

ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA • WINTER 2009

The Sixties

Glimpses from Latin
America and Beyond



EDITOR'S LETTER

My boyfriend Jim and I were watching television in a smoky working-class bar in Cuernavaca, Mexico, that July 20, 1969. I can't remember if Neil Armstrong's words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" were dubbed into Spanish.

What I do remember vividly is that as Neil Armstrong took man's first step on the moon, the Mexicans in the bar rushed toward us, hugging us, embracing us, tears in their eyes with genuine emotion and excitement, congratulating us just because we were Americans.

We hated being American. We were ashamed of the war in Vietnam. Our neighbors in New York were Dominicans with fresh wounds from the 1965 U.S. invasion of Santo Domingo. Besides, the money spent sending a man to the moon could have better been spent on better schools and affordable housing. And yet, for that one split second, there in that bar, barely a year after the Mexicans had suffered their own tragedy at the Massacre of Tlatelolco, we were almost letting ourselves be proud of U.S. progress in science. Almost.

Mexico was my first experience in a mainland Spanish-speaking country (I'd been to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico). The bar celebration was my first lesson that the 60s didn't quite seem the same from Latin America as they did in the States. Our 60s—our New York 60s—of course, had their Latin-tinged icons: César Chávez and the grape-workers' movement, the Cuban revolution, Che, even those sacred Mexican mushrooms.

Up north, both of us studying at Columbia University, we found ourselves in the midst of the chaotic 60s: the student uprisings, the advent of the media age, women's liberation, black power, gay rights, birth control (first tested in Puerto Rico), the Bay of Pigs, the missile crisis, the Prague Spring, liberation theology, the killing of the students at Kent State, sex, drugs and rock'n roll. It felt like being on a constant roller coaster.

Four months after our Mexican summer, I would head down to Cuba to cut sugar cane and to write my journalism school master's thesis on the Venceremos Brigade. Liberation looked different on that Caribbean island. Brigade men cut cane, while the women piled, until we staged our own little rebellion. Sexual liberation, gay rights and even the music of Woodstock weren't necessarily connected to the Island's revolutionary politics.

As I set out to envision this issue of *ReVista*, I asked myself how the magazine could possibly include all these themes and also encompass what was happening in every one of the Latin American countries from the incipient dictatorship in Brazil, the National Front in Colombia to Che's incursion into Bolivia. How could I possibly include all the joy and chaos and tragedy that made up the 60s?

Then I read Harvard Professor Diana Sorensen's excellent book *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties*. I'd forgotten the importance of the Latin American literary boom. I'd forgotten the importance of exile and the renewed sense of Latin Americanism. My wish list for *ReVista* just kept getting longer.

Then I reread her introduction. "The dialogue between the Latin American and the metropolitan worlds is particularly fertile at that time, both in its points in common and in its specificities," Sorensen writes. "...I would submit that the Latin American difference is one of intensity, and that it is framed by the twin rhythms of euphoria and despair."

I decided to focus on Cuba, seen mainly from the perspective of Cubans on the Island, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, and on the experiences of Harvard faculty and alumni transformed by the Peace Corps, another idealistic 60s legacy. I was despairing how to organize the remaining essays when my friend from Tufts, Jennifer Burtner, walked into my office. "Exploding paradigms," she said. "That's what the 60s were about." Her comment evolved into the glimpses of the 60s that make up the "perspectives" section.

As we in the United States move into a new era that is bound to have ripples in Latin America, just as the 60s did, I glance at the message of a Christmas card hanging on my wall: "Not only is another world possible; she is on her way." After all, I am a child of the 60s.



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Cover image: This photo-illustration was inspired by a Cuban poster for *nueva trova* artist Pablo Milanés.

Photo-illustration: Heather Clark/2COMMUNIQUE
Clockwise from top: Fidel Castro at INRA, courtesy of Marial Iglesias Utset; Dominican farmer, photo by Mike Arnow; John F. Kennedy, Keystone/Getty Images; actress, courtesy of Greg Cohen; "Pionero" kids with flag, courtesy Marial Iglesias Utset; Cuban woman on far left, photo by Olisam.



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The Peace Corps, John F. Kennedy's icon of 60s idealism, inspired many volunteers to devote themselves to Latin America, as well as to question inequality and the U.S. role in the world. Here Harvard faculty and alumni share some of their Peace Corps experiences in the region.

Under the Bridge

And Down from the Hills

BY MERILEE S. GRINDLE

I REMEMBER CLEARLY THE THIRTY SECONDS WHEN I GREW UP, AS we crossed the bridge over the river on the way from the airport, I looked down onto a multitude of shacks climbing crazily up the steep slopes of the sludgy riverbank. An awful truth was suddenly clear: in two years' time, when I made the reverse trip on my way to the airport and home, I would look down on those same shacks climbing up the riverbank. Nothing I would do in the intervening years would have any real impact on the reality that was the Dominican Republic.

All those many years ago I had just graduated from Wellesley College, an idealist and a *gringa* who wanted to do good by joining

the Peace Corps. In that brief journey across the river, I grew up in the ways of the world. For the first time in my life, I encountered deep and chronic poverty; I came face to face with inequity and powerlessness; I saw the realities of poor education and worse health care; I discovered the meaning of marginality; I understood the legacy of colonialism.

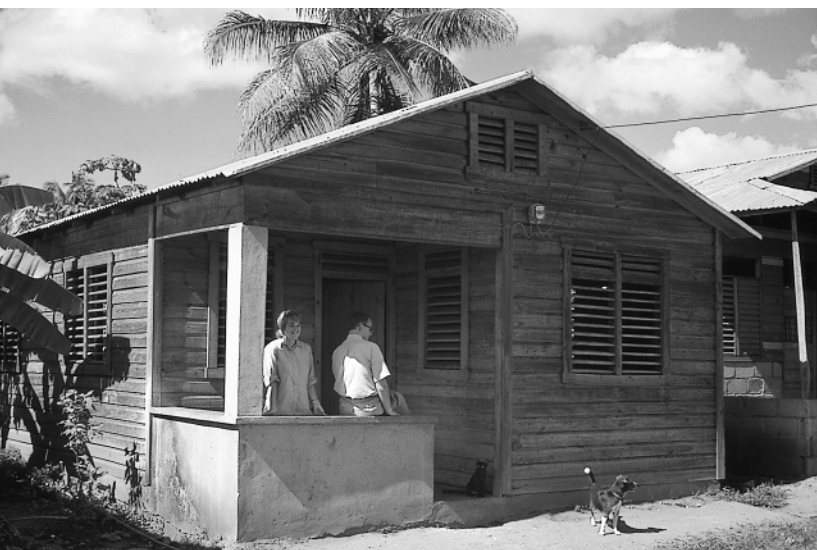
A second growing-up moment haunts me from those years. A mother walked down from the hills, where she lived in a remote

As a Peace Corps volunteer, Merilee Grindle discovered the meaning of marginality and the legacy of colonialism.

THE SIXTIES



For the first time in her life, Merilee Grindle encountered deep and chronic poverty, as well as the realities of poor education and health care. Here are scenes from her volunteer experience.



village with her two young daughters. She asked me to take their picture; she knew her children were going to die soon and wanted something to remember them by. I thought she was probably right; the girls were stick-thin, wan, and listless. The snapshot remains crystal clear in my mind.

I lived first in a small city and then in a village, and I found the lack of running water, electricity, and privacy relatively easy. Much more difficult was coming to terms with the gap that separated my comfortable life at home from the lives of those born into poverty in a poor country. I found that my education had not prepared me for acting effectively in the world and that I was not very good even at those few activities I did undertake. Nor could my assignment in mother-child health in any way compensate for the damage done by poverty and powerlessness. More profoundly, I was confronted with the history of the relationship between my country and this one. I was, after all, a volunteer in a country that had, two years earlier, witnessed the invasion of 42,000 U.S. Marines. One of its 19th century presidents tried to annex the country to the United States. Marines occupied it between 1916 and 1924. At 2 a.m. one morning, a drunken man in the house next door ranted that that he had a gun and he was going to shoot the *gringos*.

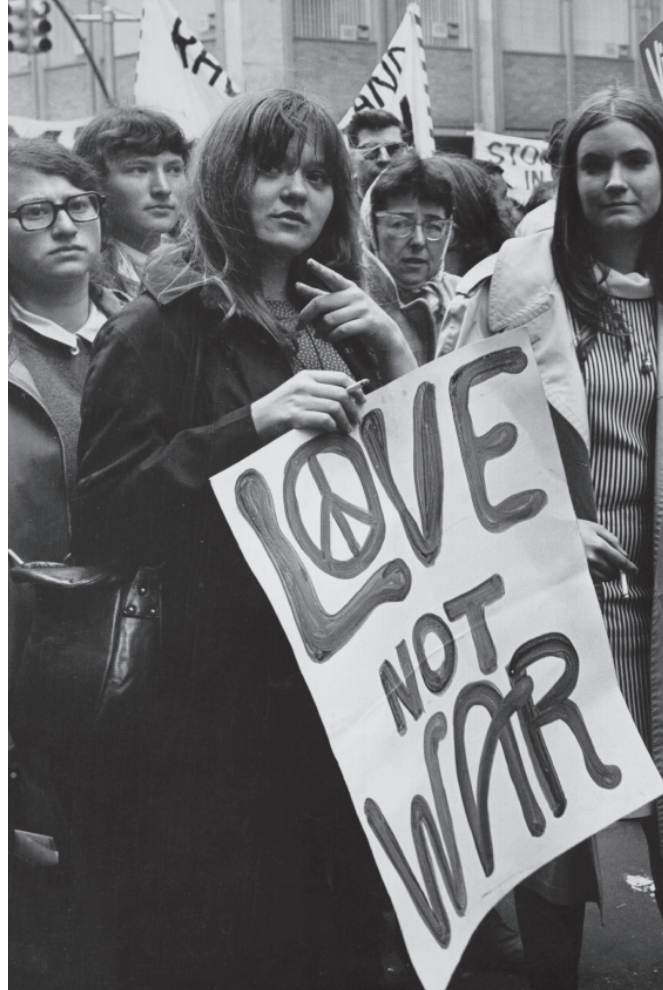
Of course, there are other memories—a countryside blessed with vibrant green beauty, kind and generous people, times when differences melded into shared enjoyment of a moment. There were the experiences of living on rice, yucca, beans, and *plátanos*; dancing the merengue; hearing Mass across the *barrio* at 5 o'clock every morning on multiple radios turned up loud; collecting tales of *sárganos* jumping out onto dark, lonely rural roads, ready to suck a victim's blood. And there was what we shared as volunteers—common anxieties, trials, tribulations, small victories, and escapes to the big city for weekends of beer and Chinese food.

It was not an easy two years, but they were important ones: years when I was forced to abandon belief in facile solutions and the ease with which good could be accomplished. Poverty, I discovered, was structural, it was pervasive, and it was deeply bound up with inequalities in power and access to basic rights. The poverty of people and countries, I saw, could not be divorced from the relations among countries, particularly poor with rich ones.

Eventually, these issues drove me to graduate school. Yet today, I continue to see the view from the bridge and remember the mother who came down from the hills with her two sickly children. I haven't yet discovered solutions to the conundrums they raised for me. Yet I do believe it important that we know more about how they happened and that we pass along our concerns to others who, we hope, will be better prepared to make a difference than I was when I was 22.



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The Call of Service

What JFK Wrought

BY STEVEN B. BLOOMFIELD

MY BELLWETHER, MY LIFE-CHANGING DAY—LIKE THAT OF SO many others of my generation—will always be November 22, 1963.

I was a third-grade student sitting in a classroom in the peaceful splendor of the Cherry Lane School in Great Neck, New York, when we heard of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The very word “assassination”—it was terrifyingly new vocabulary to an eight-year old—summoned the attention of everyone. I acutely remember my teacher’s tears, my family’s grave mood and the general mourning. The President’s death penetrated everything and called for a response, perhaps at first anger but then a kind of penance. At the end of the school year, my teacher told our class that she was joining Peace Corps, the essential institution on which the President had left his mark. She said she was moving for two years to a less privileged place. From that moment, I promised myself that someday so would I.

Simply this explains my subsequent calls to service. My intention, well before I turned ten, was to come to a fuller reckoning with the world that was suddenly revealed to me. With human life apparently unraveling, I somehow felt responsible to help put it back together. I was certain that all of us felt the same way (I admit to a childlike confusion in trying to understand why we still have

failed to do so). I do not like the tag of “idealism” as my motivator. That implies flight from reality and a sort of aspiration toward transcendence. What moved me was the opposite of that.

Subsequent days in that decade deeply affected our generation’s thinking: April 4, 1968, the killing of Martin Luther King; June 6, 1968, the killing of Bobby Kennedy; October 15, 1969, the day of the nationwide Vietnam moratorium. Their cumulative effect taught us two things: the world is dangerous, and the public action of individuals matters.

From those lessons flowed my own personal commitment. I felt that I had a responsibility to help the afflicted. I had to stand for peace and against needless aggression. I had license to challenge corrupt authority, especially when it existed in my own government.

Children, not only adults, are capable of thinking that way.

Although the end of the days of campus activism preceded my arrival at Harvard College by hardly more than months, I began my studies in 1973 feeling that light years had already passed. That

Clockwise, from top left: Two young Chicano men ride on the hood of a car during a National Chicano Moratorium Committee march in opposition to the war in Vietnam; Americans demonstrate at the United Nations building in New York; John F. Kennedy, during nominations for the Democratic presidential candidacy in 1960.



El Placer, Cantón Quero, Escuela Fiscal Julio C. Larrea, Third Grade: February 1980. Front row, from left to right: Delicia Freire, Elena Barreno, Carmen Sánchez, Bélgica Benavides, Irma Barreno, María Cristina Paredes, Carmelina Gavilanes, and Nancy Oñate. Back row: Noemí Cevallos, Orfelina Martínez, Rosa Martínez, Teresa Barreno, Emérita Sánchez, Narcisca Guerrero, Luis Quispe, Lizardo Sánchez, Manuel Fuentes, Alberto Hernández, Nelson Quispe, José Vayas, and Rodrigo Sánchez. Steven Bloomfield is surrounded by the children.

year, the United States ended the military draft. Where the Yard and nearby university buildings had been scenes of unrest and disobedience beginning in April 1969 and lasting for a few years beyond, the only “mass movement” that my class could muster was the new craze of streaking.

Mostly, I retreated with the rest of my peers behind a new normalcy of only apparent peace. The April 1975 surrender of the South Vietnamese to the Vietcong felt like a whimper in Cambridge. To most of us, all the major battles had already been fought.

November 22, 1963, however, continued to resonate for me. I firmly retained the Kennedy-generation goal of pursuing a Peace Corps stint after graduation. Somehow, I quieted my internal debate about how the same government that prosecuted the war in Vietnam would be sending me to another destination in the developing world. The difference of purpose mattered.

After graduation, I accepted a job as a teacher in an elementary school in Manhattan. In April 1978, during spring recess, I took the subway downtown to the Federal Building in New York City to find a Peace Corps placement. I turned many pages in a large loose-leaf notebook until I saw a description seeking “skill-trained” volunteers for Ecuador, skill-trained being shorthand for “unskilled.” I saw that placement as my destiny. Peace Corps invited me to travel to Latin America on July 12. My father, a medical doctor, had aided my application by stating that my recently dislocated shoulder would not be a problem in the field. Years later, I realized the poignancy of my father’s advocacy. For medical reasons, the military had rejected his effort to serve in World War II. I am certain he enjoyed helping me beat the system—a gesture true to our era.

In training in Costa Rica, a dozen or so of us descended upon a

series of chicken-coop classrooms in La Guácima near Alajuela. For two and one half months, we learned or improved our Spanish and took classes in cultivating the vegetables and grains that we were to find in our Ecuadorean highland homes. We also learned agricultural-extension techniques so we could transmit of our new knowledge.

There was no denying the oddity of our profile. We were little more than ragged escapees from Ivy League institutions, unsatisfactory marriages, questionable job futures and student loans. We worried, at least among ourselves, about conveying what was at best superficial knowledge to people whose families had been cultivating crops in the Andes since long before recorded history. We were voluntary actors in a peculiarly American tragicomedy about how wanting to do good—in the face of politics, economics and a history that often cried out our shame—was somehow okay.

Ecuador tested our ability to improvise. Were we truly to shake everyone’s hand before sitting in the midst of a meeting with forty or more participants? (Yes.) Was that guinea pig just killed for my lunch because I am truly welcome? (Yes.) Was sitting in the back of a pickup truck full of cilantro the easiest way to travel into town? (For the pleasure of smelling like soup for a week, of course.) I embraced it all, accepting my Ecuadorean neighbors and co-workers as my teachers, while I worked hard to figure out how I could be useful to them. I rebelled against the notion that I, as the tallest, whitest, most novel person for miles around possessed a higher truth than anyone else. With a queer sort of satisfaction, I began to prove my mere humanity to dramatic effect when, on my first Christmas day in Ecuador, I dropped out of a road race not a minute beyond the starting line as I desperately gasped for oxygen running up a gentle slope in the high mountain air.

The 400 inhabitants of El Placer, Cantón Quero, Tungurahua Province, at 10,000 feet above sea level in the Ecuadorean highlands, provided the most effective classroom I have ever had. I learned to value, above all else, interpersonal relationships. I learned to live modestly and to cherish small amenities like a latrine with a curtain, a warm poncho, and potatoes with a sprinkling of salt. We had no electricity; we had no running water in our homes: it was where I wanted to be.

Now nearly 30 years later, I think that regarding my side of the bargain, at least I did them no harm.

For two years, I lived on the second floor of a cinderblock house with a married couple, Selmira Santillán and Gerardo Villacrés—she must have been in her mid-twenties, and he, recently widowed, must have been in his mid-fifties—and their new son, Giovanni, born some two weeks after my arrival. At first, something in me was seeking a Thoreauvian idyll. I had every intention to move out of my pre-arranged residence and into a Walden-like self-sufficiency as soon as I had landed there. Mysteriously, however, every time I set out to find a vacant house in the village, neighbors told me the houses were structurally unsound or that the owners were soon to return. I learned months later that I was being closely watched. They would not let me live alone to perpetrate who-knew-what on a suspecting population.

Concerned that my slight knowledge of agricultural practices (combined with a seven-month drought that coincided with my arrival) would do no one much good, I took quickly to visiting the village school, a two-minute walk from my dwelling. By the end of my first year, I managed to convince the three-person faculty and the province's regional superintendent that I could teach the third grade, using a spare supply room and relieving some crowding from the three classrooms that were uncomfortably integrating six grades.

Without objective measures, I do not think that any teacher can offer a reliable reflection on his students' achievement. All I can say is that my third graders—previously taught through memorization—became an increasingly animated lot amidst the aura we created together in our snug classroom. We sang and we acted. Together we learned the history of Ecuador and mastered elementary-school writing in Spanish. We figured out the designated science and arithmetic curriculum handed down from Quito.

When the regional superintendent came to visit my classroom the first time, I sensed that he left regretting having bent the national law that prohibited foreigners from teaching in the primary grades. It was early yet. When he returned to evaluate me a few weeks before the school year's end, my students were jumping from their chairs to answer his questions, certainly in order to demonstrate their knowledge, but also because they were protecting me. In our normally high-wattage classroom, there never had been that level of electricity before.

It fit my understanding of the world's paradoxes that I was teaching students who were the same age I had been when I decided that one day I would become a Peace Corps volunteer.

Every Monday, my friends Billy, Scott, Meghan and I descended from our various mountainsides into the valley to pick up our mail, shower, and do what most of the rest of the population of Tungurahua was doing: catching up with each other on market day. We easily acquired the habit of exchanging news and recharging our emotional batteries with the people who—no depth of our integration with

Ecuadoreans could ever change this—clearly understood each other best. I cherished those relationships, those shared understandings. This was in part because we had developed pride in our mutual sacrifice and so shared something deeper than anything we had felt among our peers as undergraduates.

Sure, we often felt we were walking a fraught Peace Corps tightrope between encouraging dependence and demonstrating our cluelessness. Collectively, however, we came to feel that it was important, while retaining a sense of wonder and good will, to step across socioeconomic, political and cultural borders in order to exchange some knowledge. Thirty years later, I still feel that way.

During the last six months of my stay, I got the bright idea that we might expand our school in El Placer with a new building, and then I learned that the government had in fact long been neglecting a request by the village for an expansion. So I entered, unwittingly at first, into a sort of pyramid scheme. The village council could muster the necessary free labor. I knew some fellow Peace Corps volunteers who thought they could find me a grant in the United States to buy cinder blocks and cement. Counting on those two resources, I knew I could exact a promise from the national government for the contribution of a steel superstructure.

My problems began when I wrongly anticipated the promise of the grant, and, with youthful hubris, I guaranteed the village council that it was forthcoming. Rather than compromise my word, I lied to the government school-building ministry that the labor and the funds were guaranteed, and I entered into a perilous few weeks of hustling for the money to buy materials to complement the structure and labor. Days before my departure, we inaugurated a building nearly complete and built, mostly, on faith and hard labor and an unwillingness to fail.

That life in Peace Corps taught me many lessons that I have carried forth to this day. For fifteen years, I have worked at the (now-Weatherhead) Center for International Affairs at Harvard, an institution, incidentally, twice attacked by student protesters during the Vietnam era, where I feel I am able to exercise my belief in promoting, if not international understanding, an understanding of the international. In volunteer work in my hometown of Concord, I promote community-development projects through a sister-cities relationship with the town of San Marcos, in Nicaragua's Carazo Department. After the revelations of torture at Abu Ghraib prison, until this last Election Day I led a vigil for peace—and a kind of penance—in Harvard Yard on Wednesdays at noon for four and one half years to protest the violence and murder that our government's invasion imposed on Iraq.

Along the way, I have tried consistently to exercise my beliefs, whose provenance I trace back 35 years. When working toward change, I try to consult with the people whom the change will most affect. Generative effort matters more to me than the one-time and monumental. I try to understand context—historical, political, economic and spiritual—before presuming to establish new bridges. I am comfortable acknowledging the moral component that underlies my place at work.

If those are legacies of the 1960s, I am proud to try to continue to live them.

Steven B. Bloomfield is executive director of Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He lives in Concord, Massachusetts.



In the Shadow of JFK

One Peace Corps Experience

BY NED STRONG

I AM OFTEN ASKED ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS BY STUDENTS AND recent graduates. The most frequent questions are “why join?”, “what did you do?”, and “what has it meant for your career?” Here is my story.

My earliest recollection of international curiosity was in the fourth grade when Sister Margaret Thomas described her experience as a recently returned missionary in Bangladesh. In high school, my sister Mary went to Peru on a study abroad program and later became a Fulbright Scholar in Spain. Then in college, I took a summer job with a former Peace Corps volunteer recently returned from Ethiopia. But like many of us who joined the Peace Corps in its early years, the draw of international experience was influenced by many factors. It was the economy when I graduated from college that pushed me over the edge. In the late 60s and early 70s the country was in the grips of the Vietnam War and stagflation. Energy prices were going through the roof and the job market was grim. The only job offer I had in my senior year was working for Colgate Palmolive selling laundry detergent—not an attractive future for a newly minted Wharton grad. So, remembering my friend who had been in Ethiopia, my sister, and my fourth grade teacher, I went to Washington in the spring of my senior year and visited Peace Corps headquarters. The two openings in my field were in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. After a quick look at a world map, with images of palm trees and beaches materializing along with the chance to learn Spanish, the decision was made. By August that year I was in Santo Domingo.

I was one of 12 new volunteers assigned to work with cooperatives. We began by spending three months learning Spanish. During this time we became a cohesive group supporting one another in our classes and sharing our experiences trying to get along in a new culture. After we passed the minimum Spanish level we were shipped out to our sites. My site, Los Negros, was a fishing coopera-

tive on the southwestern coast three hours from the capital in one of the poorest and most arid regions of the country. There were no palm-lined beaches here, just an abandoned port and a few wooden fishing boats. The central Peace Corps office in Santo Domingo advised me to live in the town of Azua, the provincial capital, and to travel each day to Los Negros, 15 miles away, about 30 minutes on my Peace Corps-issued Honda 90 motorcycle. After a month, the daily commute was becoming tedious and I was making little progress with the cooperative. One Sunday afternoon, I was sitting in a gas station waiting for my motorcycle to be filled up, when a truck crashed into me, breaking my pelvis.

That truck knocked some sense into me. After a month recuperating in the hospital, I asked myself the same fundamental question everyone needs to ask if they are to accept challenges they face. The question was what exactly did I want to get out of this experience?

It was clear that I had joined the Peace Corps with a modicum of altruistic motives and had pictured myself living on an island near the ocean and working to advance the livelihood of a community. I then decided to move out to Los Negros, get to really know the forces moving the local economy, and do something to influence the community.

I returned to the cooperative, going straight to the president to ask about housing. The president, Mingo, discouraged me, saying the town was too dangerous for an American. I continued to ask around only to be told that there were no empty houses. I had noticed an abandoned thatch roof house on the edge of town that needed some major work. To my disappointment, the owner would not rent it, so I offered to buy it. The \$100 price tag was probably too high, but I accepted enthusiastically.

From there I was able to work more closely with the fishermen. But, I had to reduce the distance between us even more, so I asked if I could go fishing with my now friend, Mingo. The day began at 3 a.m. with a shot of high octane coffee mixed with cinnamon



(from left) Scenes from the Dominican Republic: launching a boat; community members; a meeting of the cooperative, constructing a school.

and highly laced with sugar. We gathered up a tank of gas, the 9 hp Evinrude motor, and other assorted fishing equipment and walked the dark path toward the small skiff named for Mingo's mother, Doña Francisca. We pushed off, connected the motor, and took off clearing the harbor and out into the open sea. Our destination was a bank of coral where Mingo has set lobster traps. At sunrise we arrived and began pulling up traps, emptying them, re-baiting them, and returning them to the bottom of the sea. Our haul was mostly second class fish and a few lobsters. After a grueling morning, by noon we headed back to the harbor. On the beach a buyer met us and purchased our catch for about \$10, enough to cover the gas and to buy food and rum for another day. This was a good day. On a bad day, if the catch was even worse, the buyer became a lender at highly usurious rates. In a true sense the fish buyer owned the fishermen of Los Negros.

This experience was repeated countless times in Los Negros. As I participated more and more, my confidence and Spanish grew, and I began to do more work with the cooperative.

One night, I organized a meeting of interested fishermen. I had borrowed a movie and projector from the U.S. Embassy to show the 1969 NBA finals between the Celtic and the Lakers to be sure to draw a crowd. After the game, in my best motivational style, I gave a speech outlining how each member could save and pool their money if only they would reduce the regular afternoon rum parties. We had to decide to do something about the low prices and usurious loans we received from the fish buyer on the beach. I concluded by challenging the members saying that they would only be successful if they would get some *cajones*. Of course, I meant *cajones*, but my Spanish did not yet clearly distinguish "a" and "o". The fishermen had a huge laugh and we agreed to move ahead. We set up the books for the cooperative and established a direct market link with a hotel in Santo Domingo. The experience was successful and worked well until someone stole our whole stock of lobsters. But, it was a successful demonstration of what could be accomplished as a group.

Armed with a new sense of accomplishment we set out to move beyond the cooperative. The school in Los Negros was a dilapidated 12-by-12 shed totally inadequate to accommodate the town's 80

students. We decided that the best thing we could do for the community was to build a school. We applied for a grant and enlisted an army of volunteers and built the only cinder-block building in the town. The school was inaugurated five months after we began construction and became the main community center.

The two years in the Dominican Republic passed quickly. Following my volunteer time, I was offered a job in Peace Corps headquarters in Washington. While there, I met my wife Julie, who decided to become a volunteer. I made the decision to sign up again. We went to Ecuador to work for Partners of the Americas in Quito. Our shared job was to develop programs for the partnership. During our two years we created two successful projects with vegetable producers and bee keepers.

When I look around at all the people I have run into in the Peace Corps one common denominator is the positive effect the Peace Corps has had on our careers. For example, Senator Chris Dodd, who preceded me in the Dominican Republic by a few years, became Chairman of the Senate Western Hemisphere Subcommittee where he had an enormously positive effect on the Central American peace process. From my group, most have entered international careers or have taken enormous advantage of their language ability. One is a senior vice president for external relations for a leading international energy company, another is an international labor negotiator for the one of the largest international mining and construction companies, another heads development efforts for an international education and training company. I have had a hugely satisfying career developing and implementing scholarship and training programs for future leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean. These are more than simple international careers. In each case the experience in the Peace Corps has shaped a responsible humanistic approach to our work where we have been able to extend our work to benefit others.

Ned Strong is executive director of LASPAU: Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas, a Harvard affiliated organization that promotes higher education and scientific and technological development in Latin America and the Caribbean through scholarship programs and advanced training.



The True Impact of the Peace Corps

Returning from the Dominican Republic '03–'05

BY MOLLY COELING

I AM AN RPCV: A RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER. FOR ME THE Peace Corps was an intense life experience, above anything else. As I continue to reflect on it, I am struck with the many and varied ways in which it continues to affect my life.

As a PCV in the Dominican Republic from September 2003 to November 2005, I lived, worked, and learned in a small sugar cane-dependent community two hours outside of Santo Domingo, the capital city. As a health volunteer, I focused primarily on nutrition education and a vegetable-gardening project.

By the time I returned to the United States, I could speak Spanish fluently and understood Dominican culture, concrete skills that helped me secure the position and succeed as a Health Educator in low-income housing developments in Boston. From the first interview, I realized that success in this job with Harvard School of Public Health faculty at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute would be the result of my experience as a PCV, building upon my formal education, which included a Master's in Public Health.

I continue to work in the same department at Dana-Farber today, having moved into project management roles over the past three years. I now rarely use the language and cultural skills that I was hired for but have come to recognize that I learned so much more than Spanish and the basics of grassroots development. I also learned how to work within a community setting and how to see a project through from an idea to its completion. I know that actively

engaging participants and maintaining morale and getting cooperation at all levels is crucial for any project, whether it be introducing Dominican women to new ways of cooking, or continuing to reach out to groups of Americans who are marginalized by our society and at higher risk for cancer.

From the Peace Corps, I know I can not only survive but thrive anywhere, whether as an American woman in a small Dominican village or as a Midwesterner living in the Northeast. I know how to adapt, how to put things into perspective, how to take a risk, and how to maintain a sense of humor through it all. I can help a woman on the subway who doesn't understand how to pay and can't speak enough English to ask, and I can do so with empathy and respect. I can respond to a Dominican neighbor who insists that all Americans are rich, just as I can respond to an American neighbor who insists that immigrants should not be welcomed here. I can understand ignorance and intolerance not only as American shortcomings but as human phenomena. I can understand that people are the same; it is the circumstances that vary.

In these ways and countless others, the Peace Corps has a lasting and widespread impact on all RPCVs in their work and in their lives.

Molly Coeling, originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, graduated from the University of Michigan School of Public Health in Ann Arbor in 2003. She now lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts and works with Harvard School of Public Health faculty at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She loves to surprise Dominicans with her Spanish skills and knowledge of the rural areas of their country.

A photo of the street that ran in front of Molly Coeling's house in El Peje de Guerra in the Dominican Republic.

My Hometown in Costa Rica

Carrying Out the 60s Vision

BY DAVID EDELSTEIN

ISERVED IN THE PEACE CORPS IN COSTA RICA FROM 1988-1990 AS a soil conservation volunteer, one of only four serving there at the time out of more than 200 volunteers. I was asked to do this work based on my Master's degree in Soil Physics from the University of Massachusetts, which I had earned a few months before. My assignment was to a neighborhood that was fairly well-developed economically. I lived in Matinilla, a rural neighborhood dominated by the cultivation of coffee and onions. The goal of my project was to improve groundwater recharge in the basin of Rio Uruca through soil conservation practices such as drainways and terraces. This turned out to be a surprisingly easy sell, as the farmers in my neighborhood worked very steep hillsides which required terracing to be viable. They were happy to have me shovel along with them, and I really enjoyed their company. Wherever I went, I was treated like a family member. One day, a Costa Rican friend of mine asked me, "David, donde está tu pueblo?" ("David, where is your hometown?") and I told him that I was standing in it. A person can really feel part of a community where everyone truly depends on everyone else for safety, financial security, and fun.

I don't know that I ever specifically thought of myself as carrying out the visions of the 60s, although well into the 80s my younger brother called me a "hippy throwback." I was a young child in the 60s, and certainly I had the chance that everyone had to have my head filled with notions of peace, freedom and justice for all. I saw my Peace Corps service as a way to pursue what I had learned in post-Harvard agriculture school in a really exciting context, and that did happen. I also learned much more from Costa Ricans about

life than I could possibly have offered them about any particular U.S. ideals. I have to say that I think our nation is suffering from a tidal wave of cynicism, but the latest crop of teenagers seems to hold the promise of something different.

I say that because I do continue to pursue certain ideals in my life and work. I'm the single parent of two teens, one a visionary idealist, the other an awesome guitar player, so the 60s do live on in my home, perhaps. I also work in the Village School, the alternative public high school in Great Neck, New York, where every day I spend time with teenagers who are looking for a different way to understand and deal with the world. They're not saints, but they do have a great empathy for children in other schools and other countries. They want their lives to be meaningful in terms of global citizenship, and some of them have thrown off the burden of irony and cynicism that are so destructive of the billions of tiny steps necessary to build a safer, happier world. I am also a volunteer educator for the Long Island Carbon Action Network, and continually work to enhance the link between people and our environment. I suppose that the word "ecology" entered ordinary conversation in the 60s, so perhaps I am living the dream.

Dave Edelstein earned his A.B. in Philosophy, Harvard 1980, and wrote a thesis about the philosophy of education. Coincidentally, he now teaches Science and Spanish at The Village School of Great Neck, NY, an award winning alternative public high school. He has returned to Costa Rica twice since his Peace Corps service, and cries every time he leaves. He can be reached at edelsteindavid@hotmail.com.

Dave Edelstein as a Peace Corps volunteer, third from right, with his Costa Rican "family."



How Can They Love Us When They Hate Us?

The Dominican Republic 1969

BY MICHAEL ARNOW

THE U.S. EMBASSY WENT ON RED ALERT AND URGED ALL AMERICANS, including me, to stay home to avoid being targets of violent attack. The Middle East today? No, the Dominican Republic, in May 1969.

The cause of the alert was a visit by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, sent by President Nixon on a fact-finding tour of Latin America. I was in the Dominican Republic as a Peace Corps volunteer, and long before Rockefeller landed, my fellow volunteers and I ran into cold stares and graffiti that screamed out, “Go Home, Yanqui!”

Hostility toward Americans was running high in the Dominican Republic at that time, particularly in the capital, Santo Domingo.

There is a love-hate paradox towards the United States and its citizens. In many small ways, we Peace Corps members learned that through personal relationships, we could overcome mistrust and suspicion.

Our troops had landed there four years earlier, many Dominicans thought we Americans were propping up their government as our puppet, and, to make things worse for Rockefeller, his family name symbolized U.S. capitalism.

We Peace Corps volunteers might have expected a friendlier reception, since we lived and worked with the poor. But on several occasions when I attempted to join forces with Dominicans whose work was similar to mine—building grassroots democratic organizations—I was rebuffed. Even if they found me acceptable personally, it would have damaged their reputations to be seen with an American.

When I was thirteen, I had read *The Ugly American* and was disturbed by the blunders we Americans were committing in underdeveloped countries. I decided to work overseas and somehow make a difference, so I got excited when President Kennedy created the Peace Corps. I didn't think that I would be lumped in the same category as those “other” Americans.

Once, when I visited a small agricultural town, a wild-eyed young man stepped from the shadows and yelled, “Americano? Just wait for the revolution!” Then, gun-like, he pointed his fingers at me and made a “rat-a-tat-tat” machine gun sound. Another Peace Corps volunteer, who lived in one of the turbulent barrios of Santo Domingo, was sitting in his shack one day when someone placed a grenade in his window. The grenade exploded; fortunately, the volunteer escaped injury.

Given this level of hostility, imagine my astonishment when, only two months after Rockefeller's visit, my neighbors took to

the streets, and excitedly congratulated me. “You Americans are the great ones!” they exclaimed. The reason for their excitement? Neil Armstrong had landed on the moon.

There were other break-through moments. One sweltering day, I was walking through the barrio when a group of domino players yelled, “Go home!” I turned and asked, “¿Por qué?” Amazed that I spoke Spanish (their only contact with Americans had been soldiers), they burst into laughter, and offered me a chair and a glass of rum. In many such small ways, we learned that through personal relationships, we could overcome mistrust and suspicion.

Dominicans also appreciated our organizational abilities. The president and treasurer of the rather haphazard community group where I lived thanked me for helping them organize meetings, record expenses, and put their organization on track. I finally concluded that Dominicans both loved us *and* hated us.

This conclusion squared with earlier experiences I had had. In 1962, when Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima were still fairly recent memories, a Japanese family accepted me warmly into their home on a student exchange. Several years later, I lived with a French family who disagreed with U.S. foreign policy, but loved us because we had liberated their country in 1944. Based on these experiences and what I witnessed in the Dominican Republic, I came to understand that most people overseas do not fit neatly into “for us” or “against us” categories, and that their feelings toward Americans are complex and sometimes contradictory.

This love-hate paradox exists at the personal level as well: a chance encounter with a rude or arrogant American can engender hostility, yet well-meaning and sincere individuals constantly connect with one another. This occurred repeatedly in the Dominican Republic while I was there, and many lasting friendships—and a number of marriages—formed between Dominicans and Americans.

If we learn to understand the conflicting feelings foreigners have toward us, we will develop insight into the hearts and minds of people in countries all over the world. Just as Dominicans in 1969 showed hostility toward Nelson Rockefeller and jubilation toward Neil Armstrong, there are people throughout the world today who resent us when they feel we trample on the rights of others, but who love us when we live up to our own ideals and promote the advancement of humankind.

Many years later, a group of Latinos in the United States asked me to produce videos orienting them to life here. It took a while to convince me that this job should be done by a gringo, but I finally took on production of a Spanish-language series about fitting into the neighborhood, responding appropriately if stopped by police,



(above) Neighbors in Capotillo, a barrio of Santo Domingo, 1968; (right) Dominican promotores and campesinos looking at a new irrigation system, financed by a small-business loan from Fundación Dominicana de Desarrollo, 1970. Mike Arnow's job was to do financial analysis of loan applications. The group receiving this loan was a campesino community organization in the Cibao valley.

workplace safety, health care, and education. Rounding out the topic areas, my DVD on nonviolent parenting is used by the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic.

I now work for the Center for Educational Programming, a nonprofit organization in Salt Lake City that produces educational materials to promote nonviolence and help immigrants and refugees in their successful transition to life in the United States. As you can see, I'm still an idealist!!!

Mike Arnow attended the Kennedy School of Government in 1967–68, served in the Peace Corps, and worked at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. He now writes and produces educational DVD's in Salt Lake City, where he hikes, skis, dances tango and, of course, merengue.





Constructing Dreams

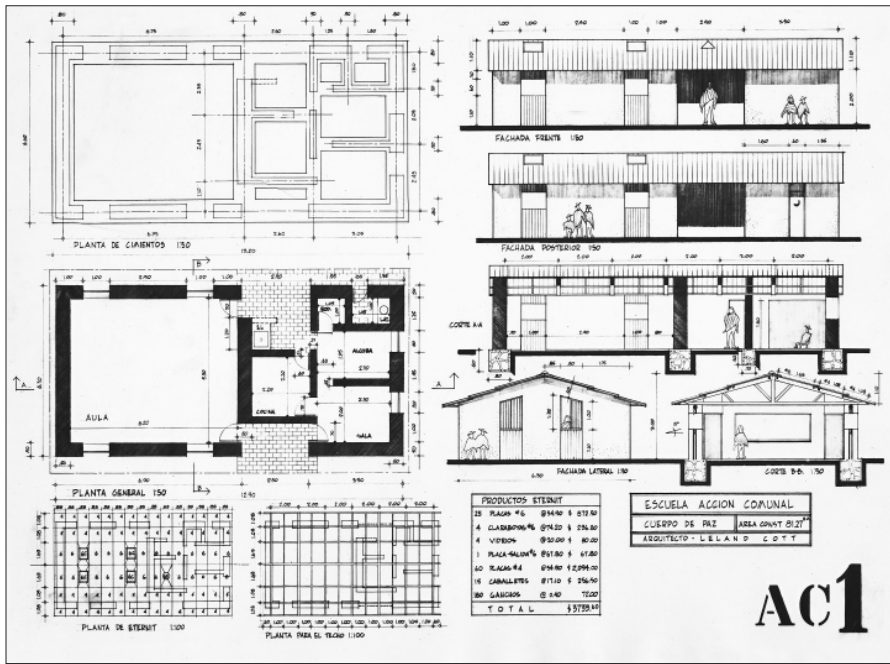
A Young Peace Corps Architect in Pasto, Colombia

BY LELAND COTT

MY PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR JOINING THE PEACE CORPS IN 1966 was one of answering my country's call to service; and specifically one that was a substitute for the military. The Vietnam draft was a fact of life, and I had already received five years of educational deferments from the Selective Service for my architectural training. As was the case for so many young men at the time, I looked toward the post-graduate alternative experience offered by the Peace Corps.

As best I can recall, I did have a sense that the Peace Corps might prove to be an important rite of passage even beyond the words in the Peace Corps recruiting material. What I didn't understand at the time was how great a formative experience my two years as a Peace Corps volunteer would turn out to be; one that continues to inform much of my life to this day.

My three months of Peace Corps training lived up to its legendary reputation for difficulty. About 40 of us, all roughly the same age, were exposed to tough physical and mental testing along with six hours of daily Spanish language training. My experience in the Peace Corps, from June 1966 until July 1968, was a complete change from anything I had previously known, from the very first moment I arrived at our two month training camp in Southern California. While training for one month in Mexico, in a village near Morelia, I lived in the same smell and filth from the farm animals as did my host family and always in utter poverty, in completely unsanitary conditions and without proper diet. In retrospect, I still marvel at how easy going and flexible we were then to allow that kind of radical change to wash over us so completely.



(opposite) The first of the large hand-made eucalyptus roof trusses is lifted into place; (above) Drawing by the author showing the foundation, floor and roof plans, elevations and sections.

However, the prospect of living high in the Andes designing and building schools in mountain villages made the temporary “inconvenience” of the training experience seem worthwhile. And 1966 was a different time, for sure; one during which our idealism formed many of our life decisions. We were, after all, going to change the world and make a difference.

That sense of idealism, coupled with my enthusiasm for architecture, was the perfect complement with President Kennedy’s vision of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps would become the natural next step in my personal and professional development. Earlier, during my three months of Spanish language and Acción Comunal training in California and Mexico—where we learned how, as professional architects, we could support other Peace Corps volunteers working to provide for the needs of the rural Colombian peasants—I volunteered to be sent to a rural location in Colombia on the assumption that my efforts would be most appreciated by my host country nationals. Accordingly I was assigned to the distant, underdeveloped southern state of Nariño to live in Pasto, its capital city, a rather nondescript small city of 80,000 whose main feature was its location on the side of thought-to-be-extinct, but active, volcano Galeras.

My basic *modus operandi* for supporting the 20 local Peace Corps Acción Comunal volunteers in Nariño was to design and assist with the construction of rural schools. Together, we developed a prototypical design made up of a single classroom and a small living space for the teacher, including a small kitchen and laundry (see illustration). When a local Peace Corps volunteer had organized a community to build a school, I would travel to that village to help with a small celebratory fund-raising fiesta. Beer sales revenue at these parties enabled us to purchase a corrugated asbestos cement roof, complete with skylights, for each school. Such a roof, mass-produced by the Eternit Company, was considered to be an improvement over the traditional heavy opaque clay tile roofing.

I would then set to work with a few men in the volunteer construction crew to lay down the outline of the walls and foundation, using a Peace Corps issued transit and tripod, so that we could hand-excavate an accurate rectangular foundation.

It would usually take a month or so to build the heavy rammed earth walls and eucalyptus-wood roof trusses that would bear the weight of the corrugated cement roof panels. During that month-long process, I would return from time to time to check that everything was being built to my specifications and then finally at the end for a final check on the placement of the roof panels. The beer bottle caps, saved from our party the previous month, were nailed to the exterior walls about twelve inches apart to act as a screed to hold the plaster on the wall’s vertical surface. The plaster was usually mixed, on-site, with hair that we would cut from the manes of the village horses to act as a binder (horsehair plaster was the way it was done in the United States as well).

The local joke was that you could always tell where I had built a school because the horses had no hair! A badge of honor, of sorts!

Pages more could be written about many aspects of my experience during those 24 months in Colombia building schools, access roads, bridges, marketplaces and parks. Aside from the obvious adventure of it all, it ultimately was a time that profoundly influenced my attitudes about Latin America. During my time here in Cambridge, on the Faculty of the Graduate School of Design, I have consulted with the Mexican Government on housing policy and run four semesters of urban design and planning studios in Havana, Cuba. Two years ago, working as a private consultant along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Cuban Government, I assisted with the restoration and preservation of Ernest Hemingway’s Havana home, the Finca Vigia. It brought back memories of building elsewhere in Latin America, including our use of Eternit corrugated asbestos cement roof panels, (purchased in Colombia!) to cover Papa Hemingway’s writing studio.

It’s now been 40 years since my return from Pasto, Colombia. The recent violence associated with the Colombian drug wars has had a serious negative effect on that city as well did the devastating volcanic eruption of Mt. Galeras in 1993. I may never return to that city, of which I have so many fond memories. But Pasto and its people taught me invaluable lessons and the experience laid the groundwork for wanting to serve as a citizen of the world, to make a difference.

Leland Cott is an Adjunct Professor of Urban Design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design where he teaches design studios and seminars about the design of housing; and is also the coordinator for the Master of Design Studies (MDesS) Housing and Urbanization specialization. At DRCLAS, he is a member of the Cuba Committee and Faculty Advisory Committee. He is a Founding Principal of Bruner/Cott & Associates, a 60-person architecture and planning firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Have You Ever *Viu Na Vida*?

A Peace Corps Experience in Brazil

BY JAMES ITO-ADLER

IN THE VERY LATE SIXTIES, AS A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER IN Brazil, I scribbled a small poem in a travel delirium brought on by a heady combination of hunger and strong spirits—*cachaça*, to be precise—on a long bus ride between Recife and Rio de Janeiro. We PCVs in Brazil were poorly paid in those days and I had precious little money to spare on this trip. The Itapemirim bus stopped every so often for refueling and I basically ate bread and olives while ordering a shot of local *aguardente* and—*por favor*—an empty bottle of same from which I would later carefully remove the label for my collection of folk art.

The poem sprang full-blown from our habit of mixing English and Portuguese in our small bilingual speech community. It proceeds:

Have you ever viu na vida
No, I never did vi
Gente quite as happy como tu and me
Si you fosse minha
What alegria I would tinha
And juntos ever more
Podíamos be.

Doggerel to be sure, but true to our speech patterns. We *namorared* in the *praça*, went down to the *comprativa* (the local pronunciation in the interior of “*cooperativa*” where many of us worked), and met at the *praia* in Boa Viagem to *pular Carnaval*.

Most of the volunteers in my circle were from the cohort of young Americans who had been selected to work with the federation of mixed cooperatives in the interior of the state of Pernambuco. These mixed coops (production and consumption) were linked with progressive elements in the Catholic Church and supported by CLUSA (Cooperative League of the U.S.A.). They were among the few surviving institutions working with rural peasants that remained after the military coup in 1964 had destroyed many of the unions and peasant leagues in the rural zones of Pernambuco.

This cohort was generally older and more educated than most of the B.A. generalists who filled the Peace Corps ranks, in part because of the volatile and highly politicized situation in Pernambuco at this time. A surprising number were lawyers, a group I semi-qualified for being a Harvard Law School drop-out. Meanwhile, the situation in the United States was also increasingly volatile and politicized as our group began training in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the fall of 1967. In response to the rising alienation of our generation over Vietnam, student movements were increasingly militant.

For trainees from the East Coast, Milwaukee proved to be more racially intense than anticipated. Father James Groppi was leading civil rights marches in downtown Milwaukee, and soul singer James Brown played a concert memorable for a confrontation between several impressively huge white police officers and a synchronized line

of dancing Black pre-teen girls, who when told to take their seats, told the officers in no uncertain terms what they could do with their night sticks. Memorable to me at least, because I remember trying to translate this eloquent example of Black vernacular into Portuguese for Antonio, our gentle professor-poet from Bahia, who had never heard Black kids talk to white cops in quite that manner.

After training, we found ourselves immersed in a rural environment in the midst of intense poverty and escalating repression, reaching a peak in Brazil in the period 1968–70. We encountered culture shock and difficulties adjusting to the frustrations of an ill-defined job and, indeed, I believe we were among the last of the community development PCVs in Brazil. There were few tangible rewards for our efforts beyond personal satisfaction at survival against the odds and a growing appreciation of the *calor humano*—“human warmth” of our Brazilian neighbors. In spite of their poverty, they seldom held the fact of our being Americans against us and were willing to share their rich culture and life experiences with us. And no doubt our often bumbling efforts to learn their language offered the occasional dose of unintentional comic relief.

I stress this fact, because for a variety of reasons we made little headway in getting to know young Brazilians of our own socioeconomic or educational background, especially in the state capital, Recife. The students did not often forgive us for being Americans and we were generally considered to be CIA spies and agents. We were basically too poor to socialize with them in any case, since on \$68 a month the *clubes* and upscale *boîtes* were beyond our reach. And the version of Portuguese we were learning to speak so fluently was that of peasants in the interior, poor people in the urban slums, and at best the regional accent of Pernambuco.

Once I was asked by my U.S. Peace Corps Director to come to the office to meet a Brazilian woman he had known in São Paulo through the progressive Catholic student movement during his former life as a priest in Brazil. The young woman wanted to visit one of the Recife slums that figured so prominently in

Race and class were an integral part of the experience of Peace Corps volunteers in the rural zones of Pernambuco in Brazil. Middle-class students often suspected Peace Corps members of being CIA spies.

the programs articulated by southern Brazilian activists; the poor *bairro* where I lived and worked fit the bill. We spent the day in Peixinhos, site of the municipal slaughterhouse, ate lunch at the Bar dos Vaqueiros (Cowboys’ bar), while the *urubus* (vultures) flew in lazy circles overhead.

Enthralled with the experience, she invited me to visit her if I were ever in São Paulo. She gave me a visiting card with her name



(from left) This label from a cachaça (firewater) bottle is a classic from Pernambuco; the toucan label is from Bahia.

and address in what turned out to be a very chic neighborhood off the Avenida Paulista. The day I actually showed up to pay her a visit, I received an invaluable lesson in the complexities of race, class and regional differences in Brazil. I was stopped at the front door by the doorman who asked me my business. I replied in my lilting *nordestino* accent that I was there to see Senhora So-and-So. I was told brusquely to wait around by the back entrance. By-and-by he returned with the *senhora*, who upon seeing me, started to laugh, “Seu João, este não é baiano; ele é americano.” “Não senhora,” he replied “Pela fala, ele é baiano mesmo.” The doorman reluctantly accepted her explanation that I was from the United States, insisting “By his speech he really is a *baiano*.”

The strength of my downscale northeastern accent and travelling clothes to match had masked my American accent and he took me for a poor migrant from the impoverished northeast, who are metonymically referred to as *baianos* in São Paulo. (In Rio de Janeiro the corresponding term is *paraíba*, another poor northeastern state.) This in spite of my white face, since *baianos* are generally assumed to be on the darker end of the color spectrum.

This experience in the Peace Corps changed my life and my passion for Brazil eventually led me back to Harvard, where I returned to the study of anthropology. I joined Prof. David Maybury-Lewis’

growing group of Brazilianists, and earned my doctorate with a thesis on the Japanese community in São Paulo. I was not alone in the transition from Peace Corps service to anthropology, and I note with pride the work of Nancy Scheper-Hughes who wrote the book, *Death Without Mourning*, based on her experiences in the next town over from where I had originally been stationed in the sugar cane zone of Pernambuco.

Later, to my chagrin, I learned from Joseph Page’s book, *The Revolution That Never Was* (1972) that in fact, the young American who set up the cooperative program in Pernambuco with CLUSA was said to have been one the most effective CIA agents in Brazil and CLUSA was on the list published by the *New York Times* of CIA conduits. So it goes. ...

James Ito-Adler earned his Ph.D. in anthropology at Harvard in 1987. Subsequently he has served as Visiting Lecturer/Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Dept., Proposal Coordinator/Editor at the Harvard Institute for International Development, Senior Program Officer with the International Health Systems Group at the School of Public Health, and most recently as Program Officer at LASPAU Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas. He can be reached at jitoadler@gmail.com.

Small Loans Fund Big Dreams

From Peace Corps to ACCION

BY CARA FORSTER

SIX WEEKS AFTER GRADUATING FROM HARVARD'S CLASS OF 1999, I joined the Peace Corps and became an Environment Volunteer. I moved to Nicaragua with rudimentary Spanish skills, unquenchable optimism, and no real idea of what I was getting myself into. In 1960, when John F. Kennedy first presented the idea of what would become the Peace Corps, he asked a group of Michigan students how many of them were willing to serve their country and the poor by living and working abroad. He said, "On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two, but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer to whether a free society can compete." Unbeknownst to me at the time, my life became part of the answer to this question.

My Peace Corps site is a little place called La Trinidad—a town of about 10,000 people nestled in a valley surrounded by three hills, bordered on the north by a river, and parked on the Pan American highway. Originally, I had planned to do something practical with my Peace Corps service, like reforestation projects, but instead I was encouraged to spend my first year teaching environmental education in the rural elementary schools. During my second year, I organized a sanitation campaign and became the manager of a small savings and loan operation. This last project became my favorite—it provided \$50 loans to single mothers to start or expand small businesses. I had never even heard of the word "microfinance," and at first I was daunted by the idea that at the age of 24 with a degree in Environmental Science, I would be administering a program for women desperately in need of both working capital for their small businesses and the skills to make the most of that capital.

Every Monday afternoon, I would climb the rocky hill east of the Pan American highway to the poor neighborhood of Bella Vista, where many of my business ladies lived. Pastel pink and blue

bananas, and the quiet faith that everything would work out. And every week I politely but insistently asked for each of these women's weekly payments. Some weeks were hard and I understood that a payment this week was not possible. But the following week I would return and the women would contribute what they could, striving to double the weekly payment and make up for the week before. At the end of our first year together, my weekly insistence and their weekly sacrifice had produced amazing results.

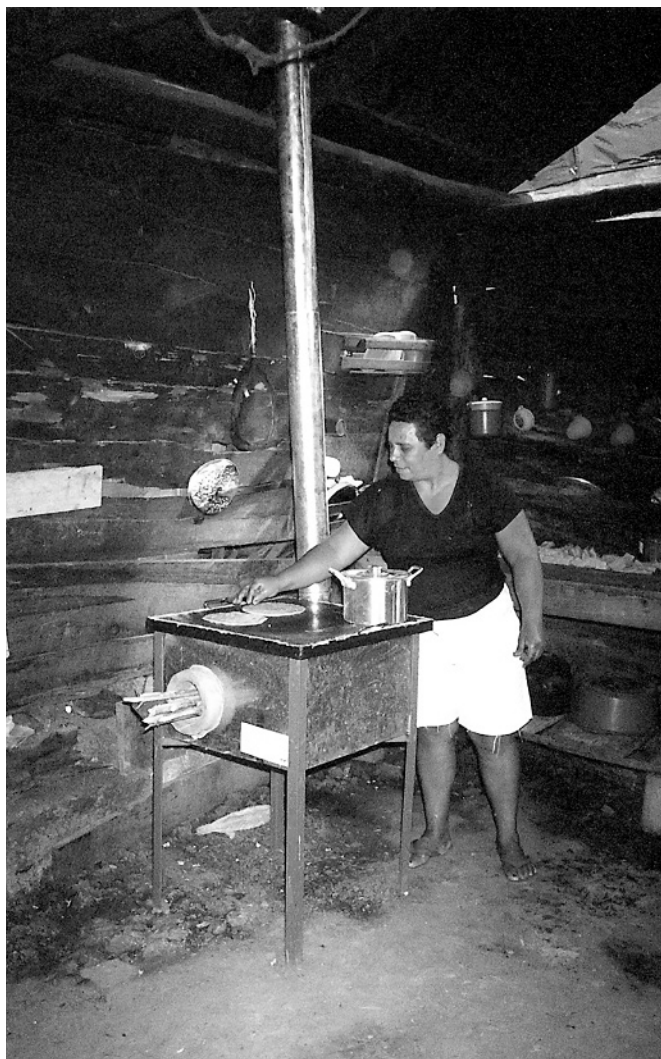
Doña Maria Salome was my only fully illiterate business woman; she would tell people it was her eyes that didn't work well anymore now that she was older, but the truth was her father never let her go to school. So, I taught her oldest daughter who was still at home how to keep her mother's books. Sometimes, as many parents will understand, her 14-year-old daughter refused to do the chores her mother asked of her, in this case writing down the sales and expenses for the week. On these occasions, Doña Maria would wait for my visit and recite from memory the full list of the week's sales and expenses, so that I could bring her books up to date. With her first year's savings, Doña Maria bought a fuel-efficient cooking stove that saved money on firewood, reduced her consumption of trees, and provided a chimney that alleviated the eye and respiratory problems she and her daughters suffered due to the open wood fire in their home. This is the kind of success that is really triple bottom line: better for her pocketbook, better for the environment, better for her family's health. The stove was such a success that on my weekly visits Doña Maria began to report how many of her neighbors came by and offered to buy it from her. She said she wouldn't sell it to anyone, because she had worked so hard to save for it and was so proud of how it had been delivered by Peace Corps staff in their trademark white SUV. It also permitted her to make her day's batch of tortillas in half the time as the open fire, allowing her to branch out into candy production as well.

Each of the women I worked with managed, over the course of the year, which included two six-month loan cycles, to not only pay back their loans, but also to save about \$1/week. For many of them, this amounted to more money than they had ever had in one place at one time before in their whole lives. Some of the women saved

Our accomplishments in the year we spent working together surprised all of us. The women realized that despite the challenges of their circumstances, they had good business ideas and could save toward their goals.

houses built with hurricane relief money brightened the muddy hillside and lined the gravelly roads where the municipal services failed to reach. I spent these afternoons sitting in the dirt-floored living rooms of these two-room houses, listening to the stories of the week's worth of happenings in each family. They shared not only stories of dashed hopes and small triumphs, but also *guiso de pipian*, *café con rosquillas*, or *tortillas con cuajada*. I listened with compassion to stories of illness, alcoholism and discrimination based on local politics; I listened with joy to stories about the children's success in school, a good deal to be had this week on business inputs like

more and some saved less, but each managed to save enough for us to implement the next step in the business plan we had created together at the beginning of the year. What we were able to accomplish in the year we spent working together surprised all of us. I realized that a firm grasp of multiplication and the education of having been raised in a capitalist society was enough to change these women's lives permanently for the better. They realized that despite the challenges of their circumstances, they had good business ideas, could save toward their goals, and could improve the life they provided for their families. All of them learned about the value



(clockwise from top left): Garbage men from La Trinidad wear Peace Corps T-shirts as thanks for their participation in a sanitation campaign; Doña Maria Salome, using her new fuel-efficient cooking stove to make tortillas; business women display "graduation" certificates.

of investing in their businesses and how saving can help achieve business and family goals. I learned that access to financial services is a powerful way of empowering women and reducing poverty.

At the close of my Peace Corps service, I treated all the women to a celebratory lunch to commemorate their successful completion of a year in the program. At this lunch Doña Maria said to me a most memorable thing. "Cara," she said, "*te agradecemos tanto por enseñarnos a trabajar.*" And I thought to myself: here is a woman who raises seven children on \$25 a week, who lived through the war, and built her house with her own hands, I couldn't possibly have taught her anything about what it means to work. But I also understood what she meant, which was 'thank you for showing us a better way to work, a way to make our work more effective, a way to make our dreams a reality on a time scale we can see.' It was my year working with these women to help them see how to turn their own potential into an engine for achieving their dreams that made me passionately committed to microfinance as the best tool I know of to help end poverty. And it is toward that goal that I have been striving ever since.

It took me six years of varied experiences to finally attain my

dream and have the opportunity to dedicate my career to expanding the reach of microfinance to poor women worldwide. My Peace Corps experience gave me the determination necessary to see this dream through to its fulfillment. Now, I am a Program Manager for ACCION International's new Center for Financial Inclusion. My program areas include consumer protection, social performance, and impact assessment, all of which help give the poor high quality financial tools so they can work their way out of poverty. We have just launched an industry-wide Campaign for Client Protection aimed at expanding clients' access to financial services, while protecting clients' rights and staying focused on double bottom line results (both economic and social). I accepted President Kennedy's challenge and joined the Peace Corps, and it is absolutely the best thing I have done with my life so far.

Cara S. Forster served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nicaragua from 1999 to 2001. She currently works as the Program Manager for the Double Bottom Line at ACCION's Center for Financial Inclusion in Washington, DC. The Center's website is <<http://www.centerforfinancialinclusion.org>>.

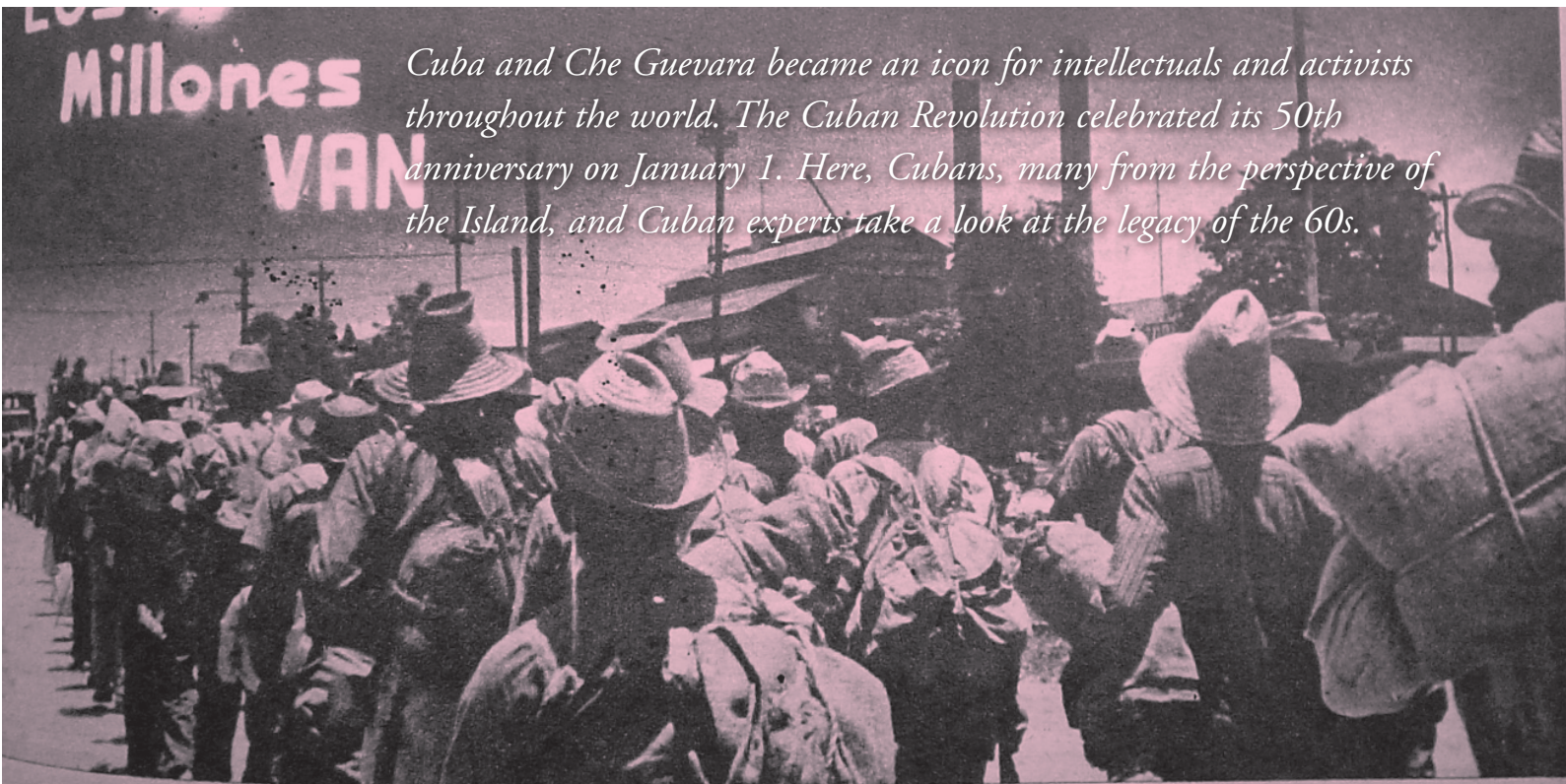


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evoluciones", o los mo-
os revolucionarios hasta
stuviera dispuesto a per-
el gobierno norteameri-

FIDEL CASTRO



El Jefe de la Revolución, doctor Fidel Cas-
tro, da a conocer la Ley de Nacionalización.



Cuba and Che Guevara became an icon for intellectuals and activists throughout the world. The Cuban Revolution celebrated its 50th anniversary on January 1. Here, Cubans, many from the perspective of the Island, and Cuban experts take a look at the legacy of the 60s.

... La aceptación del reto constituye hacer una hombrada. Pero la Revolución ha hecho muchas hombradas. Y siempre ha salido victoriosa...

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The Red Year

Politics, Society and Culture in 1968

BY RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ

AT THE BEGINNING OF 1968, WHEN CHE Guevara had been dead in Bolivia for only three months and five years had gone by since the missile crisis, Cuba found itself practically alone in the hemisphere, menaced by triple threats: the impunity of the actions of the United States in the Vietnam War; ostracism by the rest of the governments in the region; and the pressures on the Revolution to align itself with the Chinese or the Soviets rather than running an independent course.

The challenge of constructing a type of socialism distinct from the Soviet and Chinese models put to a difficult test the resolve of the nation's quest for an independent path, with the goal of building a better society.

Cuba maintained its lonely path in the dramatic certainty that it would be the first society to experiment with truly communist forms of organization and social cooperation. A year earlier, in January 1967, Fidel had announced that three small rural towns—San Andrés de Caiguanabo, Banao and Gran Tierra—would be pioneers in this experiment, which would consist of a broad-reaching welfare system and minimum use of markets and money, declaring, “This has to do with the general conception of the form in which we wish to construct socialism and the form in which we wish to build communism.” Of course, in that

communist experiment, the state did not surrender its role to the society, but rather consolidated its powers.

Such an experiment might seem a mere utopia today, but at the time it was a living argument in an intense polemic of ideas and theories about the socialist revolution in which many citizens—and not just the political vanguard and organic intellectuals—had a say.

As a direct expression of the predominant political culture and strong demand for a form of Marxism different from the Soviet model in being open to a range of ideas, *Pensamiento Crítico* (Critical Thought) was first published in February 1967. The journal sought to respond “to the need for information about the current developments in political and social thought in revolutionary Cuba today,” and bring into Cuban socialist culture so-called Western Marxism and non-Marxist intellectual thought.

Although the great threats of the first part of the 60s—the Bay of Pigs, the Missile Crisis and the War of Escambray—were history, between 1966 and 1968, terrorism against the Revolution was still active from bases in Florida and the Caribbean. In 1962, John F. Kennedy had sworn not to invade the Island, but in the latter part of the 60s, Cuban soldiers were frequently fired at from the naval base in Guantánamo. But what was even more frightening than these bullets was the Cuban perception of the U.S. war against Vietnam, in which the Pentagon used every weapon in its possession—with the exception of nuclear arms—to gain

control, and yet neither the Soviet Union nor China came to the defense of the Vietnamese. Thus, the Cubans interpreted the war in Vietnam as a growing threat to the Island, reinforced by the Soviet warning that it would never again risk its own security to come to Cuba's defense, as it had in 1962.

In this tense environment, the 1966 migration agreement with the United States, along with the passage of the Cuban Adjustment Act by the Johnson Administration, set off a period of very intense emigration, with more than 270,000 Cubans leaving for the United States by 1973. This policy, designed by the United States as an alternative to using force against the Revolution, intensified divisions within families, not just among the middle- and upper-classes. In the terms of that era, those who left were joining the camp of the enemy of the Cuban nation. The politicization of the migratory process reproduced, and indeed, reinforced, the prevailing domestic and international polarization.

Until 1968, the left almost everywhere supported the Cuban Revolution. In Europe, the Revolution was originally perceived as a populist revolution “without ideology” that had independently come to power in an unaligned manner through the efforts of guerrillas, offering an alternative to Stalinism and a world divided into two superpowers. In the Third World, above all in Africa, the Cuban Revolution was seen as the spearhead of the struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism, and Cuba as a political and even military ally, of consider-

Clockwise from top left: Woman Venceremos Brigade member cuts cane (photo by Dick Cluster); Fidel Castro speaks at INRA, August 1960; 1969-70 sugar harvest is depicted in *Bohemia* Magazine; ballet class.

THE SIXTIES

able weight despite its small size.

This progressive and leftist international support provided some counterweight to the ideological and cultural effect of isolation. Renowned intellectuals and artists visited the Island from around the world, including such luminaries as Jean Paul Sartre, C. Wright Mills, Graham Greene, Julio Cortázar, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Carlos Fuentes and Josephine Baker, to name a few.

At the same time, culture poured into Cuba through an abundance of films from all over the world, and Cubans flocked to ordinary movie theatres to see movies that elsewhere would only have been exhibited in highbrow art movie houses. In 1960, 200 of 380 films shown commercially in Havana were from the United States, but later in the decade, Japan, Italy, France, England, Spain, and Latin America offered a wide range of productions, not to mention Soviet Union and Eastern European film, previously unknown in Cuba.

Everyone seemed engaged in lively intellectual debate about art and aesthetics that might have been seen as specialized and unpopular elsewhere. In 1968, harsh polemics over culture and ways of thinking were still fresh, and many leading figures expressed their conflicting opinions about the economic theory of the transition. Che's strong criticism of socialist realism, his ironic observations about the taste of government officials transformed into cultural policy and above all, his warnings about the danger of authoritarianism in the name of the people, expressed in *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (1965), became the most influential text in the debate on the theory and practice of building a revolution in those years.

In spite of external pressures, not only intellectuals but the country's leaders engaged in repeated and polemic discussions, as if the very life of the nation depended on these conversations. Despite the blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States, they were aware of social struggles elsewhere. Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Angela Davis, Martin Luther King Jr. and the leaders of the Black Panthers were popular heroes on the Island.

Ideological debate, knowledge and attention to the latest currents in art and critical thought were forming a new civic canon. To be a revolutionary meant to participate in cultural life, to be up to date



In 1964, three generations of the Pérez-Bode family enjoyed the Soviet circus in Cuba. DRCLAS publications intern Clotilde Dedecker is the daughter of the girl at far right.

on what was happening in Cuba and the world, to *superarse* (improve oneself), a word hardly used today, loosely translated as constant learning, within and beyond the context of formal education. From politics to agriculture, and of course art, the spirit of experimentation was fertilized by revolutionary modernity and put into action for the benefit of the majority. This was a revolution for workers and peasants, for disadvantaged men and women, but its development demanded the appropriation of the most advanced knowledge about science, technology and universal culture.

Although totally separate from the Chinese Revolution of 1966 and different in meaning from the revolt in France in 1968, the upheaval in Cuba was a cultural revolution. This revolution was not undertaken only to provide social services, but to mobilize citizens committed to transforming everything from the past, beginning with themselves.

Cultural policy was expressed in quite austere forms, semi-military styles with stoic attitudes that rejected as superfluous and bourgeoisie everything that deviated from the rigorous model of socialist civic duty: "study, work and armed defense." The call to assume ideologically defined positions as part of that model spread to artistic and literary outlets, including aesthetic credos.

The poets gathered around the magazine

El Caimán Barbudo (1966), who argued for using all types of words for creative ends—educated and slang, "good" and "bad"—embodied a generation that expressed itself from the vantage of the Revolution. These writers identified their point of view with that of the Revolution, without the "original sin" of those who wrote about the revolutionary process without being part of it. At the same time as they called for a concept of social poetry that incorporated all topics, including the most intimate, they rejected as "bad poetry" that which "is impregnated with second-hand metaphysics, to situate man as separate from his circumstances." ("Nos pronunciamos," *El Caimán Barbudo*, opus 1, abril de 1966, p. 11).

These young "caimanes," clearly opposed to the canons of socialist realism, expressed their ideological position in a literary manifesto, identifying themselves as the legitimate sons of the Revolution; they judged as "bad writers" those who distanced themselves from the Revolution yet tried to pass themselves off as revolutionary writers and artists when they weren't. Without passing judgment on whether these "others" would be recognized today as having artistic merit, the point is that a group of anti-dogmatic young intellectuals, who advocated the renovation of language, considered that those who were not, in the words of Che, "authentically revolutionary" could not

be legitimate artistic creators since they adhered to bourgeois values.

1968: THREATS AND RADICALISM(S)

The year 1968 was not baptized the Year of the Heroic Guerrilla by chance. This designation did not have as much to do with national liberation projects in Latin America—Venezuela, Perú, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, many of which had already been defeated or in frank retreat—as it did with the significance for Cuban socialism of the death of Che in Bolivia in October 1967. The entire society had become immersed in a strange mix of grief, commitment and revolutionary ferocity. In terms of broad impact on the national consciousness, no book in Cuba can compare to the free mass edition (July 1, 1968) of *Diario del Che en Bolivia*. Everyone, from all social groups, read the book, and its international dissemination was almost instantaneous, transcending market and political barriers. For the majority of Cubans, Che represented a moral beacon, connecting ideas and behavior, theory and practice, Communist ideology and patriotism, nationalism and revolutionary solidarity.

In 1968, Cuba experienced in all its gravity the compromise between thought and action. In consequence of the cumulative effects of the economic blockade and the deficient results of ambitious economic plans, scarcity increased, with all its undesirable consequences. It was necessary to be faithful to the chosen path in this highly critical situation as a way of conserving revolutionary consensus. The consensus included as a fundamental political value the principle of equality and social justice.

State control had been achieved over almost all the means of production and services, with the exception of small businesses such as corner grocery stores and small manufacturing workshops. Social policy—the main instrument for delivering social justice—was devoted to preserving equality through strong homogenizing actions, democratizing access to work, health, education, culture and inexpensive public services, including entertainment, transportation and housing. The criterion was more than egalitarian—it was uniformly leveling.

In March 1968, almost ten years after the Revolution came to power and affirmed its socialist identity, small markets and private manufacturing workshops were nationalized;

there were 2,500 of these in Havana alone. Only taxi owners with their battered old cars, doctors who graduated medical school before 1959 and small farmers preserved their rights to conduct business on their own.

If we think of this so-called Revolutionary Offensive with its negative consequences as merely poor economic judgment or an overzealous expression of revolutionary fervor, we do not take into account the ideological context, which was consistent with the prevailing political culture and the particular circumstances of Cuban socialism. The egalitarian policy of the Offensive had already provided free daycare, water services, public telephones, sports events, and even Havana tunnel tolls; taxes had been slashed and the cost of public transportation greatly reduced. Doing away with the majority of small independently owned businesses was seen as a blow against the last vestiges of the old order; to permit sources of inequality was seen as inadmissible political weakness on the road to socialism. Going forward, the whole country would mobilize for the combative sugar harvest of the Ten Millions, an economic goal for the entire nation.

Though Che had been able to criticize the Soviet Union and China in his 1967 Message without compromising the position of the Cuban government, fissures would emerge in official policy in three distinct moments in 1968: the trial of the so-called Microfracción; Fidel's public criticism of

thought and strategy of struggle symbolized by Che Guevara.

The Soviet Union's announcement that it would reduce its oil sales to Cuba in January 1968 appeared to give the Micro an instrumental role in forcing Cuba to adhere to Soviet policy and, perhaps unintentionally, played into the hands of the United States, which sought to overthrow the Revolution through political subversion.

In the same speech in which he announced the Revolutionary Offensive, Fidel launched an attack on Soviet Marxist-Leninist manuals as "anachronistic." Less than two weeks before the trial of the Microfracción, from January 4–12, hundreds of artists, philosophers and literary figures gathered at Havana's Cultural Congress. It was not a meeting of revolutionary militants in support of Cuba, but a forum in which the Cuban participants joined thinkers representing diverse intellectual and ideological tendencies from a wide spectrum of Marxist and critical Western thought. The event displayed diversity, but also the idea of political commitment by intellectuals, a value shared by Western leftists and their Cuban revolutionary colleagues. At the conference's closing ceremony, Fidel underlined the "universal conscience of struggle," asking "Where were the revolutionary vanguards? On which sector did Che Guevara's death have the greatest impact? The intellectual workers, most definitely!" He praised the

For the majority of Cubans, Che represented a moral beacon, connecting ideas and behavior, theory and practice, Communist ideology and patriotism, nationalism and revolutionary solidarity.

Marxist-Leninist manuals and Cuba's reaction to the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

As Julio César Guanche describes in detail in his article in this issue (p. 25), the trial of Aníbal Escalante and other members of the Microfracción had a strong impact on public opinion at a particularly sensitive time. The Micro, as it was popularly known, operated in secret and attempted to influence officials in other Communist regimes to get the Soviet Union to apply economic pressure in order to force the Revolution to align itself with that bloc. This was certainly quite a radical deviation from the line of

participation of a group of Catholic priests in the event, clerics who advocated harmony between Christianity and Marxism before liberation theology was even talked about. He fiercely attacked the "rusting" dogmatic Marxism that he viewed as the very opposite of authentic Marxist thought, which should translate itself "as a revolutionary force and not as a pseudorevolutionary church." He concluded by stressing the importance of the Congress for the Cuban people, who "continue to increase their knowledge, information and revolutionary horizons."

The beginning of the end of the intel-

lectual left's honeymoon in Cuba was the Cuban reaction to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. An important group of intellectuals focused on the part of Fidel's August 23 speech that supported the Warsaw Pact invasion, but overlooked another aspect of the speech: criticism of the type of socialism that had been established in the socialist bloc, as well as a strong affirmation of Third World socialism.

[...] Will Warsaw Pact troops also be sent to Vietnam if the Yankee imperialists escalate their aggression against this country and the Vietnamese people ask for this aid? [...] Will Warsaw Pact troops be sent to Cuba if the Yankee imperialists attack our country, or even in the face of a threat of attack by the Yankee imperialists on our country, if our country asks for such aid?

Whether considering Fidel Castro's decision to support the Soviet intervention right or wrong, it must be recognized that this surprising speech defied at the same time real socialism and the knee-jerk response of the European left conditioned by the ghosts of Stalinism. The Cuba of that left, constructed through its traumas, desires and projections, the Cuba of a libertarian utopia, bearded men and informal styles, the incubating laboratory of pure communism, would finally clash with its contradictions, coming up against the conflicts and impurities of the real world.

The Cuban perspective on the weakening of the socialist camp and the threat of the United States was consolidated that summer of 1968, when the international context was transformed in a way that was quite negative for the Island. In effect, the struggles of the student movement in France, Germany, the United States and, later, Mexico, as well as the civil rights movement in the United States, which would come to a climax that year, would precipitate the defeat and even the physical elimination of its principal leaders (the Kennedy brothers, Martin Luther King). Because of these assassinations and defeats, Cuban expectations of change in these important countries were dashed, along with hopes of strengthening revolutionary movements throughout the world.

Cuba became a fortress under siege, and this syndrome seriously affected the atmosphere of cultural diversity and contacts

with the outside world. The definitions of "within" the Revolution and "outside" of it—*adentro* and *afuera*—became stricter and less inclusive. As a result, prohibitions proliferated. Contact with exiles was totally proscribed; foreigners were a subject of continual suspicion, as were rock music and even jazz, supposedly associated with imperialist culture, the same as beards, long hair and miniskirts. Identified as vices left-over from a capitalist past, already existing prejudices against homosexuality and religious belief intensified. Atheist puritanism, alien to traditional Cuban culture, began to dominate radio stations, newspapers, schools, and even political discussion.

In October 1968, a couple of weeks before Richard Nixon won the election in the United States, a major polemic erupted around the books that had won the literary competition of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. A calm reading of these works, as well as of the 1967 prized best short story book from Casa de las Américas (*Condenados del Condado*) does not seem to justify the ruckus, nor is the conflict easy to understand from today's distant perspective. Indeed, Heberto Padilla's *Fuera de juego* and Antón Arrufat's *Los siete contra Tebas* were published with a prologue by the presidency of UNEAC, the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists.

Although Antón Arrufat's theatre piece and Norberto Fuentes' short story collection merely dealt with conflicts of conscience and attitudes in keeping with a problematic artistic representation of the revolutionary period, and many of the poems in *Fuera de juego* simply join some ironic comments about Eastern European socialism, the political atmosphere and the attitudes of the main protagonists sparked the fight. The extreme tension prevailing in Cuba and the complex mesh of forces at that time, the worsening of political polarization and the perceived immediate threat to the Revolution can explain how these works were construed as instruments of a dangerous dissidence in the intellectual realm and how this interpretation had wide resonance. In the context of that adverse scenario and fervent national appeals for unity and production, the bitter skepticism of Padilla's verses, coupled with his notorious political histrionics, made a perfect target for his adversaries. Goaded by the flagrantly anti-Soviet stance of the poet, they attacked him

in every way, depicting his poems as "defeatist" and the poet as engaged "in the service of the counterrevolution."

Padilla would serve as a scapegoat for individuals who were not officially pro-Soviet, but who were so in terms of culture and mentality. After the Ten Million ton sugar harvest failed, the socialist culture of the 60s would experience a deep setback, and political winds shifted.

SOME FINAL WORDS ON THE 60S

It is impossible to understand why in only nine months such events as the Havana's Cultural Congress and the "Padilla affair" could happen, if one ignores the historic circumstances and the political tempo of that incredible 1968.

Cuban socialism would be transformed in the following years. In spite of the negative aura of the "Quinquenio gris," (1971-76) with the phantom of socialist realism floating over the arts, of calcified Eastern European thought embedded in the ideological apparatus and other institutions, the social and cultural development of Cuban socialism did not stagnate. The educational revolution, extensive access to cultural consumption, the continuous increase in standards of living, increased social mobility and egalitarianism, the expeditions to Africa and the deepening of a Third World foreign policy, the end of isolation and the recuperation of ties with Latin America and the Caribbean, the economic insertion into the socialist bloc with advantageous conditions, state support for artistic and literary creation, the development and proliferation of many scientific institutions and artistic production would bring a new impetus to the socialist project, strengthening its consensus and enlarging its cultural base.

Nevertheless, a year like 1968, tinged with all-encompassing, intense and dramatic color, will never be repeated. Never again in Cuban society will that defiant red dominate, without respite or halftones, so excessive, difficult, tragic, brilliant as it did in 1968.

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The Crisis of the Scissors

The Paradoxes of a Revolution in Progress

BY JULIO CÉSAR GUANCHE

IN JANUARY 1959, THE REBELS WHO expelled the dictator Fulgencio Batista came down from the Cuban mountains with their long flowing hair, ample beards and necklaces hung with religious motifs. The image of those who liberated the island by themselves—with an unconventional ideology not found in the dominant doctrines—became an integral part of “The Sixties.”

Some understood the Cuban revolution as a subversive attempt to recruit the peasant base in order to achieve the social integration of the Rebel Army, instrument of its victory. In reality, the 1959 revolution had little to do with traditional peasant revolutions such as Vietnam’s. However, there is one profound sense of commonality: the revolution put the spotlight on all the inhabitants of the planet and revealed their multiple dimensions.

The Cuban revolution is an example of what French philosopher Edgar Morin called “the possibility of a post-bourgeois civilization,” after observing the significance of the various resistances to the war in Vietnam, the condemnation of the French atrocities in Algiers, the massacre of Tlatelolco in Mexico, the Soviet invasion of Prague, the counterculture, sexual liberation, the criticism of consumerism and the affirmation of human rights.

SOME REAL SCISSORS

In Havana, a decade after the victory, Cuban revolutionaries had already organized the dismantling of imperialist domination, followed by the redistribution of land and housing, universal education and social justice. At the same time, the once long-haired revolutionaries organized expeditions to the ice cream parlor Coppelia (a meeting place for Havana’s urban youth), equipped with scissors to cut hippie hair and to tear tight clinging pants and other “deviations from revolutionary morals.” Furthermore, revolutionaries were sending homosexuals and others who did not accept official morals to labor camps with the idea of turning them into “men,” that is to say, “revolutionaries.” As strange as it seems, it is true: this all had the same objective as a



Bohemia documents the 1970 sugar harvest.

whole: to achieve the possibility of a life with freedom and dignity.

In Soviet Russia of the 1920s, Leon Trotsky used the expression “crisis of the scissors” to explain the economic ruin of the time. In this imaginary scissors, one blade represented industry and the other agriculture. The crisis consisted of the separation, the growing distance between the two. In Cuba, the very real image of people wielding scissors to enforce their faith serves to demonstrate how a revolutionary process can both head up a continental rebellion against oligarchies and forbid its citizens to listen to the Beatles, considering the musical group an expression of “bourgeois decadence.” One blade of the scissors is not only distant from the other but actually opposed to it.

GROWING CONTRADICTIONS

The Cuban decade of the 60s is fraught with dichotomies of this type that result from the coexistence of opposing ideologies within the revolution itself, which may mix, merge, confuse direction, and produce contradictory syntheses.

Between the end of 1967 and January of 1968, the Cuban tribunals concluded a trial involving so-called political crimes. The principal defendant was Aníbal Escalante Dellundé, leader of the old Communist party, the Partido Socialista Popular—

which had been integrated in 1962 into a single revolutionary organization, together with the July 26 Revolutionary Movement and the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate. Escalante’s crime in 1968 was his effort to create a political tendency that opposed the course of the Cuban revolution and wished to situate the Island as a satellite of the Soviet Union, incarnation of the land of the socialist ideal, according to Escalante.

At the same time, in October 1968, a jury convoked by the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) awarded prizes to two books: *Fuera del juego*, by Heberto Padilla, and *Los siete contra Tebas*, by Antón Arrufat. The polemic set off at the time by the “anti-revolutionary character” of these books seemed to favor those Cubans who favored Soviet-style socialism.

The polemic ended three years later with the now famous “Caso Padilla.” A good part of the international intellectual elite saw the spectre of Stalinism in Cuba in the 1971 Padilla case, but very few observed the relationship between the criticism of Padilla’s book and the accusation against Escalante, both in 1968, as the sharpest expression of the tension already existing since 1961 of two possible ways of developing the Revolution and the form in which the tension would be resolved in the future.

Padilla had written poems about life in the “real socialist” bloc,” describing how it was “practically prohibited to talk about guerrillas” and how some experienced a stifling combination of privilege and silence: “this peace is an immorality.” Seen from the perspective of 40 years later, the opposition to Padilla’s book can be better explained because of its anti-Soviet content, while the accusation against Escalante is not so much a power struggle—Escalante and his group were a mere 37 individuals with little real importance in Cuban political life—as an act against the Soviet Union to prevent its control over the direction of the Cuban process.

Padilla would become a *cause célèbre* because his discourse was backed by the West and by socialist left throughout the world, while Escalante’s viewpoint seemed

to have the backing of the Soviet Union, which for much of the world was a stinking giant with clay feet. However, both events are a continuum of the politics that, in the 60s, considered the *pax soviética* in regards to Vietnam, Latin America and the Third World as immoral and attempted to construct an independent path toward freedom and justice, refusing to be part of anyone's "camp."

INEQUALITIES

Yet the particular "crisis of the scissors" in Cuba is not just about different political and personal options existing within the process.

Strictly speaking, national liberation did not include the possibility of long hair, tight pants and criticism of consumerism. The global content of the movement of 1968 constituted an attack on both capitalism and "real socialism," but it carried differences arising from inequalities between development and underdevelopment. In France, the 1968 movement grew out of the new composition of the working class and the emergence of a broad youth-student sector, voicing the necessity to attack abundance and consumerism and thus to break the dynamic of the "one-sided man" shackled by efficiency, so he could regain time to enjoy life and recover the lost ideal of living in a community.

These necessities did not connect with Third World needs, as seen in the writings of Ho Chi Minh, Glauber Rocha, Camilo Torres, Amílcar Cabral, Salvador Allende and Ahmed Sékou Touré. They discuss the same themes: colonialism, dependence, structural deformation of the economy, looting of natural resources, precarious working class conditions, secular poverty and the dismantling of the peasant class, the lack of educational possibilities and the misery of hunger and sickness.

Cuban politics in the 60s were an attempt to give birth to "someone" who would be recognized as an equal, something that was impossible with the Soviet Union and its satellites.

When Ernesto Guevara, *Che*, called for the creation of "one, two, three, many Vietnams" in his message to the first Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966, he brought this idea to world attention. Some have attributed Guevara's call to his "adventurerism," accusations similar to those that

the officialdom of the "real socialist" bloc directed against the Cuban-Argentine guerrilla: *adventurer*, *Trotskyite*, *petit bourgeois* and *anarchist*, all at the same time, as if this were possible. Framing his action in this manner, another interpretation is avoided: if the Soviet Union conceived of politics as the negotiation of geopolitical interests between the great powers, Guevara proposed the politics of small countries' relying on themselves and each other to overcome the problems created by the oppression of colonialism, the constant underdevelopment and imperialist domination.

Guevara's guerrilla experience in Bolivia, as previously in the Congo, was not as absurd as it has been presented: a magic formula through which some twenty men in the jungle are capable of digging a tunnel one night to take over state power and to occupy the presidential seat at dawn.

Organizations such as the Casa de las Américas, the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL), and the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) were seen as representing, with great conflicts, the "two currents of world revolution," as Moroccan revolutionary leader El Mehdi Ben Barka observed: the "socialist," personified by the Soviet Union, and that of "national liberation," *parallel* to that current and spearheaded by the Third World. These organizations found their true inspiration in the latter: political struggle—through parties, guerrillas, movements or whatever the context showed was the most efficient way from a revolutionary perspective—to achieve the expression of the voices of the "wretched of the earth" of three continents.

UNLIKE A PSEUDO-REVOLUTIONARY CHURCH

In the closing ceremony of the Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968, Fidel Castro declared: "(Marxism needs) to behave like a revolutionary force and not like a pseudo-revolutionary church." Declarations like these led the Soviets to accuse Castro, alongside Guevara, of being a "heretic" and a "dangerous adventure-seeker."

But the Cuban revolutionaries were not motivated by the purity of Marxism and even less by the dark interests of Moscow. Their politics were, in effect, Marxist, but distinct from Soviet Marxism, which served to legitimate the reality of political oppres-

sion in the name of the "consecration of freedom." This Marxism justified its opposition to armed struggle and any other expression of political struggle that could affect the delicate balance between the superpowers and their attempt to divide up the world between themselves. At the same time, Third World "heresy" looked back to the republican socialism of the French revolutionaries in 1793, who demanded freedom for both the bourgeoisie and the workers as well as for the slaves in the colonies, under the generic terms "of man and of the citizen."

THE FORCE AND FRAGILITY OF UTOPIAS

In 1967, the official *Granma* newspaper declared in an editorial, "One can move towards communism and never arrive." Fighting for justice, one can cause new injustices. One can seek liberty and commit many errors in the process. The same person can be willing to die for the liberation of a country and at the same time can delegitimize other human beings in hundreds of ways—because they are black, because they are gay, because they are lesbian, because they are poor, because they are "ignorant."

A just act—not ten just acts nor a million just acts—does not justify a single injustice.

The scissors that cut the hair of those youths in Coppelia took away from them an attribute of their difference, but it also cut, above all, the possibility of living in dignity and freedom. With that, the history lived in Cuba has inherited revolutionary warnings for the present—to better understand the price, the difficulties, the regressions and the developments of freedom as a concrete ideal. To understand the force and fragility of utopias. The precariousness of faith, when no debate surrounds it, and its sterile arrogance. The insatiable nature of freedom: when one has experienced it, one demands more and more freedom. The slow decadence of revolutions if they do not combat the habit of obedience and dependence. Unlike what happened with the scissors, the promise of socialism means that national, social and personal liberty is part of the only freedom.

Julio César Guanche (Havana, 1974) is an essayist and professor. He is author of several books on Cuban history and politics, the most recent of which is En el borde de todo. El hoy y el mañana de la revolución en Cuba (Ocean Sur, 2007).

The Institutionalization of the Cuban Revolution in the 1960s

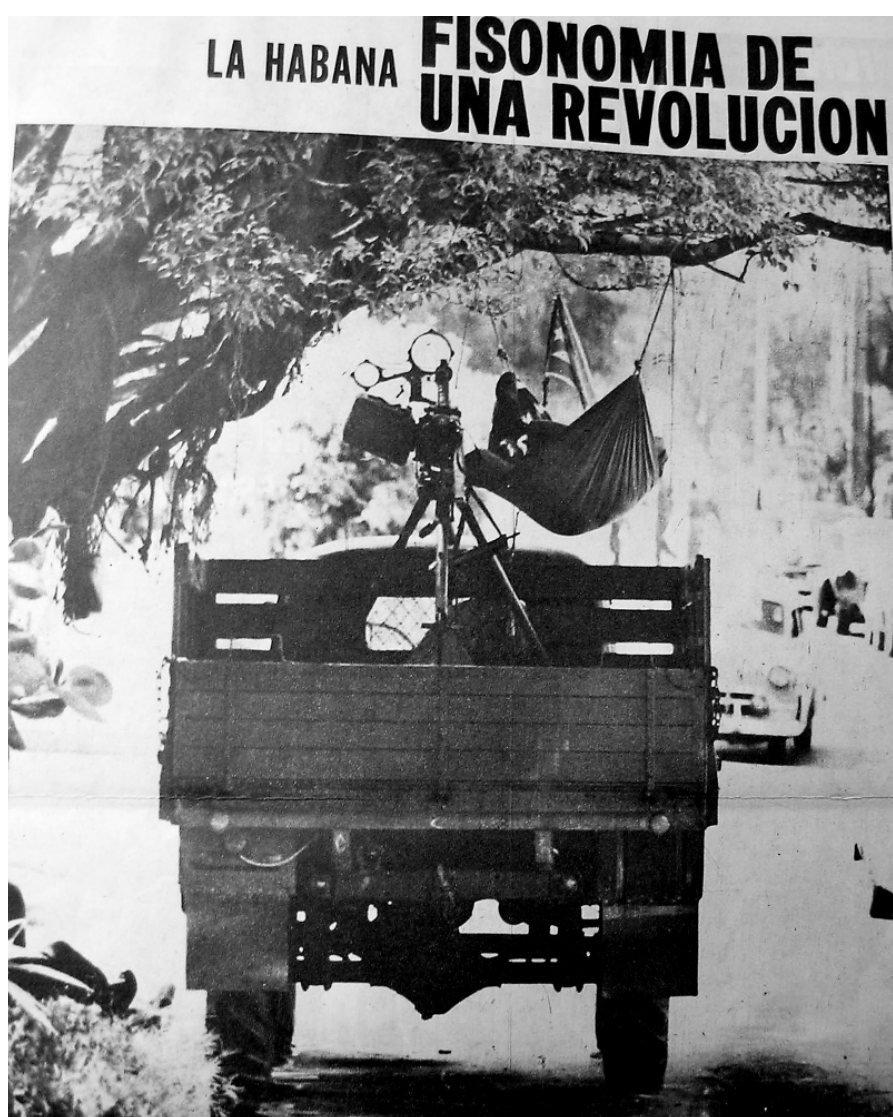
The Failure of the Radical Experiment

BY JOSÉ MARÍA AGUILERA-MANZANO

THIS TIME THE REVOLUTION IS FOR real!" Fidel Castro declared upon entering Santiago de Cuba on January 1, 1959. At that time few Cubans had pondered what a real revolution was and what its consequences would be. Almost all were elated with the downfall of Fulgencio Batista. Cubans from all walks of life exuberantly embraced the young Fidel and the *rebeldes*. Two years later no one would doubt the revolution was, indeed, for real. On April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro proclaimed the socialist character of the revolution. A day later, a force of U.S.-supported Cuban exiles landed at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs). Within 72 hours, the invaders were routed. The revolution was not only real; it would also survive.

The new government, however, did not have a clear blueprint for the future. Nonetheless, new institutions were needed in order to govern; the question was what kind and for what purposes. Having rejected representative democracy, Cuban leaders confronted the challenges of governance. Maintaining elite unity and mobilizing popular support were their core concerns. Thus, the revolutionaries brought together the July 26th Movement, the Revolutionary Student Directorate (DRE), and the Popular Socialist Party into a vanguard party, the Cuban Communist Party (PCC), formed in 1965. The Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) were two of the mass organizations set up to involve ordinary Cubans in the tasks of socialism. Their role was to be "transmission belts" between the party and the people. In practice, however, things were more complicated.

Between 1966 and 1970, Cuba attempted to pursue a radical experiment to develop *conciencia*—revolutionary consciousness—and the economy simultaneously. Cuban leaders hoped to generate sufficient resources to allow them a more balanced relationship with the Soviet Union



Sign reads "Havana: Physiognomy of a Revolution."

and to institutionalize the revolution using their own model.

After November 1959, the revolutionary government and its supporters in the Cuban Trade Unions leadership proceeded to establish tight control of the unions. Independent working-class activity—especially demands for higher wages and other economic benefits—was deemed contrary

to the call for unity. Workers needed to develop *conciencia* of the new conditions: the imperative of pursuing policies to eliminate unemployment and satisfy the needs of the *clases populares* as a whole. Prior to the October 1960 nationalizations, the state had already demanded moderation from the working class; afterward, it completely disavowed the right or the need to strike.

THE SIXTIES

However, the new *conciencia* developed slowly. Cuban labor had had a long history of unions. Even while collaborating with the government, unions were demanding wage increases.

But socialism needed a show of working-class support, and nationalism required ironclad unity in the revolution. Educating the working class was the avenue to overcoming the old mentalities. The revolution had instituted radical changes, and these created the ground for a new *conciencia*. When these accomplishments were not persuasive enough on a daily basis, party and union cadres were supposed to convince the workers: to “educate them” so that they understood the new conditions and stopped insisting on economic demands and anti-administration stance.

Without question, under the new regime trade unions were not independent and often clashed with workers who persisted in the old ways. However, from the perspective of their fate after 1966, trade unions did not fare so badly. Worker-union-management relations were tracked on an upward spiral: union leaders and managers ultimately depended on those above them for their jobs. Nonetheless, unions existed and functioned “within their sphere.” During the late 1960s, when trade unions “withered away,” state and party relations with rank-and-file workers would be even more precarious. An organization with limited autonomy was certainly better than no organization at all.

Unlike the CTC, the Federation of Cuban Women was relatively free of conflicts. Born with and for the revolution, the FMC gave many women their first opportunity to have a life outside the home. Women constituted a reservoir of support for the revolution, and the FMC readily tapped it. More than 19,000 women who had been household servants had graduated from special schools and were now otherwise gainfully employed. The seamstress programs had trained 7,400 rural women in the use of sewing machines and now they were instructors to 29,000 young peasant women. Although they were not as serious as those of the CTC, the FMC also experienced problems as a mass organization. In 1963, the federation acknowledged that cadres were carrying out their tasks mechanically and were generally inattentive to members of the rank and file, who were



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(from left) Advertisements run in the Cuban media on January 18, 1959, for West German Volkswagen automobiles and for East German sewing machines (sold at Sears).

themselves becoming apathetic. Cadres too frequently followed directions from above without creative adaptation to their specific chapters, and communicated the directions to their members as orders. There was thus a general loss of popular elan.

THE RADICAL EXPERIMENT

By mid-decade, the Cuban leaders had reconsidered the early process of institutionalization. Political and economic factors—both domestic and international—convinced them that the models borrowed from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were undermining the revolution. Socialism was not summoning the popular enthusiasm that the social revolution had. Austerity—not standards of living comparable to Western Europe—marked daily routines. The revolutionary leadership sought to establish greater political and economic independence from the Soviet Union. Between 1966 and 1970, Cuba attempted to pursue the parallel construction of communism and socialism: a radical experiment to develop *conciencia* and the economy

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simultaneously. Cuban leaders hoped to generate sufficient resources to allow them a more balanced relationship with the Soviet Union and to institutionalize the revolution using their own model.

Sectarianism in the party underscored the imperative of new recruitment methods to secure “contact with the masses.” A vanguard party of the revolution deserved its name only if it maintained an organic relationship with the people. Party militants—not party structures—were the crucial link in that relationship. When Fidel Castro introduced the Central Committee of the Communist Party in October 1965, the foundations for the radical experiment were in place. The old communists did not have the preeminence they had had in the ORI. The PCC was firmly in the hands of the new communists, especially those with

military or Sierra Maestra credentials, and rejected long-established dogmas of international communism. Cuban communists declined to recognize the leadership of the Soviet Union and reserved the right to formulate their own foreign policy. The “organic consolidation” of the PCC was at the center of institutional renovation and state reorganization. Membership had grown more than threefold since 1962, and cadres had stronger links with *las masas* because of the new recruitment method. The party was the sole and purest expression of the popular will and had the exclusive right to educate the people.

But the Cuban spirit was dulled by another consequence of socialism during the early 1960s: an expanding state bureaucracy. Ministries, agencies, institutes, committees, and meetings proliferated. In 1961, local committees of coordination, implementation, and inspection (JUCEI) were established to regulate and supervise government offices. Party-appointed JUCEI delegates were charged with mediating between the state, the mass organizations, and the public. The committees, however, were quite hierarchical and were staffed by full-time personnel. Bureaucratic expansion was dimming the prospects of popular control. Moreover, unlike the vanguard and the workers with *conciencia*, functionaries were more interested in pushing the “letter” of papers than in advancing the “spirit” of national quests and socialist visions. From 1965, the anti-bureaucratic campaign was central to the radical experiment. Reducing the numbers of people employed in nonproductive activities was therefore imperative. Many bureaucrats were transferred to more productive tasks, particularly in the countryside, and about 1,500 positions were eliminated. The consequences of the reorganization, however, were not salutary. Between 1967 and 1970, budgets and plans were discarded in favor of fidelistas’ improvised miniplans. Thus, the anti-bureaucratic campaign undermined planning and contributed to the economic chaos of the late 1960s.

During the second half of the 1960s, emphasis on moral incentives and the reduction of union cadres contributed to the demise of the labor movement. After 1966, vanguardism overwhelmed the trade union movement, which in effect withered away. Unions as a mass organization ceased to exist. Unlike the congress of 1961, the

1966 congress did not provide a framework for the role of unions under socialism. Issues such as worker input in factory administration and the defense of workers’ rights were not on the agenda. Nearly 75 percent of local union officers were turned out in the pre-congress elections; CTC full-time personnel was reduced to 53 percent; the number of cadres declined from 2,227 to 968.

Union leaders tended to be party members and never lasted long in their jobs because they were transferred to other positions. That unions provided cadres for other institutions was an indication that Cuban socialism was drawing cadres from the working class. In practice, there were no institutional boundaries between the party, management, and the unions. Moreover, unions did not seem to be important. Local unions became organizations of vanguard workers who constituted no more than 20 percent of the labor force. Ordinary workers without *conciencia* had no organization.

By comparison to the CTC, the FMC fared rather well as a mass organization during this period. In 1970, membership totaled 1.3 million. The FMC continued mobilizing women for numerous tasks. With the demise of unions, the needs of working women also went unattended. Still, the mobilization of female labor in urban Cuba to make up for male labor mobilized for agriculture became one of the FMC’s central charges.

Cuban leaders hoped to generate resources to achieve a balanced relationship with the Soviet Union and to institutionalize the revolution with their own model.

The radical experiment sought to capitalize on the most important Cuban resource: the will, energy, and passion of *el pueblo cubano*—the Cuban people—but it floundered almost from the start. After 1966, local union elections were suspended even though CTC bylaws required them every two years. Grievance procedures were virtually eliminated. The FMC lost its factory chapters in detriment to the interests of women workers. The PCC itself essentially stagnated. Until 1969, membership remained at about 50,000. By 1970, however, party members had more than doubled

to more than 100,000, about one percent of the population. Rank-and-file workers, however, were not the basis of the new growth: the central ministries, the armed forces, and the Interior Ministry were. Also, on 7 October 1967, Ernesto Guevara died in Bolivia. The Andes would not become the Sierra Maestra of Latin America.

Producing 10 million tons of sugar in 1970 was more than an economic goal: it was “a point of honor for this revolution, a yardstick by which to judge the capability of the Revolution.” But it was not possible to reach that objective. The unmet 10-million-ton harvest indeed represented more than a failed economic goal. The revolution had miscarried the attempt to generate economic and political resources to imprint a Cuban face on contemporary socialism. And now, institutionalization could no longer be postponed.

The outcome of the radical experiment had underscored the importance of institutions. Without them, there had been no check on public officials, the economy had gone into chaos, and workers had become demoralized. Mobilization had been no substitute for participation; cadres with *conciencia*, no surrogate for organization. Drawing upon the legitimacy of Fidel Castro and the social revolution, the Communist Party pursued a process of institutionalization. As it had during the early 1960s but more thoroughly and systematically, Cuba turned to the Soviet Union for models of economic

and political organization. Socialism had simply failed to develop an economy capable of sustaining the nation. There was also no option but to accept the new dependence and live with its consequences.

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The Venceremos Brigade

A 60s Political Journey

BY DICK CLUSTER

IN THE SPRING OF 1961, AS A 14-YEAR-old in Baltimore, Maryland, interested in current events, I read in the *New York Times* about Cubans fighting for freedom at a place called the Bay of Pigs, against a dictatorship that had hijacked a popular revolution. When the forces of good failed to triumph at the Bay of Pigs, I was shocked. A classmate of mine—a precocious member of the Young Socialist Alliance—told me that the operation had been run by the CIA. I could not believe. Hadn't Adlai Stevenson denied this at the United Nations? Hadn't the *New York Times* and other media reported the invasion was a spontaneous action by freedom-loving Cubans?

I tell this story to explain the political journey that led not only me but many of the 216 members of the first contingent of the Venceremos Brigade to violate the warning on our U.S. passports that stated they were “not valid for travel” to the “restricted countries and areas of Cuba, Mainland China, North Korea, and North Vietnam.” In the years between 1961 and 1969, the Viet Nam war had taught us that what the mainstream media and our government officials said about our country's foreign policy might not only be mistaken, but might even be a cynical and conscious effort to mislead us in both senses of the word.

Thus the lure of visiting Cuba to cut sugar cane in the Ten Million Ton harvest of 1969–70 was irresistible. It was a chance to see for ourselves whether the devil really had horns and a tail—or, on the contrary, was an angel with a halo. The prospect of doing manual labor with ordinary Cubans meant we were more likely to see the real Cuba than if we sat in formal meetings and speeches. The journey also promised a limited and measurable task—how much cane did we cut—as compared to the complex and sometimes daunting challenge of ending the war or combating racism or bringing radical change to our society. So we flew to Mexico City—the only air link to Havana in the Western Hemisphere at the time—where we were photographed by Mexican intelligence officers and had “Mexico D.F.



Dick Cluster, third from left, with Cuban and U.S. fifth brigade members of the Venceremos Brigade. From left to right: Steve, Alberto, Dick, Lázara and Nancy.

CUBA” stamped in large purple letters on our passports so our transgression would not go unnoticed at home. And so eventually we returned, three months later, via Cuban freighter to the Canadian Atlantic port of St. John. In between, we cut cane, asked, listened, looked and argued (mostly with each other).

We lived at the Campamento Brigada Venceremos in a rural Havana province near the Matanzas border, flat cane-growing land since its deforestation long ago in the days of the Spanish colony. We lived in canvas tents and gathered in palm thatch meeting and mess halls, the 216 of us and 70 Cuban Young Communists selected to work with us and teach us about the Revolution. In our final two weeks, and we toured the island by schoolbus with them, staying in other work camps and recently constructed college dorms. Here are some thoughts I took away from this experience at the time.

■ The revolution (that is, the rebellion against Batista and its subsequent socialist institutionalization) had been a great exercise in social mobility and redistribution: Lázara, for example, was the daughter of factory worker who had been imprisoned for trade union activity; now she was teaching high school and studying journalism at the university. Alberto's father had been a truckdriver; he was teaching high school history, studying art and literature, and designing posters. Hugo had been a clothing worker himself; now he was an economist. For-

mer mansions in Havana were dorms for students from the countryside. Our Cuban colleagues debated which former luxury tourist hotel they liked best, since all had been the scene of conferences and retreats. In Oriente we could drive to remote villages, previously isolated from all social services; now we found a clinic, a bookstore, a school.

■ Great changes in consciousness were possible, and had occurred. In the 50s, Cuba had been as anti-communist as the United States. Now, our new friends and their families approved the revolutionary reforms. At a youth work camp we visited—much like ours except it had permanent barracks, a longer workday, and did not have ice cream as part of the daily rations—I met a teenager doing guard duty at her barracks. Only the two of us were there, no minders of any sort. She told me her mother had just left for the United States, but she had chosen to stay. “I love my mother,” she said, “but I love the revolution more.”

■ Communism did not have to be Stalinist. That is to say, it didn't need to be a carbon-copy of the U.S.S.R., its culture gray, dogmatic, and always politically correct. In off hours, the camp seemed to teem with spontaneity. If someone had a wooden box and two hands, there would be drumming, music, dancing. Movie posters, even propaganda posters, as well as the new paintings in the Havana fine arts museum owed more to San Francisco psychedelia than Soviet socialist realism.

During our travels, our Cuban friends bought up copies of a new novel by a Colombian novelist, published by Casa de las Américas in Havana, *Cien Años de Soledad*. Later, in Santiago de Cuba, a medical student who had very tentatively suggested we might consider going home and waging armed struggle to bring socialism to the United States, made us a present of his dog-eared copy of the same book. We asked these enthusiasts about the novel, expecting a revolutionary tale. “Well, it's about this village... Well, you have to read it, it's very hard to

explain,” they replied, neither the village of Macondo nor the concept of “magic realism” being a doctrinal concept that fit into any prepackaged phrase.

- An international new wind could be felt in the contingents participating in the harvest from all over the world, including Vietnamese from both the north and south. However, the most telling vignette was about a personal reunion. Vic, from San Francisco, one of the oldest and most grizzled *brigadistas*, had fought for the Spanish Republic in the International Brigades. When asked, “what are your politics now?” (a key question for identifying factions and tendencies with which people were associated back home), he would say, “I’m a drunk.” No communist orthodoxy or New Leftist utopianism for him. One day a group of Bulgarian canecutters came to visit and work; with them came their embassy’s cultural attaché. He and Vic (I was told, because I didn’t see it) fell into each other’s arms, in tears. They had not seen each other since Spain, and here they were, at the heart of something that was a continuation, yet different and new. There were some discordant notes, of course. In El Uvero in Oriente, though we met older women who had learned to read in the Literacy Campaign, the bookstore was full of unsold books—and our comrades were ecstatic about finding such a trove, including the sought-after García Márquez novel. When the camp leadership made “proposals” about changes in routine, production targets, and the like, there were no arguments for or against, only a revolutionary duty to rise to the occasion. Trade union leaders we met patiently explained to us that there could be no conflicts between workers and management because enterprises were owned by the revolution which was the workers themselves. All of this, however, paled before the evident enthusiasm for making a new country, not only on the part of the Young Communists but, if more muted by everyday life concerns, of many people we met at random too. That vision continued to inspire me, and it continued to inspire many of us—not only in radical organizing but in political, service, and education work of many sorts since.

Readers of *ReVista* will be well aware that Cuba today is not the future for which

our friends on the brigade were working so hard. The harvest did not meet the goal; a more repressive policy in the arts dominated the 1970s; years of significant economic improvement in the later 70s and 80s were reversed in the 1990s with the end of Soviet aid. The world that our friends’ children got was not the one their parents had planned on bequeathing. (Aside: Nonetheless, I’m quite impressed with the way our friends’ children turned out, and the children of others like them, though that discussion does not fit in this article.)

The Cuban *brigadistas* with whom I was able to stay in touch now have politics that range from the hope of reinventing Cuban socialism within *Fidelismo* to constant criticism or cynicism, excluding only association with the U.S.-backed opposition either in Cuba or in Florida. Lázara died in the early ‘90s; by then she had a reputation, among Cubans who casually knew her, as an “honest dogmatist.” But this was her parting thought not long before she died: “We have not resolved the relationship between *el hombre* (man/woman/the individual) and *el poder* (the apparatus of power).” In those same years Juan, my former cane-cutting partner who now worked as a translator and interpreter, tried at first to put the best face on things. Then one day he said, “There’s no point in my telling you what I told the visiting Turkish journalists today. You’ve been living here a while, and you know how things are.” A few years later, his wife won the U.S. visa lottery and he somewhat reluctantly moved to Miami, to join many of her relatives and some of his. His plan for this new epoch of his life was to stay out of politics and keep his opinions to himself.

However, this was not what surprised me in my reencounters with Cuban brigadistas in the 90s and since. Rather I was struck that, without exception, they said that what they had told us in 1969–70 was the truth as they saw and felt it then. No one had been treating us like Turkish journalists. What we saw was not completely representative, but it was real. Even more surprisingly, the experience had been as special and intense for the Cuban brigadistas as for us. The explanation for this consensus seemed to boil down to two things:

- We took what they were doing seriously. For them as for us, the utopian project was much in need of validation, and

formal delegations and slogans about international solidarity were not completely doing the trick. Further, since the 19th century the United States has always had a Janus-faced character in the Cuban imagination—a potentially dominating power to be resisted, but a source of modernity and fresh ideas and part of Cuba’s synthesizing Spanish-African culture too. That we took our Cuban co-workers so seriously confirmed the seriousness with which they wanted to take themselves.

- They were challenged and excited by our cultural radicalism. Cuban youth in general were curious, or challenged, or puzzled about U.S. “hippies,” but in the day to day exchanges on the Brigade, our counter-culture got more real. Our drug-taking never made any sense to them. Those who spoke English did enjoy picking up our foul language, “fucking this” and “motherfucking that.” But more deeply, something about our notions of cultural liberation, of new gender roles, of societal reinvention outside the spheres of pure politics and economics—something about that changed their sense of what was possible, or gave them something new to grapple with. One example out of many is the protest waged by North American women against being consigned to piling cane rather than cutting it, an issue on which the Cubans eventually gave in. Similarly, they were stimulated by the process of responding to our incessant questions about how their system worked (and how it didn’t work).

I think we can take the two-way intensity of that trans-national, trans-cultural exchange as another lasting moral of the story. The world is no less in need now than then of new systems, paradigms, visions, call it what you will. Our country, certainly, needs to overcome its arrogance and isolation. Others still need to process their love-hate relationships with us.

Dick Cluster is a writer, teacher, and translator whose most recent book, The History of Havana (Palgrave-Macmillan 2006, 2008), co-authored with Rafael Hernández, is a social history of the Cuban capital. He is associate director of the University Honors Program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

The Legacy of Che Guevara

His Significance in the Americas

BY MANUEL E. YEPE

AN OCTOBER 2007 ARTICLE IN THE *WALL Street Journal* intended to deprecate Ernesto “Che” Guevara on the 40th anniversary of his assassination in Bolivia. Instead, the article was an unintentionally eloquent description of his significance in the Americas.

The article, headlined “Forty years after, the shadow of Che still falls over Latin America,” reveals why the empire pursued Che with so much malice and assassinated him with so much hatred. Che was construed as the “ideologue of communism and the armed revolution against the West in the Third World,” too revolutionary even for Cuba, thus motivating Fidel Castro to send his great revolutionary collaborator abroad to promote the revolution in other countries.

“In his life, Che had scarce direct influence outside of Cuba, but his legend has done much more than sell t-shirts to discontented rich young people,” the WSJ article ironically noted.

“Che’s paranoid, anticapitalist economic doctrines have considerable appeal for Latin Americans. Many countries in the region have elected governments headed by Che sympathizers—from Salvador Allende’s

“When Che was killed in 1967, the growth of productivity in Latin America was average compared to other countries, according to global estimates. But, from then on, it has fallen beneath the other regions. Only Brazil and Chile have had adequate developments, basically thanks to the extensive periods of rightist military governments, in which Cheismo was repressed.”

Then, the article conjectures: “Without Che’s legend, the annual growth rate would have been one percent higher. From there, it seems that the revolutionary has cost the region around 1.3 trillions of yearly internal development.”

And the article emphatically concludes: “The shirts are cheap, but Che has been an expensive icon.”

While the article assumes that Che’s ideas led to the economic downfall of the region, in truth the economic and social disaster was the result of the neoliberal policies that Washington forced on the region. These were part of its global economic strategy in which it depended on military dictators and political repression to exercise imperial hegemony over the continent.

The representative democracy exercised by political parties was able to be con-

with astonishment that, with the assassination of Che, Latin American people still have not stopped trying to obtain sovereignty and liberty for their nations.

Armed struggle was once the only path toward achieving revolutionary change and obtaining sovereignty. The path has now been paved for electoral means to function as a resource for the promotion of popular aspirations from a position of power, and many revolutionaries on the continent have accepted the challenge as they lead their countries.

A new scenario has been developing on the continent for the past two decades and for the first time in history, in which elected officials have come to power with the interests of their citizens at heart to an unprecedented degree.

These leaders are not always Marxists or revolutionaries—just like those non-Marxist patriots who chose armed struggle in the 60s—but they share a common and explicit belief in the importance of the defense of their nations’ independence and rejection of servile subordination to the hegemony of the United States that used to be the law of the land.

That does not mean that now the empire and the oligarchies have become more understanding or that the struggle of Latin America’s people has become easier. Nothing is farther from the truth. The revolutionary fight continues to be very difficult because it must free itself from systems designed by oligarchs with game rules that give them advantages and supremacy of interests.

The new reality of Latin America, with the undefeated Cuban revolution and the electoral triumphs of several rulers with anti-oligarchic programs that affirm the sovereignty of their nations is, in very good measure, fruit of the rebellious Latin America of the iconic Che who confronted absolute dominion in the region that was the U.S. response to the Cuban revolution.

At the same time, the people of Latin America were not nor would ever be pre-

Armed struggle was once the only path toward achieving revolutionary change and obtaining sovereignty and liberty. The path has now been paved for electoral means to function as a resource for the promotion of popular aspirations from a position of power.

Chile in 1970 to Evo Morales’ Bolivia and Rafael Correa’s Ecuador of today,” deplored the publication.

The article pointed out the supposedly negative effects for the region deriving from ideas inculcated during Che’s time. The article also expressed its concern for the wellbeing of the overall continent because of the example Che had set for Latin America.

trolled by the local oligarchies—in virtue of the neoliberal electoral rules—and was designed by Washington when it saw itself obligated to abandon the prior formula: stimulating social battles and armed revolutions such as that which triumphed in Cuba 50 years ago and which Che recommended with his example.

Now, U.S. transnational corporations, whose interests the WSJ reflects, observe



(from left) Modern sculpture honors Che Guevara in Cuba; an art postcard displays photographer Alberto Korda's iconic image of Che.

pared to support tyrannies like that of Pinochet, genocides such as the Plan Condor and the submission of the dignity and sovereignty of their nations to the corporations through associations such as ALCA, in order to achieve the economic growth rates and Pyrrhic profits to which the WSJ alludes.

Che's ideas were always those of an independent, united Latin America, with social justice, from the time the rebels banded together in Mexico to combat tyranny in Cuba. This ideology matured and deepened in the reality of the combat and in the confrontation with the bigger enemy, imperialism.

Che participated as a doctor in the expedition of the yacht "Granma" that disembarked in Cuba in December of 1956 with a contingent of 82 young, idealistic men. He took on an increasingly important role in the guerrilla army because of his tactical and strategic talent, as well as his courage in combat. Soon he was assigned to lead one of the five major columns in the Rebel Army and was the first to be promoted to Commander, a position that until then only Fidel Castro had obtained.

As a medical doctor with the guerillas, Che was a champion of careful attention to enemy prisoners, a practice that encouraged soldiers of the tyranny to surren-

der, convinced of the scrupulous respect for human rights of their insurreccional opponents.

Che clearly identified with patriotic, Cuban ideology, and quickly turned into one of the principal leaders of the fight for liberation and the revolutionary construction in Cuba.

After victory, he assumed the responsibilities of directing various areas of civil life without abandoning the area of defense.

He became president of the National Bank of Cuba and minister of industry and, in both positions, made important contributions to economic theory and practice in these fields—from the position of a revolutionary conducting a battle against the underdevelopment of a nation.

His participation in international events and his contacts with Third-World figures extended his international prestige as one of the most representative figures of the Cuban revolution. Among his revolutionary qualities, most notable were his passion for justice, his humanism, his generosity, his constant practice of putting words into action, and the harmonic structuring of his political, economic and military ideas, all in the space of a short life.

In the field of political ideas, he was a convinced Marxist who rejected intransigent

dogmatism, stale doctrines and bureaucratic tendencies.

The exemplary way in which Che preached revolution has left a legacy much greater than the myth and image that today mobilizes millions of oppressed, exploited, excluded and dissatisfied people in the unjust world in which we live.

Che did not go to Bolivia to die, just as he did not come to Cuba to die, nor did he go to Africa to die before setting out to fight in Bolivia. He always wanted to demonstrate with his personal example the decisive action with which the people of the world had to act in order to shake off oppression. He understood the risk and readily accepted it.

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Cubans' Memories of the 1960s

The Ecstasies and the Agonies

BY ELIZABETH DORE

THE 1960S WERE A TUMULTUOUS DECADE in Cuba. For islanders, the decade began in 1959 with the overthrow of the dictator Fulgencio Batista, the emblematic “triumph of the revolution.” It ended in 1970 with the disastrous sugar harvest, which ushered in the Sovietization of Cuba. In contrast to official history, a one-dimensional story of good versus evil, the three life histories related here portray close-up the ecstasies and the agonies of the revolution’s first ten years. They capture, in miniature, Cubans’ contradictory feelings and memories about those critical times.

MARCH 2005. WAJAY, CUBA

I am on the outskirts of Havana, in Olga Betancourt’s living room. From the outside her house looks like the small ranch-style homes I remember seeing on Long Island in the 1950s, but the picture windows are cracked and encased in iron grill-work. Olga carries in two rocking chairs from the yard: one for me and one for Victoria, my Cuban colleague. Olga sits on the edge of a broken metal sofa. I look around for somewhere to rest my tiny digital recorder, and am struck that the large room is nearly empty. But

Olga fills it. With a slim, athletic build, she is almost six feet tall. Her white skin is tanned; her cropped grey hair is laced with darker strands, and her eyes remind me of Paul Newman’s. Dressed in baggy Bermuda shorts, a red T-shirt, and sandals, Olga looks like a remnant of the Long Island country-club set, circa 1960.

Victoria explains that we are part of a research team collecting Cubans’ memories of life in the revolution. Olga had agreed over the phone to the interview, but she looks uneasy, and so do we. Cubans of her generation are unaccustomed, and afraid, of talking openly about their past.

After an uncomfortable silence, she rattles off details of her life, as if filling in a form. “I was born in 1948 in Santiago de Cuba. My mother was a primary school teacher. My father worked in a cafeteria. My grandfather taught English. My grandmother gave piano lessons.” Continuing almost mechanically: Baptist school, most of family left Cuba, Communist Youth, moved to Havana, three marriages and divorces, one son, English teacher for thirty years, recently retired, Olga stops in mid-sentence and looks directly at me.

“Explain what you want me to talk about. You tell me which paths to follow. If not, I will blabber on about things that don’t interest you.”

“Describe whatever you remember about events that were important to you, experiences that stand out in your memory.” After a silence, Olga begins. Her voice is passionate, and she laughs a lot as she crinkles and widens her eyes.

“Well, the triumph of the revolution was a key moment in my life. Everything changed for me. Life changed for everyone, for all Cubans. The focus of life changed. I was raised in capitalism...and although we weren’t large proprietors, my family wasn’t rich or anything, we had a small business. My standard of living was fairly high, you know. Relatively speaking, I was accustomed to having lots of things. The culture in my household was *Life* magazine and *National Geographic*. Then I began to think about life differently, to see the injustices in society. I began to learn, to grow, to study, to look at the world completely differently.” After a pause, she adds quietly, “My relatives emigrated, that affected me very deeply, our family’s separation.”



Portraits from the Island: (from left) Patria, a retired rural laborer, in Barrio Toledo, Marianao, Havana; an 86-year-old retired seamstress in Barrio Maceo, Santiago; a neighbor from the same barrio in Santiago; Lázaro hawks fruits and vegetables in Barrio Toledo, Marianao, Havana.

Speaking slowly, as if watching her life play back in slow motion, “I drifted away from the church. I wasn’t alone, no. My entire generation began to turn away from religion. It was hard to do. Fidel became the substitute for the God we had believed in. He was a very important leader for every one of us...and we struggled so the revolution would be what it was. Well, we had enormous political commitment. That’s how we were.”

Recalling her ardor during the early years of the revolution, she reminisces, “I volunteered for every kind of rural work. I picked coffee, slashed weeds, dug turnips and potatoes. We did whatever needed doing. What can I say, everything. We were mobilized a lot of the time. It was a period of great effervescence, the triumph of the revolution.”

Erupting into laughter, Olga leans forward and whispers: “We also spent a lot of time dancing. We listened to the Beatles clandestinely, and we danced to the Beatles in secret.”

“Why clandestine?” I ask.

“Unbelievable, no? What stupidity. We did it in hiding because we knew it was prohibited...I think that was a political

error. I think they didn’t want the youth exposed to capitalism, not even to music from a capitalist system, because we were forging a different kind of society. But it didn’t damage us, the proof is now. Our generation, that is those who stayed, because eighty percent of my friends left, those of us who stayed listened to the Beatles, we did all of that, and we’re still here. We haven’t had political problems, we are professionals, and we are the ones moving this country forward.” Olga leans back, shakes her head, raises her eyebrows, and sighs.

Not sure if I understood her right, I ask, “You said eighty percent of your friends left?”

“Friends from primary school. Remember, I was in a private school, and it was religious. Yes, yes, eighty percent. My best friend left and I suffered a lot... I lost my, almost my entire family, and I lost my best friend. That was in 1961 and it still hurts. I’m an old lady now. I’m going to die soon with that pain inside me.”

The three of us sit in silence. The void is filled with the barking of dogs and hawkers’ sing-songs plying all sorts of wares. Victoria catches my eye and wordlessly we agree to

end the interview. Olga gazes out of the broken picture window and beyond, into her past. Suddenly she stands up and offers us an herbal concoction with a dash of rum. The herbs are from her front yard, the rum “because I am a Santiaguera [from Santiago de Cuba, which is known for its rum].” Sipping the wonderful brew, we arrange to meet early tomorrow morning.

Olga is standing outside her front door when we arrive. We kiss warmly, Cuban-style. It’s hot, but not yet scorching. “I didn’t sleep much last night. I’ve been thinking over what I said. I didn’t tell you about some things that are important to me.”

Before I turn on the recorder, Olga begins. She is exhilarated and her words gush out.

“Stop. Wait until I start the machine.”

“That tiny thing is fabulous. It’s fabulous for the police,” Olga says with nervous laughter. “It even catches people’s sighs, when they don’t like something. Okay, are you ready? Well, yesterday I didn’t tell you that my colleagues, the religious ones, were, I’m not sure if the word persecuted is the right one, but they were a bit cornered. My best friend was considered a critic of the

revolution...and many of my friends had to leave the country. That hurt me a lot. It upset me. What also upset me was the persecution of young people whose hair was too long or too short, or who didn't dress the right way. I was also upset by the fact that if you listened to English or American music you were an enemy of the revolution. I never understood those things, and I don't understand them now. Nor can I go along with the fact that today many leaders say that those things never happened. I feel bad when I hear that because I lived through it, and I'm living through it right now. Until the day I die I will tell it like it was. You shouldn't have to tell lies to maintain political control. I believe that you can accomplish more with truth and honesty than with lies. That's the way I am, and I've had plenty of political problems because of it."

Olga's mood is defiant, and her tone has a sharp edge. Then she says, apropos of nothing, "So what are you two going to bring me to eat?" Immediately, she and Victoria burst out laughing.

"It's a very Cuban joke, when someone thinks they might go to jail for what they said," Victoria explains to me. Olga nods, "When we're speaking in confidence."

A short time later I look at my watch; it's noon. Hot, exhausted, and my mind swirling, I suggest we stop. Olga says she's just getting started. Over the same concoction she served yesterday, she ruminates about differences between today's youth and her generation. "I am grateful for my education and political development. I owe it to living through that great stage in the struggle. We know where it's at. We are very experienced, street-wise, you might say. No one can pull one over on us. What we have, we attained by making many sacrifices and we suffered a lot to get where we are, well, to get what we had."

That night Victoria and I sit on the porch of her house in El Cerro, an old working class neighborhood near the Plaza de la Revolución in Havana. Enjoying the breeze, we replay the interviews with Olga and reflect on her life story. "For Olga, the 1960s was a time of ecstasy and agony. She doesn't separate them; she can't. It would be meaningless."

APRIL, 2005. CENTRAL HAVANA

Pedro and Roberto interview Jorge Alonso and his wife Sylvia Martínez in the cou-

ple's slightly bohemian apartment on the first floor of a well-preserved, once fancy, townhouse, a short walk from the Capitol. Jorge is 63, white, balding, and roly-poly. He is from a wealthy Havana family, most of whom left Cuba. Jorge has worked in the Ministry of Culture for 35 years. A wonderful storyteller, he reenacts scenes from his life with self-deprecating humor. Jorge describes the moment he fell in love with the revolution, and describes the debacles, one after another, that shook his faith.

"Fidel was speaking for eight hours on TV, with the doves on his shoulders and all of that. Very pretty. Then and there he said that every family would have a VW. That should go down in history," Jorge murmurs. "There were so many things, the stuff of dreams."

I never heard that Fidel Castro had promised every family a Volkswagen car, and wonder whether it is a figment of Jorge's fantasy.

"In March [1959], I think it was, two and a half months into the revolution, and it all seemed to me," he pauses and lowers his voice, "how should I say, somewhat folkloric, very folkloric," his voice trails off. "I wasn't in love with the revolution then. Not until that day. I don't remember exactly what it was that Fidel said, but that day I told myself, yes, this is something I have to dedicate my life to, and that's what I did with lots of," Jorge suddenly stops. When he begins again his voice has lost its ebullience.

"Well, to be truthful, I should say that some *compañeros* worked fantastically hard. But I have led a very comfortable life, really. I was never one to jump at the chance to cut cane, never. When I had to cut cane I was annoyed because to me the whole rural thing, well I never had anything to do with it. Really, agricultural work and all that stuff was not for me. Well, when I was mobilized I went. I didn't know how to do it and my hands got all raw and blistered. After I cut just a little I felt sick," he adds sardonically. "I tried to do some but I, I never pushed myself to fulfill this or that quota. I, really, I didn't force myself, because I knew that, well, I was just one more poor sod out there. I've always had my own, very particular, ideas about voluntary work. When they ordered everyone to go, I went. But it seemed to me that, it strikes me as, well, for everyone to do voluntary work is madness." Jorge suppresses a laugh, perhaps because

he just said the unsayable, perhaps because of the absurdity of a city-slicker like him wrestling with cane.

In the late 1960s, Fidel Castro had proclaimed the "great leap forward." To reduce dependence on the Soviets and reverse economic decline, he set a goal of 10 million tons for the 1970 sugar harvest, more than double the level produced the previous year. Factories, farms and services were retooled for the big push, and Castro exhorted Cubans to do whatever was necessary to meet the target. Jorge recalls his blind faith in success and his despair after the failure.

"For me, as for a great many Cubans, the sugar harvest of 1970 was paradigmatic. It was something that was going to be achieved. At work people were calculating, 'look, we need this much more. We won't make it.' And I said, 'look, we have to make it. What do you mean we're not going to make it. We have to.' On I think it was the 22 of May 1970, Fidel said that it was not possible to complete the harvest. I, really, I couldn't understand it. I must tell you that for me it was a tremendous blow. It's not that I stopped believing, but by then, no, I didn't know. For me it was incredible, tremendous. I was dumbfounded." He pronounces each word slowly. Continuing in a subdued tone, "for many days, many weeks, I really couldn't believe it. I was still wrapped up in the appeal to the nation about the harvest, that we had to achieve the harvest. If you think about it now, it was something mad, totally crazy. In the weeks before Fidel announced we wouldn't make it, I thought the whole thing was a lunacy, completely barmy. But at the same time I thought that we would make it. It was a big thing to me, a very big thing."

Jorge remained in shock for months. "The failure of the 1970 harvest transformed me physically; I was a changed man." Jorge was depressed, lost 25 pounds, and developed asthma. The failed harvest ended his love affair with the revolution, his dream that anything was possible so long as Cubans, well, other Cubans, worked hard enough. With one adversity after another, Jorge's disenchantment increased over the years. But he is proud that he never even considered following his family to Miami. "I stayed here and continued to dedicate myself to the tasks of the revolution, even when they were stupid, idiotic even. I believe that if you leave your country you



This photo was taken in Matanzas province in Cuba on Fidel Castro's birthday.

become rootless, tremendously rootless.” One of Jorge’s greatest satisfactions is that his three children remain in Cuba, and are happy. “For me that is the importance of the Cuban revolution.”

SEPTEMBER 2004, VEDADO, HAVANA

It is the morning after Hurricane Ivan side-swiped the island, and the streets remain eerily empty. Roberto and I squeeze into Alma Rivera’s minuscule apartment in a dilapidated building, a short walk from La Rampa, club-land for Havana’s tourists. The three of us perch in the tiny combination kitchen-bedroom. A ladder in the corner leads to the *barbacoa*: the loft where Alma’s three middle-aged sons sleep when they are not with girlfriends. Alma is 68 years old, black, petite and strong. Proudly pointing out the features of her room, she tells us, “I repaired the walls, installed the toilet, and built the *barbacoa* and the porch with my own hands. I had no proper tools.” After her initial outburst, Alma becomes extremely solemn. “My life has been full of tears and suffering.” Growing up in a poor peasant household in Pinar del Rio was “miserable, truly miserable. From the age of seven I worked in agriculture, mostly in the tobacco zone. I wanted to stay in school but my parents didn’t let me. People before [the revolution] were foolish. [If I had studied] now I would be a great doctor.” In 1961,

Alma left her husband “because he was a womanizer,” and moved to Havana with her two young sons.

“How did the triumph of the revolution affect you and your family,” Roberto asks. Alma says nothing, and after an uncomfortable silence begins to tell us about the drudgery of her life in the 1960s.

“I worked in one cafeteria after another, cleaning floors and washing dishes.” In a rare reference to the emancipatory effects of the revolution, she adds, “I didn’t mind so much because I was in an atmosphere of freedom.” A few years later Alma was fired from a good job at the Restaurant Cochinito because she refused to have sex with the manager. Echoing Fidel Castro’s slogan about turning defeats into victories she says, with a certain smugness, “to quit at the right time is a victory.” But adds in a voice that betrays her anger, “I got nailed. When I demanded my right to severance pay they refused. No one defended me. Not the management. Not the trade union. Not the Party. No one. They acted together. Not even the Woman’s Federation. No. They were one.”

Alma describes life in the 1960s as a string of battles with one bureaucrat after another. She tells a long, convoluted story about how she fought to keep her apartment, the one we are in. “I fought hard, finally they let me stay. They were going to send the police and all. But I am not afraid

of anything. The head of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution [the official “neighborhood watch”] was on my side, and she offered to talk to Fidel Castro about this. But I said no, so we went to the housing authority. The little whites [*blanquitos*] who worked there just looked at us. Then I said listen, we don’t all have fancy foam mattresses to sleep on, now do we? Finally, they let us stay,” she says, referring to her family, “but because of all that we didn’t have a ration book [proof of residence needed to receive food] for three years.”

After we leave, Roberto and I go to Rápido, a fast-food shop, to talk about Alma’s life story. While we don’t always agree, we both find her silence about the revolution striking. Alma seemed to take the opportunities provided by the state for granted. Her narrative thread is that she obtained what was rightfully hers thanks to her own persistence, struggle and intelligence. Not thanks to the revolution, the official slogan.

Recalling the past through the prism of the present, Olga and Jorge remembered the euphoria and the pain of revolutionary upheaval. Alma’s memories are different. Perhaps because of her color and class background, certainly because of her own experiences and personality, she remembered the 1960s as a period when she continued to struggle to put food on the table, secure a place to live, raise her children, and hold down a job, albeit in conditions far better than before.

In the 1960s, Cubans were faced with fundamental choices. Some fled to Miami. Many more stayed and threw themselves into the heady struggle to forge a just society. But the majority, like Alma, plodded day-by-day to ensure that the government delivered on its promises. Although these are just three of the one-hundred plus islanders we talked to about living the revolution, they rupture the single-threaded narrative of the official story.

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From Spain to the Chicano movement in the United States, from the realms of culture, art, politics, economics and identity issues, the 60s were experienced from a multitude of perspectives or “exploding paradigms.” This section takes a look at the richness of the era in Latin America and beyond, a myriad of distinct experiences that were nevertheless shaped by the trends of the times.

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Degeneration of the Sixties

A Look at Spain

BY SANTIAGO MORALES-RIVERA

I HEARD THE EXPRESSION “THE SIXTIES” for the first time in secondary school when my language teacher wrote the number 68 on the blackboard to illustrate his lesson on the difference between the verbs *denote* and *connote*. The first meant just that: to mean objectively; *connote*, on the other hand, involved not only the specific meaning of a word, but another meaning of the appellative or expressive type. Thus, my teacher explained, for us, youngsters who were babes in arms when Franco died, that number on the board probably denoted a number like any other,

A member of a campesino community organization in the Dominican Republic seems to be wondering about what the future will bring. The 60s were a time of hope for many, and yet filled with frustration and violence too.

just another figure. But for the people of his generation, who had lived through the *six-ties* (he said in Spanish with passionate emphasis while triple-underlining the digits on the blackboard), that number carried an added meaning; it connoted, among other things, a whole era during which he, along with other “fellow travelers,” believed—and at this point the teacher’s voice broke—that another world was possible.

Today I think the lesson would have gone better for him if he had written 69 on the blackboard, for among those adolescents, whose hormones were already agitated and who were still political virgins, that number surely “connoted” much more than the preceding figure. I only half understood the lesson and the example. Although I had understood the linguistic difference, I

could not fathom the meaning of that lump that formed in the teacher’s throat just when he waxed most enthusiastic while recalling the dreams of his youth.

The reflections below will attempt, insofar as possible, to dissolve that lump: to clarify the strange mixture of enthusiasm and agitation that usually accompanies the memory of “the sixties”, and which always seems to arise when some linguistic or biological obstacle presents itself.

While schoolteachers in the Spain of yesteryear taught their students to study literary history by generations (the generations of ’98, ’27, ’36), today’s teachers, clearly influenced by their Anglo-Saxon colleagues, tend to explain history by decades. This method has helped palliate some deficiencies of the generation method, such as

the tendency criticized by historian José Carlos Mainer to seek “intra-generational homogeneities” (*AIH Proceedings*, 1971). However, as Mainer also notes in *De Posguerra* (1992), “as if by magic, the decades ended up becoming eras.” And this is what has happened, in a more spectacular way, with the decade of the sixties, which has become the titular expression of a whole period characterized, according to thinker Gabriel Albiac, by “the defense of subversion, the non-negotiable determination to transform the world and the rejection of any complicity with those in power” (*Mayo del 68*, 1993).

The sixties, according to the testimonies given by my teacher, Albiac and Fernando Savater: “Yearning for the Mystic Body, in which we will all be one,” as Savater satirized those years in “La Utopía” (1982)—seem to be informed by the notion of *generation*, at least if we abide by the definition given

However, in what was still Franco’s Spain, this generational phenomenon of the sixties was not exactly aligned chronologically with those years. During that period, the West could well be in full transition toward a new “post-industrial,” “post-structuralist,” and even “post-modern” era while, south of the Pyrenees, as critic Ramón Buckley points out in contrast, “we had not yet made *our* transition, that is, a transition toward democracy” (*La Doble Transición*, 1996).

The Spanish society of the sixties, according to Raymond Carr’s analysis in *Modern Spain* (1980), showed signs of “superficial modernization.” There was a spectacular economic development, especially in the tourism and industrial sectors, with the resulting migratory movement from the countryside to the cities. *Autarky*, Franco’s doctrine of economic self-sufficiency, was left behind, replaced by an incipient con-

writers (except, perhaps, Benet and Goytisolo) were prone to a deep “españolismo” (Spanishness), i.e., an exclusive preoccupation with the problems of Spain. And if we are to judge by cultural critic Jo Labanyi, this “Spanishness” makes them accomplices of the Franco dictatorship, inasmuch as the regime “tried to unify the nation by projecting difference outside its borders in the form of otherness: la *anti-España*, necessarily equated with foreign influence” (*Spanish Cultural Studies*, 1995).

Far from registering, then, a radical change with respect to the past, the Spanish sixties brought a series of “changes” that, in thinker Eduardo Subirats’ view, still involved multiple “ambiguities” (*Después de la Lluvia*, 1993). Between repression and resistance, liberation and caution, fascination with the foreign and the burden of “Spanishness,” in the sixties Spain began a transformation that would not entirely jell until well into the *seventies*, with the country’s transition to democracy, that is, with the period when the confrontation between the old order of things and the new materialized.

So the transition arose, *delayed* with respect to the rest of the West, as the agglutinating episode in Spain of the generational phenomenon that had begun abroad more than a decade earlier. This is why, in literary and cultural history, the so-called “generation of ‘68” really refers to authors who began to be published in the *seventies* (as happened in literature with Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Ana María Moix, Juan José Millás, etc., or in the works of singer-songwriters such as Luis Eduardo Aute or Lluís Llach) and which, depending on the context and the anthologists, takes such diverse names as the “lost generation” (Albiac), “failed generation” (Subirats), “*novísimos* generation” (Castellet) or “generation of ‘75,” among others.

The great paradox of these generations is that, although they began as “combat generations” typical of the “eliminator eras” described by Ortega y Gasset, most of them have ended up converted into “cumulative generations,” typical of eras of old age. Such a *degeneration* of some, although certainly not all, of those young internationalists is not a natural problem of senility, or at least not only senility. It is above all a problem that concerns *criticism*—that is, the way in which we interpret their legacy. I will try to explain myself.

Between repression and resistance, liberation and caution, fascination with the foreign and the burden of “Spanishness,” in the 60s Spain began a transformation that would not completely jell until well into the 70s.

by José Ortega y Gasset: “Each generation represents a certain *vital altitude*, from which existence is felt in a particular way” (“La Idea de las Generaciones”, 1922). Further, given the heterogeneity between what young people of the sixties proposed and what they had inherited from the preceding generations, that period coins the term *generation* with special political interest.

The sixties were, above all, a generational question, and also constitute a model of what Ortega called “eliminator eras.” As opposed to the “cumulative eras,” characterized by a homogeneity between the received and the current, the era of the sixties would be, in this philosopher’s words, a “combat generation...that does not try to conserve and accumulate, but rather to reject and replace; the old are swept aside by the young.” As happens in all generations, this one also instituted its titular date: the year 1968, because it was the year that saw the traumatic or agglutinating events that most strongly determined its lines of activity: Paris, Tlatelolco, and Prague, in addition to the prolonged war in Vietnam.

sumer society (Carr and Fusi in *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, 1979).

As a result of this economic liberation, there were considerable “cultural and political reforms” (Stanley Payne in *The Franco Regime*, 1987). Based, however, on “a populist production of entertainment, popular songs, bullfights, soccer and *españoladas* (films that presented a clichéd image of Spain),” these reforms represented less a *revolt* (in the manner of the rest of the West) than a “spectacular process of state disideologization,” according to cultural critic Teresa Vilarós (“Cine y Literatura,” 2002).

And there were also changes in literature. “Sometime during the 1960s,” wrote literary critic Brad Epps, “the mirror breaks for Spanish narrative” (“Questioning the Text”, 2003). Works by Luis Martín Santos, Juan Goytisolo, Miguel Delibes, Camilo José Cela and Juan Benet, “wreak havoc on the reality, idea, and ideal of realism,” Epps maintains, “[and] language turned into its own object becomes opaque, polyvalent, and at times even purposeless.” Even so, these



Armed police face a crowd of student demonstrators during the student riots at Paris on May 14, 1968.

The true “subversion” within the generation of the sixties, which in Spain takes place chronologically in the seventies, is less related with the restoration of the concept of utopia, than with the failure of utopia. In Paris, the movement of May was betrayed, according to Albiac, by the very leftist political parties that instigated it. As Savater saw them, “the clamors of May held secret complicities with the tanks of August”—that is, with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. And in Spain the utopian radical change was also problematic, to say the least. Contributing to this problematic nature was the way in which the transition was carried out—“Holy Transition” for some, “Negotiated Betrayal” for others—and, above all, the “tragic delay” with which utopia reached Spain: “precisely when History promised to reach its peak of fulfillment—in democracy, perhaps socialism,” Buckley wrote, “it turned out that History ‘did not exist’, that

it was ‘an illusion’, and therefore that the fascism we had suffered was as illusory as the democracy or socialism that were supposed to arrive.”

When all was said and done regarding the utopian question, what remained was a clear sense of loss (“If 1968 left us any legacy, it is...the loss of margins and references,” Albiac confessed) and of *mistrust* (“Mistrust toward the orders created, the theological ideals,” Savater wrote). And it is precisely this *negativity* that constitutes the “vital altitude” (which Ortega defined) of this combat generation, its real subversion, in the final analysis: the denunciation—Albiac would sum up in clear reference to the Foucaultian revolutionary analysis of power/knowledge—of “a new model of power and domination, [a] generalized spread of submission...that permeates bodies and minds.”

If, in addition to “vital altitude from which existence is felt in a particular

way,” each generation also has according to Ortega a “historic mission”, then the mission of this generation of the sixties/seventies has been to leave the following generations *disinherited*; that is its legacy, and therein lie its merit and shame. They left them, according to Albiac, “without a future. Without meaning. And without subject.” What else? In *Demasiadas Preguntas* (1994), a novel by Félix de Azúa (another author who belongs to this generation) about the changing of the guard during the transition, the protagonist—an anti-Franco teacher—confesses much more: “to keep my conscience tidy I’ve left [my children] without anything: without God, without a fatherland, without a master, without a family, without hope and, above all, without a dime.” Moreover, if Albiac points out that “it is impossible to speak of ‘68 in the first person,” the first person—or the impersonal form—are the only ways to talk nowadays. The fact is



As the Soviet-led invasion by the Warsaw Pact armies crushed the so called Prague Spring reform in former Czechoslovakia, Prague residents carrying a Czechoslovak flag and throwing burning torches attempt to stop a Soviet tank, August 21, 1968.

that, bent on leaving nothing to its heirs, that generation didn't even leave the concept of generation. In fact, the main generation that at least within Spanish culture has been proclaimed since then has been called, significantly, "generation X."

Such an *eviction* represents—I insist—an invaluable lesson on that period whose critical reach we may not yet be able to understand. The problem arises when some critics (of the sixties and subsequent generations) transform that eviction into lamentation, into complaint, into "identification of the loss," as Freud would say; in a word: into *melancholy*. And it is here that the "combat generations" can *degenerate* and become "cumulative," because, instead of sweeping away the past—and in a traditionally Spanish gesture—they identify themselves with it. "The iconic transformation of the images of Spain," laments Subirats "has not stopped to consider *what in another time and another place could have been* the sacred center of a real renovation of the reality known as Spain: its historical memory."

"Pathetic Arguments" (2008), a controversial article by critic Ángel Loureiro, argues about certain treatments of the "his-

torical memory": "the teleological view of history has been replaced by a radically new sense of history that focuses more on the past than on the future." And this is what seems to happen in the cases of Subirats, Albiac and others (and I do not doubt that they have their reasons), who have replaced the concept of "history as progress" with "history as grievance." With the additional result that the charismatic altruism of the sixties is also replaced by self-absorption, and sometimes even by narcissism. If this is not the case, how is it possible that the era that was most unwilling to perpetuate tradition is today the one that inspires the most retrospectives, to which we return the most frequently, and is even the one that *ties us most firmly to the past*, to the point, as my secondary school teacher realized, that it gives us a lump in our throats? Something must be wrong with this way of interpreting that era and its legacy.

Perhaps that sublimation (in the sense of 'elevation' here) of the "disenchantment" that is so strongly in force in the cultural criticism of the transition has not realized that in humor—often in *black humor*—melancholy finds both its *raison d'être* and its cure. It is

true, as Vilarós maintains, that "banality," agglutinated in judgments such as Albiac's "to know that nothing matters any more," establishes "from the sixties the mode of biopolitical movement in the post-modern era" and the resulting "dehistorization," "depoliticization" and "denarrativization" of current Spanish society ("Banalidad y Biopolítica," 2005). But it is no less true that, at least in literature (as Harvie Ferguson maintains, in connection with certain romantic literature), complicity between *irony* and *melancholy* "is a token of its detachment from the world of actual events, and it is by adopting an ironic pose that the modern Romantic spirit seeks to preserve the full potentiality of the human" (*Melancholy and the Critique of Modernity*, 1995).

Azúa's *Historia de un idiota contada por él mismo* [The story of an idiot told by himself] (1986) is an exemplary novel about that potentiality of the human that can also be embraced by the black humor contained in melancholy. At the end of this "mock autobiography" of Azúa himself, the self-aware "idiot" (who narrates his suicidal, fruitless search for the "content of happiness"), the protagonist finally survives himself: "I considered myself", the idiot concludes with a smile, "a FREE AND UNHAPPY MAN...deaf and blind, but with his sense of wonder intact, as it was at the beginning, before I received my first wallop. But I WAS NO LONGER MYSELF. I wasn't COMPLETELY dead, but I'd managed to kill the dependence, the anguish that had been destroying me inside for years like an invisible cancer."

Understanding this idiotic laughter, or *melancholaughter*, after suffering cruel disappointments first-hand is not an easy task. But I cannot believe that it is in the nature of the most idiotic people to wish to preserve the "potentiality of the human," and not necessarily 'too human' here. This is the scholarly undertaking that occupies us; for this other form of sixties *humorous degeneration*, or of degenerating humorously, must be a part of its critical legacy. En fin...what would my language teacher think of all this?

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Sisters, Brothers, Young Lords

A Common Cause: 40 Years of Struggle and Remembrance

BY MARTHA ARGUELLO

I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW YOUNG, DEFIANT and determined we were. We saw ourselves as instruments of change, students of revolution. What we lacked in terms of experience, we made up for with enthusiasm and commitment. Viewing photographs from forty years past, we milled through the exhibit, scrutinizing photos, graying militants remembering, owning our pasts. Like many of those present at the gathering, I had carved my path to activism on city streets. Forty years later, I retraced those early steps.

On September 19, 2008, I gathered my notebooks, my memories, and a tape recorder and traveled to Chicago for a reunion of sorts, a series of events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Young Lords Organization (YLO). A militant Puerto Rican organization in the United States, the Young Lords' bold, innovative mobilizations garnered the attention of surrounding communities as well as the media and local police.

Several photographers documented the organizing efforts of the Young Lords during the late 1960s and 1970s. These images formed the core of the photo exhibit titled "Radicals in Black & Brown: !Pa'lante! People's Power, and Common Cause in the Black Panthers and the Young Lords Organization," at De Paul University.

The exhibit, along with the panel discussion and community rally that followed, brought together several Young Lord and Black Panther Party members, a crowd reflecting the dreams and tensions of an era. They were joined by other community members, students, and activists from Chicago, New York, California and Puerto Rico, a blend of both old and new voices.

Among the photos of downtown demonstrations, neighborhood protests, free breakfasts, and health clinics, and close-ups of Young Lord members, portraits of whole neighborhoods emerged. These were the streets of Chicago and New York that we grew up in, where conditions drove us to organize. Embedded in these photos were the faces of children of Latin America, a con-

nection that migration could not sever.

Those ties were clearly visible in the photograph of the Armitage Avenue Methodist Church, the site of the YLO headquarters in Chicago. In 1968, Chicana muralist Felicitas Nuñez painted a mural across the face and sides of the church, featuring three iconic figures from Latin American history. Giving prominence to the image of the revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara, Nuñez completed her vision of Latino solidarity with other figures, among them, independence leader

who would later become the General Secretary of the Young Lords Organization, traced his development in a short biographical sketch produced by his defense committee during one of his stints in the penal system. Meeting Black Panther leader Fred Hampton and Chicano leader Corky Gonzalez were pivotal events for Jiménez and the Young Lords. However, it was his life as the child of a migrant camp worker and as a youth in Chicago barrios that planted the early seeds of activism.

Though born of urban North America, the Young Lords embraced independence and rebel movements across Latin America. Central to their ideology, independence for Puerto Rico became a mobilizing slogan.

Ramón Emeterio Betances and the legendary Adelita of the Mexican Revolution. This mural encapsulates the internationalist perspective of the organization.

Though born of urban North America, the Young Lords embraced independence and rebel movements across Latin America. Central to their ideology, independence for Puerto Rico became a mobilizing slogan, underlining the vision that political power and self determination in urban communities coalesced with the island's independence. Like Nuñez' mural, YLO literature, newspaper articles and proclamations symbolically linked arms across North America, extending into the Caribbean and Latin America. Though largely made up of Puerto Ricans, the organization with the motto "I have Puerto Rico in my heart" attracted Mexicans, Dominicans, Cubans, Panamanians, African Americans, and Colombians to its ranks. (Iris Morales, *"Palante, Siempre Palante: The Young Lords,"* New York: Public Broadcasting Service, 1996), videocassette).

Originating in Chicago, the Young Lords Organization evolved from a street gang that became politicized during the 1960s. "Cha-Cha" Jiménez, a young man

Jiménez' early years illustrate an itinerant existence that led his family from poor communities in Puerto Rico to what he called the "rat -and roach- infested apartments" of the Water Hotel of Chicago. The migratory experiences of the Jiménez family, together with settlement in poor communities and subsequent displacement from substandard housing, represented a trajectory taken by many Puerto Rican families who settled in Chicago during the 50s and 60s (See Rachel Rinaldo, "Space of Resistance: The Puerto Rican Cultural Center and Humboldt Park," *Cultural Critique*, No. 50, Winter 2002, pp. 135-174).

The Jiménez family moved, along with untold numbers of Puerto Rican families, as Chicago neighborhoods such as "La Clark" and "La Madison" became victims of urban renewal and gentrification into a Chicago neighborhood known as Lincoln Park, where a number of "European gangs" claimed particular sections as their own territory, off limits to Puerto Ricans. The subsequent organization of Puerto Rican youth into groups known as the Black Eagles, the Paragons, the Young Lords, resulted in clashes between Puerto Ricans and the "European gangs."



(top) De Paul exhibit (right) YLO Denise Oliver DePaul portrait by Maristany; (opposite page) Martha Arguello and Iris Morales

While Jiménez' life was not emblematic of all Chicago Young Lords, his political transformation and leadership position, as well as the politicization of many urban youths during that era, led to the gang's conversion into a militant organization. Positioned against white gangs in Chicago, Jiménez' experiences in Lincoln Park helped solidify his Puerto Rican identity, while his prison self-education, a blend of African-American and Puerto Rican political history, led Jiménez to reorganize and transform the defunct Young Lords gang into a political organization. Jiménez states in an interview that a Muslim trustee in prison began giving him "political books," among them, the works of Martin Luther King and the militant Malcolm X, an interest that continued long after he left prison. These books, he says, "led me to want to know about my history...to want to know Albizu and Che," referring to Don Pedro Albizu Campos, the pro-independence leader of Puerto Rico's Nationalist Party and the revolutionary, Che Guevara.

The Young Lords initially focused on community based organizing in response to issues such as substandard housing and the

displacement of families due to gentrification and urban renewal projects. Describing urban renewal as "urban removal," the Young Lords identified housing as an early focus for neighborhood mobilization. According to Jiménez many YLO members were high school dropouts, unskilled in traditional organizing techniques, and angered by community conditions and injustice. Juan González, a Columbia University student leader who later became a YLO leader in New York expressed similar sentiments regarding the group's impetus for organizing, "We knew that our families did not deserve to live under these conditions." Thus, challenging structures that generated these conditions became their common cause. The story of a woman and children evicted from their Chicago apartment illustrates the spontaneous and often unconventional methods used by the YLO. "The woman came to us for help, so we broke into an empty apartment next to the [Armitage Avenue Methodist] Church and moved the family in... basically we didn't have skills but we responded to needs. Sometimes people came to us, often we went to them," remembers Jiménez.



As YLO protests and activities expanded, the organization attracted more experientially diverse members such as Omar López, a student leader and founding member of the Latin American Defense Organization (LADO) and Latin American Student Organization (OLAS), Alberto Chivira, a third year medical student who ran the Young Lords' health clinic, and Angie Adorno, who helped organize a women's group called Mothers and Others (MAO). Assessing the impact of women within the organization, Jiménez observes, "They did the work that made us look good in the community, [they subverted] the gang image, [and] stabilized what we were doing."

At the height of their popularity, the Young Lords attempted to redress pressing issues facing Chicago's Latino communities, utilizing the bold tactics for which they



became known. These included housing, education, childcare and health services. The Young Lords of Chicago successfully occupied, renamed, and acquired the long term use of the Armitage Avenue Methodist Church building, where they operated various programs including free breakfast for children, a day care center, health clinic, and education program and maintained their “national headquarters.” A year later, young activists garnered national attention with their occupation of the First Spanish Methodist Church in New York. Iris Morales was among them.

Born and raised on 106th Street in Manhattan, Morales’ path to activism differed from Jimenez’. Yet their anger and frustration with neighborhood conditions elicited a similar response. The daughter of an elevator operator and a factory worker, Morales became an organizer in high school, influenced by civil rights and black power movements. As a student in New York’s City College, she agitated for change. Prior to joining the YLO, Morales worked as a community organizer. When asked about the factors that led her to become an activist, Morales fervently stated, “Neighborhood conditions...I hated being poor.” Similar sentiment would fuel the expansion of the YLO to cities throughout the country.

On July 26, 1969, a group of young activists in New York announced the formation of the second chapter of the Young Lords Movement. Choosing the anniversary of the launching of the Cuban Revolution as their birth date, the YLO illustrated both their ideological perspective and their penchant to link local issues with broader

movements. The YLO quickly made local headlines, drawing attention to the accumulation of garbage in the poorest neighborhoods of New York. The Young Lords quietly introduced themselves to East Harlem by sweeping neighborhood streets on Sundays. When community members joined them in this effort, the Young Lords asked the Sanitation Department to supply them with additional brooms. Two different offices of the Sanitation Department refused this request. The department’s intransigence and apparent lack of concern prompted a swift response. Discovering that the garbage they had bagged and collected during weekly clean-ups, remained on city streets, the Young Lords launched the first of several city “offensives.” On July 27, 1969, Young Lords blocked major streets with uncollected garbage. With buses and taxis unable to traverse the city, the Sanitation Department “was forced to clean it up so that traffic would get by.” The widely publicized “garbage offensive” generated negative press for both the city’s leadership and the Sanitation Department. The latter responded with increased garbage collection in previously neglected neighborhoods. The Young Lords’ ability to recognize major community concerns and mobilize around them, generated support for the group, attracting new members as well as thousands of local supporters.

The New York chapter proved to be particularly media savvy, their bold actions catapulting serious neighborhood problems into the limelight. The near death of an African American child in Harlem from lead poisoning led the YLO to launch a multi-faceted campaign against the use of lead based paint in city dwellings, eventually obtaining stricter regulations for the use of lead paint and the establishment of a Bureau of Lead Poisoning Control.

When organizational differences resulted in a schism between the Chicago and New York branches, the latter renamed themselves the Young Lords Party (YLP). Collectively the YLO and YLP organized several chapters in New York and California, as well as chapters in New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Milwaukee, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The membership reflected a transcultural exchange, produced by decades of cross migration between New York and Puerto Rico, a blend of recent migrants and subsequent generations born

in the United States and the influx of Latin American immigrants. Born amid the milieu of the civil rights era and political insurgency in the United States, the Young Lords recognized the commonality of civil rights struggles and the black power movement, with what they termed “the liberation of Puerto Rican people and the right of self determination.”

Academics frame the Young Lords within the parameters of social and political movements of the 1960s and 70s. Some YLO members however, have a more expansive view, pointing to the ramifications of their protests. According to Jiménez, there are no “former Young Lords,” just “Old Lords” organizing in different ways. Many of the YLO members who provided social services in occupied churches, moved tenants surreptitiously into empty apartments, partnered with doctors and hospital staff to takeover Lincoln Hospital, demanding better medical care, have now stepped into different arenas, with several becoming medical doctors, lawyers, child advocates, union organizers and journalists. A few returned to gang life while others found religion. Jiménez works in a gang diversion program and is pursuing a master’s degree. Morales became an attorney and produced a documentary on the Young Lords. Both Lopez and Jiménez entered electoral politics. Vicente “Panama” Alba advocates for HIV/Aids prevention, while Felipe Luciano has entered the world of trade unions. Until her death, Angie Adorno brought members together at various gatherings. Photographers Carlos Flores and Hiram Maristany continue to visually document the history of Puerto Rican communities and of the Young Lords, just as they did 40 years ago. The space constraints of this article preclude naming many Young Lords who dedicated years to a common cause. Before leaving Chicago, I revisited the photographs displayed at DePaul. The decades-old images reminded me that the issues we so vehemently fought for 40 years ago, still matter; the just society we envisioned is yet to come.

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Remembering the Power of One

A 1960s Economic Perspective

BY DAVID DAEPP

IN A REGION WITH AN UNFORTUNATE knack for being ignored, forgotten and subverted by world powers, we take another look at the 1960s and from snapshots we offer hope as the first decade of the new millennium draws to a close. We take a look through the lens of Raul Prebisch, former director of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and subsequently founding Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Skeptical and largely critical of capitalism, Prebisch built the framework that evolved into the famous dependency theory, articulating through economic parlance the frustration felt by Latin Americans in the early to mid-20th century. His central premise that the center exploits the periph-

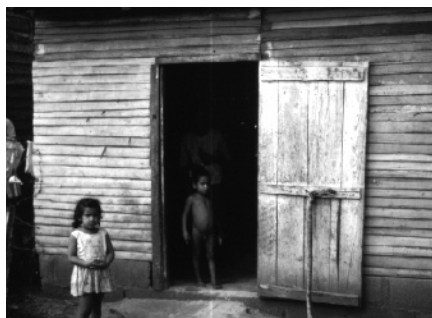
ery won widespread appeal among Latin America's leaders. Unfortunately, subscribers to Prebisch's philosophy used not only the solutions he provided to counter the ills of dependency but also adapted his metaphorical theories to suit their political needs. Prebisch's ideas were incorporated into a counterproductive rhetoric that justified rather than ameliorated lagging regional and national development.

Looking back from 2009, the leadership in Latin America needs to recognize that the exploitation described by Prebisch (and others) is not the only dilemma that has plagued the region over the last few decades. Here we will revisit themes of integration that took shape in the 1960s in Latin America and address selected sociopolitical issues that will help us to arrive in

(above) Dulce is a writer and party activist in Matanzas, Cuba; (right, opposite page) scenes from the Dominican Republic in the 1960s when DRCLAS director Merilee S. Grindle was a Peace Corps volunteer.

the current with a renewed vision for the region's progress.

Interestingly, the popularization of Prebisch's "inward development" philosophy coincided with parallel military movements that took shape in many Latin American countries during the 1960s. The marked move toward military governance was brought on by frustration with the exact sort of underdevelopment and inequity described by Prebisch. Ironically, relying on military rule and blanket protectionism provided little adaptability and long term



growth opportunities and therefore little in the way of solving the problems of dependency and underdevelopment.

We raise two issues here: 1) In describing the subversion of Latin America by center (foreign) nations and prescribing regional integration, Prebisch ignored the center-periphery struggle between the more and lesser developed nations in Latin America itself. 2) Latin America needed then and needs now the dynamism that comes with responsive and innovative governments that promote absorption of technology and best practices from foreign multinationals.

Taking on the first point, we note with mixed feelings the attempts at developing regional trade blocs such as the Latin America Free Trade Association (LAFTA) which concentrated on nullifying tariffs in the region. Created through the 1960 Treaty of Montevideo, LAFTA was crippled by its lack of policy coordination framework and omission of prerequisites for economic/political integration. Given these deficiencies, one can infer that LAFTA's founders either ignored or rejected the tiers of its members, assuming all to be capable of benefiting substantially through equal treatment. But, as was the case with LAFTA, sometimes equal treatment doesn't work with unequal participants. And this was part of the problem for notable attempts at regional integration like LAFTA.

With original signatories Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay (Bolivia and Venezuela joined the pact in 1966 and 1967 respectively), LAFTA was based on a gradual elimination of barriers to intra-regional trade over a 12-year period on a product-by-product basis. But "gradual" became "stalled" when it became evident that certain participants were only willing to grant concessions on

primary products. This left the sort of industrialization à la regional market development, the prescriptions of Raul Prebisch, clamoring for accessible economies of scale as manufactured goods remained protected even from intra-regional trade.

The reluctance of regional powers Brazil and Argentina to liberalize trade quickly meant that LAFTA was lacking its most suitable leadership while the two regional power players conveniently enjoyed the lion's share of the agreement's benefits. Exemplifying the little highlighted intra-regional center-periphery struggle, the Andean Group (AG) created the Cartagena Agreement of 1969 with dissenting LAFTA members, including Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. This presented the first internal rupture to LAFTA's push for regional progress. These Andean countries believed LAFTA had guided most of the benefits to the largest member countries (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina) and sought to reorient the trade agreement toward its original goal of equitable development and progress.

Ironically it is exactly this sort of unwillingness to remove barriers on key goods that Brazil is now lobbying against, skillfully representing Latin America, at the grudgingly unsatisfactory Doha Development Round. Brazil has evolved from a protectionist egocentric stance to a leadership position and hopefully will continue to embrace its much needed role in trade negotiations and beyond. But in pointing out past faults of regional power of Brazil we must in turn recognize that the need for effective leadership in the development of Latin America extends beyond the region's borders.

While Latin America was trying to break the chains of dependency and underdevelopment, the United States was trying to stifle the spread of communism and keeping

a keen eye southward. Actually, the United States was doing more than keeping a watchful eye on Latin America. It was engaging the region with neatly packaged rhetoric preaching equitable economic development with a concealed agenda toward effectively quarantining the region from the virus that was communism.

Starting with the Alliance for Progress (AFP) in 1961, the United States paved itself a path to further meddle in the business of Latin America all while projecting an image of benevolence. At the top of AFP priorities was the adoption of democratic governance. Incredibly, the 1960s saw thirteen constitutional governments ousted by military dictatorships in Latin America. This was seen as a major failure of the Alliance for Progress, which held as one of its principal aims to consolidate reformist civilian rule in the region.

Robert Smetherman in "The Alliance for Progress: Promises Unfulfilled" (*American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 31, No. 1, January 1972, pp. 79–85) pinpoints the lack of pre-program planning and lack of analysis of previous aid programs as root causes of weakness in the AFP with economic progress in certain nations driven more by their own assets than by the Alliance. Smetherman cites Mexico's tourism, Venezuela's oil and Chile's copper as the forces behind their better-than-average growth while hemispheric growth in 1966 was estimated at a disappointing 4.2 percent (especially taking into account a 3 percent birthrate). J. Humberto López (World Bank 2006) goes further noting that Latin America's GDP per capita relative to other country groupings such as Spain, Western Europe and East Asia saw a sharp decline in the second half of the 1900s. Compound this lackluster performance with the burden of

inequality and the picture of Latin American development looks bleak. Since the 1960s Latin America has maintained the highest inequality, next to Sub-Saharan Africa, of any region in the world with a Gini coefficient consistently above 0.5. Gini coefficients measure inequality, with 0 corresponding to perfect equality (everyone having exactly the same income) and 1 corresponding to total inequality. That is, a "1" would mean that one person had all the income and everyone else had nothing.

Dynamic leadership that promotes technological advancement and best practices absorption can help prevent that kind of inequality. These themes, one might argue, should have been the centerpiece in Raul Prebisch's prescribed panacea for the ills of the dependency that plagued his region.

Taking on the greatest of challenges such as world hunger and poverty, Raul Prebisch endeavored to the highest order of achievements: moving his region toward greater prosperity, the sort of prosperity found in the center.

Regardless, Prebisch created what was to become one of the most revered development strategies of the time: Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). ISI was a logical and well planned response for nations in the periphery that were stuck in a vicious cycle of deteriorating terms of trade.

Terms of trade (TOT) are the price of a country's exports divided by the price of its imports, and countries in Latin America were plagued by deteriorating TOT. The prices of its agricultural exports were highly susceptible to declines while the opposite was true for the manufactured goods it imported from the center of developed countries. But given that the very foundations of trade-based growth encourage nations to build on their comparative advantages, most Latin American countries intensified production of agriculture goods for export. Latin America's experiment with ISI turned sour in the 1970's when accessible regional markets proved too small and monetary and fiscal profligacy began to lose its stimulating effect. Together, these two phenomena ushered in severe external debt and balance of payments crises that would arise in the 1980s.

In his defense, Prebisch's ideas of modernization, growth of cities and manufacturing with protection for new and infant industries have worked in other countries such as Singapore and China. ISI sought to incubate domestic producers while allowing them to build economies of scale in the region and then when they were ready, to open the curtains to the stage of world trade. But what if they never were quite ready?

This was the issue that plagued ISI and the many nations that adopted its formula. The incubated industries didn't really want to leave their incubators. They enjoyed the fruits of protection and like children unchallenged by their parents, they preferred the comfort of the status quo. On the world export stage, status quo isn't a selling point unless you are decorated with renowned

brand names like Mercedes and Nike. Latin America didn't carve its trading niche, thus remaining in a continuum of underperformance despite having a great economist relentlessly working on its behalf in his lab of policy formulation at ECLA and subsequently UNCTAD.

But like taking on the greatest of challenges such as world hunger and poverty, Prebisch endeavored to the highest order of achievements: moving his region toward greater prosperity, the sort of prosperity found in the center. Maybe Prebisch's lens didn't have the right focus. Portraying things on a macro scale, Prebisch built the metaphor of center and periphery as well as his revered ISI. Fast forwarding from the 1960s to the 1990s and 2000s, we would see Brazil implement a program called Bolsa Escola, aimed at bolstering the family, from the bottom up. Contrary to Prebisch's macro focus, the center of this program in Brazil is the individual and more specifically the young student.

Implementing Bolsa Escola reinvents the economist as a specialist doctor taking a fine scalpel to his ailing patient to remove highly specific and localized problems. This sort of micro-focus in develop-

ment can be found in the neo-structural framework currently in place in Brazil. At the center of this framework is the belief in the individual realizing his own potential given the right environment.

Such beliefs are central to Amartya Sen's capabilities theory whereby he adds inspiration to economic theory arguing that individuals simply need the "freedom" to develop, that provided with the chance to develop themselves, individuals will do so. Well, Bolsa Escola is the epitome and application of Sen's belief, addressing high dropout rates in Brazilian schools by providing income subsidies to families with school-age children based upon each child's school attendance. The founding rationale of this program came with the realization that, for many in Brazil, a family's dependence on child-produced supplemental income took precedence over primary education. With increased attendance came the social benefits of reduced violence, reduced fertility rates and stronger families with greater potential for the future of their children.

While relations in the Americas stand on the edge of evolution, Latin American countries should recognize the benefits of micro level initiatives. And on the macro level, they should learn from the trials of ISI and the ills of dependency that governments must be effective referees ensuring that their vital and budding industries prosper sufficiently on the trade playing field. This means forcing the transfer of technology and knowledge from multinational corporations to local businesses and domestic workers. Raul Prebisch's aim to define the struggle of Latin American countries in unbalanced trade relationships and to provide a policy solution has laid a groundwork to learn from and build upon. In building upon the work of this great economist, we look with greater knowledge through the micro lens and realize that the future of Latin America remains just where it was in the 1960s: in the hands of the individual.

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The Sixties in Argentina

Political Repression, Cultural Vibrancy

BY MARYSA NAVARRO

IN ARGENTINA THE SIXTIES ARRIVED LATE. With mere glimpses of counter-culture and protest late in the decade, those who participated in cultural and political change were silenced, forced underground or into exile by the mid-70s.

During all these years, Argentina was ruled by successive weak military regimes interrupted from time to time by duly elected also weak civilian governments, inevitably deposed by progressively more repressive military regimes. The pattern was firmly established in September 1955 with the “Revolución Libertadora,” led by General Eduardo Lonardi and Admiral Isaac Rojas, which put an end to Juan Domingo Perón’s second term in office.

Once in power, the armed forces decided to cleanse Argentina of all things Peronist. They erased his name and that of his wife, Evita, from buildings, monuments and territories; her embalmed body was abducted from the CGT headquarters and hidden; for a while the press was only allowed to refer to him as *el tirano prófugo*—“the fugitive tyrant.” Congress was closed; his party banned, his followers excluded from elections. Thousands were jailed. On June 9, 1956, a group of Perón’s followers, attempting to revolt, were summarily shot, including their leader, General Juan José Valle.

In 1958, Arturo Frondizi of the Intransigent Radical Civic Union was elected president with Peronist support, but was forced to resign in 1962. In September, disagreements within the army over anti-Peronist policies exploded into a violent confrontation in the streets of Buenos Aires. On April 2, 1963, former vice president Admiral Rojas led a Navy uprising opposing new presidential elections. Elections were nevertheless held and Arturo Illia, the candidate of the People’s Radical Civil Union, became president. He was deposed three years later by a military junta committed to carry out “La Revolución Argentina.”

General Juan Carlos Onganía’s new government proceeded to ban all political parties and activity, jail politicians and labor leaders, once again closing Congress and

even dismissing members of the Supreme Court. Considering the University of Buenos Aires as a hotbed of communist subversion, he closed its publishing offices and on July 29, 1966, known as *la noche de los bastones largos*—“the night of the long truncheons”—ordered soldiers to forcefully evict students and professors.

The military’s exclusionary anti-Peronist policies failed to distance Peronists from Perón. Peronists continued to resist with increasing violence and by the late 60s, they had begun to create guerrilla organizations, attracting young men and women who wanted to emulate the 1959 triumph of the Cuban revolution or show with the rising Marxist labor movement, or even saw their involvement as a way of implementing the changes in the Catholic Church after Vatican II.

Censorship was harsh under Onganía. He seemed to be particularly concerned about the length of young women’s miniskirts and the long hair of young men. Satire magazine *Tía Vicenta* was closed in July 1966 because of a cartoon depicting Onganía as a walrus. In 1967, Aberto Ginastera’s opera, *Bomarzo*, based on a novel by Manuel Mujica Láinez about a sixteenth century nobleman was declared immoral and banned. Even the Instituto Di Tella, the most famous avant garde cultural center in Latin America, was closed because an art exhibit featuring urinals was deemed offensive.

Despite political conditions, Buenos Aires in the 60s was a culturally vibrant city. The Di Tella, founded in 1958 to modernize Argentine culture, offered the latest in modern art, while the Grupo Espartaco satisfied those who preferred a socially committed art. Borges continued to produce tirelessly, either alone or with Adolfo Bioy Casares; Julio Cortázar published three major novels, including *Rayuela*, (1963); Ernesto Sábato finished *Sobre héroes y tumbas* in 1961, and a young new writer, Manuel Puig, came out with two novels, *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1968) and *Boquitas Pintadas* (1969). But the event that proved Buenos Aires cultural credentials of course was the

1967 publication of the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* by Editorial Sudamericana.

The heated debate begun in the 50s about the role of Peronism and post-Peronism, as well as the future of the left and liberalism in Argentina, continued. *Sur*, with somewhat diminished prestige, nevertheless formed part of the debate, although it was still unable to come to terms with the Peronist phenomenon. *Pasado y Presente*, founded in 1963, was the relevant political and intellectual group and would soon become a major international Marxist publication.

New modern magazines catered to the expanding middle class. The first, *Primera Plana*, founded by Jacobo Timerman, was a *Newsweek* clone that revolutionized Argentine journalism, covering national and international politics, culture and lifestyles. It published famous foreign columnists and a Modern Life section with information on contraceptives, changes in family life, women’s participation in the work force, anti-war movement activities in the United States and the new music: rock and roll.

Notwithstanding the primacy of politics, the growing violence and the tastes of puritanical generals, young Argentines also began to listen to rock and roll. They created groups that imitated the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and played in a few Buenos Aires small cafes despite police repression. They managed to have a first concert in 1966; they had four in 1969, and began to record singles. Contrary to what happened in other Latin American countries, they decided very early on to sing in Spanish, compose their own songs and thus create *un rock nacional*. By the end of the 60s, they had succeeded. Silenced in the 70s, they reemerged in the early 80s to join the large mobilizations that sent the armed forces finally back to their barracks.

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Art and Politics in Brazil

En Route to an Artistic Vocation

BY CLAUDIA CALIRMAN

RIGHT AT THE EVE OF THE MILITARY COUP D'ÉTAT THAT TOOK place in 1964, there was an ongoing debate in Brazil about the relationship between art and society. Many artists and intellectuals were interested in forging a cultural production that was ethically and politically significant, but not necessarily nationalistic or ideological, as the orthodox left had prescribed. Artists associated with these new proposals were criticized both by the left and by the right. The left accused them of being elitists who lacked a social commitment to a grassroots cultural production oriented towards a revolutionary art. The right thought they were rebels spreading the seeds of communism throughout the country.

In the field of visual arts, the seminal Brazilian poet and critic Ferreira Gullar wrote *Cultura posta em questão* (Questioning Culture) in 1963, dismissing as elitist all art that valued aesthetic form over ideological content. He rejected what he called “bourgeois” art and called for a popular art ideologically engaged and socially committed to the masses. Gullar’s rupture with the experiments of the avant-garde came as a surprise. He had been one of the major spokesmen and advocates of the Neo-Concrete movement, with his “Neo-Concrete Manifesto” published in the Sunday Magazine of the *Journal do Brasil* on March 23, 1959. Some of the founding members of this movement were Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Pape, Willys de Castro, among others from Rio de Janeiro. The movement sought to liberate the visual arts from the rational and technological tone of the São Paulo Concrete movement, restoring an expressive and subjective approach to the work of art. In his manifesto, Gullar called for a move away from the mechanical and scientific concerns prevailing in geometric abstract art in Brazil, particularly by engaging the viewer as a participant in the work of art. Gullar, however, later became disillusioned with the apolitical tone that took over the latest developments in visual arts in Brazil.

If Gullar was the spokesman of the Neo-Concrete movement, Oiticica was its major exponent. The two of them engaged in an intense dialogue since the fifties. Like Gullar, Oiticica had participated in the Brazilian constructivist project that conceived of a modern universal language for the visual arts based on geometric abstraction, moving away from the regionalist tone that dominated the national production until then. Later, both theorists and artists criticized the excess of rationality of the Brazilian constructivist project, incorporating sensorial experiences in their Neo-Concrete phase. Although both Gullar and Oiticica shared similar concerns about the role of the artist in society, their subsequent investigations took different directions.

In his polemical *Cultura posta em questão*, Gullar put his finger on a crucial issue: “Can the vanguard in a developed country necessarily be the same one as in an under-developed country?” (*Vanguarda e subdesenvolvimento: Ensaio sobre arte*, p.185).



(from left) Nildo with Parangolé P15 Cape 11 (1967), Revolt (burlap, straw, leather, cotton fabric); Nildo with Parangolé P4 Cape 1 (1964) (polyvinyl acetate emulsion, canvas, vinyl, cotton fabric, tulle).

He argued that it would be naïve to pursue the same level of modernity as the European avant-gardes, since these refer to their own specific cultural realities. Vehemently attacking art that lacked a social or revolutionary function, Gullar began to promote the Centros Populares de Cultura (Popular Centers of Culture, the CPCs), a project connected to the National Student Union (UNE), which set out to foster popular Brazilian culture in slums, factories, and universities.

In 1964, while Gullar joined the Communist Party, Oiticica became a samba dancer in the Samba School Estação Primeira da Mangueira and spent much of his time at Mangueira Hill, one of the oldest shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro. Far from being a political militant, Oiticica was suspicious of any organized association. If anything, he was more of an anarchist like his grandfather, José Oiticica, than a follower of a systematic program prescribed by a political organization. An unaligned leftist, Oiticica was intrinsically engaged with the discussions about the social challenges posed to an artist in an underdeveloped country like Brazil.

He became interested in art drawn from the margins of society. He found his raw material where the vast majority of the illiterate and disenfranchised segment of the population lived: the *favelas* and



the samba schools. Through the rituals and rhythms of Afro-Brazil Oiticica found his own avant-garde. At Manguera Hill he found his collective body, as well as the cheap and abundant materials that would prevail in his work. He opened the doors to a contemporary artistic production embedded in what we can call “the aesthetics of the margins.”

In “Notes on the Parangolé,” written around the time of the exhibition *Opinião 65* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1965), Oiticica elaborates on the notion of the *parangolés*—capas to be worn by the audience—as an unfolding development from his Neo-Concrete experience. The *parangolés*, in their forms and shapes, were an extension of his former experiments with geometric abstraction. The difference was that now his art was infused with the collective, social and individual bodies that had been excluded from his earlier constructivist work.

Oiticica brought members of the Manguera School of Samba wearing his *parangolés* to do a performance at the museum’s salons. Samba dancers entered the museum wearing his capes and carrying his standards and tents, playing the drums, singing and dancing. The poet Wally Salomão, a close friend of Oiticica who liked to be called Wally Sailormoon, recalls their cold reception:

Dancers from Manguera Samba School such as Mosquito, Miro, Tineca, and Rose....all in ecstasy enjoying the mess that they were

promoting, people unexpected and without an invitation, without tie or suit, without handkerchief and documents, eyes open wide and in a state of pleasure invading the Museum. There was an evident subversion of values and behavior. They had been excluded from the ball, forbidden to enter. Then, Hélio unleashed his arsenal of bad words. (Wally Salomão, *Hélio Oiticica: Qual eh o parangolé?* Rio de Janeiro, Relume Dumará, 1996, p. 51.) Author’s translation.

After the dancers were expelled, Oiticica took the crowd to the Museum garden. He started screaming that black people had been forbidden to enter the Museum, and that this was racism. Ironically, at Manguera Hill, Oiticica was known by the nickname *Russo* (Russian) since he was the whitest among all of them.

The word *parangolé* is slang for a mundane question: “*Qual eh o parangolé?*” (What’s up bro?) Some of the *parangolés* had inscriptions such as *Estou Possuído* (I am Possessed) (P 17, Cape 13, 1966), in a double reference to being possessed by one of the deities from the Afro-Brazilian cult *candomblé*, or by the Dionysian experience of drugs and alcohol. On another *parangolé* (P 15 Cape 11, 1967), worn by Nildo da Manguera, the inscription read: *Incorporo a Revolta* (I Incorporate Revolt), which could be revolt against the lack of social mobility or against the authoritarian rule imposed by the military dictatorship. It implied a state of aggression as well as a wish for transgression.

With his *parangolés*, Oiticica fluidly danced from the labyrinths of the slums of Rio to the city’s asphalt, navigating between high and low, shifting from the closed salons of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro and its elite to the social reality of the shantytowns, from the experiments of the international avant-garde to Brazilian popular culture. He called them *arte ambiental*, a common term in Brazil in the late 60s and early 70s that was used broadly to describe any work of art challenging traditional media such as painting and sculpture. It could refer to an installation, or in the specific case of Oiticica, to his works incorporating the participation of the spectator. Far from promoting a revolutionary popular art to the “uncultured” people of the *favelas*, Oiticica incorporated their culture into his art.

Two years later, with his essay “Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade” (General Scheme of the New Objectivity) written on the occasion of the exhibition *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* (New Brazilian Objectivity); Oiticica formulated the tenets for an avant-garde art in Brazil that would combine radical artistic innovations with an engagement with political, social and ethical issues. He believed that art was directly related to social change and advocated a collective art that could promote this change. He proposed that artistic practice be open to the participation of the spectator and committed to an audience beyond the elites.

For Oiticica it was not a question of choosing between an art with popular and nationalistic overtones and one in tune with the latest developments of the international avant-gardes. On the contrary, his quest was to reconcile these apparently incompatible camps. He merged both innovative forms with social content to produce one of the most radical experiences in the visual arts from the sixties.

In “Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade,” Oiticica questioned “how an underdeveloped country could explain and justify the creation of an avant-garde, without it being considered a sym-



Mosquito with Parangolé P10 Cape 6 (1965) - To Mosquito of Mangueira (burlap, cotton fabric, nylon screen)

bol of alienation, but instead as a decisive factor for the collective process.” For him, the only way to produce a new art was “to create new experimental conditions where the artist takes on the role of ‘proposer,’ ‘entrepreneur,’ or even ‘educator.’” In this essay, he shifts the attention from the artist to the audience, from authorship to collective experience, from production to reception, from product to process.

In 1968, the military dictatorship enacted the Institutional Act #5 (AI-5) to outlaw political opposition, leading to the widespread arrest of leaders who represented different sectors of the civil society. The AI-5 suspended habeas corpus and established censorship of the press. Torture became part of the government’s method of obtaining information on its political opponents. Oiticica left the country in a voluntary exile. In 1969, Gullar lived clandestinely in Brazil for a year, fearing political persecution and was forced to leave the country in exile in 1971.

His “Popular Centers for Culture” had failed both for their lack of aesthetic innovation and for their failure to communicate to its target audience. It was Gullar, himself, who later acknowledged that when the cultural activities of the CPCs were expanded towards the unions and slums, not many workers were interested

in seeing the plays of the group. After his return to Brazil, in 1978, Oiticica did not live long enough to see the ramifications of his contribution for this paradigm, but during the vacuum imposed by the military dictatorship, it was out of his “aesthetics of the margins” that Brazilian visual arts had finally found their artistic vocation.

Extremely influenced by each others’ ideas, Gullar and Oiticica provided the fundamental theoretical framework that would shape Brazilian art in the next decades. The relationship between art and politics, so indebted to the discussions from the 60s, became central to the artistic developments that later took place in the country, especially when artists had to face censorship and authoritarianism.

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New Takes on the “New”

The Cinemas of 1960s Latin America

BY GREG COHEN

TO JUDGE BY THE PROLIFERATION OF LATIN AMERICAN FILMS on the international festival circuit these days—not to mention the colossal box-office success of works by Walter Salles (*Motorcycle Diaries*), Fernando Meirelles (*City of God*) and Benicio del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*), among others—Latin American cinema would appear to be very much on the rise at the end of this first decade of the new millennium. Yet, while we celebrate its resurgence, an irresistible historical serendipity also finds us marking the fortieth anniversary of May 1968, along with all the gilded cinematic memories that mythical year evokes. After all, if film history has enshrined “The Sixties” in the aura of so many New Waves—think France, Czechoslovakia, India, and Japan—it should also recall that long decade (which arguably extends from the late 50s to the early 70s) as the last great moment of renovation in Latin American cinema as well.

To be sure, scholars, critics and filmmakers have long since formulated a rather monolithic conception of the so-called New Latin American Cinema (NLAC) of the 1960s, a tag that suggests a coherent, pan-continental, aesthetic movement rooted in political militancy, formal innovation and independent modes of production intended to counter the Hollywood industrial model. The NLAC rubric has served to encompass the works of artists as disparate as Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba), Jorge Sanjinés (Bolivia) and Pino Solanas (Argentina). It has implied a set of precursors both external (Roberto Rossellini, Cesare Zavattini) and internal (Leopoldo Torre Nilsson); designated its founding fathers (Fernando Birri; Nelson Pereira dos Santos; Julio García Espinosa); anthologized its manifestos (with cries for an “Imperfect Cinema” or a “Nationalist, Realist, Critical and Popular Cinema”); and even anointed its high priest, long gray beard and all (Fernando Birri again). In fact, most written film histories to date have adhered either directly or

inadvertently to the NLAC model, which has been useful not only in constructing the canon of films we watch, teach and study to this day, but in organizing the manner in which we talk about Latin American films from the period more generally.

The 60s undoubtedly spawned a cascade of activity and experimentation in independent film in Latin America. Yet I wonder whether the NLAC paradigm—the concept of Latin American cinema from the mid-50s to the mid-70s as a verifiable, even quantifiable “movement”—hasn’t led us to close the book on a still unfinished chapter of film history.

The contrasting stories of Brazilian and Argentine art cinema from the period are reason enough to treat the conventional account of the so-called New Latin American Cinema with skepticism. Brazil’s *Cinema Novo* was often bolstered by state incentives for domestic film productions, even in an atmosphere of acute government censorship. Indeed, the Brazilian movement probably constituted an aesthetic program far more coherent than any broader notion of the NLAC. Irrespective of the profusion and variety of individual expressions—and these were legion, to be sure—the *cinemanovistas* seemed genuinely united around the ideal of a highly individualistic, modernist art form that was also unflinchingly militant in its engagement with local socio-political issues (national identity, neo-colonialism, underdevelopment). It was precisely this synthesis of aesthetic self-expression and political activism that Glauber Rocha succinctly encapsulated in his 1965 manifesto, “Estética da Fome.”

Such a synthesis, however, was much less characteristic of Argentina’s *Nueva ola*, another Latin American “new wave” that produced many largely undervalued masterpieces. From Leonardo Favio to Nicolás Sarquís, from Hugo Santiago to Juan José Jusid or Alberto Fischerman, the directors of this new generation produced works far less overtly obsessed with questions of national identity, though

LOOKING AHEAD

Will the dawn of the 21st century be remembered as the Renaissance of Latin American cinema? Hollywood might have us think so, given its backing of a number of international blockbusters by Brazilian directors like Walter Salles (*The Motorcycle Diaries*) and Fernando Meirelles (*The Constant Gardener*), or those of the Mexican triumvirate of Alfonso Cuarón (*City of Men*), Guillermo del Toro (the *Hellboy* franchise), or Alejandro González Iñárritu (*Babel*).

Yet film productions of the art house variety—arguably a better index of healthy cinema culture beyond Hollywood—are also burgeoning across the Latin American continents. Argentina sent two young directors to compete at Cannes this year (Lucrecia Martel with *La mujer*

sin cabeza and Pablo Trapero with *Leonera*), only a year after Mexican director Carlos Reygadas won the jury prize there for *Stellet Licht*. Colombia’s film industry has been so fertile, meanwhile, that this year’s Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival ventured to screen an impressive seven of its latest features. Elsewhere, Chilean works like *El cielo, la tierra y la lluvia*, by José Luis Torres Leiva, are garnering accolades and prestigious awards from L.A. to Rotterdam on the international festival circuit. And at the most recent edition of *Bafici* (the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema), perhaps the most esteemed film festival in the Americas, Mexico’s Yulene Olaizola bested competitors from around the world for her documentary, *Intimidaciones de Shakespeare y Victor Hugo*.



Fig. 1. Images from *La hora de los hornos*

certainly as “modernist” as their counterparts from Brazil. Thus, the Argentine films most frequently associated with the canon of the NLAC are often the least “typical” of Argentine cinema from the period. To wit, Pino Solanas and Octavio Getino’s *La hora de los hornos* (1969) may certainly stand as the founding work of “Third Cinema.” Yet its radical sound track and barrage of agitprop slogans flashing in big, bold-face letters between swarms of appropriated images—closer to the militant films of French activist Guy Debord than to other works of Argentine national cinema—produced few imitators beyond the members of its own Grupo Cine Liberación [Fig. 1]. The same might be said of Fernando Birri, the aforementioned “pope” of the NLAC. Though he did establish the legendary Escuela de Cine Documental de Santa Fe, with its orthodox neo-realist agenda, it would be difficult, in hindsight, to list the adherents to any kind of “movimiento birriano” within or beyond Argentina.

Invaluable as the NLAC model has been to our understanding of Latin American cinema from the mid-50s to the mid-70s, I fear that we have grown complacent with its convenience. As a result, we may risk relegating inexhaustibly complex films from the period to the backwaters of retrospectives, encyclopedias and festival catalogues while missing the opportunity to refresh our understanding of these works, or even to open the Latin American film canon to new efforts of preservation and dissemination. Hence, I’d like to propose just a few of the areas toward which the future promotion of 1960s Latin American cinema might migrate. My hope is that we not only reconsider the films we know well, but point the way toward lesser-known films worthy of attention. While my focus will hew closely to the cinemas of Argentina and Brazil—the two areas of Latin American film I know best—I believe my prescriptions apply just as well to movies and directors from across the Americas.

ON FILM FORM AND POLITICS

The political content of 1960s Latin American cinema has perennially defined our appraisal of individual works from the period. Nonetheless, we are far from penetrating the varied, complex *formal* mechanisms of their political critique. This is a shame, because on the whole, much of the NLAC’s own canon is rich in formal idiosyncrasies deserving of greater attention. Take Fernando Birri’s *Tire dié*, from 1958, the work held up by many as the keystone of new

cinema in the Latin American 60s. The film’s social commentary may seem self-evident, so much so that theoretical analyses rarely move beyond its most famous sequence, in which impoverished children from the outskirts of Santa Fe, Argentina, race alongside a train rolling across an elevated causeway, shouting to the passengers to “Throw a dime!” [Fig. 2]. Yet, while the montage may at first glance remind us of Eisenstein (so goes the prevailing assessment), the real impact of the sequence resides in its peculiar use of overlapping editing and the consequent effects on cinematic time and space. What’s more, the film brims with noteworthy formal quirks, among them a seemingly inadvertent repetition of graphic elements from one segment of the documentary to the next [Fig. 3]. Consciously or unconsciously, the design of the film points up a confrontation with received ideas about the nature of modern space at the dawn of the 60s, one that I believe exists in other works throughout the decade, both in Latin America and beyond.

ON THE USES AND MISUSES OF GENRE

Just as new wave directors elsewhere mined American film genres to stage a wholesale renovation of the cinematic medium (Jean-Luc



Fig. 2. *Tire dié* (1958), Fernando Birri

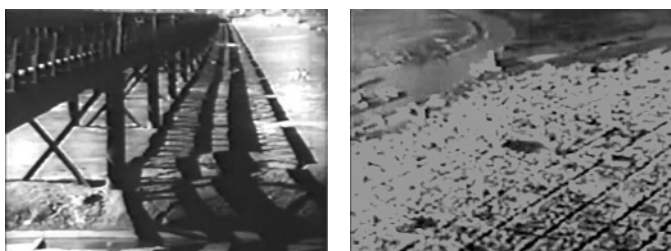


Fig. 3. Grid motif, frame stills from Birri's *Tire Dié*

Godard comes immediately to mind, of course, but so does Seijun Suzuki, whose 1967 film, *Branded to Kill*, is a ribald send-up of the gangster film), in Latin America, too, filmmakers in the 60s turned a critical eye toward genre and its received protocols. Indeed, examining the uses, abuses, and creative misuses of Hollywood genres may be one good way to expand the canon of 1960s Latin American cinema. In Brazil, for instance, a considerable amount has been written about, say, Glauber Rocha's take on the Western, or Joaquim Pedro de Andrade's version of the road movie. Less familiar, though, are the works of *Cinema Marginal*, a Brazilian underground movement of the period in which the irreverent deconstruction of Hollywood genres formed the crux of its innovation. I'm thinking not only of the group's hallmark work, *O bandido da luz vermelha* (Rogério Sganzerla, 1969), but of lesser known films like *Bang Bang!* (1971) by Andrea Tonacci (which Ismail Xavier discusses at the end of his seminal book, *Allegories of Underdevelopment*) [Fig. 4]. There, Tonacci makes mincemeat not only of the Western, but also the crime thriller, film noir, the "city symphony film" of the early 1920s, and even the science fiction B-movie. Similar palimpsests reside beneath Júlio Bressane's *Matou a família e foi ao cinema* and *O Anjo nasceu*, both shot in 1969.

In Argentina, meanwhile, many important films from the 60s and 70s buried in the archives today could be revived by attending to their treatment of genre: film noir in Lautaro Murúa's *Aliás Gardelito* (1961); film noir mixed with science fiction in Hugo Santiago's *Invasión* (1969) [Fig. 5]; the gothic in Leonardo Favio's *El dependiente* (1968); the coming-of-age drama, from Rodolfo Kuhn's *Los jóvenes viejos* (1961) to Favio's *Crónica de un niño solo* (1966) to Murúa's rarely screened *La Raulito* (1975). All these works, to one degree or another, are concerned with the subversive recycling of genre conventions, to great formal and political effect.

ON FILM-THEORIZING AND THE CONCEPT OF "NEW WAVE"

Finally, what we know today about Latin American cinema in the 60s suffers from a curious theoretical reticence when compared to our appreciation of other film "new waves" of the period. This need not be the case, though I hardly mean to suggest that a renewed approach to Latin American cinema from the 1960s must somehow resuscitate the many film theories to *emerge* in the period (film semiotics; *auteur* theory; Lacanian film analysis). Rather, I call for new theoretical strategies to resurrect and reevaluate old films. My own work on Argentine and Brazilian cinema, for example, has led me to reconsider the largely unquestioned link between our ideas of "modernity" and our assumptions about its inherently urban nature. Films like Godard's *Alphaville* or Jacques Tati's *Playtime* may lead us to draw certain conclusions about the city as synonymous with modern space, and thus about the ways that modern



Fig. 5. *Invasión* (1969), Hugo Santiago



Fig. 6. *Porto das Caixas* (Brazil, 1962), Paulo César Saraceni

space conditions knowledge in the 60s. Yet those notions acquire new hues of meaning when re-examined in the light of films like Favio's *El dependiente* or Paulo César Saraceni's *Porto das Caixas* (1963) [Fig. 6], both set in provincial towns neither fully urban nor entirely rural.

While issues of national or regional identity, allegories of underdevelopment, neo-colonial resistance and post-colonial revolution have dominated the way we think about Latin American cinema, to push beyond them toward larger philosophical questions of time, space, knowledge, and phenomena can inject new energy into the critique of Latin American films from the 60s, and even enhance our understanding of that decade's global profusion of film new waves.

Unquestionably, independent cinema in the Latin American sixties was always a part of something much broader. In my view, the arch-movement of the NLAC may have been a scholarly invention more than any truly self-conscious aesthetic agenda. Yet the many pioneering movies from the period—canonical and otherwise—are more than national artifacts or political documents. Certainly, they are more than mere objects of unilateral influence from the many historical film movements of the "center" (Italian Neorealism, French New Wave) to the single, idealized Movement of the "periphery" (NLAC). To grasp the legacy of 1960s Latin American cinema today—and even ensure its posterity—perhaps the time is ripe to liberate these works from the static framework of an avant-garde program that may never have been. So many challenging films from the Latin American 60s beg to tell us not where they fit within the New Latin American Cinema, but just what about them was so essentially "new" and "cinematic" within the broader context of film new waves the world over.

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From Selma to Salvador

African-American Echoes in the Brazilian Movimento Negro

BY KAVITA SHAH

WHEN JAMES BROWN RELEASED “SAY It Loud: I’m Black and I’m Proud” in 1969, little did he know that his music, his swagger, and his style would play a prominent role in Brazilian blacks’ struggle for self-affirmation.

Brown certainly wasn’t the sole catalyst of the Brazilian *movimento negro*, which has yet to experience a large-scale, organized black movement as the United States did in the 1960s. Yet, Brazil—the country with the largest black population outside of Africa—did manage to find inspiration in the U.S. civil rights movement and in 1960s culture, particularly through its music.

In this epic decade for black liberation worldwide along with all other sorts of liberation Brazil underwent a fundamental shock that would put the brakes on such movements. In 1964, a coup d’état funded by the U.S. government ousted the populist President João Goulart from office, giving birth to a military dictatorship that would last for more than two decades. The coup cut short progressive foreign policy toward Africa begun by President Jânio Quadros in 1961, including the establishment of Brazilian embassies in West Africa, the appointment of Brazil’s first black ambassador (posted to Ghana), and the creation of scholarships for African students to study in Brazil. During the especially repressive years of the military dictatorship in the late ’60s and early ’70s, the *linhas duras*, or hard-liners, cracked down on activists of all kinds, creating a climate of fear for Afro-Brazilians looking to organize.

The Black Power movement was not only combating a dictatorship, but also the predominant ideology of “racial democracy” in Brazil—that the nation’s high percentage of racial mixing precludes the existence of racism, discouraging any international (or *intranational*) political association with blacks of the African diaspora. Music played a seminal role in disseminating this myth, especially the samba, which itself blends Afro-Brazilian rhythms and dance forms with European harmonization. Looking to promote inherently Brazilian—and there-

fore racially mixed or “mulatto”—cultural forms, the government of Getúlio Vargas was quick to patronize the samba schools of Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s with state funds, a practice that continues today.

“Aquarela do Brasil” (“Watercolor of Brazil”), known simply as “Brasil,” is perhaps the most symbolic anthem of the Vargas era, made famous by Disney’s 1942 film short of the same name in which Donald Duck travels to Rio and is entranced by *cachaça*, voluptuous women resembling Carmen Miranda, and the exotic rhythms of the samba. The lyrics of “Brasil” capture the spirit of racial democracy:

Brasil
Meu Brasil brasileiro
Meu mulato inzoneiro
Vou cantar-te nos meus versos
Ô Brasil, samba que dá
Bamboleio, que faz gingá
Ô Brasil do meu amor
Terra de Nosso Senhor

Brazil
 My Brazilian Brazil
 My rogue mulatto
 I will sing of you in my verses
 O Brazil, samba that gives way
 Swing, that makes one sway
 O Brazil of my love
 Land of Our Lord

It was this image of Brazil’s racial paradise that Americans once hailed as a model to strive for. While both nations were founded upon the forced enslavement of millions of Africans, contemporary race relations in Brazil were, in comparison to the United States’ rigid “one-drop” system, seemingly fluid and unmitigated by the state. Events like Bloody Sunday—the 1965 confrontation at Selma, Alabama, made famous by images of state troopers tear-gassing and assaulting civil rights marchers—were simply unthinkable in Brazil. That said, racism in Brazil was widespread, albeit in a more subtle form. A 1950s UNESCO study, intended originally to demonstrate an example of racial har-

mony in the wake of the Holocaust, found that race-based discrimination in Brazil was a common barrier to social mobility. Other studies found racism to be alive and well in places of entertainment and employment, with companies advertising for employees with a *boa aparência* (“good appearance”)—which meant something other than wearing a suit and tie.

Whereas in the United States, black institutions like churches and universities served as pivotal meeting grounds during the civil rights movement, the lack of *de jure* segregation in Brazil actually reinforced the myth of racial democracy. By the end of the 1960s, the United States saw the rise and fall of two eminent black leaders (Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X), and the enactment of civil rights legislation enshrining equal opportunity and voting rights for blacks. Brazil, on the other hand, accomplished little toward alleviating social inequality for Afro-Brazilians, let alone recognizing that such a thing existed. The 1968 Ato Institucional No. 5 marked the beginning of the most repressive years of its military dictatorship; among other things, the decree suspended *habeas corpus*, the right to protest and to organize, and it declared censorship of the media, including music (the popular music duo Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso were put under house arrest and exiled the following year).

Yet gains for Black Power abroad during the 1960s had a strong effect on Afro-Brazilians, especially through the music, images, and iconography of the African Diaspora that proliferated in Brazil during the late 1960s and 1970s. *Tropicalismo*, a countercultural movement, is associated with the music of Gil and Veloso (Gil is black and Veloso, white), dubbed *tropicália*, which fused Brazilian sounds with rock and addressed political themes—especially race—in its lyrics. Gil sported an afro hairdo onstage and often wore an African tunic during performances, resonating with an international black aesthetic and political posture. Soul music, especially that of James Brown, gave rise to the Black Soul moves-



Bloco-afro Malê Debalê disseminates black pride. Afro-Bahian musician Carlinhos Brown observed the importance of James Brown's music and even how it inspired a word *brau*, to be a soul brother (Ari Lima, "Black or Brau" in *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization*, p. 227).

ment of Rio de Janeiro, characterized by festivals in the *súrbios* (suburbs, usually poor shantytowns outside of metropolitan centers). Some of these parties were called "Noites do Shaft" ("Shaft nights") after U.S. blaxploitation protagonist John Shaft.

Black Soul was criticized by some as lacking cultural authenticity, infiltrated by a foreign musical form not indigenous to Brazil, and therefore irrelevant to the project of racial democracy. But soul continued to gain popularity, spreading north to Salvador, Bahia, a city far poorer and less developed than the cosmopolitan centers of the Southeast. With a black population estimated at more than 80%, Salvador—the blackest city in the world outside of Lagos—is literally and figuratively located at the margin between Brazil and the Black Atlantic world. In addition to soul music, affirmative slogans from the U.S. black power movement—often witnessed in Brown's songs like "Say it Loud"—formed the core of *blackitude baiana*. "Black is beautiful" and "black power" took on local Brazilian meanings associated with a larger cultural movement. Brown, who had a provocative style and attitude, even had a word named after him: in 1970s Salvador, to be a *brau* was to be a soul brother, a Bahian who consumed U.S. black culture, wore an afro, colorful clothing, and was versed in black politics. By aligning themselves with U.S. blacks, Afro-Brazilians were stepping out of the norms dictated by racial democracy, and even local norms of Afro-Brazilianness. They were affirming themselves as black in a modern, cosmopolitan sense of the word.

Afro-Bahian musician Carlinhos Brown,

who grew up in Salvador during this time, observed: "I didn't understand anything [J. Brown] was singing, but I understood how he acted, and everyone understood that, because his dancing, the way he danced, dragging himself along, you know, was like... a dribble around social things, going down to the floor, using his whole body like a movement. When you came to Liberdade, some guy would always challenge you: Draw a line! And he'd dance a circle. So if you danced cool, if you did a novel step, it was alright. If not, everyone messed with you and stuff—'you aren't *brau*, man!'"

Alongside this cultural celebration, a new black political movement was taking shape, thanks in part to the *abertura*, or "opening" period, of the military dictatorship that began in the late 1970s. The Movimento Negro Unificado (Unified Black Movement, MNU) was established in 1978 in São Paulo to address issues faced by Afro-Brazilians such as police brutality, economic disparity, and racial discrimination.

The MNU also took hold in Salvador, and it was in this political and cultural atmosphere so influenced by U.S. black culture and politics that groups known as *bloco-afros* ("afro-blocs") formed. Still the most prominent cultural component of the *movimento negro* today, the *blocos* took on musical idioms and political postures identifying with the African diaspora. The musical style of the *blocos-afro*, for example, is known as the *samba-reggae* for its fusion of the two forms. Furthermore, like Rio's samba schools, the *blocos-afro*, perform yearly in Carnival and operate mostly in the Afropolis' *periferias*, or poor peripheral

neighborhoods. As such, they have taken on socio-educative roles in the *movimento negro*, serving as physical community spaces for local Afro-Brazilians to gather, share ideas, and disseminate black pride through dance and music.

In recent years, Malê released a song called "Aquarela Negra" ("Black Watercolor"), which can be seen as a re-appropriation of "Aquarela do Brasil." Here, composer Marcos Alafin speaks directly to international—not national—black—not mulatto—figures. He says, of Martin Luther King, Steve Biko, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and Afro-Brazilian historical leaders Zumbi and Zeferina: *Essa é a nossa aquarela negra, negra, negra/Esse é o nosso universo das canções* ("This is our black, black, black watercolor/ This is our universe of songs").

The legacy of the 1960s and the spirit of black liberation are evident in these lyrics. As one dancer from Malê Debalê told me in 2007, her hair is best worn braided, *bem black power* (literally, "really Black Power"), in Carnival. Though connected to the U.S. Black Power movement through an inherited aesthetic, something in that phrase is left from the original meaning, if only the English words.

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Between Bombs and Bombshells

Student and Sexual Politics in 1968 Brazil

BY VICTORIA LANGLAND

OF THE MANY DYNAMIC POLITICAL AND cultural forces that marked Brazil in the 1960s, one of the most remarkable was the effervescent student movement, especially during the momentous year of 1968. University students in Brazil had a long history of organizing politically and participating in national issues. However, the student movement of 1968 was unlike its predecessors. It represented some of the intense transformations the country was experiencing, including new degrees of participation for women in the student movement and sweeping changes in gender and sexual relationships for young people more broadly.

Brazil had been living under a military dictatorship since 1964, when the armed forces overthrew then-president João Goulart in a not uncommon Cold War move on the part of business, military and other sectors. Many university students, like others from their middle- and upper-class origins, originally supported the 1964 coup. Nevertheless, by 1968, large numbers of them had turned away from the regime—vehemently so. This shift reflected a general discomfort with the regime's gradual—and not so gradual—restriction of civil liberties, compounded by severe problems with the university system. It also reflected the growing leftward trend within the student body, a trend witnessed in other Latin American universities at that time. Students saw that the developmentalist economic programs of the last decades had produced few benefits, while the socialist turn of the Cuban Revolution offered new possibilities.

Eventually, students spearheaded the principal opposition movement to the regime, positioning student activism as essentially an “anti-dictatorship” movement. It’s worth noting too that in the four years since the coup d’état, the labor unions and peasant leagues active in the early 60s were decimated; political parties were rendered virtually obsolete; and while many other sectors of society opposed this military intervention in political life, there was very little space to express this opposition.



“They want to do away with Marieta,” the headline reads. Marieta, a romantic figure who needs to be rescued from an oncoming train, is used to advertise furniture with “modern, slick design” that comes from a factory with a “totally automatic revolutionary system.”

Because of students’ relatively privileged social position, however, and because the regime at first did not believe many students really opposed them and were merely being led astray by a small group of outside and inauthentic “agitators,” they were able to take up their anti-dictatorship position. Student-sponsored protests during this time began to assemble record-breaking numbers of participants (including many non-students, such as musical celebrities, clergy members and others), and spurred intense press coverage and often repressive government intervention. Furthermore, students would make up a large portion of the newly forming underground organizations that arose in this period and advocated armed struggle and socialist revolution.

Women participated actively in both the university-based student mobilization and the growing, clandestine armed movements. While it is impossible to know exactly how many students in general and women in particular participated in these movements, we can make informed estimates. Thus, for example, observers estimated that about 300 students attended the 1966 National Students’ Union meeting, and that one out of every ten students participating were women. Two years later, at the 1968 congress, police raided the banned meeting and arrested everyone there. Their records show that 712 students were arrested, and 22% of them were women. Judging just by participation in these congresses, this represents an overall increase in participa-



tion between 1966 and 1968 of 137% for students in general and a whopping 420% for women students.

Such a growth of female student activism clearly concerned some observers, especially once the student movement made a tactical decision to physically confront the state security forces as best they could. Since 1964 the police had gradually begun utilizing more drastic means to quiet dissenting students. If at first students generally sought to avoid the mounting physical repression unleashed against them, after a student protester was shot and killed by the police in March of 1968, they held prolonged internal political discussions about using violence and ultimately decided to not avoid confrontation (Maria Ribeiro do Valle, *O diálogo é a violência*, 24.). Thus, soon after, students began deliberately arming themselves for street protests with makeshift

weapons like Molotov cocktails, rocks and corks hurled in slingshots, simple sticks and stones, or broken pieces of acetate records that, they said, could be thrown quite precisely at some distance. Meanwhile at some marches a few students would station themselves in some of the many high-rise buildings in the cities' downtown areas, from which they could throw heavy objects at the police below.

This decision was confirmed by Olga D'Arc Pimentel, a student leader in 1968 from the city of Goiânia, who later recalled:

We decided to change tactics. You're going to force us? Then let's go, now everyone is going to go prepared. And we all did. The girls with bags underneath the skirts of their uniforms, full of rocks. Then when the army would start to line up, there came

that rain of rocks. It was crazy. (Daniel Aarão Reis and Pedro de Moraes, 68: *A paixão de uma utopia*, 153)

Although this change in tactics certainly represented a shift for the student movement in general, the active participation of female students proved even more unusual, for they had not traditionally engaged in much counteroffensive before this time. Only four years earlier, for example, on the day of the coup itself, a mixed group of students and artists went to the student union building in Rio de Janeiro to try to protect it from attacks. While some of the men armed themselves with weapons, the women of the group were to bring first-aid supplies, hidden inside their purses, in case anyone was hurt—not rocks under their skirts. Likewise, in June 1968 U.S. Embassy reports indicate that young women carried stones in their handbags to street protests and young people of both sexes brought sticks rolled up in newspapers.

Besides becoming more politically militant, students in 1968 began breaking down boundaries of another kind of activity: sex. As in other parts of the world, the climate of cultural and political change in the late 1960s led to considerable questioning of long-standing values concerning sexuality, while the technological advance of the birth control pill allowed young couples to act on their beliefs with much less risk of pregnancy. As two Brazilian historians who were themselves university students in this period have eloquently noted,

[T]he 1960s in Brazil witnessed a peculiar conjuncture. On the one hand, power was forcefully taken over by a portion of those Brazilians for whom "the dissolution of customs" was part of an insidious subversion engineered by the international communist movement. On the other hand, for the children of the post-war baby boom who were reaching adulthood, the order of the day was "questionings," as we also used to say, of the disdainfully labeled "bourgeois marriage," understood as the supra-

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sum of hypocrisy and of the inequality of erotic opportunities between the sexes. (Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida and Luiz Weis in *História da Vida Privada no Brasil: Contrastes da intimidade contemporânea*, 399)

That this sexual questioning did not necessarily result in the equal freedom of sexual expression sought by progressive young women is made clear by the fact that even within the left, old sexual standards died hard, or not at all. Numerous young male activists echoed the confession of one student who admitted: "Many of us embarked on ambiguous projects, dating some 'pretty' girl from the Paineira or Paulistano [Country] Club and at the same time carrying on burning passionate affairs with colleagues from the university, political militants..." (Ibid, 370). Nor is this to say that all or even most university students were engaged in more open sexual activities. One woman remembers the advice given her at the time by her friend: "We have to act like we put out for guys, but we don't really have to put out for guys" (Zuenir Ventura, 1968: *O Ano que não terminou*, 37.) Yet even if these explorations did not constitute the sexual revolution that some people either feared or hoped for, 1968 nevertheless marked a moment of broad sexual questioning, one felt throughout society.

These new sexual ideas and behaviors of young people provoked vociferous public debates and anxieties. A flurry of articles on topics such as sex education, abortion, birth control, and wearing bikinis filled the pages of newspapers and magazines. In one magazine article in *Manchete* magazine titled "Nudism and Sex: Is the world implanting a new morality?" the authors lamented this new "revolution of sex,...a type of atomic bomb, of highly explosive material, destined to destroy society and subvert customs." Exaggerated or not, such sentiments were not uncommon and reflect the profound sense of unease that young people's sexual explorations provoked.

The conflation of sex with revolution colored the way student activists were understood, especially women students. Following the early morning raid of the student congress mentioned earlier, the police held a press conference to show off the "subversive" materials they had confiscated. They directed journalists to tables loaded



with displays of Molotov cocktails, sling-shots, communist literature, knives, a few pistols, and several boxes of birth control pills. Indeed, those students who attended such gatherings found themselves not simply subject to arrest, but also the focus of much speculation regarding their sexual behavior. Attending a student congress or occupying a university building meant that male and female students slept overnight in unsupervised locations, sometimes for a week or longer. And journalists who covered these events invariably reported on the

night-time arrangements, often alluding to their impropriety. At the raided congress, for example, great emphasis was placed on the fact that, due to lack of space, some students were found sleeping in an unused pigsty (the congress took place on a farm). The Secretary of Security declared to reporters of the *Jornal do Brasil* that at the student meeting there was "total promiscuity. Boys and girls lived in the same tents, in the same pigsties [and] barnyard" ("Polícia paulista liga Congresso da ex-UNE a terrorismo e assassinato," October 16, 1968).

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Attractive women with guns are used in advertising to promote such products as motor oil. Sexualized advertisements expressed social anxieties about sexual activity and the rise of militancy.

At another overnight event, students took over the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of São Paulo, where they remained for several weeks, forming study and discussion groups and holding impromptu courses on current events. A reporter who visited them gave scant attention to these academic activities, but duly described "the hotel" – the fifth-floor classroom where students slept stretched out on the floor or on tables pushed together ("A Faculdade esta

Ocupada." *Realidade*, August 1968, 56).

That parents ought to better supervise their daughters' activities clearly seems to be part of the message the police were trying to send when they displayed birth control pills to the press. In a similar warning, the Army Chief of Staff told a newspaper in 1970 that young women typically got involved in subversive activities by way of young men who, after winning them away from their families, would "incriminate" them so that they

could not return. In the same interview, he proclaimed "young terrorists" as very promiscuous, and categorically stated that rates of venereal disease and illegitimate births among them were high (cited in a telegram from the U.S. Embassy Rio de Janeiro to Secretary of State, Washington D.C., July 22, 1970).

From the display of birth control pills at the student congress to the idea that women joined clandestine groups via love affairs, the overall message sent by the police and press at once dismissed women's political activities as poorly disguised sexual acting out while also, contradictorily, proclaiming that their political activities and sexual activities inevitably intertwined, thus warning parents and others to be wary of this double-pronged danger.

One further (and intriguing) expression of social anxieties about the rise of militancy and sexual activity among female university students can be found in magazine advertisements and fashion spreads from 1968. Beginning around April 1968, just as student protests were really heating up in Brazil and around the world, sexualized images of armed and/or persecuted women inundated the pages of the mainstream press. At the same time that reports of student activities decried the violence in which young people participated, the media began to display images of violent fantasies against young female bodies. The appearance of these images also suggests a form of repressive response, in this case to redefine women's political struggles as sexual entertainment. For these images both paralleled interpretations of currently active women students and helped to create a template from which to read the armed actions that were soon to follow. And these popular conceptions of politically active women propagated in 1968 would arise again in the gender-specific torture and abuse of women political prisoners by the state security forces in 1969 and the early 1970s.

Victoria Langland is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Davis, where she is finishing a book about 1968 in Brazil. This work comes from her article, "Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and Revolution in 1968 Brazil," in In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War, edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Duke University Press, 2008).



Revolution by Osmosis

A 60s Remembrance

BY GUITA SCHYFTER

I GREW UP IN THE PEACEFUL PARADISE OF Costa Rica. I can picture myself as a 13-year-old in 1960, a rebellious teenager with little self-esteem growing up in the exuberant tropical landscape surrounded by mountains, volcanoes and the sea.

The big commotions of the 1960s that would shake the world did not reach us. The first tremors that heralded in the Cuban revolution, student movements, Vietnam and the feminist movement never quite made it to Costa Rica. Life was uneventful, save for my secret longings and romantic visions. And I had no other ambition than to desperately want to escape from that paradise that felt suffocating to me without my really knowing why.

I remember myself at the very beginning of the 60s. I don't fit in: I am Jewish, living in a small community of about 250 families that have come mainly from Poland, most of whom are Holocaust survivors. Many have numbers tattooed on their forearms. I try not to look but I can't keep my eyes off their arms. My father loves the country and has been the community leader for more than 20 years. My Lithuanian mother, on the other hand, is not happy in Costa Rica. She cannot find many friends among these Polish and Gallitzian Jews who speak what she considers a vulgar form of Yiddish. She wants to move to New York where her sister lives.

The visit of U.S. President John F. Kennedy to Costa Rica changed the routine and gave me a glimpse of glamour and excitement.

The day was unforgettable. I put on mascara for the very first time in my life and went out with my classmates to welcome the president. Costa Rica was proud of not having an army. Since there were no soldiers, the government recruited all the high school students to form a gauntlet stretching from the airport up Central Avenue and all the way to the university on the other side of the city, the route President Kennedy's car would take.

Suddenly we saw the car coming. My eyes started to itch. I regretted the use of mascara on such an important day. Kennedy drove by very close in a convertible. I was impressed by his red hair. "Oh, how handsome," I thought. I noticed his eyes were very irritated. Then I then realized we all had red eyes. It was not till later that we found out that the Irazú volcano had begun to erupt, covering the whole country with volcanic ash. For the next two years it rained ashes. People walked around with umbrellas. Houses had to be cleaned three and four times a day. But the ashes were great for teasing hair into very puffy forms to create tall beehives with flips at the ends that everybody wore.

Together with Kennedy, mascara and beehives, the Beatles came into my life with their romantic plea, "I want to hold your hand." They coexisted with my other idol, Elvis Presley, rather than entirely replacing him. And they did not do away with my fondness for the mainly Mexican *boleros* (love songs) I listened to on the radio, music I still love today.

Fast forward to 1965. I have decided to study psychology at the National University of Mexico. Free at last, I am dazzled by the

university. In the Humanities Department where I study psychology, I enjoy my new-found freedom. I forget, even if only for a short time, the social demands of what is expected of me, of all of us women: marriage. Instead, I concentrate on my new life full of ideological discussions, film debates, political rallies and my first student strike.

The student demands of 1966 sounded right to me, particularly because that was what my new friends thought: abolish the entrance exam, ban the university police and overhaul the university programs. The shameful outcome of this strike was when a group of law students took over the dean's office and forced Dean Ignacio Chávez to resign at gunpoint after humiliating him in various ways. The new dean, Ignacio Barros Sierra, complied, eliminating the entrance exam and getting rid of the university police. Everybody started working on the new curricula.

When I arrived in Mexico, there was only one political party that mattered: the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional). Everything was decided and managed by the PRI: the elections, the unions, and the three social sectors of the working class, the peasants and the popular class. The obsession with political stability of the Mexican state started to suffocate everybody. At the university, discussions on academic reform were gradually replaced by calls for the release of some political prisoners. In the large cafeteria in the Humanities Department, everything was discussed: the civil rights movement in the United States, Malcolm X, Ché Guevara, the Cuban Revolution, the war in Vietnam. There was the Communist group, the Maoists, the Spartacus League, the *foquistas* (Ché sympathizers); we all agreed on liberty, justice, the end of the bourgeoisie, doing away with everything we learnt from our parents, overstepping limits, experimenting with sex, drugs and the contraceptive pill; we decided that the Vietnam war was bad, that you had to support the Cuban Revolution, and that the CIA was to blame for everything. We all had to achieve our financial independence, travel to Europe and sing protest songs.

By 1968, some of my friends were faculty representatives on the National Strike Committee. I supported them completely but participated from the sidelines. Being a foreign student I was scared to be thrown out of the country for "meddling in national politics," as they put it. The government

(from left) The year 1968 is present in the imagination today; Mexico City protests of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre.

blamed “exotic foreign ideas” for the movement, looking for scapegoats. Deep down, this suited me just fine. I was too fearful to be a militant or to commit politically to any group. So I engaged in low-profile activities. I was very good at using the mimeograph so I printed out hundreds and hundreds of copies of flyers for others to hand out. I went to all the marches and all the political meetings. To raise funds I organized the Queen of the University election with my fellow student Carlos Sevilla. We walked all around campus while Carlos picked out the girls he fancied to be Queen candidates. They then had to go and sell votes for their own election. The winner was going to be crowned on September 15 during the Mexican Independence celebration. The pageant was a huge success and raised a lot of money for the cause.

I imagine the government started to lose patience with this effervescence. At first it didn't care about the few Maoists in Political Science or the small group of Trotskyites in Economics or the Ché Guevaristas in Philosophy. But these high spirits were springing up around the whole country. With the upcoming Olympic Games, Mexico needed to present its best profile to the world. So two days after our successful contest, the army took over the university and arrested many students and anyone who happened to be there: the radio station journalist and whomever he was interviewing, the Ph.D. candidate, his examiners and his family and friends attending his defense, the passerby who got out of his car to see what was happening. Anybody who looked like a student was put in paddy wagons known as *julias*. Sevilla, the student who had organized the pageant with me, was tossed into the *julia* after desperately trying to evade arrest. He offered an unwilling gas station attendant 200 pesos for his uniform to use as a disguise. Sevilla was taken to prison and accused with others of inciting hostility, incitement to rebellion, attacking roads, robbery, gangsterism, criminal association, conspiracy, individual resistance, murder, plundering.

Everyone is a prisoner of her time. I absorbed all these events as if by osmosis. I was lucky to be able to grow up in those fascinating 1960s. They were so exciting—sometimes tragic but always compelling—and everything was about to happen. The period continues to influence my life and vision; my film *Novia que te vea*, set in

1962, tries to recreate this period.

Yet, in spite of the political tumult, ordinary life creaked on. The very afternoon of the arrests, my inseparable friend Raquel, Jorge and I decided to shirk our political duties and go to the movies. We decided on *Valley of the Dolls*. The theater was located all the way downtown near the Zócalo. As we approached, I saw army tanks, army trucks, and buses full of soldiers moving along the street. I had never seen such a sight. Costa Rica didn't even have an army. “This is repression,” said Jorge. For the first time I grasped the true meaning of the word. Unaware of what was happening at the university, we went into the movie theater.

When the army finally left the university at the end of the month, a demonstration was scheduled for October 2 at Tlaltelolco Square. By chance, that day was Yom Kippur, the Jewish high holiday. I really wanted to go to the Tlaltelolco. It was going to be full of representatives from every university and union. “Please come with me,” I beg Lali at the synagogue. Lali and her mother live in Tlaltelolco. “Come with me just for a short while and I promise we'll come back before the final prayers.”

When we arrive at Tlaltelolco the square is not yet full. More and more people start to come. It is like a big celebration. On a balcony right in front of the square are all the members the National Strike Committee. Flags, music, the sound of what I think are fireworks welcome the railroad workers. Suddenly the huge mass of people begins to run. The fireworks are not fireworks but gunshots. I see men wearing white gloves come up the Plaza. Lali and I start to run but I lose her. I freeze. Someone takes my hand and tells me we have to stand up against the attacking army: “Don't run, we have to face this aggression.” All I hear are shots, screams, people shouting, glass breaking. Suddenly someone starts to pull my other hand. Caught between the two I turn around to find that it is Lali, who throws me to the ground. “Don't let go,” she orders as we get up and start running between soldiers lying on the ground with the guns in attack position and among tanks with rotating barrels. The soldiers smash the big windows of the bakery where many women are buying the afternoon's fresh baked bread and shout for all to get out. We finally arrive at the front door of Lali's apartment building. “No one can go in,”

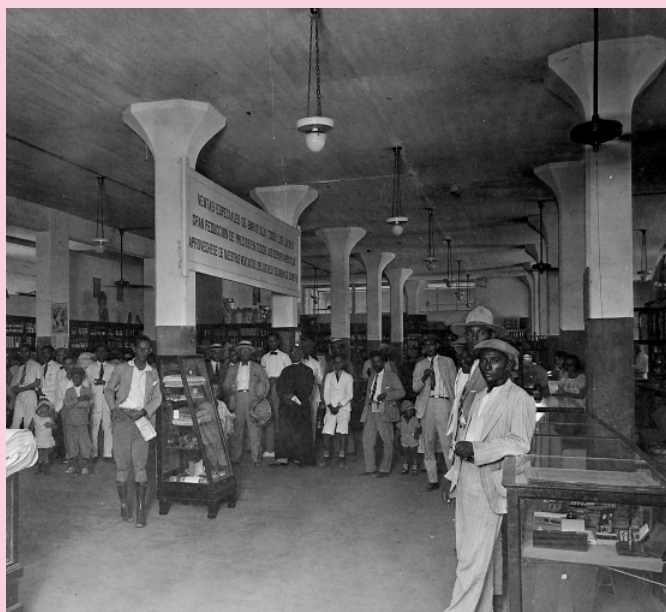
the soldier guarding the door tells us. “We live here,” cries Lali. “Please let us in sir...” It took me years to overcome the shame I felt for having begged the soldier. But he finally did let us in.

Doña Tere, Lali's mother, is frantic. It is going to be a long night. The next-door neighbor, afraid of being alone, comes with her two young children. A young guy knocks desperately and beseeches us to let him in. Doña Tere lets him in. (In his film *Rojo Amanecer*, director Jorge Fons transmits all the confused emotions of that night). A period of silence follows. But all of a sudden, at around 10 p.m., a second round of shooting begins. Bullets come in through our windows. We throw ourselves to the floor. The young guy lies down next to me. He is probably a student. We hold hands all night in fear. “Do you think they will kill us?” “I don't know,” he answers. We hear the soldiers' boots as they run up and down the stairs, knocking at the doors.

The next morning, everything is quiet again. The young man leaves without ever telling us his name. All I want is to get out of there. We walk along the square. Children are playing with the soldiers on the tanks and wearing the soldiers' helmets. When we get to Doña Tere's car, all the windows are smashed. On the hood of the car lies a brain, a human brain. Doña Tere tells a soldier to take it away. When he sees what it is he refuses. So Doña Tere gets a piece of old newspaper wraps it up and throws it in the garbage can.

After spending the night of October 2 in Tlaltelolco I did not leave my house for over a month. I was paralyzed by fear, afraid that they would catch me, torture me, throw me into jail or out of the country. I stayed locked up in the house, watching the Olympic Games. My friends were caught and stayed in jail for the next three years. I never participated actively in anything again. I realized it was not my calling to change the world. But Mexico changed forever and so did I. We had all rebelled against an authoritarian way of life and its effects can be felt to this day.

Guila Schyfter, a filmmaker, is the DRCLAS 2008–09 Fundación México/ Antonio Madero Visiting Fellow. Her 1993 film, Novia que te vea, earned five Ariel awards from the Mexican Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences.



Repatriating Photographs

BY AVI CHOMSKY

I first learned of the United Fruit Company's operations in Colombia, like many people, when I read Gabriel García Márquez's *100 Years of Solitude* and its description of the 1928 massacre of banana workers in Santa Marta. A few years later, I was researching United Fruit for my dissertation, and was met with a wall of silence when I tried to contact the company to gain access to its records. Several other scholars including Philippe Bourgois, Marcelo Bucheli, and Jorge Giovannetti, have managed to access UFCO papers in scattered locations (in Panama, Colombia, and Cuba, respectively). But company headquarters insist that the records have been officially destroyed and are not available to scholars.

There is one repository, though, that is open to schol-

ars and that has been used by many of us who have researched United Fruit over the years: the photograph collection at the Baker Library at the Harvard Business School. When I was writing my chapter on the Colombian banana industry for *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Colombia, and the Making of a Global Working Class*, I spent some time going through the Colombia albums in the collection, and chose an arresting photograph of what the company photographer identified as a "native family" in the banana zone to include in my book. I loved the image so much that I hung a framed copy in my house.

In 2007, I hosted a Colombian union leader from Santa Marta on tour in Boston. Showing him the photograph, I told him about the collection. "You

know, those belong to us," he told me quietly.

On December 5, 2008, a conference was held at the University of Magdalena to commemorate the anniversary of the massacre. While working on my conference paper, the union leader's words continued to haunt me. I finally contacted librarian Laura Linard at the Baker. Would the library be interested, I wondered, in sharing some of its images with the University of Magdalena in Santa Marta, in a sense, returning the photographs to the place and people that they came from?

With the collaboration of DRCLAS and the Baker Library, we selected 28 images from the UFCO collection Colombia albums. Some of the photographs show the company's operations and facilities, some

show the workers, and some show the results of the 1928 strike, uprising and massacre. Many company buildings were destroyed during the conflict, and the destruction was meticulously documented.

I arranged to give the photographs as a gift from DRCLAS and the Baker Library at the conference in Santa Marta. I am extremely grateful to be able to play a small role in restoring a slice of history to a region that provided so much wealth, and so many bananas, to my native Boston.

Avi Chomsky is a Professor of History and Coordinator of Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Studies, Salem State College. Her recent book *Linked Labor Histories*, looks at globalization as a long historical process with labor history at its center.



The United Fruit Company Collection at Harvard Business School

BY LAURA LINARD

Baker Library Historical Collections at Harvard Business School has extensive photographic collections documenting a range of companies and activities. Perhaps the most significant collection is the United Fruit Company Photograph Collection. Donated to Harvard Business School in 1979 by the United Brands Company, the United Fruit Collection consists of seventy-five photograph albums that illustrate the company's extensive operations in Central and South America and the United States. The photographs were taken between 1891 and 1962, with the majority dating from the

1920s through the 1950s. The albums contain approximately 10,400 photographs that vary in size from 3 x 5 inches to 9 x 11 inches. Most of the photographs are accompanied by brief captions that describe their content.

Thousands of photographs depict the operations of the company including agricultural operations, construction, and research activities. The company's many units produced bananas, sugar, abaca (for use as hemp), cacao, palm oil, cattle and mahogany. Planting, spraying, irrigation, harvesting the crops, the construction and running of railroads, and the

building of the wharves are all documented in these photos. Also recorded is evidence of hardships and damage suffered from floods, windstorms and fire. This photograph collection also offers deep insights into the daily life in the company towns and villages, both for the workers and the managers. Images of students in the company schools, doctors, nurses and patients in the company hospitals, shoppers in the company stores and shots of the workers' baseball teams and the managers' tennis courts capture a way of life and are valuable documents in understanding the social and

cultural history of this region.

The United Fruit Company Photograph Collection is one of the few archival collections on this significant company available to researchers and as a result is the most heavily consulted photographic collection. We welcome research requests for the United Fruit Collection. Please contact the Baker Library Historical Collections reference and research team at histcol-lref@hbs.edu for further information on the collection and access to these materials.

Laura Linard is Director of Baker Library Historical Collections at Harvard Business School.

(from left) Retail commissary, Santa Marta, Colombia, February 21, 1929; loading fruit, Zacapa, Colombia, April 12, 1927; handling bananas, backing the bunch, Colombia, 1924; retail commissary, Santa Marta, 1953. All images from the United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

Rediscovering Mesoamerica

Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2, edited by David Carrasco and Scott Sessions (University of New Mexico Press, 2007)

A REVIEW BY LINDSAY JONES

The publication of *Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest* is an exceptional achievement, bringing into the light a tremendously important but formerly obscure Mesoamerican codex or pictographic text. Analogies to the (re)discovery and interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls are not unwarranted insofar as the book marks the reemergence of a fabulous and fabulously significant 500-year old document—the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2* (or MC2)—which, aside from the attentions of a few specialists, had been previously unknown and inaccessible. The so-termed MC2 is an enormous map or single-page codex, nearly seven feet wide by three and half tall, which was painted on bark paper sometime in the mid-sixteenth century, that is, within a couple of decades of Fernando Cortés' military conquest of the Aztecs in the 1520s but before the establishment of the mature colonial order in the 1580s. The MC2, though it depicts largely pre-Columbian events, emerges from and reflects an especially tumultuous era in early colonial Mexico.

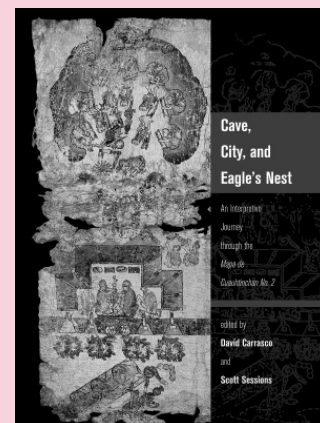
Intricate to the extreme, the MC2 provides, in brief, a pictographic rendering of the migration-to-foundation history that led to the establishment of Cuauhtinchan, a village with deep pre-Columbian roots that continues to exist on the outskirts of the present-day

Mexican city of Puebla. Though details concerning the precise identities and routes of the pre-Columbian protagonists are subject to great debate, we can be sure that the huge map charts a people's story of origins and emergence from Chichimoztoc, the famed Place of Seven Caves, then their migration along a snaky path through the central Mexican landscape, past the much-revered sacred city of Cholula to their eventual destination at Cuauhtinchan. The myriad circumstances that transpired along this sinewy journey—political alliances and fractures, ecological discoveries and transitions, ritual sacrifices and petitions—are illustrated via more than 700 images and symbols, which are rendered with meticulous and minuscule detail, in many cases only a few centimeters high.

Thus, from a distance, the MC2 appears like a large illustrated roadmap, or perhaps even a pre-Columbian board game, complete with identifiable cultural and natural landmarks as well as trails of tiny footprints that record the paths and directions of travel, sure signs that what is recounted was a physical as well as mythological journey. Yet, in order to appreciate just what an eventful journey this was, one needs to look past the broad contours of the route from the caves of origin to Cuauhtinchan and zoom in for

a closer look at any of the dozens of intensely detailed paintings that record episodes that presumably happened along the way. In other words, the MC2's impressive unity of the composition—it truly is, among other things, a gorgeous work of art—is enhanced and redoubled by its innumerable tiny but masterfully expressive painted scenes of conflict, reunion, discovery and ritual celebration. Experts and novices alike could ponder the details of this document for hours on end, indeed for years, as they appreciate just how much is going on within its borders.

Following its original creation, the MC2 was guarded by the Cuauhtinchan community for generations, and then passed through numerous hands before coming into the possession of Angeles Espinosa Yglesias, who, in 2001, made it available for serious study through the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. Though the map's existence had been well known for over a century, relatively little scholarly work had been done on it prior to this time. Answering the challenge to engage the newly available document from a wide range of different technical and interpretive angles, David Carrasco, the Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of Divinity and Anthropology at Harvard, assembled an interdisciplinary team of some two dozen schol-



ars representing the fields of history, art history, archaeoastronomy, ethnobotany, social anthropology, archaeology and the history of religions as well as specialists in restoration and conservation. A handful of this group had long experience in working with the MC2, but for most of the ensemble—which included scholars from Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Holland, Great Britain and the United States—the subsequent set of working meetings provided their first opportunity to see the map.

Along with unprecedented historical and interpretive scrutiny, the three-year interdisciplinary project also provided the occasion for state-of-the-art digital restoration, which brought back into view faded colors and images lost in the creases and wrinkles of a document that had been unfolded and refolded literally for hundreds of years. Showcasing these restoration efforts, the 480-page book includes the

insert of a one-third scale facsimile of the entire MC2 along with eighteen foldout pages that provide digitally enhanced photos of all sections of the map, each of which is supplemented with line drawings that clarify and reference specific features. Additionally, embedded within the text are more than 300 more photos and drawings of various elements of the MC2. These spectacular photographs alone would make a marvelous contribution to Latin American studies.

When that wealth of photographs is juxtaposed with 15 scholarly essays, one is left with a book that works on numerous levels and thus can appeal to many audiences. For some, the volume has the allure of grand coffee-table book. Every commentator lauds "the exceptional beauty" of the MC2, and the abundance of digitally enhanced close-ups provides a cornucopia of images that are at once quaint, quirky and profound, often whimsical if sometimes brutally violent. One can very easily imagine non-specialists, and even children, being fascinated by the many stories that could be told through this complex collage of pictures. For other general readers, the book brings the kind of "Indiana Jones appeal" of a two-tiered adventure story. At one level, the MC2 chronicles the trials, tribulations and triumphs of a people's pre-Columbian journey; at another level, the volume also clues us as to the still-ongoing intrigue of a precious document that was variously hidden from Spaniards and then strategically showcased by the community, lost

and then found, long-neglected and now restored. I, for one, find the history of the MC2 not less fascinating than the history in the MC2. Additionally, for more scholarly audiences interested in broad themes about space and time, pilgrimage and migration, indigenous acquiescence and resistance

the overarching and inevitable questions about who, where, when and, most poignantly, to what end the map was created. We learn about the techniques, materials and colorants with which the MC2 was originally painted (and maybe later touched up); and leading experts of the pictographic

pedagogical device designed to keep alive ancient traditions in the face of tremendous colonial-era social change and religious missionization. Most contributors also agree, however, that the MC2 was explicitly composed (or at least eventually utilized) to reach an external as well internal

Experts and novices alike could ponder the details of this formerly obscure Mesoamerican codex, this pictographic text, for hours on end, indeed for years, as they appreciate just how much is going on within its borders.

to colonial authority, the book offers an exceptionally rich case study. And for Mesoamerican specialists, the collected essays provide a wealth of fresh technical information and detail as well as a fabulous demonstration of what can happen when a group of scholars with very different disciplinary expertises all train their respective attentions on a single document. In this respect, the points of agreement between the various contributors are very interesting, but the occasional disagreements among them are even more provocative and revealing.

Each of the 15 chapters stands as an independent essay, and they could conceivably be read in any order. Nonetheless, the editors Carrasco and long-time collaborator Scott Sessions, following a very helpful introduction of their own, have arranged the essays into a logical three-part sequence. Part One, "Orientations in Time and Territory," is composed of six essays that provide a range of responses to

documents of central Mexico explain how the MC2 is, in some respects, a very typical origin-to-foundation narrative but in other ways is unique.

Nearly all of the authors in this first set of essays venture ideas with respect to the function of the map, ideas that reflect two sorts of tensions. They agree, for one, that the map most assuredly is a record of the past, an account of the origins of the people of Cuauhtinchan, which relates where they came from and the circumstances that eventuated in their present (mid-sixteenth-century) status; but they note also that the creators of the map looked forward as well as back, crafting the migration story in a way that provided the community with an ongoing identity and worked to authorize a bright and privileged future for the lords of Cuauhtinchan. Furthermore, the authors concur that the MC2 was intended, at least in large part, for the consideration of people within the community, perhaps as a kind of

audience. Especially compelling is the prospect that the MC2, not unlike numerous other colonial-era indigenous documents, was designed first and foremost as a means of marshalling evidence in support of claims for disputed lands, that is, evidence that could be presented in Spanish courts. In short, though there is some healthy disagreement about the extent to which the map incorporates European as well as indigenous conventions, there is no question that the MC2 merges history and myth, and thereby interlaces cosmomagical concerns for the community's proper relationship to the gods with politically expedient concerns about special entitlements to authority and to land.

The four essays of Part Two, "Narratives and Rituals of Roads and Roadsides," get more specific by undertaking close readings of the activities and elements in numerous scenes that are depicted along the journey. At this point the benefits of the interdisciplin-

ary assemblage of contributors are especially apparent. Specialists in iconography, for instance, compare the MC2 to other indigenous documents in order to identify most of the numerous deities in the map, and they comment on the diversity of skin colors, hairstyles, clothing types, hand gestures, etc. to venture identifications of the multiple ethnicities that play so large in the alliances, confrontations, victories and defeats that are recounted in the MC2. An archaeoastronomer relies on special knowledge of the eclipses and other celestial phenomena contemporaneous with the creation of the MC2 in order to unravel the map's specific calendrical references and allusions. And ethnobotanists bring a distinct expertise that not only allows them to identify a stunning range of cacti, yucca, orchids, maize,

cotton, marigolds, amaranth and trees that appear along the migration route, but also to appreciate the distinctive meanings and medicinal properties associated with each of those species.

Part Three, "Comparisons and Approximations," is composed of five essays that offer more interpretatively venturesome and comparative readings of the map. Parallels to contemporary Maya practices suggest to one author that the MC2 may have been spoken, sung and ritually performed in the context of initiation ceremonies; a pair of specialists on North American Indians look to the mythic and pilgrimage traditions of that area in order to explore the possibility that Cuauhtinchan community members utilized the MC2 as means of imaginatively "reentering" the story of their ancestors. Another author capitalizes

on analogies drawn from the colonial contexts of the Caribbean and Amazonian Basin; and another muses at the ways in which the MC2 has accrued rather than lost significances over time, and thus remains a highly salient document for contemporary audiences. A final essay by editors Carrasco and Sessions accentuates the unique role of urban centers in the creation and re-creation of human culture and identity as a means of both reaffirming and taking issue with interpretations in the earlier essays.

As director of the Moses Mesoamerican Archive at Harvard, Carrasco, himself a historian of religions and specialist on the Aztecs, has orchestrated numerous such collaborative projects over the past 25 years; while many of those collaborations have issued in highly significant publications, *Cave, City, and*

Eagle's Nest now becomes a serious contender for his greatest scholarly accomplishment. The wealth and diversity of viable interpretations leaves readers of this collection of essays with a provocative uncertainty, the sense of a mystery imperfectly resolved rather than an airtight case as to the use and status of the MC2. As Carrasco notes, this hugely impressive volume constitutes only one early step in the study and appreciation of the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2*, an invaluable document that is certain to engender a raft of studies among future generations of scholars—but it is most certainly a large and auspicious first step. No one who searches out this book will be disappointed.

Lindsay Jones is a professor in the Department of Comparative Studies at Ohio State University.

Remaking the U.S. Mainstream: The U.S. Immigration Success Story

Philip Kasinitz, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway, *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*, Harvard University Press and Russell Sage Foundation, Cambridge and New York, 2008

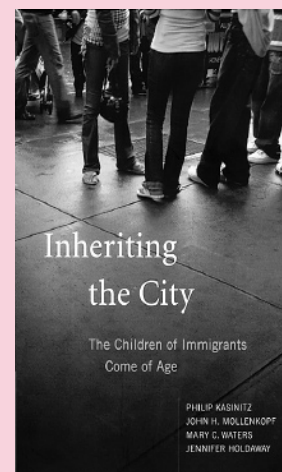
A REVIEW BY VAN C. TRAN

As an immigrant trying to understand urban diversity here, I come back time and again to the U.S. writer E.B. White's often-cited passage in *Here is New York* (1948) in search of useful clues. "There are roughly three New Yorks. There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born there, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size, its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter

— the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something (p.1)." And yet, as a social scientist, I cannot help but think that there is a *fourth* New York, the New York of the people who were born there to immigrant parents and for whom the city can *never* be taken for granted, as the city is the very embodiment of their

parents' hopes and dreams. The story of the fourth New York is one that is rarely told, and yet it is also a quintessential American one.

Inheriting the City is about such a story—the lives of children of immigrants who are now coming of age in New York City. At the dawn of the 21st century, immigrants and their children accounted for one in four of the total U.S. population. Specifically, the *immigrant second generation*—the chil-



dren of at least one immigrant parent born in the United States or someone who arrived before the age of 12—made up one out of every four Americans under 18 and one out of every six of those between the ages of 18 to 32. From small towns in rural Iowa to larger cities in metropolitan Los Angeles, immigration is now the main driving force behind the changing demographics of America. By all projections, the United States in 2050 will be much more racially, ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse than at any other point in our history. Therefore, this story is not just unique to New York City, as it foreshadows the transformations unfolding across the country, providing insights into what U.S. society will be like in the century ahead.

In this ground-breaking work, Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, Mary Waters and Jennifer Holdaway provide the first comprehensive look at the post-1965 immigrant second generation as its members enter

previous research on West Indians in New York City conducted by one of the book's co-author—Mary Waters—who is currently the M.E. Zukerman Professor of Sociology at Harvard. Specifically, the study relied on a random survey of 3415 young adults between the ages of 18 and 32 at the time the study began in 1998 and two rounds of in-depth face-to-face interviews with hundreds of those same respondents. To fully grasp the fluidity of the second generation experience within specific institutional contexts, Kasinitz and his colleagues also relied on insights drawn from participant observations conducted in a range of organizational settings from educational institutions and workplaces to community and religious organizations. Combing through what must have been a mountain of data, the story they tell is both fascinating and captivating.

To place this in context, the study was designed to address concerns raised by academic

to earnings and labor force participation, the immigrant second-generation is upwardly mobile *both* in comparison to their first-generation parents and to the native-born reference group of the same race.

Specifically, second-generation West Indians fare better than native blacks; South Americans and Dominicans outperform Puerto Ricans; Russian Jews and Chinese have better outcomes than native whites. More importantly, members of the second generation have decisively joined the mainstream, finding themselves in integrated school and work settings. In addition to speaking English fluently, they have also left behind the ethnic economies and menial jobs in which many of their parents toiled days and nights so that their offspring would have a shot at the American dream. Instead of feeling torn “between two worlds,” as classic accounts of acculturation would suggest, the new second generation not only combine the best of

each other, covering a striking range of topics from ethnic/racial identity formation and acculturation to school and work to marriage and family to civic and political participation to prejudice and discrimination. Drawing on the interview data, the chapter on ethnic and racial identity lays out the book's overall argument by exploring how identity choices among their respondents are highly fluid, situational and contextual. Furthermore, how young adults sort themselves into ethnic and racial groups carries important implications beyond mere subjective identification. To the extent that our society remains fundamentally unequal along ethnic and racial lines across a range of outcomes, ethnic group membership implies access to differential resources, settlement in different neighborhoods, entry to public schools with differential quality, and reliance on co-ethnic communities with different levels of institutional support. These structural factors, in turn, create a set of opportunities for and constraints on socioeconomic mobility.

Whereas traditional sociological accounts of racial and ethnic inequality tend to emphasize structural factors such as residential segregation, neighborhood isolation, low-quality schools and discrimination in the labor market, the authors break new ground by concluding that *culture also matters* in explaining divergent outcomes across groups. More specifically, differences both in structural positions and in cultural expectations together explain why measurable outcomes significantly vary across groups: for example, the dismal school performance of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in contrast to that of South Americans and the continuing disadvantages in the labor market

Instead of feeling torn “between two worlds,” as classic accounts of acculturation would suggest, the new second generation not only combines the best of both world with great ease, but is also remaking the U.S. mainstream with remarkable creativity.

young adulthood, comparing and contrasting their experience with that of the native-born. Drawing upon ten years of original research, *Inheriting the City* is truly impressive in its scope and contribution. The book is based on a recent study of the children of Chinese, Dominican, South American, Russian Jewish and West Indian immigrants—and their native-born counterparts—whites, blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York City. The study also significantly extends

researchers and policy makers over the assimilation prospect of the new second generation. Specifically, the ethnic/racial distinctiveness of post-1965 immigrants has led to speculations about the significant barriers to full integration into American life. What Kasinitz and his colleagues uncover is both surprising and encouraging, as their main findings point to the unmistakable socioeconomic success of the second generation. From educational and occupational achievement

both worlds with great ease, but also are remaking the U.S. mainstream with remarkable creativity. The authors further argue that the ability to select the best traits from both their immigrant parents and their American peers yield a distinctive *second-generation advantage* by providing the second generation with a wider range of options and strategies to pursue in life.

Overall, the nine substantive chapters in this volume are superb and build tightly on

among native blacks in contrast to West Indians.

Inheriting the City is as much about the contemporary second-generation's coming-of-age experience as it is about how their sheer presence is once again reshaping the U.S. mainstream. The book is extremely well written and very engaging throughout, free of academic jargon and filled with stories that vividly illustrate the enduring significance of immigration in the making and remaking of the American society. With four co-authors, the book reads extremely well and is surprisingly coherent both in its main arguments and its unified authorial voice. A monumental volume that significantly contributes to our understanding of the new second-generation, this book is destined to be a classic reference for academic researchers

in the decades to come and a must-read for the general audience and policy makers who seek to understand the complexity surrounding assimilation in American life today.

While underscoring the success of the second generation, the authors also somberly note the continuing disadvantages among our nation's native minorities—Puerto Ricans and African Americans. Their guarded optimism about the future of America's race relations and diversity is most refreshing in light of the pessimistic predictions about the new second generation. While acknowledging that important ethnic/racial differences exist and these differences do matter, Kasinitz and his colleagues also point out that their respondents are reaching out across these ethnic divisions to forge new identities and alliances.

In fact, one cannot help but admire the authors' sensitivity as they recount their respondents' multifaceted experiences, at-times contradictory perspectives, but fundamentally heroic struggles to make it in a tough city like New York. And yet, these young men and women do not for a moment take the city for granted because this is the very city that welcomed their parents with open arms and provided them with abundant opportunities. And their success story is one that this book has so compellingly told.

Van C. Tran is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology and social policy at Harvard University. His research focuses on the socioeconomic, civic and political incorporation of the immigrant second-generation, and its implication for the future of ethnic and racial inequality in the United States.

YOUR FAVORITE FILMS!

Do you have a favorite film relating to Latin America or Latinos? The film can be from any period, old, new or in-between. Please include title, director, date and country of origin, and tell us why this film is your favorite or how it changed your life or point of view.

Winners will be published in the Fall 2009 issue on Film in Latin America, and runners-up will be featured in a special website section. Please send submissions (around 250 words, including one sentence about yourself) to June Carolyn Erlick, jerlick@fas.harvard.edu.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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I'D LIKE TO WRITE FOR REVISTA. WHAT'S THE PROCESS?

ReVista, the Harvard Review of Latin America, is published three times a year, and each issue focuses on a different theme. We welcome queries from students, professors (Harvard and non-Harvard) and community members, but most article assignments are made by invitation. Potential book

reviewers are also welcome to express their interest. Queries to jerlick@fas.harvard.edu.

I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER AND WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO REVISTA. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Since *ReVista* is a thematic publication, we are often looking for very specific subject matter. However, we're also interested in building our archives. Photographers are not paid, but are given complementary copies of *ReVista* for their portfolio, as well as publication of website and e-mail information, along with their photo credit. We can accept photos in any format, color and black and white, prints, and digital in CD or through e-mail. Digital photos must be 300 dpi. Queries to jerlick@fas.harvard.edu.

CAN I GET MY BOOK REVIEWED IN REVISTA?

Book reviews are one area that we give priority to Harvard authors, including professors, alumni, students, past and present Visiting Scholars and other affiliates. Please have your publisher send a copy of your book to June Carolyn Erlick, DRCLAS, 1730 Cambridge St., MA 02138. Galleys are acceptable, but must be accompanied by a 300 dpi digital tif image of the book cover sent to jerlick@fas.harvard.edu.



Dear June:

Fantastic issue, one of the best yet. And the cover! Unforgettable, worthy of *Life* magazine in its heyday.

DAVID STOLL
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Dear June Erlick:

We will certainly lend this issue of *ReVista* on Venezuela and recommend it to friends.

I think your choice of Dr. Coronil as guest editor for this issue was very wise, as he has certainly brought many diverse viewpoints together to provide a wide-ranging perspective on changes and continuities in contemporary Venezuela. On top of that, it is a beautiful publication; the layout and pictures are gorgeous.

MEGAN MORRISSEY
VENEZUELA INFORMATION OFFICE
MEDIA@VENINFO.ORG

Hola June,

It was a very nice surprise to get a copy of the *ReVista* on "Venezuela".

Te felicito, it is interesting and complex! Almost finished reading it already.

CHLOE RUTTER-JENSEN
UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES
BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Querida June,
Thank you so much for trying to encourage dialogue in Venezuela with your latest issue of *ReVista*. As a Fulbright Scholar here in Maracaibo, I've been surprised by the extreme polarization I've encountered here. Unfortunately, most Venezuelans at the Venezuelan-American center here were so turned off by the cover that they would not have opened the magazine had I not explained a little bit about it. They commented that it was "polemic," unwilling to explore the "Chavez effect" they resent.

What, exactly, is the problem with the cover featuring a man sporting a t-shirt with Chavez's head adorned with the symbolic red beret? Everything, it would seem, to many folks here. I suppose I find this reaction here in Maracaibo fascinating because the cover does not merely show an image of Chavez, but the president as embodied by ordinary Venezuelans. The cover very much reflects "the Chavez effect," which is what some Venezuelans, if we can simply call them opposition supporters, find so disconcerting.

In the context of the November 23 elections, the "Chavez effect" was not just perpetuated in the Chavista groups of ordinary Venezuelans pressuring voters at the

polls. It is also reflected in the instances of ordinary Venezuelans who, fulfilling election duty, were required to help voters who can barely see. In these cases, they actually press the buttons for them. An opposition acquaintance of mine had no shame recounting the story of assisting several such women who came to vote for the Chavista candidates. She admits to selecting the Chavista gubernatorial candidate but not following through with the other votes; unbeknownst to the voters, she selected opposition candidates for the other items on the ballot. These aberrations on both sides are troubling.

The issue exposed me to critical thought that does not tend to appear in everyday conversations, especially in the heightened atmosphere of elections. With these elections over, the coming year will be an interesting one. I find myself in a strange place that I understand less, rather than more, with each day. I would be the last one to make any predictions on where the "Chavez effect" will take us next.

DENISE DELANEY
HARVARD COLLEGE 2008

Dear June:

Congratulations on the fall issue of the magazine. You did a job few, in any publications in Latin America have

attempted to present their readers: a balanced, honest, and useful review of what Chávez and his revolution represent. Hope to see in the future a similar effort about the Colombian critical situation, that even most Colombians apparently do not fully grasp yet.

Keep up your excellent work!

LEOPOLDO VILLAR BORDA
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Dear June:

This is a call to collaboration with readers of *ReVista*. We are a community center in Santa Ana, CA at the forefront of a movement in change agency. As developers of public programs in civics/education/cultural arts/healthcare, we want to contact readers with success stories in model cities, urban affairs or social programs. We urge them to e-mail us at americas@ruebenmartinezleap.org.

We would like to develop a 12 month youth program conceptualized as a tour of model cities in Latin America. Our goal is to showcase real stories of urban centers faced with extraordinary challenges of poverty, corruption and crime that persevered because of creativity and intelligence. Then, we would like to mimic them in some way so that it is relatable for our youth at the street level. We would also like to provide our youth with much needed knowledge on our wonderful hemisphere and all its cultures. Thank you very much,

SERGIO C. MUNOZ
RUEBEN MARTINEZ L.E.A.P
1200 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100D
SANTA ANA, CA 92701
WWW.RUEBENMARTINEZLEAP.ORG

FE ERRATA

Two photos in the article "Plants Under Stress in the Tropical High Andes" were wrongly credited. Author Fermin Rada took the photo on p. 85, but the two photos on page 86 were taken by Alexander Nieto, not by the author.

THE SIXTIES



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The Call of Service

by Steven B. Bloomfield

In the Shadow of JFK

By Ned Strong

The True Impact of the Peace Corps

by Molly Coeling

My Hometown in Costa Rica

By David Edelstein

How Can They Love Us When They Hate Us?

By Michael Arnow

Constructing Dreams

By Leland Cott

Have You Ever Viu Na Vida?

By James Ito-Adler

Small Loans Fund Big Dream

By Cara Forster

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