nelson Osorio / Eliana	Warns Colombians that hosting the World Cup will be paid from their pockets; is a mere distraction from nation’s problems; will worsen economic conditions.
“Chombo”	José Barros Junior	Afro-Colombian narrator has suffered to the point of bursting; argues for dignity of blacks.
“Campesino colombiano” (Colombian Peasant)	N/A	Colombian peasants are exploited and marginalized; narrator calls for them to demand school for their children and their own land to work.
“Qué más quieren los señores” (What More do they Want)	Arnulfo Briceño	Colombian politicians are corrupt and deceitful and ignore the people’s needs.
“Zamba de Víctor” (Víctor’s Zamba)	Nelson Osorio / Víctor Jara	Denunciation of the murder of Víctor Jara and celebration of his legacy.
“Ora sí entiendo porque” (Now I Understand Why)	Pedro J. Ramos	Peasant narrator comes to realization of his exploitation and why students call for revolution.
“Las cosas que yo canto” (The Things I Sing)	Eliana	Eliana’s personal defense of singing protest songs; justified by the conditions of the people for whom she fights.

Bongcam (p.c.) acknowledged that her growing affinities with people and music linked to grassroots *canción protesta*, which were reflected in the makeup of her studio albums, marked a change from her earlier output. She described the songs that resulted from her collaborations with Osorio as “strong,” adding that by that point she had become “very aggressive,” and “had a very direct message.” Notably, Bongcam avowed that her shift in musical approach was

concomitant with her adoption of key leftist ideals—namely, support for the guerrillas. When I asked her how she viewed armed revolution at that time, Bongcam replied: “Oh, I thought that was wonderful. ... People thought that the solution lay there and many of us were on that bandwagon. ... I agreed that the guerrillas should exist, and we sang and went all over making revolution.”<sup>213</sup>

In tandem with her shifting musico-political orientation, Eliana experienced changes in the contexts in which she performed. Corroborating the perspective of other musicians who defined “authentic” *canción protesta* in large measure by its mode of dissemination, Bongcam (p.c.) struck an essential distinction between the fora for the different categories of music in which she worked: “With romantic song there was television, social clubs, discotheques, bars. ... And then with protest [song], well, I sang wherever there was a strike; a union would call me and I would go running.” Eliana’s engagement with activist causes earned her sympathies from activists in the Communist Party, and in 1974 she was invited to join an artistic delegation to participate in the II Conference of Political Song in Cuba, along with Alejandro Gómez and Arnulfo Briceño (Díaz-Granados 2014).

Eliana’s growing commitment to the vision of *canción protesta* that had been cultivated in the grassroots movement can also be tracked through press coverage, where it did not go unnoticed. In 1973, for example, *El Tiempo* reported that Eliana travelled to Chile—by that time an important hub for protest music in South America—to perform at a festival of protest song, “the specialty which is the strength of our artist.”<sup>214</sup> With the release of *Semillas y canciones que caminan*, critics had plenty of material with which to describe Eliana’s work in the area of

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<sup>213</sup> Although Bongcam stated that she liked the music of Ana y Jaime and was friends with the young musicians, she contrasted the political stance in their work with her own: “They were not as radical as me, nor as aggressive. ... They sang mild little things, like ‘Coffee and Oil.’”

<sup>214</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 3, 1973.

*canción protesta*. One blurb advertising the album touted that “political song—in the most artistic and professional sense of the expression—has reached its peak in popularity in Colombia with Eliana’s new long-play.”<sup>215</sup> Another 1974 profile of the artist is worth quoting at length:

They say Eliana does not sell records. And it is probably true. Because what Eliana sings, generally speaking, is not susceptible to commercial voracity. It is not for secretaries in love that buy records on payday and prefer “how lovely is the blue sky at the foot of your window...” But the thing is that a new Colombia is emerging on the streets, in the schools, in the factories, in the hills: less simplistic, more serious, less tacky. That is the Colombia that listens to and understands Eliana’s songs, but doesn’t have money to buy them because they are students, workers, or peasants. ... The songs aren’t propagandist [*panfletarias*] nor complicated—two of the vices to which political music is most frequently subject.<sup>216</sup>

Perhaps the best indication of the inroads Eliana made among leftists was the appearance of a full-page advertisement for *Píntela como quiera* in a 1975 issue of *Alternativa* magazine. Founded by activists who would go on to work on a newspaper run by the M-19, and with support from communist sympathizer Gabriel García Márquez (Vásquez Perdomo 2005:70; Santos Calderón 1989:129), *Alternativa* tended to dedicate much more space to grassroots events and artists, as well as the stars of the international *nueva canción* movement, than to the purveyors of commercially mediated *canción protesta* in Colombia. As we shall see below, leftist journalists may have taken an interest in Eliana precisely because her work began to face obstacles from corporate entities.

### ***Luis Gabriel: “The Revolution Will Come”***

Born in the Atlantic coast city of Barranquilla in 1950, Luis Gabriel was the only one of the mainstream *protesta* artists to have been raised outside the interior highland region.

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<sup>215</sup> *Cromos*, June 17, 1974.

<sup>216</sup> *Cromos*, June 3, 1974.

Nevertheless, it was while boarding at the San Bartolomé La Merced School in Bogotá that Jesuit teachers inculcated Luis Gabriel Naranjo Arce with the beginnings of a social consciousness. Later, while studying in Spain in the late 1960s, Luis Gabriel was introduced to the music of Catalan *nova cançó* (new song) icon Joan Manuel Serrat, who would remain a dominant influence on his early songwriting. As Luis Gabriel stated in a recent television interview, “With Serrat I became a leftist. [Argentine protest signer] Piero also impacted me tremendously.”<sup>217</sup> Notwithstanding the general political orientation he was taking on during these formative years, when we spoke in 2014 Luis Gabriel stressed that, much like Ana and Jaime Valencia, he eschewed concrete ties with any particular political party or movement: “I was never politically active in absolutely anything. I was always independent.”

Luis Gabriel came on the popular music scene with his second-place finish in the 1972 Coco de Oro Festival with the song “Por favor sonría” (Please Smile).<sup>218</sup> The songwriter admitted (p.c.) that the ditty was more of an optimistic musing on the beauty of life than a protest song, but his record label saw potential in its catchy refrain and encouraged him to enter it in the competition. It was the song “Así es mi pueblo” (That’s How My Country Is), which was the runner up in the following year’s Coco de Oro, that launched Luis Gabriel into the world of *canción protesta*.<sup>219</sup> Describing the inspiration for “Así es mi pueblo,” Luis Gabriel stated that upon his return from Spain, he “realized that in Colombia there was a model of a dominant and

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<sup>217</sup> Interview by Pilar Hung on *Generación R*, Cali TV, DVD.

<sup>218</sup> “Luis Gabriel: Retorno a los 20 años,” *El Tiempo*, August 12, 1992, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-177842>. It should be noted that while the first two iterations of the Coco de Oro Festival centered around protest song competitions, the third, which took place in Barranquilla in 1972, was billed instead as a “Festival of Free Song” (*El Tiempo*, July 5, 1972). Pablus Gallinazo’s song “Hay un niño en la calle y un diamante en un baile” (There is a Child on the Street and a Diamond at the Dance) was awarded the Golden Coconut that year (*El Tiempo*, August 13, 1972; *El Tiempo*, August 22, 1972). In 1973, the event was once again christened “Coco de Oro International Festival of Free Song” (*El Tiempo*, May 31, 1973).

<sup>219</sup> “Luis Gabriel: Casi 40 años de vida artística,” typed biography, Microsoft Word file, Luis Gabriel Naranjo Arce personal collection.

oppressor class with a deceived populace” (McCausland Sojo n.d.). The song’s lyrics evoke traditional life in mid-century Colombia, depicting townsfolk pacified by their blind devotion to the Church and dishonest politicians, as well as by their passion for merrymaking:

Mi pueblo se ha quedado sin pescado Y la carne en el mercado, racionada está Los cerdos y gallinas van de huelgas Los borrachos van de juerga Y los niños a rezar Aprisa, aprisa el cura llama misa	My town has been left without fish And the meat at the market is being rationed  The pigs and chickens are striking The drunks are partying And the children go to pray Quickly, quickly, the priest is calling mass
Las comadres con sus suegras Todas con vestidos negros Se apresuran por llegar Y yo que ando sin trabajo Con el pelo alborotado Me voy al parque a observar	The women with their mothers-in-law All dressed in black Hurry to arrive And I who am without work With my hair unkempt Go to the park to watch
A las gentes de un partido De los hombres oprimidos Que todo van a cambiar Con mentiras y un camino De promesas, cuentos chinos Por qué todo siempre igual?	The people from the Party Of oppressed men Who will change everything With lies and a string Of promises, tall tales Why is it always the same?
[...]	[...]
[Estribillo III] Beber, cantar, bailar Mi pueblo así se olvida de llorar	[Refrain III] Drinking, singing, dancing That’s how my people forget to cry

Initially released on Luis Gabriel’s eponymous debut LP (ca. 1973), “Así es mi pueblo” was evidently something of a hit. A music video for the song, which made a splash on the television show *Mano a mano musical*, may have been among the first to have been produced in Colombia, and the song made it onto the compilation album *Lo mejor del ’73* (The Best of



'73).<sup>220</sup> Buoyed by the success of this quasi-protest song, Luis Gabriel's producers at the record company Codiscos sought to further exploit the protest element on his follow-up recording, *Y un día quise cantar* (And One Day I Wished to Sing). According to Luis Gabriel (p.c.), the label pressured him to include "political songs" by militant Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti and Chilean *nueva canción* singer Ángel Parra on the album. Benedetti's "¿De qué se ríe?" (What Are You Laughing about?) condemns a "minister of the impossible" for appearing on the front page of the newspaper laughing euphorically while the common people suffer and the nation is sold off to the gringos;<sup>221</sup> Parra's "La televisión" is a sardonic missive on the vacuous programming and crass commercialism of the medium.

Luis Gabriel maintains that he was opposed to recording the songs by other composers. "I wanted to record my songs," he told me, "what I thought and felt." Nevertheless, the pressure from Codiscos to engage more deeply with *canción protesta* inspired the songwriter to pen his own protest songs. He described "Yo le vendo vendo vendo" (I Will Sell You Sell You Sell You), which lambasts the rampant commercialism he associated with a controversial financial instrument known as the UPAC (Unit of Constant Purchasing Power), as the song in his corpus "that most says something" (p.c.).<sup>222</sup> However, the Luis Gabriel composition that most closely emulates the lyrical traits established by the likes of Nelson Osorio and others in the grassroots scene was "La revolución vendrá" (The Revolution Will Come). Recorded for his third LP, *Esto*

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<sup>220</sup> *El Tiempo*, April 18, 1974; the music video genre was described here as a cinematographic-song trailer (*trailer cinematográfico-canción*).

<sup>221</sup> The editors of *Alternativa* appear to have used the text of "¿De qué se ríe?" as inspiration for the cover of an issue published on July 8, 1974, bearing the poem's title as headline. The cover image depicted a caricature of President Pastrana smiling widely while the bodies of the worker, peasant, and student organizers he trampled during his four years of presidency lay bloody behind him.

<sup>222</sup> The Pastrana government introduced the UPAC system in 1972 in an effort to boost housing construction (Palacios 2006:233). The initiative drew criticism from the Left, which maintained that it only served to further enrich big business (*Tribuna Roja*, April 11, 1974), and it has been blamed for many families losing their homes (Ramírez Vélez 2000).

*de ser artista* (The Life of an Artist), “La revolución vendrá” reflected the longing among a wide swath of leftists in Colombia for a Cuban-style revolution, and the hope that many—Luis Gabriel included—invested in the guerrillas to achieve it. The song, which Luis Gabriel called “very strong,” is by far the most political on the album.

The recorded arrangement for “La revolución vendrá” departs slightly from the *circense* (circus-like) style Luis Gabriel (p.c.) employed in “Así es mi pueblo” and other songs. In the song’s grandiose introduction bombastic trumpet lines sound in counterpoint to the “la” vocables Luis Gabriel sings on each quarter note in 3/4 time. A fill on the tom drums ushers in the duple-time, polka-march feel—with off beats played on electric guitar—over which the majority of the text is sung. In contrast to the predominant sprightly tempo, a slower rubato section helps dramatize the message of the last strophe excerpted below:

Explicale a tu abuelita,  
Anda, dile a tu papá  
A tu mamá y la sirvienta  
La revolución vendrá

Explain to your grandmother  
Go on, tell your dad  
Your mom and the maid  
The revolution will come

Vendrá porque cada día  
Muchos niños mueren de hambre  
Mientras tú dejas la sopa  
Que porque tiene tomate

It will come because each day  
Many children starve to death  
While you push away your soup  
Because it has tomato

Vendrá porque tu papá  
Ahora tiene tres amantes  
Tres Cadillacs más y en sus fábricas  
Mil obreros muertos de hambre

It will come because your father  
Now has three lovers  
Three more Cadillacs while at his factories  
A thousand workers starve to death

Vendrá porque las paredes  
De tu ciudad están gritando  
Las injusticias sociales  
Que el pueblo está soportando

It will come because the walls  
Of your city are shouting  
The social injustices  
That the people are putting up with

[...]

[...]

Vendrá porque hay estudiantes	It will come because there are students
Y soñadores sin miedo	And fearless dreamers
Y los perros de tu casa	And the dogs in your house
Comen mejor que el obrero	Eat better than the laborer
Y vendrá quizá mañana,	And perhaps it will come tomorrow,
Dentro de un año o tal vez más	In a year or maybe more
Mas díles que estén seguros	But tell them they can be certain
La Revolución vendrá	The revolution will come

Luis Gabriel's flirtation with writing protest songs brought him into contact with pivotal figures from the grassroots movement. None other than Nelson Osorio sent the musician four poems for him to use, and he subsequently set the music to "Te tengo que dejar, amor" (I Have to Leave You, Love), which appeared on his next record (self-titled, 1977). Luis Gabriel referred to the song as the one "about the guerrilla fighter who was saying goodbye," and when in recent years a stranger told him that she joined the guerrillas because of his songs, Luis Gabriel suspected that "Te tengo que dejar" must have played a role. In light of Luis Gabriel's comments—not to mention Osorio's other song texts and his political affiliations—I interpret the text as centering around a guerrilla fighter who is leaving his or her comfortable life in the city, and along with it his/her lover, who refuses to join "the fight."

Osorio and Luis Gabriel ultimately struck up a friendship, and the singer would go on to meet Alejandro Gómez and members of the M-19 during the "leftist bohemian nights" he and the poet spent together in Bogotá. Luis Gabriel's initiation into the leftist intellectual nobility reached its zenith when he met Gabriel García Márquez. The famed novelist, whose assistant was Luis Gabriel's girlfriend, apparently facilitated the musician's participation in the Colombian delegation to the XI World Youth Festival in Cuba in 1978. Luis Gabriel appeared alongside the ensembles Yaki Kandru and Los Hermanos Escamilla at the Festival of Colombian

*Nueva Canción*, which showcased the Colombian musicians that would be representing their country in Cuba. The musicians from those other groups had much stronger connections to the Communist Youth (JUCO), whose members dominated the selection process and preparatory activities for the delegation.<sup>223</sup>

The efforts by staff at Codiscos to position Luis Gabriel as an oppositional artist, along with his collaborations and interactions with activist musicians, secured him a position in the pantheon of 1970s *canción protesta*. On the Codiscos compilation *Antología de la canción testimonio en Colombia* (Anthology of Testimonial Song in Colombia, ca. 1976), Luis Gabriel's contributions "Así es mi pueblo" and "¿De que se ríe?" were interspersed with tracks by *protesta* mainstays Gallinazo, Ana y Jaime, and Eliana. In 1977, a newspaper blurb announcing the publication of a book by Nelson Osorio similarly listed Luis Gabriel with Eliana, Ana y Jaime, and Norman y Darío as the "protest singers" that had interpreted the poet's texts.<sup>224</sup> Contemporary retrospectives of the artist also highlight his affiliation with *canción protesta*, with one article calling him "one of the pillars of Colombian protest [song]" (McCausland Sojo n.d.).

Although I have been emphasizing Luis Gabriel's connections with *canción protesta*, it is crucial to note that throughout his early career the artist had a strong profile in the mainstream media as a singer and composer of sentimental pop ballads. "Para ti Colombia" (For You Colombia), a song on his first album, was well received by the Colombian community in New York City and led to a gig at Carnegie Hall as part of a tribute to José A. Morales.<sup>225</sup> Instead of mocking his compatriots' shortcomings and vices, as he did in "Así es mi pueblo," in "Para ti Colombia" Luis Gabriel extolled the wonders of his nation's most recognized features and places

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<sup>223</sup> *Alternativa*, July 10, 1978; July 17, 1978.

<sup>224</sup> *El Tiempo*, January 4, 1977.

<sup>225</sup> Naranjo Arce, p.c.; *Billboard*, December 14, 1974.

over a stylized *bambuco* rhythm. Pop star Claudia de Colombia made an international hit out of Luis Gabriel's composition "Nuestra historia de amor" (Our Love Story), and the singer Isadora represented Colombia at the 1974 OTI song festival in Mexico with his romantic ballad "Porque soy la mujer, esperé" (Because I'm the Woman, I waited).<sup>226</sup> Unsurprisingly, the singer-songwriter has been dubbed a "legend of romantic song" (Rondón n.d.).

As described in the introduction to this chapter, Luis Gabriel appeared in many contexts alongside a who's who of Colombian media personalities. In fact, aside from his involvement with the delegation to the World Youth Festival in Cuba, Luis Gabriel seldom performed in spaces connected to activist movements. More typical were presentations on important television programs, as well as "grandiose shows" in upscale clubs and restaurants that were promoted through large advertisements in a city's premiere newspaper.<sup>227</sup> Just as Eliana associated her work in *canción romántica* and *protesta* with different contexts, these types of venues called for a specific repertoire from Luis Gabriel. During our interview, the singer explained that while some of his lighter protest songs were tolerated on television, songs like "La revolución vendrá" would have been inappropriate. Contrasting Eliana's insistence that she had embraced an "aggressive" tone in her artistry, Luis Gabriel explained a line of work that was so vital to him as such: "I was a television singer because I was young, handsome, and quite elegant; always in a tuxedo, and I sang sweetly and tenderly. ... I sang in discotheques, where I was featured as the midnight show. It wasn't a recital, or a concert, and none of that protest or social song. You sang there to enliven the event."

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<sup>226</sup> "Luis Gabriel: Retorno a los 20 años," *El Tiempo*, August 12, 1992, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-177842>.

<sup>227</sup> For example, see Cali's *El País*, October 9, 1976.

## **The Narrowing Field of *Canción Protesta***

With scant documentary evidence to draw upon and conflicting oral accounts from my interlocutors, the story of censorship of *canción protesta* during its heyday in Colombia from the late 1960s to the early 1980s is a difficult one to parse. As outlined above, during this period Colombia was governed under a State of Siege nearly three quarters of the time. Moreover, examinations of the procedures put into service through State of Siege decrees show that they were not always closely tied to the security threats authorities invoked to justify them. As such, I do not think it would be productive to attempt to correlate specific acts of musical censorship to particular enactments of State of Siege measures. My aim in this section, rather, is to illustrate two interrelated points: First, consistent with the broader patterns of state clampdowns on leftist organizing that have been identified for this era, from the mid-1970s onwards there was an increase in the intensity of intervention into artistic work that may have been considered subversive. Secondly, artists' divergent experiences of censorship, along with the sometimes-contradictory application of different types of censorship by diverse agents, can similarly be reconciled to the repressive climate fueled by the State of Siege.

Isolated incidents of censorship of music or musicians at least tangentially related to the world of *canción protesta* begin to appear in the historical record in the 1960s. In the introduction to the dissertation, I mentioned that in 1961 the folklorist Teófilo Potes was jailed for performing the prototypical Colombian protest song “A la mina,” as it was deemed to express communist ideas. In chapter 1, I also noted that Los Yetis' protest song “Llegaron los peluqueros” (The Barbers Have Arrived) was barred from radio in the late 1960s. Besides for these cases of censorship fulfilled, people in the know spoke and wrote about the probability that *canción protesta* would face censorship. In a 1967 article on *nueva ola* star Óscar Golden, which

was titled “Óscar Golden Says: Don’t Censor Protest Songs,” the singer was quoted as saying: “I don’t think there should be censorship against protest songs. That censorship does not officially exist, but the recording companies fear that they will be punished if they publish those types of records.”<sup>228</sup> Earlier that year, journalist Elkin Mesa wrote a sarcastic column warning the public that if they wanted to avoid being targeted by the secret police for having connections with the guerrillas, they would do well to “talk disparagingly about Pablus Gallinazo’s protest songs.”<sup>229</sup> Allegations of censorship continued in the early 1970s. As mentioned in the first chapter, a group competing in the 1971 Coco de Oro competition claimed that festival organizers had prohibited them from performing one of their songs because of the content of its lyrics.<sup>230</sup>

The first well-documented occurrence of *canción protesta* censorship came with the cancellation of a 1972 performance by Argentinean protest singer Piero. *El Tiempo*, which ran the story on its front page, reported that the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) revoked a permit granted the previous week for Piero to give a special performance for university students. Although no specific justification was offered, the press suspected that the song “Los americanos” (The Americans), released that year on Piero’s album *Coplas de mi país* (Verses from my Country), may have triggered the controversial suspension.<sup>231</sup> Written by fellow Argentine songwriter Alberto Cortez, “Los americanos” is a satirical attack on North American culture.

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<sup>228</sup> *Cromos*, July 10, 1967.

<sup>229</sup> *Cromos*, April 10, 1967.

<sup>230</sup> *El Tiempo*, July 17, 1971.

<sup>231</sup> *El Tiempo*, October 10, 1972. Marchini (2008:100) writes that the DAS cancelled the concert because students at a prior performance by Piero at Universidad de los Andes—a private institution—had been incited to shout slogans against the government. Giraldo Ramírez (1997:18) draws a loose connection between President Pastrana’s withdrawal of support for Medellín mayor Álvaro Villegas Moreno in the wake of the 1971 Ancón rock festival and the prohibition of the Piero concert a year later.

A couple of other aspects of this episode bear mentioning. First, the night before Piero had his concert cancelled, he received a gold record award from CBS records in Colombia. The fact that a subsidiary of a North American multinational celebrated Piero's protest music while Colombian authorities deemed it destabilizing demonstrates the potential disconnect between commercial musical production and establishment responses to oppositional expression. Secondly, a centrist columnist for *El Tiempo* conveyed his disapproval with the act of censorship, declaring that it "would be deplorable and depressing" if reactions to the song "Los americanos" were the primary motivation. He continued: "I don't dismiss, however, the possibility that there was in fact interference by those Herodian nuclei that act internally."

In my conversation with Pablus Gallinazo, the musician spoke in general terms about the obstacles he and his fellow *nadaístas* faced in trying to disseminate their ideas and literary works, and communicated his strong belief that his music had been subject to direct censorship:

And so it was full on war. A man from the military institute brigade—a sergeant—passed by all the stations with a Crayola scratching the records so that they wouldn't play them. So, they would only allow "Boca de chicle"—the ones that didn't say anything against the system. ... They played one or two innocuous tracks of mine.

Gallinazo also recounted that he once met a general who told him the army had been keeping an eye on him. The songwriter suspected that his conservative friends had helped shield him from harassment by security forces, even though he sometimes met with members of guerrilla organizations.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> While I cannot comment on them here, several reported incidents of attempted intervention into the work of political theater groups in the early 1970s—including at the Casa de la Cultura, where the CNCP was based—lend credence to the claims of musical censorship I have been describing (see *Voz Proletaria*, June 25, 1970; September 24, 1970).



Contrasting with the examples of documented and alleged censorship I have listed above, as well as the more dramatic cases I shall discuss below, are the testimonies that portray the era as one of unfettered liberty of political expression. While the suppression Gallinazo perceived may have come later in his career, for instance, it is telling that in 1968 Gonzalo Arango had ironically mourned the lack of repressive attention to Gallinazo's uninhibited work:

Now Pablus is releasing a long play with his protest songs—lyrics, music, and singing by him—in which he says what he thinks, what he loves, what he hates, without sparing any risk. ... If Pablus had released his record in North America or in Paris, one of two things would happen: He would be in jail, or become a millionaire. Here, nothing happens; they don't even arrest him. At most, democracy guarantees him the honor of starving to death.<sup>233</sup>

Although hyperbolically nostalgic in tone, a 1989 newspaper article looking back to the countercultural moment of the early 1970s noted similar dynamics. As the author wrote, at that time “you could protest and nobody said anything. ... You could read Marcuse, Engels, Mao, and Bertrand Russell, and nobody said anything.”<sup>234</sup>

Several of my interviewees who had been at the center of commercial *canción protesta* also denied that this music faced any form of restriction. Ana Valencia (p.c.), for example, was unequivocal in recalling her experience with Ana y Jaime:

AV: I can't say that they ever told us not to put a song on the radio or that somebody said “that song can't pass.” No, that never happened. There was always that freedom for the radio to play the songs they wanted.

JKR: So, there was never censorship of any kind?

AV: No, never. I mean, really from what I remember, never.

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<sup>233</sup> *Cromos*, February 5, 1968.

<sup>234</sup> *El Espacio*, September 8, 1989.

In a similar fashion, Humberto Moreno (p.c.), a veteran of the Colombian recording industry who worked with all four acts profiled in this chapter, reiterated emphatically several times that he did not recall a single instance when he or his colleagues felt compelled to place limitations on political content:

At least those of us who worked [at Codiscos] never faced any restrictions in terms of content. We were always open to whatever would come along with respect to popular and social expression. ... There was never any type of censorship in the musical arena, nor were there restrictions for dissemination on the radio, nor did the media ever exert any control over content. ... I don't recall that for even a second were there limitations on recording whatever we wanted to record, or that those of us who directed recordings experienced any political restrictions. ... There was no reason, to my knowledge, that Eliana's or Luis Gabriel's songs were stopped from being played—never.

### ***World Cup Soup***

In 1974, FIFA awarded the hosting of the 1986 soccer World Cup to Colombia. In my interview with her, Eliana explained that she became incensed at the idea that FIFA would demand the construction of enormous stadiums and other infrastructure that primarily benefited the international organization, while regular Colombians would end up bearing the financial brunt of hosting the event. Eliana got in touch with her song writing collaborator Nelson Osorio, and the pair composed “La jugada del mundial” (The Playing of the Cup) with assistance from Antonio del Vilar.<sup>235</sup> Labelled a *samba-malambo*, the song opens with an introductory riff on nylon-stringed guitars, which proceed to provide the chordal accompaniment under the sung verses; Latin percussion and electric bass round out the basic instrumentation.<sup>236</sup> Catchy verses, requiring little interpretation, give way to exclamatory refrains, in which Eliana's proclamations

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<sup>235</sup> The word *jugada* in the song's title also implies being tricked, or getting “played.”

<sup>236</sup> The *malambo* is a guitar-accompanied dance genre from the Pampas region of Argentina (Béhague and Ruiz 2017).

about the undesirable realities faced by the Colombian people are met by a chorus that exclaims in response: “Who cares! We’re hosting the World Cup!”:

Es mejor que sepas ya  
Que tú eres un jugador  
Del equipo perdedor  
Del campeonato mundial

It’s better that you know now  
That you are a player  
On the losing team  
Of the World Cup

Porque la sede mundial  
De tu bolsillo saldrá  
Como sale una jugada  
De antemano preparada

Because the World Cup  
Will be paid from your pocket  
Just like a play  
Devised in advance

Porque la sede mundial  
Es la ilusión de un buen gol  
Para que te olvides ya  
De tu hambre y tu sudor

Because the World Cup  
Is the illusion of a great goal  
So that you forget  
About your hunger and your sweat

[Estribillo I]

¡Si tú no tienes trabajo, qué importa!  
¡Si tu salario es limosna, qué importa!

[Refrain I]

If you don’t have a job, who cares!  
If your salary is no more than a handout, who  
cares!

¡Si en tu barrio no hay escuela, qué  
importa!  
¡Tenemos sede mundial!

If there’s no school in your neighborhood,  
who cares!  
We’re hosting the world cup!

[...]

[...]

Y la vida subirá  
Como un balón bien inflado  
Y en tu casa comerán  
Sopa de sede mundial.

And the cost of living will increase  
Like a well-inflated ball  
And in your house you’ll eat  
World Cup soup.

“La jugada del mundial” appears to have caused Eliana problems from the get-go.

*Alternativa* reported that the song was “immediately censored” by the artist’s label, Sonolux, which had been recently acquired by the entrepreneur (and future billionaire media and soft-drink mogul) Carlos Ardila Lülle. Sonolux’s manager ordered that the recording be archived, the

article's author speculated, because the firm would benefit from the World Cup taking place in Colombia. Eliana learned that the song was causing problems with people at Dimayor, the Colombian national soccer league, and that Sonolux was attempting to circumvent releasing it by telling her that the recording had been erased. She retrieved the master, however, and immediately signed a contract with Codiscos.<sup>237</sup>

Initially released as a single, "La jugada del mundial" was subsequently included on the LP *Píntela como quiera*. Although the song was played frequently on radio in the second half of 1974, as voices of opposition to Colombia's hosting of the Cup were mounting (Ayala Diago 2003:322), Eliana's difficulties were far from over. The song drew the ire of sports journalists, who clearly stood to benefit professionally from the event, as well as decision-makers at media outlets who did not agree with her position. The singer began to receive reports that her records were being scratched and that a "memorandum" was being circulated prohibiting her songs from being played. Advertisers were also pulling out from television shows on which she performed. Bongcam's (p.c.) memories of the backlash to "La jugada" were mixed with reactions to another antagonistic song on *Píntela*. A politician who was angered by "Qué más quieren los señores" purportedly tried to pay her to stop singing it, and she began to lose support from people in upper-class circles.

As I described above, leading up to the recording of *Píntela como quiera*, Eliana had progressively sought to fill her repertoire with songs that evinced the characteristics of grassroots *canCIÓN protesta*. Because her prior work had not faced obstacles, the reactions to the material on that album were unanticipated:

I think people were very unconscious then. It's as if they didn't get the messages.  
I sang all sorts of foolish things and nothing happened—until we woke up and

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<sup>237</sup> *Alternativa*, October 10, 1974.

finally with the [song] about the politicians it was a rude awakening, and an awakening for the people in charge, so it was then that they shut me up.  
(Bongcam, p.c.)

Sympathetic to broadcasters who were suffering the consequences of their continued support for her work, and facing pressure from the media and the political sector, Eliana decided to retire from the “commercial part” of her career.

### ***Taking on the Gorillas***

The censorship to which Eliana became subject was symptomatic of the narrowing space for political dissidence in the mid-1970s, a reality that is substantiated by other incidents. In 1976, for example, acclaimed dramaturge Eddy Armando and other associates involved with the progressive La Mama Theater were imprisoned for unknown reasons and allegedly subjected to extreme forms of interrogation.<sup>238</sup> Later that year, *Alternativa* chronicled actress Fanny Mikey’s performance at a gala for the First Lady’s birthday. Although they were initially pleased with the show, a group of ministers in attendance fell silent after the section based on Mario Benedetti’s poem “¿De qué se ríe señor ministro?” (What Are You Laughing about, Mr. Minister?), which “depicts all the vacuity, ineptitude, and repressive pleasure of any minister in any Latin American country.” As we have seen, this was the same text that Codiscos pressured Luis Gabriel to record only a few years earlier to boost his image as a protest singer. In this case, however, two days after the controversial performance, the Minister of Communications cancelled a television show Mikey had been developing.<sup>239</sup>

The final episode I will recount is based solely on the oral account of one musician. While the lack of documentary evidence obscures the precise chronology of events and makes it

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<sup>238</sup> *Alternativa*, April 13, 1976.

<sup>239</sup> *Alternativa*, October 4, 1976.

difficult to confirm specific details, the consistency with which the narrator has described various aspects in different interviews lends them an aura of veracity. Moreover, the type of interference from the security apparatus he details is very much in keeping with historical accounts of the period in question.

Upon his return from the 1978 World Youth Festival in Cuba, Luis Gabriel claims to have given statements to the press praising the Cuban Revolution and its leader, Fidel Castro. According to the singer, the declarations put him on the radar of paramilitary groups. However, Luis Gabriel's real troubles appear to have come a few years later. In 1979, he travelled to Spain, and during that trip he spent time with Piero and came across publications of Spanish protest songs. Inspired by his stay across the Atlantic, and encouraged by the fact that he had never experienced repressive reactions to his music, sometime around 1981 Luis Gabriel undertook a publicity stunt with three songs he had composed, which he described as "powder kegs" for their subversive content.<sup>240</sup> One of these songs, "Día de pecados" (Day of Sins), poked fun at Father Rafael García Herreros, the founder of the hugely successful religious charity El Minuto de Dios (The Minute of God). During our interview, Luis Gabriel recited an excerpt of the never-recorded text:

Hoy cometí un pecado, señor cura,  
Me acordé de la madre del patrón  
Me confundió con un perro o un  
    esclavo  
Y yo pensé, sólo pensé en la  
    revolución.

Today I committed a sin, Father  
I remembered the boss's mother  
She confused me with a dog or a slave  
  
And I thought, I only thought of the  
    revolution

Hoy cometí un pecado, señor cura  
Al ver su cara severa y moralista  
Perdone padre me dio la risa  
Y me tocó salir corriendo de su misa

Today I committed a sin, Father  
When I saw your strict and moralistic face  
Forgive me, Father, it made me laugh  
And I had to run out of your mass

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<sup>240</sup> Interview by Pilar Hung on *Generación R*, Cali TV, DVD.

Qué voy a hacer con mis pecados,  
señor cura  
Si yo no quiero ir al infierno ni  
quemarme  
Quiero vivir y ser feliz sin  
preocuparme  
Más no quisiera en otra vida  
condenarme

What shall I do with my sins, Father  
  
As I do not want to go to hell or burn  
  
I want to live and be happy without  
worrying  
But I don't want to be condemned in  
another life

Given his impressive charitable work constructing entire neighborhoods for low-income families, which caused some to dismiss him as a communist, García Herreros would seem to be an unlikely target for a protest song (Ortega Guerrero 1992). In his explanation, Luis Gabriel (p.c.) referred to García Herreros' oft-criticized interactions with drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, but these occurred much later. More pertinently, the priest's religious "puritanical" and "parochial" discourse clashed with the artist's sensibilities, especially after his experiences with the "irreverence" of Spanish culture.

The second song in this trilogy of unpublished works, "Mi circo" (My Circus), portrayed the chaotic reality into which Colombia was slipping as it entered the heyday of the cocaine trafficking cartels, but it was the song "Los gorilas del planeta" (The Gorillas of the Planet) that appears to have garnered Luis Gabriel the most unwanted attention. Luis Gabriel told me he wrote "Los gorilas del planeta" in response to the proliferation of dictatorships in Latin America; it "called those who had taken power by force 'gorillas,' so using the word 'gorillas' was sort of like exposing the plans of many people who were thinking about causing mischief [*dar su gorilada*]." <sup>241</sup> This message was specifically aimed at then Minister of Defense Luis Carlos

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<sup>241</sup> The songbook *Guitarra y fusil* contains several songs—including from outside Colombia—in which *gorila* is clearly used to denote a despotic and repressive dictator. This is the case, for example, in the song "Los gorilas" (The Gorillas), by Mexican José de Molina (see also Franco-Lao 1970:96).

Camacho Leyva, who had indicated in statements to the press that the military would take over power if deemed necessary for the nation's stability (Valencia 1986:124). It appears that Luis Gabriel concocted a publicity stunt whereby it was announced that the musician was nominating himself to the Nobel Peace Prize with "Los gorilas," with the support of television and radio personality Humberto Martínez Salcedo. The story was picked up by other news outlets, including a newspaper that published the song's "subversive" lyrics alongside a photo of the singer.

Although the purported self-nomination to the Nobel Prize had been done in jest, Luis Gabriel's friends warned him that he would be affected by the Security Statute, the name given to the collection of special measures put in place by Turbay Ayala's government in September 1978. Justified by the upcoming anniversary of a national strike, the Statute contained provisions for censorship over radio and television and expanded military detainment of political prisoners (Gallón Giraldo 1979:129-42). As predicted, the Security Statute "visited" Luis Gabriel. The military broke down the door to his home in order to search it, and Luis Gabriel claims he began to notice sketchy characters watching him, that he received threats via telephone, and that a bullet was even shot into the window of his bedroom. While he was never detained, the attention from the security establishment caused him an enormous amount of stress, leading him to seek refuge with a sojourn outside Bogotá. As described in the introduction, photographs from the era show the normally clean-shaven celebrity wearing an uncharacteristically messy beard. Luis Gabriel also turned to the Bible, renewing his Christian faith "after twelve years of atheism," and he maintains that faith to this day. His appearances on television—previously a vital component of his career—came to an end.



## Conclusion

Until about 1971, the category of *canción protesta* was closely associated with a grassroots movement that had been established by activists and artists with links to leftist organizations. The music itself was primarily disseminated in non-commercial venues and through non-commercial media: at the *peñas* at the Casa de la Cultura, at festivals at the CNCP, at political events, in various songbooks, and via independent recordings. As of the early 1970s, however, the term *canción protesta* was more frequently applied to music that was released by commercial record labels and showcased in the mainstream media. For several years, *canción protesta* was a marketable commodity, and recording companies actively highlighted their artists' engagement with this genre. Pablus Gallinazo and Ana y Jaime were the first bona fide *canción protesta* musicians to receive backing from the music industry, and they had strong connections to the grassroots movement. There was thus a degree of overlap between the “grassroots” and “commercial” *canción protesta* repertoires.

My examination of the four main acts associated with the commercial *canción protesta* trend reveals that this group of musicians was by no means monolithic. While in the broadest sense all these artists shared a world view that skewed leftward, each experienced a distinct political trajectory that shaped their musical production, its reception, and its legacy. Pablus Gallinazo's strong political convictions remained consistent throughout his early career, and he was the only one to have been involved with a political organization. Although Ana y Jaime popularized songs by Colombian and foreign songwriters with solid leftist credentials, the pair rejected any kind of political affiliation. Eliana espoused a similar type of political independence, yet the singer became more radical as her career progressed. For his part, Luis Gabriel's artistry

was driven by an idiosyncratic social consciousness; he eventually devoted a portion of his output to harder-edged protest songs and established relationships with more militant artists.

Numerous factors affected how these artists and their music were received by different constituencies. Pablus Gallinazo, for instance, wrote several songs praising the guerrillas, and these appear to have been adopted into the grassroots repertoire. However, it was his less combative composition, “Una flor para mascar,” which became a hit and elicited covers by musicians with no ties to *canción protesta*. Although some of the activists that gravitated towards grassroots *canción protesta* may have associated “Flor” with the dynamic political organizing of the era, its commercial success has placed it in the wider domain of 1960s-1970s Colombian popular music.

Ana and Jaime Valencia were less politically grounded than Gallinazo as individuals, and yet the gate-keepers in the grassroots scene likely considered their most widely played songs to be “authentic” oppositional gestures. Rock and roll ballads also figured prominently in Ana y Jaime’s repertoire, however, and the group is therefore just as integral to the history of *nueva ola* as it is to that of *canción protesta*.

Sonolux’s efforts to curtail the release of Eliana’s song “La jugada del mundial” unquestionably bore out some of the critiques made by activists from the grassroots movement who asserted that commercial recording companies would only accept a watered-down type of protest music. Nevertheless, Codiscos’ willingness to promote the song, along with Eliana’s most openly confrontational album, demonstrates that corporate entities cannot be tarred with the same brush. Luis Gabriel’s incursions into the world of *canción protesta* offer further evidence on this point. Although Alejandro Gómez did not specifically name Luis Gabriel as an example of an artist that “did not interpret the real sense of protest song” because his music was

“commercialized” (see chapter 1), my guess is that Gómez would have extended that characterization to the romantic crooner. He may have questioned Luis Gabriel’s political sincerity even though Codiscos’ commercial imperatives led the singer to record songs by Mario Benedetti and Ángel Parra. Gómez and his activist comrades almost certainly glorified these foreign writers—in fact, Parra’s “La televisión” was printed in *Guitarra y fusil*.<sup>242</sup>

The historical record of alleged and documented cases of censorship in the orbit of *canción protesta* shows occasional incidents of the three main types Cloonan (2013) has identified—prior restraint, restriction, and suppression—as well as an intensification in the severity of censorship from the mid-1970s on. In his comments in 1967, Óscar Golden spoke about the likelihood that record companies would exercise *prior restraint* with some protest songs, and Eliana’s difficulties with “La jugada” were a conspicuous realization of his premonition. Even after Codiscos stepped in to publish her recordings, dissemination of Eliana’s music was *restricted* by media outlets. Evidently, the state apparatus was also prepared to *suppress* counterhegemonic artistic production when it was deemed necessary. Intervention from officialdom was at work in the case of Potes’ imprisonment in 1961, and in the DAS’s cancellation of Piero’s concert for students in 1972; Pablus Gallinazo also claimed that his music was suppressed by military agents. Luis Gabriel’s experiences at the turn of the 1980s exemplify a type of repression typical of authoritarian regimes.

The increasing frequency and gravity of artistic censorship from the early 1960s to the late 1970s is consistent with the general escalation identified in the use of repressive measures in successive Colombian governments during this period. Yet, behind this palpable shift, the picture

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<sup>242</sup> Not only did Codiscos push Luis Gabriel towards producing more protest material, but they also rejected some of his promising romantic ballads. This was the case with “Nuestra historia de amor,” which pop singer Claudia de Colombia ultimately popularized (Interview by Pilar Hung on *Generación R*, Cali TV, DVD.).

is complicated by several factors. For one, it is evident that different artists experienced disparate levels of censorship, although it is not possible to fully explain this divergence. Moreover, there were contradictions between the ways in which businesses and authorities responded to *canción protesta*, and between the different approaches taken to the same artist/music by different media companies. The DAS's unexplained suppression of Piero's protest music, only a day after his record label rewarded him for it, amply illustrates this kind of discrepancy. In my view, the seemingly arbitrary and often unpredictable application of musical censorship—as seen through the restrictions placed on commercial *canción protesta* in the 1970s—is entirely in keeping with the extended, uneven, and duplicitous use of State of Siege powers in Colombia.

In the cases of Eliana and Luis Gabriel, the different forms of censorship exercised against their music brought a definitive end to their public careers in the field of *canción protesta*. Pablus Gallinazo and Ana y Jaime also suspended their performances and recording work in the late 1970s. There are no concretely recorded links between the latter two acts' professional hiatuses and censorship, and there were likely other reasons for their decisions to step out of the limelight. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the mounting crackdown on oppositional expression undercut the politico-cultural conditions of the early 1970s that were propitious for the commercial viability of a type of protest music with unmistakable—albeit sometimes tenuous—connections to leftist organizing. The arrival of the 1980s effectively marked the conclusion of the phase of Colombian *canción protesta* that had been launched in the late 1960s from the junction of *nadaísmo*, *nueva ola*, and the leftist cultural movement connected with the Casa de la Cultura.

## **CHAPTER 4. Leaving the Pamphlet Behind: Activist Music and *Nueva Canción* in Bogotá, 1975-1994**

In an essay he wrote for a graduate seminar, ethnomusicologist Carlos Miñana Blasco (1994) reflected on his own experiences in what he called the “movimiento musical popular” (literally, popular musical movement) in Bogotá between 1975 and 1990. It is clear from Miñana’s discussion that he was referring to an extension of what I have termed the grassroots *canción protesta* movement of the early 1970s. In the mid-1970s, the activist pole of the movement Miñana described was made up of numerous ephemeral cultural “brigades” whose privileged performance spaces continued to be “the public plaza, the union, the strike tent, the protest march, at political acts in the universities, the neighborhood, the township.” For the most militant of these groups, political integrity outweighed artistic production. Their members saw themselves as activists first, and they carried out their work, largely without financial remuneration, in the name of “revolution”—the commercial outlets of the “bourgeoisie” were to be avoided at all costs. Evidently, the music these ensembles performed was not substantively different from the kind that was printed in anthologies of protest songs at the beginning of the 1970s: “The music was also militant, belligerent, with an emphasis on the texts (so much so that often popular traditional songs were set to pamphletary texts)” (*ibid.*).

During the period Miñana covers, however, many musicians in the activist field were reworking their relationships to leftist politics and to the types of music that had predominated within the Left until the mid-1970s. Specifically, they self-consciously initiated processes to abandon the *panfletario* (“pamphletary”) approach that had characterized the earlier wave of grassroots *canción protesta*. This change resulted from several interrelated factors. For one, newly emerging interpretations of Marxism displaced leftist organizations’ former dogmatism, and altered activists’ perceptions of folk, working-class, and popular cultures (Miñana Blasco

1994; see also Palacios 2006:238-9). In the early 1970s, communist groups—especially those of Maoist extraction—had begun to take a serious interest in peasant culture (Archila Neira 2008), and the concurrent rise of movements specifically dedicated to issues facing peasants and indigenous communities helped increase the visibility of these identities.<sup>243</sup> As artists engaged more deeply with rural traditions, they distanced themselves from the political organizations with which they had once been linked. Moreover, as musicians came to feel increasingly like they were being exploited by politicians and activists who viewed their artistry merely as a gimmick to draw in potential adherents, they sought further breaks from the institutional Left. Finally, many artists faced the need to sustain their families and to fund their musical, investigative, and pedagogical projects. They thus underwent processes of professionalization and made forays into commercial venues and media, which again necessitated dissociation from the ideological constraints that had previously guided their work.

In this chapter, I illustrate activist ensembles' transition away from the *panfletario* mode of *canción protesta* beginning in the late 1970s. To do this, I analyze the trajectories of several groups from the movement that Miñana (1994) labels the “movimiento musical popular.” For Miñana, this movement consisted of two main currents. Musicians and ensembles like Jorge Velosa, Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo, Nueva Cultura (New Culture), and Canto al Pueblo (Song to/for the People), all of which focused on Colombian peasant musics, made up the first of these. The second current was constituted by a variegated set of ensembles that were more attuned to international trends, such as Latin American *nueva canción*, and included Chimizapagua, Alma

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<sup>243</sup> The National Peasant Association of Colombia (ANUC), which was born out of a government initiative in 1967, quickly radicalized and coordinated a wave of land invasions in 1971 (Archila Neira 2003; Celis 2013; Zamosc 2001). That year, indigenous activists who had been involved with the ANUC helped form the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (CRIC); the regional scope of the indigenous movement was broadened in 1982 with the founding of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) (Archila Neira 2009; Findji 1992; Hristov 2005; 2009).

de los Andes (Soul of the Andes), El Son del Pueblo, and Iván y Lucía. As Miñana observes, in addition to their diverging musical orientations, these groups evinced different levels of political militancy. I thus gloss the “movimiento musical popular” as a multifaceted grassroots activist music scene that existed in Bogotá from the mid-1970s through mid-1990s.<sup>244</sup>

In the first part of the chapter, I look closely at two groups from the activist stream of the grassroots movement that exemplify the shift away from the *panfletario* approach to oppositional music: Canto al Pueblo, an ensemble formed in 1977 by politically minded university students, who were committed to practicing peasant musics from the Andean region of Colombia; and El Son del Pueblo, which, with its political brand of Caribbean music, effectively served as the house band of the Independent Revolutionary Workers’ Movement (MOIR) from its inception in 1975. In the latter part of the chapter, I profile Iván y Lucía, a duo that was active from 1983 to 1994, and which represents the *nueva canción* stream of the movement. Although Iván Benavides and Lucía Pulido came of age artistically as the *panfletario* age was dying out, they continued to react against it in their own compositions.

While songwriters and musical directors in these groups would come to purposely temper the political expediency of the song texts they performed, their members did not abandon their political views altogether. The musicians in Canto al Pueblo, for instance, intensely debated the changing orientation of their ensemble vis-à-vis Marxist philosophy. After MOIR-related events

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<sup>244</sup> Given that the *popular* aspect of the movement was crucial to how musicians involved with it conceived of their political identities, its translation merits further commentary. Although *popular* can denote, as “popular” does in English, something that is widely liked, its meaning here is quite different. “Grassroots” is a standard translation for *popular*—Tate (2007), for example, translates the Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular as Center for Grassroots Education and Research—and is appropriate in the case at hand. However, Miñana’s usage also connotes the “working-class/common-people’s” (another translation of *popular*) musics upon which many of the movement’s constituent musicians focused. Teatro La Candelaria director Santiago García encapsulated one strand of signification within activist artistic circles when he stated that *popular* refers to “the link between art and the most organized sector of workers; with the struggles for national liberation” (*Alternativa* No. 218, 1979). Of course, what it meant to be *popular* was the subject of debate amongst activists.

ceased to be Son del Pueblo's main opportunities for performance, its leaders rationalized their continuing activity in a different facet of leftist political life. While they resorted to a somewhat opaque poetic language, several of Iván y Lucía's songs grappled with the rampant political violence of the late 1980s. As such, I investigate the discursive processes through which the musicians that participated in the construction of this loosely knit movement imbued their music with social and political significance.

One of my central arguments in this dissertation is that changing political contexts in Colombia have demanded concomitant shifts in the discourses of resistance within which musicians and the public defined oppositional expression. I thus begin the chapter by summarizing the dramatic evolution of the Colombian conflict in the 1980s and 1990s, and highlighting how the turn of events helped transform perceptions of the armed struggle. Many of the socio-musical developments I discuss in the earlier part of the chapter in fact preceded the historical period I recount in the following section; they are more properly situated in the late-1970s context—marked especially by the increasing prominence of the M-19 and the ensuing spike in government repression—I outlined in the previous chapter. The episodes I narrate here are thus intended, in part, to bridge the historical record to the very recent past, which I address in the concluding chapter.

### **“The New Revolution is Unarmed”: The Evolving Colombian Conflict**

Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, attitudes towards the guerrilla struggle changed considerably within the Left. Guerrilla groups' escalating incursions into criminal activity, a string of misguided operations, and the failure of a series of peace negotiations were only some of the factors that cast increasingly darker shadows on the *guerrilleros* that once inspired hundreds of praiseful (protest) songs. Moreover, during this time the conflict was complicated by



a generalized climate of violence to which newly powerful drug cartels and nascent paramilitary organizations were key contributors.

The year 1985 marked a definitive turning point in the levels of sympathy previously accorded to the “leftist” guerrillas. In November of that year, the M-19 staged an assault on the Palace of Justice in Bogotá and took its occupants hostage. When the military responded by storming the Palace with tanks, much of the building went up in flames, and over one hundred people died, including Supreme Court judges. While the security forces eventually received some public condemnation for their role in the tragedy, the M-19, which had enjoyed greater popular esteem than the FARC or ELN (Holmes, Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Curtin 2008:134), initially took the brunt of the blame. That same month, leaders of a FARC dissident group known as the Ricardo Franco Front murdered over 150 of their own fighters, accusing them of being army spies—the event is known as the massacre of Tacueyó (Osterling 1989:321). Combined with the FARC’s increasing dependence on income from kidnappings and levies on drug trafficking, the Palace of Justice and Ricardo Franco incidents helped extinguish the “notion of the altruistic and heroic guerrilla” (Palacios 2006:208), and led to a steep decline in support for these groups (Grabe 2000:305; Tate 2007:100). Realizing that its military strategies had reached their limits, in the years following the Palace fiasco the M-19 moved to negotiate its transformation into a legal political movement. The group turned in its weapons in 1990, and the re-christened M-19 Democratic Alliance (AD M-19) played an important role in the drafting of the new constitution in 1991.

While the M-19 was in the process of demobilizing, the brutal repression of political activists nominally linked to the FARC provided a rationale for that guerrilla group to perpetuate the insurgency. A ceasefire between the FARC and the Colombian army in 1984 resulted in the

creation of the guerrilla's political wing, the Patriotic Union (Unión Patriótica, UP). Almost immediately, right-wing paramilitaries backed by state forces began harassing UP leaders and assassinating its members, on the premise that there was no fundamental distinction between UP activists and FARC militants. By the early 1990s, the killings, which also affected activists from other leftist and human rights organizations, tallied in the several thousands, prompting many to label the systematic extermination campaign a genocide. After a decent showing in the 1986 elections, UP presidential candidate Jaime Pardo Leal was murdered, and his successor Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa would meet the same fate in 1990; the M-19's commander-turned-candidate, Carlos Pizarro, was also killed that year.

The intense wave of repression led many on the Left to question the efficacy of the “combination of all forms of struggle” strategy that the Communist Party and the FARC had espoused since the early 1960s, and ultimately, to abandon it altogether. The UP was essentially the embodiment of the *combinación* philosophy, as its leaders claimed to be carrying out the revolutionary process through the electoral system, but initially refused to call for the FARC's disarmament (Dudley 2004:10; Pizarro Leongómez 1991:207). In the mid-1980s, however, it became clear that the association between the FARC and the UP made civilians involved with the latter organization easy targets of paramilitary action ostensibly aimed against the rebels; it would allow the Right to conflate the terms “leftist” and “subversive” (López de la Roche 1994:150-1). For a time, a faction of new UP supporters that wanted to distance the organization from the guerrillas coexisted with hard-liners from the Communist Party that held fast to the *combinación* logic. UP head Pardo Leal appears to have been reconsidering his support for the *combinación* at the time of his murder, and by 1990 Jaramillo openly renounced it, arguing that it did not make sense to talk of peace while waging war (Dudley 2004:87, 97, 133-5, 228; Grabe

2000:370). Striking a similar tone at the launch for his presidential campaign in 1990, the AD M-19's Pizarro pronounced that "the dogmas of the '60s have been exhausted and ... must be definitively overcome" (quoted in Grabe 2000:371). By contrast, for the FARC, the massacre of unarmed political activists was a sign that the path of armed action had to be kept open, and the guerrilla group grew significantly after the mid-1980s (Dudley 2004:170).

The dramatic rise in the power of Colombian drug cartels in the early 1980s, along with the shifting alliances between, and motivations of, various actors, further confounded the conflict between the state and the guerrillas (Archila Neira 2003:123). Created by the Medellín Cartel in response to the M-19's kidnapping of a family member in 1981, the paramilitary group Death to Kidnappers (*Muerte a Secuestradores*, MAS) targeted leftists in an effort to secure opposition from the military and elites to the enforcement of an extradition treaty with the United States. When government officials moved to take on the drug barons' operations and opened the door to extradition in 1984, however, the cartel bosses declared war. In the years that followed, paramilitary groups linked to the cartels killed or kidnapped hundreds of journalists, police officers, judges, and politicians, and set off bombs in the major cities and on commercial airliners (Bruce, Hayes, and Botero 2010:51; Palacios 2006:205-7). Rivalries between these organizations muddled the battle field to an even greater extent: the paramilitary group known as the PEPES (People Persecuted by Pablo Escobar) warred against the infamous Medellín kingpin with support from the Cali Cartel and the US Drug Enforcement Agency (Dudley 2004:196-7; Tate 2007:48-9).

It took the assassination of a prominent politician from one of the traditional parties, Liberal presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán, in 1989, for the political establishment to act decisively against the "narco-paramilitaries" (Archila Neira 2003:123; Dudley 2004:149; López

de la Roche 1994:93). Pablo Escobar is believed to have ordered the killing of the leading candidate, who campaigned on a strong anti-trafficking platform (Palacios 2006:212). While acts of “narcoterrorism” continued to strike fear into ordinary Colombians in the early 1990s, the government’s offensive eventually resulted in the elimination of top Medellín kingpins José Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha in December 1989, and finally Escobar himself in 1993.

According to Fabio López de la Roche (1994:228), Galán’s murder reinforced “the population’s weariness towards the violence and the lack of guarantees for life and political action in our country.” Indeed, the bloodbath of the late 1980s and debates around the writing of the new constitution in 1991 helped spur the mobilization of peace movements in Colombia. In 1993, the Catholic Church supported the creation of the national coalition Redepaz (literally, “Network for Peace”), which included participation by former M-19 guerrillas. Redepaz and other groups organized a series of peace marches in several cities that attracted tens of thousands of people. While critics of these early initiatives complained that they “did not advance any larger social consensus regarding specific policies to promote peace,” the campaigns brought together individuals from sectors that were traditionally at odds with each other, including representatives of business associations, unions, and human rights organizations (Tate 2007:67-70). Again, this broader societal shift was accompanied by further movement among a sector of leftists in their views on the guerrilla enterprise. Describing her thinking in 1994, for instance, ex-M-19 combatant Vera Grabe (2000:446) wrote:

I came to understand that being a rebel meant putting down arms as much as taking them up. Now being a rebel meant building peace, a change of mindset, persisting, persevering, resisting, in a country where the inertia of war imposes itself and tempts civilians to succumb to its logics. ... The new revolution is the one that is unarmed and wrapped up in peace.

## Activist Music in the 1970s-80s

In chapters 1 and 3, I described how the flurry of *canción protesta* activity that radiated out from the National Protest Song Center (CNCP) at the Casa de la Cultura between 1967 and 1971 waned in the early 1970s as mainstream focus shifted to protest singers who established a presence in the commercial media. The grassroots *canción protesta* movement became more diffuse around that time. Debates between groups associated with different leftist currents over ideological issues, along with the clandestine nature of some musicians' political affiliations, isolated activist-musicians from one another and undermined the sustainability of many ensembles. Nevertheless, a handful of enduring groups and institutions, and occasional high-profile events, helped maintain the "movement's" visibility in the late 1970s. The Teatro La Candelaria, as the Casa de la Cultura was renamed in 1971, continued to play an important role in the activist music scene (and continued to fall under the PCC's sphere of influence), supporting a certain Taller Musical de Bogotá (Bogotá Music Workshop) into the second half of the decade. Other collectives firmly rooted in the activist circuit included Yaki Kandru, which performed diverse Amerindian musics, and the Brigada Víctor Jara (Víctor Jara Brigades; Miñana Blasco 1994). Alejandro Gómez, one of the pioneers of Colombian *canción protesta*, also remained active, winning second and first places, respectively, in the first and second Víctor Jara Song Festivals, held in 1975 and 1976 (Díaz-Granados 2014). Gómez helped organize the fourth iteration of the festival in 1978, which consisted of several regional preliminaries where representatives were selected to compete at the finals in Bogotá.<sup>245</sup> Covering the event for *El Tiempo*, journalist Daniel Samper suggested that "the Festival offers an excellent occasion to

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<sup>245</sup> *Alternativa*, August 28, 1978. In addition to Gómez, the organizing committee included Ricardo Waldmann, and featured special performances by his ensemble, Los Amerindios, and José y Darío, the group formed by Iván Darío López after the dissolution of Norman y Darío ("La final del festival 'Víctor Jara,'" undated news clipping, Gisela Fernández personal collection).

renovate protest song, which was so rich a few years ago, and now, unfortunately, has become somewhat simplistic and sloganized.”<sup>246</sup> The delegation selection process for the 1978 World Youth Festival in Cuba provided another opportunity to bring together musicians from the activist sector, including Yaki Kandru and Los Hermanos Escamilla—as well as commercial *canción protesta* singer Luis Gabriel.

The tradition of disseminating song texts in printed anthologies—an indispensable practice of the grassroots *canción protesta* movement—continued in the activist milieu. In the early 1980s, Carlos Miñana edited a series of songbooks that he published with the NGO Dimensión Educativa (Educational Dimension). Titled *Cante compañero* (Sing Comrade), the series aimed to “collaborate with the diffusion of the songs that talk about our problems or those of our comrades in other places; songs that have helped us become conscious of the realities that affect us; songs that have motivated our popular struggles here and there” (Miñana 1981:1). The volumes brought together songs from the Colombian *canción protesta* repertoire, Latin American *nueva canción*, and other popular songs adopted by the movement. By the early 1980s, homemade cassettes distributed through activist networks were also a primary means of musical diffusion (see e.g. Tate 2007:87).

Several acts that would become well known for their research and performance of traditional Colombian musics originated in the arena of student activism in the 1970s. Having attended university in Cali during the tumultuous early 1970s, the *tiple* player Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo performed “protest *bambucos*” and *nueva canción* at student protests and other political events (Ochoa 1996:70-1). While pursuing university studies in the city of Armenia during the mid-1970s, some of the musicians who would go on to found Grupo Bandola (based in Sevilla,

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<sup>246</sup> *El Tiempo*, September 10, 1978.

Valle del Cauca) in 1982 were exposed to *nueva canción* through clandestinely circulated cassettes; they got their start singing “in the barrios, plazas and at student meetings” (*ibid.*:93). In Bogotá, the ensemble Nueva Cultura was formed in 1976 as part of a Maoist collective called Brigada Cultural (Cultural Brigade), which was based at the Universidad Distrital. The constituent groups of the Brigada Cultural “shared the common purpose of participating in protest and agitational activities at unions, strikes and other junctural sites of opposition with the student and workers’ movements” (*ibid.*:152). Canto al Pueblo, El Son del Pueblo, and to a lesser extent Iván y Lucía were part of the same broad grassroots assemblage of cultural workers as all these musicians.

Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo, Bandola, and Nueva Cultura all moved beyond the central Andean forms that predominated in *nueva canción* and launched distinguished careers in the field of traditional Colombian music. Renjifo and Bandola have focused primarily on Andean Colombian music, while Nueva Cultura broadened its repertoire to include *música llanera* and certain genres from the coastal regions. Because the dissertation of ethnomusicologist Ana María Ochoa (1996) documents these musicians’ histories and political-artistic trajectories in substantial depth, I do not examine their work closely here. Nevertheless, I was fortunate to have spoken at length with Renjifo and Nueva Cultura’s Nestor Lambuley, and more briefly with Rodrigo Muñoz of Bandola; I incorporate perspectives from the first two below.

Another important musician whose work I do not scrutinize in this dissertation is Jorge Velosa. In the early 1970s, Velosa was a militant activist in the student movement at the National University. His song texts from that time resembled others from the *canción protesta* repertoire; one musician I spoke to described his most (in)famous song from that era, “La lora proletaria” (The Proletarian Parrot), as “*repanfletaria*” (very pamphletary). By the mid-1970s, however,

Velosa was distancing himself from this type of *canción protesta* and the political settings that fostered it. He pioneered a brand of rural traditional music from his native Boyacá Department known as *música carranguera*, which has made him an icon of Colombian music. His recordings are now shelved beside other representative examples of national culture in shops at Bogotá's international airport. For many socially conscious artists, Velosa epitomizes the successful shedding of the *panfletario* identity.

Having inspired, collaborated with, or performed alongside almost all the musicians and ensembles mentioned in this chapter, Jorge Velosa was part of Bogotá's grassroots movement in the late 1970s and 1980s (see Miñana Blasco 1994). Many of my interlocutors lauded his transition from *canción protesta* to *música carranguera*, and were emphatic in stating that, although Velosa purportedly repudiates his militant past, his music did not cease to have a strong undercurrent of social commentary. Recent scholarly analyses of the *carranguera* genre that Velosa spawned have similarly argued that "its messages are permeated with social content" related to its evocation of daily *campesino* life (Sánchez Amaya and Acosta Ayerbe 2008:120). Others have identified a strong environmentalist concern in Velosa's oeuvre (Cárdenas and Montes 2009). Velosa himself has spoken up for *campesino* political movements, going on the radio in August of 2013 to express support for a national action by peasants who were demanding economic aid.<sup>247</sup> He has also appeared frequently in concerts in support of the most recent peace negotiations with the FARC that began in 2012.

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<sup>247</sup> "Velosa le dedica serenata a los campesinos," *Noticias RCN*, August 29, 2013, <http://www.noticiasrcn.com/tags/jorge-velosa>.



## What's in a Name? Canto al Pueblo Becomes Armadillo

The ensemble Canto al Pueblo (Song for the People) was formed in 1977 by a group of university students in Bogotá. Although the group dabbled briefly in South American *nueva canción*, the musicians' focus turned early on to peasant musics from the highland regions of Colombia—genres such as *bambuco*, *torbellino*, *sanjuanero*, *rajaleña*, and *merengue campesino*. In its initial years, however, the collective's work was not primarily guided by artistic concerns:

In the first phase the group oriented its work with political guidelines more than artistic ones, in the sense that the music was basically used as a medium to transmit political and ideological content. The songs had pamphletary lyrics of very low aesthetic quality and in the music there was a certain disregard for instrumental pieces because of their supposed inability to transmit 'contents.' (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1986:5-6)

Indeed, following the tradition taken up by their predecessors in the *canción protesta* movement, the members of Canto al Pueblo built up their repertoire in part by changing the texts of popular songs to make them more political.

Consistent with the tendency among these types of groups to shirk commercial opportunities, the musicians in Canto al Pueblo showed no interest in collaborating with commercial record labels or even to derive modest earnings from their artistic work. They justified this stance by asserting that their ensemble's main function was a political one, and that selling the "people's music" would have amounted to a betrayal of their values (Franco, p.c.). As such, Canto al Pueblo's main contexts for performance were those typical of the activist movement: working-class *barrios*, labor unions, universities, and rural communities.

Although Canto al Pueblo was not formally linked to a political organization, and individual members' activism in clandestine groups was not openly discussed, the group

maintained a level of discipline characteristic of militant cells.<sup>248</sup> In addition to rigorous rehearsal schedules, the members met twice a week to study political philosophy and discuss the relationship between art and politics; this constant thread of discussion was deepened at out-of-town retreats they occasionally organized (Franco, p.c.). Following a seminar the musicians held to search for guiding principles in the essay “The Fate of Art under Capitalism,” by Mexican Marxist philosopher Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez (1973), they produced a document titled “Music in Capitalist Society.”<sup>249</sup> From Sánchez Vázquez, they drew certain lessons that were in line with positions advocated by staunch leftists, like the need to ensure that their work remained “an unproductive activity from the capitalist point of view in order to maintain its creative and free essence” (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1986:51). Nevertheless, the conclusions the group reached from its engagement with these ideas reaffirmed a shift that had already been set in motion by the constant reflection and discussion its members fostered.

The activist-artists of Canto al Pueblo had been questioning music’s role in political work and becoming frustrated with what they perceived to be the poor quality of *pancarta* songs (literally meaning a banner or sign, *pancarta* is used synonymously with *panfletario* to denote artistic works that take the form of undisguised political propaganda). Based on their readings of Sánchez Vázquez’s text they proposed that artistic work could be used as a direct tool in struggle for socio-political transformation, and not merely as an “accessory.” Art could assist in “contributing to the preservation and development of a popular cultural identity, reducing cultural alienation and in that way exerting an effective resistance to domination.” By changing

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<sup>248</sup> The ensemble did have a close working relationship with the Jesuit-founded NGO, Center for Grassroots Education and Research (CINEP; Franco, p.c.).

<sup>249</sup> This essay was included in the fourth volume of the *Cante Compañero* series, which Miñana (1986) devoted entirely to the work of Armadillo (formerly Canto al Pueblo). The monograph also features an autobiographical sketch of the ensemble and lyrics to several of their songs along with chords and melodic notation.

“the characteristics of consumption” and developing a “new ideology,” it could oppose “in a direct way the capitalist economic interests” (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1986:55). In the practical realm, these assertions signaled a change in the ensemble’s approach to lyrics, which meant “excluding a pamphletary treatment,” as well as a new emphasis on original compositions and improving the musical level of their performances (*ibid.*:6). During our interview, founding member Efraín Franco summarized the group’s evolution in these areas:

At first, we only did peasant songs with political lyrics. ... Then, the same peasant genres but with our own lyrics, telling more popular, more traditional stories. And finally, what was an experimental phase: creating our own musics that were rooted in the peasant sphere but that looked to experiment with other things.

As mentioned above, many other collectives in the activist ambit were undertaking similar processes during this period. Long-time Nueva Cultura director Nestor Lambuley’s (p.c.) recollections shed further light on the kinds of framings musicians elaborated to ascribe oppositional significance to their non-protest songs:

We started moving from that type of clichéd protest song ... to more poetic, more thought-out elements. And we also started valorizing the music itself, because before, the music wasn’t valued much. The music was used as a pretext for the political content of the lyrics. So, later we tried to separate ourselves from that approach and we tried to appreciate that making music was also an important element of resistance—we were still propelling our values.

To complement the audible changes that were occurring at the repertoire level, Canto al Pueblo sought a new public-facing identity. As with every other aspect of the ensemble’s work, the decision to abandon its original name and the search for a new moniker involved lengthy discussions by members and painstaking consideration of how the alteration would fit with broader political aims. In 1982, the group published a six-page document that reviewed the name-change process in bookish detail and even anticipated critiques that might be levelled at it

by leftists (see Miñana Blasco 1986:27-32). The text begins by listing the limitations the musicians saw in the name Canto al Pueblo, which they believed epitomized the *panfletario* approach of their first phase, and subsequently outlines the criteria for the selection of a new appellation. Although indigenous words were considered, the ensemble decided that these would not have been consistent with its focus on mestizo musics. The group ultimately settled on the name Armadillo, a creature that possessed symbolic cultural value in the rural highlands of Colombia, appearing as a protagonist in innumerable popular verses. Significantly, though, the musicians also rationalized their adoption of the new name by pointing to its etymological origins in the Spanish word “arma” (arm, weapon), “which carries an implicit sense of struggle” (quoted in Miñana Blasco 1986:31)—this explanation was clearly an attempt to maintain a connection to radical politics.

The songs compiled in the Armadillo edition of *Cante compañero*, many of which were rudimentarily recorded for a cassette that accompanied the book, are representative of the band’s work post-name-change. Songs like “Mula terca” (Stubborn Mule), “Cuando el tiesto se calienta” (When the Flowerpot Heats up), and “El Armadillo” all evoke the *campesino* world, based as they are on traditional stories or drawing on traditional verses. In describing these kinds of pieces, Franco (p.c.) used a term that comes up frequently not only in conversations about social and political movements, but also when activist-musicians who specialize in traditional forms make “significance claims” (Roy 2010:50) about their music: *reivindicación*, which translates roughly to “vindication” or “claim.” As Franco put it,

after singing about the worker who builds the houses where the rich will live and ‘The Internationale’ ... we sang ... songs that were much more in the peasant style, more in the manner of Jorge Velosa; more about life, about joy, about traditions. But we understood that this was another type of claim [*reivindicación*],

because these songs are another form of social vindication [*reivindicación*] of marginalized sectors, like the peasant sector.

Although the bulk of Armadillo's songs relied on this type of political symbolism, the more overtly political songs that characterized the Canto al Pueblo period had not vanished from the group's repertoire. Also included in the *Cante compañero* volume is Franco's composition "A Tuto," which he described as a "strong" and "revolutionary" song, dedicated to a student activist who had been tortured and killed. Like "A Tuto," the text of "Francisco"—with its references to a rifle-toting *campesino* seeking to right injustices—harkens back to early 1970s *canción protesta*:

En su hombro va el fusil,	On his shoulder goes the rifle,
En su espalda un morral	On his back a satchel
Cargado de esperanzas	Loaded with hope
Y semillas por plantar.	And seeds to be planted.
En su cara una sonrisa,	On his face a smile,
La alegría en el corazón,	Joy in his heart,
En sus manos otras manos	In his hands other hands
Y en la boca una canción.	And on his lips a song.

Despite the great care taken to reorient the ensemble, the Armadillo period was short-lived. The group was dissolved in 1984, when several of its members started another ensemble named Canto de Rana (Song of the Frog). Unlike Canto al Pueblo/Armadillo, Canto de Rana was not run as a collective, but rather was directed by one of the former members of Armadillo's "composition committee"; in Franco's (p.c.) words, the project "wasn't as activist."

### **Revolutionary *Rumba*: El Son del Pueblo**

Beyond the revolutionary urgencies, El Son del Pueblo was responsible for heating up the party  
with the hammer and sickle.  
— César Mora

The founders of El Son del Pueblo made their entry into cultural work through a wing of the grassroots *canción protesta* movement that was connected to the Independent Revolutionary Workers' Movement (Movimiento Obrero Independiente Revolucionario, MOIR), a Maoist political party.<sup>250</sup> In the early 1970s, the MOIR created a “cultural front” it called Workers of Revolutionary Art (Trabajadores del Arte Revolucionario, TAR), which had as one of its primary outlets the Bogotá Free Theater (Teatro Libre de Bogotá, TLB). Founding Son del Pueblo member Ricardo de los Ríos (p.c.), who had been involved with the MOIR's youth wing, the Patriotic Youth, got involved with TAR in his native Pasto. In Bogotá, meanwhile, MOIR activists recruited the youngster César Mora, who had garnered a reputation for singing and writing protest songs and had won the First Festival of Protest Song held at a local high school. According to Mora, his role upon first collaborating with MOIR leaders was quite straightforward: “I sang a song and they gave their speeches” (quoted in Romero Rey 2014:123).

Mora initially joined the MOIR-affiliated ensemble Antorcha (literally, Torch). This group performed “Andean music with revolutionary lyrics” (de los Ríos, p.c.), with a primary focus on *nueva canción* from the Southern Cone—especially Chile. The musicians in Antorcha engaged in the common practice of setting texts articulating the MOIR's political platforms to the melodies of well-known songs. For instance, they altered the line “I want to be buried as were my ancestors,” from the Ecuadorean song “Vasija de barro” (Clay Pot)—a staple of the Andean folkloric and *nueva canción* repertoires—to something along the lines of “I want to be buried as befits the revolution.” Several activists involved with TAR were unsatisfied with the Andean music Antorcha privileged, as well as the defeatist sentiments they associated with

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<sup>250</sup> The band's name plays with the different meanings of the word *son*, and can thus be simultaneously translated as The Sound of the People or *Son* of the People—in the latter case, *son* being the Cuban genre that served as a principal musical framework for salsa music. When the name appears without the article (Son del Pueblo), as is sometimes the case, it can also be glossed as They Are of the People.

Chilean *nueva canción* following the 1973 overthrow of Allende. Invoking stereotypical ideas about the “melancholic” quality of predominantly minor-mode Andean music, the artists who would help form Son del Pueblo in 1975 argued that protest music should be more “optimistic” and “cheerful” (de los Ríos, p.c.). Inspired by the Cuban genres upon which César Mora had been basing his own compositions, the TLB’s director, Ricardo Camacho, suggested that “the revolution must be sung to with love, with joy, with affection, with fiesta” (quoted in Romero Rey 2014:124). Established with the idea of setting political messages to Caribbean music, El Son del Pueblo was initially conformed in the Cuban *charanga* format.

For much of its early existence, El Son del Pueblo was tied to the TLB, providing the music for several plays it mounted; together, these institutions essentially constituted the MOIR’s cultural branch. The MOIR was the first among organizations of the “new Left”—those that proliferated out of splits from the PCC, many of which preached abstentionism—to participate in elections (Archila Neira 2008:164).<sup>251</sup> As such, El Son del Pueblo was called upon to accompany MOIR candidates on campaign tours. Ricardo de los Ríos’s (p.c.) explanation of the textual character of the music performed in these contexts recalls how many other activist musicians have described their compositional approaches in the mid-1970s:

The music was the pretext to communicate the program, and the lyrics of our songs outlined the MOIR’s program—in other words, against the official candidates of the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Our candidates advanced platforms against American imperialism and for social struggles and demands. So, we said all that in our songs.

To wit, a writer covering the MOIR’s 1976 campaigning for the Party’s newspaper, *Tribuna Roja* (Red Tribune), noted that “the joyful note has been the musical ensemble ‘Son del Pueblo,’

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<sup>251</sup> For Ricardo de los Ríos (p.c.), this fact distanced the MOIR from the “radical Left.”

whose verses against the López government and songs in homage to the popular heroes and their struggles have been accompanied by attendees' hand-claps."<sup>252</sup>

El Son del Pueblo also performed at other types of political events. Along with Nueva Cultura and a host of other cultural groups, in 1977 they were present at the First Cultural Symposium in Solidarity with the People of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.<sup>253</sup> The same year, the two activist ensembles performed “revolutionary and popular songs” at an event honoring the director of ANAPO.<sup>254</sup> One of Son del Pueblo’s most memorable experiences was participating in the 1975-6 strike of cane cutters at the Riopaila sugar plant in Valle del Cauca. Having been sent by the MOIR to join the strikers, the musicians remained at the encampments for over a week after the military besieged them. From this episode emerged a body of songs inspired by the well-known *Cantata popular Santa María de Iquique*, a folk cantata popularized by Quilapayún that memorialized the 1907 massacre of striking workers in the Chilean city of Iquique. El Son del Pueblo premiered the anthology, titled *Cantos del cañal* (Songs from the Cane Fields), at a packed Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Theater in Bogotá (de los Ríos, p.c.; Romero Rey 2014:127).<sup>255</sup>

The TLB and Son del Pueblo remained linked with the MOIR into the early 1980s. As such, the fundamental importance of maintaining a proper political line in artistic work—an extension of party doctrine—continued to inform the collective’s outlook when it embarked on a tour of China in 1983. TLB director Camacho said he hoped the experience in the communist

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<sup>252</sup> *Tribuna Roja* No. 19, February, 1976.

<sup>253</sup> *Alternativa*, October 24, 1977.

<sup>254</sup> *Tribuna Roja* No. 30, November, 1977.

<sup>255</sup> It is possible that this was the same event as the one reported on by *Tribuna Roja* (No. 19, February, 1976), in which Son del Pueblo performed in solidarity with striking workers at Riopaila and other industries at the capacity-filled Gaitán Theater. The gathering apparently concluded with a collective rendition of “The Internationale.”



nation would help elevate the group's "artistic, cultural, and political level."<sup>256</sup> However, attitudes had been shifting for some time at the TLB and within Son del Pueblo. For both de los Ríos (p.c.) and Mora, the TLB's decision in 1978 to mount a production of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which set off a polemic within the party, marked a definitive point of departure from the propagandist character of earlier works (Romero Rey 2014:128). Camacho has likewise stated that staging *King Lear* was a first step in "distancing ourselves from political militancy" (quoted in Jaramillo Vélez and Miranda S. 2005:22). In the years that followed, the TLB gradually severed its ties with the MOIR, and Son del Pueblo in turn sought greater independence from the theater.

Hardline leftists' distaste for anything that smelled of commercialism had limited El Son del Pueblo's opportunities for growth. Having garnered a modest level of renown through its cross-country excursions with the MOIR, El Son del Pueblo received offers from recording companies to put out its music, but the ideological pressure was such that it never took advantage of them. Likewise, Mora claims to have felt compelled to hide the *baladas* he composed because MOIR activists considered them "reactionary" (Romero Rey 2014:128). However, the TLB's move to present *King Lear*, along with its productions of other foreign works that eschewed a politically didactic style, inspired Son del Pueblo to take similar steps. In the early 1980s, El Son del Pueblo was diversifying its repertoire by taking up Cuban *son* classics—pieces better suited to enliven the *rumba* (party atmosphere) at the local nightclubs that would become its principal venues for performance. This shift in the ensemble's direction stemmed both from an evolving perspective on the role of music in political work and the desire to make a living from music. Speaking about this juncture, Ricardo de los Ríos told me: "I decided to break with that *pancarta*

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<sup>256</sup> Quoted in *Tribuna Roja* No. 44, February, 1983.

stuff. Son del Pueblo also embraced that idea to some degree, saying it's not necessary to make *pancartas* to say that we are revolutionary. Rather, we embraced García Márquez's thesis, which says that revolutionaries do things well." He explained further: "I think that in good works and in good songs the social aspect is implicit. ... Would anyone say that the Fifth Symphony doesn't have a message?"

With a newly expanded repertoire, in the early 1980s Son del Pueblo entered the *taberna* (tavern) circuit, becoming a fixture at locales such as La Teja Corrida (The Loose Nut) and El Goce Pagano (The Pagan Joy), both epicenters of Bogotá's burgeoning salsa scene. In those settings, the group's members encountered salsa musicians such as Jairo Varela, who would go on to found the legendary Grupo Niche, and now-celebrated orchestras like Guayacán. While radicals may have critiqued El Son del Pueblo's new inclinations with respect to repertoire and venues, the spaces in which they now performed were in fact the same ones frequented by members of leftist parties and even guerrilla organizations. César Mora would later point out that "it was curious that those from the extreme Left questioned Caribbean music for supposedly being lumpen, but at night they would be at El Goce Pagano dancing without any problems" (quoted in Romero Rey 2014:128). Indeed, former M-19 fighter Vera Grabe (2000:230) recalled hanging out with colleagues at El Goce, one of the many clubs on the *rumba* strip in the La Macarena neighborhood that attracted a lefty crowd (Gómez Serrudo and Jaramillo Marín 2013:77-8). La Teja Corrida, also in La Macarena, hosted people from across the political spectrum, from M-19 militants to government ministers (Garzón Joya 2009:86).

In 1987, César Mora left the TLB and Son del Pueblo in search of steadier income in television acting and leadership of several high-profile salsa ensembles. Unsurprisingly, the reaction from many of his former colleagues recalled the response among activists at the

National Protest Song Center when acts like Ana y Jaime and Pablus Gallinazo left the fold in search of greater commercial opportunities. As Mora recounts, a “commission” from the TLB visited him to encourage him not to “prostitute” himself to television, and invited him to return to the collective (Romero Rey 2014:129). Ricardo de los Ríos and other key members of Son del Pueblo continued working with the ensemble and the TLB into the mid-1990s; the group has taken extended hiatuses over the last thirty years.

### **New Spaces to Dream: Iván y Lucía**

There were four empty seats in the audience for the concert held at the Teatro Colón, in downtown Bogotá, on the night of May 21, 1990. Billed as a Concert for Hope, the event was an homage to the four presidential candidates who had been assassinated in a brutal wave of political violence in the previous three years. The main part of the program featured performances of the honorees’ favorite songs. Communist-Party darlings Los Hermanos Escamilla performed the song “Soy colombiano” (I am Colombian) for their friend Jaime Pardo Leal, the UP leader who was gunned down in 1987. Iván y Lucía followed with a rendition of the classic “Gracias a la vida” (Thanks to Life), dedicated to the Liberal presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán, who had been killed in 1989. Songs were also played for Bernardo Jaramillo, who had taken the UP’s reigns after Pardo Leal’s murder, and Carlos Pizarro, who had led the M-19’s political movement post-demobilization; both had been assassinated in the past two months. Santiago García and Patricia Ariza, central figures at the Teatro La Candelaria who had been tangentially involved with the *canción protesta* movement in the early 1970s, also read poems that evening.<sup>257</sup> Although three of the men being commemorated were from leftwing parties, and

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<sup>257</sup> There is another connection between this moment and 1970s *canción protesta*: shortly after Pizarro’s murder, Nelson Osorio wrote a text eulogizing the political leader (Grabe 2000:375).

artists with leftist sympathies played a prominent role in the event, it was presented as a non-partisan appeal for peace. Introducing one of the acts, museum director Gloria Zea stated: “We artists, intellectuals, politicians from all ideological currents are here, for them.” Actor Fanny Mikey, who had faced censorship after a controversial performance at the First Lady’s birthday celebrations in 1976, talked about how art could be used to build peace, and pleaded for a time in which Mother’s Day could be celebrated without bombs going off.<sup>258</sup>

The ensembles chronicled earlier in the chapter initiated an important process of change in the fields of activist music and oppositional expression in urban Colombia. While their members did not abandon their political values or ideals, they worked to transform previously established relationships between music and political struggle—namely, to cast off the commonly held view among leftist activists that music should be subservient to ideology—and to redefine what it meant to resist political, economic, and cultural domination through music. However, Armadillo had broken up by 1984 and Son del Pueblo peaked in the mid-1980s. In other words, their trajectories did not reflect the intensified violence that prompted the organization of the Concert for Hope and permanently altered the Colombian political landscape. Among the Colombian groups that are today classified under the *canCIÓN protesta / social* heading, the duo Iván y Lucía represents a vital strand of socially conscious music-making from this period.

If Canto al Pueblo, Son del Pueblo, and other ensembles in their milieu propelled the move away from the *panfletario / pancarta* approach to protest music, Iván y Lucía came on the scene just as its last embers were fading. Nevertheless, the duo had at least some connection to

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<sup>258</sup> A program for the concert and a video of the television broadcast are available at the National Library in Bogotá. An advertisement appeared in *El Tiempo* (May 21, 1990), and the empty seats symbolizing the murdered politicians were reported by Grabe (2000:378).

the movement that had grown out of grassroots *canción protesta* in Bogotá. While studying architecture at the Universidad Piloto at the advent of the 1980s, Iván Benavides was involved with an ensemble called Canta Libre (Sing Free). According to Benavides, Canta Libre emerged at the “tail end” of the dynamic student and leftist movements that had gained steam over the course of the 1970s, and in a university context in which Southern Cone *nueva canción* had become trendy.<sup>259</sup> He described Canta Libre as “super militant,” and both Efraín Franco (p.c.) and Miñana (1994) listed it as part of the grassroots circuit—even its moniker betrayed the naming conventions for activist music in the mid-1970s.

Lucía Pulido, on the other hand, stressed that she never got to be a part of the “*panfletario* era,” specifying that she did not perform in public plazas or in support of specific leftist causes. By the time she joined Benavides in an ensemble called Encuentros (Encounters), a decisive shift in orientation from what Canta Libre did was evident:

All these friends came from a history of making music in a very political context and of writing very politicized songs, and in this case [with Encuentros] the intention was to work with more intimate, more poetic texts, ... more from the inside. In any case, the social intention and conscience wasn’t lost—it’s not that the location changed radically, but rather that it was now done without such a direct language. (Pulido, p.c.)

A similar perspective guided Benavides and Pulido when they split off to form Iván y Lucía in 1983. Descriptions of the pair’s work in contemporaneous press accounts, as well as in interviews with Benavides, Pulido, and other musicians decades later, all portray a duo that sought to break with the lyrical directness of the protest music that preceded them, while still maintaining an element of social consciousness and an awareness of the socio-political realities that surrounded them. For many, they represented an unmistakable generational change; as a

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<sup>259</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the following information is drawn from my interviews with Iván Benavides and Lucía Pulido.

reporter previewing a joint concert by Iván y Lucía and Ana y Jaime in 1991 noted, the former “belong to the generation of the eighties, that which ... searches for new spaces to dream.”<sup>260</sup>

Among the “new spaces” within which Benavides and Pulido looked for inspiration was a different slate of literary and musical influences from those that had predominated in the 1960s and 1970s. For Benavides, a prime example of his cohort’s new outlook was its preference for Argentine writer Julio Cortázar—in whose writing he and his peers appreciated the fantastic and the “sense of liberty”—over, say, the work of communist Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti. The dissemination of Cuban *nueva trova* in Colombia also impacted Benavides’ writing.<sup>261</sup> For him, *nueva trova* icons like Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés had a “special magic. ... They started looking for a type of song in which, even if all of the social was there, the humanistic was also there.” In fact, Benavides’ and Pulido’s conceptions of the textual qualities of their own music resonate with Robin Moore’s (2006:141) analysis of lyrical themes in *nueva trova*: the Cuban artists in this movement musicalized the verses of Latin American poets and used them as inspiration for their original texts, which were “tender and personal” in nature, often linking the “public and private sphere”; although *nueva trova* songwriters rebuffed trite romantic language, love remained an important topic in their songs. As far as musical style was concerned, Iván y Lucía took a very different track from the activist ensembles that were dedicated to Colombian *campesino* musics. The duo’s sound bears imprints of the folksy singer-songwriter approach from *nueva trova* and *nueva canción*, contemporary Colombian jazz, and progressive rock. At their concerts, Iván y Lucía would often do part of the set with just guitar accompaniment for their vocals, and then another part with a full band.

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<sup>260</sup> *El Tiempo*, October 30, 1991.

<sup>261</sup> As Grabe (2000:133) indicates, many Colombians were still discovering *nueva trova* in the early 1980s.

Speaking in a 1989 interview about the imagery in the songs on Iván y Lucía's second LP, titled *Entre el sueño y la realidad* (Between Dreams and Reality), Benavides stated that "the ideal is to achieve astonishment [*asombro*], but in a suggestive and symbolic way. Certainly, things cannot be said directly; that was done in the sixties."<sup>262</sup> Twenty-five years later, both Benavides and Pulido hit on this point repeatedly during our discussions about the group's lyrical focus. Referring to his compositional canon, for example, Benavides explained:

They were never songs that said 'let's go fight' and 'let's go to war,' but rather were more about the fragility of the human being, ... never with the sense of pumping your fist in the air. In that sense, they never claimed to be quote-unquote revolutionary songs, but instead were like humanistic songs.

For her part, Lucía emphasized that the music they performed and recorded was decidedly not the sort of *canción protesta* with which Ana y Jaime were associated: "It was more what was called *nueva canción* and many themes were dealt with. ... There wasn't an intention from that place of denunciation, of protest, but rather it emerged more from inside."

The university students that made up the bulk of Iván y Lucía's followers were apparently in sync with the artists' sensibilities. Commenting on a 1989 concert by the duo in Medellín, a journalist noted that they performed "before a receptive student audience that (by dint of various types of blows) ... has known to differentiate where the facile pamphlet dies and where the poem is born."<sup>263</sup> In fact, for Pulido, the palpable shift in atmosphere at their performances at the León de Greiff hall at the National University served as a barometer for the changing political climate: "At first people shouted slogans, and then they began to shush each other, until there were no more slogans. It didn't make sense—it was a different moment."

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<sup>262</sup> *El Tiempo*, September 22, 1989.

<sup>263</sup> *El Mundo*, December 14, 1989.

Benavides and Pulido were cognizant of the *panfletario* music that came before them, and they purposely strove to create a lyrical palette that diverged from it. They rejected the *canción protesta* label for their project, and were never directly involved with a political organization or movement. Nevertheless, it is evident that Iván y Lucía retained an intentional connection to the *canción protesta* / *nueva canción* current, and that they were perceived to be closely associated with it. Benavides mentioned to me more than once that a “social sensibility” wove through many of the songs they performed. As Pulido made clear in her comments, even if their songwriting tended to obfuscate the themes they treated, Iván y Lucía’s repertoire did address the socio-political developments of their time:

We never neglected reality; ... we weren’t oblivious to what was happening. In other words, there was repression, there were disappearances, there were problems with narco-trafficking, there were lots of things happening and they keep happening. It’s just that the manner of tackling them wasn’t how they were tackled during the seventies in that super direct way—asking people to go out into the streets. Now they had a different complexity.

Among the original songs Iván y Lucía recorded, Benavides pointed to “Canción para los ausentes” (Song for the Missing), from the LP *Arcanos* (1991), as one of the “social type.” “Canción para los ausentes” was inspired by Sting’s “They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo),” a song that profiled a group of Chilean women whose relatives had been disappeared or jailed, and who danced the *cueca*—Chile’s national dance, usually executed in partners—alone in an act of protest against the repression of the Chilean dictatorship (Knudsen 2001). For Benavides, “Canción para los ausentes” is “about all the deaths that Colombia has seen, but it is more the song of a witness feeling defeat than anything else. I feel that although it talks about everything,



it is also a very personal song.”<sup>264</sup> The song’s lyrics unfold over a musical framework typical of 1980s international pop-rock:

Me detengo entre las ruinas	I pause between the ruins
Voy cantando entre la muerte	I sing amidst death
Cantaré con los ausentes	I will sing with the missing
[Estribillo]	[Refrain]
Porque los muertos no saben callar	Because the dead will not be silent
[...]	[...]
Bailo sola con mi sombra	I dance alone with my shadow
Pero escucho los latidos	But I hear the heartbeats
De los desaparecidos	Of the disappeared
¿Cuántas vidas se han segado?	How many lives have been cut short?
¿Cuántos nombres se han perdido	How many names have been lost
En el fondo del olvido?	In the depths of oblivion?
¿Quién se oculta tras las sombras?	Who hides in the shadows?
¿Quién esconde al asesino?	Who conceals the assassin?
La verdad nunca se ha dicho	The truth has never been spoken

### ***From nueva canción to canción social***

As we saw above, Lucía Pulido categorizes the ensemble she fronted with Benavides under the banner of *nueva canción*.<sup>265</sup> In fact, much contemporaneous press coverage also denominated the duo as *nueva canción* or some derivative of the term.<sup>266</sup> Likewise, they performed alongside

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<sup>264</sup> Pulido spoke about the song in similar terms, stating that it “alludes to the whole political situation. It isn’t the direct text like there was in protest song. Now it had an intention—not to evade; not to sidestep and ignore what is happening—rather, one was committed now not from the perspective of political activism but more from the artistic one.”

<sup>265</sup> Pulido has similarly described Iván y Lucía as being part of the *nueva canción* movement in other recent interviews (Steinberg 2011).

<sup>266</sup> See “Jueves para desprogramados,” *El Tiempo*, February 25, 1993, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-54510>. In some cases, it was specified that the group performed *nueva canción colombiana* (*El Mundo*, December 13, 1989); other observers slotted them in the “*nueva trova* vibe” (*El Espectador*, October 10, 1991).

other musicians that were at times classified by that label, such as Alma de los Andes, Jorge Terrén, Juan de Luque, Rafael Urraza, and Viajeros de la Música in Bogotá, and Grupo Suramérica and Gisela Fernández in Medellín.<sup>267</sup> In this regard, it is important to observe that the *nueva canción* and *nueva trova* categories carried weaker political associations than *canción protesta* in Colombia. Longtime Yaki Kandru member Benjamín Yepes (p.c.), for instance, referred to the Colombian manifestations of these tendencies as being “less anti-establishment.” About the musician Juan de Luque, Yepes proposed: “He was sort of in the vein of *nueva trova* and he did have some ‘social’ connotations, not in the sense of political claims, but rather aesthetic ones.”

Indeed, no longer linked exclusively to the contexts of political rallies, picket lines, and plazas in working-class neighborhoods, the musicians that were loosely associated through their common classification under the umbrella of *nueva canción* during the mid-1980s plied their wares in a dynamic “bohemian” circuit of bars and nightclubs. On a single weekend in May, 1984, Iván y Lucía played at Taberna Barroco and Arte y Cerveza (Art and Beer), Alma de los Andes and Jorge Terrén performed at Barroco, and El Son del Pueblo engaged in a musical duel with Jorge Velosa at La Teja Corrida.<sup>268</sup> Just as the Candelaria Theater and the Teatro Libre had been extensions of the grassroots *canción protesta* and activist art movements in the 1970s, the dramatists behind the puppet troupe La Libélula Dorada (The Golden Dragonfly) had analogous affinities with *nueva canción* musicians of the 1980s. Iván Benavides, Alma de los Andes,

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<sup>267</sup> Grupo Suramérica recorded at least one Iván y Lucía track; they included “Los buenos consejos” (Good Advice), from Iván y Lucía’s first, self-titled album, on the record *Nuestra historia* (Our History).

<sup>268</sup> *El Tiempo*, Friday, May 25, 1984.

Chimizapagua, and other ensembles performed at a *peña* held at the Candelaria Theater to raise funds for Libélula Dorada to travel to a festival in France.<sup>269</sup>

Notwithstanding the centrality of the bar scene to Iván y Lucía's career—as they became more famous, the duo also played large theaters and university halls in various cities—Benavides and Pulido regularly participated in events with political overtones. As described above, they performed at the 1990 Concert for Hope honoring the four murdered presidential candidates. Amidst a spate of bombings in Bogotá in the early 1990s, which were attributed to Pablo Escobar, Benavides and Pulido helped organize a series of concerts to counter the climate of terror that had descended upon the city. The events were titled “Con-cierto Miedo,” a play on words with the double meaning of “Concert of Fear” and “With Some Fear.”

Iván y Lucía's performances in political contexts, the “social” thread in many of their songs, their designation as exponents of *nueva canción*, and the scenes within which they moved, have all served to position them as protagonists in a lineage of socially conscious music that can be traced back to the *canción protesta* movement of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>270</sup> Several musicians I spoke to associated them closely with the field of *canción protesta / social*. After explaining that Ana y Jaime belonged “unambiguously” to the category of protest song, one Medellín musician added, “the same as Iván y Lucía.” As the term *canción social* has emerged over the last twenty years and much of the music that had been labelled *canción protesta* has been reclassified, Iván y Lucía have also been swept up into that categorical net. Describing the duo as Colombia's answer to the *nueva canción* and *nueva trova* movements in a 2008 post, for example, one

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<sup>269</sup> *Libélula dorada vuela, vuela ¡ya!*, event flyer, Bogotá: Teatro la Candelaria, August 20, 1984, William Morales personal collection.

<sup>270</sup> In this regard, it should also be stressed that Iván y Lucía's recording activities were largely of an independent nature. In fact, Benavides (p.c.) described how the pair resorted to what would today be called a crowdfunding model to raise money to record their first album.

blogger added *canción social* to the litany of generic terms with which to describe them.<sup>271</sup> Ana Valencia (p.c.) herself stated that the younger duo “had many social songs.”

Significantly, Iván y Lucía’s best known song, “Alba,” has become a classic of the *canción social* repertoire, appearing on the compilation *Los años maravillosos de la canción social, Vol. II* (The Golden Years of Social Song, 2004). Without my prompting, Benavides remarked on the irony that “Alba,” whose text is a poem by José Luis Díaz Granados dedicated to a love interest bearing the same name, would be categorized this way: “Iván y Lucía’s most famous song, which is titled ‘Alba,’ has absolutely nothing to do with protest,” he told me. “It’s not a song that talks about [politics or social issues]—nevertheless, it is a song that is catalogued as social song.” “Alba’s” inclusion in the *canción social* canon is analogous in many ways to the case of “Yolanda,” a song by Cuban *nueva trova* star Pablo Milanés, written for and titled after a romantic partner (Delgado Linares 1996). Like “Alba,” “Yolanda” is unquestionably a love song, yet its origins in the politically charged *nueva trova* movement of the 1970s make it a “political” song for many Latin Americans who associate it with the beacon of revolutionary promise that was Cuba in those days. Indeed, it is the leading track on the *Años maravillosos* compilation cited above. For Colombians, the facts that “Alba” was authored by a leftist poet and musicalized by Iván y Lucía are likely responsible for its absorption into *canción social*; this classification could have only been reinforced when Ana y Jaime recorded the song for their 1999 CD *La Huida* (The Escape).

After Iván y Lucía played their last concert in Bogotá in 1994, Pulido moved to New York to cultivate a thriving musical career.<sup>272</sup> Benavides, meanwhile, participated in a series of successful musical projects closer to home, including the rock-fusion band Bloque (Fernández

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<sup>271</sup> OWAI, “Iván y Lucía: Arcanos,” *Fotolog*, July 27, 2008, <http://us.fotolog.com/owai/15968796/>.

<sup>272</sup> Benavides and Pulido reunited for a concert in the same theater in 2015 (Guzmán 2015).

L'Hoeste 2004) and dance-music act Sidestepper; perhaps his greatest claim to fame is penning the hit single “La tierra del olvido” (The Land of Oblivion), which helped consolidate Carlos Vives’ mega stardom in Colombian and Latin American popular music.

### **Conclusion: Leaving the Pamphlet Behind**

Like many other ensembles made up of activist musicians, in the late 1970s the members of Canto al Pueblo were deeply engaged with discourses of resistance. They devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to reading about, analyzing, and discussing the politics of culture, and oriented their ensemble’s work based on those practices. In the group’s initial phase, the songs it performed were *panfletario* in character, meaning that the texts crudely reproduced the ideas of leftist political organizations. As a result of its deliberative process, however, the members of Canto al Pueblo consciously ceased using music as a receptacle for political ideology; they came to believe that there was political significance in musical style and aesthetics, in modes of production and consumption. Later in the ensemble’s career, its songwriters explicitly forswore the *panfletario* approach, seeking instead to write more poetic texts that evoked peasant life, and to allot increased attention to musical composition and arrangement. Although the group changed its name to Armadillo in 1982 as a way to symbolize the political-artistic shifts it was undergoing, its claim that the “arma” in Armadillo represented its ongoing commitment to political struggle betrayed its roots in the 1970s context; correspondingly, the ensemble continued to perform songs that idealized armed resistance.

Ultimately, Armadillo settled on making a political statement by performing peasant-associated genres from the interior highlands of Colombia, by emphasizing similar themes to those treated in traditional musics, and by performing this music at a high artistic level in grassroots contexts. Above, I noted that activist musicians posited this type of music as a form of

claim or demand (*reivindicación*) on behalf of peasants as a subaltern class. Comments by people I spoke with about Jorge Velosa's work illustrate how these socio-political ascriptions to peasant music in the post-*panfletario* age were discursively constructed. Referencing numerous songs from Velosa's repertoire that talk about various aspects of modern *campesino* life, for example, Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo (p.c.) stated: "So, that is social song. The thing is it doesn't mention a 'rifle,' nor does it say 'I'm from such and such party,' nor does it say 'I'm going to take power,' nor does it say that we must bring down the government." Luz Marina Posada, another important artist in the field of contemporary Andean Colombian music, added: "If taking back our musics, if going out [on stage] as he talks like a peasant from Boyacá, if going out dressed in a poncho [*ruana*] from Boyacá and with peasant boots is a political stance of claiming what is ours [*reivindicación de lo nuestro*], in that sense it is social song."

El Son del Pueblo's trajectory is representative of those ensembles that started out as the de facto cultural extensions of political parties. Although the group's musical emphasis on Caribbean dance music was a reaction against the Andean and Southern Cone styles that had become trendy in leftist circles, for many years its primary function was to musically propagate the MOIR's political platforms. In the early 1980s, however, El Son del Pueblo expanded its repertoire by integrating music that was less overtly political, just as its affiliate, the TLB, moved into non-propagandist works of theater. As with Canto al Pueblo, this change was guided by a decisive rejection of the *pancarta* mode of political art. Nevertheless, El Son del Pueblo continued to play a special role in leftist cultural circuits, providing the music that many activists listened and danced to in the mid-1980s. The political strictures that prevented El Son del Pueblo from pursuing commercial opportunities ultimately contributed to its decline, as members

seeking greater professionalization and remuneration saw themselves forced to abandon the project.

Although Iván y Lucía had some links to the foregoing *canción protesta* and activist music movements in Bogotá, their artistry truly corresponded to a different era. Unlike Canto al Pueblo and Son del Pueblo, Iván y Lucía never went through a *panfletario* phase. Nevertheless, the duo crafted the highly poetic and personal qualities of their song texts—an approach inspired in part by Cuban *nueva trova*—specifically in opposition to music of the *panfletario* variety. Certainly, one can understand how a political context in which the earlier guerrillas-versus-state binary had ruptured would necessitate a different type of musical rhetoric from that advanced in the protest songs of the early 1970s. In this respect, the oppositional intentionality behind Iván y Lucía songs like “Alba” and “Canción para los ausentes” was undoubtedly more nebulous than that of “¡Cuba sí, yanquis no!,” “La bala,” and “Ricardo Semillas.” All the same, the duo’s connections to the grassroots movement served as a sort of filter through which its audiences interpreted its output. Having been designated as representatives of *nueva canción* in Colombia, Iván y Lucía form part of a heritage stretching back to *canción protesta*, and forward to *canción social*.

In Colombia, the term *panfletario* has become synonymous with turn-of-the-1970s grassroots *canción protesta*—with a type of music that unequivocally names the victims and perpetrators of injustice, and presents armed struggle as the remedy. A member of the Andean music ensemble Nuestra América (Our America) made this connection when discussing his ensemble’s 1980s origins: “We were leaving the era of protest music and from the beginning we wanted to develop a message that avoided the political pamphlet.”<sup>273</sup> The equation was

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<sup>273</sup> *El Mundo*, July 19, 1993.

reinforced for me in many conversations I had during my fieldwork, as when a journalist I spoke to referred to *canción protesta* stalwart Alejandro Gómez as “somewhat pamphletary.” It is also clear that the descriptor has taken on increasingly negative connotations over the decades. Already in 1971, a commentator lauded Pablus Gallinazo for not writing in the “international pamphletary jargon” evident in the songs included on the compilation published by the Communist Party.<sup>274</sup> Likewise, a reporter covering the III Festival of New Song, held in Ecuador in 1984, judged it successful in spite of the “vulgar pamphletary music” that permeated the performances.<sup>275</sup> Interestingly, Colombian connoisseurs have consistently pointed to the Catalan *nova cançó* (new song) singer-songwriter Joan Manuel Serrat as a model of a politically committed musician who successfully conveys a potent political message while avoiding a *panfletario* treatment. Daniel Samper Pizano, for example, wrote in 1985 that Serrat’s poetic use of “tenderness and humor ... makes [his songs] the antithesis of the pamphlet,” a factor that differentiated the famous singer markedly from “elementary and obvious protest singers.”<sup>276</sup> Thirty years later, musicologist Egberto Bermúdez explained during a televised discussion about protest music: “Let’s analyze musically what’s behind one of Joan Manuel Serrat’s songs, which isn’t an openly pamphletary type of song but is profoundly political. ... The text doesn’t tell us everything.”<sup>277</sup> In the next chapter, I shall attempt to link these types of perspectives to the emergence of the category of *canción social*.

It is important to observe, as a final note, that musicians who may have *preferred* the directness of the *panfletario* approach may have seen that possibility vanish in the repressive

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<sup>274</sup> *El Tiempo*, June 23, 1971.

<sup>275</sup> *El Espectador*, July 24, 1984. Grupo Bandola represented Colombia at the Festival.

<sup>276</sup> Lecturas Dominicales, *El Tiempo*, November 10, 1985.

<sup>277</sup> “CANCIÓN PROTESTA EN AMÉRICA LATINA 15 Mayo 2014 PARTE II,” YouTube video, 11:45, interview with Egberto Bermúdez, Víctor Alfonso Moreno, and Manolo Bellón hosted by Laura Gil on the television program *Hashtag Internacional*, Canal Capital, May 15, 2014, <https://youtu.be/cbOfFBxMa84>.



climate that settled upon Colombia in the 1980s and has endured, with some attenuation, until today. Máximo Jiménez, a singer-songwriter of protest *vallenato* music who celebrated *campesino* land occupations with the ANUC in the Atlantic coastal region, sang at union events, and campaigned with the UP, was forced to seek refuge in Austria in 1990 after he was jailed and faced assassination attempts.<sup>278</sup> Los Hermanos Escamilla, who also had close ties to the UP, likewise left the country amidst security threats in the late 1990s, although the precise circumstances that led to their exile are murky. When in 2011 I asked a musician in Medellín about why she would not bluntly call out a political leader or malevolent capitalist in the songs she performed, she explained that listeners “hear something that is said directly like that and think ‘that’s out of fashion, that’s pamphletary, that’s from another time.’” However, she proceeded to give examples of other musicians she knew who have opted for a more straightforward political language in their songs, and who have been threatened, imprisoned, and exiled because of it.

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<sup>278</sup> “Máximo, el juglar vallenato que no le canta a las mujeres,” *Vice Colombia*, June 26, 2015, [https://www.vice.com/es\\_co/article/mximo-el-juglar-vallenato-que-no-le-canta-a-las-mujeres](https://www.vice.com/es_co/article/mximo-el-juglar-vallenato-que-no-le-canta-a-las-mujeres); “Máximo Jiménez – El Vallenato Protesta,” YouTube video, 18:16, interview conducted for RTVC in October, 2012, <https://youtu.be/AVpk5V5fSlw>; Viera Giraldo 2015. In her undergraduate thesis, Zuleima Jassir Vellojín (2010) provides examples of the direct language Jiménez used in his songs.

## CHAPTER 5. In Search of Social Song

### A Meeting of Social Song

On the evening of July 16, 2014, I headed to the Débora Arango Cultural Park in the municipality of Envigado, which abuts the city of Medellín at its southern flank. On that day, Envigado was in the midst of celebrating its annual Week of Culture, part of the Fiestas del Carriel that commemorate the anniversary of the town's founding.<sup>279</sup> For the first time, the Fiesta featured a Meeting of Social Song (Encuentro de Música Social). As dusk set in, groups of people began to dot the grassy knoll that formed a natural amphitheater around the temporary stage. Food and beverage kiosks lined the park, contributing to the festive atmosphere appropriate to the broader context within which the concert was being held.

The first of the three acts that performed at the Meeting of Social Song was the Cuarteto Entrecuerdas, a local ensemble I had never heard of, which was described by the announcer introducing them as having long been a part of the tango scene in the Medellín area. Joined on several numbers by the Andean music group Paxkahualí, Entrecuerdas opened their set with Víctor Jara's instrumental piece "La Partida." The instrumentation of *charango* (Andean lute), *quena* (Andean flute), and *tiple*, which can be heard on Jara's original recording from 1971, was sounded again in the mild Medellín air on this night over forty years later. It was hard to know what percentage of the audience might have recognized the song and grasped the substantial political symbolism attached to its composer. Entrecuerdas made more of an effort to spell out the motivation behind the selection of their next tune. Proclaiming that artists are compelled to talk about all the violence their state commits, one of the ensemble members announced that the

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<sup>279</sup> A *carriel* is a leather satchel that has become a symbol of *envigadeño* cultural heritage.

song “Mi país” (My Country) constituted their act of “protest.” The singer-songwriter Guillermo Calderón composed this *bambuco* in 1989 to comment on the difficult situation through which the country was living at that time. More than simply denouncing the violence of state actors, the lyrics of “Mi país” address disappearances at the hands of the military, guerrillas, and other criminals, the terrorism of drug traffickers, and governmental corruption.<sup>280</sup>

Oh, mi país, algo que llevas dentro	Oh, my country, something inside you
Te hace morir a fuego lento	Makes you die a slow death
Cuando vuela en pedazos cada ciudad	When every city goes up in pieces
Cuando el veneno blanco se va esparciendo	When the white poison keeps spreading
Cuando en tu nombre reina la impunidad	When in your name impunity reigns
Cuando tus hijos van desapareciendo	When your children are disappearing
Cómo duele, oh, mi país	How it hurts, oh, my country

When they introduced the following song, the Colombian salsa hit “Buenaventura y Caney,” Entrecuerdas listed similar entities to those blamed in “Mi país” as those that they deemed worthy of protest. They dedicated the song to the port city of Buenaventura, which, they lamented, was besought by “the attacks of the guerrillas, by the harshness and neglect of the government, by narco-trafficking.” Later in the set, they performed José Barros’ decades-old *cumbia* “Violencia,” about which they “feel as if it had been composed last night, with the violence that we live through in our country”; a Spanish cover of the Bee Gees’ “How Deep is Your Love” made for an odd postscript to “Violencia.” Entrecuerdas capped their encore with “Ojos azules” (Blue Eyes)—a staple of Andean music that is perennial at performances and on recordings of *canción social*—as a handful of onlookers sang along.

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<sup>280</sup> Guillermo Calderón, p.c. Two musicians from the world of Andean Colombian music with whom I spoke mentioned Calderón as a composer that dabbled in the *social* genre, and Calderón confirmed this identification. In 2002, Calderón, who is a resident of Neiva, Huila, performed at a concert in Armenia that paid homage to *canción protesta* lyricist Nelson Osorio (“Primer encuentro de la canción en contravía Nelson Osorio Marín,” concert program, Armenia: Centro de Documentación e Investigación Musical del Quindío, December 6, 2002, Mario Osorio Marín personal collection).

During the intermission, the MC made sure to remind the audience about the event's sponsors, which included the liquor brand Aguardiente Antioqueño, several banks, and the Antioquia Development Institute, a governmental entity. The crowd was slowly filling out for the next act—the best-known of the three performing that night—the singer-songwriter that goes by the artistic name Pala. From the outset, Pala (Carlos Palacio) warned the crowd that he would not do much talking, lest he be accused of being a “cansautor” (a play on words fusing the term for singer-songwriter, “cantautor,” with the verb “cansar,” meaning to bore or annoy). In the absence of explicit commentary, the audience would have to rely on other cues to comprehend the “social” aspects in Pala's performance. They would likely not find abundant evidence of social commentary in his song texts, which are known for their dense poetic quality and sophisticated wordplay. Nonetheless, listeners familiar with Pala's oeuvre may have shared Jorge Gaitán Bayona's interpretation of the opening number, “Colombianito” (literally, “Little Colombian”). In a close reading of the text, Jorge Gaitán Bayona (2011:68) identifies in “Colombianito” a celebration of Colombian cultural symbols juxtaposed with references to the country's troubled past. As far as I could tell, the most overt social statement in the set came during the performance of the song “Súper héroes” [*sic*] (Superheroes), in which Pala sings the praises of the “feminist in Iran, ... atheists in Texas or in Islamabad.... The hackers of Sherwood that opt to rob banks and bad bosses, ... women that yell ‘I am my own master: I love myself, I'm in charge of myself, I touch myself!’ ... The Michael Moores.” Pala closed out his set of pleasant pop-rock songs with the life-affirming “Vivir” (Live), which for Gaitán Bayona exemplifies the *carpe diem* philosophy that runs through Pala's corpus.

The last group to perform at the Meeting of Social Song in Envigado was Illary Histórico. Formed in 1986, Illary is one of the longest-running *música latinoamericana* ensembles in

Medellín, and its performance was in many ways representative of the groups that carry this tradition forward in different parts of Colombia.<sup>281</sup> The instrumentation was the same one that has been presented for decades by *nueva canción* ensembles throughout the continent: Andean *queñas*, *zampoñas* (panpipes), and *charangos*, along with the nylon-stringed guitar, backed up in this case by electric bass, keyboards, drum-set, and percussion. With eight male-presenting musicians on stage, the multi-part men's harmonies that typified seminal *nueva canción* groups were also on full display. Indeed, Illary's role that night seemed to be that of performing the "classics" of the *canción social* repertoire, and they accomplished this task from their opening with the epic "Canción con todos" (Song with Everyone), written by Argentine *nueva canción* icons Armando Tejada Gómez and César Isella. Subsequently, they moved on to a string of well-known Andean folkloric tunes and several songs by Chilean band Illapu; Argentine *zambas*, Peruvian *huaynos*, and other Andean genres abounded.

I saw no signage anywhere on the park grounds indicating the name of that night's event. Had it not been for the small print-out Entrecuerdas handed out to the audience with lyrics to songs they performed and the odd mention by the hosts and performers, some attendees may very well have been unaware of the concert's theme. I suspect that some people who came out to hear the music did so primarily because it was the free, high-profile event happening in the area, although headliner Pala likely drew some dedicated fans. Devised by a team at Envigado's Department of Education and Culture whose personal tastes veered towards this type of music,

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<sup>281</sup> In Colombia, *música latinoamericana* (literally, Latin American music) denotes a broad musical style in which folkloric genres and instruments from South America's central Andean region (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and the northern reaches of Argentina and Chile) are foregrounded, though it may also include folkloric styles from other Latin American countries; the term is used more or less synonymously with *música andina* (Andean music, see Katz-Rosene 2015). While founder Roger Díaz continues to direct Illary (without the "Histórico" qualifier), in recent years a few members left the group and continued in the same line of work under the name Illary Histórico. I suspect this move was inspired by the famous Chilean *nueva canción* ensemble Inti-Illimani, which similarly spun off an Inti-Illimani Histórico.

one of the goals of the Meeting of Social Song was to bring together the different manifestations linked to this category that organizers felt were dispersed in different cultural spaces in the Medellín area. The night of *canción social* was also intended as something of a socially conscious counterpoint to the carefree merrymaking that characterizes other parts of the Fiestas del Carriel and similar festivals in the region. As an organizer from the Department of Education and Culture explained to me: “We know that we have to project to a community, not only with festivities and rejoicing, but also with a message that hits people and with a message that will help us with the construction of a better society.”

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My brief vignette of the 2014 Meeting of Social Song in Envigado was intended to illustrate several characteristics of *canción social* in Colombia in the early twenty-first century. For one, while I have focused primarily in the dissertation on musicians that were based in Bogotá, I turn to the Medellín area in this chapter because it is where the most consistent musical activity that is explicitly labelled *canción social* has taken place in recent years. Certainly, *canción social*-denominated events—even large concerts—occurred in Bogotá during my fieldwork, but the major festivals and regularly active ensembles in Medellín pulled me to the city numerous times. In fact, as was the case in Envigado, the Medellín municipal government has underwritten many of the large-scale *canción social* events that have been held there over the last decade. Similarly, corporate sponsors appear to subsidize all but the most grassroots endeavors in this cultural field. As I have argued elsewhere (Katz-Rosene 2015), Andean music remains indelibly linked to *canción social* in Colombia. At concert after concert, groups like Illary and Grupo Suramérica—the most famous *canción social* ensemble in Medellín—interpret

widely known songs by *nueva canción* composers from various countries, while folks in the audience sing along enthusiastically.<sup>282</sup>

As can be seen through my description of this event, the criteria for belonging to the category of *canción social* have evolved significantly since the days of grassroots and even commercial *canción protesta*. In Pala's case, the mere fact that his thoughtful lyrics mark a departure from the pop fare offered up by the mainstream make him a "social" singer, though, as we shall see below, his political positions likely have some bearing on this identification. For the event's organizers, placing music on the public stage other than dance-oriented popular musics constituted a social act. However, the aspect of the performance that for me most potently symbolizes the essence of *canción social* was Entrecuerdas' performance of "Mi país." In striking contrast with the protest songs of yore that egged on the violence of left-wing guerrillas, rationalizing it in relation to state and imperialist militarism, contemporary social songs like "Mi país" decry the violence committed by all armed entities.

But where did this term, *canción social*, come from? In most of this study I have been discussing *canción protesta*, and in the previous chapter I profiled Colombian groups that were classified as *nueva canción*. As I described in the introduction to the dissertation, early into my research in Colombia, I found that much of the music that had been referred to in the late 1960s and through most of the 1970s almost exclusively as *canción protesta*, appeared to have been rebranded as *canción social*—in the media, on recordings and promotional materials, and by people with whom I spoke. As my research progressed, determining when and why the term *canción social* came into general usage became a minor obsession. I began asking all of my interviewees if they could shed any light on these questions, and further, if they distinguished

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<sup>282</sup> Grupo Suramérica had in fact been invited to the Meeting of Social Song in Envigado, but a scheduling conflict obliged them to perform on a different night of the Week of Culture.

*canción social* from *canción protesta* in meaningful ways. The answers I received were oftentimes ambiguous and inconsistent.

As I pursued this line of inquiry in my research, I recalled readings from my ethnomusicological training in which researchers present the enigmas that arise when “emic” perspectives cannot account for empirical findings. One such “mystery” appears in Anthony Seeger’s canonical ethnography, *Why Suyá Sing*, which examines the music culture of the Suyá indigenous people in the Brazilian Amazon.<sup>283</sup> In his fifth chapter, Seeger describes his quest to understand the reasons behind a gradual rise in tonal center in a single performance of a Suyá rainy season song. After a graduate student discovered the rising pitch in her transcriptions of Seeger’s recording, he returned to the field to seek answers to several questions elicited by the finding. His efforts, however, met with a serious obstacle: absolute pitch did not seem to figure in Suyá musical theory. Faced with the fact that there was no local terminology or discursive basis to account for the rising pitch, Seeger was driven to employ a few different approaches for his investigation into this musical quality; the importance of methodological diversity in ethnomusicological research is in fact a valuable take-away from his work. Although Seeger (2004:103) admits to having arrived only at “tentative answers” about the rise in pitch in Suyá singing, the research led to a better comprehension of socio-musical values that he believed were manifest in this physical phenomenon.

In this chapter, then, I seek out tentative answers to my own ethnographic quandary: understanding the terminological shift from *canción protesta* to *canción social* in the absence of clear-cut explanations from musicians and other interlocutors. In attempting to elucidate the values represented in the emergence of the *canción social* category, I have followed Seeger’s

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<sup>283</sup> For another example, see Witmer 1991.



advice on embracing varied tools: For starters, I sought out perspectives on this issue from a range of people, from musicians, to record company managers, event organizers, concert attendees, and activists. I attended as many performances of *canción social* as possible, paying attention to the repertoires and musical styles deployed, as well as musicians' stage banter. In order to corroborate my initial impressions about the extent of the lexical change, I tallied the appearance of the musical categories in question in public texts over the last fifty years.

After laying out the political context of the last two decades, I proceed by tracking use of the terms *canción protesta*, *nueva canción*, and *canción social* since 1966. The chart I compiled demonstrates a perceptible—albeit, not always linear—terminological transformation through the decades. Subsequently, I introduce the most salient constellations of meanings that the people I spoke with attribute to *canción social*, from its virtual synonymy with *canción protesta*, to its appearance as a tonic for the stigma the *protesta* label has accrued over the years, to the related ideas that *canción social* is a less aggressive and more inclusive category than its precursor. I then begin to unpack how politically conscious musicians—those who lived the era of *canción protesta*, as well as younger artists—relate radically changed views of armed struggle to socially conscious music-making in the present-day. In the latter part of the chapter, I describe how musicians associated with *canción social* have supported peacebuilding efforts in Colombia, and I report on musical initiatives that epitomize the reversal of a key symbolic trope in 1970s *canción protesta*.

## **An Elusive Peace**

In September 2015, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos made a surprise appearance in Havana, Cuba, where government negotiators had been in peace talks with representatives from the FARC since 2012. Santos had travelled to the island to announce that the two sides had

reached an agreement on the thorny issue of transitional justice, which had been holding up the talks, and committed to signing a final accord within six months. The widely circulated image of the president's awkward handshake with the FARC leader known as Timochenko, held tenuously in place by Cuban head of state Raúl Castro, buoyed many Colombians' hopes that an end to the half century of conflict between the nation's military and its largest guerrilla organization might finally be in sight. As the six-month deadline came and went without a final deal, however, favorable attitudes towards the negotiations plummeted, and by May of 2016 some surveys indicated that a majority thought the process was on the wrong track.<sup>284</sup>

The Colombian public may be forgiven for losing hope in the prospect of a negotiated settlement. In recent memory, numerous attempts to resolve the conflict have failed, often resulting in increased violence. Witnessing the decimation of the Patriotic Union, the political initiative the FARC launched during peace talks with President Betancur in the mid-1980s, the guerrillas returned to a state of war in 1987 (Dudley 2004:102; Archila and Cote 2009:79). Another brief round of negotiations between the government and the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordination Group, which comprised the FARC, ELN, and a faction of the EPL, broke off in 1992 (Zimmering 2009b). Over the course of the 1990s, the FARC grew in size and strength, and a series of victories over the military in the late 1990s forced the government of Andrés Pastrana to resume dialogues with the insurgents in 1998. While neither the FARC nor the government appeared prepared to make serious moves towards peace—both sides took advantage of the temporary détente to build their military capacities—the expansion of paramilitary groups with links to the army further undermined the process (Archila and Cote 2009:85; Richani 2013). By

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<sup>284</sup> “Mayoría de colombianos cree que proceso de paz va por mal camino,” *El Espectador*, May 4, 2016, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/mayoria-de-colombianos-cree-proceso-de-paz-va-mal-camin-articulo-630666>.

early 2002, a beleaguered Pastrana issued an ultimatum for the rebels to leave the enormous demilitarized zone that had been placed under their control as a precondition to the talks. The tentative dreams of peace that the negotiations had engendered were dashed.

A survey of Colombian business leaders conducted at the outset of the negotiations in early 1999 found that a large majority favored a peaceful resolution to the conflict (Richani 2013:137). After the talks failed, however, public support for a military solution grew (Archila and Cote 2009:88). Indeed, Pastrana's inability to secure a deal after having ceded a territory the size of Switzerland for de facto governance by the FARC paved the way for the ascension of the right-wing hardliner Álvaro Uribe to the presidency in 2002. Uribe's own father was killed by the FARC during a 1983 kidnapping attempt, and he campaigned on a promise to eliminate the guerrillas through outright war. The United States had already stepped up its military aid to Colombia in 2000 through the so-called "Plan Colombia," but the impact of this dramatic increase in funding and strategic support became the hallmark of Uribe's presidency. Between 2002 and 2008, the Colombian armed forces gained the upper hand over the FARC, driving the rebel fighters deeper into remote jungles (Richani 2013:210), and Uribe has been credited with bringing major improvements in security to some areas (and for some people). With his hawkish approach to containing the guerrillas receiving majoritarian approval from urbanites and sympathy for the FARC waning in rural areas (Bruce, Hayes, and Botero 2010:185), in 2010 Uribe left his second term in office with high approval ratings (Arsenault 2014).

Uribe's belligerence, however, came with substantial costs to democratic participation, civil liberties, and openings for political protest (Roldán 2010). As Nazih Richani (2013:203) has noted, Uribe's "Democratic Security" doctrine owed a considerable debt to the repressive approaches tested under Turbay Ayala in the late 1970s (see chapter 3). New language from the

US-led “war on terror” further emboldened Uribe’s regime to brand the guerrillas as terrorists and to paint a wide swath of political, social, and student movement organizing, as well as the monitoring of human rights abuses, as abetting the subversives. Both the official armed forces and paramilitaries working in tandem with the army persecuted activists and perpetuated grievous massacres and human rights abuses. For many, the tactic that became known as “false positives” came to symbolize the insidious means by which “security” was achieved under Uribe: it was discovered that soldiers were indiscriminately murdering poor youth and passing them off as guerrilla fighters who had died in combat (Sierra R. 2014). Under pressure from the United States, in 2005 the government undertook a campaign to negotiate with and demobilize paramilitary groups. Despite claims that over 30,000 fighters had been disarmed, most observers concur that paramilitary violence has persisted at high levels in the last decade, even if it has been labeled with other terms (Bruce, Hayes, and Botero 2010:184; Richani 2013:232). The lingering effects of these policies were evident during my fieldwork, as I came to expect that human rights activists and union leaders I met would travel in armored vehicles with a phalanx of armed bodyguards.

Despite the setbacks the FARC suffered as a result of the military’s full-court press against it, in the final years of Uribe’s reign the insurgent group began to recover some of its ground, demonstrating its renewed ability to harm state interests through attacks on oil and mining infrastructure. According to Richani (2013:221-2), the “unstable equilibrium” between the guerrillas and the military compelled President Santos, Uribe’s former Minister of Defense, to pursue negotiations with the FARC once again in 2012. The public discourse around these talks, the first since Pastrana’s attempts collapsed in 2002, demonstrated the widespread support

that existed for a negotiated conclusion to the conflict in spite of vigorous opposition from Uribe's political camp.

When I returned to Colombia in 2014, as the talks with the FARC continued to gain momentum, the change in mood from my visits in the preceding years was palpable. Rallies and concerts for peace were held regularly. Contacts who had rationalized the FARC's *raison d'être* in our earlier conversations were now eagerly handing me pamphlets outlining the guerrilla group's political agendas in the negotiations. Friends who once applauded the safety upgrades Uribe brought were intensely relieved when presidential candidate Óscar Zuluaga, who favored a return to Uribe's militaristic strategy, lost the election that June. Indeed, many regarded the 2014 elections, in which Santos was re-elected after receiving backing from the major leftist coalition, as a referendum on the continuation of the peace process, and the results seemed to affirm Colombians' thirst to know a post-conflict era. As one foreign journalist reporting on the progress of the negotiations in January 2015 put it, "the entire idea of a civil war is at odds with how Colombians see themselves today" (Nolen 2015).

Those on the Left have gradually latched on to what the press characterizes as the mainstream sentiment towards the guerrillas—that is, a deeply felt "weariness" about armed groups that undermine the political ideologies they espouse through their involvement in the drug trade, extortion, and kidnapping (Galvis 2016; Palacios 2006:256; Sierra R. 2014). Overall, leftists have been increasingly critical of the armed option as a viable path for revolutionary change (Archila and Cote 2009:90; Tate 2007:41). The radicals I knew who justified the insurgency against the state were among a minority who continued to cling—in the twenty-first century—to the "combination of all forms of struggle" theory unleashed by the Communist Party in the 1960s (see also Tate 2007:166-7).

## Charting the Change: *Canción Protesta* to *Canción Social*

In appendix A, I chart the prevalence of the terms *canción protesta*, *nueva canción*, and *canción social* in journalistic and academic articles, books, recording titles and liner notes, blogs, concert programs, and performance posters from 1966 to 2016.<sup>285</sup> As is evident from the table, in the late 1960s and through most of the 1970s, the *canción protesta* label was used frequently and widely to denominate the new category of oppositional music that was gaining currency in Colombia.

While almost all the articles mentioning *canción protesta* in 1967 referenced protest singer Pablus Gallinazo, in the next three years, discussion of the phenomenon, much of it taking place in the Communist Party's newspaper, *Voz Proletaria*, revolved around the grassroots movement based out of the National Protest Song Center. With the spate of coverage of the Coco de Oro Protest Song Festival in July-August of 1971, use of the category became more strongly associated with artists that released commercial recordings, a trend that would continue into the mid-1970s. Although *canción protesta* primarily denoted a specific group of musicians in the Bogotá grassroots and commercial scenes, the term was sometimes used to classify any kind of socially conscious music in the international arena. In fact, the first appearance I located in a Colombian publication appears in a note about the Sanremo Festival in Italy. The article observes that contestants had been bringing "songs of semi-protest" to the competition because of Italian television's distaste for "'protest,' a genre that is popular outside Italy."<sup>286</sup> In 1970, a reader wrote in to *El Tiempo* to request the lyrics for Tom Jones' "protest song" "Delilah."<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Although this compendium is drawn exclusively from documents published in Colombia, I include mentions that relate to foreign musicians. The list also includes close derivatives of the most commonly used forms (*canción protesta/social*), such as *música protesta/social*, *canción/música de protesta*, *canción de contenido social* (song of social content), and so forth.

<sup>286</sup> *El Espectador*, December 13, 1966.

<sup>287</sup> *El Tiempo*, September 4, 1970.

At the 1967 International Protest Song Meeting in Havana, participants heatedly debated the definition and appropriateness of the generic term that brought them together on the communist island. Although attendees did not reach consensus on an alternative, referring to themselves repeatedly as “the workers of protest song” in their final resolution (Ossorio 1967), *canción protesta* fell out of use in many parts of Latin America soon thereafter. At the Meeting, Spanish artist Raimón had expressed his distaste for the limited semantic reach of *canción protesta*, and proposed a remedy—invoking his experience with the Catalanian *nova cançó* (new song) movement—in the broader denomination of *nueva canción* (see Fairley 2013). In fact, there was a Latin American precedent for framing emergent politically tinged repertoires that drew on folkloric musics as something “new”: the *nuevo cancionero argentino* (literally, the new Argentine songbook) movement, launched in Mendoza in 1963.<sup>288</sup> The protagonists of the Chilean protest song movement cemented their preference for the *nueva canción* designation when they held the First Festival of Chilean New Song in 1969. In the following years, *nueva canción latinoamericana* (Latin American new song) became an umbrella category for artists in this current from various nations who were beginning to form a transnational network. In Colombia, the term *nueva canción* began to appear in the mid-1970s, initially in coverage of foreign artists performing in the country. By the late 1970s, musicians in Bogotá’s activist music scene evidently sought to link themselves to the popular pan-Latin phenomenon. As we saw in chapter 4, Iván y Lucía and their cohort were frequently described as practitioners of *nueva canción* in the 1980s and 1990s; Grupo Suramérica has been the category’s most prominent representative in Medellín.

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<sup>288</sup> However, *canción de protesta* also appears to have become current in Argentina in the late 1960s (Marchini 2008:21, 24).

Around the turn of the 1980s, many observers turned to the adjective *social* to characterize the predominant themes and associations of repertoires that did not fit easily with the political connotations of the earlier *canción protesta* movements.<sup>289</sup> Reporters covering massive *música latinoamericana* concerts that took place in Medellín in 1980 and 1981, for instance, wrote about the “songs with a content of social and ideological denunciation,” or “with a social flavor,” that were performed on those occasions.<sup>290</sup> Similarly, an announcement of the upcoming IV Víctor Jara Festival of Song (Bogotá, 1978), which stated that “soloists, duos, or ensembles in the *canción protesta* category” could participate, also indicated that the festival’s goal was “to bring together the principal exponents of the song of social content.”<sup>291</sup> Rather than serving to establish a concrete musical category, however, in my view these variations on the phrase “songs of social content” were simply descriptive; such formulations have continued to appear sporadically in the press over the decades.

Nevertheless, the term *canción social* per se also started to appear around this time. The first mention I have found dates to 1974, when Philips issued the first of two volumes of a compilation titled *Canción social*.<sup>292</sup> The albums included musicians from the Hispano-American *nueva canción* movement, who in other contexts would have been designated with that term or *canción protesta*: Mercedes Sosa, Joan Manuel Serrat, Gloria Martín, Patxi Andion, Horacio Guarany, and Víctor Heredia. The only Colombian presence on the records is Mexican singer Oscar Chávez’s version of “Cinco balas más,” by Pablus Gallinazo, and *nadaísta* singer Angelita’s rendition of a song she wrote with Gonzalo Arango, titled “Hermano no mates a tu

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<sup>289</sup> In fact, such descriptions had occasionally been made during the *canción protesta* era, as when a writer for *Voz Proletaria* (November 21, 1968) noted the “social content” in Leonor González Mina’s music.

<sup>290</sup> *El Colombiano*, March 27, 1981; *El Mundo*, July 27, 1980.

<sup>291</sup> *El Tiempo*, September 10, 1978.

<sup>292</sup> Miñana (1981:57) provided the publication date of Volume I; Volume II was issued in 1975.



hermano” (Brother Don’t Kill your Brother). By 1981, the members of the ensemble Los Amerindios had also begun to refer to a type of music they called *canción social* in interviews and in their promotional materials, though they did not use that terminology consistently.

Notwithstanding these early usages of *canción social*, the term does not appear to have been widely used during the 1980s. Broadly speaking, *canción protesta* continued to be applied to the Colombian musicians who had been identified with that category during the early 1970s, while groups that emerged at the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, along with most acts from other Latin American countries, earned the *nueva canción* moniker. *Canción social* resurfaced in the early 1990s and became more prevalent as the twentieth century drew to a close. Around this time, several record labels released “greatest hits” of *canción social* compilations. Curiously, the Colombian subsidiary of multinational Philips has been quite consistent in its categorization on this front. After releasing the aforementioned pair of *Canción social* records in the mid-1970s, Philips published a compilation LP titled *Social – protesta* (n.d.), and in 1993 it established the *canción social* tag in the medium of compact disks with a five-CD collection titled *Los 100 mejores de la canción social* (The 100 Best of Social Song). After the Universal conglomerate took Philips over in 1998, Universal Music Colombia continued in a similar vein as its predecessor, issuing the multi-volume *Los años maravillosos de la canción social* (The Golden Years of Social Song) in 1999 (Vol. 2 was released in 2004) and *Los hits gordos de la canción social* (The Fat Hits of Social Song) in 2002. Colombian record labels followed suit with *Lo mejor de la canción social* (The Best of Social Song, Yoyo Music, 2002) and *Latinoamérica canción social grandes clásicos* (Latin America Social Song Great Classics, Colmúsica; Vol. 2 was published in 2002). The change in categorization from *canción protesta* to *canción social* can also be tracked in releases by the historic Colombian recording

company Discos Fuentes. The label re-issued compilations of Ana y Jaime's and Pablus Gallinazo's hits under the titular heading of *Canción protesta* on LP in 1989 and on CD and cassette in 1996. However, a compilation CD Fuentes issued in 2000 featuring these two artists, along with others from the 1960s-70s movement, was titled *Canción social: De la protesta a la propuesta* (Social Song: From Protest to Proposal). Likewise, with its 1998 CD release *Dos ídolos de la canción social* (Two Idols of Social Song), which brought together songs by Luis Gabriel and Pablus Gallinazo, Codiscos effectively rebranded these two former protest singers.

As can be seen in appendix A, the term *canción social* has predominated in the 2000s and in the current decade, and is used to classify Colombian and foreign musicians that were associated with the *canción protesta* and *nueva canción* movements from the 1960s through 1980s, as well as contemporary acts. Events bearing the *canción social* moniker began popping up in major cultural festivals, such as the First Meeting of Social Song, instituted at Medellín's renowned Festival of Flowers in 2009, and the Icons of Social Music concerts held as part of the International Festival of Boyacá Culture in 2013. Since I began my fieldwork in 2011, nightclubs in several cities that are primarily devoted to Andean music have also regularly advertised *canción social* nights. Many CD stores I visited in Bogotá and Medellín featured labelled *canción social* sections—sometimes simply named “Social”—and if no such section was visible, asking a clerk if they had any *canción social* consistently led me to small, unmarked areas where the compilations listed above were filed, along with individual recordings by the artists typically included on them.<sup>293</sup> Inquiries to street vendors selling home-made MP3 compilations about their *canción social* stock also led to my purchase of disks with names such as *Colombia social*, *Lo*

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<sup>293</sup> During my stay in 2014, when I visited a used book and record shop in central Bogotá that I had perused on prior trips, I noticed that the owners had created a marked *canción protesta* section; this was the only labelled *protesta* section I came across.

*más selecto canción social* (The Most Select of Social Song), *Canción social y de protesta*, and *Las canciones más sonadas en canción social y protesta* (The Most Played Songs in Social and Protest Song).

**Figure 5-1.** Cover sleeve for the mp3 CD *Canción social y de protesta*



The proliferation of the *canción social* category over the last twenty-five years has meant that artists that were classified with other terms earlier in their careers have been recast as exponents of *canción social*. The contents of the *canción social* compilations I have been discussing certainly attest to this fact, and it was evident in many other ways. For example, in newspaper articles, texts written to promote recent concert appearances, and interviews I conducted with musicians, the term *canción social* regularly came up in conjunction with Ana y Jaime. As we have seen, this duo was integral to both the grassroots and commercial *canción*

*protesta* movements in the 1970s. Musicians have even replaced *protesta* with *social* in remembering their own careers. In my interview with Luis Gabriel, he spoke about having competed in *canción social* festivals with his song “Así es mi pueblo,” which he explicitly categorized in the *canción social* genre.

While *canción social* has come to primarily denote a fairly specific set of interrelated cultural phenomena that were of greatest salience in the 1970s and 1980s—broadly speaking, the internationally recognized *nueva canción latinoamericana* movement, along with the Colombian *canción protesta* artists that were disseminated via the mass media—it has become something of an overarching term for any kind of music with a hint of social consciousness. Journalists have taken to invoking the appellative when referring to international pop stars who are otherwise associated with other musical categories, if a single item in their repertoire happens to betray social or political themes. Artists as wide-ranging as Franco de Vita, Víctor Manuel, Juan Luis Guerra, and Gilberto Santa Rosa have been identified with *canción social* in the Colombian press.<sup>294</sup>

## **Defining *Canción Social***

### ***A Synonym for Canción Protesta?***

As is evident from the titles of some of the compilation albums cited above, the term *canción protesta* has not vanished from the musical lexicon in Colombia. In fact, when I mentioned or asked about *canción social*, several people I spoke with asked if I meant *canción protesta*. For others, *canción protesta* and *canción social* are virtually synonymous. When I asked about the

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<sup>294</sup> “Franco de Vida: Un ganador,” *El Tiempo*, July 24, 1992, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-164897>; “A dónde van los besos, Víctor Manuel BMG,” *El Tiempo*, September 1, 1993, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-210981>; May 31, 2010; “El caballero vuelve con canción social,” *El Colombiano*, August 5, 2010, [http://www.elcolombiano.com/historico/el\\_caballero\\_vuelve\\_con\\_cancion\\_social-MVEC\\_99467](http://www.elcolombiano.com/historico/el_caballero_vuelve_con_cancion_social-MVEC_99467).

genre classification for an artist at a record shop, one employee told me it was “pura canción social” (pure social song), while another initially replied “canción protesta.” After I pressed them on which of the two was correct, they simply stated that they were the same. Similarly, a musician featured in a video series produced by the National Center for Historical Memory, Carlos Lugo, announced that he performs “Latin American music, social or protest music” (*música latinoamericana, música social o protesta*).<sup>295</sup> At least one commentator (Fernández 2012) has seen it fit to combine the terms, referring to the movement of which Pablus Gallinazo and his cohort were part as *canción de protesta social* (song of social protest).

Although many people instinctually equated *canción protesta* and *canción social*, when I asked musicians that were identified with these labels about the chronology of their use and any differences in meaning they perceived between the two, a handful of them acknowledged that *canción social* was of more recent provenance. Concerning the two terms, Ana Valencia (p.c.) of Ana y Jaime stated: “Truth be told I think the two words have the same connotations. ... I call it social or protest song. In that era protest song was used more frequently.” In addressing the terminological change in her comments, Eliana (p.c.) alluded to subtle differences in the associations that these categories carry: “Very recently,” she said about when *canción social* appeared, “I have only been using it recently because before it was protest; and people’s hairs stood on end.”

Several journalists have also noticed that *canción social* has come to replace *canción protesta*, and a very few have even attempted to interpret the shift.<sup>296</sup> In his article on a 1999 concert featuring Argentine *nueva canción* stars León Gieco, Víctor Heredia, Facundo Cabral,

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<sup>295</sup> “Tocó Cantar - Capítulo 3 (Neiva, Cali y Tumaco),” YouTube video, 14:10, Centro de Memoria Histórica, published October 27, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih5pV\\_HXBNA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih5pV_HXBNA).

<sup>296</sup> For an example of an article that simply registers the change, see “Un concierto para los nostálgicos de la canción protesta,” *El Tiempo*, April 25, 2013, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12763102>.

Alberto Cortez, and Horacio Guarany, along with Cuban *nueva trova* deity Pablo Milanés and Colombian pop singer Andrés Cepeda, Diego León Giraldo (1999) commented on the diverging subtexts conjured by these artists' songs in the different eras represented by *canCIÓN protesta* and *canCIÓN social*. León first observed that the concert brought together “the most important exponents of what was called protest song and which today is branded as social song.” He then described how in the 1970s *canCIÓN protesta* was associated with the *mamerto*, a pejorative term that originally denoted Communist-Party activists (see chapter 2), later encompassed all types of leftists, and more recently has been used to refer to anybody with a certain look—namely, city dwellers who wear sandals, *ruanas* (ponchos), and other markers of rural or indigenous cultures. Just as the meaning of that word has changed with time, León notes, “the feelings with which the music is listened to does too.” Significantly, this major concert event, which was held in Medellín, Cali, and Bogotá, and named after Gieco’s famous song, “Sólo le pido a Dios” (I Only ask God), was billed as a precursor to a national march for peace. Concerning Gieco’s song, León Giraldo writes: “Before, in the 1970s, it was sort of an invitation to the struggle, to the confrontation against governmental regimes. Today, in our country, that song is like a plea and longing for a cessation of the violence.”<sup>297</sup> Luz Stella Luengas, an actor interviewed for the piece, recalled:

It was one of those lovely moments in history, as it was the manifestation of a social moment. Now there is no protest song. The protest turned into war, aggression. ... Protest [song] has been transformed with time and the music reflects what is happening. The music of today has more of a spiritual sentiment rather than a political intention. (quoted in León Giraldo 1999)

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<sup>297</sup> Gieco composed “Sólo le pido a Dios” (1978) in response to mounting tensions between Argentina and neighboring Chile in the late 1970s, and in the following years it became associated with the movement opposing the Malvinas war and the generalized repression of Argentina’s dictatorship (Vila 2009:507-10); see also “Que no calle el cantor,” *El Tiempo*, October 21, 1999, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-948564>.

## *The Stigma of Protest*

Several of my interlocutors echoed the sentiment that the emergence of *canción social* was tied to a significant change in the political context. When I asked a middle-aged activist who had worked with the labor movement in Medellín, and was knowledgeable about this type of music, when the term *canción social* originated, he replied:

When we were no longer in the era of the revolution. Specifically, when a much less favorable stance towards social and leftist movements began to dominate, and they started to be stigmatized, to be targeted. Let's say, from the nineties until now that [stance] has been very strong. ... The true revolutionary leftist values came to be strongly questioned ideologically, and in this country militarily, and in that sense talking about protest [song] means to be stuck in the past, and to be very out of fashion. ... So, the change of term also came with the change of era. This is no longer the era of the revolution.

In proposing explanations about the reasons behind the shift in terminology, a number of musicians I spoke with concurred that *canción protesta* and the values associated with it had picked up a degree of stigma in Colombia. Wilson Castellanos, a singer-songwriter who was part of the activist music scene in the university milieu in the city of Manizales during the 1990s, told me:

What happened was that when it was Ana y Jaime and all those folks, well, it was protest music. Personally, I would think that it changed to remove the stigma because the thing is that here, talking about protest music was a problem. They were killing everybody—the entire UP; everybody—and so they stigmatized [tildaban] you with that: “This one is a subversive; this one is a guerrilla.” I think it was because of that.

Roger Díaz (p.c.), of the ensemble Illary, which recorded an album of Latin American *nueva canción* classics (along with the Colombian *canción protesta* staple “Ricardo Semillas”) for the CD *Latinoamérica canción social grandes clásicos*, made similar points:

When people said they sang protest song they were stigmatized; that they were a Marxist, a Leninist, a leftist, a guerrilla, so that was gradually transformed into social song, which includes not only social song as such but also includes the ecological song, it includes the song oriented towards the social reality of Latin America. It includes many other things.

### **Protesta Lite**

As can be seen in Díaz's statement, there is a sense among some Colombians that *canción social* is a broader category than *canción protesta*. This idea came up in interviews and in media commentary during my fieldwork. For example, in debating what terminology the guests invited to speak in a televised discussion about "protest song in Latin America" should be using—the program was produced on the occasion of a performance by Puerto Rican political hip-hop act Calle 13 in Bogotá's Plaza Bolívar in 2014—the youngest panelist asserted:

I tend to talk about Latin American social song, because the concept of social is much broader. The very word protest can be limited to protesting but social song as such includes other types of realities in Latin America. ... The word "social" is more comprehensive than limiting oneself to saying protest song.<sup>298</sup>

Implied in statements like these, as well as in assertions that *canción social* arose in part as a remedy to the stigma that befell *canción protesta*, is the notion that *canción social* carries milder connotations than *canción protesta*. In fact, some of my interviewees specifically addressed *canción social*'s softer contours. When I asked Eliana why she thought the term *canción social* emerged, she replied: "Maybe because what they do in other places is lighter. They talk about things that are happening, but not with as much aggression as I did." Jorge Chona (p.c.), a former member of Alma de los Andes, discussed the terminological shift in a similar fashion: "People talked about protest song, about revolutionary music, oppositional music," he said about past

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<sup>298</sup> "CANCIÓN PROTESTA EN AMÉRICA LATINA 15 Mayo 2014 PARTE I," YouTube video, 25:26, interview with Egberto Bermúdez, Víctor Alfonso Moreno, and Manolo Bellón hosted by Laura Gil on the television program *Hashtag Internacional*, Canal Capital, May 15, 2014, <https://youtu.be/9ZvdsalJZtjg>.



decades. “People might have started to say social song in order to soften [*suavizar*] the issue. ... At any rate, if someone asked ‘what do you sing?’ [and you answered] ‘I sing revolutionary song,’ that sounded very strong.”

### **“That Ideal that We Had Got Twisted”: Changing Perspectives on the Guerrillas and *Canción Protesta***

In the introduction to this chapter, I suggested that the song “Mi país,” which was performed at the 2014 Meeting of Social Song in Envigado, symbolized a profound change in the political dynamics articulated in *canción social* versus those that typified *canción protesta*. This shift stems, I argue, in large measure from leftists’ substantially reformed views since the 1980s of Colombian guerrilla groups, which have outlasted all others in Latin America. It also marks musicians’ concomitant desires to hammer the final nail into the coffin of the *panfletario* mode of protest music, which they link to a now-indefensible leftist culture of uncritical support for the insurgents.

Numerous musicians I spoke with, most of whom could be said to sympathize generally with leftist ideals, have repudiated, by name, actors of various stripes that are involved with the conflict, as well as the polarized political climate that pressures civilians to identify with one side or another.<sup>299</sup> Singer-songwriter Pala, for example, regularly posts political commentary on the independent online media outlet *Las 2 Orillas* (The 2 Sides), in which he lambasts both the FARC for its ideologically deficient criminality and those in Uribe’s camp for their war- and fear-mongering. For socially conscious artists of Pala’s generation—he was born in 1969—staking out what could be seen as a centrist political position is in fact one of the ways they

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<sup>299</sup> For a satirical take on the polarization of the late 2000s, when for many Uribe supporters any critique of his policies was a sure sign that its issuer was a *mamerto*, see Samper Ospina 2009.

negotiate their wishes to weigh in on social and political themes while attempting to cast off the stodgy image of the *cantautor* (singer-songwriter) figure that has been inherited from the age of *canción protesta*. Pala and likeminded songwriters in Medellín and Bogotá have worked with arts organization Barrio Colombia to organize the International Festival of Itinerant Song, one goal of which was to redraw “the stereotype of the singer-songwriter as an activist who holds on to an outdated discourse, and who needs a fireplace or campfire to present their [musical] pamphlet [*panfleto*]” (Garay 2010). When we met in 2012, Carlos Palacio reiterated his oft-pronounced stance on maintaining political independence, and explained how it influenced how he and other *cantautores* navigate the world of *canción social*: “Today, as a singer-songwriter in Colombia you are entailed to choose a side. ... You’re with Uribe or you’re with the FARC. No, no, no! I’m not with Uribe and I’m not with the FARC. Both are equally repulsive to me. The exact same thing happens in the area of social song.” Palacio went on to recount, that, just as he turned down an offer to perform on a military base, so did he decline an invitation to perform at an event at the National University that was calling for the liberation of Peruvian Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán. “If that is what being a social singer-songwriter means,” he concluded, “then I’m not a social singer-songwriter.”

Musicians who had been part of the *canción protesta* movement, and whose songs frequently extolled the insurgents, have also become critical of the revolutionary endeavor. After describing the thrill she felt decades ago at hearing about the growing ranks of fighters in the *monte*—a sentiment she channeled musically in her recordings of songs like “Camilo Torres”—Eliana (p.c.) expressed outrage that in recent years guerrilla groups had been sabotaging oil

pipelines, electricity towers, and bridges. “What hurts me most,” she told another interviewer, “is that that ideal that we had got twisted. It became something monstrous.”<sup>300</sup>

Just as most artists have renounced their sympathies for the guerrillas, many also acknowledge that songs in which revolutionary violence is upheld have become anachronistic. In my interview with Pala, the singer-songwriter took a jab at the type of *canción protesta* that championed armed revolution through its *panfletario* language. After telling me he would have likely “headed for the hills [*monte*]” if he had been born ten years earlier, he stated: “I’m prepared to walk on hot coals and say that I defend what [the guerrillas] did because I think it was marvelous, but for me today to say ‘proletarians of the world united’ in a country like Colombia, that seems almost unforgivable to me.” The lyrical fragment Pala cited was clearly an example of a line that could have been lifted directly out of a Communist Party pamphlet, and the allusion to violent upheaval is strongly implied; that is, one can easily infer that the full line Palacio was thinking of was something along the lines of “proletarians of the world united *in arms*.”

Again, artists who were personally associated with *canción protesta* in the 1970s have also addressed the changing contexts within which their music has been heard. As discussed in chapter 2, *fusil* (rifle/gun) and similar terms were deployed frequently in songs of that era to represent guerrilla violence. In a 2015 interview, Jaime Valencia (of Ana y Jaime) spoke ardently about how the songs the duo sang that employed that kind of vocabulary, and were thus understood to endorse the guerrillas, were rooted in a very different moment:

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<sup>300</sup> “ENTREVISTA A ELIANA, cantante Colombiana – Parte 2 de 2,” YouTube video, 9:58, interview by Pilar Hung on the televisión program *Generación R*, Cali TV, conducted in 2010, <https://youtu.be/kvo-e0mFRxc>.

That was a different time in which one thought that that was the way to solve things. So, our songs evoke a historical moment for people. That was forty years ago, when people were certain that doing that was the best way. ... And one time talking with Piero about that, ... he told us that when he was in El Caguán, ... he said [to the guerrillas] “look, why don’t we dedicate ourselves to something more positive. That era is over.” That era is no longer valid now. One can be a rebel but not in that way. One understands now after many years that there are more appropriate ways to realize dreams. ... When people today—in 2015—see us singing “This Wind,” where we say “Your rifle, love, is the freest music under the sun,” well that was something that we lived forty years ago; a sentiment that was valid forty years ago—not anymore.<sup>301</sup>

Ana y Jaime continue to perform “Este viento” (This Wind) —or at least part of it—and other songs of the same ilk. Valencia worked the line he quoted from “Este viento” into a new song titled “Los años inmensos” (The Golden Years), which is a medley of short excerpts from Ana y Jaime’s greatest hits interspersed with new verses by Nelson Osorio that nostalgically recall life in the 1960s and 1970s. Ana y Jaime opened with this medley when I saw them perform with Piero in Bogotá in 2011.

Some musicians go beyond simply testifying to the radically altered circumstances within which their music is received today, as compared to when it was originally composed, and express remorse about having performed songs that in some way promoted revolutionary violence. After telling me that the hope he once invested in the guerrillas for righting injustices inspired his song “La revolución vendrá” (The Revolution Will Come), Luis Gabriel said: “That song seems irresponsible to me after all the violence there has been in Colombia.” He no longer performs the song, and regretted having recorded texts by Nelson Osorio. The compunction that artists who were involved with the *canción protesta* movement may feel about having articulated

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<sup>301</sup> “UNA ENTREVISTA DIFERENTE CON ANA Y JAIME,” YouTube video, 31:06, interview by Pilar Hung on the television program *Generación R*, Cali TV, conducted in March, 2015, <https://youtu.be/ZZdRL896vOI>. El Caguán is a region in the demilitarized zone where peace talks between the FARC and the government were held between 1998 and 2002.

positive sentiments vis-à-vis the guerrillas was further driven home to me during my conversation with renowned *tiple* player Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo. As an artist who had been absorbing the weighty tradition of Colombian Andean music, Renjifo struggled to adapt the politically charged textual approaches of *canción protesta* to Colombian genres like the *bambuco*, which were inextricably associated with romantic and bucolic themes. As he told Ana María Ochoa (1996:71) in 1994: “The moment arrived when I had different needs from singing ‘This quiet night, I came to sing’ I don’t know what. I want to say ‘people’ and I want to say ‘fusil’ (gun) but with bambuco.” It is clear from this statement and comments he made to me that Renjifo was at one time influenced by the prevailing lyrical approaches to *canción protesta* analyzed in chapter 2. When we spoke in 2011, he characterized the songs he performed in the early 1970s as “that type of songs that said ‘boss,’ that said ‘gun,’ that said ‘guerrilla,’ that said ‘hills’”—in other words, *panfletario* music. He described having felt proud that a song he composed, based on a poem employing this type of rhetoric, attracted attention from the M-19, who invited him to perform for them, because he was “to a certain point supportive of the struggle.”

However, Renjifo was unequivocal in stating that his earlier perspectives on the *panfletario* mode had been effectively reversed. Recalling Silvio Rodríguez’s song “Te doy una canción” (I Give you a Song), the last lines of which proclaim, “I give you a song like a shot, like a book, a word, a guerrilla, like I give my love,” Renjifo stated: “The thing is that at the time Silvio wrote that song, saying ‘guerrilla’ was something lovely, but today saying ‘guerrilla’ ... causes horror and revulsion in me just like saying ‘narco-trafficking paramilitaries.’” During our interview, Renjifo articulately summarized the widely held sentiment that I believe many of the musicians quoted above were expressing in other ways:

Folks on the left—principled folks—thought that what had to be done was to take up arms, and many did. But look where it brought us. ... So that era has changed, and now to whom would it occur to say in a song that the redemption of the people is in armed struggle, if we have seen that everything that has to do with arms has been a disaster? ... It seems to me that what is happening today is very important, because our problems are being sung about but from a hopeful perspective, a perspective of reconstruction, of uniting, of love.

Former die-hard fans of *canción protesta* have also conveyed regret about their prior musical tastes. In 2012, one Fernando Fernández wrote a post on the site Kienyke.com about having come across an old Pablus Gallinazo LP while reorganizing his collection. Citing a recent accounting of atrocities and criminal acts committed by the guerrillas, Fernández was incredulous that he had once sung along with Gallinazo's catchy tune, "Destino la guerrilla" (Destination: The Guerrillas). He noted that his web searches revealed that Gallinazo's "La mula revolucionaria" (The Revolutionary Mule), and songs like it, served as the theme music for websites of student groups that had been undoubtedly (in his opinion) infiltrated by the guerrillas. Asking "what are the limits of the song of social protest, and at what point does it become propaganda or apologism for the ill-fated guerrillas?" Fernández suggested that perhaps such communications should be subject to the same rigorous prosecution as befits Holocaust denial in such bastions of free expression as France. We see, here, a clear example of the stigmatization of *canción protesta* to which the musicians quoted above alluded. Yet the sole comment posted in response to the piece reveals how the tension between the distaste for the modern guerrillas, on the one hand, and the persistence of the systemic factors that give rise to their violence, on the other, maps on to the historiography of *canción protesta*. Like many other people, the commenter pointed out that Gallinazo's music, along with that of a whole host of *nueva canción* artists across the continent, corresponded to a particular historical moment of revolutionary fervor. S/he proceeded: "The question you should ask is: How can we end the

social differences and this corruption that overwhelm us so that fewer people take up guns.”

Seizing on Fernández’s example, the commenter retorted that the French Revolution that yielded France’s liberal values was not a peaceful affair; moreover, the upheaval ultimately resulted in such social gains as universal health care and public education, fundamental rights of which Colombians would have to go on dreaming (Fernández 2012).

### ***Canción Social in the Service of Peace***

Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo’s description of contemporary socially conscious music speaks to the fact that *canción social* has been positioned as complementary to the quest for peace, which has consumed an increasing cross-section of Colombian society in recent decades. Above, I mentioned a 1999 concert that toured the largest cities of the Colombian interior in conjunction with a national march for peace, and which featured stars of Latin American *nueva canción*. As a movement in support of the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC gained steam following their resumption in 2012, musicians who have been classified under the *canción social* banner have made regular appearances in prominent events to bolster the process. In August 2014, two of the artists that had performed in the 1999 concert, León Gieco and Víctor Heredia, joined Piero at the International Concert for Peace, the closing event to the Fourth International Meeting of Andean Cultures in the southern city of Pasto—the Meeting’s theme that year was “Constructing a Lasting Peace.”<sup>302</sup> Gieco returned the following April to join Jorge Velosa, Colombian singer-songwriter Marta Gómez, Cuban rocker Carlos Varela, and other groups at the Everything for Peace Concert, an event held during the World Summit of Art and

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<sup>302</sup> “Gobernación de Nariño entregó un balance altamente satisfactorio, al finalizar el Cuarto Encuentro Internacional de Culturas Andinas, clausurado en Pasto con el Concierto Internacional por la Paz.” *Gobernación de Nariño*, August 10, 2014, <http://xn--nario-rta.gov.co/2012-2015/index.php/prensa/5007-gobernacion-de-narino-entrego-un-balance-altamente-satisfactorio-al-finalizar-el-cuarto-encuentro-internacional-de-culturas-andinas-clausurado-en-pasto-con-el-concierto-internacional-por-la-paz>.

Culture for Peace in Colombia. At the featured outdoor concert Music and Musicians for Peace in Colombia, Gieco sang his anthemic “Sólo le pido a Dios” in duet with the lead singer of Colombian rock band Doctor Krápula, which has long been known for the “social criticism” it voices in its songs (Yanguma 2016). In September 2016, Gieco was back in Colombia, this time as part of a tour that fellow Argentine singer Piero organized in support of a final peace agreement, which also featured several other big-name Colombian acts—the artists’ principal goal was to “sing for peace.”<sup>303</sup>

### ***Turning Guns into Guitars***

One of the Colombian musicians who performed at many of the events just listed is César López. He sang a duet with Carlos Varela at the 2015 World Summit of Art and Culture for Peace, and performed at the Bogotá stop for Piero’s peace tour in 2016. A few years earlier, he had promoted the “24-0” campaign, which called for twenty-four hours without violent deaths, and performed at an International Peace Day concert in Medellín in 2012.<sup>304</sup> In September 2014, I happened upon a free concert he was playing in downtown Bogotá’s Plaza Bolívar as part of the national Week for Peace events; he shared the stage that afternoon with Jorge Velosa and Andrea Echeverri, lead singer of the alternative rock band Aterciopelados.

For the last fifteen years, López has dedicated the bulk of his musical activities to various projects aimed at fostering peace and reconciliation. The inspiration for much of this work originated in the aftermath of a 2003 bombing at the upper-class El Nogal club in Bogotá, which

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<sup>303</sup> “‘La guerra del amor’, el concierto en el que artistas se unen este viernes por la paz,” *El Espectador*, September 8, 2016, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/guerra-del-amor-el-concierto-el-artistas-se-unen-vierne-articulo-653856>; “Estos son los cierres viales por el Concierto ‘La guerra del amor’ en Bogotá,” *RCN Radio*, September 9, 2016, <http://www.rcnradio.com/entretenimiento/alejandro-lerner-piero-leon-gieco-le-cantaran-la-paz/>.

<sup>304</sup> “César López, el músico que toca en clave de paz,” *El Tiempo*, September 30, 2012, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12266775>; Monroy G. 2012.



was attributed to the FARC. After López, who was twenty-nine at the time, and other musicians spontaneously brought musical instruments to the site of the bombing and witnessed the positive effects their playing had on people, he helped form the Battalion of Immediate Artistic Reaction. This group's mission was to respond to incidents in which a community was harmed in the ongoing conflict and to support its victims through music.<sup>305</sup> López has also worked to collect the testimonies of the people most affected by violence—he frequently incorporates their voices and stories into his own artistic creations—and has initiated numerous projects to bring together former enemy combatants (e.g. guerrillas and paramilitaries) in conflict resolution processes by playing music together.<sup>306</sup>

The series of projects that brought César López the most attention was also rooted in his experiences after the Nogal attack. While performing near the bombed-out club, López noticed a soldier who carried a rifle in the same way he held his guitar. It was then that he got the idea to convert an AK-47 decommissioned from the Colombian conflict into electric guitars, and thus was born the *escopetarra*, a term that combines the words *escopeta* and *guitarra*, Spanish for shotgun and guitar. The potent symbolism of the *escopetarra* evidently had a tremendous impact in Colombia and the international community. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided funds for López to acquire more assault rifles and convert them into instruments, and they have supported many of the peace-oriented projects he has carried out throughout Colombia based around the *escopetarra* (Restrepo n.d.). In the hopes of elevating the visibility of his work, López donated *escopetarras* to Colombian pop star Juanes, Argentinean musician Fito Páez, and

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<sup>305</sup> “Colombian musicians organise online,” *BBC News*, June 1, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/5033626.stm>.

<sup>306</sup> “El sonido de la ‘escopetarra’ se escucha en Nueva York,” *Las Noticias México*, n.d., <http://www.lasnoticiasmexico.com/17589.html>.

Irish musician-activist Bob Geldof; a prototype is also on display at the United Nations in New York.<sup>307</sup>

Significantly, the very idea of the *escopetarra* and the language with which it is described invert key tropes from 1970s *canción protesta*. In chapter 2, I described how leftist ideologues and people involved with the *canción protesta* movement frequently advanced the idea of turning guitars into guns. In stark contrast, the *escopetarra* results from the literal transformation of a functional gun into a guitar. Whereas activist-musicians once proposed that the guitar should be imbued with the combative essence of a gun, the luthier that was tasked with carrying out the conversion stated that “the challenge is to rid [the weapon] of its negative energy,” and a 2005 article on the *escopetarra* described it as “a gun that fires music.”<sup>308</sup> Just as several of the musicians quoted above spurned the guerrillas, paramilitaries, and military for their roles in the conflict, López’s work with the *escopetarra* dispenses with the distinction that the Left previously posited between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence. Whereas the turn-of-the-70s protest song “The Bullet” made the case that bullets could be deployed for noble causes in certain circumstances, the overarching theme of the album César López released in 2010 was that “*Every Bullet is Wasted*” (“Toda bala es perdida”; my emphasis)—this was the title of the record and its leading track.

The notion that music offers a more virtuous alternative to armed action, which is clearly embodied in the *escopetarra* and in the activities César López undertakes with it, has been invoked in other contemporary settings. An article reporting on a 2010 “concert for peace” in a violence-ridden neighborhood of Medellín—at which López and Doctor Krápula performed—

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<sup>307</sup> “La ‘escopetarra’ como símbolo de paz para los colombianos,” *Colombia.com*, June 28, 2006, <http://www.colombia.com/entretenimiento/noticias/DetalleNoticia4172.asp>.

<sup>308</sup> “La Escopetarra: Guns into Guitars,” digital video, UN Television, originally released in October, 2007, [https://www.un.org/disarmament/education/Movies/ak47\\_guitar/](https://www.un.org/disarmament/education/Movies/ak47_guitar/); *Semana*, February 14, 2005.

opened: “Music, instead of weapons, and songs to rob young people from the war” (Montoya Gómez 2010). Again, this line of thinking stands in contradistinction to the ways in which protest songwriters in the 1970s presented music as complementary, and at times subservient, to armed action. In chapter 2, for instance, we looked at the lyrics of “Un fusil y mucha rabia” (A Gun and Lots of Rage), in which the narrator trades in his/her *tiple* for a gun to fully realize his/her revolutionary potential. Gustavo Adolfo Renjifo pointed me to a recently composed song that fully reverses the exchange that was idealized in that song. In the song “Peregrino del monte” (Wanderer of the Hills), by Lucho Vergara, the protagonist sings instead:

Voy a cambiarte, hermano	Brother, I am going to trade
Tu fusil, tu venganza	Your gun, your vengeance
Por tiple de esperanza	For <i>tiples</i> of hope
Erguidos en la mano	Raised in your hand
Que se termine el llanto	That the cry of your uncertain path
De tu camino incierto	Might end
Y aprendas el concierto de la paz	And you learn the concord of peace
Con el canto	With song

For Renjifo, it is precisely this type of outlook that defines *canCIÓN social* today. Referring to “Peregrino del monte,” he asserted: “That is social song, because it is treating society’s problems from the perspective of somebody who is tired of the violence; who doesn’t want arms.”

Given the different foci of César López’s own work, which toggles between participatory projects in communities and widely publicized artistic endeavors like *Toda bala es perdida*, it tends to defy traditional musical categorizations.<sup>309</sup> As López told me, he often asks himself if “this is art with a social objective, or if it is social work using artistic tools.” One thing of which

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<sup>309</sup> María Elisa Pinto (2016), who describes a workshop López led for victims of the conflict, similarly asserts that his work with the *escopetarra* aims to support peacebuilding through two main channels: by intervening directly with affected groups; and by raising awareness about these groups’ experiences among those who are further removed from the conflict.

he is certain, however, is that his own compositions do not fit with his definition of *canCIÓN protesta*: “Sometimes they ask me if what I do is protest song, and if you look closely, there is no protest. I mean, we don’t protest against anybody. We don’t accuse—‘You did this, you didn’t do that.’ No; never.”<sup>310</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that despite his efforts to maintain a neutral political stance, musical projects like the ones López undertakes are often denigrated by people on the Right. When I spoke to López in 2011, before a broader consensus in favor of the peace negotiations began to build, he described a similar stigmatization of the musical projects he leads as the interlocutors I quoted above had observed of *canCIÓN protesta*:

Unfortunately, these types of exercises are still interpreted as subversive exercises—that aren’t in the [political] center. They are always a bit to the left. That is totally absurd. But everything that has to do with human rights, with the search for liberty, with questioning some things that the governing class does wrong, has always been interpreted as reactionary, subversive, irreverent—even if they are not.

Given that the rhetoric and policies of ex-President Álvaro Uribe were largely responsible for perpetuating the type of view López was decrying—oftentimes, with lethal consequences—it is not surprising that the politician’s own effort to employ a guns-into-instruments trope was met with skepticism. Just before leaving the presidency in 2010, Uribe spoke at the opening of the Iberoamerican Congress of Culture in Medellín. According to a news report, Uribe’s speech, which ended with the pronouncement that “the child that takes up an instrument will never take up a weapon,” provoked a chorus of boos from the audience that didn’t let up until he left the premises (Cervera Aguirre 2010).

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<sup>310</sup> When I pointed to certain songs on *Toda bala es perdida* in which it is unambiguous which actors are perpetrating the violence being discussed, López responded: “Yes, there are a few clues.”

## **Conclusion: From *Canción Protesta* to *Canción Social***

In the late 1960s, a new genre of music was established in Colombia. Activists and artists, primarily linked to communist groups, found in *canción protesta* a suitable descriptor for the oppositional music they sought to produce in tandem with the dynamic organizing political groups were undertaking during these years. While the start date (1966) for the period covered in this dissertation stems from the first documented usage of the term *canción protesta* in Colombia, it also coincides with the formal founding of the FARC, which became the country's largest guerrilla group. Protest songwriters in the grassroots *canción protesta* movement devoted much of their lyrical output to expressions of support for the FARC and other guerrillas that sprang up around this time, seeing in their revolutionary violence the potential to bring about the social and political changes of which they dreamed. In the main highland cities, however, the rigid Marxist orthodoxy behind *canción protesta* encountered the rebellious postures of *nueva ola* and *nadaísmo*, making way for the emergence of a multifaceted counterculture at the outset of the 1970s that permitted commercial enterprises to market and profit from *canción protesta* in spite, or perhaps because of, its counterhegemonic associations. By the end of the decade, increased political repression helped close off this mainstream outlet for the musical expression of "protest."

In Colombia, the term *nueva canción* has generally been reserved for the internationally known artists who pioneered the transnational network that carries that name. Nevertheless, in the 1980s this label was deemed fitting for several of the musicians and ensembles that could trace at least some roots back to *canción protesta*, but who consciously rejected the *panfletario* approach that had characterized it.

Since the 1990s, the category of *canción social* has become salient, sometimes replacing the other two terms, at other times coexisting with them. While for some people *canción social* denotes the same music as *canción protesta* does, most musicians and journalists who are familiar with the phenomenon recognize that a change in terminology occurred. Several observers have also acknowledged that the *canción protesta* moniker is indelibly associated with the pro-guerrilla leftist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. As the core values of those politics have come through the years to be increasingly questioned within the Left, but also violently repressed, *canción protesta* has been stigmatized as an outdated and even subversive mode of expression. In that respect, *canción social* appears to some to embrace a wider range of socio-political themes than *canción protesta*, and it does not therefore evoke the latter's aggressively oppositional overtones to the same extent. Most significantly, musicians who are linked to *canción social* are almost unanimous in the view that the guerrillas bear some responsibility for the rampant violence of the last three decades, along with the enormous toll it has taken on Colombian society. Many artists who wrote songs in support of the guerrillas regret having done so, or at least go out of their way to explain the context from which they originated. In recent years, artists associated with *canción social* have been increasingly involved with initiatives aimed at bolstering the peace movement in Colombia. The work of one these musicians, César López, illustrates particularly well how the key discursive tropes from *canción protesta* of the 1970s have been effectively reversed in the world of *canción social*.

By compiling the incidence of pertinent musical categories in published sources from 1966 to 2016, I have endeavored in this chapter to empirically demonstrate the change in musical terminology that took place over the course of this fifty-year period. Borrowing a page from Seeger (2004), moreover, I have sought to interpret the significance of this transformation by

analyzing numerous people's perspectives of the categories, the music, and the changing dynamics of the Colombian civil conflict. In the concluding chapter, I tease out the implications of the shift from *canción protesta* to *canción social* within wider regional and historical contexts.

## CONCLUSION. Discourses of Musical Resistance in Regional and Historical Context

Throughout this dissertation, I have traced the outlines of broad and changing discourses—discourses through which musicians, activists, listeners, and other actors connected in a specific lineage of artistic and political movements have imagined oppositional action and expression. In the previous chapter, I began to show how shifting perceptions of armed resistance, themselves tied to the ebbs and flows of the Colombian civil conflict, were manifested in a transformation of musical terminology. I will conclude this study by considering how these conversions in musical discourse and practice fit with broader political developments occurring across Latin America and beyond in recent decades, and drawing comparisons between the legacies of *canción protesta / social* in Colombia and those of *nueva canción* movements elsewhere on the continent. In the final part of the chapter, I touch briefly on the new cultural realms into which protest music has moved in Colombia, and I propose a few implications from my research for the ethnomusicological study of protest music.

Needless to say, the advent of *canción social* in Colombia did not occur outside of far-reaching regional and global historical sweeps. Their principal junctures are well known: the end of military dictatorships in Latin America and the return to democracy in the 1980s and 1990s; the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and China's engagement with global capitalism; the resultant conquest of neoliberal capitalism, and the spread of ostensibly democratic systems; and the exponential increase in transnational economic and cultural exchange from the 1990s onwards. Importantly, these developments brought with them paradigmatic shifts for leftist politics and social movements in Latin America. As Susan Eckstein (2001) notes in her essay "Where Have All the Movements Gone? Latin American Social Movements at the New Millennium," the military's withdrawal from rule in different nations dislocated leftist



movements' pro-democracy and human rights foci. Combined with Cuba's inability to sustain ideological and economic support for Marxist guerrillas in the region after the fall of its Soviet backers, redemocratization, however tentative in some places, caused most of these groups to flounder. The widespread adoption of neoliberal reforms, which exacerbated social and economic inequalities in the region, also redirected traditional dynamics of protest. Private-sector workers, whose jobs could now be sold off to the lowest bidder in the transnational playing field, no longer weathered the existential risks posed by directly contesting capitalist employers. Peasants responded to growing impoverishment by migrating to cities or to the United States. Various movements targeting specific effects of neoliberalism surfaced, from consumer and student protests of steep increases in the costs of subsistence and education, to housing movements, to collective efforts to address spiraling levels of crime and violence. Related to these adjustments, scholars have asserted that "traditional" social movements, which struggled for more conventional political-economic changes, have given way since the 1980s to "new social movements"—these take on issues ranging from the environment, to ethnic identities, to gender and sexuality (Edelman 2001; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker 2008).

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, many countries in Latin America unexpectedly changed political course; by 2010 more than sixty percent of Latin Americans were led by figures who avowed socialist ideas. For Fernando Coronil (2011), the spread of leftist governments in Latin America was evidence that History had returned, despite Francis Fukuyama's (1992) controversial prophecy that the trend towards worldwide acceptance of liberal democracy and capitalism signaled the "end of History." And yet, the "leftward turn" laid bare a fundamental paradox that partially redeemed Fukuyama's narrative: while socialist-

inspired political activities increased, the absence of viable models of functional socialist systems has clouded the visions presented by various leftist actors. Unable to formulate credible alternatives to neoliberalism, transnational networks of social movements have been consigned to critiquing it. It is for this reason that scholars argue for the “need to rethink the very definition of *revolution* in an era of globalization, when the overthrow of the state is not necessarily the key to radical transformation of social relations” (Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker 2008:7; italics in original).

In his article “Latin American Protest Music—What Happened to ‘The New Songs’?” Murray Luft (1996) illustrates the ways in which protest music has generally followed the contours outlined above for political and social movements in Latin America. As Luft describes, the drawing down of dictatorships in the Southern Cone at the end of the 1980s undermined one of the central unifying issues for *nueva canción* artists. With the collapse of communism, moreover, the socialist rhetoric that had been showcased in protest music repertoires became ever more untenable. Activist music experienced a brief uptick and a new focal point as the impacts of neoliberal policies began to be felt across the region, but this surge quickly died out as the Left struggled to challenge the diffuse power nodes of globalized capitalism. Concomitant with the rise of the new social movements, activist musicians began addressing a range of particularistic issues, such as indigenous rights and the environment. Luft sees striking symbolism in the trajectory of the Chilean group Inti-Illimani, one of the major representatives of *nueva canción*. A review for one of the band’s concerts in Los Angeles in 1994 decried that “the 90s version of Inti-Illimani no longer cries for revolution. Its poetic lyrics are no longer preoccupied with freedom and social justice. The greying band members don’t damn the Yanquis

as they once did.” And yet, its musicians counter such accusations by stressing that “it’s just that the times we live in now are very different!” (quoted in Luft 1996:16).

While Colombia was not immune to the macro political-economic processes I have been discussing, its course was exceptional in the Latin American context on many fronts. By the end of the twentieth century, guerrilla movements in Central America had negotiated peace agreements, and the Peruvian military had decimated the leadership of the Shining Path guerrillas (Eckstein 2001:363). In Colombia, by contrast, guerrilla violence intensified in the 1990s. The FARC continued to expound the same Marxist-Leninist ideology—albeit, with a new Bolivarian tinge (Pizarro Leongómez 2011)—even while their main sources of funding in the drug trade and kidnapping increasingly lent them the aura of common criminals. Colombia also bucked the trend of electing leftist presidents at the outset of the twenty-first century, remaining a crucial US ally at a time when the superpower’s relationships with many of Colombia’s neighbors were strained (Nasi 2007).

Social and political movements of various kinds have trudged along in Colombia through the darkest days of repression. The recognition of the nation’s multiethnic character, newly enshrined in the constitution of 1991, spurred mobilizations of Afro-Colombians seeking cultural and territorial rights, especially on the Pacific coast (Dixon 2008; Eckstein 2001:394). Amidst acute persecution, as of the mid-1980s peasant movements saw themselves obliged to refocus from fighting for structural changes to human rights advocacy (Celis 2013); indeed, human rights work has consumed a tremendous proportion of leftist activists’ energy in the last three decades (Tate 2007). As Slater (2008:35) put it, “the struggle for the sanctity of life” has become a defining feature of many civic movements in Colombia.

Keeping in mind these different backdrops, along with the perspectives foregrounded in chapter 5, I contend that in Colombia's distinctive case of extended conflict, the shift from *canción protesta* to *canción social* represents a dramatic evolution in the discourses within which political and musical resistance have been defined. Namely, it symbolizes the transfiguration, within oppositional sectors, from viewing incitement to guerrilla violence in oppositional art as a justifiable political tactic, to seeing it as virtually inexcusable; from metaphorizing about turning guitars into guns, to physically converting guns into guitars. The terminological transformation coincides with the discrediting of the "combination of all forms of struggle" philosophy, as well as of the *panfletario* mode of musical composition that initially bolstered that belief, but it also reflects entrenched efforts to eliminate peaceful protest through sheer repression. While the departure of dictators removed a common target of opposition for activist musicians across Latin America, in Colombia, I would argue, resistance to the multiple forces of violence in the country has become a defining theme for progressive songwriters, and a key association of *canción social* more generally. Given the efforts by some powerful people to slander the idea of a negotiated peace as a concession to communist terrorists, musicians also see in *canción social* a form of resistance to these attempts to foreclose non-military solutions to the war.

In addition to the comments quoted in the previous chapter, one can point to innumerable examples that help us trace the construction of this contemporary discourse. One emblematic moment that highlighted a contrast with political relations in the 1960s came when President Santos spoke at the National University in early 2016, fifty years since the last time a head of state had set foot in the hotbed of activism. Given that the earlier visit ended with the army entering the campus to rescue President Lleras from a student occupation, an editorialist for *El*

*Espectador* perceived a great deal of symbolism in the president's meeting with less-than-welcoming students at the León de Greiff hall five decades later:

It seems to me that it was a premonitory encounter with a country where it will not be a crime to think differently and where the arms of criticism will replace the criticism of arms. Santos did not turn into a *camilista* [disciple of Camilo Torres] nor were the first years overcome by his good faith. It was the possibility of starting to live without killing each other. (Molano Bravo 2016)

In the musical realm, further comments from *escopetarra* inventor César López demonstrate how the convictions activists of the early 1970s held concerning *canción protesta*'s role as a tool of revolutionary struggle have been turned on their head for a postmodern interrogation of absolutes: As part of his response to the query, "What is the biggest act of resistance that can be achieved with creativity?" López told an interviewer: "For me it has a lot to do with questions—with embracing questions, and not so much answers. ... With questions, we move people from their positions; with questions, we are able to change things."<sup>311</sup>

It is worth reiterating, at this point, that *canción social* encompasses a few different bodies of music: that which was labelled *canción protesta* and *nueva canción* in the 1960s and 1970s; certain strands of activist music from the late 1970s and 1980s; and newly composed works since the 1990s. On the one hand, I suggest that some of the old protest songs, which may have once denoted varying degrees of sympathy for insurrectional revolution, or were associated with the struggle for democracy in Latin America, have been repurposed to fit with the broad push for peace in Colombia. *Canción social* marks an unmistakable transformation, as a journalist quoted above put it, in "the feelings with which the music is listened." It speaks to the idea that the same Facundo Cabral song could inspire someone to join the guerrillas, and,

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<sup>311</sup> "César López - Música política y creatividad UPB," YouTube video, 6:45, interview with César López, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, published April 16, 2013, <https://youtu.be/LczoUAYtc8Y>.

decades later, to lay down their arms. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that the re-airing of music from the 1960s through early 1980s involves a degree of *revolucionostalgia*—the term connotes a sense of grief over the disappearance of previously taken-for-granted political narratives (Nelson 1999:71). In the absence of compelling new utopic fantasies to challenge the neoliberal stranglehold, the former teleological suppositions, evoked as they are by the *canción protesta / nueva canción* classics that have been repackaged as *canción social*, retain some of their relevance as political-cultural references and resources.

For *canción social* music of more recent provenance, the Colombian case resonates with what Luft has described in other Latin American countries. Rather than denounce the neoliberal policies of the Colombian state in their music, many socially conscious musicians have opted instead to comment on the symptoms of those policies. The only newly composed songs Pablus Gallinazo performed at his concert in 2013, for instance, concerned pollution of the environment. Aside from an implicit denouncement of violence, what Grupo Suramérica founder and director Carlos Mario Londoño protested most explicitly at concerts I attended, as well as in our interview, was the problem of child prostitution in Medellín; his spoken condemnation prefaced the performance of Víctor Heredia's thematically related song "Novicia" (Novice, 2001), which Suramérica has adopted into its repertoire. In Colombia, of course, paramilitary and state repression is a key factor that contributes to these kinds of orientations. An illustrative example on this point comes from the Medellín ensemble Grupo Pasajeros: the text of the group's original tune "Neoliberalismo" makes no bones about its members' stance on the topic; in 2004, several of them were imprisoned for their musical activism and subsequently spent nearly ten years in exile due to threats they received.

A major stream of *canción social* since the 1990s variously chronicles violence, issues condemnations of it, or voices hopes for peace and reconciliation. Songs such as “Mi país,” “Peregrino del monte,” “Toda bala es perdida,” and others performed by Pasajeros (mentioned below) are part of this tendency. Over the last twenty years, Suramérica’s promotional materials and press coverage have emphasized the group’s obsessive commitment to these themes. In a program for a 1994 concert they baptized “The Dances of Life,” the band’s members wrote that they carry “messages of life and peace” in their music.<sup>312</sup> A reporter covering Suramérica’s first ever concert consisting exclusively of originally composed material in 2004 wrote: “The lyrics of these songs maintain their three fundamental pillars: the quotidian, the city, and the country and love, themes from which they feel committed to solidarity, coexistence, and peace in the country.”<sup>313</sup> At their performances, Londoño integrates these same phrases into the extended soliloquies he recites between songs. Over a background of soft instrumental music provided by his bandmates, in 2014 he proclaimed from the stage: “Thanks to many of you that have allowed us to keep alive the flame and hope of song; ... the song for peace, for a true reconciliation, that grows from here, from the heart.”

### **New Song, Social Song, Testimonial Song: Commemorating Twentieth-Century Protest Music in Twenty-First Century Latin America**

Brought into dialogue with writings documenting the legacies of *nueva canción* elsewhere in Latin America, my analysis of Colombian *canción social* can help illustrate the ways in which repertoires articulating the revolutionary ideals of the 1960s through 1980s, as well as those bearing witness to the era’s prevalent violence, have been diversely memorialized according to

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<sup>312</sup> *Como duele mi ciudad*, concert program, Grupo Suramérica, Medellín: Teatro Metropolitano, May 5, 1994, Grupo Suramérica collection.

<sup>313</sup> *El Mundo*, June 4, 2004.

local circumstances. Having persevered through extended periods of exile and repression during military dictatorships in their countries, musicians associated with *nueva canción* in Argentina and Chile have now been merged into a historical narrative that includes the re-establishment of moderately stable democracies. Since the end of Pinochet's rule in Chile in 1990, many people have recast well-known *nueva canción* works that were composed *before* the 1973 coup as commemorations of the difficult years that came *after* it. Deceased *nueva canción* pioneers like Víctor Jara and Violeta Parra have become national icons of resistance (Morris 2014), while acts that returned to Chile when the dictatorship ended continue to support social movements fighting the perpetuation of neoliberal policies that the military regime built in to the foundation of the Chilean economy. In 2011, for example, Quilapayún performed their famed *Cantata popular Santa María de Iquique* at an event in support of the enormous student protests of the market-oriented educational system (Bellei, Cabalin, and Orellana 2014; Karmy Bolton 2014:68). Argentine musicians who had been involved with the *nuevo cancionero argentino* generally see their music as having played beneficial roles in the protracted processes that ultimately restored democratic governance in the region (Molinero and Vila 2014). In Colombia, by contrast, we have seen that musicians and fans evince a far more complicated relationship with the revolutionary music of the 1970s, to the point that a new category was needed to usher it into the twenty-first century.

Compared to the Southern Cone, several Central American nations and Peru experienced levels of violent conflict that were closer to those that have afflicted Colombia. While the fact that El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Peru moved beyond their worst years of war by the beginning of the 1990s distinguishes them from Colombia, the record of post-conflict protest music in those countries may foreshadow future developments in the latter. Following the cessation of



hostilities in the early 1990s, Salvadorian groups connected with the *nueva canción* network expressed frustration in their songs about the impunity that soldiers who had committed atrocities during the war continued to enjoy. We saw in chapter 5 that Colombian songwriter Guillermo Calderón had already raised the issue of impunity for the various perpetrators of violence in his 1989 song “Mi país” (My Country). In Nicaragua, songs from the early 1980s that defended the Sandinistas’ military response to attacks from the US-backed Contras still resonated for supporters of the revolution decades later. Nevertheless, the 1990s output from the same “[politically] committed musicians” who wrote those pieces marked a growing disillusionment with the Sandinistas, as well as despair with the neoliberal turn Nicaragua took when the party was voted out of power in 1990 (Scruggs 2006). Some of the musicians who spearheaded a movement of “testimonial music” in the highland Peruvian province of Ayacucho during the mid-1980s got their start some years earlier in the vibrant *nueva canción* scene in Peru’s capital, Lima (Ritter 2006). While songwriters gradually stopped composing songs commenting on the brutal war between the army and Shining Path guerrillas as the conflict dissipated in the 1990s, their music continued to be performed and heard. As Ritter (2012:212) describes, many of the songs written as a reaction to the traumas of widespread violence in Ayacucho during the 1980s have been “re-signified” in the twenty-first century “as acts of memory.” It is possible that, with the passage of more time in a period of post-conflict in Colombia, *canción social* will play a similar function there. Certainly, Colombian musicians like César López have purposefully participated in the kind of testimonial songwriting that would lend itself to a remembrance of violence.

Notwithstanding the varying national contexts shaping the modern-day reception of *nueva canción* and its corollaries, there are unmistakable common threads in the pan-Latin

American panorama of contemporary protest music. In 2011, international celebrity Calle 13 performed at the Viña del Mar Festival in Chile, accompanied by Inti-Illimani and Chilean singer Camila Moreno (who has shared the stage with other important *nueva canción* figures). Notably, the group's lead vocalist introduced the anthemic tune "Latinoamérica" with a statement that presaged the massive mobilizations the Chilean student movement would initiate a couple months later, but also echoed the sentiments of many on the Left in Colombia today: "Education is our new revolution," he proclaimed, "It is not the gun. It is not violence. It is education."<sup>314</sup>

### **Passing the Mantle**

Upon learning that I was studying *canción social* in Colombia, numerous people in Bogotá and Medellín asked me if I would be examining hip-hop, punk, rock, and ska music. Musicians, activists, scholars, and lay people alike recognize that these genres have largely inherited the mantle of social and political commentary and protest from the singer-songwriter, duo, and folkloric ensemble traditions more typical of *canción protesta* and *nueva canción*. While Spanish-language rock from the Southern Cone filled a niche formerly occupied by *canción protesta* for middle-class youth in the 1980s and 1990s (Palacios 2006:239), several local rock bands, such as Kraken, Dr. Krápula, and Aterciopelados, have become well-known for their political activism in the interim; in recent years, environmental concerns have become prominent in the work of the latter two.<sup>315</sup> The hip-hop movement matured somewhat later, in the early years of the twenty-first century. Although many hip-hop artists rap about political and economic issues, as well as the armed conflict, a central thread for Afro-Colombian groups specifically

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<sup>314</sup> "Calle 13 ft Inti Illimani el histórico y Camila Moreno-Latinoamérica(En vivo)," Facebook video, 8:55, Viña del Mar, Chile, 2011 [posted May 20, 2017], <https://www.facebook.com/lacallesuenaafuego/videos/1204069149718779/>.

<sup>315</sup> Luft (1996:17) similarly noted that rock music was becoming a vehicle for protest elsewhere in Latin America in the 1990s. On heavy-metal and punk music in Colombia, see Hortua (2013).

concerns the racial discrimination this population has long experienced, and many rappers have links with Afro-Colombian social movements (Dennis 2011:82). Notably, some of the language used to discuss oppositional rock and hip-hop borrows directly from the discourse of *canción protesta*. For example, a music librarian I spoke to told me about the existence of *panfletario* hip-hop. Likewise, an article comparing rock group Dr. Krápula to 1970s *canción protesta* reported: “Beyond fearing that they will be labelled as ‘pamphletary,’ they are conscious that that term, that derision, is one of the weapons of those in power to discredit them, as if in the pamphlet there were no truths” (Araújo Vélez 2006).

A small number of musicians outside the hip-hop world continue to combine their artistry with social movement organizing in ways that resemble the grassroots *canción protesta* movement of the late 1960s. Members of the aforementioned Grupo Pasajeros work closely with grassroots organizations and frequently perform at protests and community events in poor neighborhoods of Medellín and Bogotá.<sup>316</sup> It was an appearance at an action against a proposed road toll in a lower-middle-class area of Medellín, in fact, that made them targets of an anti-terrorist police unit and landed them in jail. Just as National Protest Song Center regular Aída Pérez performed at the 1968 World Festival of Youth and Students in Bulgaria, and Luis Gabriel and others attended the 1978 World Youth Festival in Cuba, in 1997 Pasajeros renewed the practice by travelling to Cuba for the XXII World Festival of Youth and Students.<sup>317</sup> If the *du jour* solidarity events revolved around Vietnam in the late 1960s, the Southern Cone in the 1970s, and Central America in the 1980s, in 2014 Pasajeros singer Leonardo Rúa performed at a soirée calling for support for the Palestinian cause. The activist community Pasajeros is part of

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<sup>316</sup> Musically speaking, Pasajeros betrays the fundamental influence of *canción protesta* and *nueva canción* in its acoustic guitar-based songwriting and performance, and in the inclusion of Andean *quenas* and *panpipes* on many of their tracks.

<sup>317</sup> “Pasajeros (Colombia),” *Freemuse*, October 20, 2008, <http://freemuse.org/archives/1326>.

has also carried on the *peña* tradition. In August 2014, I attended a *peña solidaria* (solidarity coffeehouse) that Rúa helped organize to raise awareness and funds for political prisoners from war-torn rural regions north of Medellín. Hosted at a casual bar in Medellín's central district, the *peña* featured performances of original songs by Rúa and others, covers of Silvio Rodríguez, the Parras, Víctor Jara, and Alí Primera, poetry readings, brief pieces of satirical political theater, and testimonies from former political prisoners and lawyers who described how civilian peasants in war zones continued to be falsely accused of being guerrilla fighters. Significantly, the musicians of Grupo Pasajeros and others in their milieu—including the activist ensemble Nuestro Tiempo—are critical of the high-profile, city-funded *canción social* festivals in Medellín that are headlined by artists like Pala, Grupo Suramérica, and Ana y Jaime, asserting that they have little in the way of a “social” component; for some, when these acts are presented as exponents of oppositional popular song, it is in fact an insidious “distraction” from the truly “committed art.”

The members of Pasajeros speak about fostering the “grassroots arts of resistance” in their home city, and they have branded their own music with the label *canción propuesta* (song of proposal), which they see as a subgenre of *canción social*. Aside from making political-economic critiques in songs like “Neoliberalismo,” Pasajeros’ songs call out, by name, the policies of the Uribe regime that led to the “false positives” debacle and the targeting of social activists in the guise of cracking down on guerrillas (see chapter 5), as is the case in the song “Guajira de la seguridad democrática” (Guajira of Democratic Security).<sup>318</sup> A few well-known songs in Pasajeros’ repertoire, including “Parcero” and “La patecabra,” were in fact written by a

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<sup>318</sup> The *guajira* is a traditional Cuban song genre. After 1959, singer Carlos Puebla popularized revolutionary *guajiras* in Cuba and abroad (Gradante 2017).

songwriter from the city of Manizales named Wilson Castellanos.<sup>319</sup> In the 1990s, Castellanos worked for five years as a community leader at the Casa de la Cultura (House of Culture) in Ciudad Bolívar, a sprawling slum in the south of Bogotá, at a time when there were daily assassinations of poor young people by the security services. Notably, in describing the inspiration and approach to writing these songs in this difficult context, Castellanos (p.c.) bucked the trend of activist musicians who had been turning away from *panfletario* music since the late 1970s: “When I was at the House of Culture, and we started to use music and art as a way to tell stories, to denounce— [it was in the style of the] pamphlet—all of the songs were born out of a specific situation.”

### ***Canción Social and the Study of Protest Music***

By outlining the remarkable trajectory of a particular stream of oppositional music in Colombia, this dissertation may shed further light on broader issues arising from the cross-cultural study of music and protest. In the introduction to the dissertation, I laid out a conceptual framework that positioned my focus on shifting discourses of resistance in Colombia within the social sciences literature on resistance, which informs much research on protest musics. I also proposed that my findings underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to the analysis of music in social and political movements that goes far beyond the interpretation of lyrics. The data I have provided regarding the re-significations of 1970s *canción protesta* in Colombia also relate to another theoretical perspective through which many scholars have analyzed oppositional music. Drawing on a large body of work on “framing processes” by sociologists David Snow and Robert Benford (e.g. Benford and Snow 2000), researchers writing about repertoires as diverse as Salvadorian

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<sup>319</sup> A slang word, likely of old Portuguese or Galician origin, *parcero* translates roughly to “buddy”; *patecabra* is a slang term for a dagger.

revolutionary songs (Almeida and Urbizagástegui 1999), Serbian rock (Mijatovic 2008), and the music of US peace activists (Brooks 2010) have argued that music is a primary contributor to the issue-framing practices in which activists in social and political movements typically engage. As Drott has recently observed, however, “a song or performance, in framing a subject of political contention, *itself comes to be framed, colored by its association with the cause in question*” (Drott 2015:175; my emphasis). This dynamic can be clearly seen in the changing views I have documented of *canción protesta*, which was ultimately tainted by its associations with left-wing guerrilla groups.

Readers might understandably regard the developments foregrounded in this study as evidence of the position Peter Manuel (2017:11) argues when he writes that “a trend in world music since the activist Cold War decades has been a grand process of depoliticization and demobilization in the face of the amorphous hegemony of neoliberal globalized capitalism”; this global snapshot is, on the surface, consistent with Luft’s (1996) appraisal of the South American situation, outside Colombia. At the risk of betraying a naïve optimism in progressive politics, however, I hold on to the belief that the close examination I have provided of changes in *canción protesta*, *nueva canción*, and *canción social* in Colombia’s metropolitan hubs reveals processes that were somewhat more complex than what Manuel describes. As I have demonstrated, the evolution of this pedigree of activist music was shaped by such factors as: the collision of competing notions of resistance in countercultural currents of the 1960s; dogmatic understandings of the function of oppositional art in Marxist circles; ideological conflicts over the commercial dissemination of protest songs; unpredictable acts of censorship under an extended State of Siege; meticulous analyses of Marxist aesthetic philosophy; ongoing repression of leftist activists and artists; the ever-changing landscape of the civil conflict and

drug trade; the successful demobilization of a prominent guerrilla group (M-19); the failure of successive peace talks with the FARC, and the recent societal push to negotiate its dissolution. These matters are all inherently political. I would argue, moreover, that the broad arc I have traced in the preceding chapters registers fundamental transformations in political tactics in the context of seismic shifts at the local, regional, and global levels during the last half century.

## EPILOGUE

On June 23, 2016, President Juan Manuel Santos returned to Havana, where delegations from the Colombian government and the FARC had been negotiating for four years. After Santos signed an agreement with the FARC outlining a bilateral ceasefire and steps towards a permanent disarmament for the guerrilla group, Colombians across the country took to the streets to celebrate another significant step towards the conclusion of the war. César López, among other musicians, performed at a concert in Bogotá's Plaza Bolívar. On August 24, Colombians once again filled public spaces when negotiators announced that a final peace accord had been reached. The comprehensive deal included provisions for rural development, solutions for the problem of illicit drugs, political participation, and a process of transitional justice. As described above, Argentine singer Piero (who is a Colombian citizen) organized a tour in support of the accord in the weeks leading up to September 26, when it was officially signed at a ceremony in Cartagena that was attended by dignitaries from around the world. The treaty would have to be ratified in a national plebiscite, however, and ex-president Uribe mounted a vigorous campaign for the “no” side, which alleged that the transitional justice framework set too low a bar for punishments of the guerrillas' crimes while providing them with automatic political representation. On October 2, supporters of the “yes” side were stunned by the results of the plebiscite—50.2% of voters opposed the peace deal, while 49.8% supported it. The vote tallies showed that people in the areas most affected by the conflict voted overwhelmingly in favor of peace. Information later surfaced that the “no” camp had deliberately run a campaign of disinformation, spreading unsubstantiated claims that the negotiated peace meant handing the country over to terrorists of *castro-chavista* extraction—a reference to the Castros who have headed the Cuban regime since 1959, and the late Hugo Chávez, former leader of Venezuela's



socialist government. In the days following the plebiscite, there were massive marches and demonstrations in support of the accord. There was at least one report that *canción social* was heard at the mobilizations in Medellín, and members of several different panpipe troupes in the Bogotá area joined together to perform at marches in the capital.<sup>320</sup>

For a few weeks, Colombia's prospects of peace once again looked uncertain. However, Santos moved quickly to address some of the opposition's concerns in an amended agreement with the FARC. A new deal was signed in Bogotá on November 24 and subsequently sent to congress and the senate, where it was ratified without a single vote against (although some legislators who remained opposed abstained from voting). As I write these words in June 2017, the FARC is following the protocols for its eventual demobilization, although the process has not always run smoothly. The government has also initiated negotiations with the other major guerrilla group of 1960s origins, the ELN.

*Canción protesta* arose in the 1960s as part of the same broad political conjuncture that produced these guerrilla organizations, and was a key component of the oppositional culture that rationalized their existence for a few decades. *Canción social* has strengthened the historic processes that are gradually extinguishing the rebel groups. It remains to be seen what musical categories will surface when they are no longer defining elements of Colombian life.

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<sup>320</sup> "En Medellín marcharon a favor de la paz y en respaldo a los acuerdos," *Caracol Radio*, October 8, 2016, [http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2016/10/08/medellin/1475883959\\_922182.html](http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2016/10/08/medellin/1475883959_922182.html).

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Incidence of Musical Categories in Print Sources, 1966-2016

Unless otherwise indicated, the artists referenced are Colombian. When the marker indicating the incidence of one of the categories is placed in square brackets, the term is used in negative relation to the artist. For example, the *El Tiempo* article on June 12, 1969, stated that Rolf did not write protest songs.

#### Abbreviations

CNCP: National Protest Song Center

NCL: *Nueva canción latinoamericana*

Date	Source	<i>Canción protesta</i>	<i>Nueva canción</i>	<i>Canción social</i>	Artist / Event Referenced	Artist 2	Artist 3	Artist 4
1966-12-13	<i>El Espectador</i>	•						
1967-04-10	<i>Cromos</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1967-04-29	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1967-06-17	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1967-07-10	<i>Cromos</i>	•						
1967-08-07	<i>Cromos</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1967-08-28	<i>Cromos</i>	•			Los Yetis			
1967-11-16	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1968-02-05	<i>Cromos</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1968-02-21	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Juan Sebastián	Eliana	Aída Pérez	
1968-02-22	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•						
1968-03-07	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Aída Pérez	Juan	Jorge	
1968-04-25	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Juan Sebastián	Aída Pérez	Amalia	Gracián
1968-08-22	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Aída Pérez			
1968-10-17	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Juan Sebastián			
1969-06-12	<i>El Tiempo</i>	[•]			Rolf (Germany)			
1969-10-09	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Aída Pérez			

1970-01-01	<i>Antología de canción protesta</i>	•			Various			
1970-01-15	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-01-24	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Joan Manuel Serrat (Catalonia)			
1970-02-05	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-02-05	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Juan Sebastián	Ana y Jaime		
1970-02-12	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-02-19	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-04-09	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-06-04	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Juan Sebastián	Nelson Osorio	J. Mario	Jaime Caicedo
1970-06-25	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			Jorge López			
1970-07-03	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Eliana	Pablus Gallinazo		
1970-07-04	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime	Norman y Darío	Eliana
1970-07-16	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-08-09	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1970-08-13	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-09-04	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Tom Jones (U.K.)			
1970-09-10	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-09-24	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1970-11-05	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			JUCO activists			
1971-02-18	<i>Voz Proletaria</i>	•			CNCP			
1971-03-24	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1971-06-11	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			CNCP			
1971-06-14	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Ancón festival			
1971-06-18	<i>El Espectador</i>	•			Columna de Fuego	Los Flippers		
1971-06-18	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Eliana			
1971-06-19	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Gran Sociedad del Estado			
1971-06-20	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•						
1971-06-23	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1971-06-26	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro			
1971-07-16	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Pablus Gallinazo	Eliana	Ana y Jaime

1971-07-17	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Los Piscis		
1971-07-18	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime	Christopher
1971-07-19	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Christopher	Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime
1971-07-21	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Sergio Torres		
1971-07-22	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•						
1971-07-23	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime	Sergio Torres
1971-07-24	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			CNCP			
1971-08-20	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Coco de Oro	Ana y Jaime	Pablus Gallinazo	
1971-10-16	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			CNCP			
1971-10-23	<i>El Tiempo</i>	[•]			Nino Bravo (Spain)			
1971-11-12	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•						
1972-07-05	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Rodrigo Álvarez			
1972-08-22	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Leonel Gallego			
1972-10-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Piero (Argentina)			
1973-06-04	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Eliana			
1973-07-03	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Eliana			
1974-01-01	<i>Canción social Vol I</i>			•				
1974-12-01	<i>Arco</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
1975-01-01	<i>Canción Social Vol II</i>			•	Pablus Gallinazo	Angelita	Gonzalo Arango	
1975-06-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Carlos Mario Mora			
1975-12-02	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Inti-Illimani (Chile)			
1976-01-01	<i>Aleph</i>	[•]			Víctor Jara (Chile)			
1976-05-01	<i>Alternativa</i>	•			Daniel Viglietti (Uruguay)			
1976-08-07	<i>El Tiempo</i>		•		Gloria Martín (Venezuela)			
1976-09-13	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Gloria Martín (Venezuela)			
1976-11-01	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Quilapayún (Chile)			
1977-01-04	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Eliana	Ana y Jaime	Luis Gabriel	Norman y Darío
1977-08-08	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Nora y Delia (Argentina)			

1978-07-10	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Yaki Kandrú	Hermanos Escamilla	Luis Gabriel	
1978-07-17	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		Nueva Canción Festival			
1978-09-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•		•	Víctor Jara Festival			
1978-09-25	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		La Nopalera (Mexico)			
1979-01-01	<i>Alternativa</i>		•		La Nopalera (Mexico)			
1979-05-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	[•]			Mercedes Sosa (Argentina)			
1979-06-01	<i>Alternativa</i>	•	•	•	Pablo Milanés (Cuba)			
1979-12-20			•		Los Amerindios			
1980-07-27	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	Chimizapagua		
1981-01-01	<i>Cante compañero I</i>	•	•	•	Nelson Osorio	Víctor Jara (Chile)	Horacio Guarany (Argentina)	
1981-01-01	<i>Cancionero cantemos</i>	•	•		General Latin America			
1981-03-01	<i>El Colombiano</i>		•		Los Amerindios			
1981-03-12				•	Los Amerindios			
1981-03-27	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	Eco Latino	Vilcapampa	Chaqui-Llajta
1981-09-10	<i>La Patria</i>			•	Los Amerindios			
1981-10-03	<i>El Colombiano</i>		•		Jorge López			
1982-03-06	<i>El Mundo</i>	•		•				
1982-09-08	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Violeta Parra (Chile)			
1983-05-01	<i>El Espectador</i>		•		Canto Libre de América			
1983-07-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Songs of Latinos in US			
1984-07-27	<i>El Espectador</i>		•		NCL Stars			

1985-11-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Joan Manuel Serrat (Catalonia)			
1986-03-17	<i>Semana</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime	Eliana	
1986-04-06	<i>El Colombiano</i>		•		Inti-Illimani (Chile)			
1986-04-13	<i>El Colombiano</i>	[•]	•		Piero (Argentina)	Grupo Suramérica		
1989-01-01	<i>Canción protesta Pablus Gallinazus- Ana y Jaime</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime		
1989-12-11	<i>El Mundo</i>		•		Los Amerindios			
1989-12-13	<i>El Mundo</i>		•		Iván y Lucía			
1989-12-15	<i>El Mundo</i>		•		Genesis			
1990-07-13	<i>El Tiempo</i>		•					
1991-01-01	<i>Ana y Jaime 16 éxitos</i>	•			Ana y Jaime			
1991-01-01	<i>Canción testimonial (protesta)</i>	•			Various			
1991-10-19	<i>El Espectador</i>		•		Iván y Lucía			
1991-10-25	<i>El Tiempo</i>		•		Pablus Gallinazo	Aída Perez	Ana y Jaime	Norman y Darío
1991-10-30	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•	•		Ana y Jaime			
1992-07-24	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Franco de Vita (Venezuela)			
1992-08-12	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Luis Gabriel			
1993-02-25	<i>El Tiempo</i>		•		Iván y Lucía			
1993-07-19	<i>El Mundo</i>		•		Grupo Suramérica	Nuestra América		
1993-09-01	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Víctor Manuel (Spain)			
1993-12-22	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	NCL Stars			
1994-01-21	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Tanguito (Argentina)			
1996-01-01	<i>Canción protesta grandes éxitos de los 60s</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo	Ana y Jaime		
1996-07-14	<i>El Colombiano</i>		•		Los Amerindios			
1997-01-01	<i>Medellin en vivo</i>			•	Norman y Darío			

1997-04-01	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Ana y Jaime			
1998-01-01	<i>Dos ídolos de la canción social</i>			•	Luis Gabriel	Pablus Gallinazo		
1999-01-01	<i>Nueva canción latinoamericana</i>		•		NCL Stars			
1999-04-16	<i>El Tiempo</i>		•	•	Chimizapagua	NCL stars		
1999-09-24	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Son del Camino			
1999-10-21	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•	•	•	NCL Stars			
1999-10-22	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•		•	NCL Stars			
1999-11-14	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	NCL Stars			
2000-01-01	<i>Ana y Jaime 20 éxitos</i>	•			Ana y Jaime			
2000-01-01	<i>Canción social de la protesta a la propuesta</i>	•		•	Ana y Jaime	Pablus Gallinazo	Norman y Darío	José Barros
2001-01-01	<i>Huellas</i>	•			NCL Stars			
2002-01-01	<i>Latinoamérica Canción Social</i>			•	NCL Stars			
2002-01-01	<i>Lo mejor de la canción social</i>			•	Ana y Jaime	NCL stars		
2002-01-01	<i>Hits gordos de la canción social</i>			•	NCL Stars			
2002-01-01	<i>La huella de los años 60</i>	•		•	Various			
2002-01-01	<i>Revista colombiana de sociología</i>	•		•				
2003-09-14	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Ana y Jaime	NCL stars		
2004-01-01	<i>Los años maravillosos de la canción social</i>			•	Ana y Jaime	Luis Gabriel	Iván y Lucía	América Libre
2004-09-27	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	León Gieco (Argentina)	Víctor Heredia (Argentina)	Yordano (Venezuela)
2004-12-23	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Iván y Lucía			
2005-07-01	N/A (Medellín newspaper)			•	Grupo Suramérica	Inti-Illimani (Chile)		
2006-02-14	<i>El Mundo</i>			[•]	Alejo García			

2006-03-01	<i>Hoja de Medellin</i>			•	Alejo García			
2006-08-06	<i>El Mundo</i>		•		Grupo Suramérica			
2007-10-25	Jaime Caicedo Blog			•	Hermanos Escamilla			
2008-07-27	Fan Blog			•	Iván y Lucía			
2008-08-05	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	Víctor Heredia (Argentina)		
2008-10-20	Freemuse		•		Grupo Pasajeros			
2008-11-01	<i>Ciudad Viva</i>			•				
2008-12-15	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Pablus Gallinazo	Violeta Parra (Chile)	Víctor Jara (Chile)	Carlos Puebla (Cuba)
2009-08-07	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	Pala	Niyireth	Alejo García
2009-08-09	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica	Alejo García	Niyireth	Pala
2009-10-12	<i>Semana</i>			•	Mercedes Sosa (Argentina)			
2009-11-24	<i>Arcadia</i>	•						
2010-01-01	"Canción social en la música vallenata"			•	Máximo Jiménez			
2010-05-31	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Juan Luis Guerra (D.R.)			
2010-08-05	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Gilberto Santa Rosa (Puerto Rico)			
2010-08-09	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Ana y Jaime	Grupo Suramérica	Alejo García	Gema y Pavel (Cuba)
2010-09-20	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Alejo García	César López	Dr. Krápula	
2010-09-27	<i>El Mundo</i>		•	•	Mercedes Sosa (Argentina)	Niyireth		
2010-11-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Víctor Jara (Chile)			
2010-12-14	<i>El Espectador</i>	•			Ana y Jaime			
2011-01-20	colectivodeabogados.org	•			Hermanos Escamilla			
2011-02-22	<i>Vanguardia</i>	•			El Campesino Embejucao			



2011-04-19	Portafolio.co	•			Ana y Jaime	Piero		
2011-05-23	revolucionyresistencia musical.blogspot.com	•			Cali rock groups			
2011-07-08	<i>El Espectador</i>			•	Amaury Gutiérrez (Cuba)			
2011-07-10	<i>El Colombiano</i>	•		•	Facundo Cabral (Argentina)			
2011-07-10	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•			Facundo Cabral (Argentina)			
2011-08-07	<i>El Mundo</i>			•	Grupo Suramérica			
2011-09-09	<i>Cromos</i>			•	César López			
2011-09-13	<i>El Nuevo Siglo</i>	•		•	Fernando Delgadillo (Mexico)			
2012-04-10	<i>El Nuevo Siglo</i>	•		•	Ana y Jaime	Piero	Vicky	
2012-04-17	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Piero (Argentina)			
2012-07-09	<i>El Colombiano</i>	•		•	Grupo Suramérica			
2012-07-27	"Noche de Canción Social Andina y Latinoamericana" Flyer			•	Zonafranca	Raza Inka		
2012-10-27	Kienyke.com	•		•	Pablus Gallinazo			
2013-03-02	"Festival de Música Andina" Flyer			•	Duo Ideal			
2013-04-25	<i>El Espectador</i>	•	•	•	Víctor Heredia			
2013-04-25	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•		•	Gieco, Piero, Heredia (Argentina)			
2013-05-16	<i>El Colombiano</i>			•	Rubén Blades (Panama)			
2013-07-04	"Pablus Gallinazo" Flyer	•			Pablus Gallinazo			
2013-07-26	"Gran Noche de Música Social" Flyer			•	Felipe Fernández (Colombia)			
2013-07-29	<i>Diners</i>	•		•	Pablus Gallinazo	Violeta Parra (Chile)	Víctor Jara (Chile)	León Gieco (Argentina)

2013-08-26	<i>El Pílon</i>	•			Vallenato musicians			
2013-08-26	<i>El Tiempo</i>			•	Kraken			
2013-09-04	"Íconos de música social" Poster			•	Bandola	Alberto Cortez (Argentina)		
2014-04-01	<i>Revista Artificio</i>	[•]		•	Marta Gómez			
2014-06-02	Blog		•		Hoja de Parra			
2014-07-01	<i>El Fuede</i>	•		•	Lilian Salazar Chujfi			
2014-07-16	"Encuentro de Música Social" Flyer			•	Pala			
2014-09-18	<i>Cromos</i>	•			Ana y Jaime	Pablus Gallinazo		
2015-02-16	colombia.com	•			Ana y Jaime			
2015-02-27	tuboleta.com	•			Ana y Jaime	Piero		
2015-03-01	<i>Revista Calle</i>	•		•				
2015-03-15	<i>Cromos</i>			•	ChocQuibTown			
2015-04-08	<i>El Espectador</i>	•			León Gieco (Argentina)			
2016-04-18	<i>Radio Nacional</i>			•	Mar Es			
2016-04-29	<i>Señal Memoria</i>	•		•	Ana y Jaime	Silvio Rodríguez	Mercedes Sosa	Pablo Milanés
2016-04-30	<i>Señal Memoria</i>	•			Ana y Jaime			
2016-05-22	<i>El País</i>	•			Leonor González Mina			
2016-07-28	hacemosmemoria.org		•	•	Mar Es			
2016-08-01	<i>Radio Nacional</i>			•	Raíces Andinas			
2016-09-07	<i>La Nación</i>			•	Piero (Argentina)			
2016-09-14	<i>RCN</i>			•	Orquesta Típica Contraste			
2016-09-17	libeluladorada.com	•			Alma de los Andes	Ramiro Zambrano y Javier Apraez	Juan Rochón	
2016-10-08	<i>Caracol</i>			•				
2016-10-21	<i>El Espectador</i>	•						
2016-10-22	<i>El Tiempo</i>	•						

## **Appendix B. List of Interviews**

Alarcón, Niyireth. Medellín: July 11, 2011.

Bastidas, Carlos. Toronto: March 31, 2013.

Benavides, Iván. Bogotá: July 11, 2014.

Bongcam, Gloria (Eliana). Bogotá: July 31, 2014.

Cardona Flórez, Leonardo, and Juan Guillermo Espinal. Medellín: August 27, 2014.

Castellanos, Wilson. Manizales: September 9, 2014.

Chona, Jorge. Bogotá: July 2, 2014.

de los Ríos, Ricardo. Bogotá: July 22, 2014.

Díaz, Roger. Medellín: July 10, 2011.

Escamilla, Gustavo. Bogotá: July 23, 2013; June 25, July 4, August 21, 2014.

Fernández, Gisela. Medellín: August 29, 2014.

Franco, Efraín. Bogotá: January 26, 2015.

Flórez, Omar. Bogotá: July 18, 2014.

Gallinazo, Pablos. Bucaramanga: July 5, 2013.

George, Kemel. Skype: October 28, 2014.

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Illary. Medellín: August 13, 2012.

Lambuley, Nestor. Bogotá: June 17, 2011.

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López, Jorge. Paris: June 17, June 19, 2013.

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Miñana Blasco, Carlos. Bogotá: January 15, 2015.

Morales, William. Bogotá: June 16, 2011; July 27, 2013.

Moreno, Humberto. Bogotá: January 16, 2015.

Muñoz, Rodrigo. Sevilla: August 19, 2012.

Naranjo Arce, Luis Gabriel. Bogotá: June 24, July 24, 2014.

Nuestro Tiempo. Medellín: July 11, 2011.

Ocampo, Teto. Bogotá: June 30, 2011.

Osorio Marín, Mario. Bogotá: August 22, 2014.

Ospina, Bayron, and Eugenio Londoño. Medellín: September 1, 2014.

Palacio, Carlos. Medellín: July 13, 2011.

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Pulido, Lucía. Bogotá: June 23, 2014.

Renjifo, Gustavo Adolfo, and Luz Marina Posada. Bogotá: July 14, 2011.

Rúa, Leonardo. Medellín: September 2, 2014.

Safira (with Gisela Fernández): Medellín: September 3, 2014.

Smith, Norman. Skype: February 19, 2015.

Valencia, Ana. Telephone: March 14, 2015.

Vesga, Humberto. Bogotá: June 24, 2011.

Waldmann, Ricardo. Bogotá: July 22, 2013; September 18, 2014.

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