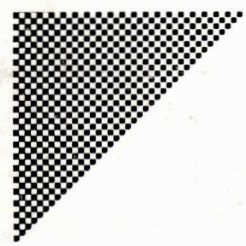


# voices of MEXICO


News, Commentary and Documents on Current Events in Mexico and Latin America



- Third World Revolutions in the World Setting
- The Bush Adventure in Panama
- Three Kinds of Terrorism Control Latin America
- Women Who Wait for their Migrant Husbands
- Science and Politics as Religion



*Provinces of Evil*



**Qué mejor  
regalo para  
nuestros  
hijos  
que un  
ambiente  
mejor.**

**Usa menos  
tu automóvil;  
compártelo  
con tus  
vecinos.**

## VOICES OF MEXICO

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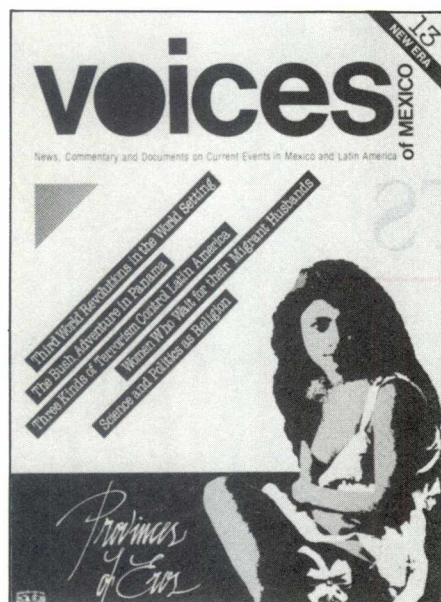
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# THIS ISSUE



Cover: Angel García Domínguez

We are glad that the change towards democracy which is taking place throughout the world, has made its presence felt in Latin America. However, for our countries, located in the sphere of influence of the United States, these changes have a double edge. For as long as the U.S. government considers Latin America as a zone of special importance for their national security, and therefore insist on meddling in our internal affairs and manipulating our political processes, our viability as sovereign states will be in danger.

Examples of U.S. intervention in Latin America are abundant. Remember the role played by the U.S. in the military coup against Salvador Allende's legitimately elected government in 1973. Ten years later, the military invasion of Grenada, and the recent one of Panama, through which a *de facto* president - supposedly elected in a ballot which had been declared null and void by Panamanian electoral authorities - has been imposed.

There are few reliable proofs of the legality of this president. The invasion of a sovereign state, on the pretext of pursuing a drug trafficker, and imposing a democracy, can achieve propagandistic effects in a wide sector of the European and North American public, but for Latin Americans it is obvious that -once again- international laws on the autonomy and self-determination of states were violated. This was made clear in the votes of the Organization of American States (OAS), and of the Latin American Parliament, which condemned the invasion of Panama. The disastrous effects of that invasion are beginning to become public: economic and social devastation and the spread of violence, all of which point to greater political instability and possibilities of future intervention.

Can we speak of democracy without the right to self-determination?

For the citizens of Latin America, the answer is a clear **NO**. Our peoples have always struggled for the legitimate aspiration to elect the governments which suit them most. They have also exercised this right each time there has been an opportunity to do so, but the U.S. government imposes conditions on our development which impede the full enjoyment of this basic human right.

The victory of the United National Opposition in Nicaragua was undoubtedly the result of a general popular vote, but it was also the result of ten years of systematic persecution of that Central American state for having dared to assert its national sovereignty. In these conditions, can the democratic life of Nicaragua - a tiny nation exhausted by war and economic strangulation - be guaranteed in the future?

The resolution of this problem, sovereignty with democracy, is of crucial importance for Latin America. *Voices* dedicates this issue to those people who suffered the traumatic invasion of Panama, and presents essays by Gérard Pierre-Charles and Francisco Gutiérrez Pérez who, from complementary viewpoints, contribute to the analysis of this complex and delicate question.

Mariclaire Acosta

Gérard Pierre-Charles

# THIRD WORLD REVOLUTIONS IN THE WORLD SETTING

Our twentieth century, now about to end, has seen the rise and fall of empires while the great majority of peoples remain oppressed. However it has also seen various processes of liberation in these weaker nations, which fight for their rights of self-determination and for opportunities to grow without the domination of super-powers. Seen in this light, the 20th century has shown how peoples of America, Asia, Africa and Central Europe have struggled with determination to free themselves of their local oligarchies, generally allied with the interests of transnational capitalism. In spite of the great variety of cultures and particular histories of each of these processes, it is possible to point out some general characteristics of recent "Third World" revolutions. In this article, Gérard Pierre-Charles, active defender of human rights in his native Haiti, analyzes the fundamental problems and foresees possible paths of development for these nations in the next century.

Ever since the "Third World" became a geo-political and historical phenomenon, the problems of social change which arise in any of these countries acquire a universal dimension, and set off powerful international forces - even if the changes are occurring in the smallest and least populated of these third world nations.

This is due to the fact that historically, and still today, third world countries have constituted territories of influence, of dominance, of plunder and of accumulation for world capitalism in its various liberal, monopolistic and transnational versions. For this reason, any attempt by a country in the region to opt for social revolution and self-determination, is seen by the countries of central capitalism as a weakening of its zone of control or influence. And so this attempt is considered a dangerous and adverse affair which must be combatted with maximum rigor and efficacy.

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Haitian intellectual. He was a full time professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico during 29 years of exile. Now he is a professor at the University of Haiti.

## The Historical Contradiction: Domination-Dependence

This vision of historical evolution is not really a consequence of the world polarity between capitalism and socialism, between west and east, as has been repeatedly affirmed in a systematic disinformation campaign organized to serve the interests of international capital. But this vision constitutes the guide to the behaviour of western nations since the Conquest and the subsequent colonial dominance. The bipolarity was expressed then in terms of "barbarie" and "civilization", of metropolis and colonies.

Resistance by subdued indians and enslaved blacks led to use of the most violent repressive actions by colonizers. Only one philosophy becomes evident from the massacres perpetrated by the Spanish in Peru against Tupac Amaru's rebellion, or by the British in India, or from the destructiveness of French or Portuguese conquerors in Africa: the ethic of capital in defense of its interests. This existed long before the antithesis of this system, socialism, could represent any threat to its survival.



President Fidel Castro led this torchlight march in Havana.

Photo by Luis Humberto González

The main philosophy of interventionism is clearly manifest in Latin America where the nation state was constituted from the beginning of the 19th century and where the ideology of the Conquest, as well as that of the defense of sovereignty, became a powerful expression of national cohesion. The Haitian revolution against slavery (1791-1804), which ended with independence, not only led to an aggressive reply from Napoleonic France, but also to a systematic trade embargo, historic hostility and ex-communication by the part of colonial powers against the young black Republic. The Cuban revolution for independence (1895-1898), provoked a U.S. military intervention in order to protect the "ripe fruit" (in John Quincy Adams' famous phrase), as the United States could not tolerate the Cubans exercising self determination. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 also suffered the intervention of the U.S. and England due to the important interests and investments made in Mexico by those countries.

While capitalism, as an international system, gradually integrated more and more of the world space into its processes of accumulation, the contradiction between colonial and ex-colonial countries and those of central capitalism reproduced and renewed itself, and became modernized according to the evolution of contemporary capitalism. This last knew how to create powerful means of domination, of control and of articulation, which act in economic, political, military and ideological spheres. This highly perfected apparatus operates in a particularly efficacious way in the context of the transnationalization of information and disinformation, as instruments of psychological warfare created by world imperialism. In this situation, the mass media can present any expression of inconformity or questioning of the system by peoples of the third world as a subversion of the established order, promoted by socialist countries, especially the USSR, China, or Cuba.

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**Resistance by the conquered indians and enslaved blacks led to the use of the most violent repressive actions by colonizers**

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**The Era of Revolutions in the Third World**

After the Second World War, as the consciousness and rage of dominated peoples was growing, the social and ideological conservatism of capitalist nations became more and more evident.

Even in countries such as France and Italy, which had the most combative communist Parties, the most dissident intellectuals, the most aware workers and the most advanced electorates, the class struggle, which was apparently being defined, in Gramsci's terms as a "war of positions" against capitalism, began to lose ground during the 60's and 70's.

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**The historical logic of domination-dependence lent the revolutions of China and Vietnam a frankly anti-imperialist character, associating them closely with the problems of the Third World**

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In fact, the changes in the structure of the planetary economy, the social advantages enjoyed by the populations of developed capitalist countries due to transnationalization and accumulation on a world level, the efficiency of the ideological struggle by the mass media in the service of capitalism, and the objective difficulties and mistakes made by real socialism, were so many other elements which contributed to feed the conservatism of these opulent societies and to accomplish that the most conscious proletarian sectors would lose their revolutionary vision and energy.

In this context another tendency of the historical evolution was made more evident: the proletarian revolution predicted by Karl Marx did not occur in a central country such as Germany, but in a region at that time on the capitalist periphery, in the back-ward and - as Lenin himself called it - "barbaric" Russia.

The Chinese Revolution was, both objectively and subjectively, a revolution of the third world, although due to historical circumstances and its own self definition, it would be identified with socialist revolutions and thus widened and fortified the world socialist system. The same happened with the Vietnamese Revolution, which became a prototype of revolutions of oppressed nations, even though its beginning was situated in a period when relations between the third world and socialism had not been clearly defined - nor for that matter, had they been defined in the conceptual and geo-political spheres, between the third world and capitalism.

In both cases, China and Vietnam, the dynamics of class struggle meant that revolutionary processes would not be carried out in the orthodox European way outlined by Marx; besides, the historical logic of domination-dependence lent these revolutions a frankly anti-imperialist character, associating them closely with the problems of the third world.

Consequently, when the Cuban and Argelian Revolutions triumphed at the beginning of the 1960's, with their anti-imperialist content and ideology, they were seen as revolutions of the third world *par excellence*. Their insurrectional character, their nationalist, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist discourse, and the fact that they took up positions alongside the "non-aligned" states, provoked panic in the world capitalist power centers and at the same time, an overwhelming enthusiasm in the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The anti-system character of these revolutions and the threat they represented to established world order was due to their work and their project. They did indeed nationalize the economic interests of the metropolis and socialized the industries which belonged to them; they caused particular concern to the West because they represented an alternative society in a context where peoples of the emerging third world demanded national and social emancipation from neo-colonial formulas which France, England, Belgium and Holland tried to construct in order to conserve their system of dominance at any price.

Certainly the "model" which these triumphant revolutions first represented, was not able to reproduce itself in other regions for various reasons (specific local and national realities, and efficacy in contra-insurgent actions, especially in the 1960's).

However, their very presence on the world scene, the success they had and the set-backs they suffered, their influence, solidarity and the expectations they caused, had undeniable repercussions on the evolution of international relations.

These revolutions, and the Cuban Revolution in particular, made extraordinary contributions to the world revolutionary process, in historical and conceptual terms: they enriched and inspired an entire current of thought and action; they brought a breath of fresh air, as well as innovative ideas and critical data, to Marxism-Leninism, thus constituting the original contribution of third world peoples to the theory and practice of the liberating revolution.

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**After the Second World War, as the consciousness and rage of dominated peoples was growing, the social and ideological conservatism of capitalist nations became more and more evident**

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From Guinea-Bissau to Mozambique, from Angola to Ethiopia, from Southern Yemen to Libya, from South Vietnam to Afghanistan, from Cuba to Chile of the Popular Unity, from Grenada to Nicaragua, the historical richness of the various revolutionary paths has been unpredictable. Those revolutions have shown that, contrary to any Eurocentric dogma, the "motor of history" of oppressed peoples was not necessarily the class struggle, while the "small motor which activates the big motor" (Che Guevara) was not necessarily the working class, but the political-military struggle of a vanguard along with a national mobilization against the oppressor State, against imperialism and against its allies in the local oligarchies.

All these experiences of social revolution in the third world were seen to be terribly difficult and they had to

confront multiple forms of imperialist interventionist actions. Each bit of territory won was gained only after a hard fight.

In all the concrete situations, and not only in the phase of taking power, but also during the entire process of national construction and the erection of economic bases of the new society and of the fundamental institutions of a democracy based on the majority, these nations had to confront imperialism's most determined hostility. The imperialists used powerful transnational forces, the most sophisticated military means, unlimited financial resources and the entire capacity of manipulation at a world level, made possible by the mass media, to counter-arrest revolutionary projects of national sovereignty.

**When the Cuban and Argelian Revolutions triumphed at the beginning of the 1960's, with their anti-imperialist content and ideology, they were seen as Third World revolutions *par excellence***

**New Obstacles and New Challenges**

The example of Nicaragua is the most illustrative example of the difficult equation that third world peoples have to resolve in the context of any revolutionary process. In fact, ever since the Sandinists triumphed in 1979, the manoeuvres of the counter-revolution, and the undeclared war waged against this country by the U.S.A., have forced them to dedicate enormous resources - around half the national budget - to the defense of their sovereignty and survival as a free nation. Consequently it was impossible to carry out fully most of the development plans, and some material achievements made in the early days of the Revolution have been lost. Given Reagan's systematic policy of reducing living standards, and his determination to oblige this rebel nation to submit, the economic and social costs of survival have been extremely high.

But long before Nicaragua, the cases of China, Grenada and Angola had shown how "the essential question of all revolutions, that is, the taking and maintenance of power", involves objective problems and conditions which revolutionary vanguards and third world peoples struggling for their liberation, have to resolve, taking into account the realities of the world we live in.

One of these realities is that imperialism does not hesitate about the means it will resort to in order to destroy revolutionary processes in the third world - be this the government of Maurice Bishop in the tiny island state of Grenada, which measures 300 square kilometers and has only 100,000 inhabitants, or that of Salvador Allende, a

legitimate government formed after free elections in a country such as Chile - famous at world level for its democratic traditions. In the battle to achieve its objectives, imperialism employs the most illegitimate means of direct intervention, or indirect action through the "contras" in Nicaragua, or mercenaries in Angola, or uses the services of the South African regime, of counter-insurgency, of clandestine operations, of sabotage, of "low intensity warfare", etc., offering unlimited resources to the most backward local forces.

When they do not manage to overthrow revolutionary regimes, the imperialist forces weaken and ruin their economic bases with the aim of discrediting them and making their failure evident. After this, the liberal press and certain social-democrat sectors use the high social cost of the revolutions as an argument to justify the idea of "useless combat". As if nations which are not involved in a process of radical transformation do not have to pay the price of eternal prolongation of oppression: but, for the third world countries in revolutionary processes, the social cost is most terrible when it is measured in terms of premature deaths, malnutrition, lack of medical care, without even a light of hope at the end of the tunnel.

The search for national or international legitimacy comes as a complement and support to the war of violence and the psychological war, which at times, according to the case, is carried out with absolute disrespect for international norms and principles. We have seen, for example, that the U.S. Army intervened in Grenada on the pretext that this small nation of black rebels was constructing an airport which constituted a threat for the "national security of the United States". The government of that country also ignored the judgement of the International Court in the Hague, which condemned U.S. intervention in the Republic of Nicaragua through armed operations carried out by the "contras". We have also seen the very respectable Congress of the U.S.A. openly discuss whether they should or should not give federal funds to support an interventionist operation against an established government.

In the current phase of the crisis of the system of imperialist domination in the world, we can observe an increasing consciousness of peoples against that dominance. Thus, just as one could see with Reagan's policies, the forces of transnational capital are ready to break the institutional framework of legitimacy which they themselves helped build when their hegemony was total.

**The imperialists use powerful transnational forces, unlimited financial resources and their great capacity to manipulate information, to counter-arrest nationalist revolutionary projects**





Slogan in Havana. Photo by Luis Humberto González

It is important to point out the following policies which count among the new elements of capitalist behavior:

a) disrespect towards certain institutions which represent that legitimacy (such as the UNESCO, and the International Labor Organization - ILO), and towards norms and principles which nevertheless constitute the achievements of a more equitable international order which were won in a combined struggle on the level of international law by some socialist countries and some third world nations such as those which practise the principles of non-intervention and self-determination;

b) the use of economic, technological, trade and financial embargoes, which have been employed very efficaciously since the Cuban Revolution, and have been applied in diverse modalities against the majority of third world nations involved in processes of national liberation;

c) the use of the foreign debt as an instrument of pressure and blackmail by the most powerful banks of capitalist nations and by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), thanks to which they can end all will to change or to rectify the relations of dominance-dependence.

The existing rules of the game contribute to define the particularly complex conditions in which the struggle for sovereignty and social revolution is being developed. Besides these limitations there are other difficulties inherent in the very act of economic transformation, in the

historic context created by the structural dependence, the instability in prices of raw materials, the accumulation of interests on the debt, the lack of capital resources and of skilled labor, technological backwardness, etc.

Even though the changes impulsed by the revolution are very important, the weight of the past and the power of international links will continue to obstruct for a long time yet the real exercise of full sovereignty and the realization of profound changes in living conditions of the majorities in our countries, subjected for centuries to a low level of development of productive forces and to the tutelage of oppressive forces, be these local ones or of colonial capitalism. To these problems we must add the burden of the real consumer necessities of the populations, as well as the models of consumerism propagated by the privileged sectors and the middle classes.

#### Cooperation with Socialist Countries

Faced with the challenges involved in social change and in gaining authentic sovereignty, third world countries in revolutionary processes had to develop international relations which would be able to provide alternative resources and diminish the pressures and the burden of conditions imposed by the old metropolis and its allies. They looked to the socialist world for credits, technology, formation of technical crews and for more equitable trade relations.

These efforts to give a new orientation to international economic relations so as to diversify them and to reduce, if not break the dependence patterns, were particularly important in third world countries from 1960 onwards, especially in Asia and Africa. Many newly independent nations which proclaimed "African socialism", such as Ghana, Mali, Guinea and Tanzania, oriented their exchanges towards that unknown world which offered new markets for their tropical produce and new sources of technological supplies.

Since 1960, as a consequence of trade embargoes and pressures exercised by the U.S.A. on the one hand, and on the other, because of its political choice in favor of scientific socialism, Cuba developed all its economic exchanges with the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries. This new orientation implied fundamental technological changes in productive systems and equipment, and in economic and financial transactions. Thanks to the granting of considerable credit, to technical advice on all levels, and to the formation of thousands of working units, the Cuban economy was able to effect the transformation and lay the grounds for a new socialist society.

The qualitative process of economic change was particularly successful in the decade of the 70's, even though Cuba had to face constant difficulties due to structural and institutional adjustments which the transformation demanded, and to the radical turn in its international relations, along with the need to dedicate enormous resources to defense.

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**When they do not manage to overthrow revolutionary regimes, the imperialist forces weaken and ruin their economic bases with the aim of discrediting them**

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There have been other successful experiences of economic cooperation between the U.S.S.R., the German Democratic Republic and other developed socialist countries, and various countries in processes of revolutionary change, such as Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique. Although we lack full knowledge about the balance of these experiences, both generally and specifically, we can say that this cooperation presents fundamentally different characteristics when compared with economic relations between the central capitalist nations and their dominated periphery.

This difference is essential if we want to understand the dynamics of trilateral relations between developed capitalist countries, the countries of the dependent and underdeveloped third world and the socialist countries.

It is clear that the phenomenon of accumulation at the world level is fundamental in all relations between central

capitalism and the peripheral capitalism of third world countries.

This process, which constitutes the key to the prodigious development of capitalism in the central nations, has been clearly explained with reference to the recent period of transnationalization by various intellectuals from Latin American and other third world countries, and particularly by the Egyptian economist Samir Amín.

These investigations show that imperialism, at all its levels, from the center of the pyramid up to the top, attracts resources from the periphery in a particularly efficient way, and uses for this, channels of unequal international commercial exchange, the fall in prices of raw materials, the employment of cheap labor in poor nations, the multiplication of dividends of transnational companies, and the flow of interest payments on loans given on the hardest conditions.

Although the foreign debt has recently acquired great importance in the consciousness of nations, and third world countries have become more aware of exploitation techniques used in the name of the debt, we must point out that this is not a new mechanism, and that it is only one of the multiple instruments of accumulation of capital employed by the central nations to use the resources of the periphery to their advantage.

If we correctly evaluate the dimension of the phenomenon of accumulation of capital on a world level, and its role in the reproduction and extension of the mode of capitalist production, it is possible to understand why the great developed countries of the world are able to base their opulence and power on the simultaneous exploitation of the peoples and resources of the third world. In addition there are sources of internal accumulation with guaranteed high levels of productivity.

Meanwhile, the socialist countries, due to their origins, their essence, and the nature of their economic relations with countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, do not benefit from the process of accumulation at a world level. On the contrary, because of certain backwardness in relation to capitalism, they contribute in some way to this phenomenon of accumulation used to the advantage of the capitalist nations, through the purchase of technology and of certain agricultural or industrial products.

This reality of the world economy has not been sufficiently studied. However, its incidence in the parallel evolution of both systems is considerable. It also influences the capacity of socialist countries to help revolutions in the third world. Hypothetically we can conjecture that the most advanced socialist nations, which had to contend with the demands of the arms race, with the needs of reproduction and technological innovation in the framework of "peaceful competitiveness", and with the demands of socialist planning and distribution, only had a few resources - be these capital, labor or infra-structure - to help satisfy the immense requirements of third world revolutions.

This kind of cooperation was extremely important and efficient and made possible the economic growth of some countries, and even meant the survival of some revolu-

tionary processes. It was decisive on military levels in cases such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia, and helped maintain the integrity of these nations.

In many spheres, that aid is based on a sense of solidarity and even of sacrifice which exists among socialist countries and among those nations oppressed by neo-colonialism and the power of transnational companies. However, the objective limitations of this aid in the field of credits and certain technologies, are also real facts in the contemporary world system in the face of attempts to make revolutionary transformations in the third world.

### Lessons and Perspectives

The experiences of 40 years' struggle in power by numerous peoples in processes of social change, busy in the construction of "new societies", represent a fundamental contribution to this task of universal dimensions. Consciously or not, today or inevitably tomorrow, millions of men and women of the planet who want to end all hunger, dependence and under-development, are committed to this struggle.

Whatever their source of ideological and political inspiration, this project responds to social and political imperatives, to the need to survive and to legitimate aspirations which come from the will to end the enormous differences that exist between peoples who enjoy the superfluous and those who lack almost everything.

This project is for the future, but it cannot help but look towards the experiences of the past. The historical memory of third world peoples is a patrimony which should be reconstituted, cultivated and analyzed in function of the conditions of each one of those experiences in space and time. This and the exchange of knowledge involved, will contribute to assure the progress of these peoples towards their liberation and well-being.

### The foreign debt is used as an instrument of pressure and blackmail by the most powerful banks of the capitalist nations and by institutions such as the IMF

It is our task to elaborate the sociologies of revolutions which occurred in the last few decades in Africa, Asia and Latin America; we should learn about the political economy of each of these experiences of national construction, and deepen our knowledge of the political culture and the ideology which led to these revolutions.

Keeping in mind that each of the experiences we have mentioned is an expression of very complex social and historical processes, and without wanting to simplify the phenomena, we can point out the following characteristics that these processes have in common:

a) They are national revolutions where the anti-colonial and-or anti-imperialist ideology adopts historic cultural local expressions (Muslim nationalism in Algeria, Fidel Castro-ism, Sandinism, national liberation in Angola and Mozambique) and which evolved towards forms of state intervention and of socialism adapted to specific situations.

b) These historical movements transformed the state which existed beforehand in the form of a directly colonial institution or representing capitalist interests, into a new political arrangement which contributed to the creation of the nation-state and the state-people. In this way, the Army in the first place as well as the judicial, administrative and ideological apparatus, came to participate in the political and social revolution.

### The revolutions of the Third World effectively achieved decolonialization, liberation and national sovereignty

c) These revolutions arose from and were directed by a political organization which represented the demands of the majorities.

According to the case, the said organization was a revolutionary party, a liberation front or a patriotic democratic movement; what they held in common was the fact that they constituted an organized structure with a strong national-revolutionary ideological content and with a leadership based on heroism and identified with the most general demands of the people.

d) These revolutions effectively achieved decolonialization, liberation and construction of national sovereignty, which had an international manifestation in "non-alignment" or in political alliances with the socialist countries.

e) On the economic front, together with the construction of material bases for the new societies, real changes were made in the organization of production, modification of property ownership, distribution of wealth, as well as in the models of consumerism and in international economic relations.

f) The revolutions installed more socially representative and more democratic political regimes than had existed in the pre-revolutionary past. The new concept of democracy has expression in the participation of the majority social sectors and classes in decision making and in the installation and functioning of an authentically popular government.

g) In third world countries, the revolution implies that the vanguard elaborates a theory of the ways and means for taking and conserving power and for social transformation. This theory is inspired by, or at least takes into

**There have been successful experiences of economic cooperation between developed socialist countries and nations in processes of revolutionary changes, such as Vietnam, Ethiopia and Cuba.**

account, Marxist-Leninist thinking, as well as national humanist and progressive ideologies.

The theory is also closely related to local experiences of social struggle, and to the social-political realities of each country and to other contingencies of geographical or historical nature, which allow the expression of the creative capacities of the people and of the vanguard movement.

h) On the basis of local social-economic and political-cultural realities, it was possible to draw up a strategy of development based - among other things - on:

1) An autonomous social organization with its own forces and which grows according to the real development and levels of local capital and technology on the one hand, and the capacity for production of goods and services necessary for the functioning of the national economy, on the other.

2) The use of human and natural resources, as well as the transformation of consumer models, following a national economic rationale which establishes priorities.

3) The creation of a new system of international relations following the break with the system of world capitalism's transnational companies, as a consequence of the inevitable trade embargo or due to a deliberate decision.

These proposals and lessons, fruits of experience of a difficult national grass-roots transformation in the third world, show how much the revolution in these kinds of contexts, constitute a challenge to the inventive capacity of oppressed peoples, and calls not only for the defense of the right to life and to the prodigious impulse to survive of millions of men and women, but also on the long frustrated will and historic capacity of this part of humanity. ■



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Francisco Gutiérrez Pérez

# Three Kinds of Terrorism Control Latin America

Perhaps the basic cause of the existence of terrorism in Latin America today, can be found in the United States' historical interest in imposing its own vision of democracy by means of force. This phenomenon, which goes far beyond its immediate and serious physical effects, has taken root in the very life of Latin America, destroying or cancelling its national and democratic aspirations. Francisco Gutiérrez provides the following analysis of the different varieties of terrorism which affect Latin America.

## Introduction

The document entitled *Christian Principles of Communication of the WACC*<sup>1</sup>, states that there are brutal and subtle ways of silencing a people. Nothing could be more true: both brutally and subtly, the Central American peoples have been silenced for 500 years.

The media, legislation, culture, economic conditions, many governmental social programs, and frequently "evangelism" and "education" are methods which, although subtle, turn out to be terribly efficient in the silencing of popular sectors of society.

But we should not present the Central American dilemma in such a dichotomous way, putting brutality on one side and subtlety on the other.

The spectrum is more tenuous and deceptive than that.

In Central America we find very subtle violence and terrorism and terribly violent legislation and messages from the mass media. The fact is, violence and terrorism, both brutally and subtly, have taken possession of Central

America. We can say without exaggerating that violence has come alive for the Central American people. The language, or better yet, the languages of terrorism, are heard by one and all. Violence and terror are not the sole privilege of any one group or ideology. They are a common language. With Noam Chomsky, we must realize that the "culture of terror" conditions human existence in unexpected and terribly deceptive ways.

Uncovering the deception to discover these subtle forms of violence is not an easy task. Contadora, Esquipulas I and Esquipulas II are proof of how difficult it is to unmask violence.

This analysis seeks to be of help in the unmasking of the terrorism which brutally and subtly effects the daily life of the Central American people. It should in no way be interpreted, from the pages that follow, that we are in favor of terrorism regardless of its form, perpetrators or ideology. We emphatically believe that liberation and peace for Central America should not come as a result of terrorism, war, repression or anti-terrorism.

Liberation and peace for the Central American peoples must necessarily be the consequence of justice, respect for human rights, and participation for all - not just the elite - in the democratic and productive processes of each of the countries in the region.

<sup>1</sup> Director of the Latin American Institute of Teaching Communication (Costa Rica).



Effects of the repression in El Salvador. Photo by José Angel Rodríguez/Imagenlatina

### Two Conflicting Hypotheses about Terrorism

If we base our reasoning on the values, means of communication and rational principles of the Western-Christian culture it is very difficult to understand the silence, submission, exploitation, pain and death that the Central American peoples have suffered for 500 years.

In order to understand this secular repression we will explore two hypotheses which try to explain modern terrorism.

#### *Simplistic Hypothesis*

Held by the United States and its allies, this hypothesis associates terrorism with revolutionary-subversive movements, drug trafficking, and communist governments.

For those who support this line of thinking, "terrorism is the illegal use of force and violence, or the threat of its use, by revolutionary organizations against individuals or property, with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments and societies, often for ideological ends".<sup>2</sup> This terrorism is the essence of the evil empire - controlled

by "the sons of darkness" - pitted against goodness, liberty, democracy and peace, which "the sons of light" defend.

This evil empire, according to the late Director of the CIA, William Casey, is made up by: "the USSR and its satellites in Eastern Europe, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Yemen, Cuba and Nicaragua".<sup>3</sup> To these states we must add the revolutionary and subversive groups which fight against the establishment in other countries.

In case this hypothesis is not sufficiently clear, on July 2, 1985, Ronald Reagan expressed it in an unprecedented, overwhelming and revealing statement: "Iran, Libya, Cuba, Nicaragua and North Korea constitute a confederation of terrorist States led by degenerate, maladjusted, crazy and mentally unbalanced leaders".<sup>4</sup>

A new angle which has been used to magnify the terrorist threat in the minds of North Americans is the supposed "link between terrorism and international drug trafficking".<sup>5</sup>

For those who support this hypothesis there is only one answer: anti-terrorism. Therefore, on April 3, 1984, the National Security Directive Decision 138 was made. This

**Violence and terrorism, both brutally and subtly, have taken possession of Central America**

is a classified decision, "but according to some officials, permits military and intelligence agencies to conduct operations to avoid or prevent terrorist acts".<sup>6</sup>

This document is part of an anti-terrorist policy which leads to unprecedented terrorist acts such as, to name only three examples: the surgically accurate bombing of Libya, the invasion of Grenada and the support given to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

The essence of the hypothesis of those who maintain - for their own benefit - that there is only one kind of terrorism, is that it seeks the destruction of the establishment, liberty, democracy and peace.

*Realistic Hypothesis*

The realistic hypothesis, held by less ideological supporters, describes at least three kinds of terrorism. This hypothesis is held, for example, by Monsignor Cirarda, Catholic bishop of the Basque Country, who mentions:

a) Structural terrorism, or State terrorism, characteristic of the dominant social system. It is often called institutional terrorism.

b) Subversive terrorism, performed by those who rebel and fight against structural terrorism. Guerrillas and popular liberation movements belong to this type of terrorism.

c) Repressive terrorism, which confronts subversive terrorism and for convenience sake has come to be called anti-terrorism.

The differences between these three kinds of terrorism are obvious. But it is precisely this obviousness which forces us to explain some of the similarities which lead governments, intellectual elites, the media and other parts of the dominant social system, to recognize the subversive and revolutionary kind as the only existing terrorism.

In this explanation it is necessary to point out, in the first place, that the three kinds of terrorism - structural, subversive and repressive - use violent means to eliminate the enemy, and that this violence is symbolic as well as physical.

For physical violence to have an effect it must also be symbolic, because symbolism is precisely one of the basic elements of all terrorism. What is not always taken into account is that symbolic violence is also necessarily physical, especially in the case of structural terrorism.

It is precisely this symbolism that gives specificity to each of the three types of terrorism. This symbolic specificity is based on the assumptions, foundations and goals which motivate acts of physical violence.

Those in power use structural violence to maintain and

reaffirm this power, which is essentially economic.

"Revolutionary violence saves the lives and prevents sacrifices of the people," according to Bolivian guerrillas of the early seventies. This revolutionary violence is a result of the failure of leftist parties and groups, who speak and act in ways that do not interpret society's desire and need for change. If the social structure were not violent - and for the people of the Third World it has always been and continues to be terribly violent - there would be no place for revolutionary violence and consequently repressive terrorism would not exist either.

Therefore, it is the intentional symbolic meaning which differentiates one terrorism from another. This means that structural terrorism, with its strong symbolism and hidden intentions, is difficult for popular sectors of society to identify because it is presented not just as neutral but as positive, as worried about defending democracy and liberty.

**The Discourse of Structural Terrorism**

In his recent book about "The Culture of Terrorism"<sup>7</sup> Noam Chomsky analyzes with great clarity and exhaustive documentation the present terrorist offensive that the United States directs at Central America.

In essence, the discourse of structural terrorism - both today and throughout history - is very simple: "You want to do what I want," "Do what I want you to do because if you don't...". In Central America today this discourse translates as follows: "those who do not accept our democracy are communists and as communists must be eliminated. If they do not accept our democracy and they insist on their goal they should be destroyed".<sup>8</sup>

This discourse explains the military aid that the United States gives to the Nicaraguan *contras* and to the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

This terrorism is responsible for the level of violence, destruction, hunger, misery and death which exists in the countries of the region. First hand accounts and statistics completely confirm this: in Guatemala for example, between 1980 and 1984, 440 towns were destroyed, displacing a million and a half persons, while more than 150 thousand people have become refugees in nearby countries and the number of deaths is close to 72 thousand. This plague of violence continues today in a much more refined and covert manner.

It is well known that in El Salvador atrocities increased under the Christian-social government of José Napoleón

**This terrorism is the essence of the evil empire - controlled by the "sons of darkness" - pitted against goodness, liberty, democracy and peace, which are defended by the "sons of light"**

Duarte, "who was president during the worst massacre in the history of the country".<sup>9</sup>

### Five Centuries of Structural Violence

But this violence is not a recent phenomenon. For 500 years, the region has suffered similar forms of violence from the different empires which have dominated it. First it was the Spanish empire, with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other, which conquered, subjugated and dominated the indigenous peoples of the region. Colonial society created ideological, legal and restrictive mechanisms - crystalized in the *Repatriamiento*\* and the *Encomienda*\*\* - which enabled them to exploit, to the point of exhaustion and death, thousands and thousands of Indians.

The crimes and violations of the Spanish empire were followed by those of the English, whose terrorist discourse was based on the slave trade, pillaging and plundering and ended in the absolute stripping and bleeding of the peoples of the Third World on various continents.<sup>10</sup>

Historically, violence and injustice were institutionalized and from Spanish domination to modern times "violence constitutes one of the most serious problems which have arisen in Latin America". This explains the outcry of millions of people who feel bound by living conditions which limit their very existence. But we must realize that this institutionalized injustice inevitably produces a profound desire for liberation from all forms of servitude, for complete emancipation and collective participation<sup>11</sup> and creates an urgent need for equally profound changes which will allow the creation of a juster society.

But all these legitimate desires are brutally and subtly crushed by:

#### Structural Terrorism "Made in USA"

In this Central American relay race, the North Americans take the torch of structural violence in this century with an assuredness, arrogance and technical perfectionism without historical precedent.

To understand what is happening at present in Central America it is necessary to unearth some of the fundamental principles of the North American terrorist discourse. Here we list the four most important:

##### 1) Economic Stranglehold

So dominated countries will not try to stand on their own it is necessary to keep them in a state of complete poverty and economic dependence.

\* *Repatriamiento* is the concession of Indians to a Spanish "owner".

\*\* The *encomienda* was a Spanish colonial institution in America with the object of distributing Indians among the conquerors. Indians had to work for or pay tribute to their owners.

According to this reasoning, countries like Nicaragua that do not want "to accept our democratic principles, must be reduced to bare subsistence".<sup>12</sup>

This principle explains the economic embargoes, foreign debt, reduction of foreign investment, capital flight, etc.

This economic stranglehold can lead to extreme measures which make possible the traumatization, intimidation and absolute slavery of these countries.

A corollary of this principle states that "in the region, no government which tries to meet the needs of popular sectors of society should exist".<sup>13</sup>

Any "communist" government in the region that struggles to close the gap between rich and poor must be destroyed by any means possible. In the case of Nicaragua, aid to the contras is not intended to overthrow the Sandinista government but to make the social model they have proposed fail economically.

The explanation of this principle offered by Noam Chomsky states: "What interests the United States is that ideological and political systems be controlled by business interests.

"In the Third World, this 'democracy' requires that the political system and the mass media be in hands of the local oligarchies or other sectors equally dedicated to the type of 'development' which is in the interests of United States investors; that the people be marginalized (forcefully if necessary), and that the military, with their long-held ties to the United States' system of violence, have free reign".<sup>14</sup>

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### The three kinds of terrorism - structural, subversive and repressive - use violent means to eliminate the enemy, and this violence is symbolic as well as physical

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And he concludes with a direct reference to the case of Nicaragua: "In the real world, the people of Nicaragua should be punished for the criminal effort of the Sandinista government to redirect resources towards the poor majority. This crime explains the firm belief of the Reagan Administration that the Sandinistas should be defeated, or at least, their revolution should become a revolution of misery, a terrible lesson for the other peoples of the region, who should be kept away from such heresies".<sup>15</sup>

The truth is, as the late Director of the CIA, William Casey said, "relatively few people and a limited amount of aid is needed to disturb the national peace and economic stability of a small country like Nicaragua".<sup>16</sup>

##### 2) The Fifth Freedom

The second principle has to do with the type of liberty and democracy that is at the root of the North American political conception whose "basic objective is the protec-





Salvadoran soldiers revising citizens. Photo by José Angel Rodríguez/Imagenlatina

tion of what we could call the Fifth Freedom",<sup>17</sup> which can be understood, in somewhat crude, but not imprecise terms, to be the freedom to rob, exploit, dominate and undertake any action aimed at protecting and promoting existing privileges. This Fifth Freedom is the basic principle guiding the actions of the United States' government throughout the world. They need "free" countries which they can use as a platform to further their economic interests without any opposition.

"Freedom" in the North American discourse is no less offensive to people in underdeveloped countries than the concept of "democracy", which consists of a favorable climate for U.S. investment, including the exclusive right to control the political system. "Those who oppose this democracy will be called communists".<sup>18</sup>

These two assumptions are not open to discussion. They are part of the doctrine, regardless of the facts. "If the facts indicate something else is true, too bad for the facts",<sup>19</sup> the doctrine cannot be changed. For example: "when President Reagan speaks of freedom he is referring to the freedom of the rich to humiliate, exploit, and if it is to their benefit, kill the poor".<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, it is an absolute truth that the Fifth Freedom constitutes the determining factor in United States foreign policy. This explains why this policy has directly conflicted with Contadora and Esquipulas. The Central American

### Structural violence is used to maintain and reaffirm this power, which is essentially economic

people, and even their governments, can say whatever they please so long as what they say and do does not conflict with United States' interests in the region.

It is evident that this principle includes corollaries that merit emphasis. One corollary has to do with the destruction of popular organizations, which has become a priority for North Americans in the region. This is true because revitalization of grass-roots organizations in the long term would create effective opposition to the type of "democracy" supported by the North American government. We cannot forget that "elite sectors of the United States have always held prevention of the growth of popular organizations to be an essential priority".<sup>21</sup> In a well functioning system pledged to support established privileges, efficient unions, with authentic worker participation, that struggle to solve serious problems in the social order, and groups devoted to workers' inde-

pendence, grass-roots control of communities, independent systems of information, etc. should not exist.

In this context, "it is perfectly understandable that the United States demonstrates a sudden concern for its particular concept of 'democracy' in Nicaragua, after the overthrow of the Somoza regime in July of 1979 (but not before), and at the same time organizes extremely violent programs to destroy popular organizations which during this very period could have built the foundations of a real democracy in El Salvador".<sup>22</sup>

In other words, "peoples (and countries) should be forced into renewed passivity if they dare to put into action a 'democracy' and a 'freedom' which contradict the United States 'democracy' and 'freedom'. And if this fails, as much violence as is necessary must be used to destroy the popular organizations".<sup>23</sup>

### 3) Religion and Democracy

"Religion and Democracy" is the name of an Institute founded in 1981 in Washington to direct and carry out religious strategies in support of the ideological discourse and policies which are the basis of structural terrorism. The activities and publications of the Institute "show that the combination of Marxism and Christianity is crucial and makes essential not only the fight against the external enemy - Latin American Liberation Theology - but also internal adversaries, such as those churches which sympathize with this theology".<sup>24</sup>

According to the doctrine of the Santa Fe document (the political guide of the Reagan Administration), liberation theology constitutes a serious obstacle for U.S. policy in Latin America because of its high level of ideological efficiency in the control of people's consciences, and because it is assumed that religious sectors have played a part in a supposed distortion towards the "left".

As a consequence, it is perfectly normal that the United States' discourse is impregnated with a series of symbolic

constraints based on the religious morals and principles of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. These constraints vary from overwhelming inroads in Central America made by fundamentalist sects (amply funded by the U.S.), to the control of the ecclesiastic apparatus at a national level as in the case of Nicaragua. And if someone with the authentic gospel in hand defends and supports popular organizations, against the United States' "norms", such as Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero, and the six Jesuit priests, there is no choice but to physically eliminate him, with full realization of the political cost of this type of action.

Similarly, if certain churches, ecclesiastic base communities, education centers and other similar organizations, maintain goals of support of the popular sectors, they can be sure that they will soon be slandered, accused of collaboration with communists and even linked to guerrillas and other groups which destabilize the "social order".<sup>25</sup>

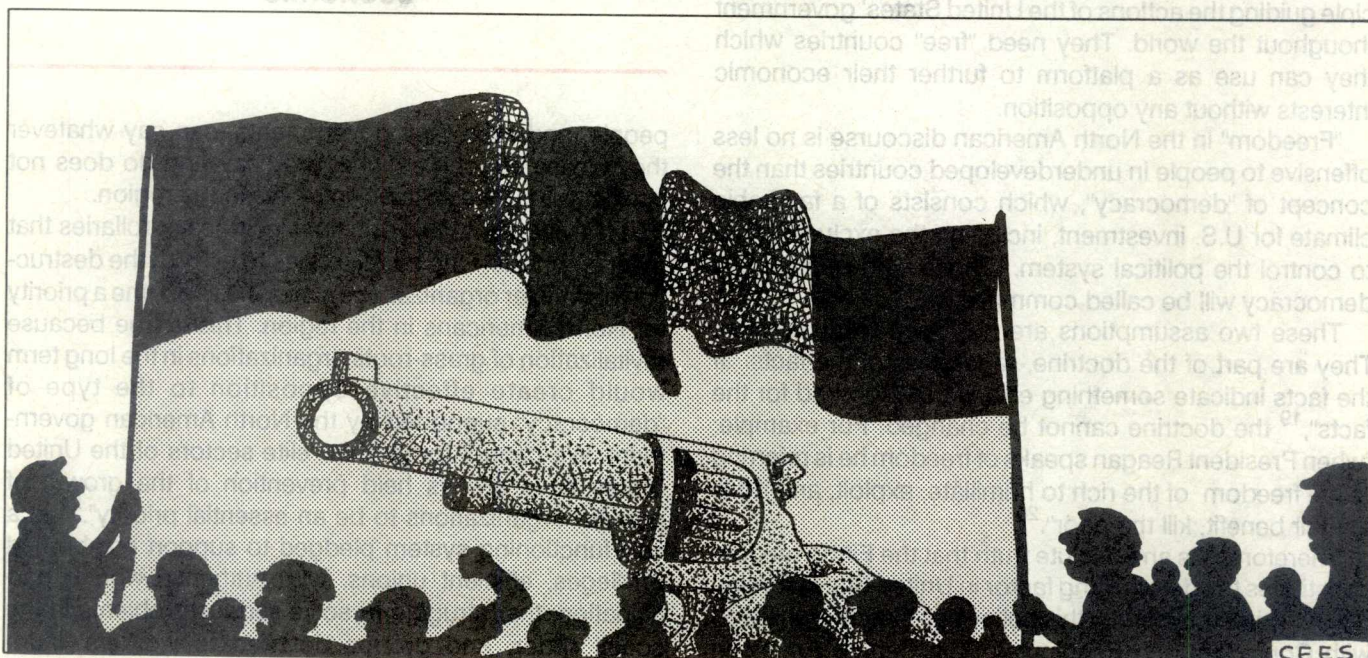
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## During 500 years, the region has suffered similar forms of violence from the various empires which have dominated it

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In this way religion performs important political functions which work against the self-determination and independence of the people with a discourse focused not so much on social and moral topics - or even strictly religious themes - as on specific political practice and ideology with an emphasis on the liberal values of "democracy" and "freedom" within the scope of the Fifth Freedom.

This is why the preferred actions of the Institute are aimed at "contradicting, discrediting and changing the



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orientation of the leaders of the National Council of Christian Churches, the World Council of Churches and the World Service of Churches, or creating parallel ecumenical institutions". According to these activities and strategies "the Institute on Religion and Democracy constitutes one of the most organic responses that the United States' political class carries out at present in this area. Its principal objective appears to be to block and revert, if possible, the growing organized participation of Christians in the liberation movements of Latin America. It tries to actively combat the resulting solidarity of broad sectors of North American churches which oppose the ideological, political and military intervention of their government in Central America and the Caribbean".<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, it is not strange that U.S. imperialism, with its present administrative structure, finds in religion a very useful manipulative instrument for its aims. For example, they are not embarrassed to state "that Sandinism is part of Soviet expansion into Latin America and as a consequence is atheist and therefore perverse, diabolical, contrary to the will of God and unworthy of existing, so fighting it is a dignified Christian act, congruent with the plans of the Lord, an authentic modern crusade absolutely blessed by the hierarchy of all churches".<sup>27</sup>

#### 4) Terrorist Communication

Without communication, assures McLuhan, there would be no terrorism. This is because what is important in terrorism is not the action itself but its resonance; that is to say, for every terrorist act, the greater its symbolic power, the stronger the terrorism. This symbolic resonance is obtained through the mass media. A terrorist act, however terrible, is weakened by lack of publicity. This means that the mass media, with their universal power - since they reach all countries instantly - are a basic component of terrorism.

"Terrorist action is symbolic and its effect should be seen in terms of information, and not only in terms of its physical effects".<sup>28</sup>

It is useful to repeat that in the case of terrorism, physical violence should be measured by how symbolic it is, that is, the extent to which it becomes a message, which is that much more meaningful when it reaches a larger public emotionally trapped by the information.

If a terrorist act does not become news, it loses its very essence and in this way is no longer terrorist. It can also occur - and it does quite frequently - that a subversive terrorist act invented by institutional terrorists, is terrorist not because of its physical power - which does not exist - but due to its symbolic power. The effects of this act of terrorism in the mass media, can be just as terrible as the act of terror itself.

This means that it is precisely the modern means of communication that create modern terrorism. Moreover, "structural terrorism is essentially terrorist communication while subversive and repressive terrorism imply communication about terrorism".<sup>29</sup>

This facet of the terrorism of the mass media explains many of the effects of the low intensity warfare of the United States against Central America. It also explains how "war is also fought from the pages of newspapers".<sup>30</sup>

The mass media are the bearers of "verbal terrorism" used by North American strategists to manipulate statistics, and which, in that it gives subversive terrorism a dimension of supposed support from States of the "other block", has the clear objective of legitimizing both the use of force and the increases in military budgets allocated to dealing with it".<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, it is the mass media that daily and obstinately try to convince the defenseless public of the necessity of fighting against terrorists, subversives and other sons of darkness. This war includes all areas of society: political, economic, psychological, military; its objective, instead of the conquest of territory, is the domination of the will and thinking of the population.

All of this is particularly true if the omnipresence of the mass media in the modern world is taken into account.

To this must be added the strict conformism and the absolute submission of the mass media to U.S. policies. Any voice that contradicts this policy can be sure that it will not find acceptance, be it a Pepe Figueres, an Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, the Catholic Institute of International Relations of London, The Baptist Convention of Nicaragua, Americas Watch or Helsinki Watch or any other person or institution ready to point out objectively the abuses and violations of the North American presence in the countries of the region.

If the circumstances force the publication of reports by these contradictory voices, "the media should be careful to effectively invalidate these affirmations, according to accepted directions about how to select, present and interpret the facts according to the dictates of the White House Office of Public Relations. This job, there is no room for doubt, is carried out conscientiously".<sup>32</sup>

### The North Americans hold the torch of structural violence in this century with an assurance, arrogance and technical perfection without historical precedent

#### Constant Adjustment of Structural Terrorism

Between Reagan's terrorist discourse and the discourse of President Bush there are only small tactical differences. Santa Fe I and Santa Fe II constitute one single discourse with modifications made necessary by new socio-political circumstances in Latin America.

The four principles which we have just listed and which were put into practice aggressively during the Reagan Administration, today have become the seven plagues of



Nicaraguan contra-revolutionaries - an example of terrorism in Central America. Photo from Unomásuno archives

the Third World which the Bush Administration tries, by all possible means, to exclude from United States' territory.

They are the plagues referred to in the report "The Underdeveloped World: a Threat to the National Security of the United States", elaborated by the Commission for Control of Arms and Foreign Policy of the U.S. Congress, and they are the basis of the following petitions of the prayer that the empire prays to its god every day:

1. From the dangers to our economy if the Third World could not or would refuse to pay the interest on their foreign debt: free us Lord.
2. From participation and popular organization which threaten our style of democracy: free us Lord.
3. From the deterioration of the environment which puts in danger the ecological equilibrium of our continent: free us Lord.
4. From the proliferation of arms and the serious problem of not being able to control them: free us Lord.
5. From Contadora, Esquipulas and other proposals to counter our influence in Latin America: free us Lord.
6. From the guerilla groups: free us Lord.
7. From drug trafficking because it represents a destabilizing force for our economy from the enormous drain on hard currency: free us Lord.

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**The concept of "democracy" consists of maintaining a favorable climate for United States' investment, including the exclusive right to control the political systems**

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These seven plagues are a very clear sign "of the changes that are occurring in the power centers in the United States: the growing realization that the principal dangers for the security of the United States are not the East-West conflict but instead, they tend to shift towards a new geographic axis: the North-South relationship".<sup>33</sup>

This explains why the United States is focusing most of its attention and concentrating all of its strategic efforts on maintaining its hegemony in Latin America, regardless of the economic or military cost.

To understand this restatement of the U.S. discourse, we offer for consideration the impressive military and economic resources deployed by the Bush Administration against drug trafficking which clearly reflect how, in

the struggle of the "sons of light" against the "powers of darkness", economic motives are disguised in order to stress other motivations which constitute the updated core of the U.S. terrorist discourse. Not without reason, after learning about the plan of President Bush to fight drug trafficking, a Colombian legislator commented that "on the one hand, the said plan contemplates a budget for more information and education for the U.S. population (the diseased party), includes funds to carry out military actions, install 'advisors', transport troops, provide arms, initiate low intensity conflicts...That is, to make war on drug trafficking not on the streets of New York or Washington but in areas of the Third World".<sup>34</sup>

This new factor in the discourse explains many current events in Central America. If tactically there are small differences, strategically the terrorist discourse is the same.

The existence of this structural terrorism means that the barriers to the liberation of Central American peoples are practically unsolvable from within the present structure of domination. Liberation will certainly not be the result of the signing of a Peace Treaty, of a cease fire, nor even of proposals and programs conceived and carried out from the platform of the political economies of developed countries.

Central American liberation can only be the result of political, social, economic, cultural and religious participation of the majority.

But this liberation, the result of popular participation, is subject to the following basic conditions:

*1) Knowledge of the Existence and Forms of Structural Violence.*

No one can liberate themselves unless they know from what domination.

Peace is the result of justice and in consequence, of the end of the causes of structural terrorism. If structural terrorism did not exist there would be no place for subversive or repressive terrorism.

It is structural violence that produces hunger, exploitation, injustice, pain and death in Central America.

Although it is true that the leaders of struggles for liberation - like Monsignor Romero - have always known against whom and how these struggles should be fought, it is not so for the great majority who day after day are deceived by the mass media. Although it is true that in this area in recent years substantial efforts have been made, it is no less true that difficulties are constantly growing.

*2) Popular Organization and Participation*

Imperialist democracy, freedom and peace are contrary to popular organization, mobilization and participation. Central American liberation will become a reality when the popular sectors are political, economic and cultural participants.

The Central American Parliament, for example, although a conquest for regional integration, will only be a

democratic platform when organized workers, women, indigenous peoples, churches, popular organizations, etc. can participate.

In this area, although there is a long way to go, successful results can be mentioned such as a Central American Coordinator of Workers that includes the principle trade unions of the region; Esquipulas of the People, which mobilizes workers, women, indigenous peoples, intellectuals and church people; the Central American Consensus, which coordinates the popular education in centers and non-governmental organizations of the region, and the Consensus of Cristian Groups, which works to integrate churches, ecumenical agencies and religious groups.

**We cannot forget that elite sectors of the United States have always held prevention of the growth of grass-roots organizations to be an essential priority**

*3) Consciousness of the Popular Sectors*

For 500 years these sectors of society have been told that their culture is inferior to Western culture, and that they lack the capacity and technology for their development. At the same time, their natural resources and their forms of organization and production have been taken from them.

The recuperation of their historical potential and of their possibilities as a people, is what will give the liberation struggle its true dimensions and scope.

The work towards recuperation is slow and difficult but is the only guarantee of hope.

In support of this process of historical recuperation, intensive popular education and communication efforts are underway. The number of support centers have multiplied, numerous base communities have appeared, pastoral accompaniment is promoted, as are ecumenical movements, while religious traditions of the native cultures are recuperated, experiences are interchanged and actions are coordinated.

The truth is that in spite of 500 years of structural violence, the Central American peoples have not yielded and in one way or another, throughout history, they have fought in defense of human rights, freedom and democratic participation.

In evidence of this struggle, moral giants shine forth. In the indigenous world they range from Tecún Uman, the hero of the Quiché province in Guatemala who fought against the conquerors, to Rigoberta Menchú, the young indigenous woman, also from the Quiché, who has been proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize because of her struggle against the injustices her people suffer.

In the field of political organizing, heroic personalities such as Francisco Morazán and César Augusto Sandino stand out, who even though they disappeared physically many years ago, continue to be the moral leaders of permanent struggles which take place in the region to create a people evermore conscious of their historic destiny. ■

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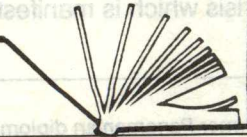
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# THE BUSH ADVENTURE IN PANAMA

Guillermo Castro Herrera

Since the U.S. invasion of Panama last December, much has been written on the violation of national and human rights of Panamanians. In the following article, Guillermo Castro examines the historic causes, the internal political interests, the separation between the people and the political forces of the nation, as well as other factors which, together, helped propitiate the military success of the Bush "adventure", but which will surely lead eventually to a moral and historical defeat. In his analysis of the Panamanian situation, Guillermo Castro points out that "new forces and realities are now taking shape in Panama".

Seen as an isolated event, the invasion and occupation of the Republic of Panama last December by U.S. troops, would appear to be just one more episode in the already long chain of North American interventions in the Caribbean zone, which goes back at least to the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1895-1898.

However, the significance and implications of the recent invasion for Panama change if we examine it in the context of the history of that nation during the second half of the 20th century, and in the wider context of the general crisis which the Latin American region has been suffering since the beginning of the decade of the 1980's.

From this double perspective, it is evident that what happened in Panama was the use of armed foreign troops to resolve an internal political conflict - a conflict which was worsened by the U.S. in pursuit of its own interests - by a coup d'etat which has subjected the country to a dictatorship of an oligarchic minority which is totally committed to the interests of transnational financial capital.

On the other hand, the political conflict to which we refer has important links with similar conflicts which affect all Latin America: Panama is suffering a severe structural crisis which is manifested politically in an extreme social

polarization and instability which has existed over nearly six years, and whose resolution does not yet appear to be in sight.

Within this general context, what is specific in the case of Panama is the combination of a series of events with various historic implications. In the first place, of course, is the direct military presence of the U.S. in the country, and the concordance of interests of U.S. power circles with those of the Panamanian oligarchy to preserve and prolong North American hegemony in the Isthmus. This element has a long history, it has been present as a cause of conflicts throughout the entire process of formation of the nation of Panama since 1903.

An element of more immediate importance is that the Latin American crisis is expressed in Panama by an exhaustion of populist national liberation processes led by General Omar Torrijos during the 1970's. This exhaustion is also that of an entire epoch of national history which began around the end of the 1940's with the emergence of nationalist and reformist middle classes in Panama's political life, and which ended with their defeat as a leading factor of that national liberation process at the hands of the local oligarchy, between June 1987 and September 1989.

This political defeat, which precedes and explains the military defeat and coup d'etat of December 1989, cannot

Former Panamanian diplomat. Currently exiled in Mexico.



by any means be attributed exclusively to the campaign of aggression and intervention unleashed by the U.S. against Panama since the middle of 1987. On the contrary, that campaign took advantage of, and worsened - in a really perverse manner - conflicts and problems which existed in Panama since at least 1983, as a result of the deterioration of the model of economic growth which reigned in the nation throughout the century, and also because of a lack of political will on the part of the political-military regime in Panama to undertake structural reforms which were indispensable for the creation of a national consensus which would legitimize its power and save it from its profound national and international isolation.

### The Nation

In order to understand the above, it is useful to recall that Panama is a country of 77,000 square kilometers, with 2,200,000 inhabitants and a Gross Internal Product (GNP) of some four billion dollars annually. Panama's economically active population consists of some 750,000 people; 600,000 of these are employees, of whom more than half lack any meaningful union organization. There are 150,000 owners of the means of production, but a group of only 121 managers control - through a close network

of banks and monopolies in commerce and industry - three of every four dollars of the GNP. Meanwhile, 80% of those dollars are generated in services linked with the transit of merchandise, capital and people - a dominant factor in the national economy since the sixteenth century - associated with the Panama Canal, the International Financial Center and the Free Trade Zone of Colón, all of which are located in less than 10% of the national territory, in the central part of the country.

This extremely open and fragile economic situation, with its excessive concentration of political and economic power, combines and is further complicated with the distorting effects of the process of national formation resulting from the North American hegemony in the Isthmus. These factors mean that, throughout the entire history of Panama, and in this crisis in particular, social conflicts are expressed in close relation to the national problem, to the point that they seem to fuse into one sole problem.

But in reality the social conflict has preceded and triggered the struggle for an independent national state during the history of Panama. Thus, every national victory - however big, however small - in the confrontation with the U.S. has been preceded by, and has consisted of processes of popular mobilizations which have threatened the political power of the oligarchy, which is



U.S. soldiers in the streets of Panama City. Photo by Luis Humberto González

## THE PANAMA CANAL

The passage between the two oceans was an obsession of the Spanish conquerors. They searched for it arduously, and found it too far to the south, there by the remote and frozen Tierra del Fuego. And when somebody had the idea of opening a pass at the narrow waist of Central America, King Phillip II ordered a halt: he forbade the excavation of the Canal, on pain of death, **because man should not separate what God united.**

Three centuries later, a French enterprise, the Universal Inter-oceanic Canal Company, began working in Panama. The project advanced thirty-three kilometers and fell resoundingly into bankruptcy.

Since then, the United States decided to finish building the Canal and to own it. There is one inconvenience: Colombia does not agree, and Panama is a province of Colombia. In Washington, Senator Hanna advises waiting, **due to the nature of the animals we are dealing with**, but President Teddy Roosevelt does not believe in patience. Roosevelt sends a few marines and makes Panama independent. And thus this province is converted into a separate country, by the grace of the United States and its warships.

Eduardo Galeano: **Memoria del fuego III: El siglo del viento.**

(Memory of Fire III: The Century of Wind)  
Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico. 1986.



The Canal has never really belonged to Panamanians. Photo from Novedades archives

allied with and dependent on imperialism. At the same time, all the defeats suffered by the Panamanian nation in this confrontation, have been preceded by set-backs of the national grass roots movement at the hands of that oligarchy. This is also true of the case of December 20, 1989.

### The Crisis

In reality, the creation of the circumstances which led to the invasion and coup d'état goes back at least to 1984, when two events of great importance for the nation occurred. On the one hand, this was the first time that Panama paid, in services on its foreign debt, more than the amount received in fresh finance from the transnational banks. On the other hand, this was the year when leading political-military organizations of nationalist-Torrijist tendencies, decided to conduct the flow of popular support accumulated for General Torrijos during the 1970's into an electoral alliance with the financial faction of the national oligarchy, which resulted in the election of Nicolás Barletta as President, and later, of Eric del Valle.

These events marked a turning point in relations between Torrijist nationalism and the national populist movement. In fact, given the choice of confronting the

crisis by widening, deepening and consolidating the program of reforms initiated by General Torrijos - and thus confronting the resistance of the oligarchy and the pressures of imperialism - or of gradually undoing what had been achieved by that program within a strategy of conciliation with the traditional adversaries of Torrijism, the second option was chosen.

The political consequences were immediate. By the end of 1984, the middle classes had broken with the regime, and by the middle of 1985, Barletta had lost his power, due to the unpopularity of his economic policies; by March 1986, these policies were approved as laws by the Legislative Assembly, while trade union organizations held a general strike in protest. The repression of this strike provoked a rupture between the organized grass roots movement and the government of del Valle. By the end of that year, the armed forces and the political-bureaucratic apparatus were the only bases of support for the regime: this was the moment chosen by the Reagan administration to ask for General Noriega's help in the aggression against Nicaragua. The refusal to cooperate in this served as the starting point for the series of aggressions which began during the second half of the following year.

## Perspectives

That process of aggression, on the other hand, encountered an ideological vacuum and a vacuum in political leadership due to the rupture between the government and its allies of the previous decade. This vacuum was filled by the National Civic Crusade which is composed of business organizations, endorsed by the Catholic Church and advised in political matters by the U.S. Embassy and political parties of the oligarchic right. This group would finally take power after the deaths of 5,000 people and damages estimated in 2 billion dollars to the national economy on December 20, 1989. They also came into power as a native administration installed by a foreign occupation army.

The stage of Panamanian history that closes with the invasion and the coup d'état in December of 1989 saw the reformist middle classes take over the political and ideological leadership of the process of Panamanian national formation. They did this in alliance with the business sectors interested in broadening the internal market and modernizing national public administration and the economy. In the exercise of this leadership, the middle strata have made important contributions by incorporating grass-root sectors into national life, sectors that only had a nominal participation under the previous oligarchic regimes.

## U.S. INTERVENTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

"The United States is directly or indirectly responsible for the installation of the worst military dictatorships in Latin America, with the complicity of the local oligarchies and bourgeoisie", says Gregorio Selser, Argentinian journalist living in Mexico.

Selser, who is also Professor and researcher in the Latin American Studies Center in the Political Science Faculty of the UNAM, recalls a commentary made by Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes: that most of the armed interventions made by the U.S. over the last few years, have been aggressions against countries with a population of less than five million people.

"The U.S. is prepared to negotiate with major powers such as the Soviet Union", says Selser, "but it just wants to impose its will in small countries which it considers its backyard".

Mr. Selser enumerated the most important military interventions made by the U.S. against Latin America and the Caribbean this century:

**October 1909:** U.S. marines overthrow President José Santos Zelaya in Nicaragua. **July-October 1912:** full-scale invasion of Nicaragua, imposition of puppet governments: U.S. troops remain in Nicaragua until October 1925.

**February 1913:** Complot in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico led by Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson. Following the "Embassy Pact", Mexican President Francisco I. Madero and vice-president José María Pino Suárez are assassinated by dictator Victoriano Huerta.

Early 1914, troops disembark in the port of Tampico, Tamaulipas. This is followed by an invasion and permanence of troops in Veracruz until 1914, by order of President Woodrow Wilson. U.S. troops again invade Mexico in 1916, in pursuit of the "bandit" Pancho Villa. The troops returned home in

1917, without having captured Villa.

**1915:** Invasion of Haiti and occupation of that country until 1934.

**1916:** Invasion of the Dominican Republic, occupation until 1924.

**December 1926:** U.S. troops disembark in Nicaragua; occupation until January 1, 1933. Popular resistance against this invasion is led by Augusto César Sandino, with widespread support from Latin America and from public opinion in the U.S.

**1924:** Occupation during several months of the Honduran Republic.

**1904-1930:** Seven disembarkments of troops in the Republic of Panama.

**1906-1933:** Three disembarkments of troops and temporary occupation of Cuba.

**August 1933:** Following the fall of Cuban dictator Gerardo Machado, U.S. ships patrol Cuban coasts.

The "big stick policy", (expression coined by Theodor Roosevelt at the beginning of this century), was replaced by Franklin D. Roosevelt's "good neighbor policy" during the rest of the 1930's and a good part of the 1940's, when there were no U.S. interventions in Latin America. However, in 1945-46, the U.S. tried to intervene against the electoral victory of Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, but failed in these attempts, as Perón won the elections in February 1946.

**June 1954:** Overthrow of constitutional President of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. This was the first intervention of the C.I.A. in the preparation and launching of such an operation. The effects of this action are still being felt today in Guatemala, where more than half a million people have been disappeared and murdered by various regimes.

**April 1961:** The "Bay of Pigs" invasion of Cuba, which failed to overthrow President Fidel Castro.

**April 1965:** Intervention and occupation of the Dominican Republic, assassination of popular leaders of a nationalist rebellion.

**1970-73:** Interventions against the democratic and constitutional government of Salvador Allende in Chile, resulting in Allende's overthrow in September 1973.

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford supported all the military dictatorships which were installed in Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, in the name of "anti-communism". While President Carter brought some changes in U.S. foreign policy, it was James Carter who authorized the first shipment of arms and financial support to maintain the regime in El Salvador, in January 1981, just three days before his mandate ended. This marked the beginning of the civil war which is still being fought in that nation.

**December 1981:** Beginning of the armed, diplomatic, political, economic and financial intervention against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

**October 1983:** Invasion and occupation of the island state of Grenada, aimed at exterminating the New Jewel Movement led by social democrat Maurice Bishop.

**June 1987:** Intervention in internal affairs of Panama.

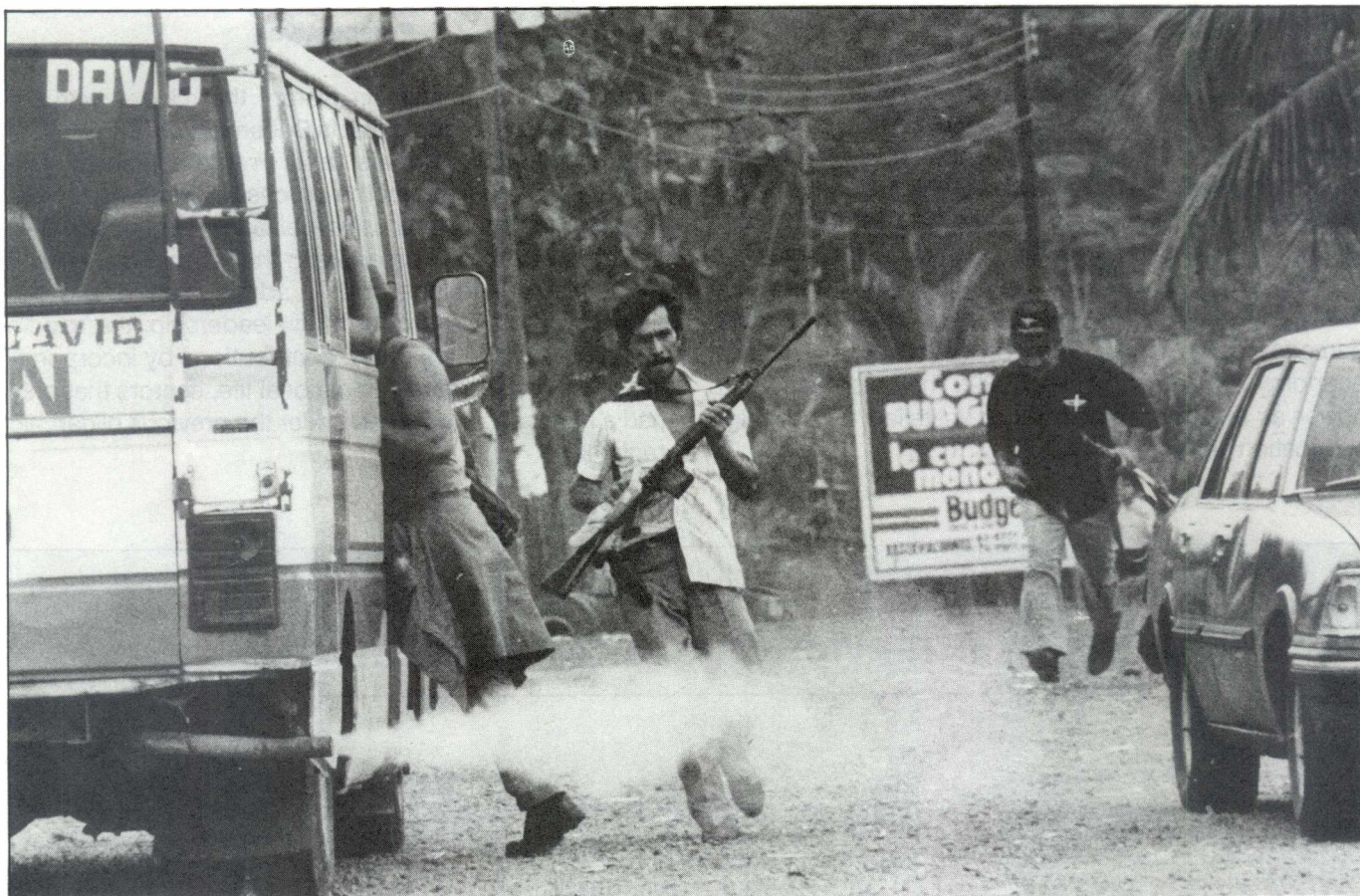
**February 1988:** Economic and financial embargo against Panama.

**December 20, 1989:** Invasion and occupation of Panama.

Mr. Selser summarizes: "Since last century, all of Latin America, from Mexico to Argentina and Chile, have suffered military interventions by the United States.

"The countries which have been invaded most are: Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba and Panama, in that order."

Jackie Buswell



The "Dignity Battalions" tried to resist the U.S. invasion. Photo by Luis Humberto González

As we have seen, this alliance broke apart piece by piece under the impact of the crisis during the past decade. If this crisis had not followed the course of events determined by the United States' intervention and invasion, the country could have waited for the split to produce a national leadership that would have been of a more grass-roots and democratic orientation. This course of events, which in other circumstances could have looked "natural", was frustrated in Panama due to the militarization of national political life.

It is significant, however, that even with all the unpopularity of this regime, its internal oligarchic adversaries never really posed a real threat to the government's political survival and these adversaries turned out to be the employees of the foreign power that help them to take over. The real moving force in Panamanian history is found and remains for the time being, in the grass-roots sectors that Torrijism incorporated into national life and then tried to demobilize afterwards. In this sense we can say that the coup of December 20 destroyed what remained of the mediating apparatus. It therefore created the basic conditions so that the social polarization created by the crisis began to be transformed into political polarization destined to show itself in new ways within the fundamental conflict of Panamanian history.

In this way we can say that the United States has been able to consolidate its hegemony on the Isthmus through

a division of the Panamanian society that, in all probability, will become deeper and broader up to the point that this hegemony will again be placed in check but in much more complex and dangerous terms for U.S. interests in Panama. In effect, the social cost of the program of consolidating Panamanian dependency carried out by the government formed by the invasion, is such that it can only be implemented by dictatorial measures. But, at the same time, the internal isolation of the oligarchy represented in this government is so great that it can only carry out this dictatorship with the support of U.S. armed forces.

Thus, we can say that the Bush Administration has opted - knowingly or not - for a political failure in Panama. It loses, if it has to take charge permanently of the government of the country and it also loses, if it opts for withdrawing its support for the government it has imposed on the country. Meanwhile, new forces and political realities - that mean new challenges for the United States and its allies - are taking shape in Panama. The quickness with which these new forces arise and the degree to which they are really an alternative for the political leadership of the country are two very important points that will show how quickly Panama will overcome the crisis that it has been going through for almost a decade. And for the United States, as an editorial in *The New York Times* pointed out in January, the capture of Noriega is just the beginning of this country's new adventure in Panama. ■

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# MEXICANS CONDEMN THE U.S. INVASION

Public opinion in Mexico energetically condemned the U.S. invasion of Panama, both for the enormous human and material costs and for its violation of the political and territorial sovereignty of the Central American country. This attitude was shared by all political parties in the Mexican Congress, by well known personalities and by social organizations which formed groups of solidarity with the people of Panama, and by the nation's diplomatic authorities. Here, *Voices* presents separate interviews by our reporter Jackie Buswell with María Emilia Farías, adjunct secretary to the Presidency of the National Executive Committee of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico City; Jesús Conzález Schmal, spokesman on international affairs of the National Action Party (PAN); and Adolfo Aguilar Zínser, of the Institute for U.S. Studies and Research, of the UNAM.

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**What is your opinion, or that of your party, on the U.S. invasion of Panama?**

*Jésus González Schmal:*

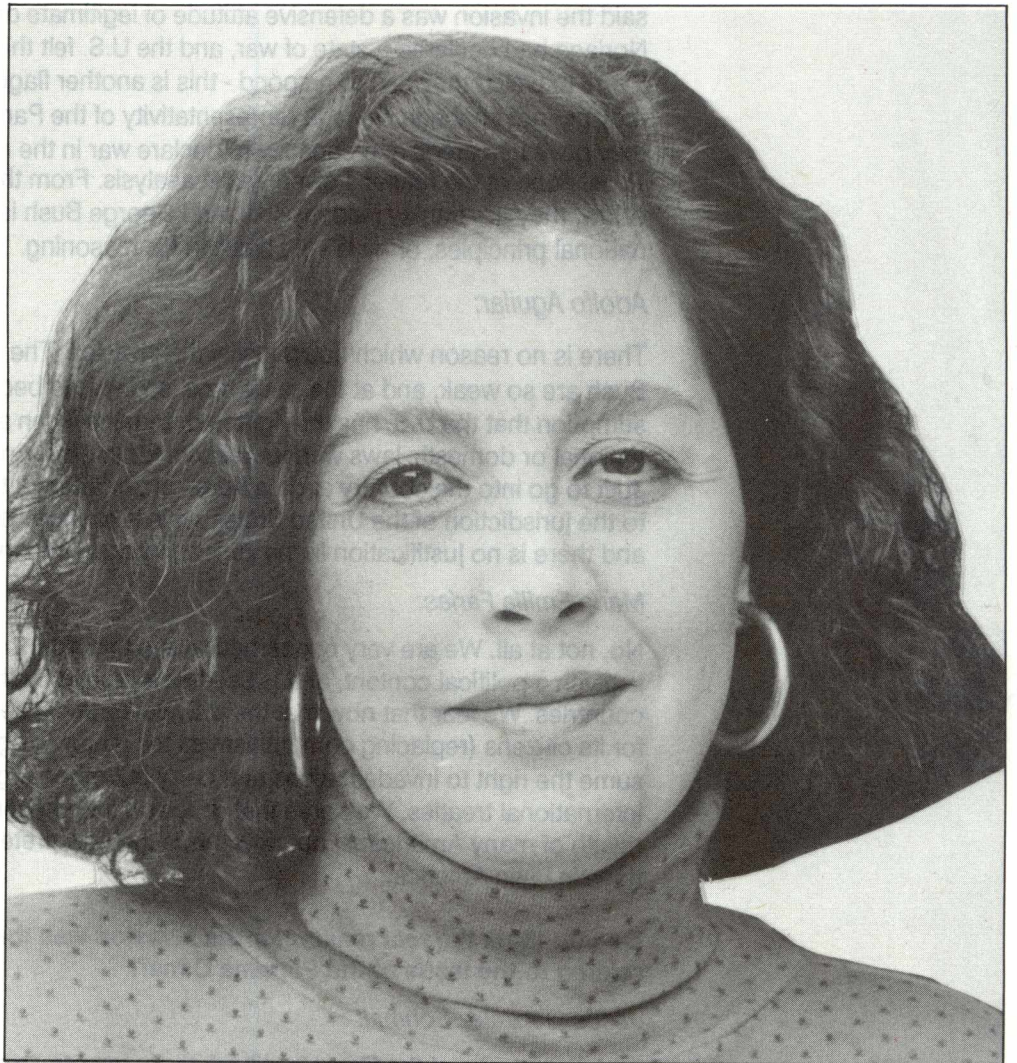
The PAN has strongly disapproved and condemned this arbitrary action perpetrated last December 20 against the Panama Republic. It is an act which violates principles of international law and Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, which forbids the invasion of foreign territories even in supposed attempts to resolve conflicts. The PAN's attitude to the invasion is one of absolute censure.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

I think an invasion is the worst conceivable act of violation of any principle of co-existence among states. There is no possible justification for invading Panama. Beyond that, with the invasion, the U.S. establishes with absolute clarity that the thrust of its policy is to maintain its hegemonic control over the region despite changes in the international environment, despite the transformation of relations between the Soviet Union and its area of influence. The United States establishes in the midst of all these changes, that it is not ready to accept any new conditions which will limit its freedom of action in its so-called backyard.

*María Emilia Farías:*

Our party has condemned the use of force and the violation of national sovereignty of a free country, we are totally opposed to this kind of actions. The unjustified aggression against a country of some two million inhabitants caused



María Emilia Farías. Photo by Alejandra Novoa

thousands of dead and wounded, with indiscriminate bombing against the civil population. In short, the invasion violated the political independence, the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the self-determination of Panama. We were stunned by the cynicism and puerility of the pretexts given to justify the invasion, and by the way the invaders proceeded to destroy Panama's armed forces for the "crime" of maintaining nationalist sentiments, so as to then impose a government prepared to act according to U.S. plans for its neo-colonial domination of Panama.

**Do you think the fight against drug trafficking, or the desire to arrest General Noriega, could possibly justify the invasion?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

The reasons given by President George Bush when he tried to justify the invasion to the world, were frankly childish. He first said that U.S. troops had disembarked in Panama to protect the life of U.S. citizens resident there; then he spoke about the troops defending or restoring democracy in Panama, and thirdly he said the troops were going to arrest an international drug trafficker. None of these reasons can be considered valid justification for a military invasion, much less so, when it is well known that the U.S. has an army of 12,000 men stationed in Panama. Nor can it be justified when we consider the differences between General Noriega and the U.S. government, which in many aspects are personal differences between Noriega and President Bush, dating from the time when Noriega worked for U.S. intelligence services, when these were directed by George Bush. Later, the U.S. State Department

said the invasion was a defensive attitude of legitimate defense because General Noriega had declared a state of war, and the U.S. felt this was an aggression against them, to which they had to respond - this is another flagrant contradiction, because, if they did not concede Noriega representativity of the Panamanian state, how come they gave him credit and capacity to declare war in the name of the state of Panama? Thus, none of the reasons given, resist analysis. From the point of view of international law, they are frankly inadmissible, and George Bush is either ignorant of these international principles, or he is very basic in his reasoning.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

There is no reason which could justify the invasion. The reasons given by President Bush are so weak, and at the same time, so cynical, because they include the assumption that the U.S. has the right to determine when an individual has violated international or domestic laws without respect for international procedures and principles. Just to go into the country and capture him, or attempt to capture him and bring him to the jurisdiction of the United States - this is an imperial act, no more and no less, and there is no justification in the 20th century for imperial acts.

*María Emilia Farías:*

No, not at all. We are very concerned to see that now the fight against drug trafficking is given a political content, and is used as a pretext by the United States to invade countries. We fear that now that the U.S. government sees drugs as the main danger for its citizens (replacing communism as the major danger), that country will now assume the right to invade nations and carry out other aggressive actions which violate international treaties. We agree that drugs do indeed constitute a problem for the health of many Americans, but now this is the new pretext used to justify U.S. interventions in Latin America.

**Do you think the real reason for the invasion was that of capturing Noriega, or is related to the issue of the Panama Canal?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

I think the issue of the Canal is still relatively remote - ten years away. If the U.S. really wanted to destabilize Panama so as to prolong its administration of the Canal, it would act closer to the year 2000. Rather, I believe President Bush has a grand aversion and animosity towards Manuel Antonio Noriega. I cannot explain a movement of 25,000 soldiers of the world's most powerful army in the search of a drug trafficker and delinquent. It seems to me that there is something else at the bottom of all this - or there is great animosity between these two characters, or there is an interest of the U.S. state to arrest Noriega - without him talking - for some reason related to information that Noriega could make public. I cannot understand how, if the U.S. had wanted to act according to international law, they could not have resorted to less aggressive measures. I think that to go and bomb such a small country, to kill civil victims - when they could easily have sent two or three experts to capture Noriega - are methods that violate not only the peace of that nation, but they are also against good common sense and reasoning.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

The purpose of the invasion was to establish the conditions of the relationship of the U.S. with the region of Central America, and with Panama in particular, based on the right of the U.S. to intervene. The objective was to bring back the notion that the U.S. has the right to intervene. This is the Monroe Doctrine. I think that the issue of the Canal is a substantial reason, but it falls within this overall objective, which is to reestablish the notion that the U.S., whether for the Canal, or for the drug issue, or of any other "valid reason" according to U.S. judgements, has the right to invade, to intervene, in Latin America. This is the political purpose of this invasion, to make it clear to all of Latin America and to the international community in general, that the U.S. retains the right to intervene and to invade.



*María Emilia Farías:*

During the invasion, more importance was given to the arrest of General Noriega, as a drug trafficker and delinquent, and the issue of the Canal was apparently pushed aside. However, according to the Carter-Torrijos agreements signed in 1977, a new Administrator of the Canal had to be appointed precisely in January 1990. I don't believe the invasion and the problem of the Canal are two separate issues, rather, one is the mask which is hiding something else - and that is, the control of the Canal, and the problem of U.S. bases in Panama, which is a strategic problem, both from the point of view of trade and of defense and security. At present, U.S. troops are well installed, and the new Administrator has been named by the government of Endara. If this Administrator had been named by nationalist Panamanians, he would surely have worked for the fulfillment of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties on the Canal. Now, with an Administrator named by Endara, who has been imposed by the United States, the fulfillment of the Treaties is going to be more difficult. I imagine that this new Administrator - who is a Panamanian - must be someone more inclined to protect U.S. interests, rather than those of Panama.

What is very serious now is that the invasion inaugurates a new kind of foreign policy for the United States, and we hope that it is an isolated case, and that this kind of invasion will not be the *modus operandi* of the U.S. in the future.

**Why do you say that it is an isolated case, when there exists a long history of U.S. invasions of the area?**

*María Emilia Farías:*

Yes, there is a long list of earlier invasions, but now that we suppose that the world is entering a new stage of co-existence and dialogue, and strong ideological frontiers are collapsing without the spilling of blood, I would like to see the case of Panama as an isolated one, and that the U.S. will soon withdraw its troops, and that these military interventions will not be their *modus operandi* in the future, especially in the light of recent events in Eastern Europe.

**What is your opinion on the hostilities exercised against various Embassies in Panama during the invasion?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

There are no words to describe it. I don't think that, even in the worst states of war, have there been such significant violations of international law. I think these hostilities constituted an aggression against the entire world.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

These were an obvious consequence of the same notion: the right to intervene means that the U.S. assumes the moral, political or strategic reason that goes beyond the specific status of diplomatic immunity or sovereignty of states. The notion with which the U.S. is acting in Latin America is that it retains the possibility of determining when an international law is applicable and when it is not. I think the offenses to diplomatic immunity were not an excess committed in midst of an invasion, as Americans will probably try to justify it; it was not an excess, it was the essence of the invasion. The message of the invasion was that there is no diplomatic immunity or national jurisdiction that can be argued against the U.S.' right to invade. I think this highlights the fact that the U.S. is going back to the early notions of the Monroe Doctrine - for a number of reasons in the U.S. domestic environment, and in the international arena. The U.S. is recovering the notion that it is back on its feet, that there is nothing standing in the way of the U.S. exercising its role in the world, that there is no sense of impotence in the face of outside events, no sense of moral doubt after the American society has gone through the traumas of the Vietnam war, Watergate, the Iran-contra scandal. The U.S. emerges from all of this with the deep conviction that it is the duty of the nation, its moral obligation, to exercise the role of policeman of the world. This makes Americans feel good - even if the rest of the world feels threatened, Americans feel good: this is clear from how the invasion was covered in the U.S. press, and the reac-

tion of the American public. The invasion made them feel like Rambo, this is very much a part of their culture.

Another element here, is that the U.S. reads the events in Eastern Europe as a permission to behave the American way: Americans feel that *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the opening of socialist regimes and the fall of the single party system, represent a defeat of socialism and a triumph of capitalism, a defeat of the empire of the USSR and a triumph for the U.S. empire.

*María Emilia Farías:*

We are totally opposed to these violations of the Viena Convention, which gives foreign Embassies the right to immunity. And following these aggressions, the U.S. has given no apology, no explanation.

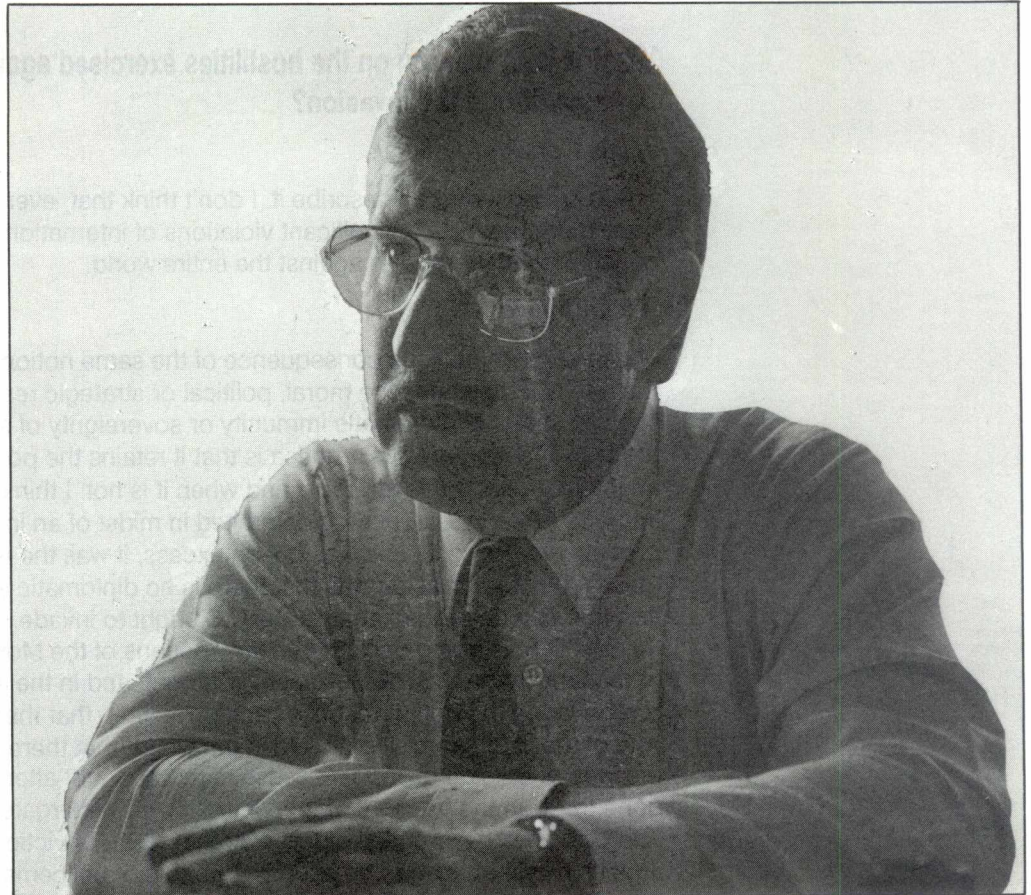
**What are your considerations on the Latin American reaction to the invasion?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

I think the Mexican government gave a very weak response to the invasion, I would classify the response as one of mere declarations - which makes us suspect that the Mexican government was in some way linked to Noriega's group, and this reduced its moral authority to condemn the U.S. occupation.

Eight leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) of Panama have received the right to exile in Mexico, yet this was the party which unduly and arbitrarily gave Noriega the character of head of state in that country. It was also the party which supported Mexico's governing party, the PRI, in Buenos Aires, when the PRI was elected to the presidency of the Confederation of Latin American Political Parties (COPPAL) in early December last year.

As for the rest of Latin America, only El Salvador, for obvious reasons, supported the U.S. All the other countries of the region, in one way or another, condemned the in-



Jesús González Schmal. Photo by Alejandra Novoa

vasion. It was a great opportunity to reactivate and give power to the Organization of American States (OAS), which could have worked to prevent the invasion when it was evident that it was being planned.

If the OAS had called an urgent meeting in early December, it could have played a very important role, and perhaps avoided the spilling of blood and the violent transgression of international law.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

It would be fair to say that the Latin American governments were over-cautious, they were intimidated by the action. They fell into the trap of the invasion even before it took place. When the U.S. proposed a discussion on the Panama question in the Organization of American States (OAS) before the invasion, Latin Americans tried to conciliate positions. This conciliatory position involved opposing intervention on the one hand but on the other, justifying morally and politically the U.S. claim against Noriega. By assuming basically the same judgement as the U.S. about Noriega, Latin Americans opened the door for the invasion. Latin Americans in the OAS made the terrible mistake of assuming that the U.S. would act more in accordance with international law.

If there was something which contributed to the U.S. making up its mind to invade, it was the undecisive role played by Latin American governments in the OAS: they defended principles, but they left the door open for the invasion. After the fact, there was a very strong reaction from Latin Americans against the invasion, but there were no strong actions to make the United States pay the price for the gross violations to international law. I think every government in Latin America had the moral, political and historical obligation to put a price on the invasion, at the level of bilateral relations. Ambassadors should have been recalled, and countries should have, individually and collectively, declared that they needed to make a thorough revision of their bilateral relations with the United States. Latin American governments should have made it clear that the invasion was inadmissible behavior, and they did not do this, they condemned the invasion but they took no actions to make clear that the aggression was inadmissible.

What happens, is that Latin American governments want to have good bilateral relations with the U.S., and at the same time make anti-invasion speeches, and as the Americans say, you can't have the cake and eat it too. The OAS should never have accepted that its duty was to help the U.S. get rid of Noriega, and almost explicitly the OAS assumed that role.

*María Emilia Farías:*

I think the reaction generally was weak and dispersed. We Latin Americans should have joined forces more and protested with greater energy - but each country in the region has its own very serious problems which I think impeded the creation of a solid united front on the issue of Panama. Some people consider that certain countries of the region permitted - or if they did not permit, they facilitated - the invasion because of their attitudes beforehand, as for example in the case of the expulsion of Panama from the Contadora Group.

As for Mexico, I think it was very correct in its reaction, drawing a line with the U.S., saying that we can be neighbors and collaborators, but drawing a line nonetheless. One very clear indication of the Salinas government was when it made clear that vice-President Dan Quayle was not welcome. We don't want any kind of explanations from Mr. Quayle, we don't need his presence here.

On the other hand, the attitude of Costa Rica seems very strange to me, I can't understand how President Oscar Arias, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, could have received Endara with full state honors.

**There were two votations in the U.N. following the invasion. One condemned the invasion, and in this first voting, the U.S. received support from some 20 nations. The second voting was on a condemnation of the hostilities to the Embassies, and here, the United States was left by itself. What do you think is the reason for this change in international opinion?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

For me, it is important to point out the shameful attitude of France, which supported and justified the invasion, and compare it with the reaction of Spain, which in contrast, strongly condemned the invasion from just a few hours after it began. As for the rest of the world, I think that as more information became available, and people realized there was no real resistance, nor risk of closing the Canal, they also realized the invasion was an excessive act, that could not be explained in logical terms, but which makes many of us think of reasons of personal animosity or of reasons of state information, or simply as an act which no-one can understand - that's why international opinion began to change, and later the European Economic Community also condemned the invasion. We hope the general public in the United States will be influenced by this, because now that there is no counter-weight of military force from the U.S.S.R., the world has to rely more and more on the capacities of democratic dynamics within the U.S., so there are self restraints to military adventures. Up to the moment, according to results of surveys, these self restraints don't appear to exist, but I think that as the U.S. public becomes better informed, and U.S. Congress members understand the damage done to the U.S. image and to the international co-existence, they are going to realize the invasion was a mistake. I believe that the concepts of human rights are more recognized, more assimilated today, and this will eventually have to modify attitudes of the U.S. government, its "Manifest Destiny" and its tendency to want to dominate the world, to act as policeman in the international arena.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

Those countries which voted with the United States in the first vote, are those which want to see the U.S. play its police role in the world, while the second vote reflects greater concern among nations, including those which first supported the U.S., for the cost of this type of behavior. The international community realized that by giving the U.S. permission to invade, they were also allowing the U.S. to violate principles of international law when it suits its objectives. Meanwhile, except for El Salvador, Honduras, and for a luke-warm reaction on the part of Costa Rica, all Latin American governments consistently opposed the invasion. And the general public here judged it as unacceptable, because the invasion is based on the assumption that we are incapable of governing ourselves, that we are intrinsically corrupted, that we need to be guided and guarded and this is an unacceptable notion.

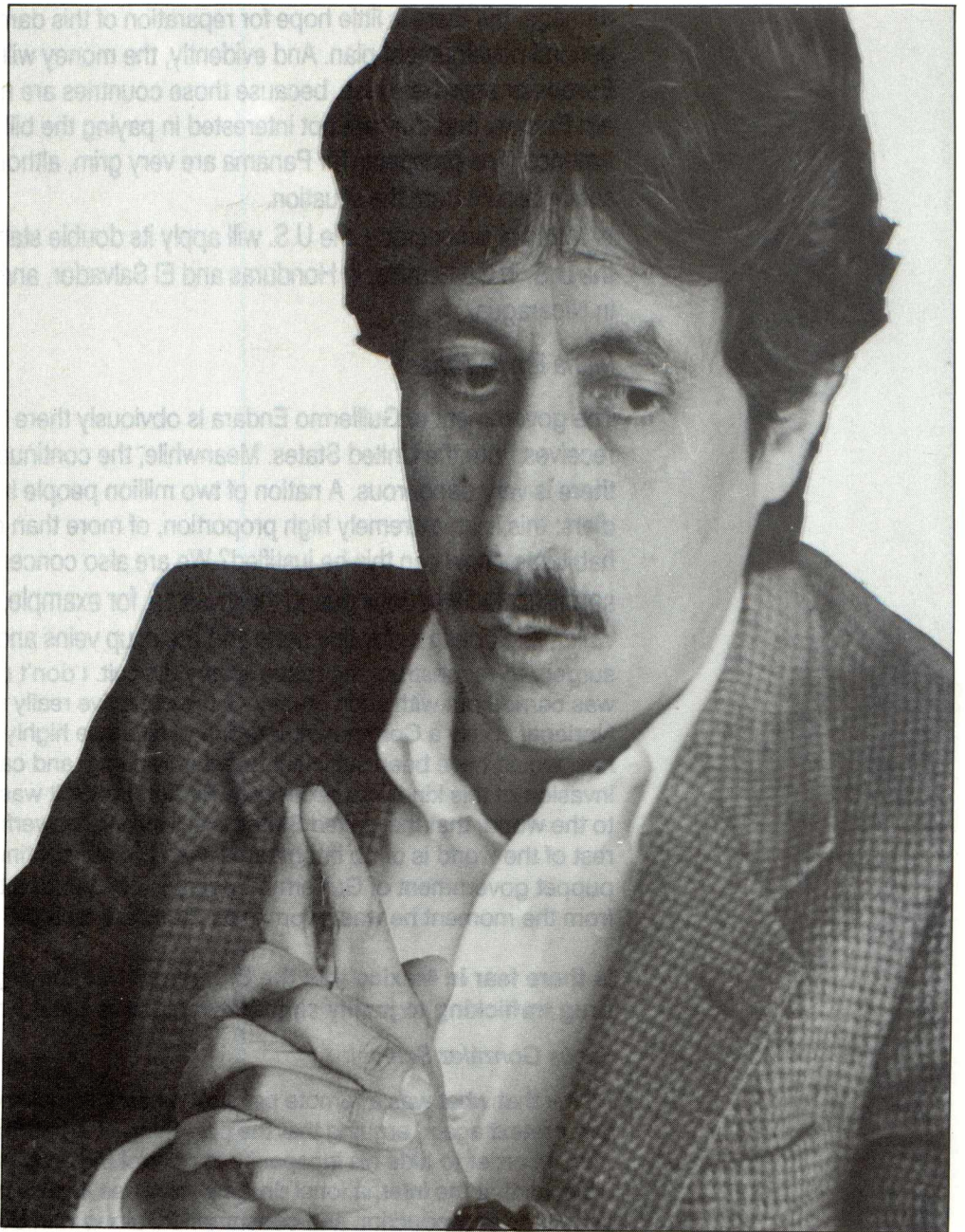
#### **What prospects do you see for the future of Panama?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

The invasion was one of the greatest diplomatic errors ever committed by the U.S., and in itself forms an obstacle for the restoration of constitutional order. When they made Guillermo Endara assume office as President of Panama in a U.S. military base, surrounded by occupation forces, they were making him illegitimate, and therefore he is a man who temporarily can have some support in his country, due to the desperation of the people there, and to their desire to end the anxiety of an occupation. But it is evident that he has lost moral prestige in the eyes of other countries, which he is not going to recuperate. This damage to his prestige can also be directly attributed to the United States. Endara is surely going to be a docile President, an unconditional of the U.S. The events which brought him to power indicate an ominous destiny for the future of Panama.

*Adolfo Aguilar:*

I think the government of Guillermo Endara is going to prove that the U.S. is capable of imposing a government but that it is absolutely incapable of establishing a framework for democracy. The government of Endara has been inspired by passion, revenge and abuse, just as Noriega was accused of, and the U.S. press has accepted violations of human rights during and since the invasion, that were absolutely unac-



Adolfo Aguilar Zinser. Photo by Alejandra Novoa

ceptable for the American press when they were committed by Noriega. Panama is governed today by the American double standard democracy. One thing we have to take into account here is that Noriega was a terrible leader of Panamanian nationalists, a disastrous leader of the poor in their struggle for justice, that he did a great harm to his country and to Latin America, that he propitiated a situation which gave the U.S. the opportunity to regain a position in Latin America which many people have fought for the U.S. to lose. So Noriega cannot be listed as a hero or as a nationalist, he has to be listed as an enemy of nationalism, as an enemy of the principle of non-intervention.

Thus, the Panamanians who were trapped in the situation created by Noriega and the U.S., today are victims - they are probably those who looted in the streets of Panama in an act of chaotic desperation; they knew they could not defend their country, and so they tried to grab what they could.

The Endara government will be over-confident in expecting money that will never arrive from the U.S., which will give token money to Endara, because Endara doesn't deserve more than that. Now that its problem is resolved, the U.S. will not put any more money into Panama, it has other commitments and interests, and it already has Panama in its pocket, and the U.S. doesn't need to spend another penny to keep it that way. It is a disastrous moment for Panama, which has suffered severe economic

damage, but there is little hope for reparation of this damage, and much less, for a general development plan. And evidently, the money will not come from Western Europe or anywhere else, because those countries are now more interested in Eastern Europe, and they are not interested in paying the bill for U.S. actions in Central America. The prospects for Panama are very grim, although some businessmen will surely benefit from the situation.

In terms of democracy, the U.S. will apply its double standard, which is imposed by the U.S. in Guatemala, in Honduras and El Salvador, and which it will try and impose in Nicaragua.

*María Emilia Farías:*

The government of Guillermo Endara is obviously there to carry out the orders it receives from the United States. Meanwhile, the continued presence of U.S. troops there is very dangerous. A nation of two million people invaded by nearly 30,000 soldiers: this is an extremely high proportion, of more than one soldier per 100 inhabitants - how can this be justified? We are also concerned about the use of sophisticated weapons during the invasion, for example, fragmentary grenades, which explode in many tiny parts and break up veins and tissues in such a way that surgery to reconstruct the tissue is very difficult. I don't understand why the invasion was carried out with such cruelty - if the objective really was the capture of General Noriega, surely a Commando group of all those highly trained troops that the U.S. has, would have been sufficient to enter Panama and capture him, I don't see that an invasion of this kind was necessary. Rather, I think it was a warning to the region, or to the world, that the United States is still strong, powerful, that what happens to the rest of the world is of no importance, the U.S. will continue to do what it likes. And the puppet government of Guillermo Endara is condemned to do what the U.S. orders, from the moment he was sworn in as President on a U.S. military base.

**Is there fear in Mexico that the U.S. might use the argument of the fight against drug trafficking to justify similar invasions in Latin America?**

*Jesús González Schmal:*

I think that what was a remote possibility, has materialized. I feel that Bush will recur to this pretext again, arguing that the poisoning of Americans by drugs comes from outside, in order to hide his incapacity to control the drug problem within his country. It is obvious that the international drug network has its axis in the United States, and that problems of production and consumption, along with other associated businesses, cannot be separated. In saying this, I do not, by any means, want to exclude the Mexican government of responsibility for having permitted, and in many cases associated with drug traffickers, but I think that President Bush is acting for his electorate so as to justify his incapacity to do something inside his country. ■



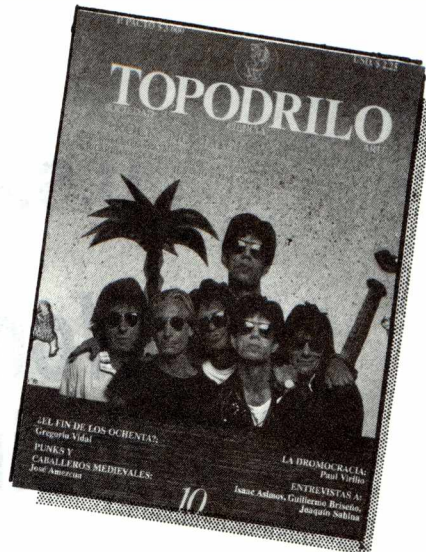
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UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE MEXICO

## U.S.-Mexico Relations

# Women Who Wait for their Migrant Husbands

The phenomenon of migration of Mexicans to the United States can be analyzed from many view-points; it has important political and economic implications for both countries. It deserves detailed analysis on demographic movement in this country, and respect for the rights of undocumented workers in U.S. legislation, to mention just two of the many aspects of this polemical theme, which *Voices* has already discussed on various occasions. Here we present an analysis by anthropologist Consuelo Díaz, who examines the situation of women who stay at home waiting for their men to return from a dream journey which for many becomes a nightmare. This wait by the women is far from being a passive act, as it involves assuming new unavoidable responsibilities in the struggle for their family's survival.

Much has been said and written about the migration of Mexicans to the United States, its causes and effects on the community of origin, on the condition of undocumented workers, the dangers they face in crossing the border and the life they lead in Mexico's neighbor to the north.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon has been a source of concern for social scientists, politicians and humanitarian associations. Everyone tries to find an explanation for the exodus, relating it to economic characteristics of the agrarian sector, demographic growth and the dependence of Mexico on other countries or the effect of certain legislation and the absence of political will to achieve a more balanced redistribution of the population with better living conditions.

The difference of perspectives in the analysis of migration has provoked heated discussion above all because the questions that have

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**The family is the main protagonist of the wait, the recipient of economic benefits, but also of the consequences of absence**

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guided research have sought different objectives. The discussion has continued up until now and hopefully, in the near future, an integrated vision of the phenomenon will be achieved. Nevertheless, it is not the purpose of this article to discuss conceptual problems, but rather to provide information on one aspect, which although it has not received much attention in the literature, does not cease to be of importance. This refers to the situa-

tion of persons who remain waiting for those who have left, especially women.

The object of this study - carried out during 1987 and 1988 in Los Altos of Jalisco, a region of great migratory movement - was to analyze the role of migration within the process of social reproduction of the family. Information on and observation of daily life during field work take us necessarily to the migrant's family.

The family is the main protagonist of the wait, the recipient of economic benefits, but also of the consequences of absence.

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1. J. Bustamante (1970, 1985, 1987), L. Arizpe (1972, 1976, 1985), W. Cornelius (1970, 1985, 1987) and a very long list of Mexican and foreign researchers who have dedicated themselves to the study of this population movement.



**With or without help, in the short term the wife of the traveller has to search for a job to continue maintaining the family**

**Women and Migration**

Given that migration to the United States, despite the growing number of women migrants over the last several years, is still a phenomenon in which men predominate, it is the head of the family who traditionally leaves in search of a supplement to his income. Due to this, migrant families have suffered a reorganization that affects their very core in which the woman remains as head of the family. From the moment that the husband decides to go north, the wife has to assume total responsibility for the family. From even before the husband's departure, she fulfills an important role as mediator between friends and relatives to put together money, to make contacts for the husband in the north, to search for possible lodging and to begin to think of the family's future survival.

Most women in Jalostotitlán, a town located in the heart of the region of Los Altos, have assumed that the departure of men is something natural. Ever since they were young, they saw their fathers and brothers leave, so it does not seem strange to them that their husbands take the same path. It is as if a part of their life cycle has not been completed until the departure of their spouse. Afterwards, nothing remains but to wait... and to survive...

The social sphere in which they live also plays an important role and makes these women assume absence and responsibility as a part of daily life, as something obligatory. The community and family pressure them to fulfill the role with which they have been marked by tradition, under the assumption that it will bring about an improvement in the well-being of everyone.

In most cases, the economic benefit expected from the migration takes up to four months to present itself, since the migrant's process of



Artwork by Rini Templeton. Reproduction by Alejandra Novoa

searching for a stable job and lodging in the United States takes time. Meanwhile, his family survives thanks to the help of in-laws and other relatives, and to the savings that were left in the town.

With or without help, in the short term the wife of the traveller has to search for a job to continue maintaining the family. Nevertheless, for many of them, the job cannot be full-time because it would be a source of criticism on the part of the husband's family and of the community in general, given that in the Mexican provinces, working wives are looked upon with disapproval. It is for this reason that in Jalostotitlán the women whose husbands are in the north say they only work at home, when in reality, in addition to domestic work, they work as seamstresses doing piecemeal work for clothing factories in the neighboring municipality of San Miguel el Alto. This "work at home" consists basically of embroidering and doing *deshilado* (drawing threads from cloth to form designs) for undershirts for newborns, and for the necks and bodices of girls' dresses. The women receive narrow strips of cut cloth of different sizes so that they may embroider them with a certain design. For each portion of the dress, they receive between 500 and one thousand pesos. On a weekly basis, they come to earn between ten

and fifteen thousand pesos. (One dollar is currently slightly less than 3,000 pesos).

According to statements of women interviewed, sewing is not a formal job in spite of the time and wear and tear on the eyes that it implies, since they do it in their "spare time". This work is generally done in the afternoon; in the vestibules and through the door frames of houses, numerous groups of women can be seen doing *deshilado* work and embroidering. Young daughters help them do the *deshilado* and they receive 100 pesos for each piece.

**Migration goes beyond the sphere of the family and goes deeper, affecting other areas of society**

**Work Not Admitted**

In this way, the *deshilado* work serves as an economic complement for a good number of women, in spite of the fact that they do not consider it as work. We may observe, for example, that 76% of women interviewed in a

**ACTIVITY OF MIGRANTS' WIVES**

ACTIVITY	WIVES	PERCENTAGE
Does not work	228	76.3
Housewife who works at home	39	13.0
Housewife	6	2.0
Domestic work	4	1.3
Personal services	3	1.0
Shoe-making	3	1.0
Teacher	3	1.0
Works at home with sewing machine	2	0.7
Restaurant	2	0.7
Housewife who helps husband	2	0.7
Day laborer	1	0.3
Employee	2	0.7
Secretary	2	0.3
Doctor	1	0.3
Other	2	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: International Migration Survey by Consuelo Díaz, 1989.

poll responded that they did not work in any other activity outside the home and only 23.4% responded that they did. Of this last figure, 3% work in the area of services since they do cleaning in schools, factories and doctors' offices and some of them are waitresses. Another 7% work, also for piecwork rates, in the clothing and shoe factories that have arisen in the locality over the last decade and 7.3% responded that they worked at home sewing but by machine. The rest work in agriculture, shops and in packing plants.

But in fact, the 76% of those who responded that they did not carry out any type of work can be seen to diminish considerably when, through participation in daily life and informal chats, it is discovered that they do indeed work at home making tablecloths, undershirts or dresses for which they are paid piece rates. Thus, the women of Los Altos are widely integrated into the informal work market through work at home. The absence of male manpower has facilitated this process, thus, migration goes beyond the sphere of the family and goes deeper, affecting other areas of society.

On the other hand, in addition to the job implied by being head of the family, the migrant's wife suffers dif-

ferent social sanctions when one fine day her husband ceases to send her dollars and does not return home. Abandonment implies, in the case of young women, the search for mechanisms that allow them to maintain their children, but in addition, these abandoned wives have to assume the sole responsibility for their

**The very environment justifies the irresponsibility of a man who abandons his family and places the blame on the woman**

children forever since, socially, she may not start her life over again with another man, because for everyone in the local community, she continues to be married. For mature women, it means assuming her failure as a wife before the family and the community, which has repercussions in her relationship with her children and relatives.

The migrant's decision not to return may provoke extremist attitudes. We know of the case of a woman whose husband went north and who left her with his family so they would care for her and maintain her as if she were their daughter. In exchange, she would do the domestic work, for which her in-laws put her to good use. When the husband ceased to send money and to maintain contact with her and the family, the latter sent her back to her house since they considered their obligation with her to have been terminated. The man had gone and had not wanted to return for some reason, surely because she was

**AGE RANGE OF MIGRANTS' WIVES**

AGE RANGE	WIVES	PERCENTAGE
Less than 20	253	84.3
21-25	12	4.0
26-30	8	2.7
31-35	9	3.0
36-40	7	2.3
41-45	3	1.0
46-50	3	1.0
51-55	1	0.3
56-60	3	1.0
61 and older	1	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: International Migrant Survey by Consuelo Díaz, 1989.

not a good wife. In this way, the very environment justifies the irresponsibility of the man who abandons his family and places the blame on the woman.

**Coming and Going**

The women whose husbands return after a year of absence remain with them during one or two months after which they begin to prepare anew for the husband's departure. Many of them remain pregnant after the encounter, and pregnancy and birth again become her responsibility. Thus, pregnancies are cyclic, just as the migrations.

Single women are also affected by migration in their relationships with men. Speaking in economic terms and making a comparison with the market, the scarcity of young men has resulted in a demand for eligible women among young girls between 15 and 16 years of age. All of those who go beyond this age and who have not married are considered by society as *cotorritas* ("little parakeets") a term

OCCUPATIONAL POSITION OF MIGRANTS' WIVES		
POSITION	WIVES	PERCENTAGE
Work for a boss*	29	9.7
Work for an institution	4	1.3
Self-employed	30	10.0
Do not work	237	79.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>
* Seamstresses		

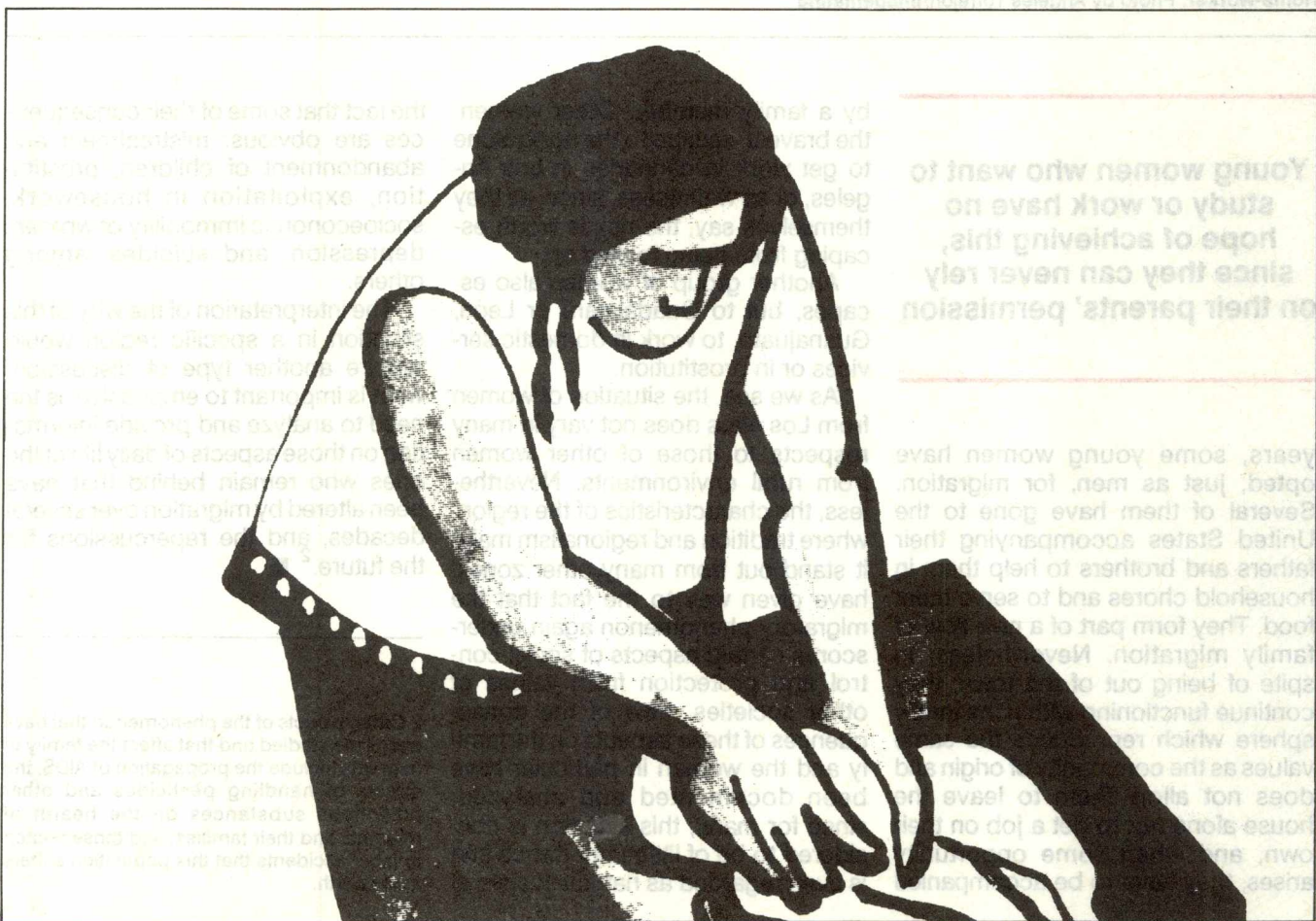
Source: International Migrant Survey by Consuelo Díaz, 1989.

that is applied to spinsters and that means remaining in the town without being able to carry out any other activity beyond domestic work, with the hope that someone from outside eventually take her away from the town.

In this way, the cycle of waiting is reproduced in all ages and social conditions; the control that society in Los

Altos exercises on women has no age limit. Likewise, the young women who want to leave Jalostotitlán to study or work have no hope of achieving this, since they can never rely on their parents' permission; studying is a privilege for men and work is only whatever exists in the home and in town.

It is for this reason that in recent



From "Images of Women", by Rini Templeton. Reproduction by Alejandra Novoa



Home-worker. Photo by Angeles Torrejón/Imagenlatina

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**Young women who want to study or work have no hope of achieving this, since they can never rely on their parents' permission**

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years, some young women have opted, just as men, for migration. Several of them have gone to the United States accompanying their fathers and brothers to help them in household chores and to serve them food. They form part of a new flow of family migration. Nevertheless, in spite of being out of the town, they continue functioning within the family sphere which reproduces the same values as the community of origin and does not allow them to leave the house alone nor to get a job on their own, and when some opportunity arises, they have to be accompanied

by a family member. Other women, the bravest, escape to the north alone to get work in canneries in Los Angeles, or as waitresses, since, as they themselves say, the risk is worth escaping from being locked up.

Another group of women also escapes, but to Guadalajara or León, Guanajuato, to work in domestic services or in prostitution.

As we see, the situation of women from Los Altos does not vary in many respects to those of other women from rural environments. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the region, where tradition and regionalism make it stand out from many other zones, have given way to the fact that the migratory phenomenon again underscores certain aspects of social control and protection from values of other societies. Few of the consequences of these aspects on the family and the woman in particular have been documented and analyzed, since for many, this situation is considered to be of little importance and is even regarded as natural in spite of

the fact that some of their consequences are obvious: mistreatment and abandonment of children, prostitution, exploitation in housework, socioeconomic immobility of women, depression, and suicides, among others.

The interpretation of the why of this situation in a specific region would require another type of discussion; what is important to emphasize, is the need to analyze and provide information on those aspects of daily life of the ones who remain behind that have been altered by migration over several decades, and the repercussions for the future.<sup>2</sup> ■

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2. Other aspects of the phenomenon that have been little studied and that affect the family of migrants include the propagation of AIDS, the effects of handling pesticides and other poisonous substances on the health of migrants and their families, and those related to labor accidents that this population suffers in the north.

# PHOTO-REPORT

## Central America Odyssey

A life in peace and justice is often a mirage for those Central Americans who travel without passports and visas through Mexico to the United States. They face multiple obstacles between the Suchiate River (the Guatemalan-Mexican border) and the Río Grande: they are not given refugee status, they are extorted by Mexican police, and they are deported to their countries of origin in spite of the violence there. If and when they finally reach the United States, they frequently encounter persecution, discrimination and other abuses. Antonio Turok, photographer for *Imagenlatina*, accompanied the odyssey of a group of Central American migrants through Mexico. These are some of the images he captured.



The first river crossing: the Suchiate.

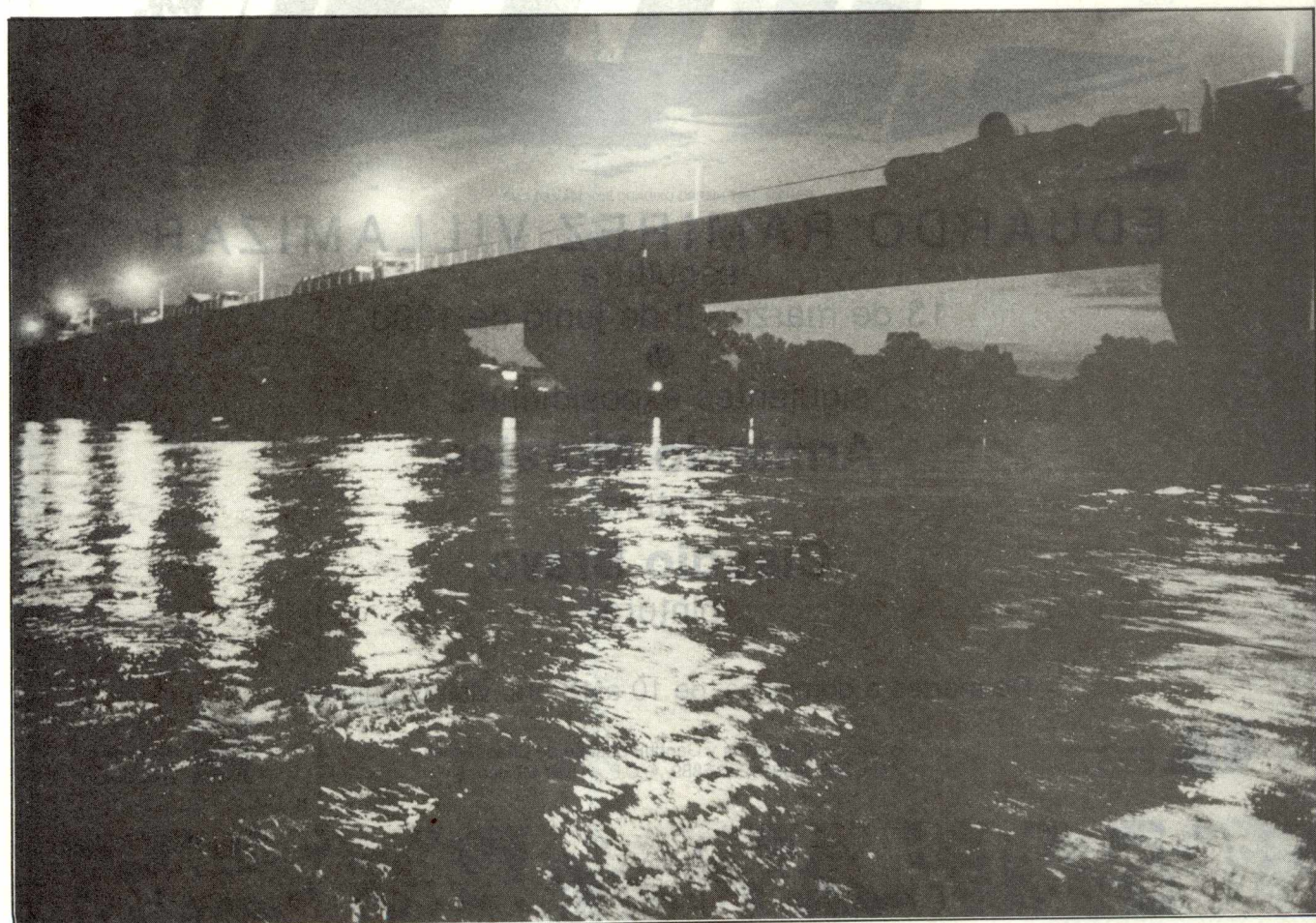
(Photo: Antonio Turok)



The journey is full of risks (Detail).



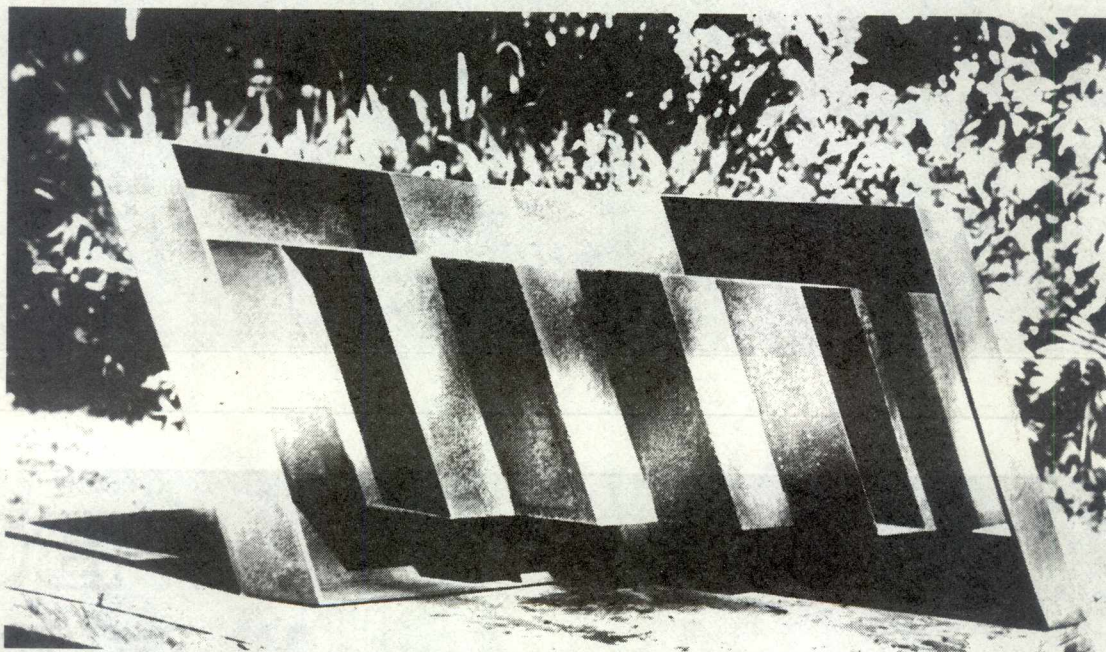
"Will we make it?"



The other river, the northern border: dream fulfilled?

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# The Devastating Power of Scorpions

In her attempts to establish equilibrium among the species which make up the wild fauna, Mother Nature gave each species a function which tends to fit in with that of its neighbor, all within a logic which justifies the extinction of weaker species by stronger ones. But in the case of scorpions - a common arachnid in rural Mexico - it seems that the proportions of the damage they cause go beyond the usual concert of nature's coexistence, as their only reason for existing seems to be that of inflicting its poisonous bite. This has various consequences, such as loss of live-stock, and costly investment in scientific search for antidotes. Although the theme appears to be a tragic one, Luz Elena Pereyra, journalist on scientific matters, deals with it in these pages with good humor and simplicity, just as scorpions are seen by the inhabitants of Durango and Nayarit - states of Mexico where scorpions abound.

Among the most interesting stories about scorpions in Mexico are those that come from the northern states of Durango and Nayarit where these small invertebrates are said to cause many deaths.

In these states the classic legends refer to the sad tale of the bride who falls dying from a scorpion bite in the arms of the groom before the couple reach the altar. Or there is the story of cattle from some ranch that were attacked by a group of these nocturnal outlaws who took advantage of the darkness to kill an unsuspecting being by injecting their fatal poison.

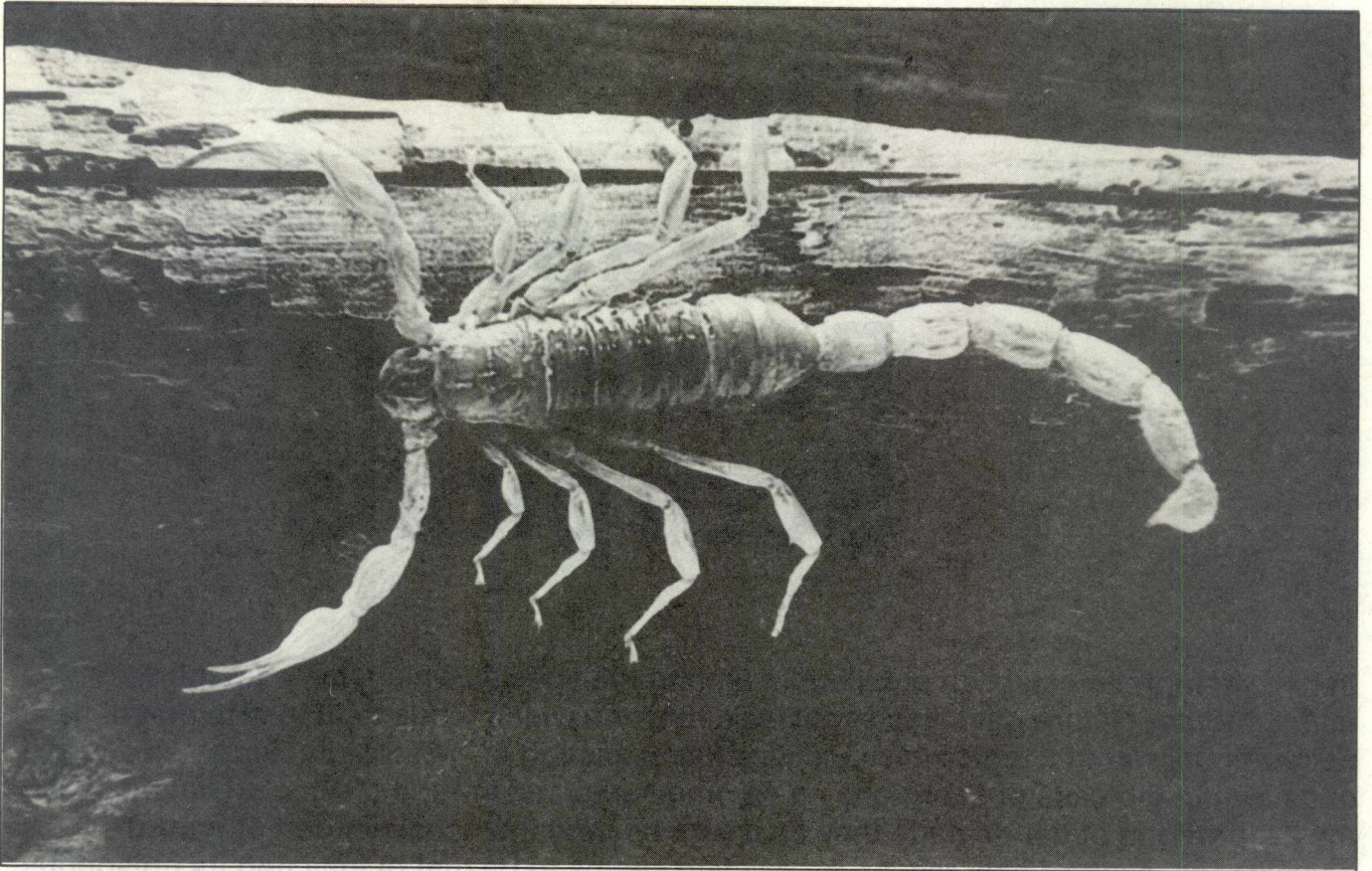
Scientific studies made in Mexico about the behavior of these predators of unsociable customs, which inhabit warm and dry climates, show that there is nothing really noteworthy except the "wedding parade". During the period of copulation the male scorpion becomes more active in his search for a female scorpion, especially in the dark. The mating takes place after a strange long and slow dance that

**The scorpions of Mexico and Africa are considered the most dangerous because they produce the most active poison**

lasts almost an hour. At daybreak the female, much like her spider counterpart, devours the remains of the male in a type of tragic end to the wedding night.

Much has been said about scorpions. Of the approximately 28,000 species of arachnids that exist in the world, the scorpions of Mexico and Africa are considered the most dangerous because they produce the most active poison.

The majority of poisonings by scorpion bites are caused by the species *Centruroides suffusus suffusus* (the



The poisonous scorpion from Durango. Reproduction by Alejandra Novoa

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### The incidence of deaths due to scorpion bites in the middle of this century obliged public health authorities to begin a new research project to obtain an anti-scorpion serum

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scorpion from Durango), *Centruroides limpidus limpidus* (from Guerrero) *Centruroides limpidus tecomanus* (from Colima) and *Centruroides noxius* (from Nayarit). For many years these different species have caused a serious health problem.

Deaths due to scorpion bites have been recorded since the time of the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. One of these was that of Fray Jacinto de San Francisco, better known as Fray Cintos, who accompanied the conqueror Hernán Cortés. There was no antidote at that time to save his life.

It was not until 1925 that there was research done in the city of Durango (state of Durango) to "obtain a medicine that would cure people who had suffered the

consequences of a scorpion attack". This was reported by Doctor Carlos León de la Peña over fifty years ago.

The incidence of deaths due to scorpion bites (as many as four cases a month) in the middle of this century obliged public health authorities to begin a new research project to obtain an anti-scorpion serum. The National Hygiene Institute, part of the Department of General Biological and Reactive Research of the Public Health Ministry, started this project some 25 years ago using the poisons of the above mentioned species as antigens in the preparation of the anti-scorpion polyvalent serum.

#### The Serum or Antidote

It was considered that the majority of the active components of the poison are antigenic, that is, they create antibodies.

Researchers also based their studies on the premise that an antidote would be determined by the ability of the substance to inhibit the effect of any poison. Thus these researchers from the National Hygiene Institute obtained the toxic substance of the scorpion from the poisonous glands which were sold by peasants from different regions who hunted scorpions for sport.



Nelson Palomo.

Close to 80,000 glands were collected through this technique. The glands were crushed to free the poison and this liquid was put in a centrifuge to eliminate the remains of cell tissue, muscle fibers and chitin. Once this substance was sterilized and put through a lyophilic process (elimination of liquids), it became the raw material for production of the anti-scorpion serum.

With this concentrated material, tests for immunity were begun first with mice and then with horses. These latter animals have a reflex that constantly creates antibodies in an attempt to eliminate toxic substances from their bodies. The horse's plasma was collected when it was determined that this animal was producing the correct antibodies used for the serum.

This blood plasma had the scorpion poison composed of hundreds of proteins and was then quantified, bottled and put through a lyophilic process under strict quality control. The Department of General Biological and Reactive Research of the Ministry of Public Health now distributes the serum and also determines the amount of antidote needed for any given year. At present 150 to 170 doses are produced to cover the needs of the country for the period of one year. Thus, the danger that the scorpion bite might produce serious complications for the health of the general population has been greatly reduced since Mexican doctors now have this serum to use against this type of poisonings. ■

Juan Luis Campos

# Provinces of Earth

The Poetry of Ramón López Velarde

*On, Psyche, oh my soul: a new sound rings, the sound of the jungle, the sound of orgy and of the sea, the sound of the heart! RLV*

At the very Christian age of thirty-three, José Ramón Modesto López Velarde, a martyr of asphyxia and of ill-fated dualities, died after receiving the holy oils, thus forsaking a poetry whose adornments lay in ruins from the whirlwinds of his passions, the consummation of the impossible love of woman in the lechery of poetry.

López Velarde wandered the provinces in search of woman. He abandoned the set ecumenical boundaries of Catholicism, wandering among his earthly recollections in revolutionary subversion. He migrated through the relentless streets of Mexico City, through the fickle routes of politics, and breathlessly surveyed the sinuous curves of womanhood. He ventured through the twists of language, and as a pilgrim within himself.

## Not Such a Soft Fatherland

Political misfortune pursued our poet beyond death. A year before, he had been left unemployed, along with others who needed the State Treasury in order to survive, following the execution of President Carranza by the crafty *Caudillo*. López Velarde was not yet buried when he was converted into a

**A convinced Catholic to the end, López Velarde had to abandon formal religious expression since his impulses steered him towards worldliness**

national poet on the merits of his last poem, *La suave Patria* (*The Soft Fatherland*). In the prologue to *Son del corazón* (*Sound of the Heart*), which brings together the posthumous poems of Ramón, Djed Bórquez (pseudonym of Juan de Dios Bojórquez, founder of the Intellectual Workers' Block), notes the following:

1921. He died. This morning, upon reading the news, I go to Chapultepec. I accompany General Obregón (President of the Republic) on his morning walk through the forest.

- A great poet has died - I say. And I tell him of Ramón and I quote his verses, which impressed the poet in Obregón.

At midday, at the University, Vasconcelos arrives elated and says:

- What a great President we have! I just spoke with him about López Velarde and he recited his verses.

- Give him a sumptuary burial, on the government's tab - ordered the invincible one-handed leader.

Faced with the elation of the Univer-

sity rector, I could only remember the poetry of López Velarde that I had just recited before the formidable memory of General Obregón.

There is nothing futher from the lyrics of the poet than nationalistic exaltation and propaganda. His political concerns did not lead him to create epics, let alone when the heroes whine with their weapons in hand. If the poetry of López Velarde is heart breaking, then this peculiar hymn has to continue its poetic inspiration. The following is the opinion of Xavier Villaurrutia, who knew him as Spanish literature professor in the National High School:

Mexican poetry is lyrical; it barely touches the epic and is not happy in it; its tone is lyrical, intimate. When a Mexican poet, Ramón López Velarde, proposed to write, from a strange inspiration, a characteristic poem, what did he say at the beginning of *Soft Fatherland*? -- "I always sang the exquisite notes of the intimate." Why did he say that? To make poetry the measure of the medium and to say a poem he wanted to be epic but which continued to be intimate.

Undoubtedly, there is excellence in this civic poem. Perhaps more than civic it should be said that it is a poem of identity. Thus, due to the steep paths, to the worry of each moment and of every place, one must return to what Octavio Paz recognized:

Journalist.

**The fine polishing which López Velarde gave his verses came from deep in his soul, and they have made him a poet of the shadow, which is not to say that his poetry is obscure**

The originality in *Soft Fatherland* consists of it being a hymn with irony, tenderness, modesty, and a certain bashfulness...Its sound is low and it avoids eloquence, and grand speech and words. His Mexico is not a heroic fatherland but a quotidian one.

The López Velarde of *Soft Fatherland* is the culmination of a sentiment lodged in highly incisive language which touches on the novelty of the fatherland for the Mexican being. Thus, it is the conclusion of an intimacy in which the permanent values are found in a process of transfiguration, where certainties are not respected. Each one of those values is a province which vanishes when it is visited.

#### The Style of the Will

Ramón López Velarde was born in Jerez, Zacatecas, in 1888. At age 12 he entered the Conciliary Seminary of Saint Mary of Guadalupe. Studying to be a priest, he was inculcated with a fine education, as was the norm during the end of the Porfiriato period. In those cells, the religious fathers were dedicated to teaching the Greek and Latin classics, especially since many of them were fine poets in their own right. Of course, Ramón already wrote verses. A convinced Catholic to the end, he had to abandon the religious provinces since his impulses steered him toward worldliness.

He then decided to study law in Aguascalientes. He was an outstanding pupil who drifted into Maderist politics and into the marauding of the women who agitated his blood.

During his lifetime, López Velarde published two books of poetry: *La sangre devota* (*Devoted Blood*), 1916, under the pseudonym of Fuensanta, a name given him by Josefa de los Ríos, and *Zozobra* (*Shipwreck*) 1919, under the pseudonym of Margarita Quijano.



Ramón López Velarde. Reproduction by Rosa María Torres from the book *Un corazón adicto* (*An addict heart*), Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1989.

Certainly a brief work, but it is written with the will of style. At the same time, he dedicated himself to political and cultural journalism, publishing his articles and chronicles in *El minuterio* (*The Minutehand*) and *Don de febrero y otras crónicas* (*February Talent and Other Chronicles*). His prose preserved the cadence of his lyricism.

That will of style, evident since his first poems, is nothing more than the will to say what is essentially human. In 1908, he wrote *Elogio de Fuensanta* (*Fuensanta's Eulogy*) about which

Guillermo Sheridan gives the following opinion:

It is a poem that contains the seed of an arduous system of contradictions, of compensated guilts, of cravings that are not melancholy, and pornographic passions that mark later poetry...

The decided polishing which López Velarde gave his verses came from deep in his soul, making him a poet of the shadow, which is not to say that he is obscure. For him, all poetry possesses

the ambiguities of the irreducible to the preciseness of reason. All words are metaphors, an approximation. Yet is it more difficult when what is not defined is meant to be said. To establish that language was the triumph of the man from Jerez; he founded one of the principles of modern Mexican poetry. Jorge Cuesta, in his *Antología de la poesía mexicana moderna* (*Anthology of Modern Mexican Poetry*) 1928, considered the following:

López Velarde could maintain pure sentiments and original language. He did not get this easily nor did he always attain it; he needs, very fre-

quently, to get violent; his expression contorts, he forces his images, and he prefers little-used words, with the purpose of pulling himself out of the narrow circle of commonplaceness, through the artifice of its systematic usage.

It must be emphasized that these complexities are not experimental tasks, but rather refer to difficulties in direct expression of the subjective medular matter in times of maladjustment. Its complication reminds us inevitably of Góngora, whose genius stretched the language with cult-isms, neologisms, with accentuations, and

who exercised his influences in the poets of the 1927 Spanish generation. Amado Alonso, in reference to the inextricable poetry of *Residencia en la tierra* (*Residence on Earth*) by Pablo Neruda, writes the following:

The poetic intuitive sense is not sentimentally manifested as something which can be named or described, but is intermediate between images and metaphors, or rather, fragments of reality constructed *ad hoc* by the poet and which are symbols, the indirect expression of sentimental intuition. In these images and metaphors there are clearly imagined intuitions and vague glimpses of suggestive power...The exceptional difficulty of comprehension found in this poetry comes from the disequilibrium between intuition and sentiment...Without a doubt this tempting equilibrium is not denied to him as it is not to any authentic poet; but the rending moments, conscious or not, are so frequent that we should take them to be characteristic.

The Velardian cult of poetic language was based on the fact that this was the only province where his eros decided. His verse was written with blood, fruit of the dualities of passion.

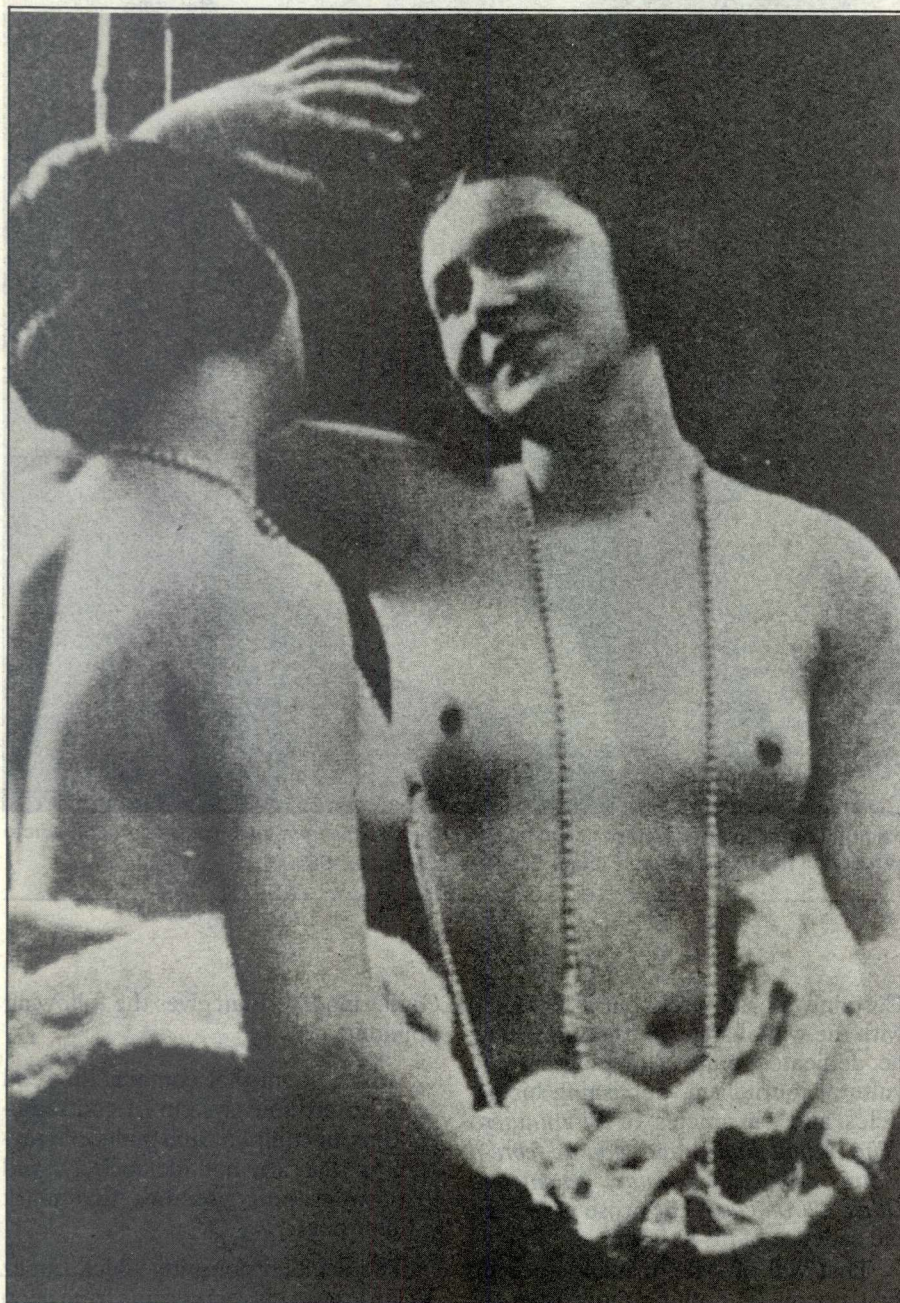
**As Xavier Villaurrutia well said, the drama of this poet was the clarity of the knowledge that his life was two lives**

**Ill-fated Dualities**

The conflict of Ramón López Velarde unfolds within the conflict of Mexico. In the civil waves drift

*las atmósferas claroscúras  
en que el cielo y la tierra se dan cita.  
(the shadowy and lighted atmospheres  
in which the Sky and the Earth meet.)*

As Xavier Villaurrutia well said, the drama of the poet was the clarity of the knowledge that his life was two lives. The tense co-existence of these forces



Eroticism was an integral part of López Velarde's poetry. Reproduction by Rosa María Torres



The poet's family. Reproduction by Rosa María Torres

made him the great poet whose unique voice alternately expressed itself to its inhabitants. As in a riddle, the many days, the many opposites, were unravelled with their signs, durations, fantasies and disappearances. To understand duality itself, in religion, was to divide oneself in religions that made Christianity Iberian, and thus Mexican. It is not the case to study the founding of the Asiatic-Euro-American religions, but rather to recognize the dichotomy into which *Devoted Blood* inquires:

*¿Será este afán perenne franciscano o polígamo?  
(Would this perennial task be Franciscan or polygamous)*

In the Islamic faith, unquestioning obedience can be found such as that which multiple women give their spouse. In these ways, then, the abandonment in the law of God is possible within the most human impulses because they are the most intimate, and the prescriptions of Eros are not denied:

*Yo, varón integral,  
nutrido en el panal  
de Mahoma y en el que cuida Roma  
en la Mesa Central  
(I, a whole man,  
nourished in the honeycomb  
of Mohammed  
and in that which Rome cares for  
on the Central Plateau.)*

This is written in *Zozobra* (*Shipwreck*), where monotheism is added to polygamy. And covered in precious tact is woman, always innumerable, that the poet must inscribe in the posthumous *Son del corazón* (*Sound of the Heart*) so that the Christian Ligia and the infidel Zoraida, as classified by Villaurrutia, grabbed him by the back of the neck:

*Me asfixia en una dualidad funesta,  
Ligia, la mártir de pestaña enhiesta,  
Y de Zoraida la grupa bisiesta.  
(They suffocate me in ill-fated duality,  
Ligia, the martyr of the erect eyelash,  
And Zoraida, the leaping rump.)*

In whatever case, López Velarde

suffered from an eternal errancy in the province of Eros, the only one to which was loyal in his pendulous and brief life.

#### The Poets of the Poet

Every poet has his own poets. Ramón López Velarde drank in the currents of an art which settled accounts with a world that suffered from the vertigo of its first modernity, or better said, of original sufferings of the permanent updating of the modern world. The esthetics of this interminable flight in which history demands re-orientation for the supposed horizontal constant of art, aspires to become fixed as a sum of immutable values. The French symbolists and the Hispano-american modernists have determined to dispose of the distinct form of these mutations.

Baudelaire is considered the first modern poet, because he assumed the critique of today's great subject, the city. Jules Laforgue, a direct descendant of Charles Baudelaire, enjoyed great influence in our language.

So as not to go too far, there is a

## On The Tear

During the 1950's the UNESCO published the *Anthologie de la poésie mexicaine* selected and presented with an introduction by Octavio Paz, which was translated into French by Guy Lévis-Mano and presented by another great poet, Paul Claudel. The English version was translated by the writer Samuel Beckett and the prologue was written by the Helenist C.M. Bowra. The Anthology contains poets such as Sor Juana, Díaz Mirón, González Martínez, José Juan Tablada, Alfonso Reyes and López Velarde.

Beckett, who supposedly understood Spanish, more or less due to his domination of the French language, shared the work with a friend. He developed his versions on the basis of literal translations. The apparent treason of translating a piece from one culture to another without having appropriated well the original language, has been lessened by the word-artists, insofar as only poets can translate poetry. All translation will always be an approximation, without which it would not be possible to even know another side of ourselves; culture is a mirror in which we can recognize ourselves.

The writer José Emilio Pacheco had the following comment on this: for a speaker of Spanish the text is as unsatisfactory as are our translations for English or French speakers. The syllables are different, they sound different, and all the musicality is lost; and to top it off, the rhyme, which is not a decoration but is part and parcel of the material itself, disappears from the poem *The Tear*.

The translator Beckett is, in effect, a traitor, but in his unfaithfulness, in his guilt, introduces English readers to the man from Jerez who describes the fear of an untranslatable eroticism.

### La lágrima

Ramón López Velarde

*Encima  
de la azucena esquinada  
que orna la cadavérica almohada;  
encima  
del soltero dolor empedernido  
de yacer como imberbe congregante  
mientras los gastos erizan el ruido  
y forjan una patria espeluznante;  
encima  
del apetito nunca satisfecho  
de la cal  
que demacró las conciencias livianas  
y del desencanto profesional  
con que saltan del lecho  
las cortesanas...*

(Fragmento)

### The Tear

Ramón López Velarde

*Over  
the angular lily  
that adorns the cadaverous pillow;  
over  
the hardened bachelor pain  
of lying like a beardless  
congregationist  
while the cats erect their clamour  
and forge a bristling race;  
over  
the hunger never sated  
of the lime that wears  
light minds away  
and the professional disenchantment  
with which courtesans  
sprint out of bed...*

(Excerpt)

Translation: Samuel Beckett.



## Mi prima Agueda

A Jesús Villalpando

*Mi madrina invitaba a mi prima Agueda  
y mi prima llegaba  
con un contradictorio  
prestigio de almidón y de temible  
luto ceremonioso.*

*Agueda aparecía, resonante  
de almidón, y sus ojos  
verdes y sus mejillas rubicundas  
me protegían contra el pavoroso  
luto...*

*Yo era rapaz  
y conocía la o por lo redondo,  
y Agueda que tejía  
mansa y perseverante en el sonoro  
corredor, me causaba  
calosfríos ignotos...  
(Creo que hasta le debo la costumbre  
heroicamente insana de hablar solo.)*

*A la hora de comer, en la penumbra  
quieta del refectorio,  
me iba embelesando un quebradizo  
sonar intermitente de vajilla  
y el timbre caricioso  
de la voz de mi prima.*

*Agueda era  
(luto, pupilas verdes y mejillas  
rubicundas) un cesto policromo  
de manzanas y uvas  
en el ébano de un armario añoso.*

Ramón López Velarde

## My cousin Agueda

To Jesús Villalpando

*My godmother invited my cousin  
Agueda to spend the day  
with us, and my cousin  
came with a conflicting  
prestige of starch and fearful  
ceremonious weeds.*

*Agueda appeared, sonorous  
with starch, and her green eyes  
and ruddy cheeks protected  
me against the fearsome  
weeds.*

*I was a small boy,  
knew O was the round one,  
and Agueda knitting,  
mild and persevering,  
in the echoing gallery,  
gave me unknown shivers.  
(I think I even owe her the heroically  
morbid habit of soliloquy).*

*At dinner-time in the quiet  
shadowy dining-room  
I was spellbound by the brittle  
intermittent noise of dishes  
and the caressing timbre  
of my cousin's voice.*

*Agueda was  
(weeds, green pupils, ruddy cheeks)  
a polycromatic basket of  
apples and grapes  
in the ebony of an ancient cupboard.*

Ramón López Velarde  
Translation: Samuel Beckett.

profound affinity between Laforgue and Leopoldo Lugones of the *Sentimental Lunary*. Allen W. Phillips, scholar of Spanish literature, notes:

Laforgue seems to have given to Lugones certain thematic and stylistic stimuli...deliberate prose and, frequently related to those, visions of modern urban life.

The Argentine Lugones is essential for López Velarde. Laforgue is also an undoubting presence, whether he was assimilated in French, in translations, or by the resonances of the authors of the daily paper. Because to our bard, it has been said that the provincial is the only theme of his lyrics, but as Octavio Paz notes:

It would be juster to say that the province discovered in López Velarde's poetry is the capital: the horror, the sensuality and the sin.

The work of the poet cannot be reduced to picturesque recitations, despite the fact that the inevitable bureaucrats of culture fill their calendars with homages.

The Zacatecan poet resident in a city in urban expansion and with the eyes of a seer takes his own poets (Herrera and Reisig, Luis Carlos López, Amado Nervo, Francisco González León, and others) as weapons to extend his wanderings in letters for orphanhood.

Unfortunately, he who has confined López Velarde to the mere province has stigmatized him as the poet of rus-

ticity. Alfonso Reyes, who did not have an impartial view of the man from Jerez, said in 1941, 20 years after his death:

Village art and complicated art, and in whom today the critical youth seeks many secrets, conquered fame with one poem: *The Soft Fatherland*.

The mistake of Alfonso Reyes, considered the founder of the literary "chapels", was unheard by poets older than him, such as is the case of José Tablada, friend and admirer of Ramón, still a principal poet. The best tribute to López Velarde had to come from the Contemporaries, the artifices of our literary modernity, because they continued the difficult inspiration of the poet that incurred into the provinces of Eros. ■

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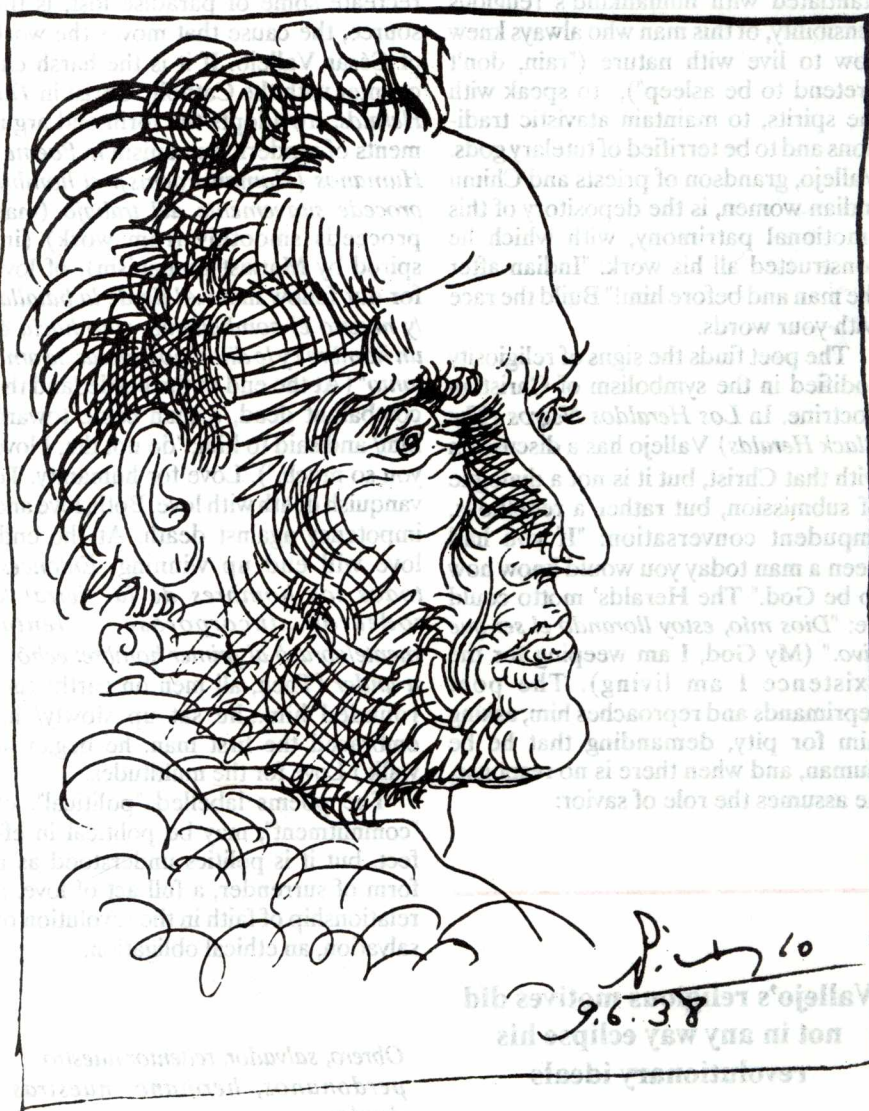
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# Science and Politics as Religion

Edgar Montiel

Stephen Hart has just published a shortened version of his doctoral dissertation (Tamesis Books Limited, London), entitled *Religion, Politics and Science in the Work of César Vallejo*, which is an appealing, new, polemical invitation to re-read the great Peruvian poet from these three points of view.

Religion, politics and science are not mere facets in Vallejo's writings; they are not loose pieces, but rather they form the very substance of his work. But, would the spine and soul of his discursive corpus not have a central obsession? His work has been selected with a clear Cartesian spirit, and the analytical zeal that motivated him makes the scholar fall into interpretational traps, a fate of the *fallacy of emphasis* that distorts the essential fiber, the point of support, the "just word" with which Vallejo moves the world. In the first chapter, dedicated to religion, one becomes aware of this danger. The author feels that he is moving in quicksand and he defends himself with the reiterated use of the conditional tense, but by means of probabilities he offers his theory: "Vallejo distorts the Catholic creed and points to its ironies...this subversion of the Catholic faith is expressed mainly in two ways, which are 1) anguished, metaphysical questioning of ideas that are generally accepted about the nature of God and 2) the use of blasphemy to describe his erotic experiences."



César Vallejo as seen by Pablo Picasso

Writer. Peruvian diplomat in Mexico.

It is known that as a child, Vallejo had two town priests as grandfathers, that his family was deeply religious and for this reason the name that they give to the *shulca*--the last born infant--was that of Abraham ("the chosen one of the people of God"), or Abrahamsito, as they used to call him. But it is not institutional Catholicism that defines the poet's religious sentiments, it is something with deeper, anthropological roots:

It is the pantheistic spirit of Andean man that is easily merged with the Christian prayer book that makes César Vallejo into a poet of mystical theology and hope, of devotion and rage, of redemption and humanism. Armed with these sentiments he will approach politics and science.

What happens to Vallejo is not an isolated case. Some Peruvian anthropologists have shown that in the Andean world, Catholicism was substantiated with humankind's religious sensibility, of this man who always knew how to live with nature ("rain, don't pretend to be asleep"), to speak with the spirits, to maintain atavistic traditions and to be terrified of tutelary gods. Vallejo, grandson of priests and Chimú Indian women, is the depository of this emotional patrimony, with which he constructed all his work: "Indian after the man and before him!" Build the race with your words.

The poet finds the signs of religiosity codified in the symbolism of Christian doctrine. In *Los Heraldos Negros* (*The Black Heralds*) Vallejo has a discussion with that Christ, but it is not a dialogue of submission, but rather a rebellious, impudent conversation: "If you had been a man today you would know how to be God." The Heralds' motto could be: "Dios mío, estoy llorando el ser que vivo." (My God, I am weeping for the existence I am living). The poet reprimands and reproaches him, asking him for pity, demanding that he be human, and when there is no response, he assumes the role of savior:

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### Vallejo's religious motives did not in any way eclipse his revolutionary ideals

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*Se quisiera(...)  
ver a los pobres, y, llorando quedos,  
dar pedacitos de pan fresco a todos.  
Y saquear a los ricos sus viñedos  
con las dos manos santas  
que a un golpe de luz  
volaron desclavados de la Cruz.*

*(One would want (...)  
to see the poor, and, weeping softly,  
give them all bits of fresh bread.  
And plunder the rich of their vineyards  
with the two sacred hands  
that with a flash of light  
flew unnailed from the Cross.)*

This poem deals with saving the poor and with saving Christ, and Vallejo assumes the responsibility of speaking to God using the informal *tú* (you). It is a dispute between creators, between redeemers. The idea of *transcendence*, of a discussion with a supreme being to recreate some of paradise lost, is the source, the cause that moves the work of César Vallejo. If it is the harsh encounter with the Catholic Christ in *The Heralds*, it adopts the form and arguments of modern humanism in *Poemas Humanos* (*Human Poems*): *el hombre procede suavemente del trabajo* (man proceeds smoothly from work) (inspired by Marxist humanism); of love for our fellow man: *Al fin de la batalla, / y muerto el combatiente, vino hacia él un hombre / y le dijo: "no mueras, te amo tanto"* (At the end of the battle, / and the combatant dead, a man came toward him / and said to him: "do not die, I love you so much."). Love for humanity. To vanquish death with love. Both, love and impotency against death. At the end, love will end up winning: *Entonces, todos los hombres de la tierra / le rodearon... incorporóse lentamente / abrazó al primer hombre: echóse a andar* (Then, all men on earth / surrounded him... he sat up slowly / he embraced the first man: he began to walk.) Love for the multitudes.

The poems labelled "political", of "commitment", may be political in effect, but it is politics understood as a form of surrender, a full act of love, a relationship of faith in the revolution of salvation, an ethical obligation:

*Obrero, salvador, redentor nuestro  
perdónanos, hermano, nuestras  
deudas.  
(Worker, savior, our redeemer  
forgive us, brother, for our debts.)*

It is love practiced as a *civil* religion, as a lay relationship with the gods, a love assumed as a way of life, from which it is necessary to interpret his political obligations. This attitude should be emphasized, since the sociological Vulgate has made Vallejo into an earthly, superficial poet, manipulating his Marxist faith, turning his profound message into a matter of barricades and pamphlets. This superficial reading is very common, and it betrays the mineral depth that makes his poetry outcrop. Recognizing Vallejo's laical, religious motives is an obligation of honesty that in no way eclipses his revolutionary ideals, but rather places them in their essential transcendental perspective.

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### The idea of transcendence, of a discussion with a supreme being to recreate some of paradise lost, is the cause that moves the work of César Vallejo

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#### Marxism and Mysticism

The poet's adherence to Marxism has also been misunderstood as a renunciation of his religious emotion. Genetic patrimony cannot be renounced. His Socialist ideal is a hope, somewhat theological and a matter of faith. In his greatest moments of reading treatises on economic policies, materialist philosophy, and Soviet science, he never ceased to be an esoteric spiritualist. Elsa Enríques, daughter of Elba Huara - a Peruvian ballerina who was a very good friend of Vallejo - told me in Paris in 1979 that, "Cesar had some splendid, mysterious spiritualist sessions in which he summoned his ancestors and interested attendants". In this way he earned some money, since he was known to be initiated in the occult sciences, and intellectuals and neighbors visited him for this. And she, Elita, then nine years old, discreetly helped him give verisimilitude to his mysterious practices, making noise outside the dark room and knocking under the table... He was a gypsy Marxist. Strictly speaking, he was a Marxist thanks to God.

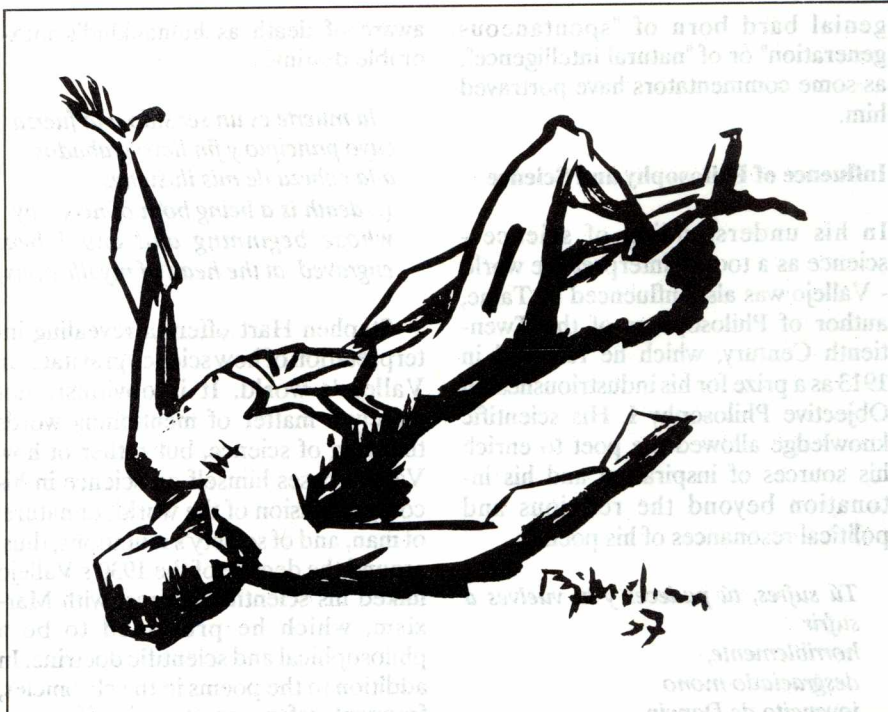
His interest in science should also be seen from this point of view. The pantheistic man has an ordered image of nature and primary causes are recognized in a god the creator.

Vallejo's vanguardism does not deny this concept. He was very interested in Newton, Darwin, and in the inventions of the period; he was passionately fond of movies (he even wanted to make this into an aesthetic philosophy: *La emoción de mi época es una emoción cinematográfica* [The emotion of my time is a cinematic emotion.]) Technology, cinematography, wireless communication, airplanes and the vertigo of speed were the outer symbols of the new generation. The chapter dedicated to science in Vallejo's work is Stephen Hart's theory and original contribution. No one until now has made a systematic analysis of science in Vallejo's poetry. In effect, as Hart notes, Vallejo in his years as a student was an avid reader of the work of Ernest Haeckel, who in those years published a successful book, *The Enigmas of the Universe*, in which he summarized scientific advances of the 19th century (positivism, materialism and Darwinism). This interest in science did not come to him by way of Marxist materialism (which did reinforce and widen his scientific knowledge), but rather by a vocation that originated in his years as a student. It is useful to clarify that Haeckel's book came to his hands as a prize for having been the best student in the 1914 class of Objective Philosophy II (now known as the Philosophy of Science).

### An Exemplary Student

At this point, new information of crucial importance should be mentioned, since it can redefine the way the poet has been viewed.

César Vallejo was a brilliant student of exceptional rigor and dedication in secondary school and in the university, which disproves the idea of Vallejo as a dispersed bohemian, an image that many mythomaniacs of literature have created. While in Trujillo last December (at the Peruvian Congress of Philosophy) I had the fortune to become friends with Eduardo Quiroz Sánchez, an old emeritus professor from the university of that city, where Vallejo studied. Quiroz introduced me to his work *César Vallejo, adolescencia y promisión* (César Vallejo, Adolescence and Promise), which he read in the international colloquium held in April, 1988, commemorating the fiftieth



Artwork by Benjamín Molina. Reproduction by Alejandra Novoa

### The poet's scientific knowledge allowed him to enrich his sources of inspiration and his intonation beyond religious and political resonances

anniversary of the poet's death, but for strange reasons his paper remains unpublished. The text demonstrates, with evidence at hand, that Vallejo completed his secondary studies in three years and not in the normal four, because, due to the brilliance demonstrated in his first two years, he was allowed to skip the third and to pass directly to fourth year. In his first years (1905-1906) the adolescent was awarded with silver medals and prizes as the best student, in Spanish Grammar as well as in Ancient and Medieval History. In his three years of secondary school, in 16 of the 34 required classes, he received the highest grade, 20, and in the rest he was graded no lower than 16. In Grammar and French he received 20 points in all years (which explains his ease in reading Baudelaire and the Symbolists of that time), and in Science courses, such as Algebra, Arithmetic,

Zoology and Botany, all of his grades were 20.

Here discipline and a vocation were being forged. For that reason, it did not strike anyone's attention when he entered medical school in 1911 at the Universidad Mayor of San Marcos in Lima, studies that he abandoned the following year for lack of resources to live in the capital.

Returning to his tertiary studies in 1913, now at the University of Trujillo, he enrolled in the school of Philosophy and Literature.

In the first three years of undergraduate school, Vallejo was again showered with many prizes for his performance in classes, such as a Diploma at the end of the year and a book dealing with every discipline. This is when he received the above-mentioned book by Haeckel. In 1914 he received the book *History of Religions* by Max Müller for being the first in the class of Aesthetics and History of Art: and for the class on Sociology, he received *Sociology and Politics* by Gumplowitz. For a poor student from the provinces, receiving these novelties was a true stimulus.

Vallejo's moderation and scientific interest thus remain established from his student years. It is relevant to emphasize this high level of achievement in the university because it prefigures the poet's rigor in the act of creation, the meticulousness of his literary dedication, which have nothing to do with the

genial bard born of "spontaneous generation" or of "natural intelligence", as some commentators have portrayed him.

**Influence of Philosophy and Science**

In his understanding of science - science as a tool to interpret the world - Vallejo was also influenced by Taine, author of *Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*, which he received in 1913 as a prize for his industriousness in *Objective Philosophy I*. His scientific knowledge allowed the poet to enrich his sources of inspiration and his intonation beyond the religious and political resonances of his poems:

*Tú sufres, tú padeces y tú vuelves a sufrir  
horriblemente,  
desgraciado mono  
jovencito de Darwin,  
alguacil que me atisbas, atrocísimo  
microbio.  
(You suffer, you endure and again you  
suffer horribly, unfortunate young  
monkey of Darwin,  
officer who observes me, extremely  
atrocious microbe.)*

For the poet, the knowledge of biological determinism made him

aware of death as humankind's inexorable destiny.

*...la muerte es un ser sido a la fuerza  
cuyo principio y fin llevo grabados  
a la cabeza de mis ilusiones  
(...death is a being born of necessity  
whose beginning and end I bear  
engraved at the head of my illusions)*

Stephen Hart offers a revealing interpretation of how science gravitates in Vallejo's world. It is obviously not merely a matter of mentioning words that ring of science, but rather of how Vallejo bases himself on science in his comprehension of the world, of nature, of man, and of society's mutations; thus, around the decade of the 1930's Vallejo linked his scientific interest with Marxism, which he presumed to be a philosophical and scientific doctrine. In addition to the poems in the chronicles, frequent references to scientific matters and technological innovations appear.

With respect to his interest in politics, it is worth remembering that Vallejo's progressivism dates from his years as a student in Trujillo, where he formed part of the North Group (1915), the original nucleus of leaders and ideologues who then formed "apristas" (members of the Popular Revolution-

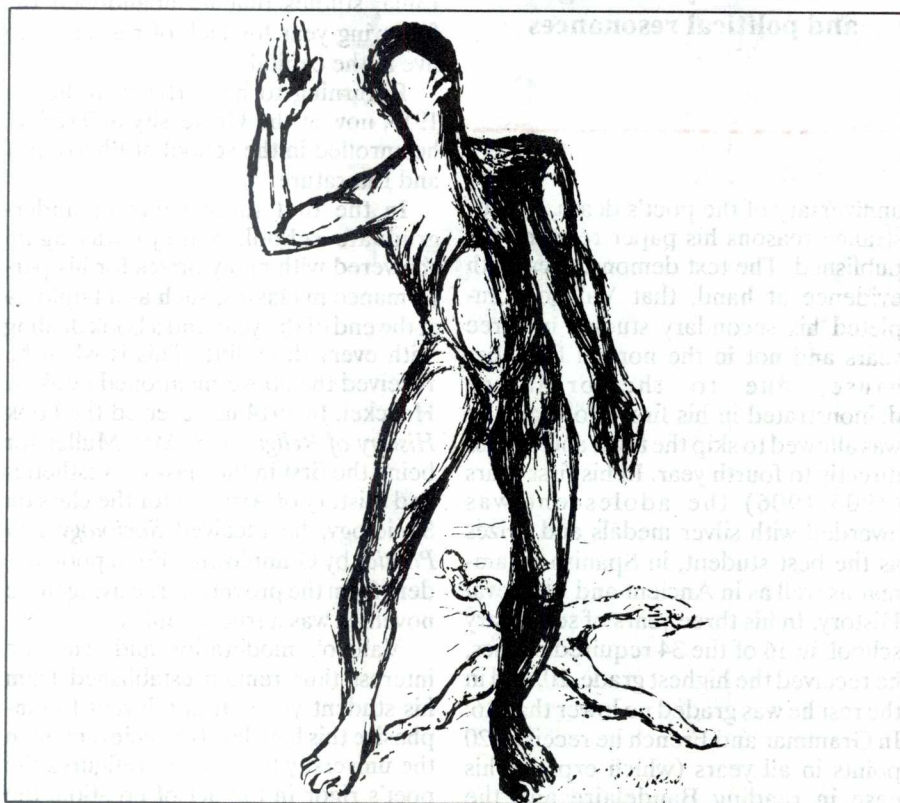
ary American Alliance-APRA, the party now in power in Alan García's government in Peru) and socialist movements. That process of Vallejo's radicalization seems well portrayed by Hart, but he is not convincing in calling the period from 1927 to September, 1929 "Trotskyist." It is an original idea, but the reasoning or documentary evidence do not appear in order to verify it. It is true that during that period Vallejo refers to Trotsky in his chronicles, but there is no apparent connection there, thus it is an abuse of confidence to say that "in that period, Vallejo owed even more loyalty to Trotsky than to Stalin". It is not possible to prove this theory, since not even in moments when Vallejo assumed the cause of Soviet socialism did he adopt the attitude of propagandist bigotry or of submission to loyalties.

In 1928, the year of his trip to Moscow, in an article *Literatura proletaria* (*Proletarian Literature*), he refuted the theory held by the RAPP (Pan Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), which sustained that "the dictatorship of the proletariat was incompatible with the denomination of a non-proletarian non-proletarian literature"; and he goes on to argue his opposition in the following way:

"When Haya de la Torre emphasizes the need for artists to aid revolutionary propaganda with their works in America, I repeat that, in my generic capacity as a man, I find her demand to be a great political proposal, and I sincerely sympathize with her, but in my capacity as artist, I do not accept any slogan or purpose, alien or my own, that even backing the best intentions, subjects my aesthetic liberty to the service of this or that political propaganda".

What indeed turns out to be revealing is when Hart gets to the bottom of the keys of the period of political realization (1932-July 1936). Vallejo is hermetic and cryptic in his criticism of Stalin, his political assassinations and concentration camps:

*Pero hablando más claro  
y pensando en oro, eres de acero  
a condición que no seas  
tonto y rehuses  
entusiasmarte por la muerte tanto  
y por la vida, con tu sola tumba.  
(But speaking more clearly  
and thinking of gold, you are of steel  
unless you not be  
a fool and you refuse  
to be so enthusiastic about death  
and about life, with your lonely tomb.)*



Artwork by Héctor Xavier. Reproduction by Alejandra Novoa

# BOOKS

## Biotechnology, University and Politics

At first glance, it has apparently not been made clear that the technological development of a country is intimately related with its politics and the attention it gives to its universities. In **Biotechnology, University and Politics**, Daniel J. Goldstein studies the genesis of several biotechnological research projects in order to illustrate this problem.

We are led to suppose that the scientific projects carried out in any country respond to well defined necessities of the population; however, who really decides what research is carried out or not? In his book, Goldstein gives us very precise examples of how big companies such as Kodak, Bayer, etc., finance research in universities and private research centers which will earn them millions of dollars annually. What's more, there is great competition between various companies, and not only in the pharmaceutical industry, to obtain new products or to improve those which already exist. Thus, third world countries remain marginated in their scientific and technological development, always depending on the developed nations, because, apart from the small or non-existent support and interest of transnational companies for third world development, the very universities of these countries provide ridiculous sums for research.

In the specific case of biotechnological development, the impact is even greater,

whether it be a matter of obtaining new analysis techniques, or new medicines for the health of human beings, or the search for further exploitation of plants and animals in creating medicines.

Little by little, the author makes clear how advances in physiological knowledge about some mechanism, for example, coagulation and fibrinolysis, lead to the development of new medicines and new detection techniques, which later become new treatments for certain diseases. At the same time he warns us of some dangers of this increase in knowledge, in the specific case of genetic manipulation.

The author emphasizes the fact that there are two biotechnologies: that of the "First World" and that of the rest of the world, or, said in another way, that of the rich, which is in permanent expansion and is oriented to generate wealth, and that of the poor - which either is not biotechnology, or is a metaphysical entity lacking intellectual originality.

With respect to the Third World, and especially in reference to Latin America, Goldstein proposes a strategy which would permit biotechnological development, that consists of fighting for an independent pharmaceutical industry, one that is autonomous and internationally competitive. This would only be possible if excellent and original research in universities is stimulated, because biotechnological capacity is linked to the existence of frontier molecular biology.

Latin America cannot afford to do without its own modern biotechnology, its autonomous administration and exercise of science and technology, and it also needs to make profound changes in industrial strategies.

The book is rich in biological and chemical concepts, which, thanks to the way they are explained and to the final glossary of terms, make its information readily accessible to every reader, regardless of his or her formation.

Biocología, universidad y política (Biotechnology, University and Politics). Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1989.

Rocío Alatorre

## Editorial Activity in the UNAM

The National Autonomous University of Mexico periodically publishes and re-edits textbooks with varied themes, products of well-known and not so well known writers. At the same time, the distribution of these texts is managed by Editorial Promotions, a university branch created for this purpose.

We would like to take this opportunity to give **Voices** readers the chance to get to know some recent UNAM publications.

Everything Mexican is part of the culture. And culture itself has multiple aspects. Mexican means Mexicans. But, in this eternal return to Mexican-ness that has already given us important books (such as **The Profile of the Man and the Culture** by Samuel Ramos; **The Labyrinth of Solitude** by Octavio Paz), the book **The Mexican: Cultural and Psychosocial Aspects** by Raúl Bérjar Navarro brings us up to date in autochthonous mutation.

The nationalism of Mexicans has many ridges as well as corners. Thus, according to César Garizurieta, inventor of the phrase "All who live beyond their means, live in error", that which is Mexican is not attainable by rational Western means, but rather through feelings, with which one is authorized to approach reason reunited with bedlam: "It could be studied in the asylum of Castañeda because in crazy people the Mexican character does appear, as if seen in a magnifying glass. There it is, in the sum of all of them, that which constitutes the way to be Mexican..."

Bérjar Navarro goes beyond this and relates that which is Mexican, North American, and Chicano as that border which continues to worry us because it is the scar so well named by Carlos Fuentes. **The Mexican: Cultural and Psychosocial Aspects**, published by the UNAM and in its fifth edition in 1988, should not be forgotten.

**Studies of Maya Culture** is a periodical publication of the

Center for Maya Studies of the UNAM. In 1988, Volume XVII was published with studies in English, French and Spanish; "the articles in this new volume...cover a long period of the history of the Mayan peoples. From the prehispanic era we include five articles on archaeology, arithmetics, epigraphy and iconography...Then, there are six articles about the Colonial period which, in reality, has been a poorly studied time frame (maybe because of the astounding cultural achievements of the prehispanic Mayas)...Following this are two articles on linguistics and a critical analysis of the Mayan concept of time; and finally, the volume ends with a book review and bibliographic information." Particularly interesting is a text by Robert Hill entitled "Instances of Maya Witchcraft in the 18th Century Totonacapan Area", which describes practices and beliefs in local witchcraft. This volume offers excellent information on the Mayas, going beyond the touristic viewpoint.

Luis J. Molina Piñero wrote **Contributions to a Theory of Mexican Government** published in new edition by the Institute for Legal Research of the UNAM in 1988. In this work, the real factors of power are reviewed not only in regard to ideology, politics, and history, but also with regard to Constitutional law and the theory of the state...Theoretical aspects of constitutional reform mechanisms are proposed...Reference is made regarding the political stability of the Mexican government. The first edition of this book was published in 1983. Since then, many things have happened with reference to the State.

**Editorial Promotions**, new series, is the monthly information bulletin of the General Administration of Editorial Promotions of the UNAM. In each issue, an interview with a well-known university scholar is presented. It announces the publication of the most recent University publications, and gives extracts of some texts in order to illustrate editorial problems.

Thus, in Number 25, of January 1989, there is an interview with the philosopher Ramón Xirau, who remembers having difficulties writing because he simultaneously spoke Spanish and Catalan, "his poetic language". Apart from his poetic work, he says that he has been writing some

books about the relationships of poetry and philosophy. Perhaps the most important of these are **Word and Silence**, from 1968 and **Poetry and Knowledge**. Xirau was the first to write a book criticizing Octavio Paz.

This informative bulletin also presents a text called "About Books, The Unification of Bibliographic Terminology", which indicates, for example, that the term "periodicals library" is a "neologism proposed by Henri Martin at the International Congress of Librarians in 1900 in order to designate the collections of periodicals and their place of use and conservation". Even though the **20th Century Larousse** considers the term adequate, it should be "efemeroteca", derived from the Greek **epheMERIS**, in function of each day, and **theke** meaning box or armory. Whatever is the case regarding the meaning, this bulletin itself can be consulted in the periodicals library of our University.

In other issues, such as that of March, writer Fernando Benítez is interviewed and he talks about the meaning of the "essay", while in the August issue, geographer Angel Basols Batalla is interviewed regarding some improper meanings found in our language.

Gisela von Wobeser wrote **The Formation of the Hacienda in the Colonial Period, Land and Water Use**, a study published in the UNAM in 1989. This book is indispensable in the search for the meanings of these economic factors in the hacienda in Mexican history. Here we can observe "some aspects relating to the use of land and water during the formation and consolidation periods of the hacienda. It attempts to show how the use of these resources changed over three centuries due to the following: through the displacement of the indigenous economy and the slow appropriation by the Spaniards of lands and water; the introduction of cattle and new crops and the use of advanced technologies; the construction of large hydraulic works; and the imposition of a new economic system." In this well illustrated edition we can also find data regarding the Church's behavior in agriculture, as regards its investment activities and the monopolization of rich inheritances.

The Guatemalan writer living in Mexico, Augusto Monterroso, is well-known for his

ironic work. His celebrated book **The Black Sheep and Other Tales** was published in 1988 in a bilingual edition by the Philosophy and Literature School. Yet further irony: it has been translated into the mother language, Latin, by Tarsicio Herrera Zapién; thus, the

work is titled **Ovis nigra atque caeterae fabulae**, no more, no less. The translator notes that "the classical types of Penelope, Pigmalion, Aquilles, Ulysses and the Sirens owe to Augusto Monterroso the acquisition of a new reality in the satirical tales of this book. For

that, I am paying the dues, as a humanist, that classicism owes to Monterroso".

Juan Luis Campos

De nuevo en español

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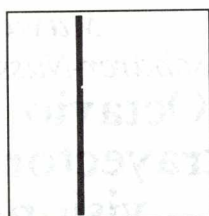
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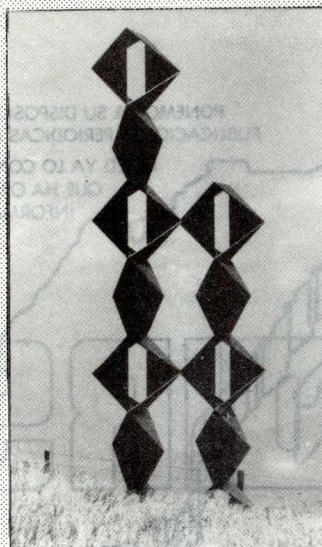
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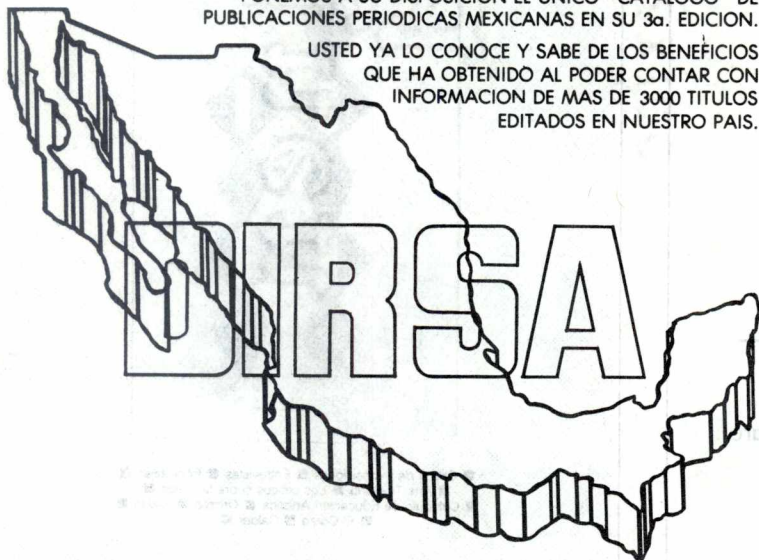
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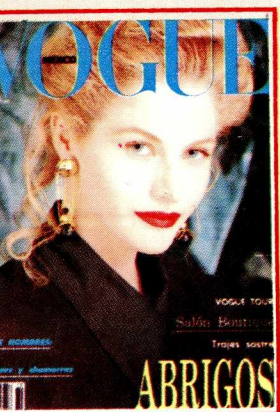
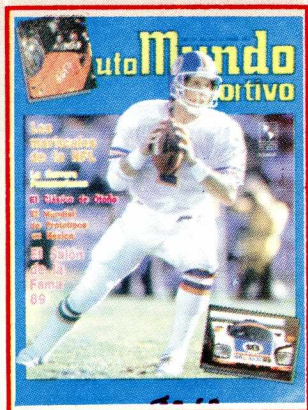
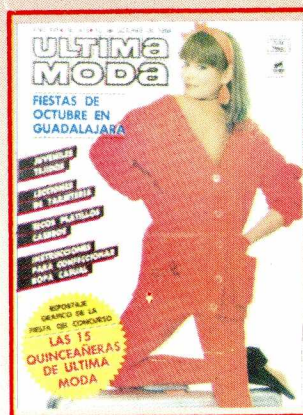
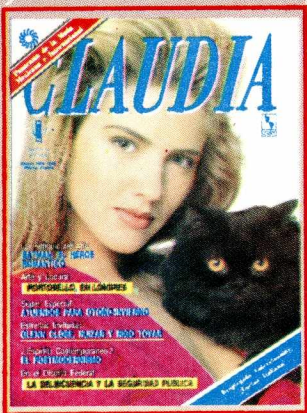
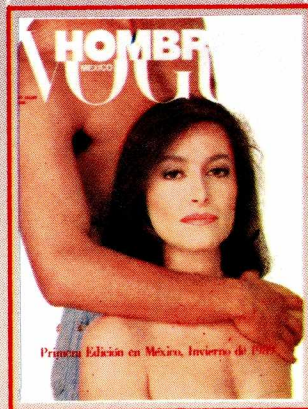
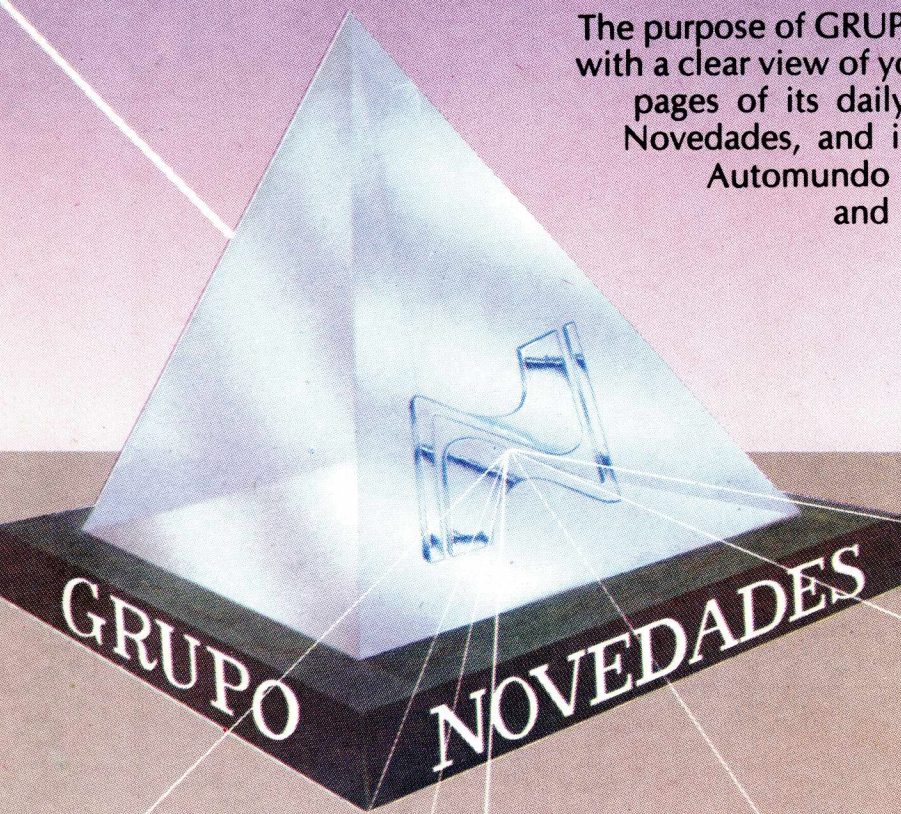


La extensión de la  
obra paziana, su  
diversidad, su  
capacidad proteica de  
metamorfosis no debe  
engañarnos sin  
embargo sobre la  
singular coherencia  
del conjunto; así  
podríamos hablar  
también de una  
continua tentativa de  
reescribir, de un  
avance en espiral, a  
lo largo del cual  
topamos con motivos  
y figuras que vuelven  
una y otra vez, siendo  
los mismos y  
diferentes.

*Maya  
Schärer-Nussberger*

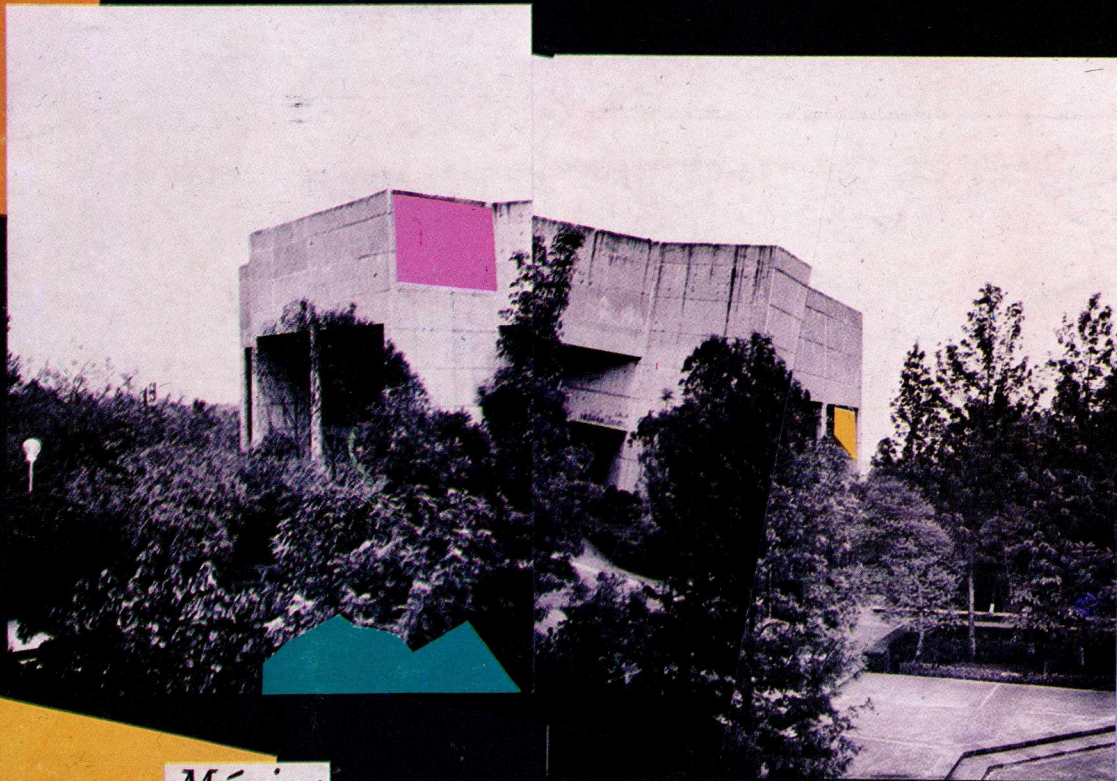
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