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Hemisphere Volume 6 Number 1, Winter/Spring 1994

# *Hemisphere*

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Winter/Spring 1994

Volume Six • Number One

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## Reformist Momentum in Mexico: A US View

by Alexander F. Watson

I would like to highlight that improved relations with Mexico parallel a fundamental change in the overall relations of the US with Latin America. After a difficult decade of economic reversals, the region has implemented far-reaching political and economic reforms that have contributed to an economic upturn that has attracted investors worldwide. Mexico has led the way on many of these initiatives and we are confident that the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will open up further opportunities for investment, while adding to our capacity to export to its growing domestic market.

At the same time, the uprising in Chiapas illustrated the serious challenges Mexico and other countries in the region face in addressing the still unresolved issues of poverty and lack of opportunity for important sectors of society. The legitimate grievances of the people of southern Mexico were neither caused by NAFTA, nor should NAFTA be in any way compromised by these developments. Indeed, the events in Chiapas demonstrated more clearly than ever the need for NAFTA.

With NAFTA, Mexico will continue on the path of free-market reform, providing the private sector

with strong incentives to energize the country's economy and attract foreign investment. With NAFTA, Mexico will be drawn further into the Western community of nations, a community in which free-market reforms are closely linked with the political legitimacy that stems from open, free, and democratic politics. The US is confident that the Mexican government has responded to the situation in Chiapas in a forthcoming and responsible way. We hope that developments since the Chiapas uprising will further enhance democratic reform, rather than jeopardize it.

### Chiapas, Economic Reforms, and NAFTA

While the problems of Chiapas date back centuries, recent changes in the Mexican and global economies have certainly contributed to social upheaval in southern Mexico. As the Mexican government has instituted financial, economic, and trade reforms—steps that we have seen as crucial to long-term growth and stability—there have been shocks to its economy, particularly to those sectors that were inefficient or protected from competition. In Chiapas, 58% of the population is dependent upon agriculture for its livelihood. Government efforts to modernize the agricultural sector through land reform and changes in support programs, coupled with worldwide declines in commodity prices for some of the state's main crops, have impacted significantly on this sizeable segment of the Chiapas economy. Chiapas has been targeted by the Salinas government to receive a large share of funds from government programs designed to

provide for a social safety net during the period of economic reform.

One of the most significant aspects of the economic reforms of the Salinas administration has been the successful conclusion of NAFTA. NAFTA entered into force on January 1 and has begun to permanently alter the trading patterns of North America. The opening of the Mexican economy will increase overall economic efficiency and growth, but that growth will benefit some regions more than others at the outset. It is up to the Mexican government to best use its fiscal and social policies to redistribute the benefits of growth to include regions of slower growth. The Mexican government understands this need and is committed to increase its social expenditures in Chiapas.

The first phase of NAFTA implementation is fully under way. Reports indicate that it is proceeding with few difficulties. Amb. Jim Jones reports that our embassy and consulates are being inundated with inquiries from US businessmen and women seeking information on doing business in Mexico. The inaugural meeting of the NAFTA Commission was held in Mexico City on January 14 and addressed a number of crucial implementation issues, including the creation of the NAFTA secretariat. Representatives from the Departments of State and Labor and the Environmental Protection Agency continue to work with their Mexican and Canadian counterparts on organizing the commissions required in the labor and environment supplemental agreements and the Border Environmental Cooperation Agreement.

In their initial "declaration of war," the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) deemed

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*Alexander F. Watson is US assistant secretary of state. This article was excerpted from testimony before the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, February 2, 1994. It was delivered before the March 1994 assassination of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's official presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio.*



NAFTA the death knell for the Indians of Chiapas. I do not accept that judgment. Such a statement is little more than EZLN rhetoric that makes for catchy headlines. The EZLN itself claims to have been preparing for its "war" for some 10 years—obviously long before NAFTA was on the table.

NAFTA is not the cause of the social and economic inequalities in Chiapas that spawned the uprising any more than NAFTA can be blamed for poverty or social tensions elsewhere in Mexico or the rest of North America. NAFTA only became operational on January 1, 1994. But make no mistake about the expectations of the Clinton administration. NAFTA by itself is not viewed as the panacea to those problems. As the majority of economic studies project, NAFTA will increase trade and investment flows among the partners and stimulate the economies of all three. This will lead to job creation and allow for more balanced development throughout Mexico. To quote Special Trade Representative Mickey Kantor from remarks made at the January 14 inaugural session of the NAFTA Commission: "The idea of NAFTA is to raise standards of living, to increase economies, to make all of North America more competitive. That creates jobs, [and] the ability of all three countries to create jobs and to raise their standards of living obviously addresses grievances that many have in all three countries."

As it comes into full implementation, NAFTA will bring some dislocations to segments of the economies of all three NAFTA partners. It has been suggested that corn producers in Mexico—corn is a primary crop in Chiapas—will suffer disproportion-

ately from NAFTA's opening of the Mexican market to cheaper and more efficiently produced US corn. The importance of corn production to the Mexican economy was taken into consideration in NAFTA as witnessed in the long phase-in period of the corn provisions: 15 years, almost a generation.

***NAFTA is not the cause of the social and economic inequalities in Chiapas that spawned the uprising any more than NAFTA can be blamed for poverty or social tensions elsewhere in Mexico.***

In addition, the Salinas administration announced in October of 1993 a new income support program for subsistence farmers, including corn growers, known as PROCAMPO. It will provide direct income support to farmers who generally have not benefited from past Mexican price support programs. At the same time, it is designed to be phased out over the 15 years scheduled for NAFTA implementation. In 1994 alone, the Mexican government will spend \$3.5 billion on PROCAMPO nationwide.

Furthermore, the NAFTA process is more than a closer linking of our trading patterns. This process accelerates a comprehensive integration of our two countries in many areas. It helps energize local

nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) and forges links between them and like-minded NGO's in the international community. The process increases Mexican sensitivities toward democratic values and human rights. Under NAFTA, Mexico is now more than ever part of the "global village."

## **Democratization in Mexico**

As you know, Mexico has long been dominated by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), the political organization that emerged after the Mexican revolution. Over the years the PRI has provided Mexico with considerable stability and presided over a remarkable transformation of the country. It is also acknowledged by most observers that the prominence of the PRI has historically discouraged the development of an open and competitive democratic process.

Just as we are witnessing a remarkable transformation in Mexico, from a statist and protectionist economy toward an open economy that encourages free markets, we are also witnessing dramatic transformations in the Mexican political system. Under the leadership of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Mexico has taken bold steps towards guaranteeing the protection of fundamental human rights and permitting an open and fair democratic process. For the first time in Mexico's history, opposition parties have gained governorships in several states and significantly improved their representation in the legislature. Electoral reforms in 1990 and 1993, including the Federal Electoral Processes and Institutions Code, introduced reforms in voter registration, placed limits on

campaign spending, and created an electoral court to adjudicate electoral disputes.

These reforms, however, failed to fully satisfy opposition parties concerned about the impartiality of the electoral authorities. During the 1994 elections in the state of Yucatán, opposition parties complained of extensive fraud. It is for that reason that we welcomed the announcement on January 27 that all of the candidates for the presidency in Mexico had reached an agreement entitled "Peace, Democracy and Justice." It recognized that a necessary and unavoidable condition to a just and lasting peace is the advancement of democracy through free elections. In the agreement the parties pledged to work for:

- the impartiality of electoral authorities;
- permanent access to voter lists and registration data;
- equality in access to and coverage by the media;

- the prevention of the use of public funds and programs to favor particular parties or candidates;
- the revision of the rules for party financing;
- the review of the points in the penal code that could restrict political rights;
- the consideration of a special federal prosecutor for election-related crimes;
- a consensus to work together for democracy and convocation, if warranted, of a special session of the congress to consider further reforms.

The US believes this accord, properly implemented, will strengthen democratic practices precisely at a time when Mexico is moving to establish closer ties with the US and other democratic nations of the hemisphere.

It is a tribute to the strength of the Mexican political process that these watershed agreements have emerged less than a month after the incidents in Chiapas. Chiapas,

rather than representing a reversal in the process of economic and political transformation in Mexico, has proven to be an energizing factor contributing to a deepening of the reform process. We hope and expect that this process will continue. The US has been supportive of democratic opening in Mexico. We have discussed frequently with Mexican officials our willingness to cooperate in ways that are in full conformity with Mexican law. The US State Department has also met with NGO's to discuss how they might be able to assist Mexican NGO's in ensuring the full implementation of electoral laws.

In closing I would like to reiterate that we view with great optimism the development of closer ties with Mexico and applaud the process of economic reform and political opening that is taking place in that country. The US looks forward to deepening ties with Mexico and working fully with whomever the Mexican people elect as their leaders in the upcoming presidential race. We are confident that NAFTA's implementation will continue to improve relations between our countries in the years ahead. In the aftermath of Chiapas, we are also mindful of the fact that Mexico, as well as other countries in the hemisphere, need to pay more attention to the plight of those sectors of the population that have been left behind by the swift changes of modern life.

Just as President Clinton has emphasized the need to address many of the basic and fundamental social problems that we continue to face in the US, we welcome the renewed commitment of Mexico toward addressing the problems of poverty and inequality. A policy of peace, reconciliation, and democratic reform, with respect for human rights, will help strengthen the ties of our people on both sides of the border. Our own principles call for nothing less in the conduct of one of our most important bilateral relationships. ■



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# The Past Six Years: A Review and Revisit

by Anthony P. Maingot

It was six years ago that I wrote my first commentary for *Hemisphere*. As I write my last one as editor of the magazine, it makes sense to revisit the main issues of that 1988 editorial and take stock.

Six years ago the emphasis was on the changing patterns of trade and the challenges these presented to the Caribbean region. Specifically I asked a question that was neither particularly original nor new: whether the small Caribbean nation-state, characterized by deeply held concepts of sovereignty and the individualism typical of insular societies, was the best institutional base from which to confront the challenges so clearly on the horizon. The question is still valid because it is still unanswered. And yet, six years later it no longer seems like the most urgent issue.

The most pressing issue today is whether, even as quite individualistic societies, enough regional sense exists to understand that given the nature of their problems, Caribbean nations have to cooperate with each other. It is, after all, in this age of domestic and international restructuring, relatively easy to score some good hits on Caribbean leaders for not acting with greater unity and more forcefully. In this regard, however, it is important to note that not all the tendencies have been discouraging; both

the positive and the negative trends have to be analyzed so as not to fall into the general gloominess and pessimism that today appears to predominate among Caribbeanists.

***Inflexible concepts of sovereignty have to make way for collective, intraregional and international links that can assist in confronting the calamity that threatens to overwhelm democratic structures everywhere.***

On the negative side, one has to reiterate that despite the never-ending agreements to form unions of one sort or the other—the latest being the Association of Caribbean States—actual behavior shows the persistence of centrifugal rather than centripetal forces. Not even the generalized threats to the Caribbean's traditional exports and, perhaps even more immediately, to those nontraditional industries that the Caribbean Basin Initiative engendered and promoted seem to support effective collective action. If the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) menaces the region's garment and assembly industries, then Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago—leaders of CARICOM—decide to apply for entry into NAFTA on their own. The Dominican Republic, rebuffed by CARICOM, pursues the same route.

## Positive Trends

Before we dwell totally on such lamentable individualism, however, it is good to analyze some of the positive trends in Caribbean collaboration. These tend to be in the political and more symbolic arenas. This was the case of the political observers and workers sent in 1987 and 1990 by islands such as St. Lucia and Dominica to help the Haitian people's efforts at establishing democracy. Having participated extensively in both attempts myself, I marvelled at the effectiveness with which hundreds of Creole-speaking West Indians operated in this once forbidden land. The hope, lit bright by those experiences and now dimmed by tyranny, should not be allowed to die out.

Another trend that honors the incipient spirit of pan-Caribbean collaboration is CARICOM's opening towards Cuba. Just like Willie Brandt's *Oostpolitik*, so condemned by President Ronald Reagan, opening doors and establishing bridges are vital to an eventual democratization of Cuba just as they had been in the East German case. The West Indian *aggiornamento* towards Cuba has had to face the hostility of two American administrations and direct threats from important members of the US Congress. And yet, seldom in the past has there been such a solid front on a Caribbean issue. In virtually every Caribbean state, labor unions, the private sector, and government have signaled their common will to trade and negotiate with Cuba and to keep the lines of communication open. Even conservative governments, such as that of Eugenia Charles in Dominica for instance, understand what only the US administration refuses

*Anthony P. Maingot, founding editor of Hemisphere, steps down from this post effective with the publication of this issue. His successor is political scientist Eduardo A. Gamarra, who is acting director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University.*



to admit publicly: that the Cold War is over not only for the likes of China and Vietnam but also for Cuba, and that the best way to facilitate a peaceful transition to democracy is through contacts and interaction, not isolation.

What emerges from an analysis of these positive trends is the role of democracy, the most important "symbolic capital" that most of these small states enjoy. It is as democracies that they participated in Haiti, answered the threats from the US Congress, and invariably meet the conditions on respect for human rights now commonly set by multilateral lending agencies. It is this democracy that, sustained by educated and mobilized populations, is the best guarantee that the small states will manage to ride out the very rough economic times ahead.

All of which leads me to believe that the threats to these democracies will not come mainly from the reorientation of trade and investment flows. They will come rather

from the internationalization of corruption and the crime and violence that invariably accompany it. The damage this can do to small societies is already palpably evident.

### Drugs and Venality

In island after island, the effects of drug usage and the venality that comes with the drug trade are threatening the very sinews of the society. In Puerto Rico the National Guard is deployed to fight what has to be called a war of the narcotraffickers against the society. Trinidad is caught in the grips of an unprecedented crime wave and revelations of high-level collusion with Latin American Mafiosi shake the society all too frequently. Curaçao, according to the Dutch press, has become the center of a Colombian-European-US drug syndicate, while urban Jamaica is divided into political enclaves best called "garrison constituencies."

There are, of course, islands where there is little common crime

and violence but much corruption. Dutch St. Maarten, for instance, is littered with fancy private jets carrying mysterious passengers to enigmatic destinations. The point is that there is hardly a society in the Caribbean that has escaped the ravages that local greed and the insatiable North American demand for drugs have wrought.

And so, as important as the problems of trade and investment are, the fundamental task facing Caribbean elites is to strengthen the democratic state by making it more accountable and transparent. Inflexible concepts of sovereignty have to make way for collective, intraregional and international links and cooperative arrangements that can assist in confronting the calamity that threatens to overwhelm democratic structures everywhere. Caribbean unity and collaboration is needed not just to negotiate its economic destiny but also to safeguard those democratic institutions that make the world respect the region's voice at all. ■

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# Cuba's New Capitalists

by David Adams

It's 8 p.m., pouring rain, and the Miramar district of West Havana is without electricity again. The streets are deserted, a few candles blink from apartment windows, and Cubans settle down for another long, dreary night. Down one potholed street, however, things are humming—literally. Through the rain can be heard the rumble of a generator, a rare sound indeed in a Cuba starved of all consumer items, including fuel supplies. More than just the background score for a good time, it's the sound of Cuba's clandestine economy.

Communism may grind to a halt when the power is out, but Cuba's new capitalists don't stop for anything. In July 1993 Fidel Castro legalized the use of the US dollar after 30 years of "anti-gringo" rhetoric. Millions of those dollars are now pouring into the island from Cuban exiles in Miami anxious to assist needy relatives. The roar of that dollar flood lets Cuba's new capitalists know they have a lot of catching up to do.

Guided by four young Cubans, I run towards a brightly illuminated porch, dodging the rain under sagging tree branches. There is laughter and music inside. "Oye, Pedro! Open up, we're here," shouts one of my companions, knocking on the door with his fist. The door opens and a smiling Pedro emerges. "Welcome. You're late," he says. "Who's he?" he asks, looking suspiciously at me. "He's the journalist we told you about," answers Ramón, one of the young men with me.

David Adams is a Latin America correspondent for the Times (London).

"Look," Pedro says with a menacing grin, "just be careful not to write anything about me. I'll be screwed, and you will be, too."

***The "liberation" of the dollar is undermining the egalitarian principles of the revolution, opening the door to corruption and creating a new class of Cubans who live, work, and eat outside the reach of the socialist state.***

Pedro is a "maceta," Cuban slang for the mafia of black marketeers who are emerging ever more openly from the shadows of a dying revolution that is already beginning to live a savage postcommunist brand of capitalism. The "liberation" of the dollar is undermining the egalitarian principles of the revolution, opening the door to corruption and creating a new class of Cubans who live, work, and eat outside the reach of the socialist state.

In 1990 Castro announced a "special period for times of peace": an austerity plan on a wartime scale intended to help Cuba survive the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the loss of foreign subsidies and oil

supplies. During this special period, economic conditions in Cuba have grown steadily worse. Television programs are now teaching Cubans how to make their own candles, how to bake fruit rinds as meat substitutes, how to make their own toothpaste and deodorant, and how to grow medicinal herbs. Meanwhile, those with access to dollars can shop at well-stocked—but expensive—supermarkets known as "diplo-stores." Cubans call it "diplo-communism."

## A Secret Restaurant

In the air-conditioned comfort of the dining room in his cramped home, Pedro has started a secret restaurant—*Chez Pedro*. There is only one table (reservations accepted) so he can claim that his customers are guests if the police arrive. Pedro is not his real name and he doesn't like the word "maceta" either. The term literally means "hammer," reflecting the mafia's reputation as hardened criminals with economic power. "I prefer *trafficker*," he says. His aim in life: "I want to live like Michael Jackson and work like Pablo Escobar."

In a country where most people travel by bicycle, Pedro has five cars, although they are all beat-up Soviet Ladas. "Hey, a Lada is like a limousine in Cuba," he says. Petrol may be hard to come by, but not for Pedro. He has gallons of the stuff hoarded. In Cuba all property is owned by the state, and moving house consists of a swap where no money changes hands. But Pedro owns several houses, including one in the luxury beach resort of Varadero.

Pedro began his life of crime some years ago. But since the dollar ban was lifted, he says life has



never been better. Now it's easier for him to conceal the source of his money. As he expands his business operations, he estimates his earnings have jumped about \$15-20,000, making him the equivalent of a Cuban millionaire in pesos, and possibly one of the richest men in the country. On the black market a dollar is worth 70 pesos today. While Pedro can make more than one million pesos a month, state salaries vary from only 148 pesos to 600 pesos per month. "Pedro is the king of the *macetas*," one of my friends tells me.

Most Cubans these days are forced to live on the rice and beans that they receive in monthly rations at subsidized state prices. Few Cubans have eaten meat or fish in months, even years. At Chez Pedro the menu consists of lobster tail, marlin, shrimp, and pizza. My friends are lucky; they have relatives in Miami who send them dollars. Our meal, for five people, cost \$82, or the equivalent of two years salary in a regular state job.

Eating in Pedro's dining room is like traveling back in time. An imitation Tiffany lamp sheds an uneven light over a dining table complete with china plates and engraved wine glasses in silver vessels. The table is adorned with silver pheasants and assorted art-deco knickknacks. Marble and bronze statues—one about six feet tall by a French sculptress—dominate two corners of the small room. A forged René Portocarrero hangs on the wall in a splendidly elaborate gold-painted wooden frame. Everything is for sale: the forged painting for \$5,000; the genuine statue for \$8,000.

"Anything to drink gentlemen?" A waiter dressed in a tall, white chef's hat and long white apron

has entered. A bottle of sparkling Spanish wine is selected while my fellow diners opt for a Detroit "Piel" beer, smuggled past the 30-year-old US trade embargo against Cuba.

***There was a time  
when Cubans feared  
the authority of the  
state, and taking  
liberties with the  
communist system  
was deemed too risky.  
Not today.***

"I swear to you that there's nothing you can request that I cannot supply," boasts Pedro, who has joined us at the table. "I have my contacts. Don't ask me where," he adds. My friends explain that Pedro has bought "access" at every tourist hotel and restaurant in Havana. Anything he needs can be stolen at the drop of a hat. Bribery and contacts are what count in the last days of communism. I don't look convinced, so Pedro leaves the room and comes back with a small 1929 Gil García painting—genuine, but stolen—a West German syringe, and a dozen tiny bottles of morphine. "Satisfied? You want cocaine, marijuana, just let me know. OK?"

Sitting next to me, José, a surgeon from the Calixto García hospi-

tal, is shocked. "Do you know how hard it is for me to get morphine?" he says and launches into a detailed description of the shortages at one of Cuba's top medical institutions. Public health, one of the most vaunted achievements of the Cuban revolution, is having to cut all sorts of corners to make do. The laundry room cannot cope due to the power cuts, so patients must bring their own sheets. Doctors are allowed one bar of soap per month to wash their hands. José is due to attend a medical conference abroad next month. He plans to defect and fly to Miami.

### **Self-Employment Pays**

Efigenio would like to leave, too, but he knows his chances are slim. So he is making the best of a new opportunity offered by the revolution to go into private business. In September 1993 the government decreed that nonprofessionals could apply for licenses to become self-employed in simple trades. Efigenio is a highly qualified underwater engineer and diver, but he was laid off from his regular job cleaning ship bottoms in the port of Havana. Cuba's maritime commerce has fallen drastically since the breakdown of trade relations with former communist allies in eastern Europe.

He still receives 40% of his monthly salary, which amounts to about \$3, to support his wife and two children. But since September, Efigenio and a friend have been illegally fishing and diving for lobster every morning near where he lives on Havana's sea front, the Malecón. He hasn't applied for a government license and doesn't intend to. "They won't give me

one. They want the lobsters for the tourists," he says, pointing out that there is a 500-peso fine for fishing lobsters illegally.

He may be right. At Cuba's most exclusive "foreigners-and-dollars-only" supermarket near the old Soviet embassy, Cuban lobster is being sold for \$23 a pound. Cuban shops don't have it. In fact, Cuban shops don't have any fish at all, or meat, or fruit, or . . . the list is endless. Efigenio sells his lobsters on the black market for 80 pesos a pound, or \$1.15. One night he and his partner made 1,500 pesos fishing two hours each morning, and he expects to double that soon.

According to the Cuban government, more than 19,000 people have requested self-employment licenses since September 1993. The old communist party bureaucracy is having trouble coping with the stampede for capitalism. Long queues have developed outside labor ministry offices, requesting licenses for taxicab drivers, hairdressers, and bicycle and shoe repairpersons.

### Enthusiasm for Dollars

When I met Eduardo at a friend's house and he told me that he planned to start his own food stand, I decided to follow him through the application process. I was surprised when he said he thought it could be done in a day. But then I didn't count on Eduardo's ingenuity and the new Cuban enthusiasm for making dollars. Eduardo appeared to have one major problem: he didn't have a job or the necessary culinary background the law required to apply to work independently in food and beverages.

There was a time when Cubans feared the authority of the state, and taking liberties with the communist system was deemed too risky. Not today. Eduardo laughed when I suggested that what he was about to do might get him in trouble. "No one is frightened anymore. We're too busy surviving," he said.

I offered to help by driving him around Havana in my rented car. I was running low on petrol and Eduardo said he knew where we could fill up quickly. A few minutes later I watched Eduardo suck petrol from a government ministry truck with a hose, directly into the tank of my car, in broad daylight. So much for fear.

***Although the communist party remains firmly in control in Cuba, it has become almost irrelevant to the needs of society as it is increasingly less able to provide the basic necessities and social services it so proudly claims are the rights of every citizen.***

Next we visited Eduardo's friend, who had, at least until it closed in September of 1993, managed a large state factory. He neatly typed out a false reference for Eduardo saying he had worked as the cook at the factory for the last five years and was a model of "revolutionary discipline."

Earlier in the day, Eduardo had dropped in at the ministry of labor to spy out the lay of the land. He struck up a conversation with a young woman in the office and agreed to pay her \$5 to hurry his paperwork through. When we returned with the reference, I waited in the car while Eduardo entered

the ministry. He was back triumphantly in less than 10 minutes with the approval in his hand.

There are thousands of Eduardo's doing precisely the same thing all over Havana, some legally, others not. There's José, the electronic genius who makes his own satellite dish TV receivers out of oil cans so he can watch CNN. He steals the signal from a large tourist hotel and charges \$70 to install the homemade equipment. And there's Juan, who washes the tourists' cars outside the Riviera Hotel. He was chatting with a police officer when I thanked him for cleaning my car. We joked that a few weeks ago the officer would have arrested Juan for accepting the \$1 bill I paid him. Now Juan is making more in one day than the police officer is paid in two months. "I'm getting rid of this," says the police officer about his uniform. "I want to go to the countryside and raise pigs," he adds.

### Irrelevant Party

The communist party, reeling from one economic crisis to another, is in no position to tell the people what to do. Although the party remains firmly in control in Cuba, it has become almost irrelevant to the needs of society as it is increasingly less able to provide the basic necessities and social services it so proudly claims are the rights of every citizen. "They know they can't feed us. At least they let us feed ourselves," says Eduardo.

The fate of the revolution hangs in the balance and the direction of recent reforms remains unclear as it plots a course through uncharted waters. Meanwhile, in Miami, Cuban exiles are waiting for what they believe is an inevitable popular uprising against Castro.

But back at Pedro's restaurant, the talk is not of counterrevolution. "I hope Fidel never falls," says Pedro. "Everything I have, all this," he says, spreading his arms, "I owe it all to Fidel. I'm grateful to Fidel. Do you think I could survive if the Miami exiles take over this country?" ■





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# Cárdenas, PRI, and the US Vote

by Sallie Hughes

In April 1993 Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas rallied striking Mexican mushroom pickers in Pennsylvania. In August, in Tijuana, he met with Mexican-Americans setting up a US election campaign committee. The then unofficial presidential candidate for Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD) was on the stump again in the US. But unlike 1988, when he barnstormed the US claiming electoral fraud after his failed presidential bid, Cárdenas will face competition for the support of the 5-7 million Mexicans who live in the US.

A more aggressive and better organized Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) has joined the battle for the hearts and minds—as well as money and votes—of Mexicans living north of the border. “We are working hard to present our version of things,” said Martín Torres, PRI subdirector of international affairs.

From as far away as Pennsylvania and as near as San Diego, 30 groups representing hundreds of Mexican farm workers and environmental and human rights organizations in the US met with Cárdenas in August 1993 in Tijuana. Officially they pushed for fair elections. Unofficially they came out to support Cárdenas, who still represents the strongest challenge to continued PRI control of the Mexican presidency. “We have a lot of interest in maintaining and reinforcing our ties with the Mexican community in the United States,” Cárdenas said.

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*Sallie Hughes is a political reporter for El Financiero International, an English-language weekly based in Mexico City.*

Cárdenas first toured the US in 1985 as the PRI governor of the central Mexican state of Michoacán, addressing cheering migrant workers in Washington state's Yakima Valley. Since then he has traveled to Texas, California, New Mexico, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and New York. To the chagrin of the Salinas de Gortari administration, Cárdenas has talked during his more recent trips about electoral fraud in Mexico and his own version of a free trade agreement.

***PRI has worked  
vigorously to bring  
Mexican workers  
in the US back into  
its fold.***

According to Rodolfo Elizondo, the secretary for international relations of the conservative opposition Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), the PAN has taken its cue from the PRD and stepped up its efforts in the US, as well. The first PAN newsletter, *Acción Internacional*, was mailed to Mexican leaders in the US in August 1993. PAN president Carlos Castillo attended conferences at seven US border-state universities and met with Mexican leaders in each community. Interim PAN governor Carlos Medina of Guanajuato also visited the US in the fall of 1993.

But the biggest response to the Cárdenas challenge comes from President Salinas and the PRI. Sali-

nas has worked vigorously to bring Mexican workers in the US back into the PRI fold. Since Salinas took office amid protests on both sides of the border, the government has visibly promoted educational, cultural, and human rights programs for Mexicans in the US, consular employees in San Diego said. The six people on the human rights staff of the San Diego consulate, for example, filed 3,735 petitions on behalf of 966 people in March 1993. In 1987 the staff of two oversaw an average of about 80 petitions a month.

As another indicator of increased government activity, Mexico has opened, with government logistical support, 14 new cultural institutes in the US since 1991. Only the institute in San Antonio existed before Salinas took office.

Salinas has also extended his popular Solidaridad poverty alleviation program to the US. Some analysts credit Solidaridad at home with rebuilding popular support for the PRI between 1988 and the congressional elections of 1991. Under the name of Solidaridad Internacional, the basics of the program have been extended north.

In addition, in the past three years, the PRI has formed 16 new political committees in the US, and four more are near completion. Only a Los Angeles club officially existed in 1988, the PRI's Torres said. Besides keeping a high community profile, the “Compatriot Support Committees” distribute practical information, such as the rights of aliens in the US and how a Mexican national can bring a car purchased in the US back into Mexico.

Since 1853, when former president Benito Juárez plotted his re-



turn to Mexico after being exiled to New Orleans, the Mexican opposition has occasionally sought relief north of the Río Grande. The government's aggressive stance represents a new twist, one that acknowledges the importance of transnational political strategies in an era when the border exists as a boundary but not as a barrier.

## The Role of the US Vote

The political support of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the US is important to candidates vying for Mexico's presidency. If they voted as a bloc, the millions of Mexicans in the US could sway an election. For the moment, however, forming such a bloc is almost impossible because the great majority of immigrants would have to return to their home communities in order to vote. Border state polling places only accept a small number of voters registered in other areas, according to Torres. The PRD pushed to allow expatriates to vote in Mexican consulates as part of a political reform package debated in the Mexican congress, but the proposal never got a full hearing and died. In the past, it also has pushed for absentee balloting. The PRI refused in both cases, citing the complexity of guaranteeing a fraud-free election.

Mexican law prohibits an infusion of campaign money from workers in the US. Even still, analysts point out that immigrant campaign money is a formidable attraction for Mexican political parties. Although political parties deny it, some observers think both the opposition and the PRI received US campaign money in 1988. Denise Dresser, of the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, claims that PRI and PRD committees in Los Angeles raised money in 1988. "It is not clear how much, but everybody knows that they did," she said.

Even a little money could help the PRD, whose campaign chest is bare when compared with that of

the wealthy PRI, said Juan Molinar, a professor at the Colegio de México. People at the Cárdenas meeting in Tijuana spoke of raising \$1 million, a gesture Cárdenas publicly refused.

***Party strategists  
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compatriots at home.***

An additional draw is the access immigrant groups have to the US media. In 1988 Cárdenas and protesting PRD sympathizers succeeded in widely publicizing their claims of electoral fraud. Some of the biggest anti-PRI demonstrations at the time were in front of Mexico's consulate in Los Angeles. The new Cárdenas group vowed to lobby the US Congress and President Bill Clinton on electoral and human rights issues. A representative of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition agreed to add his group's voice.

## Campaigning in San Diego

Meanwhile, Salinas hopes the myriad pro-government efforts will promote a positive image of the government, the coming presidential elections, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Convincing San Diego residents of the merits of free trade is part of the reason why the Mexi-

can consulate there is keeping a higher profile, said Mexican consul Gustavo Iruegas. "It is easy to find people in San Diego who are not even familiar with Tijuana," he added. The Mexican government spent about \$32 million to promote NAFTA in the US in 1992, the commerce secretariat announced in September 1993.

Finally, party strategists are emphasizing transborder efforts because they believe Mexican immigrants in the US are opinion leaders who can sway the vote of their compatriots at home. Mexicans living in the US maintain extremely strong ties to their home communities, especially in the southern states where Cárdenas's support is thought to be strong. Many return annually for saint's day festivals and to provide financial support for relatives.

Leaders at Cárdenas's planning meeting said getting Mexicans in the US to convince their compatriots at home to vote is a top priority. "We are telling people, 'If you cannot return home to vote, then be sure to call home and tell your friends and relatives,'" said Raciél García, a farm worker organizer who works near Palm Springs, California. Economist Carol Zabin, who researches Mexican immigrants for both the University of California at Los Angeles and Tulane University, believes the PRD has a lot of work to do. "I don't perceive a big organizational effort. They need to get to villages on saint's days and sign up the immigrants, or something like that."

Despite its new efforts, the PRI is not assured of a US political following, either. Many Mexicans are in the US precisely because the economic policies of PRI administrations hurt them. One of those anti-PRI immigrants is Belén Rosas, who attended the Cárdenas meeting on behalf of his organization of Oaxacan workers in California. "The vote here would represent a vote against the system," he said. "We are here because the government ignores our communities." ■

# Drugs Alter the Security Agenda

by Ivelaw L. Griffith

**C**ataclysmic changes in international politics and in the domestic politics of many countries around the globe since the late 1980s have ushered in a new era in world politics—the post-Cold War era. Scholars and statesmen are, as yet, unable to fully explain the close of the Cold War chapter in world history or to grasp all that the end of the era portends, but most of them accept that one discernibly changed area is the security arena.

High-agenda security items like nuclear holocaust, the global arms race, and the Strategic Defense Initiative are being displaced by what James Rosenau, a respected international relations scholar, calls “interdependence issues” (e.g., environmental concerns, AIDS, chronic debt, and international drug trafficking). These issues span national boundaries and cannot be addressed at the local or national level. Of course, the challenges of the post-Cold War period do not present uniform threats to nations, states, or regions. Neither, as a matter of fact, did the challenges of the Cold War era.

The post-Cold War security agenda is not only changing in content, but also in conception. The nature of threats to nations and states in the contemporary world necessitate redefining the term “security” itself. It is becom-

ing increasingly obvious that non-military developments can and do pose genuine threats to nations and states; that in many regions the basis of threats is no longer external, but internal; and, thus, that traditional ways of viewing counter-measures often no longer hold.

***The geonarcotics arena: where conflict and cooperation among national and international actors are driven by drugs.***

As might be expected, scholars differ in their views and interpretations of the evolving post-Cold War political landscape and of the challenges that are likely to face nations in the era ahead. Stanley Hoffman of Harvard University, for example, anticipates the development of different currencies of power affixed to different poles of international power: military, economic and financial, demographic, etc. Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington envisages a new world order whose central feature will be geoeconomics—the admixture of the logic of conflict with the methods of commerce. Samuel Huntington of Harvard University's Institute for Strategic Studies, on the other hand, challenges contentions that

economics will be the fundamental source of world conflict. He sees culture as the key source of discord, asserting that “the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future” (*Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993).

None of these propositions are necessarily mutually exclusive, but one can sense that the post-Cold War international community will be devoting considerable time, effort, and resources to an interdependence agenda item that falls outside the parameters of the propositions mentioned above. That agenda item is narcotics. Indeed, the president of the 1993-94 session of the UN General Assembly, Amb. Rudy Insanally of Guyana, remarked prophetically in October 1993 that “the international community's success in controlling drug abuse will serve as a litmus test of its ability to respond to the complex problems of the post-Cold War era.”

## The Role of Geography

One can already discern the development of what I call “geonarcotics”: significant relations of conflict and cooperation among national and international actors that are driven by drugs. Geography is a factor in this geonarcotics arena, not only because of the global special dimensions of drug operations, but also because the geographical features of areas facilitate certain drug operations. For example, the physical geography of South America and Central and South Asia enhance the prospects and potential for cocaine and heroin production, respectively. And the Bahamian

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*Ivelaw L. Griffith is professor of political science at Florida International University. He is editor of Strategy and Security in the Caribbean (Praeger, 1991) and author of The Quest for Security in the Caribbean (M. E. Sharpe, 1993).*



archipelago and other topographical features of Latin America and the Caribbean, and of Central, West, and Southeast Asia, facilitate drug trafficking. Power in the geonarcotics milieu is both state and nonstate in origin, with nonstate power brokers sometimes exercising more sway than some state agents. Consequently, in this milieu, politics, which involves resource allocation—determining who gets what, how, and when—is not only a function of state action.

The Caribbean is not exempt from having to pay increasing attention to conflict and cooperation driven by drugs. The region's major security concerns in the latter part of the Cold War era were foreign intervention, instability, and militarization, with vulnerability as an all-encompassing dilemma. Now, in the early post-Cold War period, instability and vulnerability remain, but the most critical problems relate to drugs. Not that drug problems are a creation of the new era; they were there before, but their scope and intensity, and the diminution in importance of some other concerns, have pushed drugs to the top of the security agenda.

Contrary to the belief held by some people, there is no single "drug problem" in the Caribbean. Neither is there a single drug involved. The problems relate to drug production, abuse, trafficking, and money laundering. And the "danger drugs" are marijuana (popularly called *ganja*), cocaine, and heroin. Neither cocaine nor heroin is produced in the region, but these drugs—especially cocaine and its derivative, crack—present the major abuse headaches. There is trafficking in all three drugs, with, as should be expected, variation in trafficking sites, volumes, and kind of drugs. In regard to money laundering, some countries are known or suspected; others are not. In any case, gone are the days when drugs in the Caribbean were merely a problem in Jamaica, the Bahamas, or Belize. Now all countries—Hispanic and non-Hispanic—are part

of the action, in different ways, with different consequences.

Guyana, for example, unknown for major drug operations a decade ago, is now both a major *ganja* producer and cocaine transshipment location. In March 1993, for instance, 117 pounds of cocaine were found aboard a Guyana Airways Corporation (GAC) plane in New York following its arrival from Guyana. US Customs fined GAC \$1.8 million for this violation. Even more dramatic, in June 1993, police in Guyana confiscated 800 pounds of cocaine, US\$24,000, hundreds of thousands of Colombian pesos, and thousands of Guyana dollars following an aborted transshipment operation. Several Colombians, Guyanese, and Venezuelans were implicated in the affair. And in early April 1994, a police raid at Karabese, along the Atlantic coast, resulted in the destruction of 14 acres of *ganja*. The situation is so grave that President Cheddi Jagan has called for consideration of legalization as a countermeasure.

***Drug-related crime has transformed the "paradise" character of many Caribbean vacation spots, driving fear into locals and foreigners alike, and depressing tourist activity.***

These drug operations have security implications in that they threaten the physical and psychological safety of citizens and the governability of states in the region. There are several political, military, and economic consequences, including corruption, arms trafficking, vigilantism, de-

pressed tourism, and increased crime. Close observers of the Caribbean have known for some time what the *New York Times* reported on April 19, 1994: that drug-related crime has transformed the "paradise" character of the US Virgin Islands and other Caribbean vacation spots, driving fear into locals and foreigners alike, and depressing tourist activity. Moreover, governments in the region are forced to commit already scarce resources to the "war on drugs." Thus, drugs present a real security dilemma for the Caribbean. The scope and intensity of the threat vary from country to country, but to paraphrase Martin Carter, the distinguished Caribbean poet, the situation is such that "all are involved; all are consumed."

## Many Fronts

Given the multidimensional nature of the problems, no single countermeasure will suffice. Battles have to be waged simultaneously on several fronts: law enforcement, education, interdiction, legislation, and rehabilitation, among others. All these require resources of various kinds. The problem is, though, that Caribbean countries have severe resource deficiencies, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of personnel, skills, and technology.

Domestic initiatives alone cannot deal with the drug phenomenon. Regional and international action is necessary because the drug phenomenon is a transnational one—an interdependence issue. Governments alone cannot do what is required. Individual citizens and nonprofit organizations, in the Caribbean and elsewhere, will need to contribute. Many already do. The casualties in the counternarcotics battles will be human as well as institutional. The battles will be long and hard. Yet, Caribbean governments and people have to remain engaged. Whether we like it or not, drugs will be part of the Caribbean security agenda for much of the foreseeable future. ■

# Teaching Classical Music in Haiti

by Robert M. Grenier

**I**n July of 1993 I was invited to give vocal instruction at the Ecole Ste. Trinité, a private teaching institution supported by the Anglican Church in Haiti. I was one of a handful of volunteer music teachers from Canada and the US who instructed these students in an entire range of musical instruments—and in my case, voice—during the school's three-week summer camp.

The course of study included class instruction in music theory and history, individual lessons on each student's instrument, and participation in a variety of ensembles. These ensembles consisted of the four separate wind and string groups divided into junior and senior categories respectively, a men's and boy's chorus called Les Petits Chanteurs, and the full symphony orchestra L'Orchestre Philharmonique Sainte Trinité. These six ensembles met daily employing an entire student body ranging in age from seven and eight-year-olds to mature adults.

Ecole Ste. Trinité may be considered one of the glories of the island for, in contrast to the physical decay that all too apparently plagues Port-au-Prince, it harbors one of the country's great spiritual treasures: its talented youth. Everyday these promising young people, along with their instructors, would follow a prescribed routine that appeared like some serene and confident gesture arising from the

tumult and misery surrounding the walled precinct of the school.

Each morning at 9 a.m., under the stern gaze of their mentors, 100 or so well-groomed, young Haitians assembled in the school's courtyard to attend the ceremony of *drapeau* (flag raising). After the flag raising, there followed the official litany of prayers, scripture reading, hymns, and announcements. With obligations to both God and Caesar duly rendered, the business of making music took its paramount position in the imagination of all.

The orderly ranks broke only to be refashioned again in classrooms devoted to the study of theory, to participation in an ensemble, or to the business of practicing one's instrument. The latter was done everywhere—in studios, classrooms, and rooftops. Much had to be learned in a short time, for at the end of the three-week program would come two lengthy public concerts and numerous solo performances at six student recitals.

Situated in the heart of Port-au-Prince and adjacent to the Anglican Cathedral of Ste. Trinité, the Ecole Ste. Trinité consists of a series of interlocking structures that are quite evidently the result of several building campaigns. Judging by the lack of accord among their designs and by the choice of building materials and even floor levels, each building seems to have been designed by a different architect. Yet this seeming inharmonious jigsaw arrangement has housed a vast number of souls seeking a most compelling harmony. The crowning glory of this tangled architectural assemblage is the Salle Ste. Cecile, a modern, air-conditioned concert hall situated on the top floor of the most recent structure.

It possesses a good acoustics and can seat several hundred on its steeply banked terraces. The hall is decorated with a variety of paintings by Haitian artists, and the school itself adorned with beautifully sculpted doors and many large murals painted by one of its former students, the sonorously named Voltaire Romulus.

## Unique and Beautiful

Within the guarded compound that is the school of Ste. Trinité, a unique and beautiful world unfolds where teaching, self-discovery, the encounter with great music, fellowship, and individual growth occur between regular periods allotted for work and play. Twice daily, at 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., a bell rings to announce *gouter*: a half-hour period where refreshments are served to all. The earlier of these two periods is the most memorable, for it is then that the younger members of Les Petits Chanteurs, fresh from their morning encounter with the seraphic music of Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*, break their ordered ranks to descend upon the food and drink like some vision of fallen angels from Paradise Lost. Their frantic gamboling on the concrete pavement ends only upon the ringing of the second bell when they proceed to modify their hellish ululations into songs inspiring enough to sustain the faithful. Such energy and high spirits are common at Ste. Trinité, where the many student recitals are well-attended and encores are frequent. To make good music is important to everyone there, but it is also very important to have fun.

In the opinion of many, the city outside Ste. Trinité is in its worst

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state in more than a decade. The various embargoes imposed on Haiti, as well as its own volatile political culture, have left Port-au-Prince in an appalling condition: buildings and streets are crumbling with garbage left in piles everywhere and frequently set alight. The oppressive heat of the tropical sun accelerates the spreading of the stench of garbage and human waste. The great swarms of people walking about appear purposeful and intent only upon surviving another day. The few cars and trucks are evidence of the effectiveness of the fuel embargo. In fact, this embargo is directly responsible for the camp being held in Port-au-Prince rather than at Leogon, many miles to the southeast where it is normally conducted.

An electrical generator failed during dinner one evening, leaving only a back-up that itself stopped intermittently, plunging the capital into darkness and without the power to pump water. By 10 p.m. there was no light to be seen in the capital except at those points, such as Ste. Trinité, that were connected to the power line that serves the presidential palace. It was startling one evening to see the stars in such clear abundance as if we were standing in a country field far away rather than in the center of a modern national capital. Despite these adversities, the pride of the ordinary Haitian remains strongly in evidence. One man associated with the school was reproached by a Haitian woman who crossed the street to forbid his photographing a queue of trucks waiting for gas. She insisted that he should not record their misery.

### A World of Contrasts

The contrast between the world outside and inside the walls of Ste. Trinité was mirrored in miniature during the teaching of private voice lessons. Most often, perched on a third story balcony with a commanding view of the mountains framing Port-au-Prince, the individual tenors

and basses of Les Petits Chanteurs would come to have their vocal technique and artistry scrutinized. Among Les Petits Chanteurs was a very young and exceptional student with the musical name of Remi. His voice was beautiful, but how much more so it appeared since poor Remi had just been released from the hospital where for nearly two weeks he had been fighting typhoid fever caused by contaminated water.

***Haiti's turbulent political situation threatens a cornerstone of civil life.***

The exceptionally harsh circumstances surrounding the lives of the summer camp participants do not appear to prevent the program from functioning like nearly all camps and summer music schools. The two public concerts in July, each three hours in length, stand as monuments to the activity of the school and the determination of its participants. Both concerts were performed in Salle Ste. Cecile to a full house and were recorded by Haitian television for later broadcast. The programs for each consisted of some three to five occasionally multimovement works by each of the six ensembles. Most of the selections were taken from the Western classical tradition such as the performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 by L'Orchestre Philharmonique Sainte Trinité. The other selections were tailored to the technical and artistic level of the ensemble in question. But particularly striking was the uniquely Haitian classical music by the composers Férère Laguerre and Lodovic Lamothe that appeared on both programs. The second concert was distinguished by a homage to Férère Laguerre (1935-83), featuring three

of his works: two orchestral, *Un sel badjo, mi-an mi-an* and *Conte Haitian*, and a song entitled "Musique" that reflects that aspect of French musical sensibility that is at once passionate yet restrained, combined with a sensuousness derived from the uniquely Haitian rhythms.

The intensity of the summer's activities quickly came to an end following the second concert. The inevitable long good-byes, exchanges of gifts, and promises to return next year were indulged as is customary and natural following such intense daily contact. A year in Haiti however, can be very long—a much harsher and more unpredictable proposition than a year experienced in North America. Indeed, whenever discussion turned to politics and the anticipated return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a sense of submission to the inflexibility of events seemed the most common response of the young students. Haiti's turbulent political situation has often threatened the school's musical activities. The threat to the school can materially affect the progress of the students, who in the past have received many full scholarships from US universities. Apart from this, that threat seems to imperil the symbol of what civil society could be like in Haiti.

The solemn morning ceremony of *drapeau*, where fealty to God and country are expressed in song and word, is the formal release of a vigorous fountain of talent and energy whose torrents daily filled every vessel set before it. The six hours of music prepared for the public concerts represent the students' tremendous discipline and individual devotion to their instruments and to one another; a requirement to master the demands, both intricate and subtle, made by the music of Beethoven, Mozart, and Laguerre. The ability to work hard and to share generously seem to be the cornerstone of civil life. The extinction of this brilliant example would be potentially more harmful to Haiti than the loss of its one remaining generator. ■

## Insider briefs on people and institutions shaping Latin American and Caribbean affairs

### Don't Call the SS Harlan County

Women have become the newest targets of political violence in Haiti. According to a joint UN-OAS observer mission, there has been a new surge of sexual assaults against female supporters of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's democratically elected president, who is now in exile in Washington. Women's groups report as many as "18 cases of rape in a single day," and many of the "victims are market women who live in poor, pro-Aristide neighborhoods" (*The Miami Herald*, April 13, 1994).

### When the Dust Settles

According to a *Newsday* (May 12, 1994) analysis of Panama's May presidential election, candidate Rubén Blades expects to be back in 1999. Even though the US-based actor received only 17% of the popular vote, the leader of the Papa Egoro Movement scared many opposition party old-timers with his late spurt in popularity. The country's new president—Ernesto Pérez Balladares—captured 33% of the ballots. According to Blades, "When the dust settled, we were the third political force in the country." The party also managed to capture nine seats in Panama's unicameral legislative assembly.

The big question, however, is what happens to the actor now that he has lost the race? Many of his supporters say, "We'll win it in '99," the year of the next election, but according to *Newsday*, Blades won't

commit. The best he can offer is to stay in Panama awhile so as "not to give the impression that I'm skipping town." Besides, one report states he has lost as much as \$150,000 a month in revenue during the nine months of intense campaigning.

### One Less Excuse

Brazil is now taking steps to reduce the cost of prophylactics, which reportedly "are among the most expensive in the world" (*Journal of Commerce*, April 22, 1994). The cost-reduction measures are tied to a new list of duty cuts the government announced in April as part of a Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Tourism effort to slash inflation. Currently priced at about \$1 each, the cost of condoms will likely drop to about 47 cents each once the duty and other import taxes are eliminated.

### Check It Out

For those who are interested in a well-written and inexpensive news and public affairs magazine from Mexico, Excelsior's *Mexico Insight* may be just the ticket. This bi-weekly, full-color, English-language publication is edited by Michael J. Zamba. In its May 1, 1994, issue, *Mexico Insight* offered thoughtful articles on the challenge before Ernesto Zedillo, the new presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, on the heels of the assassination of his predecessor, Luis Donaldo Colosio.

### A New OAS? A New Location?

When João Baena Soares steps down as secretary general of the OAS, his successor—Colombian president César Gaviria—will confront challenges ranging from the lingering difficulties with Haiti to the thorny question of Cuba's possible re-entry into the organization. Perhaps the most difficult, though, will be presented to him by community leaders in Miami, who will lobby heavily to relocate the OAS secretariat to Dade County.

A key element in this lobbying effort will be a successful gathering of Latin American heads of state during the Summit of the Americas, December 9-10, 1994, in Miami. Is this pie-in-the-sky? Not necessarily. Just months before President Bill Clinton decided to hold the summit in Miami, the city was not even on the list of possibilities, and then was aggressively opposed by senior State Department officials, among others, largely because of their concern over ethnic and exile politics there.

### Arizona's NAFTA Niche

The Arizona State Legislature approved a \$100,000 grant in April 1994 to create a computer network designed to position the state as a regional information hub for business trading under the auspices of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Although details are not yet complete, the grant will underwrite an initial feasibility study and start-up costs for the network. Carol Colombo, of the Phoenix-based law firm of Colombo & Bonacci, is one of the private-sector advisers to the project.

*Edited by Mark B. Rosenberg*



## Radio Martí Redux/Seeming (and Being) Useless

The US Information Agency's Office of Cuba Broadcasting took measures in March 1994 to send the message that it too could be downsized "without any negative impact on broadcast quality radio and television programs to the people of Cuba." Four employees in the Research Analytical Unit of Radio Martí's Office of Research were targeted. In their own defense, the ousted employees argued that "time and again, in performing their responsibilities, the analysts have sought to bring to the Radio Martí director's attention real, underlying problems in news and programming, only to have the director respond by marginalizing the analytical unit, by progressively eliminating our functions and by attempting to ultimately make us seem totally useless."

## When Wasn't It?

In response to escalating violence directed at nationals and foreigners in Guatemala, one Guatemalan private-sector leader has observed, "It's like the Wild West out in the streets" (*Business Latin America*, April 25, 1994). There have been few periods in the country's contemporary history, however, when violence hasn't been excessive and directed simultaneously at both rich and poor, the political and the apolitical, and national and foreign groups. What does make this epoch distinctive is the growing influence of a "powder elite" that is linked to narcotics trafficking.

## With Friends like These . . .

In the spring of 1994 the Bolivian congress accused former president Jaime Paz Zamora of developing a very close friendship with Isaac "Oso" Chavarria, who, according to the US Drug Enforcement Agency, is the country's principal narcotics trafficker. In his defense, Paz Zamora accused the US of conspiring against him for inviting Fidel Castro to the August 1993 inauguration ceremony of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. The accusations against Paz Zamora and his party, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, have triggered Bolivia's most serious political crisis of the 1990s, and have almost certainly derailed his re-election bid for 1997.

## Implementing NAFTA

President Bill Clinton's February 1994 announcement that the Labor Secretariat of NAFTA would be located in Dallas pleased many but not all Texans. Some were disturbed that the secretariat would be located at the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, which, after all, has had little or no interest in the labor agenda. The secretariat, to be fully operational by July 1994, will have a \$3 million budget. It will enforce the workers' rights side agreement to NAFTA.

In addition, Clinton will place the NAFTA Development Bank in San Antonio. The bank will underwrite NAFTA-related commerce, environmental, and infrastructure projects, with funding eventually reaching \$3 billion. NAFTA's Environmental Commission, which will

be based in Montreal, will monitor environmental practices of the member countries and review complaints of unfair competition because of stricter environmental laws in North America.

NAFTA's trilateral North American Trade Secretariat (NATS) will be based in Mexico City. It will be responsible for producing, archiving, and translating NAFTA documents. Negotiators do not agree, however, on NATS staffing. Whereas the US has proposed the secretariat be staffed by government agency officials on loan to the organization, Mexico has proposed that "outside personnel" be contracted and paid with funds that are budgeted by the member governments for the NATS.

## On the Move

Georgette Magassy Dorn has been named as chief of the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress. A specialist in Hispanic culture and the curator of the Archive of Hispanic Literature on Tape in the Hispanic Division, she holds a Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University.

Mark B. Rosenberg, founding director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) at Florida International University (FIU)—who has served in that capacity for 17 years—has taken a leave of absence to assume the interim deanship of FIU's newly proposed College of Urban and Public Affairs. Eduardo A. Gamarra, a political scientist at FIU, is now acting director of LACC. He will also serve as editor of *Hemisphere* beginning with the next issue.

# A Sociologist Turns to Politics

by Mauricio A. Font

***Brazil's current crisis involves a diverse array of highly charged forces: economic, social, environmental, and—above all—political. If elected president, would academician Fernando Henrique Cardoso stand a chance of being effective?***

*“... [A]n ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison [define] who can have the calling for politics. . . . Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer.”*

—Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*”

*“As a politician, your responsibility is to change reality and not just defend principles. If you're committed to change, you cannot turn an ethical position into an obstacle to action.”*

—Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *The New York Times*, March 14, 1988

**W**ith the May 1993 appointment of Fernando Henrique Cardoso as finance minister, Brazilian politics took a truly ironic twist. Cardoso's criticisms of the 1964 authoritarian regime cost him his job as a professor of sociology as well as four years in exile. After a brilliant academic career that included founding dependency theory, this major critic of Brazil's “associated dependent” model was now given the task of solving its worst economic crisis since the turn of the century. If Cardoso succeeds, the country may well avert chaos and Cardoso could become the next president in 1994. High as the personal costs of failure may be, they pale in comparison to the highly polarized and potentially explosive presidential election that could result if the crisis persists or deteriorates further.

## The Challenge

The increase in oil prices in 1973 and 1976 and the debt crisis that followed in 1982 battered the Brazilian economy. Gross national

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product per capita decreased 5% during the 1980s. Meanwhile, inflation continued its steady climb to more than 30% per month in early 1993, signifying an annual inflation rate of 2,500%. In the two years preceding Cardoso's appointment as finance minister, five predecessors (one of whom lasted less than three months) and six stabilization programs failed to bring inflation under control. Cardoso's immediate task was to slay, or at least slow down, Brazil's galloping inflation by early 1994. Beyond that, he has to initiate or at least prepare the ground for some form of structural adjustment.

## The Making of a Hero

What makes Cardoso a prince of hope in such a context of gloom? Why did the best known critic of the Brazilian development model undertake the mission of saving it? A lifetime of intellectual, administrative, and political achievements explains the strength of Cardoso's appeal as a hero for the times. The saga that would lead eventually to politics began when the Brazilian military regime forced the rising, left-leaning professor out of the Universidade de São Paulo and into four years of exile in 1964.

Taking up residence in Chile, Cardoso really “discovered” Latin America and a richer theoretical and comparative framework in which to analyze Brazil. Santiago



was perhaps the most intellectually exciting place in Latin America in the mid-1960s, as the left criticized structuralism in an atmosphere of optimism about the desirability and imminence of major social change. His involvement in the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and Santiago's universities and research centers led to a focused concern on the question of development, a broader Latin American framework, and engagement in the main currents of social democratic and socialist thought. Cardoso's collaboration with Chilean sociologist Enzo Faletto produced *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (1969; published in 1979 as *Dependency and Development in Latin America* by the University of California Press), perhaps the most influential interpretation of twentieth-century Latin American structural dynamics. He soon emerged as the leading figure in Latin American dependency theory.

Cardoso returned to Brazil in late 1968, anticipating his reactivation as a professor at the Universidade de São Paulo, but a wave of repression in the following year "canceled" his tenured position. In response to this setback, he established, along with several colleagues, the Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP) in 1969. Under Cardoso's presidency, CEBRAP challenged the stifling intellectual climate the military had created in Brazil.

Cardoso and his associates went on to play a substantial role in the process of gradual reopening after 1974. A task force from CEBRAP played a key supporting role in the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB)—the main political organization demanding the return of

democracy. The very objective of creating a space in which alternative views about Brazilian society could be entertained made CEBRAP and its president protagonists in that struggle, and marked CEBRAP for a terrorist attack. It was this struggle that would eventually bring out in full Cardoso's vocation as a politician.

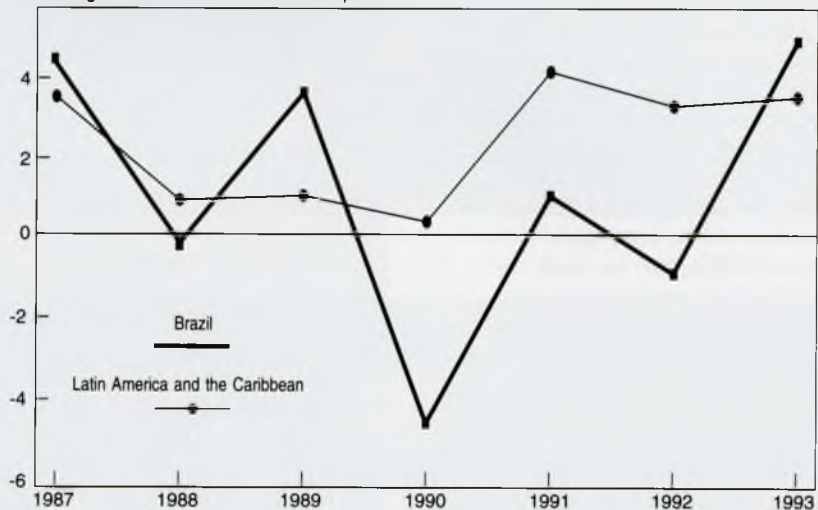
Cardoso spent the 1970s making sense of Brazilian authoritarianism and exploring conceptual and theoretical issues raised by his brand of dependency theory. The most exciting result of these explorations was his bold analysis of the relationship between local social classes and the state and the limits of the nationalist development strategies based on import-substituting industrialization—as well as his development of a conceptual framework to ex-

plain the political and economic dynamics of all of Latin America. Rather than calling for a reductionist approach to the politics of development, his deeper concern is with understanding emergent social classes, political processes, and states through historically grounded research.

In 1978 Cardoso ran for the Brazilian senate. His victory as an alternate led, in 1979, to the vice-presidency of the Partido do MDB—the political party that grew out of the MDB during Brazil's democratization process. Cardoso became one of São Paulo's regular senators in 1983, following André Franco Montoro's election as state governor. Max Weber's classic essay, "Politics as a Vocation" (quoted on page 20), provided the inspiration for his inaugural speech.

## GROWTH OF GDP

Percentages based on values at 1980 prices



Source: UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Cardoso's defeat in the 1985 São Paulo mayoral race showed how much the neophyte had yet to learn in order to master politics—even if the loss was partly due to internal squabbles within the PMDB. He learned the lesson and in the race for the senate in 1986, he proved to be one of the biggest vote-getters. As the *New York Times* (March 14, 1988) put it, he was “no longer drawn to the cloistered life of academia,” but had “learned to play politics among politicians.”

Politics became progressively more absorbing for Cardoso throughout the 1980s. Along with many intellectuals and other professionals, he founded in 1988 the Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro (PSDB). It was a more cohesive, principled, and manageable party than the PMDB, but its small size raised doubts about its prospects. Despite this, the founders forged ahead in articulating a progressive platform based on what to them was a realistic but socially responsible assessment of the country's predicament, including an approach to economic policy that sought to balance state action with expanded roles for the market. In a political system that traditionally has been oriented to patronage and has tended to polarization, such a call to moderation and responsibility could only hope to gain ground gradually, but the party's reputation as a serious political organization grew quite rapidly. Cardoso's appointment as minister of foreign relations in 1992 and finance minister in 1993 reflected increased recognition of both him and the PSDB.

### The Action: Content and Context

If stabilization and adjustment are unavoidable, Brazil is due for even more fundamental reforms. With the demise of state-led import-substituting industrialization, it needs to find a new development strategy and redefine the state's economic role. In immediate practical terms, the government must choose a combination of measures from a

list of such difficult instruments as fiscal reform, privatization, trade liberalization, deregulation, and similar “orthodox” advice—a far cry from the “heterodox” policy normally associated with the neo-structuralism and dependency analysis of the 1970s.

*Cardoso is one of the few national political figures able to work effectively with most contenders in the Brazilian polity as well as with foreign investors and governments.*

Critics see poetic justice in the unconventional Cardoso being compelled to follow fairly conventional economic advice. But Cardoso is no stranger to incongruities. To sympathizers, his keen dialectical mind will synthesize demands and programs into a forward-looking perspective for the new century.

Cardoso's main asset in this situation is his reputation as honest leader, able negotiator, and effective politician. He has already shown that he is one of the few national political figures able to work effectively with most contenders in the Brazilian polity as well as with foreign investors and governments. As an impressive conciliator and tactician in the senate and the 1988 constitutional assembly, he developed constructive relationships with entrepreneurs and trade unions, political parties, and the military. The respect he commands in

the international arena feeds the perception of a statesman able to claim for Brazil a more salient global role.

In the meantime, it would be foolish to expect Cardoso and his allies, or any other actor, to successfully implement all or most of the required reforms within a year. Successful structural adjustment or even plain stabilization normally takes years to carry out. In light of this reality, what has been achieved so far and what results can realistically be expected in the near future?

The initial measures implemented after June 1993 focused on public sector reforms aimed at reducing the large and growing government deficit of approximately \$22 billion (of an \$89 billion budget). Fiscal reforms in 1993 included a budget cut of \$6 billion, tough measures against tax evasion (a phenomenon that costs Brazil \$25-30 billion per year), and calling in overdue debts owed by the states to the central government. As a result, tax collection in 1993 was up by more than 25% with respect to the previous year and was growing at record levels in early 1994. These policies have brought increasing macroeconomic stability—even if their full impact will take years. The projected budget for 1994 will have a significant surplus. Still, the economic team was frustrated that inflation increased from 30% to 40% per month as of January 1994. Cardoso's fight against the deficit—the main cause of inflation—scored another major victory in late February, when the congress approved a special \$16 billion fund, financed through increased taxes, that theoretically ensures fiscal equilibrium for at least two years.

The fiscal measures prepared the ground for a stabilization program proper—FHC2 (as dubbed by the media)—also approved in late February 1994. The main stabilization instrument in FHC2 is a new index to be used in adjusting salaries and eventually most prices. The Unidade Real de Valor (URV)



replaces 11 different indices currently in use. Pegged to the dollar, the URV is conceived as a preamble to the adoption of a strong currency—the third step in Cardoso's plan. With reserves nearing \$33 billion (up from \$23 billion with Fernando Collor de Mello) and a solid trade surplus, the government is in a very good position indeed to introduce a stable currency.

The new fiscal context creates favorable conditions for speeding up the privatization process. Even a partial sale of the state's 159 public enterprises worth \$193 billion will bring considerable additional resources to the treasury. The state has already privatized significant holdings in the steel industry. While progress in other sectors has been relatively modest as of early 1994, three dozen firms are being readied for the auction block this year, including much of Embraer, Brazil's aerospace giant. These transactions should bring in several billion dollars. In addition, constitutional revisions are being planned to further reduce government spending, increase taxes, and allow for more privatization.

The reforms adopted or in progress lay the groundwork for further advances in the economic restructuring agenda, but the bulk of these must be addressed by the government coming to office in January 1995. The government is selectively using tariff reduction as a disciplinary tool against sectors that increase prices faster than the URV. But major new rounds in trade liberalization are unlikely in 1994. While somewhat higher than Latin America's average of 11%, the 14.2% mean tariffs represent a considerable drop from previous levels and are unlikely to experience major cuts anytime soon. As a result, imports increased by 25% in 1993—to a total of \$26 billion. Inflation will indeed need to decrease substantially in the near future for the reforms to be perceived as successful, but a more durable solution is within reach of the next Brazilian government.



*Cardoso talks to factory workers in São Paulo during his 1978 campaign for the Brazilian senate.*



*Cardoso addresses a special commission of the Brazilian senate in 1994.*

Cardoso's plan picked up momentum when long negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other foreign lenders finally led to a resolution of the debt problem in April 1994. The effective approval of Brazil's stabilization plan has put into motion an agreement to repay \$49 billion of the foreign debt under the terms of the Brady plan—that is, using

US Treasury Department bonds as collateral—and to renegotiate the entire debt of \$123 billion. Again, the macroeconomic environment created by Cardoso's economic team gets much of the credit for solving this huge problem, and thus putting an end to the international debt crisis of 1982.

While the fiscal picture is greatly improving, the best grounds for op-



timism come from the performance of the Brazilian economy itself. At \$446 billion, this top Latin American economy is larger than Russia's. It grew by a healthy 5% in 1993 and is expected to come close to that rate in 1994—while last year's productivity grew by 6%. Having already withstood major forms of adjustment, the private sector remained remarkably resilient through often ill-conceived measures of past governments and responded well to the new economic reforms. The export sector has been particularly impressive and is responsible for a 1993 trade surplus of \$13 billion in the context of sharply increased imports. Simultaneously, foreign investment has grown substantially—from a negative \$400 million in 1989 to a positive \$400 million in 1990, \$1.1 billion in 1991, \$2.9 billion in 1992, and an estimated \$3.3 billion in 1993. A more stable macroeconomic environment should lead to the same or higher levels of performance.

There is growing agreement in Brazil that the root of the country's crisis has more to do with politics than the economy. The main obstacles to reform come from weaknesses in the evolving political system. Democratization has proven harder than first thought. President Itamar Franco's limited political base compels him to dole out policy concessions to win support. The fragmentation of the party system makes consensus extremely difficult and provides incentives for many of these parties to block reform for narrow political and economic reasons. Since policy successes enhance the chances for Cardoso's presidential bid, other presidential hopefuls have something to gain by blocking them in the congress.

The adoption of FHC2 by the Franco-Cardoso government has put Brazil on a sound track, but the policy and political situation remains perilous. Parts of the plan were initiated with temporary executive decrees that still require congressional approval. A most hopeful

sign is that the very long and open process of negotiation that Cardoso used to arrive at his stabilization plan has generated a broad and stabilizing alliance, even if the temptation to defect remains high.

***There is growing agreement in Brazil that the root of the country's crisis has more to do with politics than the economy.***

Failure to reduce inflation and stop the crisis would most benefit Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, the Partido dos Trabalhadores candidate who has led in the polls for months. It is clear that, whatever happens, what the government does between now and October 1994 will greatly shape the results of the election. Another big question is how much tolerance the military will have for a leftist candidate committed to a larger role for the state, particularly if there is a weakening in governability as the elections approach. Last year there were clear rumblings of military anxiety over corruption and incoherence in the congress and the prospects of a deepening political crisis. Since a candidate of the right seems objectionable to many Brazilians, the very danger in the situation may in the end favor a center-left moderate candidate such as Cardoso.

### **The Journey Ahead**

Predicting Brazilian politics is a risky business, but it is difficult to foresee democratization in Brazil without the PSDB and Cardoso as major players. If the current reforms and policy team organized

by Cardoso survive through 1994, it will likely lead to an enhanced political role for both regardless of the outcome of the October elections. The PSDB and Cardoso will thus emerge as significant winners from this situation—even if a dramatic turnaround in the rate of inflation does not materialize. On the other hand, a major deterioration of economic or political conditions, coupled with any large miscalculation by other players, could still bring the country close to chaos. The passage between the Charybdis of ineffectiveness and the Scylla of turbulence is in fact populated by hungry sharks, but this situation only focuses more sharply the attention on the skills and nerve of the one at the helm, enhancing the dramatic quality of the performance.

Will the stars that have guided Cardoso this far continue to shine? Probably, though clouds on the political horizon will make them hard to see at times. If so, Cardoso's stint as finance minister will indeed have opened a new and major chapter in the drawn out process of Brazilian democratization and economic reform. The expectation that this is the last chapter should be tempered by signs that the book is far from complete. The difficulty in obtaining short-term success pales in comparison to the larger economic and political challenges ahead—stabilization, structural adjustment, and the formation of a durable coalition around a new development strategy. A good performance against inflation and in political stabilization will earn Cardoso and his party a cardinal position from which to negotiate with other contenders the adoption of effective answers to pressing long-term problems. But the ultimate answer is necessarily a collective one. What will matter in the end is the political maturity of institutions, political organizations, and the general public. Therefore, what the current situation puts to an exacting test is the process of Brazilian democratization itself. ■



# HAITI

Photographs by Gary Monroe



Taken between 1984 and 1987, Monroe's Haiti photographs are radiant with the spirit of discovery. Powerful and evocative, they are stripped bare of artifice and traditional documentary narrative. Their meaning is elusive.

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# Crisis and Environment

by J. Timmons Roberts

**D**uring the 1982 UN Environment Conference, Brazil was called "the world's worst polluter." Moreover, reports of pollution and deforestation in the Amazon worsened throughout the decade. In 1989, when a US congressional delegation offered to help generate resources for the environmental protection of the Amazon, President José Sarney responded, "We don't want the Amazon to become a green Persian Gulf." By 1992, however, Brazil was playing host to the massive UN Conference on Environment and Development, and Sarney's successor, Fernando Collor de Mello, signed all the proposed conventions. Some of these—on climate change and biodiversity, and the declaration of principles on forests—could potentially limit Brazil's economic growth rate. Thus, the event appeared to signal an important reversal of policy for a country that had long rejected outside pressures to protect its environment.

Satellite photographs of the Amazon reveal that the current rate of deforestation is down dramatically from that of the 1980s. Estimates of how much deforestation occurred during the 1980s are still contested, from NASA's 15,000 square kilometers per year to the World Resources Institute's 80,000. The latest NASA figures, however, are down sharply from either figure: satellite photographs from 1991

show the rate at around 10,900 square kilometers. The figures for 1989 and 1990 were also lower than for previous years. The diminished rate of deforestation, which began in 1988, has led observers to question whether the drop is truly the result of successful environmental policies and enforcement, or merely a product of wet burning seasons and the country's devastating economic crisis.

***To head off international avarice, Brazil's military pushed for rapid occupation by Brazilians of what it saw as "empty spaces." Yet the projects boomeranged.***

Has Brazil truly turned environmentalist? Why did Brazil's state leadership feel it had to undertake a long and expensive international political campaign to "green" the country's image? Are Brazil's economic and political crises conducive to environmental protection? Which major players support or oppose protectionist measures? Is a national consensus on environmental policy in the making?

## The Problems

Brazil suffers from a series of dire environmental problems. For example, the species-diverse Atlantic Coast forest—which in colonial times stretched virtually unbroken from the country's northeast to its south—is now reported to be more than 90% decimated, with its remnants still threatened. More than 70% of Brazilians have no sewage treatment (a situation underscored by Brazil's recent cholera epidemic), a problem reaching from far rural isolation into the heart of Brazil's most modern cities: industrialized São Paulo, with a population of more than 15 million residents and accounting for almost a quarter of Brazil's entire gross national product, lacks sewage treatment for more than 80% of its population. Air pollution and illegal toxic dumping are also widespread problems.

Most international concern, though, has centered on the destruction of the earth's largest and oldest block of tropical rain forest: the Amazon, two-thirds of which lies within Brazil's boundaries. Because the Amazon region makes up more than half of Brazil's national territory, economic planners have been encouraging its rapid development since the 1950s. With the discovery of impressive mineral resources there, Brazil's post-1964 military regime became concerned with international avarice toward the Amazon. To head off a feared "invasion," the military pushed for rapid occupation by Brazilians of what it saw as "empty spaces." This emptiness was a misconception, however. For centuries the Amazonian economy experienced wild booms and busts involving the extraction of various commodities

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(medicinal plants, cacao, rubber, and Brazil nuts), which had already introduced a population of Brazil nut and rubber gatherers, small farmers, lumberers, traders, and strong local commercial and political elites, in addition to the indigenous peoples already there.

To quicken the pace of development, Brazil's federal government built a series of roads into the Amazon, earmarked 3% of all national revenues for a special development agency for the region, and provided a series of generous incentives to businesses setting up operations there. Mining, lumbering, agriculture, and ranching—much of which was owned and operated by outsiders to the region—took off in the 1960s and 1970s. In agitating for the development of the Amazon, Brazil's military had the strong support of some of the nation's largest corporations, especially those in construction. Four of the country's 10 largest private firms are builders, and were among the main beneficiaries of enormous contracts to build road, dam, and mining projects in the region.

Many of these ambitious projects were financed through external loans, including several provided or guaranteed by the World Bank. Some were undertaken specifically to provide exports that would improve Brazil's debt profile with external lenders. Yet a number of these projects later boomeranged. For example, the plan to turn the Carajás iron deposits into an export-based, regional development project for the eastern Amazon (funded partially by the World Bank in addition to other external sources) would have required 22 massive pig-iron factories fueled by charcoal from the native rain forest. Based on projections of the deforestation this was expected to cause, international environmentalists attacked the Carajás project as, potentially, one of the world's five worst environmental disasters. On the other side of the Amazon region, a photograph taken during the 1987 dry season from a US

space shuttle showed more than 5,000 fires. That photo covered an area of the state of Rondônia where the huge Polonoroeste colonization project—funded by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank—was under way.

***Environmentalists  
decried Brazil's  
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European and US environmentalists vilified Brazil for its environmental and Amazonian policies, bringing substantial pressure to bear through agencies such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, the international press, the US Congress, and the European Community. Further, where local environmental groups appeared weak, the international environmentalists worked through or even created their own chapters in Brazil. Contacts between international environmentalists and leaders of Brazilian grassroots organizations of rubber tappers, Indians, small farmers, urban environmentalists, and others have multiplied rapidly since the mid-1980s.

For a long time the military and the far right in Brazil have claimed that such outside pressure was part of a plot to keep Brazil from becoming a developed country. Speaking to a meeting of the Amazon Basin's nine nations in 1989, for instance, senior Brazilian diplomat Paulo Flecha de Lima described accusations about Brazil's poor environmental

record as part of "a campaign to impede exploitation of natural resources in order to block [Brazil] from becoming a world power" (*O Liberal*, Belém, November 14, 1989).

## **New Alignments**

Since the democratic opening in 1985, however, Brazilian politicians have increasingly been aware of the environment's importance in foreign relations. In that same year the World Bank suspended payments on the Polonoroeste program and the first national meeting of rubber tappers was held in Brasília. The December 1988 murder of Chico Mendes—the internationally known leader of the rubber-tappers union in the Amazon state of Acre—intensified pressures on Brazil to address the problems of deforestation and human rights abuses in the Amazon.

In 1988, President Sarney, despite his sometimes anti-environmentalist stance, pushed through the country's first comprehensive environmental policy, "Nossa Natureza," which among other things created the Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (IBAMA). Though riddled with problems, IBAMA and other government organs have exercised growing strength in pressing for increased environmental safeguards. Sarney later campaigned successfully for Brazil to host the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Just before his inauguration in 1990, a trip by president-elect Fernando Collor de Mello to the US, Europe, Russia, and Japan made him acutely aware of the strategic role of environmental issues in foreign affairs. After announcing a rather ambitious environmental program, Collor canceled the remaining fiscal incentives for land clearing in the Amazon during his first day in office. He also appointed as minister of the environment the vocal environmentalist José Lutzenburger (who later resigned after



many disagreements) and changed IBAMA from a regulatory to an executive body. With the change, the minister of the environment advised the presidency directly, though much power was vested in the Conselho da República, where a strong military presence remained. Due to the economic crisis, the potential for reducing the government's budget made cutting subsidies for ranching and lumbering a relatively easy decision. Still, as US political scientist Steven Sanderson points out, "Collor didn't disconnect the environmental imperative from the National Security Council."

An undeniable feature of UNCED—which took place as Collor fell into a devastating corruption scandal—was the massive presence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at official and nonofficial events. Networking between environmental, women's, indigenous, and other groups from around the globe took off in Rio, a change that appears irreversible. Within Brazil, environmental NGOs have grown from about 40 groups in 1980 to more than 2,000 in 1992. The advocacy and research groups—which are well connected with universities, government agencies, policy circles, and international financial sources—are gaining political power. According to Brazilian analyst Eduardo J. Viola, a class of highly educated technicians and administrators is heading the organizations, making the movement increasingly more professional.

Environmental groups in Brazil vary widely in terms of whether their structure is basically top-down or grassroots in nature, the class origins of their members and the particular issues that concern them, and their styles of action. Most of the country's environmental groups, however, face a critical problem: Brazil, like most of Latin America, lacks a tradition of membership in civic organizations. Thus, according to Flavio de Mattos Franco of the World Wildlife Fund in Brasília, Brazil's largest group, S.O.S.

Mata Atlântica, has only 2,000 members even after a national membership campaign. The Brazilian chapter of the World Wildlife Fund has virtually no dues-paying members. Consequently, these and most other NGOs are forced to look for other sources of funding, primarily from international groups, corporate sponsors, or government contracts, thereby potentially compromising their independence.

***Environmentally protected areas, which encompass just 3.5% of Brazilian territory, are chronically threatened by invading gold miners, lumberers, and squatters.***

Recent interviews with several Brazilian environmentalists reflect their uncertainty about the direction of the ecology movement. Sociologist Arturo Deiges noted that in national contests of polarizing politics, groups concerned solely with environmental affairs have been confronted by other groups pushing for social and political justice. While the umbrella organization for environmental groups at the 1992 UNCED debated whether to exclude social justice groups from their tent, Beth Grimberg, of the organization Pólis in São Paulo, and Mattos express the belief that social justice and environmental groups are converging politically, a process that seems to have begun in the mid-1980s. Donald Sawyer, of the Brasília-based NGO Instituto de Sociedade, População e Natureza, asserts that even mainstream envi-

ronmental groups in the US now realize the need to combine social justice and environmental goals in funding projects in Brazil.

Another key result of the 1992 UNCED were the promises of more than \$5 billion in aid and loans for environmental programs in Brazil and other Third World nations. Such funding does not come without conditions, though, and Brazil's environmental policy continues to be somewhat driven by pressure from the World Bank and other outside lenders. For example, some new programs require that Brazil implement the legislation and enforcement necessary before the promised funding is released. João Paulo Capobianco, head of the lead environmental group S.O.S. Mata Atlântica, warns, "If a radical change does not occur in the posture of the government, of politicians, and the press," UNCED's achievements, including loans and foreign aid, could be lost (*Folha de São Paulo*, June 22, 1993).

According to Deiges, Brazil uses three main policy instruments to address the Amazon question: protected areas, environmental impact analysis, and spatial planning. Protected areas, which encompass just 3.5% of Brazilian territory, are chronically threatened by invading gold miners, lumberers, and squatters. These preserves are poorly demarcated and will become mere islands if current trends continue: there is growing understanding that, rather than attempting to transplant the European and US conceptions of pristine wilderness, a model of sustainable use would be more effective in the Amazon. Yet another problem is that, while Brazil formally adopted environmental impact analysis in 1986, the projects with the greatest potential for environmental destruction are directed by the government, which exempts itself from preparing impact statements. Finally, spatial planning (i.e. zoning) has been repeatedly proposed over the last 10 years, but has been notably ineffective since Brazil lacks the infra-



structure and the political will to enforce such measures in the face of desperate poverty, political patronage, and corruption.

## **What Has Changed?**

Has the tone of environmental debates changed within Brazil? According to Jean Hebette, of the Centro Agrário do Tocantins in the Amazon state of Pará, the NGOs have been highly influential: "The debate has changed from finding fault to looking for solutions. Colonists are talking about preserving their resources. Rubber tappers are now talking more about sustainable development. The international ecological movement was critical in affecting the [public's] mentality through the media. But their ideas fell on good soil with the small producers." The old right and the army, however, have increasingly expressed the nationalistic view that environmentalists are inspired by outsiders who are threatening Brazil's sovereignty.

Public opinion seems to be "greening" in Brazil, but it remains unclear whether such concern will translate into action and whether it will last long now that the excitement of the 1992 UNCED has faded. On the positive side, 50% of respondents in a 1992 Gallup survey in Brazil rated environmental issues as "very serious," and when asked how concerned they were about environmental problems, 80% said "a great deal" or "a fair amount." Even more convincingly, Brazil was among the highest of the 24 countries studied in the portion of the population (71%) agreeing that "protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic growth." Brazilians, though, ranked lowest in the world (26%) in the rate of "green consumerism," that is, avoiding certain products that harm the environment. The same poll, designed by US sociologist Riley E. Dunlap, shows that economic and social issues are more pressing for Bra-

zilians: only 2% considered environmental problems as the most important in the nation.

US political scientist Timothy J. Power observes that, in spite of the importance of public opinion and interest groups in setting environmental policy, the leadership role of the president remains pivotal. As a weak president with no mandate, Sarney's periodic anti-environmental outbursts appear to have been largely for domestic political consumption, as he needed military support to serve out the remainder of his term. Unlike Sarney, Collor had 33 million votes, and thus had more leeway to maneuver against the military, at least early in his aborted term.

*Public opinion seems to be "greening" in Brazil. It remains unclear, though, whether such concern will translate into action and whether it will endure beyond the excitement of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development.*

With the impeachment and resignation of Collor in 1992 and the succession of his vice president Itamar Franco to the presidency, Brazil has returned to a lame duck, unelected president with sinking popularity and marginal room to set his own agenda. Faced with the constant demands of what seem like perpetual economic and political crises, Franco has decidedly soft-pedaled environmental issues.

While he formed the Ministério Extraordinário para a Amazônia and chose a former ambassador to the US—Rúbens Ricúpero—to head it, giving Ricúpero and his new ministry a high-profile location in his old, and now vacant, vice-presidential suite in the presidential palace, it remains unclear what the role of this new ministry will be. Ricúpero stepped down from his post in March 1994 to assume the powerful position of economic minister. He was replaced in April by Henrique Brandão Cavalcanti, who promised to "not change anything in environmental policy." An indicator of Franco's weak commitment to environmental conservation in the Amazon is that he has largely sought to avoid dealing with the controversy raised in the aftermath of the mid-1993 massacre of Yanomami Indians by Brazilian gold miners. Franco even lashed out against officials who did not defend Brazil's official position on the matter.

So, is Brazil's economic and political crisis conducive or not to environmental protection? On the one hand, the weakness of the national treasury makes the government more attentive to the need to create a positive image of the country in the outside world. On the other hand, the ravages of the economic crisis continue to drive poor people to the Amazon in search of gold and land, making enforcement of environmental regulations and protecting reserve boundaries increasingly difficult. The political crisis—which sometimes appears to approach the collapse of the Brazilian state—undermines respect for the rule of law and confidence in environmental protection organs such as IBAMA. Finally, in times of desperate hardship, such agencies seem increasingly alien and irrelevant to the many people for whom short-term thinking takes precedence over sustainable development.

The current crisis, then, has created some factors favoring both more and less attention to Brazil's environment. Continuing swings in

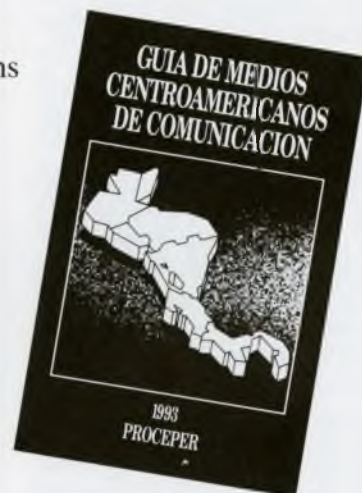
policy and posture are likely. When the president needs international legitimacy, a large-scale project to gain international media attention is launched. Such projects are set up "for the English to see" (as the Brazilian saying goes), while the root problems go unaddressed. The basic problems—poverty, corruption, and violence, as well as inequalities of land tenure and wealth that rank among the world's worst—continue to drive the poor into the Amazon and to create an atmosphere of impunity for both those who violate human rights and damage the natural environment.

Was Collor merely an exception, or could Brazil's next president, to be elected in November 1994, significantly alter the country's approach to environmental questions? Leading in the polls for the presidential election is Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, the candidate of the Partido dos Trabalhadores and an ex-steelworker from São Paulo. During his 1989 campaign Lula organized large committees of academics, environmentalists, and policy experts to develop a new environmental policy. The structure of power that might emerge from a Lula victory would likely spell a new level and type of participation by environmental and social NGOs in setting their country's policy. The implications for the environment of a victory by his main rival, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, are unclear. We have seen how many of the major players in the environmental struggle continue to face each other: NGOs, the military, foreign lenders, business interests, and so on. Regardless of the election's results, changes in public opinion and the growth of the social justice and environmental NGOs are bound to have lasting effects on environmental policy in Brazil. While addressing environmental issues remains difficult given the ongoing economic and political crises, environmental NGOs and international lenders will make it impossible for Brazil's new president to ignore them. ■

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# Monetary “Lobotomy” and Inflation

by Katherine Ellison

**M**ost Brazilians dream of a future in which they could make regular bank deposits, knowing that by a certain time they will have saved enough for a down payment on a car or home. It seems a simple fantasy for members of the world's tenth largest economy, whose gross domestic product grew in 1993 by nearly 5%. Yet ever since inflation rocketed from 45% a year in 1976 to a record 2,567% in 1993, the notion has grown more and more outlandish.

This is not to say that Brazil's inflation—now at 40-plus percent a month, one of the worst rates in the world—has not had some fans. Banks, for instance, have made billions from the price increases every year. Speculators have also profited from what is, in effect, a tax paid by the poor, who have no hope of saving, to the rich. But now, the class of those with the savvy, surplus cash, and sufficient lack of scruples to profit from the economic chaos is shrinking. Meanwhile, elections planned for October 1994 are increasing pressure on the government to take dramatic action.

On March 1, then-finance minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso vowed he would meet the challenge, as he launched the tenth major anti-inflation campaign since 1980. Within the same month, Cardoso quit the ministry to run for president. But his plan is still alive and, despite huge obstacles, still being viewed as Brazil's best chance for economic stability.

*Katherine Ellison is the Miami Herald's South America bureau chief in Rio de Janeiro.*

The keystone of the crusade is a bold attempt to “dollarize” the economy, although no one in the government is eager to use that word. What this means is that the nation's all-but-useless currency, the cruzeiro real, is to be converted back into a genuine unit of wealth. The process has begun with the introduction of the Unidade Real de Valor (URV), a dollar-based index now being used to establish the values of salaries and other important contracts. On July 1, according to the plan, the URV itself will become a new currency—the sixth new currency in the past 14 years. It is to be called the “real,” and worth roughly a dollar.

***The joke spread that the monetary reform was the government's way of saying, “Together, we will rob you.”***

Economist Winston Fritsch, one of Cardoso's principal advisers at the finance ministry, calls the process a kind of “lobotomy” necessary to cure Brazilians of their inflationary expectations. “Money in Brazil has ceased to be a unit of account or store of value,” he said. “So now

we are creating a currency in steps to recreate in the population the notion of a currency that has real value.” Government leaflets marketing the plan have pressed this psychological approach. “Finally, a new currency, strong and as respected—here and abroad—as Brazil deserves,” the leaflets promised. “A real currency, to fill people with pride.”

Justifiably hardened by their history of disappointments, however, Brazilians have been slow to jump on the bandwagon. In the week in which Cardoso launched his plan, the joke spread that URV was the government's way of saying, “*Unidos roubaremos voces*” (“Together, we will rob you.”).

Such cynicism has threatened to strangle Cardoso's project in its infancy, as does what some politicians view as its fatal flaw: i.e., while it puts a lid on salaries, it gives no guarantee that prices won't keep shooting up. In early March, after hearing the details of Cardoso's strategy, union leaders threatened strikes and leftist politicians demanded that the government retreat from what they charged was a shock plan that placed all of the burden of reform on workers' shoulders. Part of the unions' fear had already been realized in February when sellers, perhaps in anticipation of a price freeze, raised the cost of basic foodstuffs by 53%, well above the predicted 38% inflation for that month. The price of beans, a Brazilian staple, rocketed up by 179%, according to the news magazine *Veja*, while the price of onions soared by 126%.

Cardoso vowed that he would not freeze prices, a tactic that has failed in the past. Yet his advisers insisted they could bully suppliers

away from abusing strapped consumers. In what Fritsch called "moral suasion" and some newspapers have dubbed "fiscal terrorism," Fritsch said the finance ministry could, if necessary, cut tariffs on exports by unruly firms, or reduce subsidies. "Every company has some dealings with the government, so you can always find some way to harass them," he said.

Cardoso had been preparing the ground for the URV for months before he put it into practice, mostly by raising taxes and designing deep cuts in the federal budget. With a balanced budget, the government would no longer be forced to print money to cover its debts, thus fueling inflation. Nonetheless—and this is the plan's most serious problem—the ex-minister's budget has yet to be approved by the congress, which is bogged down by election-year intrigues and a long-running investigation into a massive corruption scandal of its members.

More bad news came in April, when legislators acknowledged they had at least temporarily abandoned a long-awaited and urgently needed constitutional revision. Cardoso had hoped to steer the process toward supporting his plan, by means of approval of changes in the tax laws, an overhaul of the bankrupt social security system, and the reversal of a law that bans the firing of public employees. Now all these measures will have to wait.

This opposition leaves Cardoso with perhaps one last weapon with which to coax support for his proposal from the ruling elite. Many believe that if nothing is done soon about the rampaging inflation, Brazil's poor majority will give an overwhelming victory in October to Cardoso's main rival, the socialist labor leader Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, already by far the current front-runner in all public opinion polls. The increasing fear of a Lula victory may have become the best hope that Brazil's aristocracy will at last unite behind a stabilization plan. ■

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# Chiapas and the National Crisis

by Jorge Castañeda

*The Chiapas rebellion reflects a profound national crisis in Mexico. It reflects a Mexico that, despite its deepening integration with the US, remains firmly anchored in the Third World*

**W**ith the outcry of “*no que no, hijos de la chingada*,” the feared Mexican bronco awoke from his lethargy and submission in the remote highlands of Chiapas—the land of indigenous people and anthropologists, of *huipiles* and syncretism. The emergence of a Mexican guerrilla movement has unleashed a political crisis for the country, an image crisis outside of Mexico and—the only positive result imaginable—a crisis of conscience among a Mexican elite separated by an abyss of centuries from the indigenous masses that have taken up arms.

Lacking better information on what the final outcome will be—though no doubt tragic—and examining the insurrection with the caution that is necessary for any event of this type in Mexico, four reflections come to mind. The first has to do with the nature and structure of the guerrilla force itself. In contrast to the 1970s *campesino* uprisings in the state of Guerrero, the Chiapas rebels are genuine guerrillas and not simply one more group of angry and insurrectionist peasants.

Although not all the members of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) carry the powerful modern weapons of its television spokespersons, several thousand combatants form part of a defined and coordinated structure guided by a single leadership with a politically consistent, albeit archaic, discourse. The Zapatistas’ organizational, logistical, public relations, and communications capacity and their tactical and military strategy reveal that this group has been preparing itself for years. They have well-trained units and qualified instructors. This is not a millenarian *Jacquerie*; it is a highly current and contemporary guerrilla group.

*The Chiapas rebels are genuine guerrillas, not simply one more group of angry and insurrectionist peasants.*

Second, the EZLN’s emergence in itself denotes either a functional failure or an incomprehensible mystery for the Mexican state apparatus. Almost three years ago, rumors of a guerrilla uprising in

Chiapas abounded. In July and August of 1993 the newspaper *La Jornada* and the magazine *Proceso* published long articles regarding battles in the Lacandona Jungle and the town of Ocosingo. Carlos Montemayor—the well-known Mexican writer and an authority on armed insurrections in Mexico—stated that “in those regions, the mountains have eyes.” Everything is known, and the Mexican intelligence services—no matter how corrupt or repressive—have a well-deserved reputation for efficiency and quickness. When they want to capture someone, discover something, or infiltrate and disarticulate a group, they do it well.

## Sophisticated Warriors

No one understands how thousands of *chiapaneco campesinos*, led by indigenous and mestizo leaders from both that region and the rest of the country, were able to train and prepare for a complex and tremendously ambitious operation without raising any suspicions. This is even less comprehensible if one remembers that the current secretary of the interior and the man responsible for the security of the Mexican state, Patrocinio González Garrido, served as governor of Chiapas until the beginning of 1993; in reality he has also retained political control over his home state. A grave deficiency exists in the government of

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Carlos Salinas de Gortari that reveals either an unconscious calculation that purposely allowed the eruption to achieve a specific political objective or an acute state of internal decomposition.

Third, the Chiapas revolt supports the argument of those obstinate and maligned critics and skeptics who, since 1988, have insisted that the route taken by the Salinas government would lead, sooner or later, to a major crisis. Such a crisis, they noted, would occur, not in a country magically propelled to the First World by news media headlines and elite trade agreements, but one firmly anchored in the permanent Third World within Mexico—that part of the country that includes several segregated nations, injustice and inequality, authoritarianism and corruption, and poverty and marginalization.

### Deeper Crisis

The Chiapas uprising is a symbol of a much deeper crisis. It is neither an exclusively ethnic phenomenon nor the product of the undeniable poverty and backwardness of the state of Chiapas. While Chiapas is one of the most backward states in Mexico, it is also one of the four states where the government has concentrated its efforts and resources to fight poverty through its so-called National Solidarity Program.

What gave rise to the guerrillas in Chiapas was not only its backwardness and the marginality and isolation of its indigenous population but, above all, a political problem. In Chiapas the Salinas government spent money, but the corrupt, oligarchic, and authoritarian social and political structures were maintained and strengthened. State authorities and the army itself encouraged cattle ranchers to seize land from the communities. The security forces and, again, the army repressed the indigenous peoples without mercy: they violated human rights, raped women, jailed leaders and priests, burned towns and vil-

lages, and left legitimate ancestral claims dangling. The typically economic and despotic conception of the Salinas government resulted in a policy that was doomed to fail. The *chiapanecos*, like millions of other Mexicans, want more than a trickle of money—they want real resources. They also want to participate in deciding how, by whom, and where money will be spent. Above all, they want to be treated with dignity, not humiliated, beaten, and repressed.

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The fourth and final reflection is that Mexico cannot continue to be governed the way it has been so far. The problem of Chiapas is Mexico; it is not social or economic, but political. The appearance of a guerrilla force—no matter how ephemeral it may prove to be—means that there are Mexicans who do not believe in the electoral route to channel their demands. This was already well known. Poll after poll revealed that more than half of all voters do not believe in the transparency of the electoral processes. The Salinas government dedicated five years, millions of dollars, thousands of liters of ink, and an infinite number of international friendships to destroying Cardenismo, the only opposition force that could have electorally channeled the demands and discontent of

groups such as the ones in Chiapas. Cardenismo was accused of radicalism, extremism, violence, and anachronism, in the forlorn hope that 90 million Mexicans would be convinced or compelled to fit within the confines of a country seemingly composed of nothing but magnates and “yuppies” of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, and Creole lawyers and middle-class supporters of the Partido de Acción Nacional. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas appeared as an evil to be avoided at all costs—including democracy, human rights, and international image.

### Several Evils

It is clear today, as many originally thought, that Cárdenas is the lesser of several evils. The real evils—violence, desperation, impotence, and rage—are on Guerrero Mountain in Chiapas, in the barrios of Netzahualcoyotl, or in the barrancas of Tijuana. The one overwhelming evil is the irrational and condemnable recourse to arms and the rejection of legality and the electoral route. The new configuration of the Mexican political spectrum that will emerge from Chiapas is loyal to the real country. If the eternally postponed Mexican democratization can occur, the indigenous ire of Chiapas and other rages and resentments lodged within the end-of-century Mexican mestizo will be able to express themselves through the ballot boxes. The true evil will have been avoided and the lesser ones—reformed Cardenistas, democratized *priistas*, and provincial *panistas*—would exist in a country where everyone, including Commander Marcos and the inhabitants of San Juan Chamula, would fit. This would not be the worst development to stem from the takeover of San Cristóbal de las Casas. ■

*Editor's Note: Translated, with permission, by Hemisphere staff from an editorial published in El Nuevo Herald (Miami, Florida) on January 6, 1994.*

# After Chiapas: The Indian Agenda

by Martin Edwin Andersen

**T**he violence seemed like part of a well-known script. Masked young men wearing baseball caps and bearing old rifles took control of town squares in a poor region far from the modern comforts of the capital city. Stunned military and police, jarred from the stupor of their New Year's revelry, called for reinforcements, then counterattacked. As propeller-driven aircraft bombed and strafed once-sleepy hamlets nestled in the mountains, the estimated 2,000 insurgents shrank back into the protective rain forest. Meanwhile, the government forces swelled to more than 10,000. The build-up was accompanied by displays of bodies—alleged to be those of guerrillas—with hands tied behind their backs and skulls shattered by pointblank bullets. In Washington, strategic thinkers muttered darkly about outside support for the unheard-of rebels.

The bloody rebellion by native Americans in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico proved to be an international embarrassment for a country widely praised for its economic reforms. It also appeared timed to undermine President Carlos Salinas de Gortari just as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was coming into effect. While the rebels of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional—named for Emiliano Zapata, the hero of the 1910 Mexican Revolution—melted into the surrounding countryside, the government retali-

ated with claims of foreign participation in the uprising. From the government's perspective, this was, perhaps, the best way to explain why the well-disciplined guerrillas had even seized the square in San Cristóbal de las Casas (the second largest city in Chiapas with some 90,000 people), but it was not a claim borne out by guerrilla casualties. The dead insurgents bore the physical features characteristic of the region's Mayan tribes.

*The situation in Chiapas mirrors the condition of native peoples in many areas of Mexico, home to Latin America's largest indigenous population.*

No one should be surprised by the uprising in Chiapas. It is Mexico's poorest state and the site of a long-running series of violations against the human rights of native peoples. It is also the scene of a virtual assault by large landowners against the small agricultural holdings of the Mayan, Tzeltale, Zapotec, Zoque, and other indigenous communities of the region. In recent years, wealthy landowners have forced thousands off communal farm lands, known as *ejidos*, which according to official Mexican lore, are one of the most important social gains of the "Institutional Rev-

olution" inaugurated by Zapata and others. The guerrillas' protest against what they called the Salinas government's complicity in rights violations and the erosion of their land rights was intensified by worries about what NAFTA will do to the price of corn—a staple—and by a fear that multinational corporations would be able to push those remaining off their lands.

The situation in Chiapas mirrors the condition of native peoples in many areas of Mexico, home to Latin America's largest indigenous population. More than a million Mexican Indians speak no Spanish, and eight times that many use native Indian languages as their preferred idiom. Nearly 70% of those who live in rural areas are considered by the government to be "marginalized" (as the Mexican government refers to its Indian communities), with nine in ten outside the reach of sanitation and sewerage systems and thus victims of intestinal disease.

## Indian Needs

To some observers, the Chiapas revolt, coming at the end of the UN "International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples," underscored the urgency of addressing the needs of Latin America's 35-40 million Indians—particularly their political rights and the protection of their lands and resources. Victims of poverty, violence, and political and social marginalization, the plight of native peoples has largely escaped the notice and attention of policymakers, both in Latin America and in Washington.

The rebellion was tragic proof of the risks posed by the failure of governments to protect the politi-

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cal, social, and economic rights of native peoples. The degree to which the Zapatistas struck a popular chord throughout Mexico seemed to do as much with the widespread appeal of their demands—the protection of native lands, real democracy, and the fair treatment of native peoples—as with the puckish and impassioned flair of their enigmatic leader, Subcomandante Marcos.

## The Native Agenda

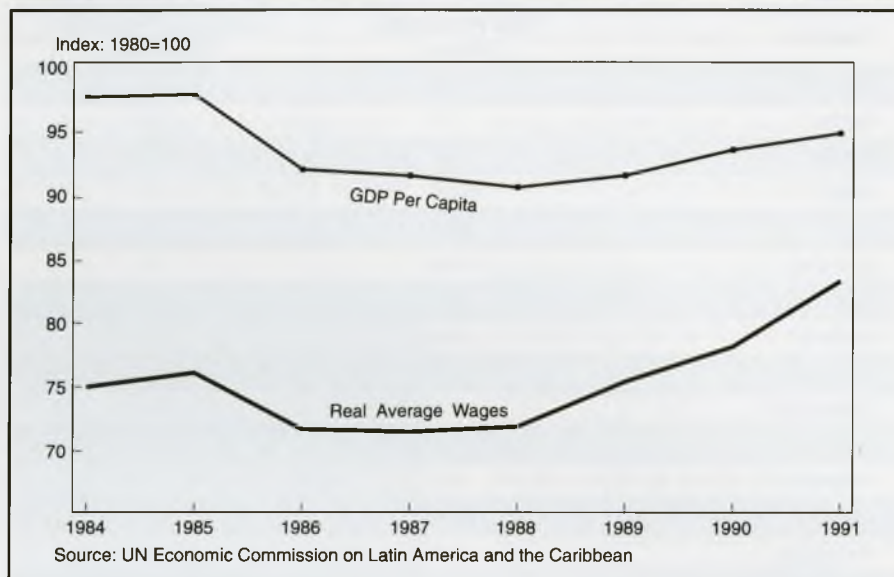
The *grito de Chiapas* reflected the serious problems confronted by an estimated 300 million indigenous peoples around the world. The indigenous agenda includes many of the most intriguing and urgent items that need to be addressed by policymakers as their countries approach the twenty-first century. These include:

- the quest for broad and effective participation in newly emerging democracies;
- human rights;
- the growing recognition within the international scientific community of the contribution of traditional knowledge, particularly of plant resources, to science and technology;
- mass migration across international boundaries;
- demilitarization;
- environmental protection; and
- a new framework for the decentralization of decisionmaking within nations, allowing for more effective local self-governance.

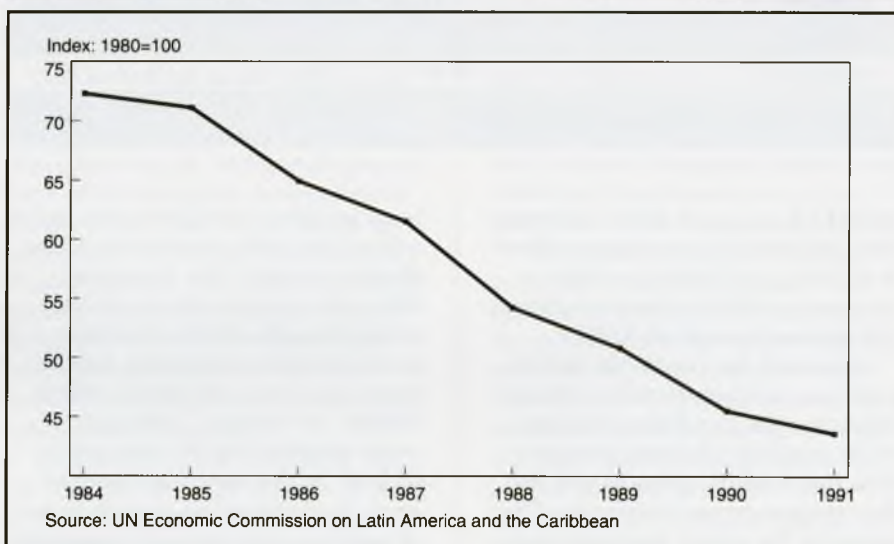
As the seemingly endless stream of newspaper articles and editorials about Chiapas made clear, the indigenous revolution is here. The question is will it be largely non-violent and beneficial to indigenous and tribal people, as well as the rest of humanity, or will it result in an endless series of “low-intensity conflicts.”

Indian advocates point out that, if violent episodes like that of Chiapas are to be kept from recurring, a systematic effort needs to be made to help indigenous peoples living in fragile environments to

## GDP PER CAPITA AND REAL WAGES



## REAL URBAN MINIMUM WAGE



conserve their resources. Part of the solution is to ensure them resource rights (access to land, water, and fuel), to promote their ability to defend their land and resource base, and to help them meet their needs in a modern world without losing their time-honored resource management methods. The continued progression of the global march to democracy as well as the protection of our common natural

inheritance requires helping indigenous peoples to take meaningful and representative roles in their own governments.

The Chiapas revolt spawned several myths, which policymakers can ignore at their peril. The Salinas administration was protecting its own vested interests when it dismissed pre-New Year's reports of guerrilla activities as fabrications generated by its opponents and the opposition

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Country	Total Population (Millions)	Indigenous Population (Percentage)
<b>Argentina</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>.1</b>
Belize	.2	10
<b>Bolivia</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>66</b>
Brazil	150.8	1
<b>Chile</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>9</b>
Colombia	31.9	1
<b>Costa Rica</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1</b>
Ecuador	10.3	21
<b>El Salvador</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>21</b>
Guatemala	9.1	50
<b>Guayana</b>	<b>.4</b>	<b>1</b>
Honduras	5.1	7
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>11</b>
Nicaragua	3.5	3
<b>Panama</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>6</b>
Paraguay	4.5	3
<b>Peru</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>40</b>
Suriname	.8	3
<b>Uruguay</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>—</b>
Venezuela	19.3	1
Source: Central Intelligence Agency, 1990		

to NAFTA. It is now clear, however, that the Mexican army was involved in a classic, and brutal, counter-insurgency effort in the mountains of Chiapas throughout 1993.

Following the revolt, the Salinas government tried to evade responsibility for the conditions that led to the revolt by claiming the guerrillas had outside contacts and foreign supporters in their ranks. The causes of the revolt, however, were clearly Mexican in character and content. Manuel Camacho Solís—Salinas's own special negotiator—gave lie to government claims that the Zapatistas were led by foreigners by describing the rebels as home-grown insurgents; his use of the term "army" when describing the insurgents flew in the face of government claims that the guerrillas were a band of "lawbreakers."

Finally, while the Zapatistas have stolen the headlines, most indige-

nous activism throughout the hemisphere has been nonviolent, if not always peaceful. The Zapatistas' leftist rhetoric should not be the prism through which all indigenous activism is evaluated. Indian issues are not, in the main, either "leftist" or "rightist," although some activists may be thus characterized. At the most fundamental level, the indigenous agenda is one of political and economic empowerment and, to a certain degree, of cultural sovereignty.

There is also the danger that the New Year's Day revolt will become a pretext for spending more on the military, not just in Mexico, but throughout Latin America, and that indigenous activism may become the new *raison d'être* for army involvement in internal security. Chiapas has become the symbol of what can go wrong when armies—even comparatively small

ones—attempt to carry out tasks other than the defense of the nation-state against external threats. Inappropriate roles and missions, not necessarily size, are what make militaries potentially dangerous actors outside civilian control. The lack of effective recourse to a functioning legal system, coupled with the employment of military forces as a virtual army of occupation, can be seen as an open invitation to the disenfranchised and disaffected to join the Zapatista rebels.

Throughout Latin America the absence of a unifying communist threat has sent militaries scrambling to define new threats to security as a means of holding onto budgets and prestige. Despite the fact that Mexico has one of the lowest per capita military expenditures in Latin America, the lack of an appropriate role and mission for its army is pushing the force to demand a greater say in major national decisions, the antechamber of militarism. This trend is exacerbated by a financial independence that dates back to the Mexican Revolution, and now, by the events in Chiapas.

That the military's own role in internal security in Chiapas itself contributed to popular support for the Zapatista insurgents is evidenced by a 1993 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights report about conditions in the southern Mexican state. Despite a constitutional prohibition against military involvement in domestic affairs, the report notes "troubling . . . signs of renewed involvement of the military in civilian affairs during the administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. . . . Another disturbing development is the deployment of the army among the indigenous populations of southern Mexico—especially in Chiapas—where long-simmering land conflicts have been aggravated by the government's agrarian policy. . . . [L]awless practices of the Mexican military have become increasingly tolerated at the highest levels of the Mexican government. . . . The growing ac-



ceptance of lawless military involvement in detentions and searches among civilian populations is a dangerous development."

Trained to employ maximum force to destroy an "enemy," utilizing forces that are largely alien to the community in which they are deployed, illegal acts by the Mexican army were almost inevitable—all the more so once the guerrilla insurgency burst forth with unsuspected force. In testimony before the US Congress on February 2, 1994, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck pointed out that, despite reports of hundreds killed in the fighting in Chiapas, the government has never produced a single wounded prisoner!

According to many knowledgeable observers, the Salinas government has increasingly used the army to intervene in political and labor disputes, as well as a major actor in the fight against narcotics trafficking. The Minnesota Advocates report notes: "The militarization of the drug war is, in large measure, a result of the government's inability or unwillingness to pursue serious reform of the police," even as the army has itself been implicated in almost surreal episodes of narcotics-related misconduct, including the murder of law enforcement officers. Meanwhile, in many precincts, antinarcotics police have had to buy their own ammunition, even though most local police make a mere \$200 a month.

The events in Chiapas raised specific issues that are broadly representative of the challenges facing indigenous peoples throughout the continent: the political empowerment of indigenous peoples; the protection of their land rights; indigenous rights and the administration of justice; and forest management and the protection of indigenous cultures.

## Political Empowerment

Bringing "marginalized" peoples into the democratic process is a key

component for the consolidation of elected governments. Throughout Latin America—but most certainly in Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia—democratic participation cannot be limited to areas of relative privilege if the long-term prospects for democracy are to be secure. New and emerging democracies can remain healthy only if they are fully representative.

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In Guatemala nearly 60% of the country's 10 million people are descendants of the ancient Mayas, yet there are only six indigenous members of the congress. Independent observers say one important factor in the low turnout in Guatemala's crucial January referendum on constitutional reforms was the fact the ballots were printed only in Spanish, although hundreds of thousands of potential voters speak only indigenous languages.

In Ecuador there is a single native American congressman. And in Bolivia, of the 130 members of parliament, only three are indigenous, a fact ameliorated only partially by the 1993 election of Víctor Hugo Cárdenas—a recognized native American leader—to the vice-presidency.

## Protection of Land Rights

Indian homelands—in many cases the last remote forests, savannas, and wetlands of Latin America—are facing a ruthless onslaught by lawless cattle ranchers, loggers, and

landless peasants. Experts say—and the experience of Chiapas seems to bear out—that securing legal protection for their lands, and thus their way of life and the ecosystem that sustains it, is the greatest challenge faced by native peoples. In Mexico an estimated 70% of Indian land is forest. For example, the 50,000 Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua's Sierra Madre Occidental live in one of the richest biosystems in North America. Both the ecosystem, with its stunning variety of plants and animals, and the Tarahumara Indians are at risk—victims of an unholy alliance of large landowners and drug traffickers. Ineffective policing by the Mexican army has helped to make the sprawling state on the US border a lawless cesspool of corruption.

In places such as Central America, where the population is expected to double within the next 25 years, the increasing shortage of what were once "frontier" lands means that commercial agricultural interests can only expand at the expense of native peoples and their control over their own territories. In Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, and elsewhere, land issues are at the forefront of the indigenous agenda.

An important part of helping indigenous peoples protect their lands is to help provide them with the information and support needed to create accurate land-use maps, thus demolishing a racist myth that endures from the Spanish colonial era: that the remaining forests, savannas, and wetlands are "uninhabited," and therefore there for the taking.

One promising effort has been undertaken by native peoples in Honduras and Panama, assisted by the nongovernmental organization Native Lands. In both countries, Indians have escaped the invisibility myth by creating graphic, detailed records of their lands, including who lives there and how the land is used. By employing scientific maps and technical evaluations, native peoples can make credible cases for legalizing communal home-

lands, stanching the invasions of their lands by landless peasants and multinational companies, and resolving on more favorable terms the relationship between Indian homelands and national protected areas.

### Administration of Justice

The revolt in Chiapas has helped to focus attention on the need for new rules and new laws governing how countries treat their Indian nations and other indigenous peoples. In countries as diverse as Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru, native Americans continue to be victimized by military-run internal security forces. Both the military and insurgent groups subject native Americans to forced recruitment and violence. The lack of representative legal systems at the community level means the denial to native peoples of the full protection of the law, while indigenous lands continue to be overrun, confiscated, or threatened.

Human rights advocates point out it is necessary to strengthen civilian justice systems—including police—at the local level in order to effectively confront abuses. Native American demands for legal protection through the creation and support of community and regional justice systems, including law enforcement, mirror the democratic experience of the US itself, where law enforcement is overwhelmingly civilian and local (as opposed to many countries of Latin America, where the armed forces still control the police). The creation of and support for local administration of justice helps to ensure community empowerment on issues of vital concern, and is directly related to questions of demilitarization and human rights.

### Forest Management and the Protection of Indigenous Cultures

There is a growing recognition in Latin America of the needs of indigenous peoples who use forests as the basis for their livelihood,

social organization, or cultural identity. These groups and established local communities that depend on forest resources have an economic stake in sustainable forest use. The international community can and should help indigenous peoples increase their capacity to protect their own lands and thus support sustainable resource use and the protection of the environment.

***In countries as diverse as Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru, native Americans continue to be victimized by military-run internal security forces. Both the military and insurgent groups subject them to forced recruitment and violence.***

Among those policy considerations deserving of support and assistance are:

- the recognition of indigenous peoples and local community residents' rights and cultural identity;
- the extension of an equal opportunity to indigenous peoples for full participation in their country's life, including the life of the forest;
- the exchange of information (with mutual protection of intellectual property rights) between external research and technology generation and locally developed technology and indigenous knowledge, as a means of more sustainably managing forest resources;

- empowering indigenous peoples and residents of local communities to ensure their effective participation in planning and decisionmaking related to the life of the forest, utilizing, as much as possible, the help of local and international nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.

These efforts should also include the definition and strengthening of the participation and stake of indigenous peoples in local, national, and international economies, particularly in the sustainable harvest of both timber (including fuel wood) and nontimber forest products and services, and the facilitation and furthering of the cultural, educational, and economic self-sufficiency of indigenous peoples.

### Chiapas, and Beyond

During the Bush administration, the US was seen as unsympathetic to UN efforts to address the indigenous agenda. The Clinton administration also got off to a slow start when the US delegation at the June 1993 human rights summit in Vienna was not even prepared to discuss indigenous rights (the summit's second hottest topic after women's rights).

The Clinton administration should clearly state that it is US policy to assist indigenous peoples, particularly in emerging democracies and in nations in which native peoples are either a numerical majority or a significant minority. One promising development came in late January, when the 1993 State Department country reports on human rights featured, for the first time, beefed up coverage of indigenous rights (thanks to legislation sponsored by former senator Alan Cranston [D-CA]).

Where possible, native peoples must be included in sustainable development strategies, particularly those that would enhance the protection of rain forests or other environmental treasures. The Clinton administration should also vigor-



ously champion indigenous interests and concerns within the multilateral development banks and international trade organizations.

As a recent Congressional study on the impact of US foreign assistance shows, the Agency for International Development has done limited work in providing aid to indigenous peoples. US efforts, however, should reach out to meet the special needs of indigenous peoples, rather than hoping they benefit indirectly from programs aimed at rural peoples or the poor. Greater emphasis should be made on programs that facilitate indigenous institution-building and economic empowerment; fortify cultural identity; increase technical and professional training; and strengthen legal rights.

For better or worse, events in southern Mexico have riveted our attention at the point of a gun—albeit a rusty shotgun. Their meaning—the violence, the marginalization, the potential for more resources to be funneled to the security forces and away from the people—needs, however, to be juxtaposed with recent developments in Bolivia. There the newly elected presidential ticket included an indigenous leader whose school-teacher wife still wears the traditional dress—long black braid, multilayered skirt, felt shoes, and a bowler hat—of the Andean Altiplano. The August 1993 inaugural address of vice president Víctor Hugo Cárdenas—whose presence on the ticket was instrumental in achieving President Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada's wide margin of victory—was given not only in Spanish, but also in the native languages of Aymara, Quechua, and Guarani.

"After 500 years of colonial silence and after 168 of republican exclusion, we now speak up to tell our truth," Cárdenas said. "Democracy in a country that is multiethnic, pluricultural, and plurilingual ought also to be multiethnic, pluricultural, and plurilingual. . . . A tree grows from its own roots." ■

## Indian Rights in Latin America

### Guatemala

Indigenous people comprise one-half of the population but remain largely outside the country's political, economic, social and cultural mainstream. Indigenous people suffered most of the serious human rights abuses described throughout this report. . . . Although indigenous people are accorded equal rights by the Constitution, in practice they have only minimal participation in decisions affecting their lands, culture, traditions, and allocation of natural resources. . . .

### Brazil

Brazil's approximately 250,000 Indians, who speak 170 different languages . . . have only a very limited ability to participate in decisions affecting their lands, cultures, traditions, and the allocation of natural resources. . . . [I]ndigenous groups are marginalized from the political process. . . . [I]llegal mining and timber cutting are a constant problem on Indian lands. . . . [T]wo [gold miners] taken into custody [for the murder of 16 Yanomami Indians] were released on December 29 when their trial was delayed owing to difficulty in locating witnesses. There have been no convictions, however, in any previous case involving the murder of Indians. . . .

### Chile

In 1993 Congress passed a law that was drafted by a committee composed of representatives of the various indigenous groups, recognizing the ethnic diversity of the indigenous populations. It replaced a law that emphasized assimilation, and it gives them a greater voice in decisions affecting their lands, cultures and traditions. . . . The population which identifies itself as indigenous (nearly 1 million, according to the 1992 census) remains separated from the rest of society, largely because of historical, cultural, educational, and geographical factors. . . .

### Argentina

The degree to which indigenous peoples participate in the political process, their exercise of civil rights, and the extent of their control over natural resources and land varies widely from one ethnic group to another, and from one region of the country to another. The indigenous population, estimated at 100,000, is concentrated at the northern and southern extremities of the country. . . . In 1987 Congress passed a law designed to return Indian lands. It has yet to be implemented. . . .

### Mexico

The Government encourages indigenous groups, many of which do not speak Spanish, to participate in political life, and it is respectful of their desire to retain elements of their traditional lifestyle. . . . [T]hese groups remain largely outside the country's political and economic mainstream, a result of long-standing patterns of economic and social development, and in many cases their ability to participate in decisions affecting their lands, cultural traditions, and the allocation of natural resources is negligible. At the beginning of 1994, these problems were particularly highlighted by an armed uprising in Chiapas state. . . .

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*Editor's Note: Excerpts from the 1993 State Department country reports on human rights, which for the first time included extensive reporting on the political, economic, and cultural rights of indigenous peoples, as required by the Cranston Amendment.*



# The New Agrarian Reform

by Othón Baños Ramírez

**M**exico's new agrarian reform law was created to end not only the social redistribution of rural properties, but also the intervention of the state in the internal life of the *ejidos* (collectively owned agricultural properties) and rural communities in general. The Mexican government expects that these reforms will stimulate the modernization of the agrarian economy. Undoubtedly the new law, which went into effect in February 1992, inaugurates a new stage in Mexican agrarian policy. Since the revolution of 1910-40, that policy has revolved around the legal regularization of *campesino* ownership of land, a focus that gave rise to the *ejidos*. Today, the *ejidos* number 28,000 and comprise 50% of Mexico's cultivable land.

## The Farm Crisis

Mexico has been facing an agricultural crisis since the 1970s. In response, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has chosen the most practical—and perhaps the only—option: the fundamental transformation of the *ejido* system. Since 1988 Salinas has insisted that “the massive redistribution of rural property has ended. Whoever claims that . . . millions of hectares [remain] to be re-

distributed is lying to the almost two million persons who seek such land and to the more than four million agricultural workers.” The key objectives of his agrarian program are fourfold:

- to ensure the security of property holdings;
- to reverse the growth of small holdings by promoting the establishment of producer associations based on the investment of private capital;
- to reduce government subsidies for agricultural production; and
- to reduce the state's role in agricultural production and commerce, including the dismantling of parastatal agencies in agriculture.

***The new agrarian reform leaves most campesinos extremely vulnerable. It leaves the majority of them without financial credit, forces them to seek wage work, and undermines their political leverage.***

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As part of this process, the Salinas administration has been restructuring the Instituto Mexicano del Café and reorienting the functions of CONASUPO (National Basic Foods Company) and the government's

main institutional linkages with the countryside, the Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos and the Banco Nacional Rural.

The new politics of agrarian reform leaves most *campesinos* extremely vulnerable. For example, in Yucatán, market-oriented reforms in 1990 left many henequen-producing *ejidatarios* without credit and unable to harvest their crop. Moreover, by forcing them to seek wage work on an individual basis, the reform undercut the collective organization that had been the basis of what little political leverage they previously exercised. These serious problems have affected corn, citrus, and vegetable producers as well.

## Preferential Treatment

The government's posture is to give preferential treatment to the most productive *ejidos* (which are located mainly in northern Mexico), at the expense of self-sufficient *ejidos* (located mainly in central Mexico) and poor *ejidos* (which are the majority of *ejidos* nationwide and are located mainly in the south). By providing minimal credit for the cultivation of poor *ejido* land, the government does not promote their productivity, but merely delays the migratory exit of the rural population in the *ejido* communities and maintains its political clientele in the countryside.

In the context of the presidential election of August 1994, the latter is especially crucial given not only the Chiapas rebellion but also the assassination of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's official presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, both which have increased the urgency of maintain-



ing the party's traditional electoral machinery in the provinces. To achieve this objective, the government has increased its social expenditures through its National Solidarity Program, which targets the urban poor, peasants, and indigenous peoples with various development projects for sewage and potable water, health, education, food distribution, electrification, street paving, housing, and soft loans for low-income rural producers.

The new agrarian reform appears favorable to those *ejidos* with the greatest potential for productivity, some of which may be transformed into something like the cattle project of Nuevo León in northern Mexico. In this agro-industrial enterprise involving 336 associated producers, private initiative invested more than \$6 million in *ejido* lands, with profits apparently in excess of \$2 million in 1991. But this highly successful, highly publicized project is a striking exception to the rule. In general the establishment of such complexes of associated producers has been unsuccessful unless the state itself has played an active role. According to many experts, such enterprises are mere fronts for large-scale agricultural land rental by private investors who maintain control over their business operations. Foreign investment under these arrangements has principally occurred through "contract agriculture" in export horticulture.

### Contradictory Reactions

Over the medium and long run the new agrarian law will cause diverse and contradictory reactions according to the specific agricultural setting and product. Focusing on *ejidos*, we can foresee the emergence of an extremely complicated social problem that is intimately tied to Mexico's politics, culture, and economy. The Mexican government recognizes that, of the nation's population of 85 million, at least 41 million persons live in pov-

erty, and of these 17 million live in extreme poverty. Many of the extremely poor are small *ejidatarios*.

***In opening up new market opportunities for Mexican agriculture while failing to prepare or support ejidatarios, the Salinas administration is abandoning thousands of poor campesinos, leaving them with few prospects.***

Two perspectives have emerged concerning the "reform of agrarian reform." An optimistic view affirms that, thanks to the new legislation, more private investment will flow into agriculture, thereby modernizing the sector and boosting its productivity and output. The pessimistic view argues that the new law will cause a massive sale of *ejido* landholdings that will inevitably result in the concentration of rural property in the hands of a small circle of wealthy and powerful owners and accelerate the migration of the countryside's poor people to cities in Mexico and the US. Although it is still too early to tell, neither extreme has yet occurred, though trends suggesting the validity of both sides of the argument have emerged.

With respect to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexican authorities have yet to publicize a coherent plan for preparing the nation's agricultural

sector for competition with the business giants to the north. In theory, the ending of government subsidies, technical support, and other forms of aid to small agricultural producers will be more than compensated by a surge in private domestic and foreign capital, the modernization of technology, and access to larger and more lucrative markets. In the best of cases, however, very few *campesinos* will improve their economic standing. The great majority will become marginalized. Indeed, from the standpoint of government policymakers, traditional *campesinos* pose an obstacle to national economic development. The politics of the new agrarian reform seeks to eliminate this obstacle by transforming traditional *campesinos* into either "small farmers" of the US variety or a cheap, *ejido*-anchored rural labor force for highly capitalized agriculture.

In this setting, the new agrarian reform could lead to the worsening of the socioeconomic polarization of Mexican agriculture and to considerable growth in the political clout of large agricultural enterprises. In opening up new market opportunities for Mexican agriculture while failing to prepare or support *ejidatarios*, the Salinas administration is abandoning thousands of poor *campesinos*, leaving them with few prospects beyond mere survival and turning them into a low-wage subsidy for both modernized agriculture and the manufacturing and service sectors.

The new agrarian reform is integral to a policy of accelerated introduction of advanced methods in agricultural production, thereby preparing Mexico for a new stage of economic development and, through NAFTA, economic integration with the US and Canada. This policy promises greater productivity, but fewer jobs. Poor *campesinos* will end up losing what little they have and, facing even more extreme poverty in the countryside, will exit en masse to the cities—including those cities across the border to the north. ■

# The New Agrarian Reform

by Othón Baños Ramírez

**M**exico's new agrarian reform law was created to end not only the social redistribution of rural properties, but also the intervention of the state in the internal life of the *ejidos* (collectively owned agricultural properties) and rural communities in general. The Mexican government expects that these reforms will stimulate the modernization of the agrarian economy. Undoubtedly the new law, which went into effect in February 1992, inaugurates a new stage in Mexican agrarian policy. Since the revolution of 1910-40, that policy has revolved around the legal regularization of *campesino* ownership of land, a focus that gave rise to the *ejidos*. Today, the *ejidos* number 28,000 and comprise 50% of Mexico's cultivable land.

## The Farm Crisis

Mexico has been facing an agricultural crisis since the 1970s. In response, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has chosen the most practical—and perhaps the only—option: the fundamental transformation of the *ejido* system. Since 1988 Salinas has insisted that “the massive redistribution of rural property has ended. Whoever claims that . . . millions of hectares [remain] to be re-

distributed is lying to the almost two million persons who seek such land and to the more than four million agricultural workers.” The key objectives of his agrarian program are fourfold:

- to ensure the security of property holdings;
- to reverse the growth of small holdings by promoting the establishment of producer associations based on the investment of private capital;
- to reduce government subsidies for agricultural production; and
- to reduce the state's role in agricultural production and commerce, including the dismantling of parastatal agencies in agriculture.

***The new agrarian reform leaves most campesinos extremely vulnerable. It leaves the majority of them without financial credit, forces them to seek wage work, and undermines their political leverage.***

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As part of this process, the Salinas administration has been restructuring the Instituto Mexicano del Café and reorienting the functions of CONASUPO (National Basic Foods Company) and the government's

main institutional linkages with the countryside, the Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos and the Banco Nacional Rural.

The new politics of agrarian reform leaves most *campesinos* extremely vulnerable. For example, in Yucatán, market-oriented reforms in 1990 left many henequen-producing *ejidatarios* without credit and unable to harvest their crop. Moreover, by forcing them to seek wage work on an individual basis, the reform undercut the collective organization that had been the basis of what little political leverage they previously exercised. These serious problems have affected corn, citrus, and vegetable producers as well.

## Preferential Treatment

The government's posture is to give preferential treatment to the most productive *ejidos* (which are located mainly in northern Mexico), at the expense of self-sufficient *ejidos* (located mainly in central Mexico) and poor *ejidos* (which are the majority of *ejidos* nationwide and are located mainly in the south). By providing minimal credit for the cultivation of poor *ejido* land, the government does not promote their productivity, but merely delays the migratory exit of the rural population in the *ejido* communities and maintains its political clientele in the countryside.

In the context of the presidential election of August 1994, the latter is especially crucial given not only the Chiapas rebellion but also the assassination of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's official presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, both which have increased the urgency of maintain-



ing the party's traditional electoral machinery in the provinces. To achieve this objective, the government has increased its social expenditures through its National Solidarity Program, which targets the urban poor, peasants, and indigenous peoples with various development projects for sewage and potable water, health, education, food distribution, electrification, street paving, housing, and soft loans for low-income rural producers.

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# War and Accountability in Guatemala

by Walter Gillis Peacock

## Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala

by David Stoll. Columbia University Press, 1993. \$47.50 cloth; \$17.50 paper.

In Guatemala during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the team of sociologists with which I was doing research was often stopped by the military or national police at unexpected checkpoints in the highlands. Even though field work is always complicated by unanticipated difficulties, these encounters were dangerous with high levels of uncertainty. On one occasion a young officer pulled an extra pistol from the small of his back, moved toward our vehicle, and told us we would give him a ride to the next town and that only Spanish would be spoken. His "request" was not questioned. In these instances, the limited restraint displayed was probably due to our US passports. Unfortunately, no such protection existed for tens of thousands who were subject to the brutal excesses of Guatemala's military during the same period.

In *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*, anthropologist David Stoll has taken up the task of giving a voice to some who were targets of the military's scorched earth policy. Stoll seeks to "reinterpret the recent history of Ixil country in a way more in accord with how the

inhabitants talk about it" (p. xiii). He also wants to remove the romantic surrealism he finds so prevalent in the scholarly literature on guerrilla insurgencies and revolutionary movements, which, along with the solidarity and human rights movements, is influenced by "left-wing mythology." He questions the prevalent "reinterpretations" of the Guatemalan holocaust and its characterization that use terms like "oppression," "rebellion," and "resistance."

**Stoll wants to remove the romantic surrealism he finds so prevalent in the literature on guerrilla insurgencies.**

In attempting to find the "voices" of the Ixil, Stoll worked in areas controlled by the Guatemalan military in and around the towns of Chajul, Cotzal, and Nebaj, where he lived from October 1988 to September 1989. He interviewed village representatives, "religious leaders, labor contractors, and other groups of interest," and surveyed 164 Ixil leaders or entrepreneurs and 98 household heads in an outlying neighborhood of Nebaj that "absorbed many refugees from destroyed *aldeas* [villages]" (p. 13). While acknowledging potential selectivity bias because he could not interview any of the tens of thousands who had been killed or disap-

peared and did not interview any of the more than 12,000 Ixils living in "communities of population in resistance," Stoll maintains that his data provide insight into why the military won the war, why the revolutionary movement failed in the western highlands in particular, and "how outsiders project their agendas into peasant populations, how political violence emerges, and how non-combatants respond to it" in Guatemala and other parts of the world (p. 14).

## The Scorched Earth Policy

After listening to these voices, Stoll's conclusions challenge revisionist accounts of the violence that hold that it was yet another in the long history of attempts by highland Indians to improve themselves and assert their human rights, and of brutal attacks by the military to suppress those popular movements. As Stoll notes, "to discourage Ixil farmers for helping the guerrillas, the army burned down all hamlets and homesteads outside the three towns. At first in reaction to guerrilla ambushes, then by plan, army units shot, hacked, or burned to death thousands of unarmed men, women, and children" (p. 4). For Stoll, the entire blame for the army's scorched earth policy and unspeakable brutality must be laid squarely at the feet of the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP). He maintains "the only reason the army attacked Ixils was to get at the EGP" (p. 20).

Furthermore, he suggests that the EGP was neither a popular nor indigenous movement that captured the aspirations of Ixils, suggesting instead the existence of a "gap between revolutionary politics

Walter Gillis Peacock is an associate professor of sociology at Florida International University. He is the co-author (with Frederick L. Bates) of *Living Conditions, Disasters, and Development: An Approach to Cross-Cultural Comparisons* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993).



on the national level and the politics of the western highlands, that is, between the ladino-dominated Left and Mayan Indians" (p. 89). While the EGP was operating in Ixil country in the early 1970s, Stoll discounts Ixil involvement as limited, consisting of only "militants" and disillusioned radical students. It was "only after EGP military units appeared, ambushed soldiers, and provoked wider reprisals against the population did thousands of Ixils join their revolutionary movement, to protect themselves from the army" (p. 88). Despite his own reckoning that the majority of EGP combatants are Ixils, that they are central to the command structure, and that as many as 17,000 Ixils remain in EGP controlled areas, the fact the EGP did not spontaneously arise among Ixils precludes its claiming the label "popular," and, in the final analysis, any claim of legitimacy.

### Defining Moment

Stoll's analysis of the violence is quite narrow in both temporal and spatial considerations. While mentioning the history of Indian suppression and that the Ixils were ruled by a police state, 1975 becomes the defining moment, the starting point, for his analysis because it was the year of the first EGP raids. It appears that Stoll considers the state's actions so out of character, if not in form then certainly in magnitude, that something must have provoked its action. What came before is of little or no relevance in his analysis. In addition, what occurred or occurs outside the confines of Ixil country is of little relevance, except that this boundary defines the EGP as an external,

nonindigenous, and hence illegitimate movement that corrupted the Ixils. The fact the military might also be considered illegitimate by the same criterion is not considered or questioned.

***Guatemala's Indians  
have not played  
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country's revolutionary  
movements.***

Stoll is at his best within the temporal and spatial boundaries that he sets. It has long been noted that Guatemala's Indians have not played central roles in revolutionary movements and their use of structures originally imposed upon them, such as the *cofradía* (religious brotherhood), to define their own sphere of control or "civil society" is also well documented. Stoll has added to these themes by capturing how Ixils have responded to "the violence by manufacturing a new kind of neutralism for themselves and recreating institutional space to make their own choice" (p. 13). He documents the relationship between the military and remaining Ixils, the emergence of the civil patrols, the growth and spread of evangelical Protestantism, and the use of evangelicalism and the civil patrols as mechanisms for establishing a reformulated civil society. Furthermore, his accounts of the ebb and flow of Ixil support

for the EGP and the perspectives of Ixils under military control should be read by all students of revolution and social movements.

### Multiple Realities

Conversely Stoll is at his worst in placing the violence of Ixil country in the larger historical and contemporary setting of Guatemala. In perhaps the most poignant statement that captures both the strengths and weaknesses of the book, Stoll notes, "While Ixils . . . have not adopted the army's point of view, they do accept its definition of what is possible . . . because it is corroborated by their own experience of the realities of power" (p. 164). Stoll has done an impressive job of connecting us with the realities of Guatemala, from the perspective of the Ixils who have remained or returned (either by force or choice) to the "old law" of an oppressive state. Nonetheless, as social scientists, can or should we stop there? In the world of multiple realities, all of which are shaped by social forces, Stoll's acceptance of this single world view results in large elements of his book seemingly apologizing for the Guatemalan military. The military—through its domination of remaining Ixils—has defined for Stoll not only what is possible, but the justification for eradicating tens of thousands of men, women, and children. The legitimacy of the military is never questioned; it is a given.

The Nicaraguan revolution, the massive infusion of development programs into the highlands following the 1976 earthquake, and the removal of political restraints by the Reagan administration are but a few of the other factors that must

be considered when addressing the violence in the western highlands of Guatemala. For example, the military was fearful that the successes of the Sandinistas—which followed a major natural disaster like Guatemala's—would be played out again, this time in Guatemala. Following the earthquake, state officials, unable to meet massive reconstruction and emergency needs and under foreign pressure to avoid a repeat of Somoza's extraordinary corruption and ineptitude, granted international agencies a free hand at establishing their programs. That free hand was severed by the military coup of the early 1980s, and its imprints were being wiped out throughout the highlands and the city as development programs were forced to close and grassroots reconstruction committees were targeted for death. Clearly the EGP and Ixil country were targeted for particularly brutal attention in part because the EGP represented a visi-

ble threat and was symbolic of the state's loss of control. Yet it was but part of a wave of oppression and destruction that occurred throughout the country. For Stoll to lay the blame exclusively at the feet of the EGP is an extraordinarily short-sighted oversimplification.

### The Chiapas Comparison

This review is being written at the same time that the Mexican government is negotiating with the Zapatista guerrillas in Chiapas, just across the border from Guatemala. Many of the same arguments voiced by Stoll are being heard, such as that the Zapatistas are not really an indigenous group, that their leaders are not really Indians, and that they do not represent Indian aspirations. I am sure Stoll would question the characterization of the Zapatistas as a "popular" force. Prior to the success of their January 1 military action, it probably would

have been difficult to find overwhelming popular support for the guerrillas among Indians; 10 years from now one may well have difficulty finding a majority that supported the Zapatistas, except among "militants," "ex-combatants," or "disillusioned radicals." It is doubtful, however, that many will question the legitimacy of the Zapatista claims.

Let's hope that an apologetic account of why tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children were killed, just so the military could "get at" the Zapatista guerrillas, will not need to be written. The Mexican state is no stranger to the use of military force. Still, the fact that Mexico's state leadership derives its legitimacy from popular and revolutionary ideology means that political and social reform is likely to play a much greater role in state-Indian relations in Chiapas than it has in Guatemala. ■

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# Love-Death among the Guerrillas

by David Stoll

## Bridge of Courage: Life Stories of the Guatemalan Compañeros and Compañeras

by Jennifer Harbury. Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 1993.

In September 1992 a North American lawyer went on a week-long hunger strike outside an army base in Guatemala City. Armed with a novel, Jennifer Harbury camped in front of a grim fortress where secret prisoners are said to rot in underground cells. Inspections of the interior yielded nothing, but Harbury, like thousands of other women in Guatemala, wanted to know what the army had done with her husband.

Harbury's spouse is one of thousands of Guatemalans who, since the late 1960s, have "disappeared" in the hands of the country's security forces. Efraín Bamaca Velásquez—better known as "Comandante Everardo"—belonged to the Organización del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA), one of four small guerrilla armies in the Unión Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The struggle dates back to 1954, when the CIA overthrew an elected government challenging US interests. Ever since, Guatemala has been dominated by its army, and North Americans drawn to this Central American country have struggled with a profound sense of guilt. Some of us have embarked on political journeys like Harbury's.

David Stoll, an anthropologist, is the author of *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala* (Columbia University Press, 1993).

A Harvard law school graduate from Texas, she is far from the first gringo to become romantically involved with a Central American revolution. But she may be the first to have written a book about her experiences, and it is a candid one. Mainly a collection of testimonials from active and former combatants, *Bridge of Courage* leaves readers with powerful impressions of how brutal the security forces can be, and of the courage required to oppose them. I was left with an additional reaction, however, because of my experience with a different slice of Guatemalan life than the one in which Harbury immersed herself. For me as an anthropologist, the stories in the book call into question the ethics of guerrilla warfare.

**Harbury is far from the first gringo to become romantically involved with a Central American revolution.**

Of mounting raids and then disappearing, blurring the distinction between combatants and civilians, so that those who remain behind to face the army's rage are bewildered bystanders. Of setting up front groups that implicate wider circles of people, many of them unknowing. Of demanding civil guarantees from the same system you are trying to overthrow through armed struggle. And of continuing the war in the face of what I and

many other observers (although not Harbury) take to be widespread popular disillusion with it.

## "Bodyguard" on the Edge

Harbury's first contact with Guatemala was working with illegal immigrants petitioning for political asylum in the US. Frustrated by judicial rejection of her clients, she went to Guatemala to track down human rights testimony for them. Before long, Harbury was also an unarmed "bodyguard" for Guatemalans in danger of being kidnapped, and this soon led to contacts with the clandestine support networks of ORPA. That is, she was on the periphery of one of the underground military organizations whose activities have, for nearly 30 years, strengthened the Guatemalan army's rationale for building up a national security state.

At first, Harbury collected the stories of guerrilla cadres who survived the army's destruction of their urban safehouses, and of human rights activists being tracked down by the army with equal mercilessness. Their memories were so heart-rending that she headed for the mountains to interview combatants. It was during these visits that she met one of the first Mam Mayan Indians to join ORPA, Comandante Everardo, whom she married only months before he disappeared amid a fire fight in March 1992. When Harbury demanded to know what had happened to her husband, the army claimed he had killed himself to avoid capture—a not implausible scenario as many guerrillas had opted for suicide over capture. But Harbury was determined to confirm this claim and pressed to have his body exhumed.

The body turned out to be someone else's. Meanwhile, an escaped prisoner reported seeing a severely battered Everardo at an army base where captured guerrillas are "re-programmed" to join government death squads.

Hence, it is not surprising that Harbury's campaign to make the army observe the Geneva conventions has gotten a warm response from many Guatemalans. But is Harbury correct when stating that many Guatemalans want the URNG to keep fighting? And is supporting armed struggle the only alternative for the Guatemalan left, as she also seems to assume?

Consider for a moment the case of Santiago Atitlán, a town that used to be a hotbed of ORPA recruiting in the early 1980s. To defend themselves from army depredations, in 1990 the Atitecos forced the army to close its base. Then they asked ORPA to stay away, too. Their success in mobilizing human rights support, and the growing presence of human rights activists like Harbury, suggests that guerrilla warfare is not the only option for Guatemalans.

Contrary to the claim made by Harbury and others that repression is getting worse, the army has, in fact, been forced to scale back its abuses under the weight of domestic as well as international pressure. During a constitutional crisis in 1992, the officer corps divided, permitting the election of Guatemala's human rights ombudsman as president. While President Ramiro de León Carpio has been forced to acquiesce to army demands since then, new groups demanding their rights continue to emerge from civil society.

No doubt because of Harbury's harsh experiences—she describes the death of one friend after another—her book fails to acknowledge how Guatemala has changed since the early 1980s, instead submerging important issues in the potent image of the love-death. The reasons go beyond her own tragic union with Comandante Everardo,

and probably beyond anything you will find in the scholarly literature on guerrilla movements.

Long ago ORPA stopped trying to ban romantic love among its militants, many of whom are women. If Harbury's stories are representative, as I believe they are, love—comradely as well as romantic—has been one of the mainsprings of revolutionary movement, sharpened by the probability that courtships and friendships will end in early death. Again and again, Harbury tells the story of a romance cut short by sacrifice for the revolution, the most recent being that of her husband. As for the friendships that ended this way, they are countless.

*Love—comradely as well as romantic—has been a mainspring of revolutionary movement, creating a martyr's mythology.*

Like nothing else I have read, Harbury's stories explain why militants accept the probability of an early and often horrible demise. But solidarity activists should beware of the resulting ideology of martyrdom that pervades both the guerrilla armies of the URNG and the popular organizations allied with them. The living feel an obligation to continue the armed struggle that has taken so many of their comrades, but martyrs can no longer speak, and their memory can be used to avoid reassessing strategies that they might now want to change.

Yet, what if Harbury is right, that broad masses of Guatemalans sup-

port guerrilla warfare, but are simply afraid to say how they feel? After all, understanding how people feel in a repressed society is not an easy task. My own approach, as a researcher rather than an activist, was to live in a Mayan area that was a guerrilla stronghold at the start of the 1980s. This area was harshly repressed by the army and now claims to be neutral.

How do I know if my sources tell me how they really feel? There is no way to know with absolute certainty, but the willingness of so many of them to damn both the army and the guerrillas convinced me that, when they say they want the war to stop as soon as possible, I have to take their statements at face value. The cost of protracted war is too immediate and the hypothetical benefits of lengthy negotiations too remote for people whose daily struggle to exist continues to be complicated by the URNG as well as the army.

Outside the organized left, it is easier to find Guatemalans who place their hopes in emigration to the US, or personal religious conversion, or even international human rights observers, than in heroic figures like Comandante Everardo. One reason is that, when guerrillas draw soldiers in hot pursuit, they often failed to protect civilians from the army's reprisals. Survivors get their "consciousness raised," but this includes the realization that, had the guerrillas never appeared, their loved ones would probably still be alive.

Significantly, Harbury's voices are all from the revolutionary vanguard, not from the many bystanders who never asked the guerrillas to attack the army on their doorstep and who have suffered so many of the casualties. As a result, her testimonies fail to capture the many nuances of suspicion and anger as well as sympathy that non-activists feel toward the guerrillas. Guerrillaphile North Americans (including myself, until recently) need to recognize that casting one's lot with a guerrilla movement



makes it harder to see how little support there often is for it—if not in the full flush of revolutionary mobilization, then later as armed struggle becomes as interminable as trench warfare.

In all of Latin America, only Colombia has bled from a longer civil war, and there the left is deeply divided over whether to continue armed struggle. Unfortunately, this debate has yet to come out of the closet on the Guatemalan left, even though the guerrillas are too weak to extract significant concessions from the army and vow to continue fighting until they do—hence the ever-stalemate peace talks that, since 1991, have failed to produce an agreement.

### Unarmed Scapegoats

Meanwhile, URNG ambushes do not increase the Guatemalan security forces' respect for the law. To the contrary, guerrilla attacks strengthen army hard-liners who oppose making any concessions to the left. When there was no chance of extracting due process from the out-of-control military dictatorships of the 1970s and early 1980s, this may not have been so important. But now that more political space has opened up, armed struggle reinforces the Guatemalan army's rationale for dominating national life. When guerrillas attack the army in proximity to peaceful protests, unarmed activists become endangered scapegoats.

Unlike Harbury, I do not believe the URNG has gained much ground in the last three years of peace talks. Even though the URNG has probably given more ground than the government, both sides have come to look intransigent. Occasionally, my Mayan interviewees wonder if the two sides are working together to keep everyone else under the gun.

That peace talks started at all was due less to URNG's domestic strength than to international pressure on the government. Unfortunately, international pressure has been unable to break the para-

doxical convergence of interests between the two armed groups. Subversion justifies a counterinsurgency state, and the army's human rights abuses justify the URNG's armed resistance. Each side's activities provide powerful rationales for the other's, permitting both to impose their priorities on the rest of the society, much of which does not feel represented by either.

The Mayan peasants with whom I talk cannot see the point of the URNG continuing the war, and as a result neither can I. Giving up the armed struggle for little in return may still be unthinkable for most of the Guatemalan left, but if it ever wants to organize broadly again, it may have to do just that.

Captured guerrillas like Comandante Everardo have every right to international safeguards. Harbury's campaign is a courageous one that deserves the support of the larger human rights community. She has increased international pressure on the army by publicizing how it treats its prisoners. Yet, now that

more political space exists, activists cannot ignore the contradictions between working for human rights and supporting armed struggle—that is, demanding that a government respect due process while implicitly supporting armed attacks on its agents.

*Bridge of Courage* suggests the close ties that can develop between human rights work and support for a guerrilla movement, and how international activism can become a substitute for grassroots domestic support. Guatemalans want their rights and deserve more international support than they are getting. It is important, however, to discern between the demand for human rights as a plea for due process and the call for those same rights as a justification for an insurgency that is going nowhere. ■

*Editor's Note: The "Where is Everardo?" campaign can be contacted at P.O. Box 650054, Austin, Texas 78765; (512) 473-7149.*

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## Chiapas in the Wider World

by Marian Goslinga

**T**he unexpected emergence of an armed insurrection in Mexico on January 1, 1994—the first day the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect—has brought to the fore not only the growing vulnerability and the loss of legitimacy of Mexico's ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional but also the limits of popular tolerance for economic reform. Named for Emiliano Zapata—the legendary figure of the Mexican revolution who fought for land reform and *campesino* rights under the banner "Tierra o libertad"—the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional is primarily made up of peasants who are demanding a host of democratic reforms.

The state of Chiapas is the poorest and most backward in Mexico. According to the 1990 census, 26% of the state's 3.2 million inhabitants speak no Spanish and identify themselves as Indians rather than as Mexicans. To restore peace and a sense of national unity, the Mexican government must not only implement social and political reforms in Chiapas but extend the reforms on a national basis.

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Marian Goslinga is the Latin American and Caribbean librarian at Florida International University.



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