

Uruguay
Last Updated: 29 November 2016

torg	gname	onset	mingrou pdate	maxgrou pdate
T503	TUPAMAROS	1972	1963	1971
T1629	ARTIGAS GUARD COMMANDO		1992	1992
T350	OPR-33		1971	1972
T1452	RAUL SENDIC INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE		1974	1974
T1771	JUAN ANTONIO LAVALLEJA COMMAND		1992	1992

I. Tupamaros

Min Group Date: 1963

Max Group Date: 1971

Known Aliases: Movimiento De Liberacion Nacional (MLN), National Liberation Movement,

Tupamaros, Tupamaros (Uruguay)

Part 1. Bibliography

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- "OBITUARY Raul Sendic Founder of Tupamaro rebel group led 9-year Uruguayan insurgency." 1989 *The Globe and Mail*, May 01. Proquest.
- "30 Preguntas a un Tupamaro" CEDEMA. <http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=1722> ¹

Part 2. Narrative

Founding

The Tupamaros, which began as a Union in 1959 and then moved towards violent action, were inactive as of 2012. (Bernard Dukas, 1986). It formed as a violent organization in 1963 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 691). According to one article, the Tupamaros seem to be more in line with anarchism than Marxism despite what they claim ("Tupamaros wage a grim battle" *New York Times*, 1970). The overall sense of their beliefs is that only violence can bring about change, which explains their distaste for elections (Joseph Novatski, 1971). The Tupamaros appear to have derived from a farm worker's organization and a socialist political group which morphed into a violent leftist group (elite rebel band). A pamphlet published in 1968 claimed another one of their aims was to provoke a United States intervention in order to "create many Vietnams" in South America (Crouch, 2010; CEDEMA).

Their first attack was in 1966 when they clashed with state forces. Early on, they began by robbing banks, distributing food, and revealing scandals; one article describes them as "robin hoods" but they have since turned to murder and kidnapping (Joseph Novatski, 1971, "*Urban Guerrillas in Uruguay Seem to Have Modified Tactics.*"). They kidnapped two foreigners in Montevideo and shot a third. The two kidnapped were an American agronomist and a Brazilian embassy official. The third, killed, was an advisor to the Uruguayan government (*New York Times*, 1970). The proposed reason for this particular instance of violence was that the Uruguayan government refused to release 150 political prisoners. Interestingly, they furthermore kidnapped a British ambassador on Jan 8th 1971, the same day they publicly "declared" their support to the Broad Front, a political party with socialist leanings (seem to have modified their tactics as of July 7th, the date this article was written, the ambassador had not been found).

Geography

¹ This source appears very untrustworthy, but it matches up with the available google books result and several other places that also display a copy of "30 Preguntas a un Tupamaro"

Interestingly, according to one source, the Tupamaros began operating in rural areas, and then moved because of a conviction that rural movements are likely to fail. They operate mostly in Montevideo (New York Times, 1970). They were apparently concerned they would be “too exposed” if they continued to operate in the countryside (elite rebel band). There is evidence they are connected with Argentina, as they seem to have Argentinean weapons (elite rebel band). They certainly have borrowed ideas from both Chile and Cuba. They published their “thirty questions to a Tupamaro” in a Chilean newspaper (Crouch, 2010). The Tupamaro interviewed in this article clearly had great respect for the Cuban communist method (CEDEMA).

Organizational Structure

They were founded by Raul Sendic--a former law student, labor leader and politician--in 1963; he named the group after an Inca chieftain and martyr. The police captured him in 1970, yet, according to this source, the group continued without him. (New York Times, 1970). Apparently, they operate in cells of eight to fifteen people (small elite rebel band). It is guessed that they have some fifty leaders and about 1000 followers (elite rebel band). It began in 1959 as a farm worker’s union, organized by Raúl Sendic, of sugar and beet-root workers (elite rebel band). Apparently, this union staged a march on the capital in 1962, which later became something of a riot (elite rebel band). Apparently, due to the widespread affluence in Uruguay, the group attempted to recruit from the white-collar workers instead, gaining doctors and journalists, as well as former police and armed forces. (New York Times, 1970). After Sendic’s imprisonment, the leadership seemed to come from young university students (Joseph Novitski, 1971).

External Ties

There is evidence they are connected with Argentina, as they seem to have Argentinean weapons. (elite rebel band). †

Group Outcome

The state, under President Jorge Pacheco Areco, has mostly responded violently, using the army and “emergency powers” to jail Tupamaros. The president has also sought tougher police chiefs in Montevideo to try to keep the Tupamaros in check (laboratory). The group also appeared to weaken after the capture of Sendic, their leader, though he managed to escape somewhere between his first capture in 1969 and his subsequent one in 1972 (Obituary//Joseph Novitski, 1971). The official stance of the government was that they do not negotiate with kidnappers, which contributed to the Tupamaros holding their hostages for such an extended period of time (Joseph Novitski, 1971). According to one article, after the group had been subtly supporting a left-leaning political party, the Tupamaros split into two groups, one that was more interested in politics, and another that wanted to continue with their violent tactics (modified tactics). In 1972, the Tupamaros began heavily attacking military outposts which triggered a massive response by the Uruguayan army who finally managed to stamp out the Tupamaros, and Sendic was captured again (Obituary).

Part 3. Proposed Changes:

Additional aliases: none

Min. Group Date: 1959

Max Group Date: 1972 (OBITUARY Raul Sendic Founder of Tupamaro rebel group led 9-year Uruguayan insurgency.)

II. Artigas Guard Commando

Min Group Date: 1992

Max Group Date: 1992

Known Aliases: Guardia de Artigas

Part 1. Bibliography

- “Cronología entre 1991-1993” La Red 21.
<http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/443978-cronologia-entre-1991-1993>
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- “El saldo de la visita de Maduro a Uruguay y Argentina, según El País.” RunRunes.
<http://runrun.es/runrunes-de-bocaranda/runrunes/70198/el-saldo-de-la-visita-de-maduro-a-uruguay-y-argentina-segun-el-pais.html>
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<http://www2.ejercito.mil.uy/noticia.php?idA=2923&idC=1&idSc=4>

Part 2. Narrative

Note: Very little information exists about this group, and what does tends to contradict itself.

Founding

According to an Uruguayan news website, Alfonso Lessa, a reporter, (LaRed21) actually met the Antigas Guard Commando (or Guardia de Artigas).² In his book, *La Primer Orden* (the first order), he describes them as a secret military group that was ultranationalist and “antimasón” (when searched, it appears to not be an actual word; the closest approximation being Antimasonería, which means anti-freemason) (Lessa, Alfonso). Lessa also explains how Hugo Chavez, the future president of Venezuela, gave a speech at a university in Havana about his secret meeting with the Guardia de Artigas back during a military scandal of 1992. According to Lessa, in this speech Chávez names the group among the patriotic groups of Latin-America, claims they were part of the military (not an anti-state actor), and then talks about how he and the Guardia de Artigas were planning for the long run (Lessa, Alfonso). The group came to attention with one attack in 1992.

Geography

Another article claims La Guardia were based in Montevideo, (which isn't surprising if they were part of or connected to the military) (El saldo de la visita de Maduro a Uruguay y Argentina, según El País).

Organizational Structure

According to Lessa, Mario Aguerrondo, a prominent military official, who was being investigated during this period, is the son of the founder of La Guardia (Lessa, Alfonso). But, according to another source, Mario Aguerrondo is the grandson of the founder (Herencia profesional). A book makes a passing reference to La Guardia as a group connected to bombs in 1992 (Luis Roniger, Mario Sznajder). Their first act was to place a bomb in the study of the former president Julio María Sanguinetti (LaRed21). According to this source they “retained” Alfonso Lessa on the 14th and 15th of may (LaRed21). Finally, on December 31st 1993 they purportedly placed a bomb in the “domicile” of a criminal attorney José Luis Barbagelata. (LaRed21).

External Ties

Hugo Chavez had a meeting with the group at one point but it is unclear whether he provided any external support. Lessa also explains how Hugo Chavez, the future president of Venezuela, gave a speech at a university in Havana about his secret meeting with the Guardia de Artigas back during a military scandal of 1992, in this speech (according to Lessa)

Outcome

² According to a spanish dictionary this word means “land newly broken up.”

Unknown.

Part 3. Proposed Changes

Min Group Date: April 29, 1992 (LaRed21)

Max. Group Date: 1992

Additional Aliases: None

III. OPR-33

Min Group Date: 1971

Max Group Date: 1972

Known Aliases: Organizacion Popular Revolucionaria - 33, Uruguayan Anarchist Federation, FAU

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Narrative

Founding

The FAU (Federación Anarquista Uruguaya), the political organization for which the OPR-33 was the military wing, was still active in 2012 (FAU website). OPR-33, however, was not (FAU interview). The FAU, an anarchist political group founded in 1956 in response to the sharp economic downturn that Uruguay was plunged into, began with many ideas. They based some of their ideologies on Bakunin and Malatesta, forming as an organization against imperialism (FAU interview). Out of that, grew OPR-33, the military wing of the FAU (FAU interview). Interestingly, the FAU were suspicious and critical of the violent actions of their contemporaries, the Tupamaros, and worried if they did not keep a tight leash on their military arm that it would become less about the ideas (anarchism and anti-capitalism). Therefore, they never allowed OPR-33 autonomy (FAU interview) The group is a decidedly anarchist group, anarchy meaning it “opposes the state and capitalism.” (FAU interview). It remains unclear exactly why they became violent; however, according to the FAU interview, by the time the military wing of the FAU was founded, many of the original FAU leaders were incarcerated, making violent action seem to be a last option (FAU article).

Their first notable attack was on July 16th in 1969, where a bomb that, according to Colonel Gavazzo (one of the known people in charge of “interrogating” the operatives), was planted at the Banco Comercial (Commercial Bank) in Montevideo by OPR-33 (FAU interview). On the same day, a team of OPR-33 operatives stole the “orientales 33” flag, a symbol of Uruguayan independence from a museum (FAU interview). They then turned to mostly theft of money or guns and kidnappings, some of which have been rumoured to be for publicity's sake. Their last big operation, before many of the leaders were captured and never seen again, was to shoot and kill Raul Cantioni, a soft drinks distributor (FAU interview).

Geography

The group operated in Montevideo (FAU Interview).

Organizational Structure

Because OPR-33 was under the banner of the FAU, and the FAU drew predominantly from blue-collar workers who were feeling the economic downturn in Uruguay, the majority of the members of OPT-33 came from working families in Montevideo (FAU interview).

Despite the fact that OPR-33 never had autonomy outside of the agenda of the FAU, they did have a few “leaders.” Notably was Juan Carlos Mechoso, one of the original founders of the FAU; born into a working family before the economic downturn, he supposedly first began to sympathize with anarchist groups at age 14 (FAU interview). Another article names Gilberto Coghlan, as a leader of a railroad union and opr-33 militant (operativos represivos contra el partido por la victoria del pueblo). Due to the lack of autonomy OPR-33 had, coupled with the fact that the government came down hard on the group, the leadership of OPR-33 remains hard to decipher (FAU interview). Another known leader was Idilio De León Bermúdez, who was shot and killed in a police

shootout in 1974 after leading at least a “column” of OPR-33 (FAU interview). Many of the leaders of OPRP-33 and of PVP were “disappeared” in the mid-70s (FAU interview).

As of the mid-70s, OPR-33 has only about 30 “operatives” inside Uruguay (FAU interview). They moved many of their people to Argentina, which was not under military rule at the time. However, this prompted a joint Uruguayan-Argentinian government movement to find and capture many of the operatives, of both OPR-33 and PVP. The group started as the FAU, which worked closely with worker’s unions and groups of that nature. There is evidence that, when opr-33 moved some of its operations/operatives to Argentina, they then gave rise to the PVP (El Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo) (Operativos represivos contra el partido por la victoria del pueblo). The PVP appears to be an Argentinian political party that still exists today (Quienes somos). The FAU (and therefore OPR-33) drew predominantly from urban anarchist-sympathizers who had been hit hard by the economic downturn (FAU interview). Mechoso is a classic example of someone who enjoyed the flourishing blue-collar working economy of Montevideo (along with his family) when he was a young man, and then saw the job market and his family’s prospects dry up (FAU interview).

External Ties

Information is not forthcoming on any external support. Besides the fact that they clearly had operatives in Argentina in order to be able to move their people there, there is no evidence of other groups lending their support. While there is no evidence of a direct alliance between the FAU and the Tupamaros, TC or MIR, however the interview does reference FAU pulling some of its members from these groups (FAU interview).

Group Outcome

Generally the state’s responses (both responses by the Uruguayan government, the Argentinian government, or a combination of both) were extreme and violent. They would kidnap and interrogate (torture) many suspected leaders of OPR-33. Juan Mechoso’s brother, Alberto Mechoso, managed to escape from one of these camps, yet many other leaders were simply never seen again (FAU interview). In addition, Operation Condor, a military operation that spanned many governments of South America, along with that of the United States, also worked to suppress the actions of anarchist groups, sometimes violently (Operation Condor: Deciphering the U.S. Role). With some US assistance, (operation Condor apparently had a detailed list of OPR-33 operatives and their locations) it seems that the Uruguayan and Argentinian militaries came together to bring about the end of OPR-33 in ~1975, though they continued to round up members through 1976 (FAU interview).

Part 3. Proposed Changes

Proposed Changes

Min Group Date: July 16th, 1969 (FAU interview)

Max Group Date: 1975 (FAU interview)

Additional Aliases:

IV. Raul Sendic International Brigade

Min Group Date: 1974

Max Group Date: 1974

Known Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- Tops ID 4221³
- "OBITUARY Raul Sendic Founder of Tupamaro rebel group led 9-year Uruguayan insurgency." 1989 The Globe and Mail, May 01. Proquest.
- Special to The New York Times. 1974. "Uruguayan Dies in Paris; Rebel Tie Seen." New York Times (1923-Current file), Dec 20. Proquest.
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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1989/04/29/raul-sendic-dies/ed66f6a3-f697-4559-be29-7d9106e0d1f5/>
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Part 2. Narrative

Founding

The information collected by TOPS ID 4221 is essentially the only available information. According to one source, the group came to attention in 1974 when Colonel Ramon Trabal was shot six times in the basement of his apartment in Paris, and two men were seen fleeing the scene (Uruguayan Dies in Paris; Rebel Tie Seen). Later, the France-Presse news agency mentioned the "Raul Sendic International Brigade" and that Colonel Ramon Trabal had "paid for his crimes" (Uruguayan Dies in Paris; Rebel Tie is seen). These crimes included: using torture to obtain confessions from Tupamaros members when he served as the head of intelligence in the Uruguayan government during the Tupamaros' active years, and, apparently tracking escaped Tupamaro members to Paris.

Geography

³ Fairly confident most of the information here comes from "Uruguayan Dies in Paris; Rebel Tie Seen."

The group's incidents appear to happen in Paris.

Organizational Structure

While there is little evidence on the group or on this incident, several sources confirm that Colonel Ramon Trabal was indeed the head of intelligence for the Uruguayan government during the years the Tupamaros operated, and that he very likely did use torture to obtain confessions (Uruguay in Transition: From Civilian to Military Rule).

External Ties

There is no information of external support although the group is transnational, as in, they carried out the assassination in France.

Group Outcome

Unknown.

Part 3. Proposed Changes

Proposed Changes

Min Group Date: No proposed changes

Additional Aliases: No proposed changes

V. Juan Antonio Lavalleja Command

Min Group Date: 1992

Max Group Date: 1992

Known Aliases:

Part 1. Bibliography

- "Cronología entre 1991-1993" La Red 21.
<http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/443978-cronologia-entre-1991-1993>
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- El País - Uruguay. 2007. "Los 170 años de Lavalleja." El Pais, May 05. Proquest.
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<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/uruguay/history-54.htm>

Part 2. Narrative

Founding

Comando Juan Antonia Lavalleja, also listed with La Guardia as a 1992 secret group related to the military that set some explosives (The Legacy of Human Rights Violations in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay). I have no evidence that this “group” comprises more members than just Lavalleja. The first documented act of this group was in 1991, when Lavalleja claimed credit for a bomb that destroyed Deputy Hugo Cores’ car (LaRed21). On the first of May 1992, a bridge with a railroad running across it in Minas was destroyed; this is attributed to Lavalleja (LaRed21). Lavalleja, also seems to have had his home municipality (formerly “Minas”) named after him, which seemed to imply at least some sort of notable, whether revolutionary or not, action on his part, to achieve this honor. (Los 170 años de Lavalleja).

Geography

The group appears to operate in the municipality, Minas, now Lavalleja.

Organizational Structure

The group was led by Lavalleja, but there is not much information about the group beyond that.

External Ties

There appears no evidence of external support for the group or ties to other state actors.

Group Outcome

Unknown.

Part 3. Proposed Changes

Proposed Changes

Min Group Date: January 11th 1991 (LaRed21)

Max Group Date: May 1st 1992 (LaRed21)

Additional Aliases:

Notes:

Types of group:

- Leftist (tupamaros, artigas guard commando)
- Anarchist (opr-33/fau)

- Unknown

Reasons for not escalating

- Size?
- US intervention with operation condor (?)**
- Provoke response from URU military (Tupamaros) vs not
- ideology?