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Silences, Confessions, and Taboos: Petit Bourgeoise’s Dissident Memories of Political Radicalization in Bogotá, Colombia

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Abstract: As part of a transnational politicization of everyday life during the 1960s and 1970s in Colombia, many professionals and white-collar employees experienced a radical political change and social awakening in their lives. Although connected with developmental programs such as the Alliance for Progress, they began to question their political identifications as middle class in an effort to redefine what they thought their role should be in a revolutionary society. This presentation discusses these experiences as a question of memory. It shows how professionals and white-collar workers sought—consciously and unconsciously—to remember a radicalized past in order to define themselves as gendered petit bourgeoisie in the present. It also traces a political genealogy for those memories within the Left to show how such genealogy played a pivotal yet forgotten role in the political execution of José Raquel Mercado, a working-class Black leader, by the guerrilla M-19 in 1976.