

CONCLUSION

When I interviewed Lil Milagro's uncle in 2006, Alfonso Huevo Córdova, I asked him to explain how her ideas continue to exist today. He responded by saying, "she is dead but her ideas live on...of course men died in the fight as well, but for a woman to die like she died, she transformed into a martyr, a woman fighting for the freedom of all Salvadorans."¹ Although Lil Milagro's life ended tragically, her story humanizes the transformation individual's encounter as they become revolutionary intellectuals. Moreover, her narrative helps us understand how opportunities and obstacles determined by an individual's class, gender and society can serve as both intellectual and radicalizing forces in a person's life. Above all, Lil Milagro's story illustrates that individuals become intellectuals in different ways, but that their work is critical for revolutionary cultures to emerge and create a counter-hegemonic alternative.

Without understanding Lil Milagro's historical context, it would be impossible to humanize her story and place it within a broader context of revolutionary movements. Through this lens, we learned that Lil Milagro exhibited a deep compassion for people at an early age. Her parents and their emphasis on education then nourished Lil Milagro's intellectual development as she benefited from the opportunities of being part of a Salvadoran middle class.

Upon graduating from high school, Christian idealism surfaced as the core of her identity and would interact with many new ideas and experiences at the university. At the UES, Lil Milagro embraced the path of a traditional intellectual who learns about the

¹ Alfonso Huevo Córdova, interview, June 25, 2006.

world through institutions and the dominant culture. Over time, however, her experiences with the outside world fostered a revolutionary consciousness as she interacted with audiences that included the church, radical student groups, Christian movements, and Latin Americans from other countries. These experiences allowed her to work within an intellectual dialectic as she sought out the opinions of different audiences, which then strengthened or changed the assumptions underpinning her worldview. Through this process, she began to see herself as a theoretical representative of the poor, and thus a revolutionary intellectual.

Once Lil Milagro decided to join the armed struggle in El Salvador, her Christian idealism merged with ideas relating to Marxist understandings of class struggle, an emphasis on social and economic equality, and an end to government repression. At this point, she developed a syncretic ideology that combined Socialism and Christianity. Similar to the path of Camilo Torres, Lil Milagro came to believe that armed struggle was the only way to bring social justice embodied in the Christian gospel to the people.

Beyond this theoretical framework, Lil Milagro's story also illuminates the process in which individuals search for an identity in a world characterized by repression and injustice. Whether as a teacher, student activist, demonstrator, or revolutionary intellectual, Lil Milagro remained true to her conviction to fight for social justice. This core identity was fueled by a strong disdain for hypocrisy and her Christian idealism. In addition, her gender was a strong component of her identity. Although she did not analyze society based on a western feminist understanding of women's struggles, her legacy will remain a testament to the influence of women intellectuals and their capacity to participate in the creation of a revolutionary culture that paved the way for social

justice and the liberation of all Salvadorans. Julia Shayne suggests a similar position when she states:

Salvadoran women believed in a feminism predicated on the liberation of the masses and not the liberation of women, in particular. A handful of revered women revolutionaries, including Mélida Anaya Montes (Comandante “Ana Maria), Nidia Díaz, Eugenia, and Ana Guadalupe Martínez, had been active members of the FMLN since its inception, and they served as role models, challenging the stereotype of women as unfit for military tasks. In this sense, women guerrillas served as gendered revolutionary bridges through their mere existence.²

It is difficult to know whether Lil Milagro’s life in the revolutionary vanguard made her a gendered revolutionary bridge. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that her presence had an impact on society.

Indeed, there are many areas in Lil Milagro’s life in need of further exploration. For instance, comparing Lil Milagro to other revolutionaries of her time would help conceptualize her place within the revolutionary vanguard. Uncovering more information on Lil Milagro’s interaction with the poor during her clandestine life would clarify her specific contribution to El Salvador’s revolutionary culture. Conducting more interviews with Salvadorans and their memory of Lil Milagro would help us discover the extent of her legacy and its relevance in the country today. Finally, it should be noted that Lil Milagro wrote thousands of pages of poetry, letters, and diary entries that were not included in this analysis. Exploring these writings further is obviously necessary if scholars are to understand every nuance of Lil Milagro’s life, ideas, and experiences.

Despite this need for further research, with this thesis I hope to introduce Lil Milagro’s story into the ever-growing scholarship on revolutionaries and their role in challenging repressive governments in both El Salvador and Latin America. Beyond this,

² Shayne, *The Revolution Question*, 93

I believe that stories like hers serve as a foundation for understanding the radicalization process and how individuals come to believe that they can create a more socially just world.

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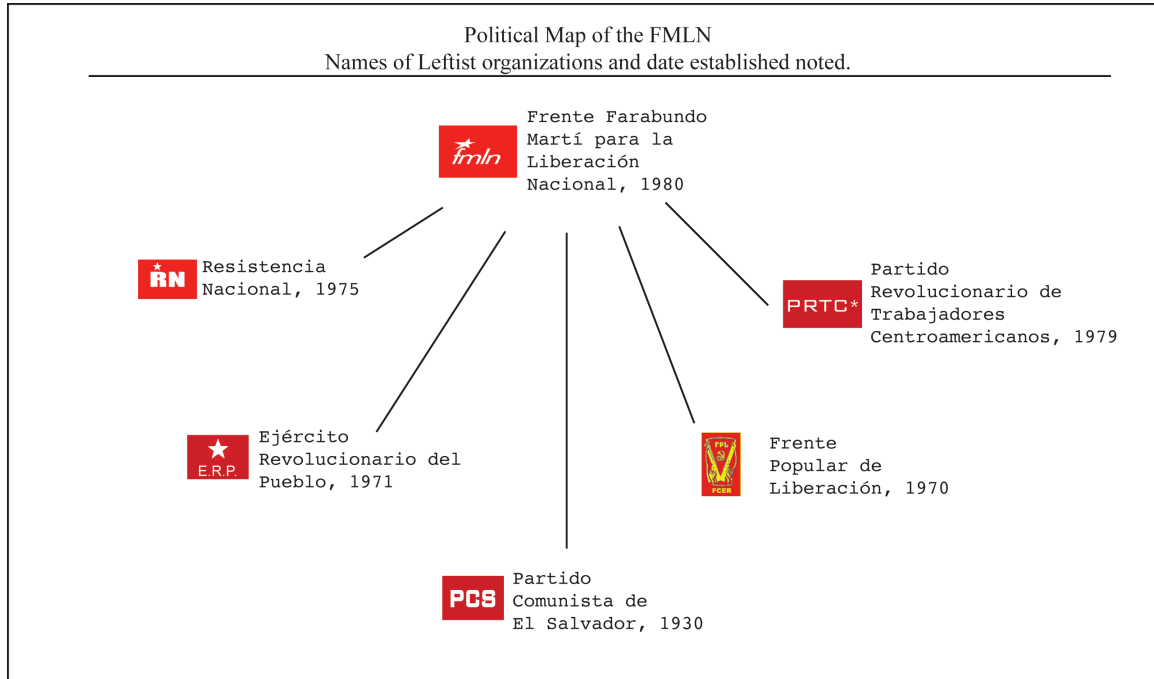
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APPENDIX A:

Political Map of the FMLN



APPENDIX B:

Yo quiero ir a París by Lil Milagro

Tengo 19 años
y quiero ir a París....
ver mi rostro en El Sena,
rezar en Notre-Dame,
conocer las costumbres de
París.

Cierto,
que tengo casa
en este pueblo de San
Salvador,
pero casas y pueblo,
se le vuelven pequeños
a la desmesurada dimensión
que toman mis ideas,
y aunque ya se
que sobre El Sena
no corre más que agua
que París es también,
una continuación
de casas y de pueblos,
donde los hombres rían,
sueñan, duermen y
caminan,
yo quiero ir a París.

Cierto,
que aquí nací,
y mi cariño por el mundo
aquí comienza;
quiero a mi madre,
mucho,
tanto que ya es dolor
imaginarme lejos.
Amo los campos de la casa

en que murió mi abuelo,
el río,
donde lave mis manos y mi
cuerpo
cantándole a los vientos.

Amo y quiero
las grises piedras del
camino
que me llevo en los pasos,
-de tantas veces rece ride-

Amo también,
lo que está aquí,
todo lo mío,
que me acompaña
íntimamente,
ya cuando duermo o pienso,
libros, vestidos,
pensamientos, papeles,
mis cuadernos,
mis cartas de estudiante.

Amo y quiero el recuerdo
de aquellos días,
en que iba con mi madre
a recorrer su pueblo,
y me pasaba,
meciendo ensueños
sobre la hamaca
de mis abuelos.

Cierto también,
que me formé bajo este
cielo,

que tengo sangre autóctono,
que pienso americanamente:
como los compañeros
nacidos en mi suelo.
Llevo dulces verdades
de esta pequeña patria:
la amiga mas querida
el amor primero
de generosas ilusiones
mis hermanos
que como yo cantan y viven
bajo el paterno techo.

Amo y quiero todo esto,
quién lo duda?
tanto, que ya es dolor
imaginarme lejos;
quiero a mi madre,
mucho;
quiero campos y hermanos,
abuelos, amigos,
compañeros,
casa y pueblo.
quiero esto, quien lo duda.

Pero a pesar de todo,
de mi pueblo y mi casa,
de mis libros y cosas,
de los amigos,
de los buenos recuerdos,
muy a pesar de todo,
tengo 19 años
y quiero ir a París.

APPENDIX C:

Despertar by Lil Milagro

Yo era mansa y pacífica
Era una flor,
Pero la mansedumbre no es un muro
Que cubre la miseria.
Y vi las injusticias
Y ante los ojos asombrados,
Estallaron las huelgas y las rebeldías
Del hombre proletario.
Y en vez de absurdas lástimas,
De hipocresías compasivas,
Brotó mi indignación¹
Y me sentí fraternalmente unida a mis hermanos,
Y toda huelga me dolía,
Y cada grito me golpeaba
No solo en la cabeza o los oídos
Sino en el corazón.
Cayó mi blanca mansedumbre,
Muerta a los pies del hambre,
Me desnude llorando de sus veles
Y un Nuevo traje me ciñó las carnes.
Primavera de lucha son ahora mis brazos,
Mi enrojecida sangre es de protesta,
Mi cuerpo es verde olivo
Y un incendiario fuego me consume
...y sin embargo,
sigo siendo como antes,
amante de la paz,
quiero luchar por ella desesperadamente,
porque desde el principio
yo soñé con la paz.

¹ Alejandro Murguía and Barbara Paschke eds., *Volcán: Poems from Central America: A Bi-lingual Anthology* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1983), p. 14.