

# Politicians without Parties and Parties without Politicians: The Foibles of the Peruvian Political Class, 2000–2006\*

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Since the collapse of the Fujimori regime in November 2000, the Peruvian political system has experienced considerable turbulence, which has focused attention on the capabilities and comportment of the country's elected politicians. While some analysts hold that 'there is no political class in Peru', others maintain that since Fujimori's demise a 'resurrection' has occurred in the fortunes of both parties and politicians who occupied centre stage during the 1980s. This article examines these claims, arguing that despite appearances to the contrary, the core of Peru's political class operates in a rational and responsible fashion.

Keywords: Peru, political class, Fujimori, democratisation, Toledo, APRA.

Parliamentary government, which has with justice been stigmatised as the greatest superstition of modern times, offers greater and ever greater obstacles to the introduction of good government and some of the elected representatives obtain a freedom from responsibility which tends to the advantage of crime.

Cesare Lombroso  
*L'Uomo delinquente*

## Introduction

Since the War of the Pacific (1879–83), when the state disintegrated and an overwhelming majority of the oligarchy failed to resist the Chilean invasion, successive generations of

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\* Fieldwork for this article was undertaken with financial support from the British Academy, which is gratefully acknowledged.

Peruvian commentators on history and politics have bemoaned the country's lack of a 'serious' political elite capable of implementing a '*proyecto nacional*' ['national project'] to secure long-term economic development and political stability. According to José Carlos Mariátegui, writing in the 1920s, the coastal planter class who ruled post-Independence Peru was 'backward [...] in its mental outlook', so that 'Democratic and liberal institutions cannot flourish or operate', the outcome being a prevalence of *gamonalismo* [political bossism] and frequent rule by military *caudillos* (1971: 16, 34). Analysing the same scene from a corporative Catholic perspective, Mariátegui's most lucid critic, Víctor Andrés Belaunde, argued that 'Behind the labels and titles of parties in Peru, only three political forces have counted: the coastal plutocracy, the military bureaucracy and highland *caciques*. The middle and popular classes have lacked effective representation ... parliamentary government has been a disaster' (1984: 149, 152, 159). For his part, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre concurred with Mariátegui and Belaunde on a number of central issues. A retrograde ruling class, possessing a 'feudal' mentality, weak bourgeois impulses and beholden to foreign interests, could not promote progress. Haya consequently called for a thorough overhaul of the state and the political system to allow greater mass representation, curtail oligarchic privilege, reduce the corruption in public life evident during Leguía's authoritarian regime (1919–1930) and establish a more efficient 'technocratic' civil service to accelerate development via an interventionist state (1972: 5, 19–20).

These critiques, popularised by the nation's three most authoritative figures in early twentieth-century intellectual and political life, have exercised considerable influence on attitudes and events in recent decades. For example, one motive for the coup led by Juan Velasco in October 1968 was to bury 'oligarchic' Peru, put an end to petty squabbling by self-interested parliamentarians and promote socio-economic and political modernisation. Such sentiments naturally came to the fore around the centenary of the War of the Pacific, when the claim by the doyen of Peruvian historians, Jorge Basadre, that 'The drama of Peruvian life has arisen because the state is not well implanted in the nation', producing a gulf between '*el país legal y el país profundo*' ['the official and the real country'], was repeated by academics from across the political spectrum and in the popular media (1980: 242, 250). Given the 'drama' afflicting Peru over recent decades, questions about its politics and politicians have also percolated into the literary sphere. Amid the hilarity and acute social satire contained in his novel *No me esperen en abril*, Alfredo Bryce Echenique addresses serious issues. Key protagonist, patriarch don Alvaro de Aliaga y Harriman, laments the fact that '*cada día queda menos Inglaterra en el Perú*' ['every day less of England remains in Peru'], and consequently attempts to overcome the frivolous, pleasure-seeking spinelessness of the nation's elite through opening 'the best, most expensive and most British public school in South America' (1995: 19, 153).

Preoccupation about the quality of Peru's business and political leadership has understandably been heightened by the experience of Alberto Fujimori's regime (1990–2000) and the problems besetting the Toledo administration (2001–2006). Reflecting widespread public concern about contemporary instability in the system of government and a lack of talent among Peru's elected representatives, in 2003 eminent sociologist Julio Cotler posited that 'there is no political class in Peru', on the grounds that its consolidation has been hindered by a combination of regular military coups, the

fragmentation of parties and marked electoral volatility in recent years, which has produced a high turnover in elected representation.<sup>1</sup> The accuracy of his claim aside, Cotler pinpoints an important issue. Most recent research on Latin American political systems after military rule has concentrated on ‘consolidation’ and the degree of ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ accountability attained in a given republic. This focus has resulted in a considerable amount of ‘labelling’, much of it of dubious utility (Collier and Levitsky, 1997). While the calibre and comportment of political actors is universally regarded as a *sine qua non* for good governance, the actions of politicians have to a surprising degree been ignored as a topic for research, both in Peru and elsewhere around the continent. Accordingly, this article examines the behaviour of the Peruvian political elite in recent years and its role in sustaining democratic government in one of Latin America’s most unpredictable and labyrinthine polities.

## The Legacy of Belaunde and García

Shortly after the military retreated to the barracks in 1980, it became commonplace to describe Peru’s political map as being divided into three roughly equal blocs. On the right, President Fernando Belaunde’s Acción Popular (AP) party had emerged victorious in the May 1980 general election, garnering 40 per cent of the valid votes cast for the Senate and 39 per cent for the House of Deputies. AP’s junior partner in government, the Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC), polled ten per cent. Much to the chagrin of *velasquista* army officers, the second Belaunde administration represented a restoration of the politicians they had ousted in October 1968: after twelve years of enforced exile or inactivity, almost all leading members of AP and the PPC were elected to Congress or occupied prominent bureaucratic positions. Considerable continuity was also evinced vis-à-vis the centre-left Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), despite the death of its founder Haya de la Torre in 1979. Peru’s oldest and best organised party attained over 28 per cent of the vote and a sizeable representation in a Congress that included all but one of its historic activists with a national profile. What of the left, which had grown considerably during the military *docenio*? In 1980 five Marxist groups fought separate campaigns, each receiving derisory support. Out of this chastening experience, the Izquierda Unida (IU) alliance was born and managed to broaden its appeal, to the extent that in the November 1983 municipal elections a three-bloc political system seemed to be emerging. The combined AP-PPC vote reached 31 per cent nationally, with APRA on 33 per cent and IU attaining 29 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 See the interview published in *Quehacer* 142 (May–June 2003), 6–15. For the purposes of this paper, the ‘political class’ comprises members of Congress, their paid advisers and full-time activists employed by Peru’s political organisations. This includes former presidents, presidential candidates and their entourage (e.g. Valentín Paniagua, Alan García, Lourdes Flores, Alberto Andrade, etc.). Overwhelmingly Lima-based, these form a relatively permanent group complemented by a smaller number of provincial career politicians occupying influential positions in municipal and regional government, who also organise and manage the nation’s political life on a professional basis.
- 2 All statistics on elections are taken from Tuesta (2001).

This tripartite correlation of forces, however, started to unravel between 1983 and 1985, although the shift was not immediately apparent. Support for the right evaporated owing to economic mismanagement by the AP-PPC government, growing corruption within the state bureaucracy and a failure to curb actions by Sendero Luminoso insurgents. Consequently, the 1985 general election witnessed the AP vote fall to seven per cent of valid ballots, as many stalwarts of the Peruvian right lost their parliamentary base. With APRA's charismatic candidate Alan García garnering a commanding 53 per cent of the presidential poll and IU 25 per cent, the fundamentals of the political system appeared to remain in place, the decline in representation on the right being counter-balanced by an influx of new blood onto the APRA and IU congressional benches. As yet, only a few 'outsiders' had managed to enter the legislature, which remained dominated by individuals affiliated to one of the four main groupings: in the 1980 presidential election AP, APRA, the PPC and the left accounted for 96 per cent of valid votes, a figure that rose marginally to 97 per cent in 1985 (Tuesta, 2001: 530, 540, 556–558).

The fortunes of both established parties and politicians began to change dramatically in the late 1980s, when economic meltdown and an inability to contain rapidly escalating guerrilla activity bred hostility, not only towards the García government. Anger against the whole political class mushroomed among a disillusioned electorate. But who would profit from this lamentable situation? As the 1990 general election approached, AP failed to regain popularity as voters remembered its poor performance in office between 1980 and 1985. Led by *limeño* lawyer Luis Bedoya, the PPC could not take advantage of APRA's unpopularity because of its association with the Belaunde government and its image as the political vehicle of the capital's 'white' upper- and middle-classes. Although backing for IU leader Alfonso Barrantes grew as the economic and political crisis accentuated, in mid-1989 the ever fragile IU alliance fragmented amid dizzying sectarianism and personality clashes, making the divided left unelectable (Taylor, 1990).

Faced with such an array of unappetising choices on the right, centre and left, numerous voters started to search around for alternatives and seek ways to chastise established politicians, whom they understandably blamed for bringing the country to near collapse. A first indication of increasing frustration and volatility among a discontented electorate occurred in the November 1989 municipal ballot, when a tasteless chat show presenter with no previous political experience was elected mayor of Lima with 45 per cent of the vote. Significantly, at the national level backing for independent candidates rose to 28 per cent of valid votes, substantially up on the three per cent 'outsiders' obtained in the 1985 presidential poll. As the 1990 general election approached, it appeared that another non-establishment figure would become the chief beneficiary of popular anger – Mario Vargas Llosa. However, the novelist's subsequent alignment with the traditional right, his 'rich *gringo*' image and enthusiastic espousal of an ultra neo-liberal manifesto frightened and alienated many electors – who invested their hopes in a true 'outsider', Alberto Fujimori.<sup>3</sup>

3 On the background to Fujimori's 1990 election success, see Salcedo (1990). Insider accounts of the 1990 campaign can be found in Vargas Llosa (1991) and Vargas Llosa (1993).

The 1990 election represented an unmitigated disaster for Peru's political class (mostly of their own making), although at the time many within its ranks did not appreciate the scale of their problems and worse was yet to come. An inability to perceive fully the level of voter rejection was largely due to a continued healthy representation in Congress. Boosted by Fujimori's unexpected showing, support for independent presidential candidates had grown to 32 per cent. This trend notwithstanding, the combined ballots of APRA, Vargas Llosa's Frente Democrático (FREDEMO) coalition and the two left alliances (IU and Izquierda Socialista), still accounted for a solid 68 per cent of valid votes cast for the presidency. While Fujimori managed to win the second round run-off against Vargas Llosa by attracting sympathisers of APRA and the left, his Cambio 90 grouping had only gained 32 out of 180 seats in the House of Deputies and returned fourteen out of 62 senators. This contrasted sharply with the performance of the parties. Despite a disastrous record in government, APRA organised an effective campaign and received around 22 per cent of valid ballots, allowing it to return 53 deputies and seventeen senators. Left voters secured the election of twenty deputies and nine senators, while FREDEMO comprised the largest group in both chambers, electing a total of 84 members. Taken together, members affiliated to the three main blocs still accounted for a substantial 77 per cent of Congress.

Such a strong representation helped disguise the depth of public antipathy to Peru's political class and can be explained by various factors. Cambio 90 departmental lists for parliament were drawn up in a very improvised fashion and contained many individuals who never dreamed that they might stand a chance of election. Apart from including a high proportion of candidates of dubious ability, an overwhelming majority were unknown and received minimal publicity during the campaign, whereas their competitors from the established parties enjoyed higher levels of media coverage. They could also draw on greater personal and organisational resources to compete more effectively in the preferential ballot. Additionally, at the local level mainstream candidates with a history of political activity possessed the advantage of voter recognition and in many cases could count on a personal following. This situation prompted numerous electors to cast a split ballot. Unable to bring themselves to support any of the leading presidential candidates, many opted to voice dissatisfaction by backing an 'outsider'; in the congressional poll they were less disposed to endorse 'exotic' candidates and consequently cast a ballot for a known figure who, they hoped, would make a better representative. Voter hostility, however, soon turned to wrath – a development incoming president Fujimori was to use to his advantage, with far reaching consequences for Peru's political class.

## **Peru's Political Class under the *Fujimorato***

Fujimori entered office in a precarious position. Cambio 90 comprised a marginal force in Congress. Alliances would therefore have to be struck with the traditional parties in order to pass legislation. Equally worryingly, the president-elect possessed no clear programme and could depend on no solid party organisation embedded in civil society to provide a modicum of solidity to his administration. Although politically inexperienced,

Fujimori quickly appreciated that attacks on established politicians and their organisations enhanced his standing. Vilification against the '*partidocracia*' and '*la politiquería criolla*' consequently intensified over the months leading up to the April 1992 *autogolpe* [palace coup], when Congress was dissolved, the 1979 Constitution suspended and opposition politicians arrested, along with members of the Supreme Court. These actions proved hugely popular, with the president's approval ratings topping 80 per cent in the months following the *autogolpe*. Ably assisted by intelligence director Vladimiro Montesinos and chief of staff Nicolás Hermosa, between 1992 and 1995 Fujimori proceeded to construct a classic 'neo-populist' or 'militarised' democracy, characterised by manifest presidentialism and an expanded role for the armed forces and security services in government, along with a high degree of executive control over the judiciary and the legislature.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding parliament, boosted by the capture of Abimael Guzmán in September 1992, the president's Cambio 90-Nueva Mayoría (C90-NM) movement attained 44 seats in the November 1992 election for a single chamber 80-member Constituent Congress. Apart from the PPC (which obtained eight seats), all the main parties boycotted the poll in protest against the illegitimacy of Fujimori's *autogolpe*. While laudable on moral grounds, this course of action was not cost free. Established parties and political figures found themselves marginalised, being deprived of the platform membership of parliament afforded and having to endure the resultant diminished media coverage. Threescore 'outsiders' took their place, for the 1992 Congress largely contained individuals possessing no history of militancy or a national political profile: all of the majority group C90-NM representatives were unknown newcomers; among opposition members, only fifteen were recognisable figures active during the 1980s.

The sidelining of the 1980s political class was accentuated after 1992, as Fujimori strove to consolidate his power. Assisted by positive economic growth and falling inflation between 1993 and 1995, as well as by the defeat of Sendero Luminoso insurgents, Fujimori easily won the 1995 general election with 64 per cent of valid votes. The extent of public hostility towards the political class at this juncture can be appreciated from APRA's performance. Despite the disastrous government of Alan García, in 1990 the party had still managed to garner a respectable 22 per cent, which fell to four per cent in 1995. AP fared even worse, attaining two per cent. The IU candidate received a paltry one per cent of valid ballots. In consequence, the 1995 general election reduced representation of Peru's main right, centre and left organisations to an insignificant rump in a parliament controlled by Fujimori loyalists (who occupied 67 out of 120 seats) possessing little experience or talent. Two sets of figures illustrate the deepening popular antipathy towards the political class at this juncture: whereas 'independent' candidates attracted 32 per cent of the poll in 1990, they won 94 per cent of valid ballots in 1995; combined support for the four parties that had dominated Peruvian politics in the 1980s slumped to seven per cent of the presidential vote and a slightly less disastrous fifteen per cent of the congressional ballot. None of the 1980s

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4 On these events, see Cameron (1997); Crabtree (1998) and Conaghan (2005). The characteristics of the Fujimori regime are also examined in Crabtree (2000); Degregori (2000); and Wiener (2001).

parties achieved over five per cent of the valid vote for president, resulting in their legal registration with the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones [National Electoral Tribunal – JNE] being rescinded.<sup>5</sup>

The 1995 general election therefore reinforced two trends underway since the April 1992 *autogolpe*. After 1995, Fujimori became undisputed master of the political landscape, as the regime tightened its grip over every branch of government and (via manipulation masterminded by Montesinos) an important swathe of the media. In Congress, the executive's will was imposed aggressively by a nucleus of C90-NM representatives fiercely loyal to the president, headed by Martha Chávez, Martha Hildebrandt and Luz Salgado. Contrastingly, the traditional parties entered into deeper crisis, facing an uphill struggle to regain legal status and keep even a skeleton apparatus functioning at a minimum level of activity. APRA, Peru's most 'organic' political organisation, epitomised the extent of their problems. Its most charismatic personality, Alan García, had fled into exile and several members of his administration were being investigated for corruption. Only two high-ranking cadres (Agustín Mantilla and Jorge del Castillo) numbered among APRA's eight parliamentarians elected in 1995. Most of the prominent *apristas* from the 1980s found themselves attempting to earn a living in a difficult job market.<sup>6</sup> All other parties were in worse straits. Acción Popular's representation of four congressmen included only one individual of national standing (Javier Alva Orlandini), while the near moribund IU had been reduced to two representatives, both of whom possessed a countrywide profile (Javier Diez Canseco and Rolando Breña). Almost all erstwhile left-wing parliamentarians on the IU slate had to try their hand at a plethora of less stimulating occupations, from retreating into NGOism (Agustín Haya), to harvesting olives (Ricardo Letts) or taxi driving (Edmundo Murrugarra).

## The Rise of Independents and the Chameleon Politician

In the mid-1990s, therefore, party activists who dominated the political scene from 1978 to 1990 became relegated to the margins of the system and trapped in a cycle of mutually reinforcing developments over which they exercised little control. Voter rejection between 1990 and 1995 firstly diminished their parliamentary power base and the centrality of party organisations as a vehicle for political advancement. As party apparatuses haemorrhaged members and support (a trend encouraged by continuing *fujimorista* railings against the '*partidocracia*', as well as a tempering of the highly charged ideological politics that characterised the 1980s), many politicians subsequently

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5 The most thorough analysis of the demise of Peru's political parties during the mid-1990s is Tanaka (1998). Also see Levitsky and Cameron (2003).

6 The author was able to witness this firsthand in 1995, when invited by the then APRA General Secretary, Luis Alva Castro, to present a series of lectures to mark the centenary of Haya de la Torre's birth. It was evident that the party organisation at the provincial level was in dreadful shape. Haya's centenary was being used to rekindle enthusiasm among grassroots activists in an effort to keep APRA alive.

resigned to join the mushrooming number of 'independent' movements vying for popular backing in an extremely fluid electoral marketplace. Whereas the 1985 general election campaign had been monopolised by full-time operators attached to the four prominent political parties (the only exception of note being the southern departments of Puno and Tacna, the power base of local *caudillo* Roger Cáceres), in the 1995 poll, no fewer than fourteen recently formed independent coalitions participated, in addition to Fujimori's C90-NM.

This trend accelerated in the November 1995 municipal elections, when a veritable alphabet soup of independent candidates and movements suddenly appeared. In metropolitan Lima, for example, a majority of district council ballots witnessed two or more new groups competing for office. The municipality of Puente Piedra well illustrates the situation. Apart from Fujimori's C90-NM, the Somos Lima coalition headed by Alberto Andrade (mayor between 1996 and 2002) and Acción Popular, four independent lists figured on the ballot paper for the first time: Obras Sí; Por el Cambio y Futuro; Movimiento Cívico Vecinal; Hechos y No Promesas. The very names given to some of these lists (Deeds Not Words, For Change and the Future), provide a pointer to the electorate's attitude towards the political class and their party organisations three years after Fujimori's *autogolpe*.

Given that the myriad of loose groupings appearing throughout Peru during the mid-1990s typically possessed no coherent ideological foundation or detailed programme and were headed by *caudillo*-type figures keen to expand their personal power base (and therefore willing to accept support from almost anywhere), it was easy for ambitious politicians anxious to retain a seat in parliament, or a paid position in municipal government, to change allegiance. Indeed, for an important proportion of professional politicians, it became commonplace to switch groups at regular intervals according to the shifting sands of national or local political fortune. Some logically gravitated towards the centre of power – Fujimori and his entourage – while others commenced a confusing march through a succession of opposition groups.

Both scenarios affected organisations and individuals from across the political spectrum. The trajectory of lawyer Enrique Chirinos Soto illustrates one path. In the 1978 Constituent Assembly poll held to guide Peru back to elected government, he became an assembly member on the APRA ticket, in the 1980 general election being returned again as an *aprista* deputy for the department of Arequipa. By the time of Alan García's 1985 landslide, however, Chirinos had put aside his APRA membership card and secured a seat in the Senate as an independent candidate within the right-wing Convergencia Democrática alliance structured around the PPC. In 1990 he backed Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO coalition and during the second round campaign played a leading role in attacking Fujimori on racial grounds, arguing that a second generation Japanese was constitutionally barred from becoming president of Peru. This was followed by election to parliament on the recently cobbled together Renovación ticket in the 1992 Constituent Congress poll and the 1995 general election. Thereafter, Chirinos snuggled up to the president and Montesinos, even going so far as to present the highly controversial case for Fujimori's third re-election before the Constitutional Tribunal.



Upon Fujimori's fall from power, Chirinos' reputation has been tarnished severely and he currently holds no prospect of political office.

A second route, this time from the left to independent movement politics, can be traced through the career of Luis Guerrero, who started political life during the late 1970s as a student leader in the Maoist organisation, Vanguardia Revolucionaria-Proletario Comunista. In accord with changing alignments by Peru's Marxist parties, he entered IU, playing an active role in the municipal and national campaigns of the 1980s. After the 1989 split diminished electoral prospects for the left, Guerrero embraced movement politics, securing election as mayor of Cajamarca as an independent candidate in 1993, a position to which he was re-elected in 1995. In the mid-1990s he became close to Fujimori, but after 1998 joined the opposition camp following disagreements over levels of municipal funding. Moving from the local to the national stage, Guerrero was elected to Congress in 2000 on the Somos Perú slate headed by Alberto Andrade. As Alejandro Toledo's star began to rise, Guerrero abandoned Somos Perú to align with Perú Posible (PP), for whom he was returned to Congress in 2001. This new affiliation did not last long, however. Conscious of the Toledo administration's waning popularity and the implications this had for remaining in Congress, February 2003 saw Guerrero leave PP to build the Perú Ahora group to contest the 2006 general election.

Among the right, the shifting political attachments of Rafael Rey, Opus Dei devotee and ally of disgraced archbishop of Lima, Luis Cipriani, plots another pattern of accommodation and the determined pursuit of a congressional seat. Joining Mario Vargas Llosa's Libertad movement during Alan García's bungled attempt to nationalise the banks in 1987, Rey was first elected to parliament on the FREDEMO ticket at the 1990 general election. Ignoring calls to boycott the November 1992 Constituent Congress poll, he was returned on the Renovación list, gaining re-election under the same colours in 1995. Thereafter, Rey consistently spoke and voted in favour of executive policy in the legislature, his pro-Fujimori stance facilitating another successful re-election in the rigged 2000 election, on this occasion under the Avancemos label. Following Fujimori's demise, in the 2001 ballot, Rey attached himself to the Unidad Nacional (UN) alliance headed by Lourdes Flores, again attaining membership of Congress. Since 2001, however, he exhibited scant loyalty to UN, for he regularly ignored the party whip and pursued his own agenda, even on such important matters as votes of confidence in the Toledo government.

Not all members of the political class who changed their loyalties during the 1990s and beyond possess a history of accommodation to Fujimori's discredited regime, as shown by the comportment of academic Henry Pease. A longstanding member of the Peruvian left, Pease stood as presidential candidate for IU in 1990. Following the disintegration of IU as a serious force, Pease affiliated to the Unión por el Perú (UPP) coalition of opposition parties established in 1994 and headed by ex-UN General Secretary Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Under this banner he secured membership of Congress at the 1995 general election. After being re-elected on the UPP slate in 2000, in 2001 Pease returned to parliament on the PP ticket. Between 2003 and July 2004 he occupied the pivotal position of President of Congress, before resigning and retiring from politics to concentrate on academic interests.

Such impermanence not only indicates a strong propensity to short-term calculation on the part of many elected representatives, which raises issues of governability; it also impacts negatively on public perceptions of the political class as a whole. Opportunistic behaviour reinforces the idea that parliamentarians are primarily interested in personal financial gain, lack principle and remain unconcerned about their constituents' needs. This image resulted in Congress being held in low public esteem and forged an increasingly sceptical attitude towards 'chameleon' politicians. Indeed, the Peruvian case supports Hobsbawm's claim that politicians figure among the 'occupations ranked at the bottom of the scale of trustworthiness in sociological enquiries' (2003: 581).<sup>7</sup>

## The Impact of Fujimori's Downfall

In the immediate aftermath of the April 2000 general election, the marginalisation of Peru's traditional parties and the 1980s political class appeared set to continue into the new century: APRA and AP representation in the 120-member Congress stood at an embarrassingly low six and three seats respectively. On the other hand, 'movements' like Fujimori's Perú 2000 (52 seats) and Toledo's PP (29 seats), fared considerably better. Although little seemed to have changed, popular reaction against electoral manipulation caused the regime to implode in November 2000, leading to the appointment of a transitional government headed by AP veteran Valentín Paniagua and the holding of fresh elections in April 2001.<sup>8</sup> During the anti-Fujimori mobilisations, 1980s activists (especially from APRA and the left), played a prominent role in organising street protests (such as the nationwide *Marcha de los Cuatro Suyos* in July 2000) and also occupied important positions in Paniagua's transitional administration.

Events during the final months of the Fujimori regime consequently presaged an upturn in fortunes for the pre-1990 political elite, which eventually came to pass: in the April 2001 ballot APRA increased its parliamentary representation to 28, with the recently formed *Unidad Nacional* (UN) alliance (centred on the PPC), becoming the third force in Congress (seventeen seats). Amid daily disclosures of extensive corruption, the election marked the nemesis of *fujimorismo*, whose congressional numbers slumped to three, while on the back of Toledo's successful campaign for president, PP became the largest bloc (45 members) in the legislature. One outcome of Fujimori's demise, therefore, has been a return to centre stage of an important group of politicians who rose to prominence in the 1980s but experienced exclusion during all or part of the period following the April 1992 *autogolpe*. Notable figures here included Alan García, Lourdes Flores (PPC member and 2001 presidential candidate of UN) and Javier Diez Canseco (ex-IU senator, elected congressman for the UPP). As the trajectories of the three individuals indicate, several returned to public prominence

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7 Following a scandal over the level of parliamentary salaries (approximately £5000 per month, but paid a bizarre sixteen 'months' per annum), public approval of Congress declined to eight per cent in March 2004. See *El Comercio*, 15 March 2004.

8 These events are analysed in Taylor (2000, 2001).

under a new political label, while others retained their longstanding political commitment (this was particularly true for APRA's 2001 parliamentary intake). These developments have led to claims that 'some of the moribund parties of the past and their leaders suddenly came alive after the dramatic collapse of the Fujimori regime', with a 'resurrection' taking place in 2001 on two fronts: 'well known politicians associated with the 1980s party system made a comeback [...] This signalled the second resurrection, not just of traditional politicians but of a traditional party [...] Two of the traditional parties – APRA and AP, Peru's oldest parties – won close to a quarter of the legislative votes and seats', heralding, it is argued, a 'partial rebirth of the 1980s party system' (Kenney, 2003: 1216, 1235–1236).

While these assertions contained an element of truth, talk of a 'resurrection' of pre-Fujimori politicians and parties in the wake of the 2001 poll proved premature. The revivalist label may reasonably be applied to Alan García and APRA, but even a 'partial rebirth' was difficult to detect vis-à-vis other leading components of the 1980s political class and their parties. Despite the exemplary fashion in which Paniagua ran the transitional government after Fujimori's flight, AP leaders did not consider the party in sufficient shape to contend competitively for the presidency in April 2001 and garnered a paltry four per cent in the congressional ballot, returning just three members. Indicatively, all comprised 'historic' figures from previous Belaunde governments – the party remained low on members, possessed a Lima-centred apparatus and had conspicuously failed to attract new talent into its ranks. What of Peru's other right-wing party, the PPC? Through creating the UN coalition in order to widen its appeal, the PPC achieved an increased presence in parliament. Nevertheless, in 2001 the UN alliance faced deep internal problems that placed a serious question mark over its ability to evolve into an 'organic' organisation enjoying genuine mass support. Efforts to rebuild the left, via the Movimiento de Nueva Izquierda [New Left Movement], also met with little success, while high profile leftist activists from the 1980s competing for votes on the UPP ticket received only four per cent of valid ballots and returned six members to the 2001–2006 Congress. As with AP and the PPC, the left proved incapable of renewing its membership or cultivating a layer of new leaders with the ability to command popular appeal. APRA aside, in the aftermath of the 2001 general election all the 1980s organisations faced an uphill struggle to expand their party apparatuses, attract new blood, reconnect with the electorate and build strong voter identification.

Furthermore, despite talk of party and *político* 'resurrection', the 2001–2006 Congress remained dominated by individuals representing independent movements founded during the *fujimorato* (who accounted for 75 per cent of the 120-member chamber).<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most exotic of these alliances peopled by 'outsiders' comprised the Frente Independiente Moralizador [Independent Anti-corruption Front – FIM], established by Fernando Olivera in 1990. Through fulminating against corruption and incompetence within the political establishment (especially Alan García and APRA), the FIM gained seven per cent of the ballot in the 1992 Constituent Assembly, receiving the third

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9 APRA (28 members) and AP (three members) were the only surviving 1980s party organisations in the 2001–2006 Congress.

highest number of valid votes. This position was maintained in the 2000 general election (eight per cent, giving it nine members of Congress). Boosted by Olivera's role in Fujimori's downfall (disgruntled members of the intelligence services passed him the video showing Montesinos bribing an opposition congressman that triggered regime collapse), in April 2001 the group garnered over a million votes in the congressional poll and secured eleven representatives – an outcome that permitted the FIM to exercise considerable leverage in a hung parliament. In order to govern, incoming president Alejandro Toledo needed to strike an alliance with the FIM, offering the group three ministers in return for support in the legislature. Unfortunately for Toledo, the FIM formed the most unpredictable bloc in Congress, while its leader Olivera is often seen as a maverick figure with a penchant for engaging in personal feuds, policy u-turns and ill thought out publicity stunts.

Such a concatenation of weak parties, a prevalence of fragile and transitory political movements led by self-interested *caudillos* and peopled by opportunistic individuals devoid of loyalty, who demur from standing too much on principle and possess negligible roots in civil society, logically has implications for governability. How, then, has the nature of Peru's political elite affected the quality of democracy since Fujimori's denouement?

## Peru's Political Class and Democratic Governance: The Toledo Presidency

Mainstream political science literature holds that strong mass parties staffed by professional politicians are crucial for consolidating stable democratic government because they fulfil a variety of important roles. In addition to creating a conveyor belt for transmitting citizens' demands to state institutions and deepening 'horizontal accountability', a developed party system erects barriers to 'outsiders', thereby promoting continuity within the political elite. Established parties not only educate their members in the art of political craftsmanship, they help to create an atmosphere conducive to co-operation among the political class, encouraging adherence to the 'rules of the game' and the pursuit of consensual decision-making. The ability to engage in long-term policy-making, as opposed to positions adopted through calculation of short-term advantage, is also enhanced, not least because parties are subject to 'respective accountability' (through the threat of removal in a forthcoming election). The locking of political elites into 'organic' parties is also said to assist governability by making it easier for the executive and parliament to reach agreement on procedures and legislative programmes.<sup>10</sup> With these arguments in mind, if indeed there has been a 'partial rebirth' of the party system post-Fujimori, to what extent is this evinced in the working of Peruvian democracy and the behaviour of politicians during the Toledo administration? An examination of developments surrounding Perú Posible and Unidad Nacional between 2001 and 2006

10 On the functions of political parties, see Mainwaring and Scully (1995); Diamond et al. (1999); and Mainwaring (1999).

illustrates the limited nature of party 'rebirth' and highlights the problems this poses for democratic 'deepening'.

Founded by Alejandro Toledo in 1994 as a vehicle to contest the 1995 election (when he attained three per cent), PP initially remained a marginal entity indistinguishable from the bemusing array of independent movements appearing at the time. This changed over 1999–2000, when Toledo emerged as the leading opposition figure to Fujimori, a transformation that attracted numerous ambitious individuals into its ranks. Being new to national politics, most possessed minimal experience, such as the former national volleyball star Cecilia Tait. Others ditched their existing party affiliation to jump on the Toledo bandwagon. Given this background, when PP assumed office in July 2001 it exhibited certain characteristics: (a) a personalist (as opposed to a formal bureaucratic 'machine') approach to internal decision-making; (b) no deep history of common struggle, shared political culture or lasting *esprit de corps* among members; (c) no coherent binding ideology and (d) an absence of committed grassroots activism. In consequence, from the first months of Toledo's administration the PP group in Congress has been faction-ridden along various lines (between *limeños* and *provincianos*, 'founders' and carpet-baggers, neo-liberal enthusiasts and ex-militants of the Marxist left). Lacking a shared corpus of values, common identity or sense of loyalty, the PP bloc in the 2001–2006 Congress comprised, unsurprisingly, a fragmented body riven with petty jealousies. Its members regularly prioritised the pursuit of personal vendettas over group discipline and the smooth resolution of political disputes, which hindered efficient government and weakened an already fragile minority position in Congress. Frequent spats between PP representatives in parliament also reinforced public perceptions that the executive was weak and divided, contributing to Toledo's unpopularity.

These failings were epitomised by the fall from power of Beatriz Merino in December 2003. Merino, a past supporter of the PPC who had been elected to the 1995–2000 Congress on the FIM ticket and an ex-director of Peru's tax collection agency (SUNAT), was appointed as the country's first woman prime minister in June 2003. Widely regarded as honest and efficient, after several months in office her approval ratings stood at a healthy 66 per cent, comfortably above those of other ministers and President Toledo.<sup>11</sup> Such popularity nevertheless attracted envy from PP parliamentarians, who had long railed against the appointment of independents to key government positions because as a result party cardholders were blocked from lucrative employment within the executive (in November 2003 only three out of sixteen ministers were PP members, an indication of the dearth of talent among its ranks). Additionally, Merino had gained the enmity of influential PP powerbroker and socially conservative Opus Dei supporter Luis Solari, whom she had replaced as premier and confronted successfully in a number of heated disagreements over taxation policy in cabinet. To this backdrop, rumours started to circulate about her sexual preference, allegedly emanating from Solari and plied enthusiastically by disgruntled PP members

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11 At this juncture, Toledo's approval rating stood at eighteen per cent. Polling data published in *El Comercio*, 27 November 2003.

and several of their FIM allies in Congress (in 1999 Merino had engaged in a number of policy clashes with FIM leader Olivera, providing further motive for the settling of scores). As the whispering campaign continued to grow, after some delay Toledo spoke out in defence of his prime minister, calling for the PP congressional bloc to demonstrate 'unity' and to end 'political vendettas' and 'pointless confrontations'.<sup>12</sup> Indicatively, the president's appeals fell on deaf ears, so that Merino felt compelled to resign in December 2003, provoking a minor political crisis and a cabinet reshuffle. The manner of the premier's hounding from office, coupled with the undermining of Toledo's authority, cost the executive dear. Disapproval of what the press labelled 'cannibalism' and indiscipline within the ruling parliamentary caucus impacted negatively on public attitudes towards the president, his administration and Congress, all of whose approval ratings fell significantly during the month following Merino's departure – to an extent that questions were raised about the ability of the government to survive.<sup>13</sup>

A similar fate befell Interior Minister Fernando Rospigliosi, who was forced out of office in May 2004. A well known journalist formerly associated with the left, Rospigliosi played a prominent role in Toledo's campaign team during the 2000 and 2001 elections, when he spoke out strongly against corruption and the electoral manipulation perpetuated by Fujimori and Montesinos. Once appointed as Interior Minister, he gained a reputation for probity and businesslike decision-making independent of favouritisms and kowtowing to powerful interests. As well as giving strong backing to anticorruption agencies created after Fujimori's removal and diligently pursuing a necessary programme of police reform, Rospigliosi regularly voiced criticism of politicians whom he considered unethical or inept – including those on the government's backbenches. Predictably, such an abrasive stance accumulated multiple enemies for the minister both inside and outside parliament.

To this backdrop, March 2004 witnessed *montesinista* remnants within the security services attempting to undermine Rospigliosi's authority by circulating rumours about supposed administrative irregularities. Simultaneously, he became embroiled in a high profile quarrel with businessman Jorge Mufarech, an ex-Minister of Labour under Fujimori (when he engaged in some controversial dealings), who defected opportunistically to Toledo during the death throes of the previous regime and – tellingly – secured election as a PP congressman in April 2001. Mufarech's animosity towards Rospigliosi partly sprang from the fact that a close ally in the latter's ministerial team charged with prosecuting cases of corruption had helped to incarcerate some of his business friends. To add insult to injury, Mufarech's textile company had been disqualified from competing for a contract to supply police uniforms, after Rospigliosi had

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12 *La República*, 10 December 2003. Merino also received public support from the main opposition leaders, Alan García and Lourdes Flores.

13 A poll conducted in January 2004 indicated that only 13 per cent of electors approved the performance of Congress, with 81 per cent registering their dissatisfaction. PP and FIM representatives attracted the highest levels of public censure. Toledo's rating stood at a dismal 7.2 per cent; an overwhelming 90.9 per cent opined that the president would not complete his term in office. *El Comercio*, 19 January 2004; 30 January 2004.

summoned the anticorruption agency Proética to conduct a second audit into the bidding procedure. Piqued at the decision, Mufarech not only called for the minister's resignation, but also demanded he be banned from holding public office for five years. Reacting with characteristic bluntness, Rospigliosi retorted that Mufarech was 'immoral'; his continued corrosive presence on the government's backbenches consequently represented 'a danger to the governability of the country'.<sup>14</sup>

Opportunity for the congressman to exact revenge was not long delayed – the unwitting instrument being the inhabitants of Ilave (department of Puno), who for a month had been conducting peaceful protests demanding the resignation of local mayor, Cirilo Robles. Robles faced unproven accusations of misappropriating public funds and criticism regarding unfulfilled campaign promises, but refused to step down. Such intransigence heightened passions, culminating in a riot on 26 April 2004 that terminated tragically with Robles' lynching.<sup>15</sup> In the ensuing brouhaha, Mufarech, abetted by other PP members of Congress antagonised by Rospigliosi's independence and direct manner, backed opposition calls for his resignation. The hastily formed cross-party coalition succeeded in forcing the departure of an effective and respected minister from a department of state responsible for implementing reforms in the police and intelligence services that are crucial for enhancing the quality of Peruvian democracy.

Rospigliosi's downfall also highlighted the multiple shortcomings of many PP (and other 'movement') politicians. Puno's five parliamentarians – indicatively, all 'movement' representatives with minimal experience – made extravagant promises to improve local infrastructure and public services during the 2000 and 2001 campaigns, most of which had not materialised halfway through Toledo's mandate. Once the unrest in Ilave started to escalate, they consequently felt unable to visit their constituents out of fear of inciting additional discontent, as well as receiving verbal and physical abuse (as the tension mounted, one congressman chose to remain in the departmental capital judging a beauty contest). These events illustrate several problems confronting Peru's political class: (a) the scant legitimacy attached to most politicians (provincial elected representatives from the Andes are especially prone to low approval ratings, as Lima appears very distant to their constituents); (b) a lack of connection with the day-to-day problems faced by citizens and (c) an absence of functioning grassroots party apparatuses able to communicate grievances to congressmen/women or to provide a mechanism for the negotiation and peaceful resolution of demands.

If the governing PP parliamentary group suffered particularly from internal division, a proclivity to corridor intrigue, the pursuit of personal advancement and endemic indiscipline, it was not the only component of the 2001–2006 Congress to exhibit such characteristics. As the 2001 election loomed, PPC politicians appreciated that contesting the poll independently would bring limited success. They therefore formed the UN alliance in an effort to widen voter appeal outside the PPC's narrow class and geographical (Lima) base. Small independent groups established in the 1990s were subsequently

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14 *La República*, 13 March 2004.

15 Background information on this incident is available in Degregori (2005).

absorbed into its ranks, along with lapsed *fujimoristas*; a former Communist Party trade union leader even became part of the alliance's presidential slate. The resultant hotch-potch of UN members of parliament returned in April 2001 created difficulties for the leadership regarding the adoption of agreed policy positions and the enforcement of disciplined voting.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, several UN congressmen regularly flouted the party line, effectively operating as independent members. In this regard, two of the most notorious were the aforementioned Rafael Rey, and José Barba (an *ex-aprista* who had been elected to Congress in 1995 as a supporter of Toledo, with whom he quarrelled in 1999). Whereas in the interests of sustaining democratic government UN leader Lourdes Flores adopted a stance of critical support for the Toledo administration, between 2003 and 2005 Rey and Barba formed a constant disruptive influence in parliament. Driven by a volatile mix of egoistic publicity seeking and personal animosity towards the President, they also called regularly for Toledo's impeachment – timing their attacks to maximise instability at moments when he seemed to be vulnerable.

The prevalence of such narcissistic behaviour within the first- and third-largest blocs in the 2001–2006 Congress indicates that a large swathe of Peru's elected politicians behaved differently from the compartment political science literature maintains is encountered in systems possessing strong party organisations. Between 2000 and 2001 a substantial turnover of elected representatives occurred (85 parliamentarians, or 71 per cent), suggesting that opportunities for 'outsiders' remained considerable. In addition to the arrival of numerous greenhorns with unproven political skills and questionable party loyalty, many members demonstrated a proclivity to short-termism driven by anticipation of individual gain and the continued receipt of a handsome parliamentary salary. This scenario complicated executive-legislature relations. No fewer than nineteen members of Congress (one-sixth of the chamber) switched political allegiance between parliament's inauguration in July 2001 and August 2004. Most desertions affected PP, which saw its already minority representation fall from 45 to 38 over this period. With the administration's chief ally, the FIM, likewise experiencing a reduction from eleven to eight seats and other components of the ruling coalition falling away in order to distance themselves from an unpopular government, in August 2004 the executive lost its majority in Congress by three votes. This created another potential source of instability, which grew following additional resignations from PP as the approach of the 2006 general election tempted more fickle individuals to reposition themselves in the expectation of maximising their electoral appeal.<sup>17</sup>

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16 Problems besetting the UN parliamentary group were epitomised in January 2004, when on a vote of confidence in the executive, only five out of the twelve members present followed the party line. *Caretas*, 1806 (15 January 2004).

17 The unedifying spectacle of parliamentary musical chairs intensified in 2004 and 2005. A new coalition, the Grupo Parlamentario Democrático Independiente (seven members), comprised chiefly of ex-PP and FIM representatives, emerged to compete with SAUDI (an alliance of Somos Perú, AP, UPP and various independents), which claimed ten members in August 2004. The Perú Ahora movement, headed by individuals who split from PP in February 2003, attracted additional PP dissidents to stand on its 2006 congressional list. In many respects, the situation prevailing in 2004–2005 mirrored the *trasformismo* characteristic of nineteenth-century parliamentary politics in Italy.



Such a fluid and seemingly precarious situation not only calls into question notions of a 'resurrected' party system, it would also appear to threaten the continuance, let alone the quality, of Peruvian democracy, as well as to give credence to Cotler's assertion that 'there is no political class in Peru'. Semblance and reality, however, are frequently found to be in contradiction, with contemporary Peruvian politics proving no exception. Behind the chaotic façade that characterised everyday political life during Toledo's presidency, an underlying stability existed that belied popular perception. Perhaps the contemporary Peruvian political class can best be understood through the analogy of a rotten apple, where the outer pulp is of limited usefulness, in contrast to the seed-bearing core. While approximately 60 per cent of the 2001–2006 Congress acted in an unpredictable and unprincipled fashion, the remainder – along with former presidential candidates and their advisers – provided much needed stability to the system. APRA's congressional team, reinforced by Alan García and full-time members of the party apparatus (many of whom are researchers for its elected representatives), formed an important bloc at the heart of the political class. After being on the brink of collapse in the mid-1990s, APRA and García emerged as one of the winners of the 2001 election. Post-Fujimori, the party has made strenuous efforts to reengage with voters after its bitter experience in government (1985–1990), rebuild its cadre base (targeting women and younger voters), strengthen its social democratic credentials via links with the Socialist International and placate international financial institutions. With García well placed to perform strongly in the 2006 presidential campaign, the party adopted a position of critical support for the Toledo government – which it wanted to survive until 2006.<sup>18</sup> The most cohesive bloc in Congress elected in 2001 consequently operated as a 'responsible opposition', did not exploit recklessly the government's minority position in the legislature and conformed largely to the 'ideal type' characteristics of parties laid out in mainstream political science literature.

Although UN formed a smaller and less united bloc that, in contrast to APRA, suffered from tergiversation by its parliamentary representatives, the kernel of the second largest opposition force in Congress (comprising seven members of the seventeen elected in 2001, plus the national leadership gathered around Lourdes Flores), included individuals who played a vital role in maintaining governability (e.g. Antero Flores, elected leader of Congress in August 2004). Like APRA, with the vociferous exception of mavericks such as Rey and Barba, UN members voiced their disagreements and frustrations with Toledo, but stopped well short of engaging in conduct that might bring down the government. The same applied to AP and most UPP lawmakers. On the right, centre and left of the political spectrum, therefore, influential political figures (most of whom date from the 1980s, if not before), engaged in all or most of the behavioural characteristics a mature political class is supposed to exhibit: they mediated, compromised, made pacts, calculated beyond the short-term and helped avoid executive-legislature gridlock.

Such comportment became evident in the immediate aftermath of the Toledo government's loss of control of Congress in August 2004: on 10 August senior ministers met

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18 A discussion of this issue is provided in Taylor (2005: 588–590).

with leading opposition figures to discuss current problems, iron out differences and negotiate on forthcoming legislative initiatives. They agreed to form a commission to study constitutional reforms, as well as consider proposals for a seven-year national development strategy focused on stimulating investment and employment. Following several days of intense horse-trading and a certain amount of hullabaloo from PP members angered at their diminishing influence, a new composition of congressional commissions was negotiated successfully, with the opposition taking control of many key committees. Although a UN member occupied the position of speaker, APRA emerged as the main beneficiary of these developments. One outcome was to reduce executive-legislature conflict – twenty months away from the 2006 general election none of the main opposition groups wished to lay itself open to accusations of creating instability. Events surrounding the management of the government's loss of parliamentary control also point to a level of co-operative behaviour that gets overlooked in the everyday cut and thrust of Peruvian politics.

A further example of the willingness to negotiate and strike deals occurred in September 2005, when APRA, AP and UN presidential hopefuls and their advisers agreed a raft of important measures. In an attempt to reduce the fragmentation of Congress, block 'outsiders' and enhance governability, García proposed that any group entering parliament had to achieve five per cent of the popular vote. For the smaller AP, Valentín Paniagua suggested the threshold be set at three per cent, with a compromise figure of four per cent eventually being agreed.<sup>19</sup> On this matter and during all the difficult moments that arose over the latter part of the Toledo presidency, key opposition figures (García, Flores and Paniagua) met regularly in private to discuss political issues and co-ordinate positions aimed at enhancing governability and the reform of state institutions. To this end, they also engaged in informal talks with President Toledo and his ministers.

## The 2006 Elections: Party Fortunes, Political Class and Governability

To what extent did the 2006 elections signify a 'resurrection' in party fortunes? What implications has the vote had for Peru's political class and governability? The April and June polls highlighted the contradictory nature of contemporary Peruvian politics. On the one hand, they illustrated the continuing fragility of political parties and the latitude that still exists for an 'outsider' to garner substantial support, while simultaneously offering ample evidence of the high level of co-operation taking place between professional politicians positioned at the heart of the system.

An indication of ongoing inconstancy and lack of party solidity was provided by the ruling PP group in September 2005. Due to a lack of a suitably qualified candidate from within its ranks, Rafael Belaunde was chosen as the *toledista* presidential candidate despite having until recently been a longstanding member of AP. When Belaunde

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19 Common positions were also hammered out on measures to combat crime, the election of Beatriz Merino as the new ombudswoman (which required a minimum of 80 votes in Congress), and the trade agreement being negotiated with the US.

moved to scratch nine discredited sitting congressmen from the PP parliamentary list, considerable hostility and division erupted, which eventually forced Belaunde's resignation. Confronted by a chaotic situation, on 31 January 2006, Toledo's group decided against putting forward a presidential candidate. Following a drab and unfocused campaign, the largest bloc in the 2001–2006 Congress only just managed to scrape past the barrier to parliamentary representation, attaining 4.1 per cent of valid congressional votes and returning two deputies. Given PP's lack of a solid party organisation and grassroots membership, the likelihood is that it will wither as a political force. A similar fate befell the Toledo administration's ally, the FIM, which disappeared from the parliamentary scene after obtaining a derisory 1.5 per cent of the popular vote.<sup>20</sup>

The first round victory of presidential candidate Ollanta Humala, who obtained 31 per cent in the April 2006 ballot and 47 per cent in the second round run-off with Alan García, reflected the continued high level of voter rejection of politicians and widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo.<sup>21</sup> Irresponsible behaviour by public figures, excessive congressional salaries, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency also fuelled discontent, thereby boosting support for a maverick candidate who struck a popular chord through denouncing 'the system'. Such sentiments helped elect 45 members of Humala's Unión por el Perú coalition, even though it had only been hurriedly cobbled together six months prior to the election.<sup>22</sup> Given that the largest parliamentary group in the 2006–2011 Congress possesses all the failings of Fujimori's Cambio 90 parliamentary intake in 1990 and Toledo's PP representatives elected in 2001, can only complicate governability. Indeed, the first defections driven by personal rivalries

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20 Official data on the 2006 elections can be accessed on <http://www.elecciones2006.onpe.gob.pe>. For political developments during and after the election campaign, see the excellent blog site organised by Maxwell Cameron at <http://weblogs.elearning.ubc.ca/peru>.

21 After posting the highest rates of economic growth in Latin America during Toledo's term in office, official statistics indicate that poverty decreased by five per cent between 2001 and 2006. However, this improvement mainly occurred on the coast. Income inequality expanded overall, while deprivation in the *sierra* remained endemic. Most of the 'anti-system' vote came from the southern highlands, where *per capita* income in the countryside in 2005 was as low as £30 per month, with illiteracy rates exceeding 70 per cent. See the reports in *La República*, 7 June 2006; 5 July 2006. It is also necessary to note that the discontent with politicians is not an uncomplicated issue. After recording perilously low approval ratings over much of his term, as the end of his presidency approached Toledo's popularity began to soar to hitherto unimaginable heights. In July 2006 polling data indicated that his performance was judged positive by 51 per cent of electors. Polling data published in *La República*, 3 July 2006.

22 Humala's alliance was constructed around two groups: (a) the UPP, which had been in existence since the mid-1990s and (b) the Partido Nacionalista Peruano (PNP), which he formed in 2005. Humala had to join forces with the UPP because his movement failed to meet the requirements necessary to register officially as a political party. Legislation tightening the regulation of parties had been passed in October 2003 on the initiative of the political elite, who wished to create additional hurdles to the emergence of anti-system 'movements'. In the 2006 congressional ballot, UPP members gained nineteen seats, the remaining 26 being filled by PNP supporters.

and ambition among UPP deputies occurred in the month following the June 2006 second round ballot. An important faction in Congress therefore has a limited capability to propose coherent policies, while theoretically having the capacity to torpedo legislation emanating from the executive. The unexpectedly strong performance of *fujimorista* candidates in the 2006 election brings further uncertainty to the political scene. The thirteen deputies elected on the Alianza por el Futuro (AFF) ticket can be expected to act in unison when attempting to secure the release of the disgraced ex-president and get the plethora of charges against him dropped. On other matters, however, they are unlikely to operate as a disciplined bloc.

Voter antipathy towards candidates on the UN list resulted in the principal force on the Peruvian right returning only seventeen members to Congress, providing additional potential for gridlock in the legislature. Parliamentary coherence has been additionally undermined by the inability of the three groups that formed the UN alliance (the PPC, Solidaridad and Renovación) to stay united. Amid the mutual recriminations that followed Flores' failure to gain entry into the second round, each group decided to go their own way and contest the November 2006 municipal elections separately. A similar position was taken by the different elements within the Frente del Centro coalition built around AP and Somos Perú. For its part, the left failed to learn from past errors and contested the election divided into three groups, which only added to its marginalisation and allowed Humala to capture the protest vote. In consequence, the left has no congressional representation for the first time since the military returned to the barracks in 1980.

Such a panorama affecting forces from across the political spectrum indicates that the party system remains far from 'resurrected'. Extreme fragmentation, when combined with the substantial support obtained by UPP 'outsiders' in the 2006 elections, would also appear to validate Cotler's claim regarding the absence of a political class. As during Toledo's presidency, however, the true situation is somewhat different, for important countervailing tendencies are at work. Despite all the brouhaha surrounding Humala's candidature, in April 2006 over 60 per cent of electors opted (albeit unenthusiastically) for parties or alliances identified with the existing political system. Governability has also been eased through the enactment of the four per cent threshold for gaining membership of parliament, a measure designed to exclude makeshift 'movements' from Congress, so facilitating the brokering of pacts aimed at avoiding executive-legislature gridlock. The barrier achieved its objective insofar as seventeen groups who contested the election failed to gain a seat. As a result, whereas the 2001–2006 Congress contained deputies from eleven different organisations, the newly elected chamber holds seven. Furthermore, recent legislation, passed on the initiative of established politicians, dictates that to be recognised officially as a group in Congress (and so get nominated onto investigative committees and other coveted positions), requires a minimum of six deputies. This requisite led the Frente del Centro, PP and Restauración Nacional to form a single bloc of nine members in July 2006 (the 'Alianza Parlamentaria'). The current legislature is consequently less fractured than its predecessor, decreasing the likelihood of frivolous obstructionism in parliament.

The only mainstream political force that has noticeably grown in strength and undergone a 'resurrection' since Fujimori's ousting is APRA, whose parliamentary

representation rose from 28 in 2001 to 36 in the April 2006 ballot (thirteen of whom were members of the previous Congress). Alan García was also elected president. As well as being the second largest force in Congress, APRA's deputies comprise the legislature's most experienced and disciplined group. Importantly, its leading figures possess considerable political craftsmanship, necessary skills in the current conjuncture. Given its minority position, the Party has been forced to enter into pacts with other alliances intent on ensuring governability and reinforcing Peru's weak institutions. Indeed, the willingness of 'core' members of the political elite to broker deals and make compromises was encouraged by the perceived threat to the system posed by 'outsider' Ollanta Humala. Such group solidarity could be seen hours after the polls closed on 9 April 2006, when initial results suggested a second-round contest between Humala and García. On the Canal N television election special three leading representatives from PP, UN and AP indicated that despite a long history of party rivalry (and not a little anti-*aprismo*), they would all back García in the forthcoming presidential poll, on the grounds that APRA represented a party of proven democratic credentials, with a history of sticking to the agreements it negotiated with other organisations. All 'responsible' political actors, they argued, had to support APRA if a return to a Fujimori-style 'militarised democracy' was to be avoided.<sup>23</sup>

How was it that the political elite could act so decisively at the end of a hard-fought election campaign? One factor that frequently gets overlooked amid the often intemperate hurly-burly of everyday political life in Peru is the impact of the struggle to oust Fujimori in 2000 and the efforts 'core' politicians made collectively to stabilise the system in 2001. Over these turbulent months the political class had to work closely together in a hothouse environment, which cemented trustworthy working relations and even cross-party friendships. These ties proved invaluable during the 2006 elections as they facilitated the building of a common front against Humala. An ability to co-operate and work closely together has also been in evidence since the installation of the APRA administration on 28 July 2006. The newly appointed cabinet received broad parliamentary approval (75 votes out of 120, only the *humalistas* voted against), with representatives of all groups stating that they would allow the government a honeymoon period and would act as a 'responsible opposition'.<sup>24</sup>

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23 Such a stance had already been adopted by Lourdes Flores on the eve of the first round ballot. UN's presidential candidate announced that in the event of an eventual run-off between Humala and García, she would support the latter because, 'despite disagreements' with APRA, the overriding task in the present conjuncture was to 'defend democracy'. During the following week, an overwhelming majority of the political class adopted the same position. Flores' comments were reported in *Correo*, 6 April 2006.

24 This stance was even adopted by leading UPP members of Congress, such as Carlos Torres, who opined that: 'Because we do not have a majority, we are not going to bang our heads against the wall. We want to assist governability and not oppose just for the sake of it'. *Caretas*, 1928 (8 June 2006). Opposition deputies are aware that a tactic of misdirected disruption could result in their electoral annihilation at forthcoming elections, a fate that befell the FIM in 2006.

## Conclusion

While Cotler highlighted correctly the impact of electoral volatility, high turnover of congressional membership and dispersal of votes leading to a plethora of groups attaining parliamentary representation during the Fujimori and Toledo administrations, the assertion that 'there is no political class in Peru' is surely an exaggeration. Being cognizant of their role in creating the conditions for Fujimori's 1990 election victory, their subsequent marginalisation and the undermining of democratic government that occurred after the 1992 *autogolpe*, Paniagua, García, Flores and other politicians with long memories acted in a measured fashion. Following Fujimori's downfall they have played a crucial role in first stabilising and then starting to rebuild Peru's democratic system. The bitter experience of the 1990s and the trauma surrounding regime collapse in November 2000 exercised a sobering impact on politicians of all ideological hues, as evinced by their conduct during Paniagua's transitional administration. Not wishing to return to the decadence of parliament that characterised the mature *fujimorato*, they operated constructively in their dealings with the executive on matters of legislation. Presidential hopefuls within the government's ranks, as well as leading opposition figures, were also well aware that any 'resurrection' of fortunes at a personal and party level might be short lived if their actions provide opportunity for a charismatic 'outsider' to perform strongly in the 2006 general election – giving further incentive to consensual and non-disruptive conduct. For a variety of reasons, therefore, the core of Peru's political class functioned largely in a rational and responsible manner during Toledo's term in office.

In contrast, the behaviour of most members of the 2001–2006 Congress contributed little to democratic consolidation, while the actions of a small minority worked actively in the opposite direction. APRA excepted, the absence of party coherence facilitated regular changes in allegiance as occasion demanded and allowed greater scope for petty egotism and ambition for office to triumph over principle. The Peruvian maxim '*Nadie sabe para quién trabaja*' ['Nobody knows for whom they are working'] aptly describes the double-dealing and absence of loyalty found among many lawmakers between 2001 and 2006. In an attempt to counter such unprincipled behaviour, the political elite introduced measures to exclude exotic 'movements' (and with it their erratic members) from parliament.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, although the barriers to gaining entrance to Congress worked in the 2006 elections, claims regarding the 'partial re-birth' of the party system remain premature. One legacy of the Fujimori regime has been to reinforce the atomic individualism of Peruvian politics and its clientelistic tradition, which hinders the formation of parties of any size or durability. Unsurprisingly, the antics of the opportunistic majority attracted most publicity and disguised the constructive efforts of the core of the political elite to enhance democratic government during the Toledo presidency.

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25 The García administration has also pursued a strategy of neutralising potential sources of disruption. For example, Rafael Rey became Minister of Production in the first APRA cabinet; José Barba was nominated ambassador to Panama in September 2006. These appointments could not have been made without prior consultation with Lourdes Flores and other leaders of UN.

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