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Hemisphere's Inaugural Issue: The Readers Respond

Hemisphere seems to be one of those rare initiatives that fills a unique niche. It promises to become indispensable almost immediately. It manages somehow to be punchy, thoughtful, and exciting at the same time. I'll look forward to the next issue. Everyone here found something he or she wanted to read in the first one!

Alex Wilde
Director, Washington Office on Latin America

This first issue has established Hemisphere as mandatory reading for those concerned with Latin American and Caribbean affairs. Alert to contemporary trends, the magazine succeeds in combining the readability of a weekly news journal with the analytical rigor of the academic literature. Comprehensive in its geographic and thematic coverage, Hemisphere provides a venue where many different points of view can be aired. Recognizing that no perspective has a monopoly of the truth is a first step towards achieving the elusive goal of understanding the direction in which our hemisphere is moving.

Sergio Diaz-Briquets
Research Director, Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development
Washington, DC

Hemisphere is very interesting reading on the sort of subjects that are right down my alley. The production is also of a very high standard.

Geoffrey Barcant
Managing Director, Smith, Robertson & Co. Ltd.
Trinidad, WI

The following commentary is excerpted from a feature editorial on Hemisphere's inaugural issue, in El Nuevo Herald (November 3, 1988). The readers would be better equipped to analyze the ideas presented and reach their own conclusions on [Central America] if opposing points of view appeared in the same issue. This is especially true for a magazine that is published only three times a year. Given such long interludes, any magazine that contains only one position on an issue cannot achieve the balance necessary for arriving at just and correct conclusions. Hemisphere's first issue suffers from this defect.

Roberto Suárez
Editor, El Nuevo Herald
Miami, FL

How lucky we are to have Andres Oppenheimer (“Cuba to the Aid of Noriega?”) to assure us that the presence of Cubans in Panama is not something the US should be concerned about.

Does it matter that the New York Times reported that General Noriega is relying on agents from Cuba's notorious America Department to counsel him on standing up to US pressure and bolstering his domestic power? Oppenheimer's report propagates the myth that Fidel Castro has forsaken his subversive and violent policies of the past in order to "mend fences" with the countries of Latin America. I dare say no evidence exists whatsoever that this is so.

Whether it is one Cuban or one thousand in Panama, we can rest assured Cuba's mission is to contravene US policy, further isolate the US from Latin America, and perpetuate the bloody spiral of violence that plagues the hemisphere. This is nothing to scoff at.

José R. Cárdenas
Director of Research and Publications
Cuban American National Foundation
Washington, DC

Congratulations from a severe and discerning critic for your head start in publishing Hemisphere. I liked it very much, even though I disagreed with about 65 percent of the writers—especially Carlos Monge's "The Political Eclipse of Mario Vargas Llosa," which I sense is sheer fantasy/wishful thinking.

In addition, Andres Oppenheimer's "Cuba to the Aid of Noriega?" misses the point. The real story is Noriega's aid to Cuba in the matter of drugs, a story that has grown steadily and disarmingly over the years.

Jack H. Vaughn
Senior Advisor in Natural Resources and Environmental Management
ROCAP/USAID
Guatemala

Hemisphere will no doubt fill a vacuum in the Caribbean because of its mix of serious journalism and readable academic writing.

Carlos A. Romero
President, Asociación Venezolana de Estudios del Caribe

I hope you are very proud of Hemisphere. The breadth of the first issue's content is impressive. It is a first-rate magazine.

Lynne C. Rienner
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
Boulder, CO
Below is a brief review that I will share with the several libraries with which I am associated, as well as the New England Council for Latin American Studies, the New England Journal of History, and the New England Historical Association. "... This is a newly-established journal that has come off the presses in full stride—an 'adult birth': mature, confident, outspoken, balanced. I recommend Hemisphere enthusiastically as a source for students, instructors, or anyone who wishes to inform him/herself on Latin America and the Caribbean."

James J. Harrington
Chair, Social Studies Department
Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District
Bridgewater, MA

You are off to a great start and have responded to a clear need for a broad variety of topical articles. The first issue reflects the high quality of the contributors and the relevance of the subject matter. I will be looking forward to each issue.

Ambler H. Moss Jr.
Dean, Graduate School in International Studies
University of Miami

Hemisphere is beautifully produced and forward looking, with impressive articles. I read Anthony P. Main- got's editorial on new Caribbean politics, and wish I had the power to make it compulsory reading for all Caribbean leaders—not just business people and politicians but educators and the press.

Sir Philip Sherlock
Executive Vice President, Caribbean Resources Development Foundation
Miami, FL

Congratulations on a fine first issue, an excellent balance of opinion and analysis, and a very wide range of issues covered with exemplary competence. I would love to contribute some time soon.

Tom J. Farer
Director of Law and International Affairs
The American University

Congratulations! I currently subscribe to a number of foreign affairs journals, but I found your publication much more useful and interesting than most of the others. It is a pleasure to see "think pieces" and feature articles by some of my colleagues (Andres Oppenheimer, Bernard Diederich), as well as scholarly works in such a publication. The focus on Latin America and the Caribbean is automatically of interest to me. But it is the quality of the contents that makes Hemisphere a welcome item in the mail box.

Greg Flakus
Chief Correspondent, Voice of America

Congratulations on your first issue of Hemisphere. I was very impressed with its contents. I hope you continue to maintain the same high standard in future issues.

Victor Bulmer-Thomas
Professor of Economics
Queen Mary College
University of London

Bravo! Hemisphere is most impressive—informative, handsome, a fine mix of topics and range of viewpoints.

Judith Vecchione
Executive Producer,
WGBH/Educational Foundation
Boston, MA

On behalf of the editors of the Inter-American Review of Bibliography, I wish to express to you my warmest congratulations for Hemisphere, which is an excellent addition to the literature on our region. The caliber of the contributors, the diversity of their perspectives, and the sponsorship of Florida International University and its focal geographical location, are assets that all readers will deeply appreciate.

The content of the first issue adequately reflects Hemisphere's goal: "a magazine of interest and quality."

Celso Rodriguez
Editor, Inter-American Review of Bibliography
Washington, DC

Congratulations on the publication of Hemisphere. It is a balanced, fair-minded issue. The interview with Leslie Manigat is a coup in itself.

Irving Louis Horowitz
Distinguished Professor
Rutgers University

Editor's Note: Articles from Hemisphere's inaugural issue (Fall 1988) have been reprinted or extensively discussed in the following publications: Commodities Report (September 15), Latin American Weekly Report (September 22), El Nuevo Herald (November 3 and 15), The Orlando Sentinel (December 4), and Trinidad and Tobago Review (December).

Hemisphere welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, and may be submitted in English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. All letters are subject to editing for clarity and length. Please address letters to the Deputy Editor, Hemisphere, Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University, University Park, Miami, FL 33199; FAX (305) 554-3593.

Hemisphere Winter 1989
New Geopolitical Realities

by Anthony P. Maingot

Geopolitics, the influence of geography on politics, continues to be central to any analysis of US-Caribbean Basin relations. The nature of the problems and opportunities presented by geographical proximity do change, however.

Only a decade ago the Caribbean Basin was blanketed by the rhetoric of ideological confrontation and revolutionary challenge, as well as by the predictable Great Power responses. Why this is no longer so is not hard to discern. Ideological fervor has served neither side well, as the Jamaican case illustrates. Neither Michael Manley's "politics of principle" of 1976-80 nor Edward Seaga's version of Reaganomics has made any difference to the Jamaican masses. The reduced price of oil and the end of the North American recession, as it affected the tourist trade and the price of bauxite and alumina, have much more to do with the Jamaican economy's recent slight improvement than with ideological formulations. The Jamaican electorate made this clear on February 9, when it reelected Manley. This appearance, therefore, of one of the candidates presented by Anthony P. Maingot

A Club of Pragmatists

Manley will join Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela—and possibly that other veteran of Caribbean electoral politics, Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic—in something of a club of ex-presidents. Manley and Pérez continue to be vice presidents of the social-democratic Socialist International. Bosch, after leaving the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano, shifted strongly to the left, but then moved closer to the center as he became a truly viable candidate. All three figures promise to restore diplomatic relations with Cuba. It remains to be seen, however, whether these will be "normal" state-to-state relations—devoid, thus, of unorthodoxies such as "internationalist" party-to-party agreements and Third World "vanguardisms." Reason and logic say they should.

Nothing, in the Caribbean or in the international community, justifies 1970s-type adventures. Manley, for one, seems to have understood this. Before a Miami audience of bankers and business people he was adamant: "...we do not ever intend again to allow the relationship with Cuba to become internally divisive or a source of trouble with Washington." No one expects a reappearance, therefore, of one of the amazing features of Jamaica's turn to the left in the late 1970s: the influential role played by the communist Workers' Party of Jamaica and its intellectual leader, Dr. Trevor Munroe. The suspicion that they represented a minute part of the electorate was verified in 1986 when—in the party's first outing as an independent movement—it received 0.2 percent of the vote. The ideologically-charged atmosphere, which gave such groups relevance in the Caribbean, is gone.

By emphasizing a pragmatic foreign policy towards the US and Cuba, the new Caribbean leadership will be presenting both Washington and Havana an opportunity to reduce regional tensions. They can all turn then to addressing the fundamental concerns shared by nearly all who border the Caribbean Sea.

Two of these are critical in the short term: immigration and corruption.

Immigration

Immigration is not a new phenomenon in the Caribbean region. Whether it is migration to the US or to other areas of employment opportunity in the region, Caribbean peoples have moved, adjusted, and prospered. The countries of the Caribbean face an economic dilemma. On the one hand, they need a migration outlet for their work forces, which are growing faster than any of the Caribbean's economies. On the other hand, the countries can ill afford to lose their technical and professional people.

The brain drain hurts these developing economies in two ways. First, because education, right through professional training, is invariably free, the brain drain represents a subsidy to the developed countries. In 1982, for instance, 50 percent of the 1977-80 graduates of Jamaica's training institutions had migrated. The costs of training these migrants, according to Jamaica's National Planning Agency in 1982, was $348 million. The Agency made a political point when it compared that amount to the $84 million in US loans and grants received by Jamaica, 83 percent of which had gone for loan financing.

Second, these countries are losing the technical and managerial skills that are essential to their ongoing transition from raw-material production to manufacturing and the provision of services. For example, what employment benefits have
Trinidad derived from the millions invested in its steel industry (ISCOTT), when it has had to hire managers, first from Germany and now from India? And this at a time when thousands of educated Trinidadians are entering Canada with the outrageous claim that they are "refugees" suffering political and racial discrimination. Throughout the region hospitals are short of nurses, skilled managers are at a premium, and the promising tourist industries are losing their chefs to the booming cruise-ship business.

Calls on the US and Canada to set limits on the number of visas granted to certain technical occupations will not work. Caribbean people regard migration as a fundamental human right and will not tolerate state interference with that right. The situation calls for bilateral attention.

**Corruption**

Corruption, the other matter in need of immediate attention, is no longer an issue of mere personal greed. Corruption has become so rampant and brazen that it is distorting development and eroding confidence in the Caribbean's democratic institutions. Much of the problem is fueled by the drug trade, but it precedes the arrival of this noxious new commodity. Not unlike the brain drain, corruption represents another subsidy to the metropolitan centers of the world.

A case now making headlines in Trinidad illustrates this fact of "reverse development flows." Just as Trinidad is seeking a standby loan from the International Monetary Fund for $120 million, it has been revealed that the late John O'Halloran, a former minister of Petroleum and Mines and intimate of then-prime minister Eric Williams, left a fortune estimated at Can.$500 million. Needless to say, little, if any, of the money was invested in Trinidad. It was all plowed into Canadian shopping centers, office buildings, and housing projects. Piece by piece, a firm of Canadian "forensic accountants" has provided a record of secret commissions on an array of projects upon which Trinidad launched its "independence" from foreign domination: the oil industry, the airline, infrastructural projects, even the race track. Also linked to the payoffs was Francis ("Boysie") Prevatt, the longstanding chairman of the then-ruling People's National Movement (PNM) and a man often appointed acting prime minister whenever Williams absented himself from the island.

The degree to which the local taxpayers subsidized foreign interests is evident in reading the testimony of an American executive who negotiated an oil contract with the Trinidad government. The $2 million in bribes, he noted, was "a good deal ... a trifling amount in relation to the long-term benefits to a small company [Tesoro]." Indeed, based on its "killing" in Trinidad, Tesoro went on to become a Texas oil company of respectable size. There is much more to be revealed, as any Trinidad entrepreneur will tell you. Word is that what has been publicized so far about government hobot (graft) is just the tip of the iceberg.

A 1987 muckraking documentary by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation embarrassed the Trinidad government into taking action before the Canadian courts. Is this foreign "intervention" in the island's affairs? Not to the people in the street who welcome Canadian help in this case.

The issue of seeking foreign help to deal with corruption in independent countries raises many ticklish questions about sovereignty and extraterritoriality. The issue is not limited to North-South relations, as evident in the unfolding insider-trading scandal involving the purchase of American National Can Company by the French state-owned Pechiney, S.A., for five times the original market value of the shares. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) revealed the scandal, using the well-named "RICO" (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization) Act. The scandal reaches right into the French cabinet. The SEC's involvement, states one French stock analyst, "has preempted our usual means of burying political scandals."

The complexities of tracing dirty money are enormous and often beyond the reach of small states. The sheer volume of transactions creates a great gray area in which legal and illegal funds get easily confused. In 1987 $25.6 billion—onethird of the total market transactions of US securities—were purchased and sold abroad. Billions more of foreign moneys are invested directly in US businesses and real estate while even more goes into the offshore banks.

Geography has made the Caribbean a neighbor of the world's most powerful economy. Money and human talent flow northward like a river defying all geographical conventions. In between, there are a dozen islands with hundreds of "offshore" operations to facilitate the minority bent on an illegitimate passage. It is time to set some of these items on the agenda of the new leaders in Washington and the Caribbean.
Forging Consensus

by Mark B. Rosenberg

At his confirmation hearings in January, Secretary of State James A. Baker said, with reference to Latin America, "I don't see an issue coming to us any quicker than this one. It's going to be right on our doorstep when we take office."

As pointed out in The Third Century: US-Latin American Policy Choices for the 1990s (Washington, DC, 1988), the Bush administration faces "an avalanche of tactical Latin American decisions." Early progress is imperative for the amelioration of Mexico's debt crisis, a prelude to a summit with other debtor nations. Meanwhile, Central America remains a stern test for US policymakers: the Arias peace plan, US-Nicaraguan relations, and elections in El Salvador continue to generate divisiveness and paralysis. The Bush administration faces these problems in a context of Latin American impatience and frustration over US foreign policy. Regional complaints focus on Washington's penchant for paternalism and its inattention to basic matters of economic recovery and multilateral consultation.

What is needed is a fresh, more responsive US approach to Latin American affairs. The key is to forge a consensus in Washington around three critical issues: national security, antidrug policy, and the debt crisis.

National Security

The fundamental concepts of "threat" and "national interest" must be defined: What are the security concerns of the US in Latin America? How can they best be addressed, balancing objectives against means? Can they be publicly debated and congressionally mandated?

Soviet and Cuban interference in Latin America is still perceived by many as the major threat to US security in the region. This view, however, underplays the importance of a wide array of entrenched problems. These include the impact of the debt burden on government, economy, and living standards; rampant corruption; weak and overburdened justice systems; and a deteriorating natural environment.

The key is to forge a consensus in Washington around three critical issues: national security, antidrug policy, and the debt crisis.

Antidrug Policy

The US needs to recognize that it confronts a national crisis of drug abuse, exacerbated by the spread of crack cocaine. US narco-diplomacy and drug-eradication campaigns have little credibility in Latin America, given the hesitant efforts in the US to curb the nation's demand for illicit drugs.

Supply and demand are related. To expect help from Latin Americans before the US initiates major antidrug efforts is to invite bilateral cynicism and tensions. The Bush administration's appointment of William Bennett, former secretary of education, to the new post of "drug czar" is a sign of growing US maturity. Bennett's nationwide ties with educators promise to direct serious attention to the demand side of international drug trafficking.

Debt Crisis

The magnitude of the Latin American debt makes it a matter of both finance and security. Yet, as Henry Kissinger stated, "The dominant view in the US government and the major banks still denies that there is an emergency" (Washington Post, January 11, 1989).

The debt problem calls for urgent, high-level response. US banks have proven incapable of rising above their short-term interests to concert a reasonable debt strategy for their Latin American clients. Furthermore, US manufacturers have allowed the banks to define the agenda, thereby losing millions of dollars in exports to the debt-constricted markets of the Americas. It is time for the US government to fill the void by providing an inter-American forum for the development of policy options.

Making It Work

During the Reagan years, excessive partisanship and preoccupation with Nicaragua led to disjointed US policy toward Latin America. To avoid this trap the Bush administra-
tion must begin laying the groundwork for bipartisan foreign policy. This approach demands that the government's executive and legislative branches work together to define a shared agenda concerning the principal objectives and the means to achieve them.

For example, if the US seeks to continue encouraging Latin American democratization, a thorough interagency review of the matter needs to be carried out. Simultaneously the Department of State needs to coordinate its activities with Congress. A close relationship is especially necessary in light of the upcoming debates on war powers, intelligence oversight, and the micromanagement of foreign policy.

On Capitol Hill the legacy of intense partisanship means that policy coherence will be hard to obtain. The task of overcoming this legacy calls for a special effort to avoid the Reagan-era antagonism that characterized relations between Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams and House and Senate leadership. The new assistant secretary not only must know Latin America; knowledge of Capitol Hill and good working relations with both political parties are also essential. In addition the assistant secretary must speak to the "parochial" interests of congressional districts. Members of Congress and their staffs must also address the links between their constituencies and Latin American affairs.

Coordination among the foreign-affairs staffers on Capitol Hill would further promote policy coherence. In practice the staffers wield considerable influence. They lay out policy alternatives, monitor their executive-branch counterparts, and serve as quasi-diplomats when receiving foreign dignitaries at home and traveling abroad. As information sources for the media, they help to set the news agenda on foreign affairs. Knowledgeable Latin Americans aim much of their lobbying energy at the staffers.

Perhaps most important, executive leadership must smooth the way to improved relations with Latin America. This role is crucial in view of the ascendancy of populist politicians in the region, like President Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela. Such politicians can serve either to cement US-Latin American cooperation or to undermine prospects for a common inter-American agenda. President Bush's longstanding interest in Mexico is a reassuring sign that he and his advisors will be sensitive to the concerns of Pérez and his counterparts.

A bipartisan spirit is needed in Washington. If finger-pointing, excessive partisanship, and a "we-told-you-so" attitude persist, then US-Latin American relations will continue to suffer.
A Year of Elections

by Don Bohning

One of the biggest electoral demonstrations in recent Latin American history is taking place in 1989, as voters in eight countries elect new governments. The wave of elections tests the region's democratic trend and poses potential new policy dilemmas for the Bush administration. In addition to the Latin American contests, there could be as many as six national elections in the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Venezuela provided a preview of Latin America's 1989 electoral parade December 4, when it overwhelmingly elected former president Carlos Andrés Pérez, the candidate of the Democratic Action Party, to a five-year term as the country's chief executive. The results of both the Venezuelan election and a November 15 municipal vote in Brazil also offered a hint of the emerging nationalistic populism that may confront the new US administration.

The first Latin American election of 1989 is scheduled for March in El Salvador. It is followed in May by elections in Panama, Bolivia, and Argentina. Brazil, Uruguay, and Honduras hold elections in November. And Chile's election is planned for December.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, elections are constitutionally required during 1989 in Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, Antigua-Barbuda, and St. Vincent. They are likely to be called in Grenada and Belize, although elections in these two countries could carry over into early 1990.

From the Washington perspective, the most critical votes in Latin America are those in El Salvador, Argentina, and Brazil. In the English-speaking Caribbean, the headliners are Jamaica and Grenada.

Latin America

During the eight years of the Reagan administration, the US pumped $3 billion in economic and military assistance into embattled El Salvador, where a decade-old guerrilla insurgency has claimed more than 60,000 lives. Most of the US assistance has gone to build the Salvadoran military and to support President José Napoleón Duarte's centrist Christian Democratic government.

But with Duarte dying of cancer as his five-year term nears an end, the Christian Democrats are in disarray. The opposition rightist ARENA party won control of the National Assembly in the 1987 congressional elections and is given a good chance to win the presidency in 1989. Although Alfredo Cristiani, ARENA's US-educated presidential candidate, has helped to moderate the party's image, observers fear an ARENA victory could mean an even greater polarization of Salvadoran society and jeopardize further US assistance for the beleaguered country. "If the right wins, I see El Salvador as a major test for our policy in terms of our staying power," says one US official involved in regional policymaking.

Elections in Argentina and Brazil pose a different set of problems. Both countries are burdened with a heavy foreign debt. Both countries have recently emerged from military dictatorships, with fragile civilian governments in their first term. And in both countries old-style populist candidates are the early front-runners for the presidency, which some see as a potential test for the continued democratic process.

In Argentina, Carlos Menem, the Peronist governor of La Rioja province, held a large and early lead over Eduardo Angeloz, governor of Córdoba province and the governing Radical Party candidate to succeed President Raúl Alfonsin. In Brazil, where next November will see the first direct election for president since 1960, the early front-runner is Leonel Brizola, a populist of the left who has been anathema to the Brazilian military for three decades. Brizola returned to Brazil in 1979 from a 15-year exile and was elected in 1982 to a four-year term as governor of Rio de Janeiro state.

The strength of the Brazilian left was demonstrated in November 15 municipal elections in which Brizola's Democratic Labor Party won victories in the state capitals of...
Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Maceio, and São Luis, and did well in smaller cities. The smaller and further left Workers' Party also demonstrated surprising strength, winning in São Paulo and two other state capitals, Porto Alegre and Vitoria.

Menem and/or Brizola presidential victories could trigger a moratorium on the hefty foreign debts of both countries, much of which is owed to US banks. In Brazil a Brizola victory also could exacerbate trade disputes over the country's protectionist policies. As for Argentina there are fears that a Menem victory could bring back the chaotic days of the Isabel Perón presidency and, in turn, trigger a military coup.

"Those are the three [El Salvador, Argentina, and Brazil] seen as most critical," said one US official. "And a new administration in Washington is going to have to deal with them at a time when it is going to be hard to shake this [the Reagan] administration's obsession with Nicaragua."

In Venezuela the Bush administration will have to deal with another left-of-center populist after Pérez's February 2 inauguration. In the early 1980s, Pérez—who served as president from 1974 to 1979—angered the Reagan administration with his outspoken support of Nicaragua's Sandinistas, from whom he has lately distanced himself. While Pérez continues his rhetorical commitment to Third World causes, he has moderated earlier positions. Thus Washington is confident the US can work with him.

In Panama the May 7 election is expected to define the future role of General Manuel Noriega, the country's military strongman, and his position vis-à-vis the Bush adminis-
continued to recognize Eric Arturo Delvalle as Panama's legitimate president, although he was overthrown by the Noriega-controlled National Assembly in February 1988 after he tried to fire Noriega as Defense Forces commander. As a footnote, the Panamanian election, if held as scheduled, will mark the first in 50 years in which the late three-time president Arnulfo Arias is not a factor. Arias died in Miami last August.

While less important from a US strategic standpoint, Chile's presidential vote in December 1988—the first since 1970—will be closely watched to see the fate of General Augusto Pinochet, the country's military president since he led a 1973 military coup. Voters rejected eight more years of a Pinochet presidency in a yes-or-no referendum last October. As a result, a constitution approved in 1980 calls for a wide-open presidential election late in 1989. There is some speculation that Pinochet himself might run or, more remotely, might decide to cancel the election and continue in power.

There is not likely to be much anguish in Washington over the Bolivian election in May, with none of the leading candidates being cause for official concern. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the Bolivian election is that it is likely to be held. That in itself is an achievement for a country that had 175 changes of government in its first 162 years of independence. Neither is the November election in traditionally democratic Uruguay—where a rare decade-long military dictatorship gave way to an elected civilian government in 1985—expected to rock the hemisphere boat.

That might not be the case in Honduras, which also selects a new president in November. As the Central American conflict has escalated in recent years, Honduras has increasingly become an American satellite, hosting a major US troop presence and harboring the US-financed Nicaraguan contra rebels. In addition Honduras is beset with the pressure of an increasing number of Nicaraguan and Salvadoran refugees, an upsurge in death-squad activity, and the reported involvement of the military in drug smuggling.

Election results in the English-speaking Caribbean are not likely to cause significant changes in current direction. In Latin America, however, the elections will indicate whether the democratic transition represents a fleeting phenomenon or a long-term trend.

The English-speaking Caribbean

In the English-speaking Caribbean the big election was Jamaica's contest of February 9. The election pitted conservative prime minister Edward Seaga, a favorite of the Reagan administration, against former prime minister Michael Manley, whose "democratic socialism" and leftist rhetoric of the 1970s caused consternation in Washington. Manley, who has moderated his nationalist Third World and anti-US rhetoric since losing to Seaga in 1980, won convincingly.

In Grenada, the other featured Caribbean-election attraction, Prime Minister Herbert Blaize's New National Party (NNP)—hammered together in the wake of the 1983 US invasion of the island—has fragmented. Keith Mitchell, minister of communications and work, has been elected to lead the NNP in the election planned for December. It is possible none of the four existing parties will gain a majority, which means that erratic former prime minister Eric Gairy could be a factor in forming the next government.

In Antigua, the Bird family—father and sons—which has dominated island politics for more than four decades, is expected to retain control of the government despite family feuding over who would eventually succeed Vere Bird Sr., the family patriarch and present prime minister.

In St. Vincent centrist prime minister James Mitchell is a heavy favorite to be back for another term. In St. Kitts some observers think Prime Minister Kennedy Simmonds could be in a bit of trouble but probably not enough to lose an election.

In Belize the election is shaping up as another confrontation between former prime minister George Price and incumbent prime minister Manuel Esquivel, who ended Price's long domination of the country's politics in 1984. Esquivel's United Democratic Party has internal problems, and some observers give Price a good chance at regaining power.

Political Consequences?

No matter who wins, election results in the English-speaking Caribbean—with the possible exception of Jamaica—are not likely to significantly change current direction. In St. Vincent, Grenada, and St. Kitts, however, the results could have a bearing on commitment to a faltering unity movement among the smaller Eastern Caribbean states.

The case is different in Latin America, where one official US regional specialist suggests the 1989 elections will provide an indication of whether the democratic transition "is more than just a fleeting phenomenon and whether people are committed enough to democracy to give it a chance over the longer term."
Freedom and Democracy

by Mario Vargas Llosa

Freedom, perhaps, is the most disquieting paradox of history. It nourishes humanity's most profound accomplishments and aspirations, but it also is the abyss into which humanity often falls and destroys itself. Paradoxically, freedom engenders the fear of adopting liberty and the temptation to suppress it.

The Attitude of Intellectuals

Renouncing freedom is one option, of course. Individuals and groups sometimes give in to this temptation under the spell of a religion or ideology. It is only an apparent paradox that among those who do so are intellectuals and artists who depend on freedom as lungs depend on oxygen. The case of Plato is exceptional. It is merely the first in a long sequence of events in the course of Western civilization. Liberty puts a terrible burden on our shoulders; and no one carries this burden more intimately than creative people.

We know the case of Latin America very well. Great creators have given our literature its worldwide renown and have extraordinarily enriched our language, our imagination, and our sensibility. But many of them have not vacillated in putting their prestige and their word at the service of ideologies and regimes that stand at odds with freedom. Some have succumbed to the Marxist spell. Others, sometimes of high standing, have served, through complacency or enthusiasm, the cause of right-wing dictatorships, sometimes at the very moment when these were committing their worst crimes.

The Peoples' Vision

The peoples of Latin America have demonstrated a vision of freedom that is far superior to that of many of the intellectuals. This is something that Latin America can show the world with pride. It is true that our countries display scandalous inequalities—that the spectacle of poverty repeats itself like a recurring nightmare from the Rio Grande to the Strait of Magellan. It is true that, in education, health, labor, and law, we have much to accomplish. And yet we Latin Americans can say that, compared to what happened decades ago in Europe or to what frequently occurs in the Middle East, the Far East, and Africa, our peoples have only occasionally fallen to the spell of despotism. When they have done so, as in Perón's Argentina and Castro's Cuba, they soon regretted the fact.

Never during our republican trajectory have so many Latin American governments been born out of more or less clean elections. Countries where, 25 years ago, no elected official could complete his term, today are models of pluralism and coexistence. The remaining dictatorships or semidictatorships find themselves on the defensive. Some of them, such as Noriega in Panama and Pinochet in Chile, seem to be in the midst of their last dying gasps as they confront their peoples' thirst for morality, decency, and freedom.

In Latin America today the Cuban model of violent revolution is on the defensive. With the exceptions of Cuba, El Salvador, Peru, and Colombia, the myth of armed revolution is a panacea for our ailments is no longer attractive. Increasingly this myth seems to be an ideology of marginal groups, bereft of popular support.

Perhaps the greatest significance of this democratizing trend is that, unlike the period after World War II when a wave of democratization also swept the continent, it neither has resulted from external pressures nor has it been the exclusive work of local "elites." This time, as freedom and consensus replace the arbitrariness of force and personal power, the impetus has been the humble citizens of our countries—the anonymous men and women, usually poor and uneducated.

In analyzing the recent Latin American elections a consistent pattern emerges. Whether the elected parties and officials are of the moderate left or moderate right, they unequivocally represent the democratic option of cohabitation in a setting of lawfulness, freedom of expression, and alternation of power. By voting in small and sometimes insignificant numbers for the parties and officials of both extremes, the consulted peoples have punished those whose ideologies constitute a threat to freedom.

Learning a Lesson

The lesson could not be clearer. Our intellectuals and other leaders should learn from it. In spite of hunger, economic injustice, and the lack of jobs, schools, and hospitals; in spite of misfortune and despair, the predominant way of life in Latin America, our peoples have not lost...
their appetite for freedom. Our peoples cling to democratic regimes in the face of their fragility and the painfully slow pace of attempts to improve living standards. Can any Latin American dictators boast of having the popular support enjoyed in the past by Mussolini and Hitler, or today by the Ayatollah? No. The best proof is the brutal repression—the torture, censorship, and crimes that our dictatorships must carry out to remain in power. We must not lose sight of this fact. In the midst of the great difficulties our countries are going through, in the midst of the economic crisis that is drowning us, sometimes threatening to disintegrate us as nations, this popular commitment to democracy represents hope. Despite all of our problems the peoples of Latin America continue to see freedom as the best option. They may be poor, uneducated, frustrated, and forlorn; yet they know what they want: freedom.

To be sure, they cannot theorize about freedom. If we were to ask them, the common citizens of our America, they most probably would give us vague and uncertain reasons—what Sartre would have called "their choice." It so happens that the option of freedom often manifests itself as an instinctive and blind hunger from the depths of the psyche, rather than as a conscious and reasoned effort. It is a mysterious desire to reach a complete and supreme individuality, breaking away from the undifferentiated collectivity. It is the sovereignty of being that can be attained only by experiencing the utmost responsibility: to make one's own choices, to decide one way or another about the most vital issues, to be the true maker of one's destiny.

The Homeric poems were born from a people who felt these deep-seated urges, who, even amid the grayish darkness through which they moved, longed for their emancipation. Even as confused ideals, these longings marked the birth of the West, the beginning of a culture of freedom.

The blind globetrotting bard, who, according to legend, gave life to the Homeric poems, also inaugurated a tradition that infused humanity with a fundamentally new dimension. It opened the doors of social and individual life to a secret, silent lady who, little by little, transformed history and the human condition with her magic wand. She did not bring with her happiness. If anything, she deprived us of it. But she did bring progress, greater justice, and, for those nations that enthroned her as their queen and submitted themselves to her whims and bewitching charms, a substantial improvement in the quality of life.

Even in the worst of circumstances our peoples offer her joyous hospitality, and when they lose her they yearn for her, fight for her, and always end up resuscitating her. This is proof that, in spite of dictators and fanatics, material failings and great disequilibria, freedom cannot be separated from the culture and dreams of Latin Americans.

(Translated by Lourdes Simón)
Ecuador: The Politics of Locos
by Catherine M. Conaghan

No one can claim the Febres-Cordero years were boring. From 1984 to 1988 President León Febres-Cordero stood at the center of Ecuador's increasingly conflictive and often bizarre polity. In 1986 there were two abortive military uprisings, and in 1987 Febres-Cordero fell victim to a kidnapping at the hands of air force paratroopers. Struggles between the executive and other branches of government were chronic. The national police teargassed members of the congress, and an executive order physically barred supreme court justices from entering their offices. By the end of the Febres-Cordero years, high government officials were fleeing to Miami to avoid prosecution on corruption charges. The "sleaze factor" had come to Ecuador.

The deteriorating mood and political conduct culminated in the carnivalesque presidential election of 1988. The populist candidate considered to have Febres-Cordero's support, Abdala Bucaram, took campaign politics to a new low. He accused his social-democratic rival, Rodrigo Borja, of everything from alcoholism to a low sperm count. Bucaram went on to lose the May run-off election to Borja, but only after personally recording his own campaign song and music video. He liked to close his campaign rallies with a lip-synch to the tune that proclaimed, "Por eso, me llaman loco, todos los oligarcas" ("All the oligarchs call me crazy").

Politics on the Skids

The strangeness of Ecuador's recent politics reflects the deeper malaise at work inside its political culture, parties, and government institutions. The economic crisis since 1982 has steadily eroded the character of political discourse and public manners. In the absence of strong institutions and new ideas, Ecuadorian politics has devolved into a highly personalized and often trivialized arena of intra-elite struggle. The "sleaze factor" takes its toll on the nation, can President Rodrigo Borja restore some semblance of political credibility?

Since the onset of the economic crisis in 1982, Ecuadorian politics has devolved into a highly personalized and often trivialized arena of intra-elite struggle. As the "sleaze factor" takes its toll on the nation, can President Rodrigo Borja restore some semblance of political credibility?

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A leading Guayaquil businessman and the candidate of a rightist electoral coalition, won a narrow victory in 1984 on a platform aimed at retracting state interventionism and introducing business values to public administration. But inconsistencies within the administration unraveled his promise to deliver economic growth and political certainty. Instead of serving up pinstriped conservatism, Febres-Cordero experimented with an erratic mixture of right-wing populism and authoritarianism. Thus the military was repoliticized, the public's trust in government plummeted, and a new bombastic populism became entrenched in Ecuador's political repertoire.

An essential problem was that Febres-Cordero neither tolerated the play of democratic institutions nor respected his peers in the party system. His own political ascent relied heavily on his ability to grab the public spotlight by denigrating rival party leaders. Febres-Cordero routinely referred to his rivals as "cowards," "tramps," and "Marxist clowns," and frequently questioned their masculinity. His disdain extended to the Ecuadorian party system, including his own Social Christian Party. Febres-Cordero was quick to declare his government would not be one "of parties," and his appointment of apolitical technocrats and businessmen to the cabinet underscored this point.

Febres-Cordero viewed the presidency as an opportunity to deregulate the economy, which he had advocated as leader of the Guayaquil Chamber of Industry. His initial goals were economic—decontrolling prices and exchange rates, while creating a hospitable investment climate for local and foreign firms.
Surrounded by a coterie of orthodox economic technocrats, Febres-Cordero chafed at any attempt to subject his economic management to consultation and negotiation. The fact that leftist and centrist parties controlled the congress served to harden his antiparty stance.

The president's strategy for defusing the opposition ranged from physical intimidation to ignoring the demands of contenders, regardless of the constitutional or legal implications. The government enacted many key economic measures as emergency decrees, thereby circumventing the need for congressional approval. When the congress increased the 1985 minimum wage in excess of the executive's request, Febres-Cordero threw the measure in a legal limbo by refusing to publish it in the Registro Oficial. He followed the same course with the congressional amnesty granted to Frank Vargas Pazzos, the air force general who led the 1986 uprisings against the president to protest government corruption and meddling in the armed forces. Although the Tribunal de Garantías Constitucionales upheld the legality of the measure, Febres-Cordero refused to implement it. Thus he prompted air force paratroopers to pressure for compliance by kidnapping him in January 1987. In September of that year, the executive-legislative conflict reemerged as Febres-Cordero defied the congress by refusing to remove Minister of Government Luis Robles after he was censured for human rights violations. The administration regarded as a personal attack virtually every congressional attempt to exercise its oversight functions. Febres-Cordero responded to congressional actions by accusing its members of corruption and libel.

Febres-Cordero matched these frontal attacks on authority with maneuvers to wear down and disorganize the opposition from within. Offers of cash and patronage lured some opposition congressmen away from their parties. A combination of desertions and deals with two "independent" populist parties enabled the government to forge a majority for the 1985-86 legislative session. But the respite from conflict was short-lived. The center-left opposition won the 1986 mid-term elections and solidly defeated the government's plebiscite proposal to change the law governing political parties. A growing climate of violence paralleled the continuing scuffles in the institutional sphere. The government repressed antigovernment labor demonstrations, partisans of Febres-Cordero assaulted congressmen, and international organizations began to cite Ecuador for human rights violations.

The administration's credibility was further strained by continuing economic troubles and increasingly incoherent economic policymaking. The March 1986 earthquake interrupted Ecuador's oil exports and seriously aggravated the government's already weak financial position. Despite his antistatist rhetoric and falling oil prices, Febres-Cordero did not restrain public expenditures. Cultivating a populist flourish, he turned the completion of public works projects—many of which were of dubious value—into a major goal. At the same time his attempts at deregulation faltered. Although the economic team had boasted that its economic reforms would "last a thousand years," a fevered demand for dollars forced Febres-Cordero to reinstate controls over the exchange market in March 1988.

The Electoral Circus

Electioneering for the 1988 presidential and congressional elections did nothing to add sobriety to the political atmosphere. Each of the 16 legally-registered parties sought differentiation by choosing a well-known figure to head the ticket. This practice led to controversial choices that created serious fissures inside some parties and discord among prospective electoral partners. It clouded an already confusing political spectrum as factions split off from regular parties to create their own movimientos to back particular candidates.

Parties of the left split over the presidential candidacy of air force general Vargas Pazzos. Known as "El loco Frank," Vargas declared himself a "man of the left." Although two leftist parties nominated him for president, the Frente Amplio de Izquierda (FADI), which included the Communist Party, endorsed Maoist Jaime Hurtado. The pro-Vargas members of FADI responded by forming their own party, while other center-left leaders left FADI to back right-wing populist Abdalá Bucaram. And one populist group broke into warring factions as two Bucaram brothers, Averroes and Avenidas, and their followers battled in the streets of Guayaquil over leadership positions and presidential endorsements.

Electoral politics on the right turned equally fractious. Each party of the Frente de Reconstrucción Nacional (FRN), the electoral front that had united rightist parties behind Febres-Cordero's 1984 bid, launched its own presidential candidate. The most notable of the right's candidates were Sixto Durán Ballén and Carlos Julio Emanuel. While Febres-Cordero had marginalized FRN from his government and channeled patronage through ad hoc government committees, many voters blamed the rightist parties for Ecuador's political and economic plight. The administration believed, nevertheless, that it could engineer a rightist victory. The idea was that, if the votes for the center and left were widely dispersed across the various Marxist, populist, and reformist parties, the rightist Durán Ballén would take the second spot in the January first round and go on to face center-leftist Borja in the May run-off for the presidency.

In an attempt to dilute the center-left's vote, Febres-Cordero permitted Abdalá Bucaram, an exiled party leader and the former mayor of Guayaquil, to return from Panama. But this Machiavellian decision misfired. Bucaram won 175 percent of the vote to edge out the
rightist Durán Ballén for second place. Bucaram's second-place finish gave him a spot in the May run-off against Borja, who won first place with 24.8 percent of the vote. The various rightist parties garnered only 17.4 percent of the first-round presidential vote and won only 10 of 71 congressional seats.

Bucaram's promises of free school lunches, free maternity care, and public works articulated the dissatisfactions of the lower classes, particularly the poor people of Guayaquil. But his provocative comments and personal style became the primary issue of the campaign. Among his most offensive ad-libs were his praise for the political acumen of Adolph Hitler and the comparisons he drew between himself and Jesus Christ. His emotionally-charged campaign speeches attacked the "oligarchy"—a category in which he lumped Febres-Cordero along with Borja and his supporters. Ruminant of the populist rhetoric of Latin America's past, Bucaram called his supporters "los humildes" and "los desamparados." His campaign commercials featured martyr-like images of himself (e.g., Bucaram in an outstretched position like Christ on the cross) and his family (e.g., his son looking as if he were beaten, smothered in catsup to simulate blood). He even extended the religious imagery to Borja, pictured in a commercial with devil's horns.

Bucaram appeared on television with two empty whiskey bottles and declared the bottles represented Borja's daily alcohol consumption.

Bucaram's unpredictability and mass base frightened many on the political right. Still, some rightist leaders confessed privately to supporting Bucaram as a lesser evil and as a president they could control. And the Isais family of Guayaquil, a powerful industrial and financial group, contributed financially to Bucaram's campaign. But many Quito businessmen leaned toward Borja.

Borja responded to Bucaram's style with his own personality-based campaign, which included a commercial featuring popular entertainers singing, "Rodrigo Borja ama su gente" ("Rodrigo Borja loves his people"). The circus-like campaign reflected a fundamental problem of Ecuadorian society: the exhaustion of ideas and programs in the context of the nation's economic crisis. Personality became the focal point of the campaign because neither side formulated a fresh set of alternatives to Febres-Cordero's policies. Bucaram and Borja rejected the president's half-hearted attempt at neoliberalism. In doing so both candidates resurrected old-fashioned Keynesian, CEPAL, and dependency thinking.

The lack of fresh choices and the carnivalesque atmosphere of the campaign generated public disaffection with the candidates. Street graffiti proclaimed, "Borja o Bucaram, sigue la crisis" ("Borja or Bucaram, the crisis continues"). As the election day neared, rumors circulated that the military was poised to intervene if Bucaram won.

The election took place on May 8 without disruptions. Borja took 46 percent of the votes cast, while 41 percent went to Bucaram, who swiftly conceded defeat. Nonetheless, trouble spots in Borja's electoral victory may prove problematic for his administration. The voters split along regional lines. Borja's support was overwhelmingly concentrated in the interior provinces; he did not carry a single coastal province. Hence the 1988 presidential run-off was the most regionally polarized contest in Ecuador's recent history. Given the traditional animosities between the coast and the sierra, Borja can expect little tolerance from costenos, should his government falter.

Bucaram turned in a remarkable performance—eating away at Borja's overwhelming lead in the polls to a margin of just five percentage points. The results legitimize Bucaram as a national leader and assure him a role as a future presidential contender. As such, Bucaram and his powerful political family are sure to articulate coastal frustrations with Borja's program. Bucaram's sister, Elsa, is currently the mayor of Guayaquil. Unless the character of the Bucaram discourse changes, bombast and personal attacks may be permanently entrenched in Ecuadoran politics.

Democratic Prospects?

Borja assumed office last August with only a modest mandate and with economic conditions that reduce his ability to satisfy the demands of the populace. Crashing international oil prices and uncontrolled government spending during Febres-Cordero's last year left Borja little choice but to enact an austerity package. In September he implemented the initial measures. They included a 75.6 percent devaluation of the currency, tax increases, import restrictions, and a ban on vehicle imports. The measures hiked fuel prices by 100 percent and electricity prices by 30 percent. A 15.8 percent increase in the minimum wage tempered the social costs of the program.

While unhappy with the measures, the Frente Unitario de Trabajadores (the umbrella labor organization composed of the major trade-union confederations) did not mobilize against the package. Borja has stressed business-labor cooperation, and has made it clear that his administration will respect the labor movement. But he has also reached out to the private sector by appointing well-known businessmen to key positions in his economic team.

Recent events in Ecuador underscore the key role that politicians play in strengthening or undermining the institutions and civic culture of a fledgling democracy. During the last four years, leadership's belligerence, intolerance, and aggressive political style have brought Ecuadoran democracy to the edge of breakdown. The politics of machos and locos has taken its toll. In spite of almost a decade of civilian rule, the consolidation of Ecuadoran democracy stands as a formidable challenge to President Rodrigo Borja.
A Political Obituary: Arnulfo Arias of Panama

by Steve C. Ropp

For half a century, Arnulfo Arias was Panama's leading political figure. There is little question that the imposition of a military-dominated regime in 1968 stemmed from domestic resistance to the possibility of an Arias presidency. Just as current developments in Argentina cannot be understood without reference to the legacy of Juan Perón, analysis of Panamanian politics must start with the legacy of "El Hombre."

Born in 1901 in the interior province of Coclé, Arias attended the University of Chicago and Harvard Medical School. On returning to Panama in the 1920s, he became active in a civic movement called "Community Action." The movement's leaders were mestizo professionals from the interior provinces, such as Arias himself. Its popular base consisted of urban workers. These professionals and workers felt excluded from the political alliance formed by Panama's urban-commercial elite and supported by the US. Arias's political philosophy contained elements of racism directed primarily against black West Indians. This philosophy arose from the US preference for hiring West Indians, a practice that excluded a wide swath of Panama's population (including Spanish-speaking blacks) from the fruits of the Canal-based economy. Arias's flirtation with Nazi philosophy during the 1930s was no charade. What it masked, however, was his more fundamental commitment to indigenous populism against US imperialism and its Panamanian allies. This populist commitment explains the durability and size of Arias's political constituency, particularly in the urban centers of Panama City and Colón.

Arguably, Arias's death on August 10, 1988, was Panama's most important domestic political event of the year, in terms of potential consequences. It rivaled the more dramatic confrontation between the Reagan administration and General Manuel Antonio Noriega. An obvious question is whether Arias's Panameñista Party will survive the loss of its charismatic leader. Because Arias regularly commanded the loyalty of 35-40 percent of the electorate, loss of party vigor could create a large and volatile new electoral mass. It is unlikely, though, that Panameñismo will remain a major political force. Even in its heyday, Panameñismo was a highly personal movement, not an institutionalized party. Arias had great faith in the masses but little faith in mass organizations as vehicles for social change. This fact, as well as the refusal of the Panameñistas to strengthen their machinery by participating in national and local elections between 1968 and 1984, means that the party could quickly become an empty shell. Unlike Juan Perón, who left Argentina with both a class constituency and mass organizations, Arias left Panama with merely an ill-defined mass following.

Panama is ostensibly moving toward "pure and clean" democratic elections in May 1989. A civilian president, two vice presidents, 67 members of the National Assembly, and 505 local representatives are to be elected for five-year terms beginning on September 1, 1989. At first glance the death of Arias seems to have improved Panama's prospects for democracy because it eliminates a major barrier to the military's acceptance of democratic government. After all, the military ousted Arias from the presidency in 1941 and in 1968 because it regarded him as a political threat. And in 1984 the Defense Forces resorted to electoral fraud to prevent him from assuming the presidency.

Yet Arias's death has not improved relations between civilian parties and the current military leadership. The cocaine colonels—boxed in by US drug indictments and domestic opposition—cannot afford to relinquish the reins of power to civilians.
ical dominance—cannot afford to relinquish the reins of power to a civilian government. It is therefore likely that the scheduled 1989 elections will be a stage-managed affair.

Some of the evidence for this political scenario is inferential. Clearly the military leadership bears high costs in maintaining the political status quo. But it would bear equally high costs in permitting the establishment of a civilian democracy. By default, what is likely is a stage-managed election that produces another military-controlled government.

A more tangible indication of Noriega's intent is the fact that in August 1988 he founded the Consultation and Political Advisory Commission. Its main purpose is “to organize the 1989 elections within the framework of the constitutional and legal order of the Republic of Panama.” The 16-member commission includes only representatives of the military-controlled political parties, the mass organizations, and the Defense Forces. Such membership suggests that Noriega will tightly control the elections and exclude the democratic opposition from meaningful participation.

A less likely scenario is that of “Haitianization,” which would leave the Defense Forces in direct and open control of the government. This scenario involves the possibility that Noriega may see no need for a democratic fig leaf. Alternatively, as happened in Haiti during 1987-88, a failed attempt to create a democratic fig leaf could result in a quick return to direct military rule.

“A Haitianization” assumes that, above all, the military's top commanders seek to preserve their domestic safe haven against extradition. Democracy, or even its semblance, may play a minor role in this effort. As in Haiti, direct military rule would lead to continued economic decline. Cuts in government services and employment, coupled with efforts to raise additional revenue at the expense of the middle class, would result in increased middle-class emigration.

Arias's demise has vastly improved Panama's long-term prospects for democracy by narrowing the differences between the military and the civilian political parties. Nonetheless, the short-term prospects are bleak. Barring a civilian uprising or a coup by progressive junior officers, Panama will experience additional years of direct or indirect military rule.
The Sandinistas and the US Press

by Pablo Antonio Cuadra

ne of the peculiarities of Central American history resides in the fact that it has fallen to the press to defend the rights of people against those who have held power and sought to expand it at the expense of individual rights. Newspapers have been our only compensation for weak legislative and judicial branches, confronted by executives perpetually tempted to excess. Nicaragua is a case in point. There, the daily *La Prensa* has been called “the republic of paper.” The Somoza constantly sought to break or stretch the bonds of constitutional limitation and erode liberties, searching for greater and greater power. In our newspaper the republican conscience was born and survived by stating plainly what congressmen or judges were too venal or frightened to say. The people remembered as much, and this is the way they learned to identify their rights.

For, in fact, there are two ways to be a democrat. One can either establish and practice from the seat of power itself, or one can fight for it from the outside. Spanish America is more a democracy of desire than of fulfillment. But that desire is informed by a greater vehemence and force of tradition precisely because it has cost so much in blood and sacrifice. Democracy is and remains our collective ideal; so much so that tyrannies of the left and right pay it the ultimate compliment of hypocrisy. They speak of themselves as “authentic democracies,” thus indirectly paying tribute to the system that made America.

North American press has enjoyed more freedom, but for that very reason has been less concerned about the lack of it. In Central America the most elemental struggle for freedom of expression is permanent and dramatic, in a way that our North American colleagues have never experienced. That is why they frequently appear to be strangely, discouragingly insensitive to our struggle, a struggle that, by rights, should affect them as much as it does us.

North Americans do not struggle against power, with rare exceptions, but rather against a different political party. They fight not for democracy but rather within democracy. Thus their consciousness of freedom is very different from our own. Their perspective is naive—virginal, without history as it were—when the unexpected news item suddenly erupts in their crystal ball. I have always had a special terror of that kind of “objectivity.” The last Somoza, educated at West Point, knew how to speak English well. In truly deplorable fashion he managed to convince the North American press that, as hard as he had worked at it, the Nicaraguan people were not ready for democracy. Years later, Tomás Borge—who lacks neither intelligence nor a certain charm—also managed to convince the best newspaper people in the US that as interior minister he was the greatest guarantee for keeping the extremists and radicals at bay.

But Borge was one of the founders of the Sandinista Front and has openly declared his Marxism-Leninism on many occasions. No matter! All that is history.

The journalist’s art would seem to consist of viewing matters with a spurious objectivity, which somehow

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In Central America the struggle for freedom of expression is permanent and dramatic, in a way North American journalists have never experienced.

The Press and Freedom: Contrasting Styles

For Central Americans the press and freedom of expression represent more than the free play of opinions. They also represent that invisible wall of containment and defense against an equally venerable tradition—that of the “strong man,” whether Spanish or Indian, the product of a history at once morally and racially violent.

Our newspapers have thus played a different role from those of the US. There, freedom has enjoyed a multiplicity of defenses. The three branches of government are independent of one another. The private sector and individual rights enjoy an almost sacred status. Thus the...
supersedes history itself. We should not be surprised then that in Somoza's day a fair number of American reporters categorized La Prensa as a passionate opponent of the government and therefore not objective. Likewise, in today's revolutionary age, Stephen Kinzer of the New York Times patronizingly called La Prensa to task for lack of objectivity. The article was entitled “La Prensa: Gadfly of the Sandinista state. The editors don't let the facts get in the way” (March 7, 1988).

Many years have passed since Alexis de Tocqueville recorded the peculiar myopia that characterizes American politics when it regards other countries. This would seem to be an inheritance that the American press has made no effort to correct, particularly when it moves south of the Rio Grande.

As a poet I sympathize with Pablo Antonio Cuadra—my other persona, editor of La Prensa—who has been forced to endure, for the nine years of the Sandinista regime, the almost daily visits of American journalists. They always ask the same questions—almost all of them fervent admirers of what the Sandinistas have told them, contrary to what they might read in the not-very-objective La Prensa. And after the questions and answers, the result is always the same: a total lack of comprehension.

It could be, of course, that we are the ones who do not understand. Possibly American journalists are not really interested in the Nicaraguan problem but in certain internal political problems in the US. It is not that they are against the so-called “contras”; they are against Reagan. Their objective is not the victory of peace and democracy in Central America but of the US Congress against the White House.

On other occasions the lack of understanding or the misconceptions are the result of a guilt complex, sometimes quite well developed. We may think they are looking at the future; in truth, they are contemplating their own past and ours. They recognize how wrong their country's policies have been. After Vietnam, indecision would appear to be the best decision of all. But we Central Americans do not have the luxury of fighting within democracy. We are fighting to establish it. That is quite another, less comfortable, less easy matter.

Then you have the “liberals.” The liberal American journalist has the largest conscience Diogenes's lantern will ever light upon. Unfortunately, its very breadth contains a crucial contradiction. Such journalists are humanitarians who close their eyes to offenses against human rights. In my comfortless experience I can testify that, among the American liberals I have known, the greatest nobility coexists with an incorrigible naiveté.

**Another Sellout**

If I were so inclined, I might luxuriate in the attention the American press gives to President Daniel Ortega's strident attacks against the US government. After all, we still have a few scores to settle with “the Yankees,” and even a verbal reprisal is a delicious treat for the Nicaraguan nationalist sensibility. But it is impossible not to notice the things that are working precisely in the opposite direction—the submission to Castro and the intervention of the USSR and the entire Soviet bloc in the internal affairs of our country. The strangest spectacle of all is the wave of improbable foreigners—Vietnamese, Cambodians, North Koreans, Bulgarians, East Germans—flooding our landscape, while a contrary current of thousands of Nicaraguans, young people above all, flee into exile. We have emptied Nicaragua of human resources and replaced them with people at once strange and totally alien to our history, our customs, our culture. The Russians and the PLO kiss us on the lips. We are addressed with endless bows by the servants of Kim II Sung; we are advised by Cuban neo-imperialists; flocks of blond students help us, badly, to pick coffee.

In effect, we have lost our historical privacy. For eight years we have been the biggest story in the world press, but also the biggest lie. We have completely destroyed our economy in spite of the advice and admonitions of high officials of the regime since resigned; we have sacrificed a unity that our political history has almost never known; we have provoked a civil war that consumes the same peasants and same Indians for whom we fought; we have provoked the hostility of neighboring countries, all to the benefit of a single beneficiary, not our people, but a foreign power, the one least respectful of the values of nationalism that we proclaimed to be our banner. We have taken in vain the name of our 30,000 dead and pushed a revolution off the rails. Instead of a state for the people, we have the people for the state. Instead of power for the people, once more, we have dictatorial power imposed upon the people. Once more, too, the pharaonic pyramid is repeated: the ruler above, obedience below. On high a “vanguard” enjoys privilege. Below the salt lies the broad, submissive multitude.

"Who can say that this is communism?" a member of the US Congress asked me one day, with evident sincerity. "It is not," I replied, "just as the scaffold is not yet a house. We are too close to the history of Cuba not to see that what has been built so far is an imitation of that model." It may be quixotic to ask the press of democratic countries—and above all the press of a country that guides the destinies of the free world—to take the effort to distinguish between plagiarism (covered by a deceptive populist liturgy) and the genuine creative liberty of a people.

Up to now Don Quixote has not received a gentle reception. The big lie seems to be more welcome than a bloody truth.

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**Editor's Note: Edited version of an article published in Resistencia, 2:4 (August 1988).**
The Contras as Political Gypsies

by Joe Eldridge

Despite President George Bush's feeble declarations of commitment to the Nicaraguan contras, both Democratic and Republican members of Congress have declared the contra project dead. Last fall Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for Latin America and a long-time contra booster, even referred to the need for a "post-contra" policy. This need became more pressing when, in February, the presidents of Central American nations renewed their commitment to the regional peace process. Without increased military aid the war will continue to wind down, leaving stranded in Honduras thousands of contra combatants and their families.

Twice in 1988 Congress approved contra-aid packages that included food, clothing, and medicine. The last appropriation, engineered last fall by Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, provided $27 million in emergency relief. The issue of contra aid will reemerge in Congress, the contras are a nettlesome problem that refuses to go away.

Rigid stereotypes about the contras (and the Sandinistas) have distorted the issues and undermined thoughtful debate. Critics of US policy tend to portray the contras as cutthroat mercenaries, neglecting to mention that many of the foot soldiers are humble peasant farmers swept up by chaos. The supporters reserve similar epithets for the Sandinistas, viewing the contras as virtuous freedom fighters and democrats. These images impede serious discussion about the ultimate fate of the contras and their families. Because abandoning these stereotypes would be tantamount to surrendering one's political bona fides, critics and supporters alike make little effort to look beyond the polemics.

The plight of the Nicaraguan refugees is often exploited by contra supporters to emphasize Sandinista tyranny. Others opposed to aid sometimes become so preoccupied with discrediting the contras that they overlook the serious mistakes of the Sandinistas that have led to the Nicaraguan exodus. Repatriation becomes a distinct possibility only to the extent that errors are recognized—and corrected—on all sides.

While many people have fled Nicaragua to escape the draft, others have left because the meddlesome Sandinistas wanted to exert state control over many aspects of their lives. Hundreds of peasant farmers have left Nicaragua precisely because they wanted to be left alone. They did not want to be told what to plant, when to plant, and at what price.

As in most wars the majority of the refugees abandoned their homes to escape the fighting. In interviews at camps in Honduras, many refugees have indicated to me and other observers they would consider returning to Nicaragua if the war ended and if the Sandinistas would give them iron-clad guarantees that they would neither suffer reprisals nor be drafted. Obviously a decision of this magnitude requires the commitments of the Sandinistas, the contras, and the US government.

For other fighters and their families, a return to Nicaragua is unthinkable, at least for now. The distrust is too deep and the ideological divisions are too pronounced for healing to occur.

On the Road Again

Honduran tolerance of the contras has reached its limit. With the retirement of Ronald Reagan, their most formidable advocate, and with...
the chronic ambivalence of Congress regarding military assistance, the Hondurans have asserted their own political interests. Over the last several months thousands of combatants and their families have crossed the border into Honduras to receive US aid. Nevertheless, the presence of contras in Honduras is unacceptable to the vast majority of that country's citizens. A high foreign ministry official recently told me that the government considers the contras a more serious problem for Honduras than for Nicaragua.

In September special envoy Morris Busby created a furor when, asked about the status of the contras, he replied, "They are in Honduras." Since then the US embassy in Tegucigalpa has tried to reassure Honduras that the US will not leave Honduras holding the proverbial bag. Unsatisfied with US assurances, Honduran foreign minister Carlos López Contreras used the occasion of last fall's UN General Assembly meeting to propose the creation of a multilateral peace-keeping force to police the Honduran borders. The prompt rejections by Secretary of State George Shultz and the contra leadership highlighted the proposal's importance. The Hondurans hoped the peace-keeping force would disarm the contra fighters.

The Hondurans have insisted all along that the contras are Washington's problem. After all, they argue, the US funded and trained the contras. Recent reports of contra trafficking in weapons and in US-donated food and medicine have heightened Honduran anxiety and resentment.

Despite their reluctance, material incentives can probably persuade Honduras to accept some of the contras and their families. The majority of these Nicaraguans will inevitably have to look elsewhere. Honduras has suggested that resettlement could occur in Costa Rica and Guatemala, the region's neutral countries. Predictably both countries have seemingly closed the door on this alternative. As indicated by the problems of the Nicaraguans who are now fleeing to the US, the onus necessarily falls on Congress and the Bush administration to formulate a policy that responds to the genuine humanitarian needs of the contras and their families.

The fighters and the refugees are already feeling the pain of abandonment by the US. The contras who mutinied against their Reagan-backed leadership have been ostracized and ignored. One former combatant, interviewed last summer in Miami, said he felt like the "paper cup of this war, used and discarded" (Miami Herald, July 18, 1988).

A humanitarian solution to the plight of the contras and other Nicaraguan refugees is difficult but not impossible. We can learn much from the partial successes already achieved in the repatriation of the indigenous peoples—the Miskitos and Sumus—who were uprooted from their homes on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. Over the last several months thousands of Miskitos and Sumus have gone home, deciding that putting up with the hardships of Nicaragua is preferable to life in Honduran refugee camps. The growing impatience of the Honduran military, which recently unleashed a campaign of harassment and intimidation against Nicaraguan Miskitos and Sumus living on the Honduran side of the Coco River, has contributed to the desire to return home. Also promoting repatriation has been an unusual degree of cooperation among the Honduran government, the Sandinista government, and the UN, which have guaranteed safe passage.

Several organizations have joined together to ease the trauma of relocation. The International Red Cross, the UN High Commission on Refugees, other private development organizations, and the Sandinista government have helped thousands of Miskitos and Sumus to resettle in Nicaragua by providing food, clothing, and building materials.

What should be done to the Nicaraguans who remain in Honduras? Emotion-laden language must give way to dialogue about the genuine needs and desires of the fighters and refugee families. On the one side, Nicaragua must guarantee total amnesty under the supervision of international monitors. The Sandinistas must also offer incentives, such as land, to encourage the return of the fighters and refugees. On the other side, Honduras must participate in finding opportunities for the permanent resettlement of those Nicaraguans who do not want to return home. International agencies have expressed their interest in assisting with this process in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica.

The Nicaraguan government has voiced its desire to facilitate the repatriation of the thousands of refugees living in Honduras and Costa Rica. Further, war-weary peasants are willing to bind up the nation's wounds by focusing on the task of domestic reconciliation. When I asked if they would live alongside the contras, peasants who had just experienced a contra attack answered: "Why not? Nicaragua has land here for everyone. What counts is that we live in peace."

The Bush administration must be prepared to play a pivotal role in this process whether the ultimate destination of the contras and their families is Central America or elsewhere. Many of the contras, who believe they are actually defending the White House's interest, hope to resettle in the US. The Honduran government expects Washington to "take care" of the contras—in the US if necessary. Regardless of their destination the Nicaraguan exiles need material assistance.

Political oratory and expediency must not take precedence over humanitarian needs. Central America's war is winding down. Without more US military aid, negotiation will supplant the fighting. The US—from the earliest days the central protagonist—must insure the contra fighters and their families have the chance to rebuild their lives wherever they choose to resettle.
Zoning the Brazilian Amazon: Rondônia
by Janet M. Chernela

The use of zoning to preserve critical areas of the Amazon Basin was one of the principal ideas espoused by Francisco "Chico" Mendes Filho, the Brazilian ecologist and labor leader who was assassinated on December 22, 1988. Mendes suggested the demarcation of forested areas as "use zones," restricting some zones to the extraction of resources such as rubber. His objective was both to preserve the forests of Amazonia and to maintain their productivity for traditional economic activities like rubber collection. Mendes was not alone in espousing a zoning, or multiuse, method of resource management. The same method is the earmark of the UNESCO Man in the Biosphere Program. But Mendes was remarkable in demonstrating the conservationist and economic viability of a traditional approach to forest management and in integrating the approach into a visionary model of large-scale zoning.

On December 15, 1988—a week before Mendes's assassination—the state government of Rondônia presented a proposal for the "socio-economic and ecological zoning of Rondônia" to a visiting delegation of US legislators (Diário do Pará, Belém, December 16). The proposal outlines a series of objectives: to preserve natural ecosystems; to restore environmentally-degraded areas; and to set aside areas for managing sustainable resources, for preserving traditional economic activities, for developing new economic activities, and for maintaining national security. One of the goals is to protect indigenous peoples and others who earn their living in extractive activities such as fishing and rubber tapping. The document voices concern for "the territorial integrity of these communities" and their protection from "the impact of external forces."

According to the document, 55,000 poor rural families will benefit. Ninety-five percent of these families work in small-scale agriculture and the remaining 5 percent are engaged in extractive activities. The initiative contains incentives for the cultivation of cocoa, coffee, rubber, and wood. It anticipates a total cost of $250 million and requests that the World Bank provide $150 million.

The proposal, which must win the approval of the Ministries of Agrarian Reform and the Interior, seems to be an effort to repair the damage caused by the controversial Polonoroeste project. A combination of roadworks and colonization, Polonoroeste has brought 160,000 newcomers a year into Rondônia since the late 1970s. In just a decade the project has removed one-fifth of the state's forest cover. The World Bank, as the principal lender for Polonoroeste, has been widely criticized by international environmental groups. The environmentalists contend the Bank's requirements for ecological safeguards are either insufficient or not enforced. In response to such criticism the Bank has become increasingly attentive to ecological issues. Consequently the Rondônia proposal was undoubtedly a product of "Bank diplomacy."

There are several potential problems, however. For example, the proposal fails to specify what portion of Rondônia would fall under zoning regulation. If the entire state is to be regulated, as the document suggests, why would the project benefit only 55,000 families when the total population of Rondônia is 1 million people? Perhaps the most serious flaw is that the proposal inadequately discusses means of implementation. It is unclear how the project, if approved by the Brazilian government and the World Bank, would be carried out.

Nonetheless, a plan for resource management in Rondônia is long overdue. Environmental zoning, which simultaneously addresses economic and ecological problems, is a promising approach. The implementation of a well-conceived zoning project in Rondônia would serve as a model for resource management in other Amazonian states.

Janet M. Chernela is assistant professor of anthropology at Florida International University.
During the evening of December 22, 1988, Francisco Mendes Filho, a leading Brazilian environmentalist, was killed by a shotgun blast as he stepped outside his home in the frontier town of Xapuri, Acre. Mendes was the president of the Union of Rural Workers, a labor organization of the seringuiers, or rubber collectors, whose livelihood depends on the wild rubber trees of the Amazon rain forest. A man of humble birth, Mendes had been a simple rubber collector ("tapper") who was known to his friends as "Chico." His leadership qualities emerged in the mid-1970s as he helped to organize the Union of Rural Workers. He later manifested these qualities in a difficult and bloody struggle to defend the tappers' territories against expropriation and deforestation by cattle ranchers, lumbermen, and settlers.

Mendes proved to be an effective spokesman and lobbyist for forest conservation. Primarily through his efforts the concept of the "extractive reserve" gained currency and was officially implemented in the state of Acre and elsewhere in the Brazilian Amazon. The creation of such protected areas placed Mendes's movement in direct conflict with ranchers and would-be landowners, who made repeated attempts on the lives of the rubber tappers and activists.

Historically, rubber tappers have been among the most abused laboring classes in Brazil. Like many tropical plant species, rubber trees occur as scattered individuals throughout the forest. Each tapper has his own estradas, or trails, that he works on alternating days. He makes fresh cuts on the tree trunks in the morning and collects the latex after the midday meal. Later in the afternoon or evening the collector curdles the latex by slowly ladling it onto a spit that he rotates over a smoky fire, eventually forming the crude rubber ball that he sends to market.

The physical conditions of rubber collecting are lonely and harsh. But the traditional system of labor relations in this extractive enterprise was even worse. A system of debt-peonage prevailed in which all of the collectors on a particular river or section of a river worked under a trader or seringalista. The trader provided basic supplies to his collectors and purchased their rubber. Because the traders manipulated the account books, most rubber tappers quickly fell into debt and became bound to their traders. This relationship benefited the traders because of the traditional scarcity of labor in Amazonia. Some rubber barons employed private armies that enforced the virtual enslavement of their rubber tappers. The tappers' attempts to escape often resulted in torture and death.

Although it abused human beings, the traditional rubber system did not destroy the rain forest. The dispersed rubber trees dictated a dispersed labor force. In the heyday of the rubber boom most collectors did not clear gardens for food; traders provided their staples to maximize collecting time and hence profits. Amazonian rubber lost its dominance in the market after 1912 when most of the production shifted to more efficient Asian plantations, causing a dramatic decline in world prices. The glittering excesses of Brazil's rubber boom era faded as the Amazon entered a period of economic depression. Nevertheless, the main economic activities of the region continued to involve the piecemeal extraction of forest products, including rubber.

Francisco "Chico" Mendes came from such circumstances. He was a tapper who collected latex, Brazil nuts, and other products from trees in the forest. It was a hard life with barely enough earnings to cover the needs of a family living in an isolated hut beside a jungle river. But, insofar as the rain forest survived, it was a sustainable life.

By the 1970s a wave of settlers, ranchers, lumbermen, and miners threatened the Amazonian forests. This wave resulted, in part, from government development schemes and tax incentives. Mendes and the other members of the Union of Rural Workers conducted many demonstrations to block the razing of forest lands. Mendes's soft-spoken
nature and nonviolent tactics led some to call him the “Gandhi of the Amazon.” He was certainly a man of courage, for he knew well that the history of Amazonian conflicts is written in blood, not compromise. In rural Brazil brute force and the law of the gun often prevail. Ranchers, mine owners, and other landholders hire pistoleiros, or gunmen, to intimidate or kill peasants, squatters, Indians, priests, and anyone else they wish to evict from their claims. The Brazilian government rarely prosecutes such crimes. Indeed, the large landowners portray themselves as champions of order and progress in the struggle against leftist agitators, subversive elements, and foreign influences. Their powerful organization, the Rural Democratic Union, is an effective opponent of agrarian reform in Brazil.

In 1987 Mendes lobbied the Inter-American Development Bank against a loan to finance the construction of a highway of penetration into Acre. In order to secure the loan the Brazilian government announced its intention to establish a number of ecological reserves. The government designated some of these as “extractive reserves” to protect the forest while allowing the small-scale collection of renewable resources such as rubber, fruits, and nuts. These special reserves will benefit Amazonian Indians and the rubber tappers. In this context, whites and natives forged a conservationist alliance, with about 10,000 Indians joining Mendes’s Union of Rural Workers. In 1987 the UN Environmental Program recognized Mendes’s effectiveness as a conservationist when it honored him with a Global 500 Award.

Mendes’s rising star aroused the ire of ranchers who coveted the lands now designated as protected forest areas. In the aftermath of his murder, the police launched an investigation and arrested several members of a prominent Xapuri family for their alleged involvement in the crime. National and international protest and media coverage have forced the police to respond. With breathtaking speed, Chico Mendes has become an inspiration and martyr for the environmental cause.

The struggle to protect the rain forests of the Amazon requires constant vigilance. Acre’s governor, Flaviano Melo, is promoting the concept of a new highway to link the state capital of Rio Branco with the Peruvian frontier city of Pucallpa. This road would connect with the trans-Andean highway to Lima and its Pacific port of Callao. Melo argues that, because Brazil’s ports are much farther away, the 1,000-mile route is a key to the effective marketing of Acre’s forest products. The route would also facilitate the export of Brazilian soybean, grain, and meat to the Pacific Rim.

Much to the chagrin of environmentalists, Melo has approached Japan concerning the financing of the estimated $300-million project. The world’s foremost consumer of tropical hardwoods, Japan sees Amazonian timber as a replacement for its declining sources in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Melo contends the road should be built under his administration to insure that environmental safeguards will be observed. Despite his attempt to align himself with the legacy of Chico Mendes, experience shows Amazonian road construction unleashes processes of colonization and deforestation that resist all attempts at regulation. If the Rio Branco-Pucallpa highway is completed, Acre’s forests are likely to suffer the massive devastation that has occurred in the neighboring state of Rondônia.
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Saying One Thing, Doing Another ...

Two recent developments indicate that, despite Fidel Castro's emphasis on anticapitalist "rectification" and his skepticism about Soviet-style "perestroika," Cuba is eager for foreign investments in specific sectors. One of these is petroleum—where the country is now producing 1 million tons of crude a year—half from Matanzas province. Spanish and Soviet investments have financed a new oil terminal in the Bay of Matanzas at a cost of about $60 million.

"Foggy Bottom Freedom Fighter"?

Important nuggets of information can be found in Elliott Abrams's exit interview on Reagan policy in Latin America. The former assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs assesses Latin America's recent experience with democracy and prospects for democracy, and discusses other matters such as relations between the executive branch and Congress on Central American issues. According to Abrams, House speaker Jim Wright was "impossible to work with." While Abrams was complimentary of the foreign service, he argues the "Department of State as an institution has shown an inability to defend itself from one of its greatest enemies on earth, the US Congress" (Policy Review, Winter 1989).

¿Quién tiene la culpa?

The latest hammering of the US foreign service comes from Constantine C. Menges, whose Policy Review (Fall 1988) article emphasizes the capital flight from Panama. Panama's foreign exchange reserves have shrunk from about $20.6 billion at the end of 1987 to about $7 billion in July 1988. An estimated 30% of this capital flight has found its way to Miami.

Capital Flight

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Presidential Pecadillos

Andrés Oppenheimer reported in the Miami Herald (December 11, 1988) that Presidential Concubines (1988), written and published by Carlos Capriles Ayala, is the hottest selling book in Venezuela. Alleging that all of Venezuela's presidents, from Bolivar to Carlos Andrés Pérez, have had mistresses, the book has sold more than 45,000 copies. The issue of presidential mistresses has had a growing public affairs impact because of the high profile of Blanca Ibañez, Jaime Lusinchi's companion during his recently completed presidency.

¿El gringo del altiplano?

In Orbita-Bip ... the Bolivian political leader Gonzalo Sánchez Lozada has been given the nod to be the country's next president. Why? According to the Caracas-based publication, "Goni," as he is known, believes that a second-place finish in the May 1989 presidential election is as good as a victory because neither the left nor the right can tolerate a victory by the other. With this deadlock in the electoral outcome will be determined by the congress, which will opt for Sánchez, the candidate of the incumbent party, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario. According to the publication, Sánchez "speaks Spanish with a marked North American accent, but his mentality is Bolivian hasta la médula (to the bone marrow)."

Cueca Solo (They Dance Alone)

Have you listened to Sting's latest song, "Cueca Solo," on the album ...Nothing Like the Sun (A&M Records)? Based on the "cueca," Chile's traditional courting dance, "Cueca Solo" asks "Why are these women here dancing on their own?" The song resulted from the 1986 Amnesty Tour, when traveling musicians had the opportunity to meet victims of torture and government repression.

Roots Rock

Hot new albums that will appeal to Latin music buffs are Rubén Blades's Antecedente and Los Lobos's La pistola y el corazón. Blades is the Panamanian musician who popularized "crossover" music. His latest album reflects his feelings for the people and places of Panama. Los Lobos highlight the use of indigenous guitars and harps in their most recent album interpretation of traditional Mexican music.

Watch Out

Three US journalists were recently awarded Alicia Patterson Founda-
tion grants to write books focusing on Latin America. Sam Dillon of the Miami Herald, Pam Constable of the Boston Globe, and free-lancer Michael Massing will use foundation support to examine respectively the contra war, Pinochet’s impact on Chile, and US counterinsurgency doctrine.

The CBI: A Second Look

In Gateway, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's international economic development publication, international trade attorney Lee Sandler has suggested that pending legislation on the CBI (CBI-II), sponsored by Rep. Sam Gibbons (D-FL) and Sen. Bob Graham (D-FL), should focus on risk reduction. Questioning the common wisdom that expansion of duty-free treatment for imports is the means to enhance CBI’s impact, Sandler suggests that the lack of adequate or available insurance coverage is a significant obstacle to potential investors. The solution? “Increase OPIC insurance coverage.”

806.30-807.00 Redux

The US International Trade Commission has released a multivolume report on the use and economic impact of tariff items 806.30 and 807.00. These measures provide duty concessions for domestic products that are reimported to the US in conjunction with foreign processing and/or assembly. Leading supplier countries are Mexico (54%), Canada (14%), and the Caribbean states (10%). Prepared for the House Subcommittee on Trade, the studies are useful instruments for researchers and investment analysts concerned with the employment impact of offshore manufacturing.

You May Need These

The Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance at Georgetown University has published a set of useful and timely studies on Central American migration to the US. An analysis by Segundo Montes and Juan José García Vásquez estimates that there may be as many as 900,000 Salvadorans now living in the US. (El Salvador’s population is approximately 5 million.) Another study, by Sergio Aguayo and Patricia Weiss Fagen, calls for greater involvement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in implementing refugee and safe-haven protection in the US.

On the Move

Susan Kaufman Purcell is now vice president for Latin American affairs of the Americas Society. Formerly with the Council of Foreign Relations, where she published Debt and the Restructuring of Mexico (June 1988), Purcell will coordinate a series of study groups focusing on the impact of Europe ’92 on Latin America and the US, and the impact of détente on Soviet and US relations with Latin America.

Antonio Valle Vallejo, who was Gabriel García Márquez’s assistant at the Foundation of New Latin American Cinema in Havana, was assigned by the novelist to represent him last June at a film festival in Bogotá. Valle accepted the assignment—it would be his first trip outside the island. Once in Bogotá, he found the US Embassy, asked for asylum, and is now in Miami. Reports are that an indignant García Márquez belatedly requested that Colombian president Virgilio Barco return Valle.

Peter Eisner, senior editor of foreign news at Newsday for five years, is moving to Miami to resume work as a foreign correspondent. The former Associated Press reporter already has extensive experience in Latin America, having covered the news in Central America, Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil.

Lillian Pubillones, formerly on the staff of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, is now executive director of the Coalition for the Advancement of Foreign Languages and International Studies (CAFLIS). CAFLIS brings together 128 national groups representing the foreign language, teaching, and social studies communities in the US. It hopes to convince US policymakers of the vital link between competitiveness and international education and language training. A major agenda item will be the possibility of creating a “national endowment for international studies,” similar to the National Science Foundation.

Jackie Tillman, formerly director for Latin America on the National Security Council, was named executive director of the Cuban American National Foundation in Washington, DC last October. A Jean Kirkpatrick protégé, Tillman has worked in the United Nations and at the American Enterprise Institute. Under her tutelage expect more public affairs conferences and publications addressing the human rights situation in Cuba and that country’s foreign policy.
Upside-Down Decolonization
by Rosemarijn Hofte and Gert Oostindie

What do less-developed countries stand to gain or lose, as the US, Western Europe, and the Soviet Union seek to reduce their geopolitical commitments? Uncertainties abound, as illustrated by the case of the Netherlands and the Dutch Caribbean.

The prospects for the independence of Holland's Caribbean possessions are clouded by questions of economic viability and political fragmentation, as well as domestic politics in the Netherlands. The Antilleans understandably hold that these problems need to be solved before changes in the relationship with the Netherlands can be addressed.

With Aruba things are different. According to the 1983 amendments to the law (Statuut) that governs decolonization, this island must become independent in 1996. But neither the Aruban government nor the population is willing to take this final step because they are content with their present status as an autonomous partner in the Dutch Kingdom.

The most extreme scenario would make the Netherlands Antilles a Dutch overseas province. The almost unanimous opinion of politicians in the Netherlands and the Dutch Caribbean is that this option is not preferable. The larger islands certainly would not want to take such a regressive step. Nevertheless, it is not out of the question that in case of further fragmentation of the Netherlands Antilles, smaller islands such as Saba, Bonaire, and St. Eustatius would eventually opt for the status of the 13th province of the Netherlands. Saba and Bonaire have already expressed their interest in doing so.

If some, or all, of the islands choose to become a sort of Département d'Outre Mer, each island would become a separate municipality with a so-called "Article 12" status. This means that each island would be under the financial tutelage of the Dutch state. Such an arrangement could provoke the possibility of growing Antillean resentment against renewed Dutch involvement in local affairs.

When discussing the decolonization of small islands, such as the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, one wonders why the metropole wants such mini-states to become independent. What is the burden it finds too heavy to carry? Sociologist Harry Hoetink has suggested that Dutch policymakers fear two things: a revisit to the social unrest and rioting of "Willemstad 1969" and mass migration from the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba to the Netherlands. A third fear might be added: the financial costs.

Responsibilities and Image
In our interview with the Dutch minister of Social Affairs and Netherlands Antilles Affairs, Jan de Koning, his Excellency volunteered his view on decolonization. Koning preferred the term "decolonialization" to "decolonization." This was not meant to be a play on words. He emphasized that, since the signing of the Statuut, relations in the Dutch system are no longer regarded as "colonial," a fact recognized by the UN. The minister underlined that the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba are equal partners, even though the former nation supplies financial and technical assistance. Moreover, in the area of foreign relations the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba are included in relevant negotiations and treaty signings. In short, the Caribbean partners possess a high degree of autonomy, in spite of the social and cultural traces the colonial past may have left.

Koning's remarks are justified. Yet they are telling with regard to the Dutch concern with world image. Many Dutch felt the events of May 1969 severely tarnished this image. Even though no shot was fired and the Dutch were required by Article 43 in the Statuut to restore order, the episode left a bitter taste for two main reasons.

First, the Dutch, especially the young, believed the Netherlands should lead Europe and the US in improving relations with the Third
World. They resented their country's seeming reversion to its old role as a colonial power ready to intervene when its interests are threatened. Some politicians like Koning still talk about May 1969 as a nightmare for both the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands. But the majority of the Dutch do not think the international community still labels the Netherlands as a colonial power, or did so even in 1969. Ironically, pushing the Netherlands Antilles into independence today might be considered a repulsive colonial act.

A second difficulty concerns Article 43, which mandates the Dutch to guarantee "adequate administration" of their overseas territories. Article 43 stipulates that the Dutch government may be called upon to control internal unrest. "May 1969" suggests this provision is no dead letter. Most Antillean politicians do not resent the "colonial" connotations of this part of the article, but would not mind if it were removed. Henny Eman, the former prime minister of Aruba, has said that internal defense and adequate administration are "our own responsibility; we will never call upon the Netherlands for help as far as these are concerned."

The Dutch are still uneasy, though. Despite their obligation to intervene, they are not supposed to exert any influence on Antillean politics. Nevertheless, with the constitutional and economic problems in the Netherlands Antilles, Dutch involvement has intensified to the dismay of politicians in the Netherlands. With this growing involvement Dutch disaffection with the political system in the Netherlands Antilles has increased proportionally. The nature of Antillean politics, including relatively large social and economic inequalities and patronage, is not always appreciated by the more Calvinistically-inclined officials and politicians in The Hague.

In addition to internal order, Article 43 covers the external security of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. External defense is a hornets' nest. The Antilleans and Arubans cannot defend themselves, yet the Dutch are not able to do much more than show the flag in the hope it will thwart outside aggressors. At present, such external threats seem relatively remote. The Dutch presence in the Caribbean still provides some stability in a volatile region, much to the satisfaction of the US and Venezuela. Major problems, however, could develop if the Statuut is changed or revoked, leaving no adequate provisions for defense. The vacuum could be filled by other powers, thereby threatening Antillean sovereignty.

It seems Article 43 will become one of the major issues in discussions regarding constitutional changes in the Statuut. Minister Koning and former Netherlands prime minister Barend Biesheuvel are most specific in identifying why the Netherlands wants to discard its responsibilities vis-à-vis the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. Both refer to Article 43. Biesheuvel argues external security is the disputed point. In contrast, Koning thinks the obligatory Dutch guarantees of internal security and decent administration under Article 43 are the main problems, because they interfere with the autonomy of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

The latter problem seems easier to solve than the external defense issue.

In short, the provision for intervening in the case of internal or external threats will probably serve as a stimulus to Dutch desires to decolonize and an irritant in future relationships between the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba.

Migration

The inhabitants of the Netherlands Antilles have Dutch passports and are thus entitled to unrestrained settlement and social benefits in the Netherlands. Independence will take away Dutch nationality and close the borders. It may thereby limit mass migration to the Netherlands. Fortunately the future of the Netherlands Antilles is not a major issue in the Netherlands; Dutch political parties do not openly seek to capitalize on latent xenophobia. All parties deny that racism or xenophobia plays any role in their decisions. Instead, other reasons, such as costs incurred to the islands by the brain drain and the bad employment situation for Antilleans and Arubans in the Netherlands, are used to defend measures limiting the number of incoming migrants.

The liberal-conservative Peoples' Party for Freedom and Democracy (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD) yearly calls in parliament for stricter admission rules, yet...
never receives support from any other major party. The VVD seems to be guided by the spectre of the Surinamese exodus of the 1970s. On the eve of independence in 1975, or shortly after, 150,000 people—one-third of the total Surinamese population—settled in the Netherlands. The VVD claims this led to political and economic disaster in Suriname and represented a burden on the Dutch welfare state, because Surinamese immigrants—as Dutch citizens—were entitled to social benefits. A brain drain will leave the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba with a shortage of trained executives. The problem with this argument is that it easily might be abused to cover less noble motives to limit migration.

The total "ethnic" population of the Netherlands is an estimated 700,000 people, or less than 10 percent of the population. Approximately 50,000 of these "ethnics" are from the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, islands which have a total population of 260,000. More than 40 percent of these Antillean and Aruban migrants are unemployed. This situation makes their position in the Netherlands vulnerable. It also gives rise to local resentment against "the foreigners" who put pressure on the Dutch entitlement structure. Support for racist parties declined in the parliamentary elections of 1986. Nevertheless, it seems that many Dutch citizens have reached the limits of tolerance and acceptance of foreigners. This, too, may influence Dutch policy.

On the other side of the ocean, the Antillean and Aruban governments use the migration issue to put pressure on their Dutch counterpart. They sometimes cunningly threaten that immigration to the Netherlands will escalate if the Dutch, for example, refuse to increase their financial assistance to balance the budget or if the Netherlands tells them to prepare for independence. Such threats, which indeed frighten many Dutch politicians and citizens alike, seem to be one of the few trumps the Antilleans and Arubans are holding in their negotiations with The Hague. Of course this could also be a self-defeating argument, prompting the Dutch to curtail free immigration.

Do the Dutch want to extricate themselves from their "colonial" relationship because of pressure from the rank and file at home? Or is it Dutch concern for their overseas territories?

**Finances**

Former Aruban prime minister Eman thinks Dutch financial support is a factor in decisions regarding the future of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. One of the most important goals of his administration was to become financially independent: "Money should not cloud decisions on your constitutional future," he said.

In these islands development aid per capita is among the highest in the world. The Netherlands disburses about 25 billion guilders per year to its partners overseas. This amount excludes defense, administration of justice, and occasional budget support. The sum is fixed at 5 percent of the Dutch development aid budget, which in turn is fixed at 1 percent of the total budget. Per capita, this is Df11000 or $500, many times more than the aid from all other sources that the English-speaking Caribbean receives.

Most Dutch politicians we have talked to confide that money is of no consequence in the debate, and some even call the amount of financial support "peanuts." Only the VVD representative expresses some reservations. His party thinks the remittance of money from the Netherlands to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is "excessively high." Two arguments are used. Poorer countries in the world may have stronger claims and the Dutch have experienced painful cuts in the social and educational budgets. In other words, the money might otherwise be used to balance the budget in the Netherlands.

Antilleans counter these arguments with arguments of their own. First, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba have a 300-year-old tie with the Netherlands that makes them special. This argument is supported by some Dutch politicians, especially older ones. Second, Antilleans rightly claim that they must cut their budget more drastically than their Dutch colleagues. Another argument is that development aid sustains a high standard of living and high wages in the Dutch Caribbean, a disadvantage in the intra-Caribbean competition for investments and employment. Antilleans correctly stress, however, that this standard is not a consequence of development aid but of past industrial activity, particularly in the oil sector.

Even though most Dutch say they want the amount of aid to remain the same, some of them suggest that the donor country should have a larger voice in allocation. This is a new development. During the past two decades, presenting the money with strings attached was "not done." In the 1980s even social democrats support Koning's viewpoint that the Netherlands should direct and control the spending of its development aid. Stimulation of social and economic development, not theaters or community development projects, should be its thrust, they say.

Dutch politicians deny that the possible independence of the Caribbean partners, most likely followed
by a commonwealth construction, would have consequences for the amount of Dutch aid to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. A VVD spokesperson suggests that aid may be reduced if the status quo is maintained, rather than when the islands become independent. The Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, nonetheless, may express some reservations about Dutch guarantees for development aid. After all, following the so-called “December murders” of 1982, when the Surinamese military junta executed 15 members of the opposition, the Dutch suspended all economic aid to the former colony. In short, the islands may rightly feel the Statuut offers more guarantees for financial support than any other treaty between the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba ever will.

**Why Independence?**

Do the Dutch want to extricate themselves from their “colonial” relationship because of political pressure from the rank and file in the metropole or because there is a lack of interest for the welfare of the citizens overseas? Or is it just the opposite: Dutch concern for the welfare of their overseas territories? There might, of course, be another reason for decolonization: using the threat of independence as a lever to influence Antillean and Aruban politics. Finally, there may exist a general uneasiness about the idea of having “dependencies” in the late 20th century.

The first two motives seem unlikely explanations of Dutch policy, since the overseas territories are not a political issue in the Netherlands. One Curaçaoan politician even complains about this “detrimental lack of interest.” Probably the only way the overseas territories could move into the limelight is when the Netherlands Antilles or Aruba make negative headlines, as happened in May 1969, or when demagogy gets the upper hand, expressed in xenophobia, or if the cost of keeping the islands afloat is set off against cutbacks in the Dutch welfare system.

Even among policymakers, whose actions are guided predominantly by Dutch interests, a total absence of concern for citizens in the West Indies seems no ground to push the Netherlands Antilles into independence. Some genuinely believe independence would help the development of the territories. This argument, rejecting continued dependence, receives support in Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. When we asked the Aruban pro-independence politician, the late H. S. “Betico” Croes, why his country should become independent, he answered, “That question has been answered by more than 140 countries. You have to fend for yourself and accept your own responsibility.” Antillean premier Maria Liberia Peters expresses it even more crisply, “It’s your pride, it’s your dignity.”

**Dutch support for racist parties declined in the parliamentary elections of 1986. Nevertheless, it seems that many Dutch citizens have reached the limits of tolerance and acceptance of foreigners.**

As real as these nationalist sentiments are, they do not reveal the actual dynamics that characterize the present decolonization process. Indeed, to the Antillean, the idea of independence is a long-term one, not a matter for immediate implementation. The Dutch, though, are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, many policymakers in the Netherlands want independence for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba mainly because of their qualms about a colonial relationship as we approach the magic year 2000. Words such as “unnatural,” “anachronistic,” and even “futureless” are used to express these misgivings.

Supposedly, the wheel of history dictates that independence is the next logical step for the Caribbean partners. A member of the Dutch parliament, however, implies it is not so much the wheel of history as it is the wheel of politics that directs the future of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba: “It is hard to retrace one’s steps if there exists no immediate reason to do so.”

On the other hand, Antillean resistance to any clear-cut and immediate independence might tempt the Dutch to use the idea as a threat, indeed, as a punishment, to achieve two goals. First, the threat applies pressure on the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba to balance their budgets and reorganize their disproportionately large civil services. Obviously the Dutch minister of Antillean affairs cannot reveal whether he employs the threat of independence as an incentive to ensure that the islands change their financial and administrative ways. But some experts doubt such a line of action would have any effect, since nobody reckons with a forced independence. Secondly, and much more effectively, the threat suppresses possible inclinations in other islands towards attaining a separate status. When, for example, St. Maarten in 1988 expressed its desire to become a separate country within the Kingdom, the Dutch answer was clear: the choice is between participating in the Antilles-of-five or outright independence.

The upshot is that decolonization in the Dutch Caribbean departs from previous patterns and experiences. It is an “upside-down” process. Since a colonially-imposed independence is not expected, what is unfolding is a complex and often perplexing, but in the final analysis eminently-civilized, minuet between metropole and colonies.
Before the 1980 coup most of Suriname's 370,000 population resided in and around the capital and only city, Paramaribo. The Creoles (Afro-Surinamese) dominated the urban and suburban areas and high positions in civil service and business. The Hindustanis (East Indians) and the Javanese (Indonesians) were agriculturalists. The Syrians, Lebanese, Chinese, Dutch, and Sephardim were found in urban trades, mid-level civil service positions, modest shops, and importing houses. The vast and underexploited savanna and rain-forest interior was home to several groups of American Indians and six groups of Bush Negroes (Maroons).

Three parties dominated the political scene through the 1960s and 1970s: the Creole Surinamese National Party (Nationale Partij Suriname, NPS), the Hindustani Progressive Reform Party (Vooruitstrevende Herverwings Partij, VHP), and the Javanese Indonesian Peasants Party (Kauw Tani Persatuan Indonesia, KTPI). They divided power among themselves in an atmosphere of political wheeling and dealing, including patronage that greased palms up and down the social structure. Party politics worked best when both NPS and VHP were members of a coalition government. KTPI regularly joined with either the Creoles or the Hindustanis when the latter two groups could not collaborate, thus providing the swing vote in times of acute Creole-Hindustani rivalry. Two narrow Creole-Javanese victories in 1973 and 1977 led to consecutive governments that excluded the Hindustanis from power. The country was tense and angry; development policies were corrupt, shortsighted, and vague.

The brittle structure of power finally snapped. The result was a coup fomented by 16 army noncommissioned officers. For many there was joy and hope that the young sergeants would restore a balance to politics, clean up corruption, and move the country ahead. But the sergeants proclaimed a revolution, collaborated closely with small groups of radical leftist politicians, established relationships with Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua, and ruled with a heavy and increasingly bloody hand. By late 1982 the people's support evaporated and the military resorted to thuggery to maintain power.

Seven civilian cabinets followed. They themselves were maneuvering to gain power. But neither the military nor the civilians gained mass support. Despite efforts to create a revolutionary Peoples' Mobilization (Volks Mobilisatie), these cadres, relentless with promised patronage and perks, did not connect with traditional social organizations at the grassroots level.

Transition

In Suriname each ethnic group has its own array of social, religious, and political organizations. One example from the urban Creoles should suffice. Most urban Creole women belong to a variety of clubs, societies, and associations that are vertically integrated from the household level to the highest levels of national political power, where the organizations serve as instruments of powerholders. Anthropologist Rosemary Brana-Shute reports that “teams” of women are bundled together at the household (aso) and subneighborhood (birti) levels in mutual exchange and support networks. Building on these, the women have created burial societies (fonsoe), rotating credit organizations (kas moni), and social clubs to celebrate shared rites of passage (straati vereniging).

As political arms (politieke kern) of NPS, most of these social groups remained active throughout the revolutionary period. The groups were permeated by symbols of “womanness,” particularly the role of mother-nurturer, respectful, disciplined, sexually active, and, often, defiant of the whims, boastings, and unreliability of men. Much of their activity was articulated with the Creole religious system (winti) and gatherings often took on a deeply spiritual air when African spirits and ancestral ghosts joined in the proceedings of the living.

The Peoples' Mobilization attempted to graft its priorities “top down” onto these neighborhood groups through the instrument of Peoples' Committees (Volkscomitees). They failed for a number of reasons,
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perhaps the most profound being that their orientation was entirely male. Young soldiers (i.e. "sons") entered, uninvited, backyard parties of clubs (i.e. "mothers") dressed in combat fatigues and black jump boots with Uzi submachine guns slung, cavalierly, over their shoulders. Young males were appointed Peoples' Committee leaders and charged with organizing men, women, and children into revolutionary, dedicated to the cause of labor, development, and political consciousness-building. Women attended, ate, drank, and politely listened to the oratory. But they returned home to dismiss the proceedings with a sharp hiss of the teeth (churi) and, in reply to repeated questions of why they went in the first place, answered, "I am not a fool. If food and drink is available I will take it." Opportunists signed up for ration cards available only to members. Virtually everyone was playing the military for the fool.

Concepts of Surinamese negritude were also violated. Many of the young soldiers did not present their orations in Sranan Tongo, the Creole mother tongue and lingua franca of Suriname. Instead they did so in school-book Dutch. European cadence and metaphors did not stimulate the cultural juices of the masses nor play well in the backyards of Paramaribo.

The military had deposed the police from power. The police in Suriname had the reputation of "good sons." They were replaced with military police heavies. And, in an irony common to neocolonial societies, the military offended many by its crude denunciations of the mother country, the Netherlands. The abstractions of Dutch exploitation fell flat because many natives genuinely liked the Netherlands and wrapped much of their sentiment around Queens Wilhelmina and Juliana. Railings against the Dutch were perceived as rude and bold (vrijpostig), an attribute of the misbehaving young and disrespectful (no abi lespeki). Analogous failure took place with other ethnic groups.

The revolution got no further than the "Peoples' Palace," the military barracks, and select bank accounts that were swallowed by graft and thievery. The military's fate was sealed when, in December 1982, it tortured and murdered 15 prominent dissidents, unceremoniously dumping their bodies at the hospital. Surinamese believe the souls of the deceased who are not properly dispatched to the afterworld return to involve themselves in the affairs of the living.

In the eyes of urban residents the Bush Negroes occupy the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. Their Afro-American culture is excoriated as unrefined, if not barbaric. Did ethnic Paramaribo fear the Bush Negroes would garrison the capital city?

The Game

By 1983 domestic and international support for the revolution had evaporated and Commander Desi Bouterse was compelled to enter into dialogue with the "old" political leaders. Everyone knew democracy had to be restored. They wanted it and Bouterse needed it as he presided over his bankrupt, demoralized fiefdom. The Dutch and the Americans supported dialogue, while the Cubans, Libyans, and Soviets, knowing the military charlatans for what they were, moved to the margin. The old parties entered into dialogue with the military to secure elections. Many were fearful the military would renege its promises. During this time the public countenanced no pessimism. Civi lians threw themselves into the desperate political game that eventually became a messianic reality.

Throughout 1985 and into 1986 the dialogue was going nowhere. It was at this time that, in Dutch sociologist Johan Huizinga's words, a "spoil sport" emerged. A young Bush Negro named Ronnie Brunswijk, formerly in the army and a one-time bodyguard of Bouterse, began a small, poorly-equipped insurgency in the Bush Negro areas of eastern Suriname. Brunswijk denounced Bouterse's regime and promised a return to democracy via free elections. His support primarily consisted of Maroons. By 1987 he controlled one-third of the countryside.

Brunswijk's efforts were denounced by the democratic hopefuls in Paramaribo. Why? In the eyes of urban residents Bush Negroes occupy the lowest rung of the national social hierarchy. Their Afro-American culture is self-servingly excoriated as unrefined, if not barbaric. Despite their heroic battles against white armies in the 18th century—the very inversion of colonialism—their exploits were unappreciated by ethnic Paramaribo.

Did ethnic Paramaribo fear that the Bush Negroes would garrison Paramaribo and destroy Afro-Asian dominance there? Or did they oppose the Bush Negroes because the "spoil sport," as Huizinga says, "by withdrawing from the game ... reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others"? Brunswijk dared to challenge the messianic hopes of the civilians and thereby scorned their gaming strategy. In so doing he reaped the bitter harvest of being banished from Paramaribo's reality.

Nevertheless, it was Brunswijk who ultimately moved the military to
concede to civilian elections. Bouterse had to secure his urban flanks against jungle attacks and he promised elections for late 1987.

Old Shoes Don’t Hurt

By early 1987 the rival political groups began organizing in earnest for the election. The military transformed its political arm into the National Democratic Party (Nationale Democratische Partij, NDP). Several political parties—NPS, VHP, KTPI, and a number of smaller parties—confederated, not united, into the Front for Democracy and Development (Het Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling). NDP dominated the mass media. State and private radio, television, and newspapers were effectively censored. (To avoid blatant charges of censorship the government denied licenses to uncooperative publishers for the import of paper and ink.)

The Front held its first mass meeting in August 1987, drawing together 40,000 celebrative citizens, the largest body of people ever assembled in the history of Suriname. The citizens were addressed by the leaders of various parties, who appeared jointly on the dais. Such public gatherings were scheduled up to two days before the elections, and on two later occasions drew even larger crowds. For four months it was Mardi Gras in Paramaribo and, dizzy with their collective energy, Surinamese began, for the first time, openly criticizing the military and especially Commander Bouterse.

The keystone of revolution in Suriname and, indeed elsewhere, was to mobilize the young. Bouterse, handsome and fit at 42, constantly railed against the old “grey heads” and promoted his acolytes as young, vital, and hip. Eschewing his military uniform, the commander began appearing in Miami Vice-style garb: woven shoes, silk stockings, linen suit with sleeves pushed to the elbow, gold chains, a boldly-colored tee-shirt, and aviator sunglasses. Disjunction was provided by his serious premature baldness and mouth-encircling mustaches and beard. On state occasions he wore a European-cut three-piece pin-stripe. He appeared discomforted. Although the Miami look is in for the young who can afford it, his costume did not generate the expected youthful enthusiasm. For many it was precisely the military’s disastrous fiscal policies that prohibited them from acquiring such garb. Envy is a very powerful emotion.

Although the Miami Vice look is in for the young who can afford it, Commander Bouterse’s costume did not generate youthful enthusiasm. For many it was precisely the military’s disastrous policies that kept them from acquiring such garb.

Rival theme songs were broadcast daily, sung spontaneously in the streets, and blared endlessly at gatherings. NDP selected as its testimonial a rap-rhyme number sung in Sranan Tongo. Again aiming at the young, a young black performer in obligatory sunglasses and gold chains rocked and chanted, “One we stay, two we do, three we see, four we go, five we are not afraid.” If explicit behavior counts for double, this gambit also failed. The young mockingly recited the verses, inverting them into negatives, and railing ridicule on the singer while merrily singing out the theme song of the Front. Older Creoles referred to the singer as a “street negro” (“straati nengre”) and protested that they did not like the beat. Sung in Sranan, the NDP theme song associated the military/NDP too closely with the Creole ethnic group. The linguistic politics mirrored reality: the military and its profiteers were dominated by Creoles.

The Front selected as its song a pop number in Dutch that extolled the virtues of ethnic collaboration. Dutch, the colonial language, caused affront to no one. Dutch is the language that many Surinamese love to hate and a mastery of it indicates respectability. Innocent and nonthreatening, the kind of ditty mom and dad would sing after a few drinks, “Vote Front” (“Stem Frontoal”) promised: “Everyone is a front, then the country is healthy again, vote Front, Surinamers all. Democracy and development, that is the whole thing, brother don’t lose your vote.” The crowd ended by roaring out, “That is that thing” (“Dat is dat ding”), and the air was filled with waving V-for-victory fingers. People meeting on the street ignored normal conventions and greeted each other with “Dat is dat ding,” while motorists, whose driving panache rivals only that of Rome, waved V-signs at one another.

Front leaders Henck Arron and Willie Soemita, both in their 50s, wore tailored Caribbean shirt-jacks and campaign caps with the logo of either the Front or their own political party (for Creoles the flameau or flame, for Javanese the Wajang puppet). Another Front leader, Jagarnath Lachmon, 70 years old, played to the humility and traditional outfit of the Hindustani farmer: old black lace-up shoes, black slacks, white shirt open at the collar, and all cinched up by a belt doubled back through the first two loops. His cap was either the VHP emblem or the Front emblem, which contained each of the three symbols in its own circle surrounded by a larger circle. Slow, lumpy, and cumbersome, “Lach” was just what the people wanted.

Slogans were popular and threaded throughout the campaign’s discourse. Bouterse’s NDP contribution to political opera was “only love” (“soso lobi”), which was offered...
up by candidates in a gooey mix of wide smile, open arms, and silky pronunciation. People had difficulty relating this slogan to the murders of 1982 and the ravages perpetrated by the military against Bush Negro women and children in the interior insurgency. Love is a highly-charged word and many considered NDP’s slogan further evidence that their daughters were under siege. “Only love” (“soso lobi”) shortly became transformed into “only trouble” (“soso trobi”) and “only losers” (“soso lasi”).

In a revelation that brings to mind V. S. Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*, the Front selected an old shoe (oru su) as its symbol. Old shoes began appearing all over Paramaribo: hanging from flagpoles, nailed over doorways, mounted on hoods of automobiles, and, as the election neared, carried about by the faithful. The caption for the old shoe was “old shoes don’t hurt.”

Front meetings were carefully staged in public terrains rather than the headquarter yards of political parties. Each group sported its own ethnic costume—Creole women in koto, Hindustanis in sari, Javanese in sarong. There was no pretense of merging the identity of the ethnic groups into one national culture (as NDP sought to do). The goal was unity in diversity and the US motto, “United we stand, divided we fall,” was widely used in the original English. Ethnically-exclusive meetings were scheduled at different times in separate political party yards. Even though the military and its revolutionary administration were predominantly Creole, the Front never referred to them in ethnic terms. The opponent was the ethnically-faceless army. Recognizing its delicate confederated plurality, the Front dared not refer to the ethnic identity of its opponent.

NDP offered up a recipe of love and socialism. Like the Front, the NDP made no mention of ethnicity, save one occasion with disastrous results. Two nights before the election it was clear that NDP would lose; the question was merely one of degree. Bouterse was the keynote speaker at an NDP night meeting and was going to arrive three hours late. Free food and beverages had already been consumed and the crowd was getting restless. The rap singer was growing hoarse. When Bouterse arrived he was clearly intoxicated. Surrounded by his Creole lieutenants, Bouterse mounted the podium, wearing sunglasses and a shirt more than discretely open, wobbled a bit, mopped his brow, and launched into a discussion of how socialism would remove the perils of multiethnicity. Groping for a metaphor, he claimed Suriname no longer could have “Hindustani pandits [priests] huddled in their temples going ‘kakara, kakara, kakara.’”

The live broadcast became the talk of the town. Not only had Bouterse singled out one group for excoriation but he had insulted its language by using a crude onomatopoetic description. He then made reference to the fallen comrades of the revolution and demanded that the members of the audience remove their campaign caps for a moment of silence. Some did, some did not, and in an outburst of anger he told them to put their caps back on and to remove them again when he gave the order. This was interpreted as the last desperate commands of a weak and demoralized dictator. As he began to wobble, he was escorted off stage while yanking at his slipping pants.

The Front won 90 percent of the votes cast and secured 40 of the 51 seats, despite the fact that NDP had barred the Front from running candidates in the war zones. The Front even carried the vote in areas that were heavily populated by NDP supporters (insofar as housing and land tracts were granted to them in exchange for political support at one time or another). The result was a massive psychological and political victory for the people of Suriname.

The night of the election, as returns were pouring in, Lachmon, in a moment of bragadocio, announced, “Gentlemen, the game is over, you have to go home.” But alas, it was not. As the crowd grew evermore festive and spilled onto the streets singing and waving flags, Lachmon once again rose to the podium. In his strictest and most commanding voice he ordered the crowds to go home, not to torment the military, and to stay off the streets. There were still a few hands of the game left to be played.

By January 1988 a president (Hindustani), a prime minister (Creole), and a cabinet (carefully balanced Creole, Hindustani, and Javanese) had been assembled. As they have for years, Surinamese scrupulously observed which ethnic groups obtained which ministries. Indeed, the faces were new but the ethnic assignments were old. Larger issues were left unresolved. Would amnesty be granted to the military for the murders of 1982 and other times? What would be their role in power or power-sharing? Would the police take over the administration of law? Would the military continue to absorb a huge piece of the budget? Would the war in east Suriname continue? And what would eventually happen to Bouterse, who still commands the military? It is likely that these questions will remain unresolved for a time to come.
Crisis in the Backlands

by Adiante Franszoon

Suriname's current political crisis is rooted in the deep tensions that exist between its ethnic communities, as manifested in the civil war between the Maroons and the national army.

Formerly known as Dutch Guiana, Suriname became independent from the Netherlands in 1975. Its citizens live in a country the size of Illinois. Despite its small population, Suriname is one of the most ethnically-diverse societies in South America. Blacks, East Indians, Indonesians, Chinese, Europeans, and Amerindians comprise the population. The blacks consist of two subgroups: Creoles, who tend to be urban, and Maroons. The latter are the descendants of African slaves who escaped from coastal Suriname between the mid-17th and late-18th centuries.

After more than a half century of brutal guerrilla warfare against colonial troops, the Dutch recognized Maroon independence in the 1760s. This treaty allowed the Maroons to occupy a large part of the interior of Suriname, which has been their homeland ever since. The Maroons of Suriname thus were among the first people in this hemisphere to gain their independence and for hundreds of years their isolation allowed them to develop a rich community and cultural life. Today there are six Maroon groups totaling around 65,000: the Djuka, the Saramaka, the Matawai, the Aluku, the Paramaka, and the Kwinti. While they do some trading with the urban populations, the Maroons are as distinct as any Indian tribe from the Amazon heartland. They are ethnically, linguistically, and demographically separate from the rest of the Surinamese, who blend Dutch language and culture with other multiple ethnic strains.

A Military Strongman

The military strongman, Desi Bouterse, is a Creole product of that blend. A sergeant and physical education instructor in the Dutch-Surinamese army until Suriname became independent in 1975, he then joined the newly-formed Surinamese national army. Five years later Bouterse led a bloodless coup against the government of Henck Arron. Hailed as part of the new "socialist" revolution sweeping the Caribbean, Bouterse was especially close to Grenada's new revolutionary leader Maurice Bishop. The Cubans also had important missions—civilian and military—in Paramaribo. Virtually unchallenged, and with this external help, Bouterse soon gained control of all aspects of the government. The peaceful appearances changed when, at dawn on December 8, 1982, Bouterse rounded up 15 prominent Surinamese, and tortured them before executing them on the grounds that they were plotting a countercoup. A shocked population turned against the regime. Doubting the loyalty of urban Surinamese, Bouterse began to recruit Maroons into the army. Soon his own personal bodyguard was largely composed of Maroons.

One of these was a young man from the Djuka tribe, Ronnie Brunswijk. A former sergeant in the Surinamese army, he was Bouterse's personal bodyguard before they had a falling out in 1986. On one level the present situation in Suriname could be described as a personal feud between Bouterse and Brunswijk. During the years of close "revolutionary" association between Bouterse and Cuba, Brunswijk was among those sent to Cuba for military training. The main cause of the civil war, however, is the age-old contempt with which many urban Surinamese view Maroons.

We do not know exactly why Brunswijk was dismissed from the army. We do know that he did not take this blow lying down. His Maroon background and identity came into play. Before he left the army, he took arms and munitions into the jungle. Acting as a modern-
day Robin Hood, he “appropriated” money from Creole society to build homes and help elderly people in his tribal community of Mongo Tapu. His popularity among the Maroons grew.

In June 1986 Bouterse responded. He unleashed his military—including field artillery, aerial bombardment, and tanks—on the defenseless village of Mongo Tapu. The army claimed it was looking for Brunswijk. In the following months similar violent actions were taken against other Maroon villages. In December 1986 the New York Times reported that 244 Maroons had been killed.

Bouterse’s pogroms were no more successful than those of the Europeans centuries ago. The Maroon resistance stiffened. Many felt that if, as Bouterse claimed, he was merely looking for Brunswijk, it was needless and excessive to practice a scorched-earth policy against communities that, until then, had little or no connection with the guerrilla leader. Bouterse even hired Amerindians to hunt Maroons for him, just as the colonial troops had done in the 18th century. At the same time the army was attacking Maroon villages, the US Committee for Refugees (in February 1987) said the army was also carrying out a policy of arrests and murders of the Maroon residents of Paramaribo.

**The Ramifications of Violence**

Suriname enjoyed one of the highest per capita incomes in the region. But Bouterse’s actions have taken the country down with him socially, economically, and politically. After Suriname gained independence in 1975, the Netherlands agreed to provide $100 million annually in aid for 15 years. Following the execution of the 15 civil leaders in 1982, the Dutch suspended their aid and the US cut off its annual subvention of about $1.5 million. The price of bauxite, which once provided 70 percent of foreign earnings, has also fallen. And the government has depleted its foreign cash reserves. The fall in bauxite prices, poor government administration, and the withdrawal of foreign aid have caused Suriname’s economy to contract dramatically. In 1985 it had a gross domestic product growth rate of negative 50 percent. Yet Bouterse manages to keep an army of 2,700, armed with some 30 modern Brazilian-built small tanks and personnel carriers, and several modern aircraft converted for aerial bombardment. Suriname’s military budget for 1985 ($44 million) was double that of Jamaica, which had six times its population. Facing this army is the lightly armed 200-300-man “Jungle-Commando” army of Brunswijk’s Suriname Liberation Army.

How could such a depressed economy sustain such an army and such a war? The well-documented
answer is that Bouterse has been financing the conflict through drug trafficking. In November 1986 Bouterse's closest aide, Captain Etienne Boereveent, was sentenced in Miami to 12 years in federal prison. He was found guilty of conspiring to allow drug dealers to use Suriname's airfields as a base for their operations into the US. The fee was alleged to be $1 million per load (New York Times, June 18, 1987). It is also alleged there is a heavily-guarded cocaine-processing factory in a remote western corner of the country.

During my recent visit to the Guianas, one informant claimed to be a former drug salesman for certain military officers. He nervously and very reluctantly described the trafficking to me. The raw materials, and some already-processed cocaine, he said, come from Colombia and, to a lesser extent, Brazil. The cocaine is shipped out by Brazilian fishing boats from Paramaribo to Cayenne and Brazil. Most of it goes to Brazil. From Brazil and Cayenne it is transshipped to European and North American markets. All the salesmen, he said, are from the army or are close associates of Bouterse. The informant added that Bouterse already had bought land and houses in Brazil.

The source also said the drug runners had to adhere to a formal agreement that, if they were caught, their supplier would never be revealed. He said the drug runners are paid well, to the point that they do not mind the risk involved. Brazil's fishing boats are always moving in and out of the port of Paramaribo, but have yet to be seen loading or unloading fish.

**Is There Hope?**

Suriname held a referendum in September 1987 to ratify a new constitution, and in November held an election to choose a new government. These only came about as a result of intense internal and international pressure and the increasing isolation of Suriname. The election was held as a desperate attempt by Bouterse's regime to have the suspended foreign aid restored to its former level. A few months after the election, the political and military situation in Suriname had changed little. Despite the election of a new government, the National Assembly remains under military control.

**Few Maroons were included in the election.**

**As a result the Maroons have no representative in the new government.**

**Bouterse has repeatedly said he will not rest until he has eliminated all the Maroons from Suriname.**

Since the election, Brunswijk, the Suriname Liberation Army leader, has openly invited the government to negotiate. The government, however, has turned down the offer. Some church groups have taken upon themselves the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis, but they are working without official guidelines or government cooperation. Bouterse has repeatedly said there is no way he will negotiate with Brunswijk. Bouterse is the dominant political force in Suriname. Even after their landslide victory, civilian leaders Jaggernath Lachmon and Arron, who promised during the campaign they would sweep away military influence in the government, have subdued their claims. The role of the military in the government is untouched.

Few Maroons were included in the election; only people and political parties from Paramaribo, the capital, took part in it. As a result the Maroons have no representative in the new government. The new constitution, which Bouterse himself helped draft, has given the army wide control over the affairs of the country. With this constitution Bouterse can still do whatever he pleases, and he has repeatedly said he will not rest until he has eliminated all the Maroons from Suriname.

The immediate challenge concerns the fate of the more than 14,000 refugees. At least 10,000 of them are Djuksas, Paramakas, Alukus, and Amerindians, who have fled across the Maroni River into French Guiana. In addition there are 4,000 refugees within Suriname, as Maroons have fled from the Sar-amaa homeland. Before Suriname can again become politically stable, and before questions concerning the future of the Maroons can be answered, the issue of the Bouterse dictatorship must be settled.
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Towards Democracy in Mexico?

by Jonathan Fox

On July 16, 1988, in Mexico's largest opposition electoral mobilization ever, more than a quarter of a million citizens protested the government's crude efforts to manufacture a sliver of an electoral majority. An outsider might have expected to find rage, with overtones of violence. Indeed, the moment of silence in memory of the election-eve murder of candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's top antifraud expert cast a dark shadow over the crowd. But the general mood was far more festive than angry. Owners of jewelry stores facing the overflowing plaza did not even shutter their doors. Cheery marchers flowed in “self-organized order,” as opposition strategist Adolfo Gilly put it, avoiding the rigid contingents of official and opposition street traditions.

For the first time, the result of Mexico's presidential election was not a foregone conclusion. People believed that their votes mattered. The candidate of the new center-left coalition probably would have received the most votes in a free and fair contest (including equal media access), though it is possible that the official candidate came in with a plurality. We may never know the “true” figures. Fear of less than total control led the government to resort to the “perfecting of the popular will,” as commentator Carlos Monsiváis quipped.

Last summer marked a turning point in Mexico's political transition. Divisions in Mexico's governing elite created opportunities for ordinary people to influence events to an unusual degree. Hundreds of thousands of citizens, many already democratically organized at the community level, participated actively in electoral politics for the first time, catching analysts completely by surprise. Mexican politics will never be the same.

The Opposition Emerges

Since the 1930s, when President Lázaro Cárdenas incorporated the masses into the fledgling official party, the Mexican regime's leadership has continually frustrated periodic foreign predictions of its imminent collapse. The 1988 election, by undermining the legitimacy of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), thrust the regime into an uncertain transition from one-party dominance to a fluid new multiparty system.

The story of the 1988 election began at least 20 years ago. Peaceful student protests during the summer of 1968 were followed by the army's massacre of untold hundreds on October 2. By the mid-1970s a wide range of social groups had followed the students' lead, charting new paths towards autonomy from PRI's top-down controls and calling for the government to put its rhetoric of social justice and democracy into practice. Peasants and slum dwellers began bypassing their official representatives, business leaders began forming their own organizations, and workers continued pressing for trade-union democracy. These emerging grassroots movements, which expressed a new sense of citizenship, became one of the driving forces of today's electoral opposition.

The regime's credibility was briefly revived by a limited electoral reform, combined with the oil- and debt-driven 1978-82 economic boom. Interest groups contended for pieces of a rapidly growing pie. Then oil prices fell, interest rates shot up, and capital flight spiraled out of control. The government responded with the halfhearted 1982 bank nationalization that discouraged private investment without providing an alternative to replace it.

After six years of policies to attract private investment, the economy remains in crisis. As long as debt payments preclude recovery, no improvement is in sight for the majority of Mexicans, whose real income has fallen by more than 50 percent since 1982. Their resulting dissatisfaction is exacerbated by government budget cuts that have sharply reduced the regime's long-
standing capacity to divide and conquer dissent with selective economic concessions.

The 1988 election surprise was clearly driven by unending austerity. But poverty alone does not explain the nature of dissent, nor where and how it is expressed. After all, Mexico has not experienced classic food riots, the burning of buses, or the mass pillaging of supermarkets seen, for example, in the Dominican Republic and Brazil. Even after the opposition exhausted the limited legal recourses to protest fraud, Cárdenas’s firm moderation prevented his followers from resorting to violence.

**Electoral Competition: What Happened?**

Cárdenas’s National Democratic Front (FDN) won Mexico City, home to about one-fourth of the country’s population. His electoral victory was linked to the 1985 earthquake, which provoked a spontaneous, self-help mobilization of hundreds of thousands of metropolitan residents. This left an indelible mark on city politics, as democratic, grassroots organizing bypassed official agencies and opposition parties. Since the government later made significant concessions to the mobilized earthquake victims, people saw that their collective action could make a difference. Impatience with official austerity and authoritarianism deepened the following year. A broad new democratic student movement began at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. And thousands of citizens expressed unheard-of public defiance when they booed and cursed President Miguel de la Madrid at the inauguration of the 1986 World Cup.

Some Cárdenas voters wanted to reject the official candidate or to renew PRI’s commitment to reformism and nationalism. Others wanted to democratize the internal workings of PRI, as Cárdenas’s dissident Democratic Current emphasized in 1987, before being expelled and forced into the opposition. But many FDN votes were also in favor of an effective electoral opening. We still do not know which attitudes best explain the wave of support for Cárdenas: dissatisfaction with economic policies or the quest for democratic government. Because exit polls were banned, only the future evolution of the opposition will tell.

Cárdenas’s support from moderate voters and disaffected PRI bureaucrats was greatly reinforced by the fact that he was a mainstream figure from within PRI and not a radical outsider. Because of rigid electoral procedures, most of the democratic urge was expressed through votes for pro-Cárdenas parties that, until recently, were mere shells—small, often corrupt and authoritarian electoral machines, sponsored by the government. The candidate of the new, independent Mexican Socialist Party (PMS) withdrew late in the race, throwing his support to Cárdenas.

No presidential candidate is likely to have received more than a slim plurality of votes. The official returns gave PRI 507 percent of the vote. FDN was awarded 31 percent and the conservative National Action Party (PAN) totaled 17 percent of the official count. But FDN’s analysis of available election data indicated that PRI received only 36 percent, leaving PAN with 23 percent of the vote and FDN with a 42 percent victory.

Neither FDN nor the official totals are definitive, however, because only slightly more than half of the ballots—54 percent—were made available for public scrutiny. These ballots showed Cárdenas leading Salinas by a five-point margin: 39 percent to 34 percent. The government claims that the 46 percent of the ballots that were not made public provided an overwhelming majority—67 percent for Salinas to 20 percent for Cárdenas—and determined the outcome of the election. It is doubtful Salinas’s actual share of the unexamined ballots would have been sufficient to swing a majority.

Most of the questionable ballots were cast in rural precincts, where ballot security is more difficult to assure than in cities. Political bosses were able to manipulate more rural than urban votes because of the rural opposition’s restricted access to media and limited poll-watching presence and experience.

Salinas effectively competed for organized peasant support in some regions, proposing creative policies and treating peasants as citizens. But austerity and Mexico’s heritage of agrarian reform still led significant rural areas to vote for Cárdenas. It was difficult, however, for the opposition to penetrate those rural areas, such as Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Veracruz, where there is little freedom of assembly and association. In cacique-dominated Pinotepa, Oaxaca, for example, Cárdenas’s campaign stop was the first public-opposition assembly in memory.

A widely-accepted official result is that only 52 percent of the registered electorate voted at all (probably a massive increase over past elections, when participation rates were seriously inflated). Taking the unregistered and annulled votes into account, 57 percent of the potential electorate did not vote. In many areas suspected of opposition sympathies, large numbers of voters were reportedly purged in advance from the rolls. Many voters were also apparently added to the rolls where opposition oversight was lacking. Official figures claimed that only 13 percent of the electorate were not on the rolls. But, according to Gallup’s reputable pre-election poll of nearly 3,000 citizens, 24 percent were unregistered. The gap indicates room for manipulation of election results that may have been much more important than the often reported stuffing and destruction of ballot boxes.

After the election, attention shifted to the congress, which is constitutionally mandated to ratify the results. PRI held a small but sufficient majority of seats. Lack of unity around legislative candidates cost the FDN coalition at least 50
congressional seats. Thus tensions emerged within FDN between those affiliated with political parties (a minority) and those unaffiliated (a majority).

Since July several state and local elections have shown that both right and center-left opposition parties generally lack effective grassroots structures. Nevertheless, when analyzing the combination of PRI sweeps and the extremely low turnout rates in these races, continuing fraud and media monopolies must not be underestimated.

**Opposition Dilemmas**

Three challenges await the Cardenistas movement. The first challenge is to build on Cardenas's mass support without provoking repression. The base for mobilizing to overturn the official victory was limited, given the degree of abstention, the lack of unity between left and right opposition, and Mexicans' long memories of past official repression. Cardenas's initial victory claim, lacking public proof, briefly boxed him into a political dead end. But he modified his stance to stress the need for official review of the contested election results—an equally unwinnable but more politically sustainable demand. The opposition coalition's decision not to pursue civil disobedience in defense of its claim to the presidency helped avoid unpredictable results. In Mexico the difference between limited civil disobedience and open rebellion is not always clearly defined, either by participants or security forces. By exercising caution, FDN seems to have avoided causing an official backlash.

The second challenge is to develop creative strategies that encourage grassroots participation. Having exhausted the legal channels for challenging the election results, Cardenas directed his political energies into the construction of the new Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). PRD becomes the fifth member of the FDN coalition, uniting former Priistas from the Democratic Current with a wide range of liberals, nationalists, and socialists. Given the choice within FDN between the combination of government-spawned parties and the socialist PMS, it is not surprising that Democratic Current chose to express its own identity. The challenge, however, is to build a party that does better than other parties in reaching the grassroots movements and the unorganized populace. If the leadership builds yet another conventional party, then it will turn away many of the citizens who last summer were talking politics for the first time.

The third challenge is to demonstrate that the opposition can actually govern. Cardenas proved an effective governor in the past, but as a man of the system rather than as an opponent. Will Salinas break the ice and be the first president to allow victorious opposition candidates to become governors? The opposition needs to demonstrate that it can win overwhelmingly, probably in a state not considered "strategic." If elected, the Cardenistas need to make the difficult transition from an opposition movement to an effective governing coalition. Clearly the Cardenistas are seeking power within the system. The question remains: what would they do with that power if they attained it?

**Are Democratization and Political Stability Compatible?**

Some insiders contend PRI's manipulation of the rolls and its election-day irregularities were insufficient, leading the party to snatch victory by means of a massive, last-minute computer intervention. Two contending positions seem to have emerged as the returns came in: the "traditional" hard-line faction in favor of a clearly-exaggerated majority vote versus the technocratic "modernizing" faction, which might have accepted a clear plurality. The technocrats, forced to rely on the "dinosaur" (such as the union bosses) to win, were too weak to recognize an official less-than-majority win even if they had wanted to. In this scenario the official sliver of a majority probably represented a precarious compromise.

The night the Federal Election Commission's computers "went down," the outgoing government of De la Madrid clearly chose stability over democracy. How will the Salinas team confront this choice in the future? In light of their electoral compromise, the difference between PRI's "modernizers" and "dinosaurs" has blurred significantly. Both factions defend heavy state intervention in social and political life and are moderately nationalist in foreign policy. What distinguishes the modernizers is their free-market inclination and their greater tolerance for political dissidents.

Manuel Camacho, for example, Salinas's principal ideologue and an oft-mentioned 1994 presidential prospect, honed his modern-style bargaining skills with the post-earthquake protest movements. This effort is widely considered a "positive-sum" success—most participants won something. Both Camacho and Salinas had raised hopes that the 1988 electoral process would be cleaner than in the past. In the cities it probably was, because of unprecedented citizen vigilance of an estimated 80-90 percent of the polls. The course of the state and local elections since July has not raised hopes of an electoral opening in the near future.

Salinas's December 1 inaugural speech, though short on specifics, reiterated his public commitment to dialogue, electoral democratization, and social reform. Those who hoped for the success of the reformists on the Salinas team consider his secretarial appointments to be transitional. Optimistic reformists recall that several past presidents chose to dramatically shift directions in the course of their terms. Camacho, initially expected to be named secretary of the interior, the key ministry of police and politics, ended up with the thankless job of running the Federal District. Instead, hard-liner
Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios captured the Interior Ministry. Gutiérrez Barrios previously ran Interior's feared political police, and he is widely believed to have something on everyone.

Salinas's inauguration was marked by an unusually elaborate military parade and the presence of eight foreign heads of state, ranging from José Napoleón Duarte to Fidel Castro. Apparently the military did not play an active role in the electoral process, wanting to avoid tarnishing its political image.

Throughout his campaign, Car- denas, the son of a general, addressed himself respectfully to the military, winning some rank-and-file votes.

What does the rise of national opposition mean for the future prospects of governance in Mexico? Not surprisingly, the breadth and intensity of last summer's opposition mobilization proved impossible to sustain. Like the 1985 post-earthquake upsurge, some of the freshly-politicized sectors will find channels for sustaining their activity. But many will not, waiting for future opportunities to become political contenders.

Right-wing and left-wing electoral mobilization has ebbed. Yet democratic social movements that predated the election and grew dramatically during the contest have endured as major players. Mobilized peasant grain producers have recently put on the national agenda the terms of trade between agriculture and industry, contending that crop-support prices are as important as the minimum wage. Urban community movements continue to press for more equitable and efficient service delivery.

Organized labor remains a wildcard. As workers reel from unemployment, trade unionists await the passing of long-time boss and archetypal PRI-dinosaur Fidel Velásquez to speed the transition to new collective-bargaining arrangements. We cannot assume that Salinas will extend his longstanding personal and political battle with the leadership of the Oil Workers' Union to other union bosses. Salinas's honeymoon with big business has continued, since the rise of a center-left opposition put a damper on its previous flirtation with the right-wing PAN. Whether the private sector's support will translate into renewed domestic investment remains to be seen.

The official PAN vote of 17 percent was far below the expectations of the right wing on both sides of the border. PAN has since been divided between defense of democracy and opposition to Cardenas. Its leaders claimed the unprecedented FDN senatorial victories in the Federal District were fraudulent. PAN's presidential candidate, Manuel "Maquio" Clouthier, called for the annulment of the entire electoral process, in sharp contrast to Cardenas's attempt to separate clean from fraudulent results. Salinas has recognized the Church as a legitimate political actor, a striking change in Mexican affairs. The pro-Church PAN began a rapprochement with the Salinas administration. A sign of improved relations is that, in a departure from its usual practice, PAN accepted federal election support funds.

In any scenario increased congressional opposition will tend to check presidential power. PRI won 52 percent of the seats in the lower house—by far its lowest proportion ever—and the 1990 congressional elections are likely to provoke a new round of opposition initiatives. PRI will now have to form coalitions to pass constitutional amendments, though the opposition's disunity will facilitate PRI's maneuvering.

The government's first small concession to "home rule" in the Federal District, the newly-created representative assembly, is likely to outgrow its intended limits and become a further opposition counterweight during the Salinas years.

Towards a "Historic Compromise"?

Salinas may be Mexico's weakest president in decades. Yet his history has shown him to be stronger than he first appears. His surprise move against the mafia of the Oil Workers' Union reminded observers of a key element of the current situation: opposition inside and outside the government remains divided.

Many of the leaders of the grassroots movements that drive the Cardenista opposition—slum dwellers, trade unionists, peasants, and teachers—were shaped by the student protests and massacre of 1968. So, too, were the Salinistas. But the "bottom-up" vision of the Cardenistas contrasts with the "top-down" vision of the Salinistas. According to the latter, Mexico's stability depends on the commitment to "modernization" from above—opening the system up within limits and backing off when the pressure from the traditional political establishment becomes too great. Both contenders have years of experience sizing up one another. And each has become increasingly skilled (and even respectful) in bargaining with the other. Mexico's democratization depends in large measure on the capacity of the two groups to develop and sustain new rules of the game.

Rapid and radical political change is not on Mexico's agenda. Yet, after July's opposition upsurge, Mexico faces a choice between more democracy or more authoritarianism. The old system has eroded beyond repair. A new one, however, is not yet ready to take its place. To continue a relatively stable transition to more democratic rule, Mexico needs a "historic compromise." Such a compromise would not be an alliance, but a flexible agreement among the contenders regarding the boundaries for political bargaining. Reformist policymakers must choose between their alliance with the "dinosaurs" and an opening towards the grassroots movements that are inside and outside the official sectors. Conflict is inherent in both choices, but one alone holds the potential for long-run political renewal.
An Ex-President's Memoirs


by Julio Mojuel

The text of José López Portillo's autobiography, *Mis tiempos*, is long and peculiar. The ex-president of Mexico, who held office from 1976 to 1982, begins by reminiscing about his childhood and adolescence. He recounts the steps of his academic training and the path that led to his first years in public service. Before the pages of the first volume conclude, the history turns into a personal diary that starts with the day he assumed the presidency. Writing from the standpoint "of the here and now"—as an ex-president who faces only the judgment of history—López Portillo presents an extremely detailed account of what he thought, said, and did while in office.

In many countries the publication of a living ex-president's memoirs would not be an act of undue importance. In Mexico, however, things are different. The publication of this unprecedented book was immediately seen by the "political class" as an act of betrayal. The direct beneficiaries of "the system" consider López Portillo's memoirs a violation of the sacred codes upon which the Mexican state was built. Their outrage, of course, could not have been unexpected. Adding to the drama was the precise moment of publication—as Miguel de la Madrid's presidency was coming to an end and Carlos Salinas de Gortari had become the "president-elect." This, then, is not a book of inconsequential ruminations; with the backdrop of Mexico's crises and the recent transfer of executive power, it represents a bold, calculated political act.

López Portillo utilizes the autobiographical scalpel to make two precise incisions on the torso of Mexican politics. The first reveals his account of the populism of his presidential predecessor, Luis Echeverría. Not surprisingly, this account portrays the López Portillo administration in favorable light. He argues that his own administration was decidedly not an "Echeverrista maxima—puppet of the ex-president Echeverría. Indeed, López Portillo attempts to vindicate his own political persona by emphasizing his independence from the Echeverristas, who many consider a surviving nucleus of political resentment. As for the focal points of today's politics, López Portillo is an enemy of De la Madrid and Salinas and a supporter of Cardenismo, the anti-PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) movement led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

The second incision made by López Portillo is barely perceptible. In elliptic fashion the ex-president suggests that the policies of his sexenio (six-year term of office) were more original than those of his successor, De la Madrid. At the same time López Portillo dismisses as "false" and "ill-willed" the charges of corruption and incompetence that taint his name in the pages of contemporary Mexican history.

With these two incisions López Portillo succeeds in conveying the aura of a Mexican president. Unintentionally, however, he illuminates how Mexico's political system operates, behind a facade of democracy, according to secret, personalist, and authoritarian lines of power. This is precisely where the ex-president commits a major blunder: why reveal the intricacies of "his crime" and expose himself to wider condemnation? López Portillo writes prolifically of "his crime," assuming that by doing so he glorifies his persona and somehow rescues it from his political legacy.

(Translated by Lourdes Simón)
Mexico-Bashing in Washington

by George W. Grayson

Since his election to the presidency last July, Carlos Salinas de Gortari has moved to strengthen ties with the US. By so doing he may preempt US-launched attacks on Mexico, which have become so frequent in recent years that the neologism “Mexico-bashing” has entered the vocabulary of Washington decisionmakers. In addition to meeting with president-elect George Bush in late November, Salinas has selected Gustavo Petricioli as his ambassador to the US. A 61-year-old economist and former finance minister who holds a master's degree from Yale, Petricioli possesses the stature to bring coherence, dynamism, and greater effectiveness to Mexico's previously understaffed, overworked, and sometimes outflanked embassy.

Mexico-Bashing

Despite efforts to improve relations with Capitol Hill, Mexico often finds itself the target of stinging blows. The Senate hurled the latest punch when it voted 61 to 27 in mid-April 1988 to penalize Mexico for inadequacies in its war on drugs. Epithets such as “crooked,” “corrupt,” and “venal” suffused the speeches and corridor gossip that attended this move.

The Senate was reacting to White House certification of Mexico as “fully cooperating” on narcotics matters pursuant to the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. This statute, which was aimed at Mexico, requires the president to terminate most foreign aid and to oppose development bank credits to nations whose antidrug efforts fail to meet US standards. Had the House followed the Senate's lead—fortunately, it did not—only an executive veto would have prevented a nasty bilateral rift amid the most crucial Mexican presidential campaign in 50 years.

The spring 1988 brouhaha follows, by two years, Senator Jesse Helms's emergence as the Mexico basher with the hardest punch. During hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, which he chairs, the North Carolina Republican treated Mexico with all the tenderness of Cromwell ruling Ireland. He charged that President Miguel de la Madrid was elected fraudulently in 1982 and that the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) kept two sets of election books—“one private and one public.” William von Rabb, commissioner of the US Customs Service, Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, and other executive-branch spokesmen also pummeled Mexico for “engrained” wrongdoing and “widespread drug-related corruption.”

Mexicans greeted the Helms hearings as the political version of fingernails clawing a blackboard. For them, the soft-spoken North Carolinian embodied the spirits of Minister Joel Poinsett, General Winfield Scott, General John “Black Jack” Pershing, Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, and other Americans who had meddled egregiously in their nation's affairs.

Attorney General Edwin Meese III's apology to his Mexican counterpart did little to quell a firestorm of anger. Resentment mushroomed when leading US newspapers ran features on our “neighbor in distress” and a CIA report estimated that there was a 20 percent chance the Mexican political system would collapse within five years. Last year's Senate vote poured salt into these wounds before they could begin to heal.

Why has Mexico been so vilified? It is of critical economic and strategic importance to the US. It has undertaken an impressive offensive on drugs. Why have members of Congress and the executive branch openly accused Mexico of actions they would never dream of saying publicly about Canada, Taiwan, or Israel. Is there anything that Mexico can do to boost its influence here, or will every philippic against drug trafficking and ballot-box stuffing incite a mean-spirited donnybrook?

Reluctance to Lobby

The Mexicans believe their importance to the US and their antidrug commitment are self-evident. Thus, unlike other large nations with interests at stake, they have failed to devote the necessary resources to win friends and influence people in Washington. In the past a medley of factors explained Mexico's reluctance to play the power game in an organized, assertive, and prominent manner. To begin with, lobbying means involvement in the affairs of another country and, as such, runs afloat of Mexico's cherished, though inconsistently applied, belief that nations should keep their noses out of each other's business. A variation on this theme is the antipathy the fiercely-nationalistic Mexican government has traditionally felt toward justifying its actions to anyone, particularly to its mighty northern neighbor. Even more troubling is

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the possibility that attempts to influence Washington would be seized upon to justify more blatant American intrusiveness in Mexico. The precedent was set when John Gavin, US ambassador until May 1986, assumed an extremely high profile and vehemently crossed swords with detractors of him and his country.

Of course, any appearance of pandering to Uncle Sam is political suicide for those Mexicans involved. One of the many ironies of a 2,000-mile cheek-by-jowl relationship is that close association with the adjacent country, considered highly desirable by US politicians anxious to propitiate Chicano voters, can be the kiss of death to their Mexican counterparts.

Limited resources and cautious ambassadors have nourished Mexico's timidity at a time when scores of other countries benefit from self-promotion. Conversations with dozens of Capitol Hill staffers reveal that Petricioli's predecessor, Jorge Espinosa de los Reyes, rarely sought meetings with senators. He complied graciously with requests for interviews, yet seldom took the initiative—except that his political advisers encouraged contacts with such border senators as Lloyd Bentsen, W. Philip Gramm, and Peter V. Domenici. His inertness, compared to other envoys, set the beltway. In all fairness, Ambassador Espinosa and his embassy colleagues were active in communicating to congressmen the negative consequences of decertifying Mexico under the 1986 narcotics statute. They also actively communicated their country's views on the Omnibus Trade Bill, which contained provisions detrimental to Mexico.

The embassy's press office has shown remarkable attentiveness to US journalists and other opinion-makers. Still, former foreign secretary Bernard Sepulveda (1982-88) relished his highly-scripted role in the cabinet as a designated advocate for Third World unity, solidarity with Nicaragua, and anti-US nationalism. Such policies excite support among vocal elements within PRI, the mass media, intellectual and academic circles, the Mexican congress, and segments of organized labor. These constituencies are particularly important for a government pursuing conservative economic policies to cultivate. Men and women with Sepulveda's outlook resist entanglements with the "imperialist" US, which they regard as hostile to Mexico's well-being in particular and to developing states in general.

Mexican activism has also been discouraged in the past because of a fatalistic sense that nothing could be done to chill anti-Mexican sentiment. Some Mexican officials were even convinced their country was the target of an orchestrated defamation campaign.

In March 1986, two days after a cover story on Mexico appeared in Newsweek's international edition, Deputy José Angel Pescador claimed to speak for PRI when he said it was "possible to suppose" that the magazine was "following the line assumed by some foreign publications that consistently have tried to distort the image of Mexico abroad and, at times, to degrade the Mexican people." Familiarity with the press control exerted by their Tammany Hall-style regime leads many Mexican officials to suspect any foreign media reports critical of their own country.

Many Mexican elites, like other Latin Americans, view the US system as the mirror image of their own authoritarian, presidentially-dominated regime, further impeding their nation's effectiveness above the Rio Grande. This perception blinded them to the mounting involvement of Congress in foreign policy and to the enormous importance of independent regulatory agencies.

**The Canadian Effect**

Doubtless the Mexicans could profit from the experience of the Canadians who, until a few years ago, were equally hesitant to push their cause in Washington. Obviously Canada enjoys several advantages over Mexico vis-a-vis the US. Among these are a mutual enthusiasm for democratic institutions and capitalism, a cultural affinity, a shared language (except for the Quebecois), a history free of armed conflict since the War of 1812, and common defense ventures.

Still, many problems bedeviling US-Mexican affairs also affect those between Canada and its southern neighbor. High on the list are trade, protectionism, investment, fishing, US cultural penetration, and pollution. Like Mexico, Canada is acutely affected by Washington's actions on, for example, former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "It's like a mouse and an elephant trying to sleep in the same bed."

Traditionally Ottawa dealt with the red, white, and blue colossus in the same understated manner now typifying Mexican diplomacy. As recently as the 1970s, embassy regulations prevented most Canadian officials from traveling the 17 blocks from their ornate Massachusetts Avenue chancery to Capitol Hill. When problems arose, a Canadian diplomat would register his country's concerns with the appropriate State Department desk and, possibly, with a White House official.

The surge of protectionist pressures in response to a ballooning US trade deficit persuaded Canada—the US's largest commercial partner after Japan—to change its tactics. The new phase in its Washington diplomacy began with the December 1981 arrival of Allan E. Gotlieb as Canada's ambassador. Rather than tiptoe around the capital and craft discreet notes to the State Department, the bespectacled Harvard Law School graduate and former Rhodes Scholar soon inserted himself into the power game.

As he explained his actions to an American journalist: "Your constitution works on the basis of deal making. The administration can't
govern by itself. The Congress can't govern by itself. You need a 'treaty' to govern. I get caught in that. The administration can't move the Congress, so I've got to get my hands dirty and try to move Congress myself."

And move Congress he has, thanks to an excellent flow of information from public-opinion surveys and well-connected friends, cultivation of American corporations with links to Canada, mastery of Washington's social life, and aggressively-suave lobbying techniques. "No ambassador," according to Wyoming's Senator Alan Simpson, "understands the jungle of our politics as well."

The Canadians enjoy a superb reputation for making their case in Washington. This adroitness bore fruit in April 1987 when President Reagan agreed to consider an accord on acid rain. In 1988 the two countries signed a sweeping trade pact to eliminate all bilateral tariffs over a ten-year period. Subsequently Reagan overrode opposition from Navy brass and approved a Canadian purchase of nuclear submarines using American reactor technology.

The reasons for Canada's lobbying success as compared to Mexico's lack of success can be quantified from the reports of agents who have registered with the Justice Department, under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, to advance the interests of the private and public clients. First, the number of Canadian agents more than tripled from 29 to 100. The total for Mexico (29) declined. Second, in 1986, 88 of Canada's 100 agents were "active" compared to 21 of those signing up on behalf of Mexican entities. Third, public and private Canadian firms increased from 13.7 percent to 68.1 percent their funds earmarked for political and quasi-political pursuits, whereas Mexican entities continued to disburse only several percent of their monies for such important purposes.

Fourth, Canadian clients consistently channeled 10.5 to 25 percent their resources into attracting investment to their country and fostering US-Canadian joint-corporate initiatives—activities that enlarged an influential pro-Canadian constituency. Meanwhile, between 1978 and 1986, Mexican clients forked out but a pitance on similar endeavors, which helps explain the harsh treatment inflicted on Mexico by Helms and his fellow critics.

Finally, funds spent by Canadian clients for tourist promotion declined steadily in recent years, even as their Mexican counterparts continued to lavish more than 90 percent (94.9 percent in 1986) of total outlays on a sector of marginal political significance.

**Mexican Stirrings**

The Mexican government has made desultory attempts to improve its standing in the US. Mario Rodriguez, the embassy's University of Texas-trained trade attaché, reported that in the early 1980s he was sent to Washington "to change ... attitudes and communicate better" with the US power circle on trade matters. To accomplish these goals, he doubled the size of Mexico's Trade Office, computerized his files, and tried to keep in touch with key congressional aides. This stepped-up diplomacy was done quietly. "It's our way of solving problems without creating others for ourselves," said Rodriguez.

Still, he was only one person and found it impossible to cover all the political bases. After Mexico banned US trucking services on the strength of an obscure 1955 presidential decree, the Teamsters and the American Trucking Association retaliated by convincing Congress to pass the 1984 Motor Carrier Safety Act. Few Mexican truckers could meet the law's strict standards in order to operate on US highways.

Ultimately the Mexicans forfeited the legislative contest because, at the insistence of the Ministry of Communications and Transport, no representatives appeared at Senate hearings on the safety bill. In the absence of opposition the bill passed easily. "If you don't show up, the guy who does, wins," observed a lobbyist employed by several Mexican clients. "That's the way the system works." In all fairness to the Mexicans, it would have taken a herculean effort to triumph in a US legislative arena over the combined force of the trucking firms and organized labor.

Increasingly their American friends urged Mexican authorities to hire a public relations firm to magnify their country's clout in Washington. In the aftermath of the scathing publicity beamed on fraud-ridden state and local elections in mid-1985, the Office of the Mexican Presidency recruited Mark Moran, a Washington lawyer originally employed by the Hannaford Company, and now a partner in Sawn, Berger, Mann & Moran, to help tell Mexico's story to US opinion leaders. Despite hard work and goodwill, the ebullient Moran's modestly-funded efforts have scored few points, as demonstrated by the periodic Mexico-bashing.


**Salinas epitomizes a new generation of Mexicans who prefer hammering out pragmatic solutions to US-Mexican problems rather than engaging in demagogic rhetoric.**
mutual problems rather than indulging in demagogic rhetoric. Salinas's commitment to a trade-focused development strategy has expanded Mexico's export sector, magnified the relationship between internal and external policies, and forced Mexicans to increase their foreign contacts. This démarche coincides with the declining ideological character of US policy toward Latin America exhibited by the Bush administration.

The key element in an energized Mexican lobbying effort would be a dynamic embassy, which must add substantially to the 22 professionals working there in January 1989. The staff of 11 consulates and the experienced specialists in the Trade Office should complement the embassy's activities. As the Canadians have done, the ambassador might assign special projects to one of the big-league lobbying outfits or law firms that abound in Washington.

The cultivation of legislative and executive contacts should be an invigorated embassy's first priority, followed by continued upgrading of its standing with the media. Mexico will loft its star in the halls of Congress, in the White House, in the State Department, among editorial writers, and in the TV newsrooms if it can activate business leaders who have an interest in both the country's economic vitality and harmonious bilateral ties.

Intensive and systematic mobilization of Mexico's oil clients is imperative—with the Mexican ambassador, appropriate consuls general, and key cabinet secretaries cultivating the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana oil patch. Equally prudent would be mobilizing the scores of US corporations that supply goods and services to Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex), the national oil monopoly, and to other state firms. A letter or phone call from a Mexican diplomat may impress—but not move to action—a senator or representative. More likely, a contact from the chief executive officer of US Steel, whose profitable Marathon Oil subsidiary is a key Pemex customer, will have an activating effect. Few people realize that hundreds of thousands of American jobs are generated by trade with Mexico and that Mexican political stability and economic well-being are important to US security.

The embassy should make common cause with the Mexico-US Business Committee, a binational organization composed of corporate elites in both nations. The American component of the organization is the "US Council," which is chaired by Rodman C. Rockefeller and composed of 33 giant corporations ranging from ALCOA to Zenith.

The Mexico-US Business Committee is not a registered lobbyist. Nevertheless, its members have but-tonholed key policymakers in both nations to oppose protectionism and support a bilateral framework for trade and investment.

Failure to develop an effective presence in Washington militates against favorable laws and administrative acts. Worse still, it encourages more bludgeoning by officials who perceive Mexico to be an inviting target. In turn, such diatribes spark recriminations from Mexico City. Hence they provide ammunition to the critics of pro-American leaders such as Salinas, who are valiantly promoting the economic and political advancement of their deeply troubled nation.

The Quest for Business Survival

by Francisco Valdés

As the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari further exposes Mexican business to the rigors and risks of international competition, domestic firms are scrambling, economically and politically, for survival. It remains unclear which sectors of domestic business, and which particular firms, will survive. What is clear is that business associations have responded to the uncertainties of the 1980s by assuming a more active political stance.

The Old-style Politics of Business

Mexican entrepreneurs channel their political actions through two kinds of business associations (see table): associations based on sectoral and regional concerns and those built on wider business concerns.

Among the sectoral organizations are confederations of industry, commerce, banking, insurance, and agriculture, while among the regional organizations are Mexico City's Association of Vallejo Industrialists and Monterrey's Chamber of Manufacturers. The organizations that address wider business concerns (e.g., labor relations, fiscal policy, foreign investment) include COPARMEX, CCE, and CMHN. The various strata of the nation's private sector—as divided by activity, size, capital, technology, market, and region—use such associations to...
### Business Organizations and the State

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| AMCB | Asociación Mexicana de Casas de Bolsa Mexican Association of Stock Market Brokers* |
| AMIS | Asociación Mexicana de Instituciones de Seguros Mexican Association of Insurance Institutions* |
| CAMCO | Cámara Americana de Comercio American Chamber of Commerce** |
| CANACINTRA | Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación National Chamber of the Transformation Industry* |
| CANACO-MEX | Cámara Nacional de Comercio de la Ciudad de México National Chamber of Commerce of Mexico City* |
| CCE | Consejo Coordinador Empresarial Entrepreneurial Coordinating Council (affiliates all national organizations)** |
| CMHN | Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios Mexican Businessmen Council (formed by 32 key heads of investment groups)** |

*Legally recognized as a mandatory affiliation and state-policy consulting organization. **Voluntary affiliation organization.

pursue their political interests and spread their vision of “what’s good for Mexico.”

The participation of business associations in Mexican politics is nothing new. It dates from 1917, when, as the victors of the 1910 Mexican Revolution began to reconstruct the nation's economy, major entrepreneurs founded confederations of industry (CONCAMIN) and commerce (CONCANACO) to represent their interests. Private enterprise, like the military, was excluded from the official party of the Revolution (which eventually became the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, whose membership comprises peasants, labor, and the amorphous “popular sector”). By the 1940s, however, the official party and Mexico's business leadership had agreed on guidelines for the latter's involvement in economic policymaking. Business leadership agreed not to oppose, as a sector, the state's one-party system, receiving in exchange the right to participate in selecting government officials and in making economic policy.

By the 1960s the upper rungs of Mexican business had become a more powerful economic force, having consolidated their position in finance, industry, commerce, and agriculture. The state's policies of "stabilized development" dictated that government intervention in the economy gradually give way to private enterprise. As this process occurred, state-business relations entered a new phase. The heads of major firms were no longer content to restrict their political involvement to matters of economic policy; they became increasingly concerned with shaping both public opinion and state policy in general. In the early 1970s business representatives launched a campaign to end the sector's "second-class" citizenship, claiming that "leftist groups" (i.e., sectors of PRI and various intellectuals in the press and in universities) dominated civic affairs.

During a bitter conflict with the administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-76) over its emphasis on populist reforms, representatives of leading businesses founded the CCE. Its purpose was to coordinate the efforts of business associations in striving to make government policy more responsive to the interests of the private sector. The CCE remains a key channel for business initiatives in Mexican politics.

**The New Politics of Survival**

The Mexican economy is in the midst of painful, massive adjustments. President Salinas's policies of economic restructuring, which he began to shape while at the Ministry of Budget and Planning in 1982-88, push Mexico further into the competitive arena of the world market. These policies emphasize export-led industrialization, and thus the dismantling of government protectionism, as the path to economic recovery. The political worries of business focus on the exhaustion of...
The politics of Mexico's military stands in sharp contrast to that of its Latin American counterparts. The fundamental difference is that the 1910 Mexican Revolution depoliticized the nation's military. The Constitution of 1917, the cornerstone document of the Revolution, defines a threefold mission for the military: defending Mexico's sovereignty, enforcing the constitution, and preserving internal order. Since World War II the military's principal mission has been the preservation of internal order. In light of geopolitical considerations, the choice of that mission has been a judicious one, since defending Mexico against the US is not feasible and defending Mexico against Guatemala is hardly necessary.

The present strength of Mexico's armed forces is approximately 135,000. In Mexico, as in the rest of Latin America, the army is the dominant service, accounting for about 75 percent of the active forces and receiving a commensurate portion of the defense budget. As a percentage of gross domestic product, however, Mexico's military budget continues to be among the lowest in Latin America. Mexico's military is a closed institution; its activities have long been shrouded in secrecy. Even specialists, both Mexican and foreign, have trouble discerning the pulse of the nation's armed forces. Many observers have assumed that since the mid-1970s the armed forces have had a burning desire to take an active role in political affairs.

The Crisis Unfolds

During the mid-1970s deteriorating economic conditions under Presi-
dent Luis Echeverría fomented rumors of a military coup. In 1982, when President José López Portillo nationalized Mexico's banks, the atmosphere of tension and uncertainty led to further rumors of military intervention. But on both occasions the army, the military's key sector, obediently remained above the fray of national politics. Traditionally, presidential elections have stimulated debates over the feasibility of a military candidate. Yet, in contrast to other Latin American situations, the overriding assumption in Mexico has always been that such a candidate would resign from the armed forces before accepting the presidential nomination.

In 1988, for the first time in more than 40 years, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was engaged in an all-out struggle against strong electoral opposition. Heading the opposition was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the son of ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas. The older Cárdenas was an army general and remains a powerful symbol of the Revolution's legacy of social reforms and nationalism. In opposing the PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas courted the armed forces. Some analysts suggest that, like the electorate in general, the military voted in substantial proportion for Cárdenas. The fact remains that the army stayed at the periphery of Mexican politics, thereby ensuring a peaceful and lawful election on July 6.

The army has been the subject of rumors in recent years concerning its growing role in deterring political violence and instability and in enforcing the government's antidrug policies. During the presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-88), the government increasingly anticipated problems of violence and demonstrated the military's strength before the opposition could mobilize. De la Madrid's administration featured this strategy before and during state elections. A prime example was the case of Chihuahua in the summer of 1986, when his administration forestalled violence by deploying extra troops to patrol streets and polling places.

Regarding the antidrug campaign, De la Madrid's government concluded that the production and transportation of illegal drugs required the attention of administrative and law-enforcement agencies. The armed forces continue to participate in the antidrug campaign. The army is responsible for the eradication of illegal crops. And the navy is responsible for the interdiction of drug-transporting vessels in territorial waters.

The Military under Salinas

The direction the Mexican military will take under Salinas is unclear. Salinas chose a secretary of defense, Antonio Riviello Dázan, who ensures the military's loyalty. Doing so was crucial in the wake of the political uncertainties arising from last year's presidential election and the new administration's program of economic restructuring. The military is expected to continue its allegiance to PRI in the near future. A recent example was the army's role in January's lightning-like strike against "La Quina" and the powerful Oil Workers' Union. The army has demonstrated such allegiance not only by actively supporting Salinas against the oil-union leadership, but also by parading on inauguration day, an uncommon practice.

Undoubtedly Salinas will call on the army to handle additional conflicts. Nonetheless, the army will probably try to minimize the use of force. After all, it still bears the scars of the 1986 Tlatelolco incident, when soldiers fired upon masses of protesting students. The army's actions on that fateful day severely tarnished its image. Today's leaders, who were majors and lieutenant colonels then, have taken precautionary measures to prevent such incidents. The army remains wary of performing police-arrest functions. Instead it prefers to intercede in potential problems before they get out of hand.

During the De la Madrid years the army began a process of extensive reorganization that will likely continue during the Salinas government. Army leadership views the reorganization, which emphasizes the institution's tactical divisions, as an initiative to further depoliticize its role. A series of military educational reforms has complemented this initiative. Analysts of Latin America have learned that professionalization is not synonymous with depoliticization. Still, the Mexican military is unique among the armed forces of Latin America, and continued depoliticization may indeed be its future.

Rumors about the building of a Mexican national security apparatus have proliferated in recent years. If it does exist, such an apparatus could override the various reforms and lead the military into the political arena. Yet the military would likely confine its involvement to the well-defined sphere of national security and thus avoid entanglement in the nation's formidable economic problems.

It is erroneous to equate the heightened visibility of the Mexican military with heightened political influence. Moreover, the military remains insufficiently trained to take over the reins of government. The next six years will probably not provide the military with a crash course in heading the government. As far as the military's leadership is concerned, this is all for the best. In light of the recent failures of military-led governments throughout Latin America, the military leadership of Mexico welcomes the opportunity to stay out of the political limelight.
Grassroots Challenges

by Luis Hernández and Laura Carlsen

Mexico's presidential election of July 6, 1988, gave voice to a widespread phenomenon that has been quietly growing for years. Grassroots movements—indeed, independent organizations of campesinos, workers, slum-dwellers, religious groups, feminists, environmentalists, and others—prepared the ground for the massive anti-PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) expression on election day. Such movements have evolved from the aftermath of the government's antistudent repression of 1968, which spawned a generation of social activists. But the movements have gained force as survival mechanisms in a setting of authoritarian government and economic crisis. The goal of the grassroots initiatives is survival—for families, communities, and the nation.

Grassroots movements provide the key to understanding the changing political climate of Mexico. Who are these groups? And what is their political role?

The Urban Popular Movement

As Mexico's cities became bloated with poor residents during the 1970s, the urban masses began to press for housing and neighborhood services such as sewage, water, and transportation. The onset of economic crisis in the early 1980s, as well as the 1985 earthquake and the 1988 presidential election, escalated popular demands for government response. The government, however, did not respond. As a result, grassroots organizations entered virgin terrain by providing urban services.

The urban popular movement (UPM) displays several novel characteristics. To begin with, its participants come together because of their demands as consumers, not as producers. Thus their tactics consist not of strikes, which are the bread and butter of labor movements, but of sit-ins and marches. Another innovation is that women form the core of UPM's constituency. "Popular feminism" focuses attention on the "quality of life"—family economic needs, domestic work, bearing and rearing children, personal relationships, crime, and sex discrimination. This aspect of UPM is full of contradictions: their practices notwithstanding, the women cling to traditional conceptions of gender and would never call themselves "feminists." The fact remains that, through groups like the Women's Regional of the National Coordinating Body of the Urban Popular Movement, they exert a growing impact on a broad array of grassroots initiatives.

An additional new feature is UPM's concept of "territorial" organizing. The nucleus of the organization is always the people who live side by side. This may include a group that invaded land to build self-help houses, people who sought to rebuild their neighborhood after the earthquake, or a community that would no longer tolerate life without basic services. Among the resulting initiatives are neighborhood house-building cooperatives, tenant-rights organizations, food cooperatives, and crime-watch committees.

A final novelty is that UPM is neither a formal nor legal organization. The resulting flexibility makes the movement more resistant to government co-optation and repression and to its own in-fighting. By making the movement accessible to neighborhood residents, the informality also facilitates the leap from personal complaints to public action. Furthermore it lays the groundwork for nationwide coalitions among all types of grassroots organizations. One instance is the alliance between the Peoples' Union of Nueva Tenochtitlán, an organization of Mexico City tenants, and the Venustiano Carranza National Organization of Street Vendors.

Labor

The economic crisis has unleashed considerable repression against Mexico's "rank-and-file" labor movement. This movement encompasses "independent" unions, which are officially registered but not affiliated with the government or labor confederations; and "currents," democratic movements within official unions. The latter have become the more common of the two; since 1972 the government has refused to grant independent registration at the national level, with the notable exception of the "19th of September" Garment Workers' Union that formed after the 1985 earthquake.

Labor is the least likely of the grassroots movements to advance its interests during the Salinas administration. For one thing, the local and national labor arbitration and conciliation boards, government authorities, PRI officials, and "charros" (official union bosses) oppose the rank-and-file movement, which challenges the entrenched lines of power and corruption. For another, thou-
sands of jobs have been lost not only to the national downswing but also to industrial reconversion, the government’s project to improve Mexico’s productive capacity and reorient it to foreign markets. In recent years the government has guaranteed the proliferating maquiladoras, or export-assembly plants, of the northern border region a cheap and docile work force as part of a package of direct subsidies and decreased export taxes. Inflation, wage controls, and cutbacks in social services worsen the plight of working-class families. The bottom line is that since 1982 the purchasing power of Mexicans has plunged by more than 50 percent.

These conditions augur poorly for both independent and official unions. Indeed, the longstanding privileges of the official unions are quickly eroding. Indications of the latter are the devastating Economic Solidarity Pact of December 1987 and Salinas’s action against the leadership of the Oil Workers’ Union (which was not simply a matter of eliminating corruption, as commonly reported in the US press).

Nevertheless, it is not yet time to write eulogies for the Mexican labor movement. The emergence of the Garment Workers’ Union after the earthquake, the success of workers’ cooperatives (notably the Pascual soft-drink factory), and the victory of Volkswagen workers in staving off contract givebacks are signs of life in the rank-and-file movement. Attempts to unify the independent unions, particularly the three-year-old Union Coordinating Council, are potentially important.

Equally significant, many unions are beginning to view their objectives in broader light. For instance, rural teachers participate in campesino campaigns to raise the official price of corn. Garment workers march alongside poor urban women to demand social services. Organized professors actively support students’ demands for participation in university decisions. And unions of all kinds have joined together to protest electoral fraud. Such alliances hold a key to revitalizing the labor movement and, more generally, to forcing the Salinas administration to take seriously grassroots pressures.

Campesinos

The demand for land remains the driving force of campesino initiatives, but now it has company. Demands for control over the marketing of crops and for democratic representation have risen to prominence on the agenda of rural grassroots movements.

For decades opponents of PRI gained strength in the cities, but the countryside remained the privileged terrain of the official party. This situation dramatically changed in July 1988, when thousands of campesinos abandoned the ranks of PRI and their state of apathy to back the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. In Michoacán, Oaxaca, La Laguna, coastal Guerrero, and parts of Veracruz, PRI’s near monopoly over the peasantry has finally been broken. Rural discontent with PRI stems from government policies that encourage large-scale production for export, thereby concentrating land, credit, and other resources in the hands of a few. Such policies sacrifice rural living standards to export growth and industrial development, a key reason for the massive migration from rural zones to Mexican cities and to the US. A sign of plunging living standards in the countryside is that, according to researchers at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, from 1982 to 1987 the terms of trade of agriculture with industry dropped by 30 percent.

Agrarian protest—more isolated and severely repressed than that of any other popular sector—has continued unabated. In cases like the Democratic Campesino Front of Chihuahua, it has become regional in scope. For some groups the presidential election was just the most recent form of protest. A case in point is the Guerrero town of “El Quemado” (“The Burned Town”), whose name derives from the scorched-earth tactics of the Mexican army in fighting the area’s guerrilla insurgency of the 1960s. Those residents who suffered imprisonment and torture at the hands of the government are Cardenistas today. In addition are thousands of rural converts without organized political experience who see in Cárdenas a viable alternative to PRI.

There are also economic implications. Salinas, when he served during the de la Madrid presidency in the Ministry of Budget and Planning, developed a program of agrarian modernization based on the principle of negotiation. Some campesinos, especially those who belong to the National Union of Autonomous Regional Campesino Organizations (UNORCA), adopted this style. Not only did they implement successful cooperatives; they also reached accords with the government regarding matters such as price guarantees, marketing, technical training, housing, and social welfare. Apparently the government was willing to concede greater independence to the campesinos in exchange for more efficient production. Signs are that, as president, Salinas will continue this approach. PRI’s agrarian proposals have openly incorporated the principles of UNORCA’s project and some of UNORCA’s advisors have considerable influence with Salinas.

The relationship between UNORCA and the government illustrates one political avenue open to grassroots organizations. This avenue is potentially viable for two reasons. First, the traditional left has failed to generate a workable program of agricultural modernization. Second, the Salinas approach, it seems, respects the independence of grassroots organizations.

UNORCA’s strategy, however, contains points of serious vulnerability. The strategy underestimates the co-optive powers of PRI in the form of the party’s old-style agrarian leaders. It therefore overestimates the Salinas administration’s willingness to sacrifice political
control, and overlooks the possibility that regional campesino leadership could become absorbed by the government bureaucracy. Furthermore, the strategy could benefit the most favorably-positioned campesinos — those who own decent land and produce exportable crops — at the expense of their "less important" counterparts.

In the meantime last fall's official announcement of low guaranteed prices for corn and beans elicited massive rural protest. Campesinos blocked federal highways, refused to deliver crops, and seized silos, while grassroots organizations maneuvered to form coalitions. What is more, since the Salinas administration began, almost three dozen campesino activists have been murdered in Chiapas, Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Oaxaca, and Veracruz. These murders, including the killing of four activists and the wounding of 15 others during a municipal election on January 22 in Xoxocotla, Morelos, are evidence that the defense of traditional Indian culture and self-government is often a leading goal of campesino protest. This is especially true in the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, where indigenous culture forms the basis for alternative economic and community projects.

What's to Come?

The emergence of other grassroots movements — of, among others, students, Christian base communities, and environmentalists — is infusing new values and constituencies into the campaign for democracy. In doing so, these movements provide myriad new combinations of grassroots alliances. For instance, Christian base communities have joined forces with UPM to provide health services in poor neighborhoods, with campesinos to fight for price supports, and with environmentalists to protest against the Laguna Verde nuclear plant. And environmentalists have organized not only against Laguna Verde but in support of both Cardenismo and efforts by Indian groups to defend their access to natural resources.

The context for the continued development of grassroots initiatives is clear. During a period of economic crisis, the presidential contest of 1988 opened the way for "ground-up" and "top-down" competition to gain the support of the vast middle sectors: the millions of Mexicans who neither participate in grassroots organizations nor fill government posts. These sectors of Mexican society are becoming vocal — people who previously restricted their protests to grumbling around the kitchen table or Friday-afternoon griping in the neighborhood cantina.

This is a time of strange bedfellows, as political allies eye each other suspiciously at meetings previously not thought possible. Not that the new scenario is without risks. For example, in many states, anti-PRI Cardenista factions do not yet constitute a viable democratic force. By the same token, new movements face an old threat: co-optation by Mexico's government machinery. Professional politicians are inherently a risky bet as popular allies. Already several federal deputies, who were elected as opposition candidates, have returned to PRI, having succumbed to the juicy offers of the official party.

Yet professional politicians of the new electoral opposition have been forced to adopt new tactics. The elections proved they can neither win elections nor build democracy without developing new political channels of mass participation.

Enter the grassroots organizations. One of their major tasks is to ensure that the new Party of the Democratic Revolution, linked to the Cardenista movement, understands this message. The grassroots organizations must take into account the many risks and the possible gains, move carefully but quickly, and constantly judge how best to advance democracy under unprecedented circumstances.

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Rural Struggle

by Luis Hernández and Laura Carlsen

On Sunday, January 22, 1989, a burst of gunfire shocked the predominantly Indian town of Xoxocotla, Morelos. During a municipal election, police opened fire on a group of unarmed residents who were protesting an attempt by authorities of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to impose an official candidate. Four protesters died and 15 others were wounded.

Located 60 miles south of Mexico City, Xoxocotla is a town of 20,000 people. Like many other predominantly Indian communities, Xoxocotla has defended its traditions against the agents of "modernization"—land speculators, large commercial farmers, creditors and brokers, and government officials. For decades the town has led a dual political life. On the one hand, its residents have managed to conserve the principal features of their political traditions. Thus, a local assembly continues to elect the town's governing leadership and the elderly still play a vital role in community affairs. On the other hand, the concerns of local residents have been increasingly subordinated to the policies and whims of federal and state authorities. Fraud has determined the results of municipal elections since 1982, as PRI candidates have won in the face of strong local opposition.

Yet the town's resistance has not weakened. Indeed, its strengthened resistance has reinvigorated cultural traditions such as the indigenous language (Nahua) and folk medicine, as well as various community ceremonies. At the same time, the people of Xoxocotla have established new forms of economic and political organization. These include cooperatives, as part of the Union of Morelos Communities and the National Coordinating Plan of Ayala, to bypass brokers in marketing the local peanut crop. They also include efforts to improve the chances of electoral victory by linking local political candidates to anti-PRI parties. Not surprisingly, Cuauhtémoc Cardenas carried Xoxocotla, as well as the state of Morelos, in last summer's presidential election.

On January 25 a funeral for the four murdered protesters was held in the central plaza. During his sermon, the priest announced, "This was the third electoral fraud in Xoxocotla. Enough is enough. It's time to raise our voice." Later on, the mother of one of the deceased added, "This is what my son wanted: that we get rid of corrupt governments, murderers with power. This town will fight back. I'm so proud of you, son, so proud. Listen to me, son. We're all here with you. Everyone is here, and nothing'll stop us."

Faced with this response, the government recognized the electoral victory of the local Cardenista-aligned candidates. It also disbanded the police force in Xoxocotla and compensated the families of the victims. But the killers were not punished and, in Mexico City, the majority of PRI congressional representatives refused to take a public stand.

In addition to the four killed in Xoxocotla, Morelos, 30 campesino activists—in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Jalisco, Oaxaca, and Veracruz—have been murdered since December 1988, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari took office.

(Translated by Hemisphere staff)
Family Business, Mexican Style

by Alan Knight

A Mexican Elite Family, 1820-1980

Family Business, Past and Present

Don Pedro Gómez (all the names in this book are pseudonyms) was a Creole landowner in the Puebla region of Mexico during the late colonial period. The family he fathered went on to prosper, first as modest provincial entrepreneurs, then as powerful Mexico City capitalists. The family fortune took off along with the Mexican economy during the Porfiriato, the "order and progress" dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911). By the time of the 1910 Revolution the Gómez family owned stores, textile factories, lumber mills, banks, insurance companies, and real estate. Buffeted, but not sunk, by the storms of revolution, the Gómez's made an impressive comeback during the 1920s, their familial trajectory again following the curve of national economic upswing. They continued to prosper, weathering the ugly challenge of Cardenismo (1934-40) and benefiting from the sustained boom of World War II and the postwar decades of "desarrollo estabilizador" ("stabilized development").

This diachronic process, however, is not the central feature of the book. At its heart lies the synchronic analysis of the Gómez family during the 1970s and early '80s. The main sources are oral accounts and first-hand observations, supplemented by archival work. The book is therefore a work of anthropology, by anthropologists. (Or, at a pinch, it falls within Paul Frederich's category of "anthrohistory," albeit squarely emphasizing the "anthro.") Historians of Mexico will note with interest those episodes in which macrohistorical trends impinged upon family fortunes: the railway building of the 1870s; the entrepreneurial setbacks of the 1910s and 1930s; and the residential shifts associated with the prodigious growth of Mexico City after 1940.

So enveloping is the Gómez familial network that escape proves difficult, except for those deviants who are disowned. Members of the family can run but they can't hide.

But the historical analysis is thin and includes some aberrations. Díaz's Científicos were hardly a "class of professional bureaucrats"; the sketch of the 19th century is questionable; and in 1922 the Christero [sic] War was still three years from starting (pp. 17, 18, 205). A more serious shortcoming is the interpretation of the Revolution as primarily a movement of mestizo self-assertion that led to a "new mestizo society." This interpretation takes too much at face value the rhetoric of the Revolution. Indeed, in one of their many illuminating observations, the authors note that the very category "mestizo" is absent from contemporary Gómez family discourse (p. 196).

The anthropological analysis of the modern Gómez clan is a different matter. Here the authors move with the assurance conferred by a mass of detailed data and a sure grasp of the comparative and theoretical literature. Their main point is that the Gómez family constitutes a three-generation grandfamily of remarkable cohesion. This cohesion is maintained by co-residence or close residence, shared rituals, a durable family ideology (Catholic, conservative, nationalist, and patriarchal), and an evolving family memory, or "cognitive map." This "map" is chiefly compiled and maintained by the family's "centralizing women," who are the principal sources of the authors' data. (This fact raises the unanswerable question: to what extent have these sources colored the authors' analysis, substituting family norms for practice?)

So enveloping is the familial network that escape proves difficult, except for those individual deviants (a jailed divorcee, a renegade flamenco dancer) who are disowned, or those poorer, provincial branches of the family that are discreetly lopped off. Women who marry into the Gómez clan are grappled to it. Their original family ties must atrophy. As one such affinal woman puts it: "The ideal of a Gómez man is to marry a test-tube baby" (p. 229). Members of the family can run but they can't hide. When a Gómez daughter married and went to live with her new husband in the US ("partly in order to get away from the domination of the family"), "several sisters bought properties near them and on one occasion a plane-
load of fifty-one ... relatives arrived to spend Christmas with the would-be loners" (p. 101).

This suffocating solidarity reveals its utility in the realm of business. Unfortunately the book tells us little about the family's business operations. We learn the Gómez's are suspicious of the state. They loathed presidents Lázaro Cárdenas, a “Communist,” and Luis Echeverría, “a madman who was tearing down everything that had been achieved in Mexico during earlier decades.” We also learn they revered Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, “a great president,” the scourge of students, subversives and “intellectual bums,” who happened to attend Gómez family weddings (pp. 199-201). Nonetheless, the character of the Gómez economic empire, its business operations, and its relations with government remain obscure. What we see is a view from the drawing room and not the board room.

Hence the book contrasts with those more conventional analyses of Mexican business elites that focus on public rather than private persons. (e.g., Alex Saragoza's The Monterrey Elite and the Mexican State, 1880-1940, 1988). In addition the book contradicts the familiar thesis (first sustained by Sanford Mosk's Industrial Revolution in Mexico, 1950, and since repeated by Saragoza) that Mexico City entrepreneurial groups, in contrast to their counterparts in the northern industrial city of Monterrey, operate in close and even sympathetic conjunction with the Mexican state. The Gómez family, at least in its rhetoric, spurns the state; whether its business practices match its rhetoric is not clear.

What is clear is the nature of family ideology and ritual. Here the information and insights are telling. We learn of a family that is aggressively Catholic yet displays a strangely secular indifference to the priesthood. (This is not the only respect in which the Gómez's, despite their elite status, resemble some peasant cultures.) We learn of a family steeped in machismo: for the women, Kirche, Küche, Kinder (church, kitchen, and children); for the men, feo, fuerte y formal (ugly, strong, and formal), according to the Gómez ideal of the kept mistress and the casa chica (the husband's illegitimate family) (pp. 142, 210-11).

We learn, too, of a family that is aggressively nationalistic, in somewhat knee-jerk and hypocritical fashion. Its members value Mexico's modern image, typified by the Olympic games of 1968, which President Díaz Ordaz providentially saved from domestic subversion. They flaunt traditional Mexican symbols—food, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and charro (cowboy) customs—and they see the 1938 petroleum nationalization by President Cárdenas as his one positive achievement. Yet they salt away their money in foreign banks, they deplore President Echeverría's replacement of French furniture with "coarse Mexican handicrafts" at the presidential residence of Los Pinos, and, for their lavish riding expeditions, they have discarded Mexican for Spanish saddles. Their nationalism, it seems, has a strong taint of material self-interest. Despite frequent trips abroad, they have no time for foreigners or foreign culture, and they entertain Mexican stereotypes worthy of any petty bourgeois bigot. Only Spain and Spaniards escape censure: the family boasts Spanish roots, and Spanish capital and marriages have, for generations, reinforced the family business.

Conversely Mexico's Indian heritage is disdained. The Gómez family affords further evidence of the shallowness of revolutionary indigenismo, at least among the country's elites, as well as of the pervasive importance of Spanish commerce and immigration. Oddly the book makes no mention of servants—their numbers, role, and treatment. While the existence of servants is implied, the Gómez women, we are told, are expected to breast-feed their numerous children, change their diapers, get up at night when they cry, and shepherd them to and from school (p. 212). To what extent are these indeed daily practices, or merely idealized norms?

Such questions aside, the authors' patient cognitive mapping is valuable and illuminating. They penetrate the institutional facade of the Mexican elite—the eternal impersonal acronyms of parties and business confederations—and touch the intangible mentalité of Mexican conservatism. They reveal something of its abiding strengths, its inner contradictions, and its forms of ideological self-reproduction. Ritual is of key importance. It must be said the Gómez's are a pretty boring lot. Despite decent educations, they have few or no cultural interests. Family, money, and politics (in that order) dominate dinner-table conversations. Their lavish entertaining, horse rides, and foreign excursions evoke somewhat Reaganesque images.

Thus, if the authors' lengthy discussion of the family's daily routines and rituals sometimes palls, the fault lies more with the Gómez than with the authors (ch. 5). Nor can the rites of passage of such Mexican elites compare, in terms of novelty and exotica, with those of Melanesian...
primitives. Family conversations, we learn, "present an important arena for the process of adaptation of the family ideology to daily needs" (p. 181). But, apart from a growing awareness (and practice?) of birth control, it is not clear that the Gómez family's ideology has undergone significant changes over the years; it is the clan's dogged familism, Catholicism, anti-intellectualism, and conservatism that are striking. Like the Bourbons, the Gómez's have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Or, to take a more recent, quasi-regal analogy, they seem to blend Reagan-esque cultural tastes with a flair for gemütlich, extended-family junketings that resemble those of the new American First Family, the Bush's.

Comparing Family Portraits

Behind all this detail, humdrum yet often fascinating, lies a thesis. The authors argue the Gómez's exemplify a three-generation grandfamily typical of Latin American families, rich and poor, and distinct from the more or less Anglo-Saxon pattern of two-generation nuclear families. Cultural norms thus display a marked consistency across countries, across classes, and across time. As Lomnitz and Pérez-Lizaur say, "The basic elements of the kinship system appear to have been essentially invariant since colonial times" (p. 235). The Mexican bourgeoisie, the Peruvian middle class, Mexican shantytown dwellers, and even Mixtec and Maya Indians, all share three-generational, co-residential family patterns that set them apart from British or American families. These claims are bold and significant.

In addition business activities revolve around the family and impart a distinct irrationality to its decisions. For the Gómez's it is more important to preserve the business(es) in family hands, to avoid corporate anonymity, and to find niches for deserving family members, than to pursue profit with ruthless entrepreneurial rationality. Board meetings are occasions for macho bragging, not sober deliberation. Payrolls are padded with relatives; indeed the family has its own (Gómez) doctor and dentist.

Yet this apparent irrationality has a perverse rationality. The family represents a tightly-knit, ideologically-coherent, and socially-durable source of mutual support in what—essentially in the 30 years after 1910—was a dangerous world. Like the 19th-century entrepreneurs described by David W. Walker (Kinship, Business and Politics: The Martínez del Río Family in Mexico, 1824-1867, 1987), the Gómez clan became an elite version of the extended-family networks that sustain peasants and shantytown dwellers.

Since the 1940s, however, the family modus operandi has become outdated. In the more benign business climate of Priísta Mexico, the rationality of the padded payroll has diminished; the need for technological innovation (spurned by the Gómez's) has increased; and the multinationals have shouldered aside these representatives of an older phase of familial enterprise. As in the past, the fortunes of the Gómez family reflect secular phases in the development of Mexican capitalism.

The analysis of the Gómez family is convincing, though it would have been strengthened by greater concentration on business activities per se. But is the stark contrast drawn between irrational Latin and rational Anglo-Saxon capitalism entirely valid? The authors' rational-capitalist norm is drawn from Max Weber, that is, from a deliberately schematic "ideal type," a model that is contrived, utopian, and abstract. Actual business practices are a different matter: irrational familism (jobs for the boys) and an associated resistance to technological innovation have been regularly cited as explanations of Britain's relative industrial decline. (Conversely the now fashionable model of Japanese industrial organization contains strong familial strains.) Other elements in this stark cultural contrast are perhaps overdrawn. Reference to Alan Macfarlane's analysis of the historical roots of "individualistic Western societies" (p. 146) is contentious and provides a slippery foothold for grand comparison.

The same problems characterize the authors' analysis of the state. "The Mexican state," they write, "is not a classical bourgeois state in the sense that other capitalist societies are described as such. ...The Mexican power elite is not identical with the class owners of the means of production: one deals in capital, the other deals in power" (pp. 237-238). Again, the problem here is not the Mexican formulation, but rather the implied contrast with an imaginary capitalist norm, which supposedly points to the aberrant character of the Mexican case. Yet it is something of a commonplace that, as Karl Kautsky observed as long ago as 1909, "the capitalist class rules but does not govern"; that, in Ralph Miliband's more recent formulation, "the economic elites of advanced capitalist countries are not properly speaking a 'governing' class comparable to pre-industrial aristocratic and landowning classes" (The State in Capitalist Society, 1973, pp. 51-55).

To the extent that capitalist relations broadly prevail, entrepreneurs do not need to have their hands directly on the levers of political power. In this respect the Gómez's are not so different from entrepreneurs in more "advanced" or "rational" capitalist societies. This does not mean comparisons of this kind are inherently invalid. It means, rather, they are exaggerated, as contrasts between Mexican reality and non-Mexican ideal types are almost bound to be.

It would be unfair to blame such a penetrating case study for failing to construct a convincing comparative framework. If the contrast between rational, individualistic Anglo-Saxons and irrationally familial Mexicans is overdrawn, at least it emphasizes those aspects of the Gómez family that are integral to its growth, survival, and character. These aspects are reproduced elsewhere in Mexican and Latin Ameri-
can family structures. Lomnitz and Pérez-Lizaur extend anthropological research beyond the village and shantytown, to the inner sanctum of the bourgeois drawing room. In doing so they have shed light on a class whose impersonal political agency is often invoked (e.g., Nora Hamilton, The Limits of State Autonomy, 1982, pp. 282-85), but whose carnal embodiments have usually remained shadowy and anonymous.

A Mexican Elite Family puts flesh on the skeletal bones of the Mexican bourgeoisie. Historians, anthropologists, and sociologists of Mexico and of Latin America in general should be grateful. The Gómez's may not be nice to know, but they are well worth knowing about.

**Mexican Struggles**


The interpretation of insurrections has come a long way from the stereotypical portrayals of unleashed animalistic mass violence, stories about great heroes and villains, and accusations of “outside agitators” spouting alien ideologies. They have gone beyond accounts of “inevitable” transitional steps between “inevitable” historical stages, or alleged measurements of frustrated expectations. The trend over the last 20 years has been to combine structural social science with history—two fields in different proportions. This approach has generated understandings that typically are sympathetic to insurgents while specifying the conditions under which they revolt and the limitations of their accomplishments. John Tutino's synthetic history of rural rebellion in Mexico represents a splendid example of this intellectual trend.

Tutino divides his long time span into three periods: late colonial, mid-19th century, and the revolution. For each he specifies the loci of rebellion and passivity, exploring the changing socioeconomic structures that gave rise to varying political actions. For the first period he focuses on the Bajio (the zone around Guanajuato), where population growth and commercial quickening led to lower wages for campesinos and reduced their access to land. Two disastrous famine years led to relief efforts favoring urban elements, making rural masses available to follow Father Miguel Hidalgo into sustained insurrection. But neither the autonomous peasant communities of central Mexico nor the secure estate dependents north of the Bajio felt actionable grievances. The latter, in fact, provided the troops that suppressed Hidalgo's forces and the rebel bands that arose in Jalisco and San Luis Potosí.

The second half of the book covers the “agrarian decompression” (1810-1880) and “agrarian compression” leading to revolution (1880-1940). After independence elites were weak and small holdings and tenancies grew more numerous. By 1840 elites had begun to use political means to secure new resources, a tendency accelerated after the passage of “liberal” legislation outlawing communal property. Mid-century rebellions occurred in the Yucatán, the Sierra Gorda, and the isthmus of Tehuantepec. In the 1860s and 1870s peasant revolts in Chalco, Chiapas, Jalisco, the Huasteca, and elsewhere helped to frustrate or delay the implementation of new property arrangements. But, under Porfirio Díaz, rural elites in many regions were able to profit greatly at the expense of the direct producers: coerced plantation workers in the center-south lowlands, dispossessed villagers in the highlands, and insecure tenants and dispossessed smallholders in the north. When economic crisis, elite conflicts, and succession problems came together in 1910-11, a disparate set of rural rebels took up arms in what became a revolutionary struggle for land reform. As in 1810, secure estate dependents played a minimal part as insurgents.

When Tutino gives detailed accounts of particular struggles he introduces familiar factors from other studies of revolution in Mexico and elsewhere: elite divisions, popular ascription to elites of responsibility for distress, and communal and religious traditions. These factors are not themselves defined. But Tutino's real interest is explaining variations in peasant grievances. For this purpose he works with four variables: material well-being, autonomy, security, and mobility. If declines in any of the first three are not compensated by opportunities for the fourth, rebellion becomes probable. As elements of a descriptive typology, these variables perhaps suffice. Historians of the old school may even find that this much theory is an unwarranted intrusion. Those who prefer a higher proportion of social science, however, may well be disappointed that Tutino eschewed the opportunity to integrate analyses built around capitalist encroachments upon peasants with those built around class relations within distinctive agrarian sectors. Nonetheless, his synthesis of his own archival investigations, the research of others, and recent theoretical currents make From Insurrection to Revolution a welcome contribution to the burgeoning literature in modern Mexican history. Attractively pro-
Books in Review

Cuban Expression

La última frontera: 1898

El Candidato (1978), Alfredo A. Fernández’s first novel, obtained the Premio Novela UNEAC and broad popularity among Cuban readers. La última frontera reiterates the qualities that merited such fame. Fernández writes in a historical format that Cuba’s postrevolutionary literature has profoundly revised.

This novel tells of the adventures of a North American lieutenant who, passing himself off as Stephen Crane, the correspondent of the London daily The World, disembarks on the isle a few months before the Hispanic-Cuban-American War. The novel presents an almost mystical voyage through a historical period that began with the explosion of the Maine and culminated with the taking of San Juan Hill by Teddy Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders.” In portraying both events the novel emphasizes the presence of Crane’s impostor among the mambises (Cuban rebels during the Spanish domination of the island). The novel also highlights the events surrounding the mysterious explosion of the Maine. Fernández’s epilogue transcends the barriers between history and fiction.

Fernández presents the disjunction between the history-fiction and/or fiction-history genres that texts such as Crouch’s Riding with Garcia and A Yankee Guerrillero or Eliseo Pérez Díaz’s La rosa del cayo (1947) have exhaustively examined. Fernández knows quite well the epoch explored by historians such as Foner and Hugh Thomas. The analysis that resulted from works by Manuel Moreno Fraginals and Jorge Ibarra aided in the demystification of the historical process of Cuban independence that has now found an echo in literature.

What differentiates La última frontera is its proximity to a public made conscious and educated by a revolutionary process. The novel does not follow the narrative guidelines of European literary histories; rather, it represents a new language in Latin America that merits critical attention. At times the text parodies pamphleteering with these characteristics, though it lacks the euphemistic metaphors of that genre. The book highlights the impact of popular culture through an eroticism that lacks the controlling mechanisms that Cornelia and Jan Flora attribute to the Latin American soap opera and Virginia Erhart attributes to the works of Corín Tellado.

La última frontera is not a conformist text or the porter of the hidden ideological messages that characterize the continental “fotonovela.” If analyzed as an example of literature emerging from the processes of historical rupture and discontinuity, this novel establishes a clear framework for a public that is witnessing the new literary expressions of Latin America.

Manuel Cachan
University of North Dakota

Taking Shape

The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century

David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay provide a distinguished text for the period of 1810-1880, a text that adequately reflects current thinking and is wholesomely analytical. Although it suffers from a few small errors, it will stimulate teachers and students of Latin American history.

Previous texts overstate the personalismo at work in the 19th century, grossly underplay economic factors, and ignore the social analysis that has been an important part of the Latin Americanist trade for the last generation. This book attempts to remedy these omissions and alert us to the fact that today’s political systems have their origins in the past century. The work’s comparative dimension may be its most valuable contribution. We can see clearly the 19th-century utilitarianism, liberalism, conservatism, and positivism in a variety of contexts. The book will serve admirably as a first-assigned text in a course on modern Latin America.

In keeping with recent theory the authors stress the “corporatist heritage” of Latin America rather than class conflict. This emphasis is appropriate given our belated understanding of the importance of corporatism in Latin American culture. A recurring theme in the volume is the inherent contradiction between corporatism and individual freedom. Individualism is a “for- eign” idea that suffers many defeats but will not die. The volume’s analysis of economic change is thorough and rewarding. Class analysis is present when deemed relevant, but the authors delight in exploring the multiclass nature of alliances in the last century. For example, they cite cases where artisans supported conservatives when doing so saved the former from the perils of “free trade.” Indians fought liberals if the latter went “too far” in attacking the Church’s secular and religious role. The authors’ treatment of the implications of ideas for the groups is realistic, even earthy.

The work begins with two essays devoted to the formation of new political, economic, and social systems in independent Latin America. We glean rich insights from Bushnell’s deep understanding of conflicts during the era of independence. The chapters on the Brazilian empire display refreshing interpretations derived from Macaulay’s pioneering work on the subject. The analyses of Brazil and New Granada, or Colombia, are the most stimulating and will force the redrafting of sev-
eral sets of lecture notes. Teachers will fault the work for its lack of maps, especially since the authors stress regional diversity within countries. Many place names appearing in the text are not present on the map at the front of the volume. Specialists on the 19th-century history of Latin America will occasionally find cause for complaint in the chapters devoted to their particular countries of interest. Since my specialty is early 19th-century Mexico, I find it distressing to encounter several errors in chapter four, "Mexico in Decline (1821-1855)." This chapter is the weakest; it stresses detail at the expense of analysis and, since the authors are not experts on Mexico, the detail leads them astray.

Allow me to point out several errors. The Scottish Rite Lodge existed prior to the arrival of the British minister and was not chartered by him (p. 66). Alaman was "interior and exterior minister" in Victoria's cabinet, not "foreign minister" (p. 65). Interest in education developed early on: schools were founded in the 1820s, but they were disappearing by the 1830s for lack of financial support. Santa Anna was not present at the suppression of the Bravo revolt in December 1827; he was on route, probably to join Bravo (p. 72). President Victoria's favored candidate in 1828 was Gómez Pedraza, his minister of war, not General Guerrero (p. 67). And Victoria did not join the revolt against his own government, though he did surrender to rebel forces when he determined that the cause was lost (and to avoid further bloodshed) (p. 67).

In effect, the Acordada Revolt brought down Victoria and Gómez Pedraza; Gómez Pedraza did not attempt a "preemptive strike" per se (p. 67). Guerrero did not order the expulsion of Spaniards in 1829; the authority came from laws passed by the national congresses (as they had also in 1827 and would again in 1833-34—not mentioned in the text) (p. 68). Most important, slavery was not abolished in Texas in 1829—an exemption was made for that province (a part of the state of Coahuila y Tejas) to avoid rebellion (p. 68). Guerrero's wartime "extraordinary powers" were not the issue upon which his government was ousted in December 1829; rather, it was fiscal bankruptcy and an underpaid army that did the trick (as Santa Anna's repeated letters to the chief had warned it would) (p. 69). Poinsett was ordered out by Guerrero, his friend, before Bustamante came to power, not by the latter (p. 70). Guerrero did not seek refuge on Picaluga's ship but, rather, was invited to dine. He was then betrayed by Picaluga, on instructions from Minister of War Facio, not Alaman (this error is present twice, on pp. 70 and 198), who has been cleared of suspicion.

Had the same analysis been applied to the Mexican case for the 1820s and 1830s as was used in the treatment of other countries, the authors would not have become ensnared in so much detail. Their basic scheme fits the early Mexican case as well as it does that of New Granada. They might consider this when they undertake (as they surely will) a second edition.

Harold Dana Sims
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Flesh and Blood


What do the lives of an Argentine tango artist, a Peruvian soccer star, a Cuban prostitute, and a Cuban urban squatter from Uruguay, a little-known power broker from Yucatán, a Mexican politician, and a Cuban Baptist preacher reveal about the human tradition in Latin America? These are among the 23 people who are profiled in The Human Tradition in Latin America: The Twentieth Century. Rather than presenting statistical models and focusing on historical themes, the book's contributors strive to present the human element in their studies of modern Latin American history. In this compilation of individual biographies, flesh-and-blood people emerge from a historical context fraught with obstacles, vicissitudes, and social injustice.

These individuals come from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Venezuela, and Uruguay, and from walks of life that are as diverse as the countries that serve as the backdrop for their personal dramas. The editors, however, do not give their criteria for excluding countries like Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico. Notwithstanding these omissions, the editors have attempted to adequately represent Latin America's heterogeneity.

What are the common denominators that emerge from such diverse biographies? What is the aim of such an apparently amorphous volume? The editors argue "the heritage so evident is the story of courage... These are stories of women and men who lived their lives with pluck and determination." They also emphasize these stories are of "ordinary, everyday" people.

A few of the individuals are well known: the colorful Chilean military leader, Marmaduke Grove; tango's greatest artist, Carlos Gardel; and the senior statesman and intellectual of Panama's West Indian community, George Westerman. The majority, however, are members of the obscure masses. Nonetheless, several of these men and women are extraordinary and heroic, while others seem adrift in the course of their country's history. They encountered discrimination based on gender, nationality, ethnic or racial heritage, economic class, and family status, and the difficulties of life under a dictator.

The "strategies for survival" chronicled on the pages of The Human Tradition in Latin America...
include: artistic expression (dance and music, literature, weaving, production of artillería or tapestries); pursuit of athletic prowess (organized sports); adoption of leadership roles (as minister or priest, lay leader in a base community, feminist, regional cacique); and defiance of authority and established social conventions (Brazil's Patricia Galvão). In every case the authors introduce us to people struggling to bring meaning to their lives under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, each demonstrating tenacity, perseverance, and trust in his future.

Steve Stein profiles Miguel Rosetaing, one of Peru's premier soccer players in the early decades of this century. Venezuelan murderer Ligia Taing, one of Peru's premier soccer players in the early decades of this century, is examined by Judith Ewell who writes: "Cultural traditions and values, often nurtured by gossip, limited modern women as much as the laws did." Leocio Veguilla's suffering and imprisonment as a Baptist preacher at the hands of Castro's government is written by Harold E. Greer. These and the other biographies of The Human Tradition in Latin America clearly demonstrate that what is political is also personal.

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Growing Pains
Trinidad and Tobago: The Independence Experience 1962-1987

In 1982 Eric Williams and the People's National Movement (PNM) led polyglot Trinidad and Tobago to independence with a mix of economic cenism, nonalignment, anti-imperialism, and a nascent ideology of Black Power. In 1987 Williams was six-years dead. The country's post-oil-boom economy was in shambles, the PNM had been drummed out of office by the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), and many of Williams's cronies had departed in ignominious circumstances. Economic hardship and social factionalism plagued the country as the NAR splintered along ethnic lines.

These events provide the chronological framing for Trinidad and Tobago: The Independence Experience 1962-1987. Their significance is indispensable for understanding the political conditions that shaped this collection of essays and commentaries. The contributors are local academics, politicians, public servants, prominent business leaders, and some who wear a combination of hats. While this diversity provides insight into Trinidad and Tobago's development experience that goes beyond the views of academics, there is a negative side as well.

For example, Frank Rampersad, who was one of Williams's most trusted and influential advisors, reflects on the development experience in what comes off as a banal apologia, since he says little about the period's attendant corruption and waste. In another chapter, former university lecturer and present NAR cabinet member Bhoie Tewarie urges his fellow Hindus to reduce their public identification with the NAR and to reduce their expectations of patronage from the state. The political message in his contribution is clear: stop raising a ruckus—causing "confusion," as they would say in Trinidad—and your time for political spoils will come.

Economic hardship and social factionalism plagued the country as the National Alliance for Reconstruction splintered along ethnic lines.

This collection examines discourses that are familiar to those who know Trinidad and Tobago. For example, it examines the theme of "pure East Indian culture" being swamped by "African culture," and the countervalue of an East Indian "takeover" of the economy, that are picked up by not only local sociologists but used with impunity by local politicians. The collection trots out the "Carnival mentality" (i.e., a supposed aversion to hard work) once again, if only implicitly. It reminds us of government corruption, bureaucratic indiscipline and inefficiency, and of Williams and his "yes men." And it discusses the symbolic importance of nationalizing the banks, which resulted in enhanced local economic control, but perhaps more important for the public, installed dark faces in positions that had previously been reserved for light ones. Further, the volume pursues questions of economic dependency and inequality among ethnic groups. Finally, in the face of foreign cultural bombardment via the media, the book extols the legitimate, "indigenous culture" (usually taken to mean "African").

The contributors develop these themes in interesting ways. For example, the chapter by Gordon Draper, though ponderously written, analyzes the role of Williams in the centralization and thus the near incapacitation of the government bureaucracy.

In a rather surprising chapter, Earl Lovelace, one of the country's most gifted novelists, reaffirms "African" identity by valorizing the role of the "indigenous traditions" of steelband, stickfight, Carnival, and the bongo dance. Despite a corrective that these traditions have their meaning in the Caribbean context, he is vulnerable to V.S. Naipaul's acerbic remarks in The Middle Passage (1962). "Culture," according to Naipaul, "is spoken of as something quite separate from day-to-day existence, separate from advertisements, films and comic strips. It is like a special native dish, something like a callaloo." The inde-
pendence struggle of Trinidad and Tobago, however, was precisely a struggle against being defined solely in the terms of the tourist brochure.

Perhaps the most important chapters are those by Selwyn Ryan, Dennis Pantin, and Ralph Henry. Ryan, the author of the seminal Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago (1972), explains in his introduction that the collection seeks to address the extent to which the PNM achieved the goals of economic development and political autonomy put forth in its charter of 1956. In another chapter he argues it is impossible to evaluate the consequences of independence without evaluating Williams and the PNM. Ryan points to the PNM's considerable accomplishments, such as those in education. Nonetheless, he does not mince words in criticizing Williams and the party, and he blames the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago for allowing Williams to monopolize power and decision-making.

Pantin, in a chapter on the past and future of the Point Lisas industrial estate (a state venture), emphasizes the dangers of bureaucratic centralization. Point Lisas continues to provide little employment and to drain the treasury; it may soon be known as "Williams's Folly." Pantin astutely locates the origins of this venture in Williams's obsession with steel production and in the political contingencies of Black Power. Henry questions the utility of the development economist Simon Kuznets's models of growth and equity for what Henry calls a "plural society." He argues the PNM was committed to redistributing wealth, within the limits it set for itself by following W. Arthur Lewis's "industrialization by invitation" development plans. Moreover, Henry demonstrates that, during the 1960s, Trinidad and Tobago's income distribution actually worsened when compared to pre-independence levels, but that thereafter it improved. Henry shows that the income levels of blacks and East Indians achieved parity by the early 1980s.

The contributions by Patricia Mohammed and Rhoda Reddock perform the overdue task of examining women's history. From Mohammed we learn about the changing status of East Indian women and their integration into the wider society. Reddock reminds us that, although women were the PNM's vociferous foot soldiers, women's emancipation is far from complete. While women continue to possess informal authority, access to formal power continues to elude them.

The book is billed as a "retrospective," but it frequently serves as a launching pad for commentary on present-day politics. This is unfortunate in many ways, since the volume presents no sustained analysis of the "February Revolution" of 1970 and the Black Power movement of the same period. Arguably this was the most important period of the post-independence era because it not only represented an attempt by a subordinate group to fundamentally redefine its identity, but it also forced the predominantly-black PNM to support the redistribution of wealth. In addition the volume includes no discussion on or by Lloyd Best or others on "the left," not to mention early opposition politicians. And it makes no serious attempt to address the development of religious cults, including the Spiritual Baptists and the Orisha, which continue to gain followers.

Nonetheless, the volume's commentary reflects the authors' concern with Trinidad and Tobago's future, now that it appears less than rosy. Trinidad (more than Tobago) has always been blessed with extremely good luck: sugar busts gave way to booms, cocoa was crowned king as King Sugar died for the last time, and oil rescued the society from the brink of who knows what. Such luck explains a rather Pickwickian attitude of trusting that everything will be all right. The tone of the book indicates this attitude may be changing.

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The Underside

Unseasonal Migrations: The Effects of Rural Labor Scarcity in Peru

In Peru and throughout Latin America, peasants are increasingly turning to seasonal migration, wage labor, petty commerce, and other kinds of employment to supplement income from agriculture. Unseasonal Migrations looks at one such case, diagnosing the reasons for this trend and its destructive impact on peasant society and the environment.

The setting is the Peruvian department of Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, where peasants migrate seasonally to small coffee farms in the nearby tropical lowlands of the Andes' eastern slopes. The family members who stay behind in the highlands must work harder to compensate for the missing workers, neglecting established reciprocal labor obligations between households. In the lowlands seasonal cultivation leads to short cuts in coffee production and environmental deterioration. Despite low returns, coffee cultivation is necessary to supplement highland agriculture income; the peasants are locked into an exploitative and destructive system.

Collins amply documents this phenomenon. She analyzes in detail the labor history of the region, the causes of migration to the lowlands since the 1980s, and the mechanisms keeping coffee prices low. Unseasonal Migrations is a model for regional studies of the relation of small-holding cultivators to larger market systems.

Some gaps appear, however, in the data presented at the community level. Collins short cuts the ethnographic descriptions, leaving but one case study to document a major point. She cites a "consumption survey," but gives no details about the survey or sampling methods. The role of migration in the peasant
household economy and the economic exchanges between households need further examination. Collins omits these details in favor of historical data on the region, for example, on wool production since 1850 and on average population density, making her book not an ethnography but a regional history informed by ethnographic fieldwork.

On the positive side, Collins's regional analysis successfully combines ecological and historical explanations, a difficult task. Nevertheless, her attempt to place this study within the context of the Marxist literature on peasant economy is less successful. Although her summary of this literature is interesting, the comparative material is neither focused nor original, and it intrudes on the author's own work, sometimes obscuring the argument. Collins concludes with a sweeping and simplistic condemnation of capitalism, claiming that as long as uneven exchange and surplus extraction through market forces persist, "the settlement of new land only perpetuates poverty." This kind of statement only detracts from her powerful, historically-specific analysis.

The basic argument in the book, that labor scarcity causes difficulties for peasant livelihood, is well documented. In addition, Collins makes striking conclusions about the causes of this scarcity of rural labor. She argues that state policies favor urban consumers and intermediaries at the expense of small-holding peasants. The peasants stay poor, in spite of their hard work and entrepreneurship, because of low prices paid to the producers of highland food products and coffee, the monopsonistic power of the state-run marketing cooperatives, and the lack of credit to improve productivity of small-scale agriculture. Thus Puno remains one of the most impoverished and underdeveloped departments of Peru. Unseasonal Migrations could have made an even more valuable contribution if it had emphasized this aspect of the argument—the specific state policies perpetuating poverty—and recommended new policies for rural areas.

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Regional Affairs

Inter-American Relations: The Latin American Perspective

This volume is a collection of papers previously published in the Texas Journal of Political Studies. Several of the articles are the products of first-rate scholarship and well worth publishing as independent essays in a professional journal. But the value of including them in a work entitled Inter-American Relations: The Latin American Perspective is dubious. Through a series of introductory essays, the editor tries to develop common threads between the articles. These threads were to be woven into the Latin view of international affairs in the hemisphere. The result is disappointing.

One of the better essays, by Philip Kelly, analyzes Brazil's role in South America. Kelly speculates that Brazil "could, in time, assume a hegemonic role over the Southern Hemisphere similar to the authority held earlier by the United States, Great Britain, and the Iberians." He examines the parameters of Brazil's foreign-policy framework within the context of potential or actual conflicts, and concludes "Brazil favors stability and integration and consequently will exert a strong influence toward lessening regional conflict during future decades."

Another valuable essay, by Dale Story, examines trade relations between Mexico and the US. Story explains why trade with the US has become such a critical factor in both domestic and foreign policy for Mexico, and discusses the forces of protectionism in both countries. Unlike some of the other contributors to this volume, Story does not try to draw ambitious conclusions based on limited data.

Parts of this volume follow an unfortunate pattern characteristic of much social science research, where scientists are apt at describing phenomena, but very sloppy at explaining them. An example is the article by William J. Fleming, who tests for a causal linkage between foreign investment and infrastructure construction in Argentina in the period 1854-1914, to draw lessons for contemporary Latin American development. Fleming concludes that this case indicates that, used carefully, foreign-debt-driven economic growth can generate sustained development. His research design and data, however, do not warrant this conclusion. He presents simplistic cross-tabulation analyses (without all the relevant statistics that rigorous quantitative analysis requires) to test a hypothesis of questionable relevance.

Moreover, Fleming ignores the issue of whether the differences in the nature of the current international capitalist system and that of the earlier period under consideration allow for meaningful comparison.

Bruce R. Drury's essay on agrarian development and foreign debt in Brazil is another example of weak analysis. Pointing to hunger and malnutrition in Brazil, he claims the major cause of the food crisis is the massive external debt. But he provides little solid evidence for such a conclusion. Most observers agree the origins of the food problem in Brazil are much more complex than this article suggests; in fact, the problem existed well before the emergence of the recent debt crisis.

This volume does not significantly enhance our knowledge of the Latin American perspective on inter-American relations. Some of the articles are valuable. A selective, well-focused volume on the Latin view of hemispheric affairs might have justified their re-publication. This volume does not.

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