

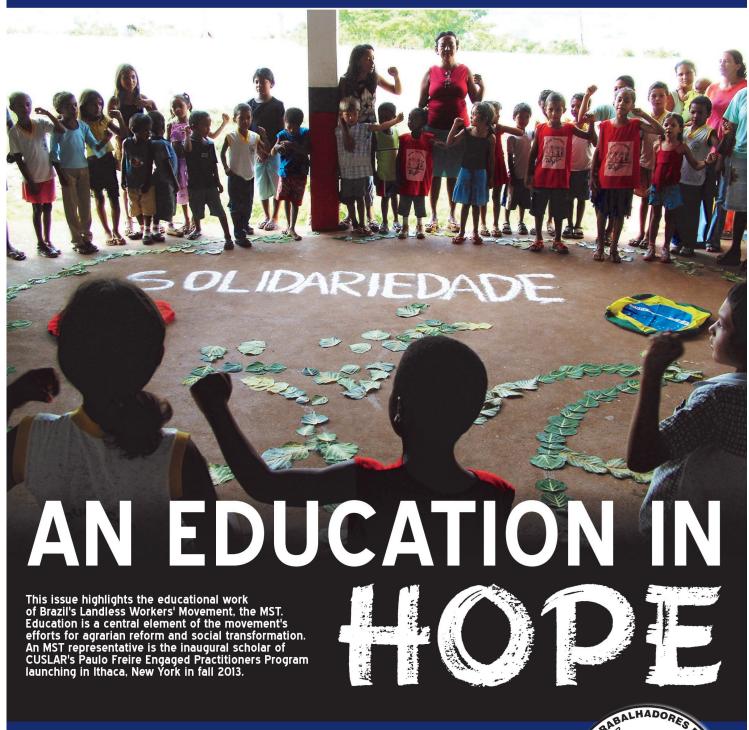
CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE ON U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS, ITHACA, NY, USA

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Editorial: Learning hope in difficult times

by Tim Shenk

Paulo Freire begins his 1992 book, *Pedagogy of Hope*, with a comment from a friend who asks how he could write about hope "in the shameless hellhole of corruption like the one strangling us in Brazil today?"

Freire, a pioneer in pedagogical thought, argues that the educator's role is to prepare students to think critically and solve problems collectively. The Brazilian educator penned his most famous work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, while in exile in Chile in the 1960s, and he spent his life teaching and working for liberation.

By the time he writes *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire has surely seen his share of hopelessness. He answers his friend:

"I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream.... I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential, concrete imperative."

He continues:

"Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without struggle, hope, as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearings, and turns into hopelessness. Hence the need for a kind of education in hope."

More and more people are sensing that our society has lost its bearings, that the current economic model isn't serving their needs.

While U.S. student debt has topped \$1 trillion, roughly half of recent graduates are unemployed or under-employed. Nearly 30 percent of U.S. workers are in poverty-wage jobs, according to *Forbes*, and there are 40 percent more temp jobs now than there were in 2009.

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As economic crisis deepens here and around the world, it becomes clear that we need an education in hope.

To learn how to hope! The suggestion at first seems absurd. But this isn't just any sort of hope. In fact, Freire says somewhat playfully, "there is no hope in sheer hopefulness. The hoped-for is not attained by dint of raw hoping."

A lasting and robust hope, then, must be learned and cultivated, anchored in the daily practice of working toward a transformed, hoped-for reality.

As CUSLAR launches the Paulo Freire Engaged Practitioners Program this fall, hosting dialogues and study with a representative of the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) of Brazil, we will

continue to develop what "an education in hope" means. To open the conversation, here are a few elements of an education in hope.

A first element is its content. An education in hope is grounded in both a critique of inequality and injustice, as well as the practice of studying and developing more just alternatives.

CUSLAR is excited to share is the experience of the MST. Founded in 1984, the MST claims nearly two million members and is a globally renowned champion of agrarian reform and peasants' rights. Its practice of political and technical education known broadly as *formação* in Portuguese is the backbone of its leadership development and is a model for organizations and educators everywhere.

A second element of an education in hope is its method – that is, how and where it is taught.

Understanding the complexity and scale of the problems to be solved, an education in hope is both interdisciplinary and rigorous. It respects and incorporates participant knowledge while falling neither into authoritarianism nor permissiveness.

In this respect, Freire challenges those who say he endorses a "dumbed down" version of education: "To defend a thesis... rigorously, but passionately, as well, and at the same time to stimulate the contrary discourse, and respect the right to utter that discourse, is the best way to teach, first, the right to have our own ideas, even our duty to 'quarrel' for them, for our dreams."

An education in hope goes beyond formal schooling, drawing lessons from current and historical efforts for social change. In their 2011 book, *Pedagogy of the Poor*, Willie Baptist and Jan Rehmann argue that "the struggle is a school," and that "every sound theory that relates to social realities needs to contain condensed life experience as well."

A third element of an education in hope is its collectivity. One person can't change the world – for a task such as this, we need a social movement that draws from all sectors of society.

When people learn together, we can begin to develop a common language, a common assessment of problems

and common hopes and dreams. Breaking the silence about injustice and breaking through the discouragement of isolation are key products of building knowledge collectively.

CUSLAR attempts to practice an education in hope through our internship program, speaker series, study groups and newsletter review process. One student recently noted, "CUSLAR is unique in that we don't only study oppression – we also work toward liberation!"

May this publication, as all of our products of collective intelligence, be a contribution to an education in hope.

Cover photo: Landless Workers' Movement school at the Nova Conquista Encampment in Açailândia, Brazil. Photo courtesy of the MST.



CUSLAR is a Cornell University-based organization, founded in 1965, which seeks to promote a greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. CUSLAR members are a diverse group of people united in our concern about the role of the United States in the social, political and economic affairs of the region. CUSLAR supports the right of the people of Latin America to self-determination and control over decisions that affect their lives and communities.

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CUSLAR is a project partner of the Center for Transformative Action.

Introducing Brazil's Movimento Sem Terra



Founded in 1984, Brazil's *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, or Landless Workers' Movement, has become a world leader in work for agrarian reform and human rights-based social transformation.

by Kailin Koch

Beginning as an effort by peasant farmers to occupy land for agriculture, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, the Landless Workers' Movement, or MST, has grown into a national grassroots movement in Brazil to preserve local communities and their ability to sustain themselves.

Drawing from historical indigenous resistance to Portuguese rule, the MST has made progress through political and social organizing toward popular agrarian reform in the Brazilian countryside.

Founded in 1984, the MST identifies its three main goals as fighting for land, advocating land reform and "striving for a more just and fraternal society."

These are crucial aims given Brazil's vast wealth inequality and high concentration of land in the hands of very few: three percent of Brazil's population owns two-thirds of the country's arable land and large *latifundios*, or landed estates, are still prevalent in the countryside. Lack of land has forced many peasants to attempt to farm areas where they have no legal title or migrate to urban areas.

Since the MST's inception, more than 350,000 families have been settled, and 150,000 people still seeking land are members of one of 900 "encampments," or communal living communities.

Kailin Koch studies Spanish and Government at Cornell University. While it has been sustained as a predominantly rural movement, organizers soon drew connections between the needs of rural and urban communities. The MST has criticized the Brazilian government's neoliberal development model, which seeks to modernize and advance industry at the expense of rural workers' land and urban workers' ability to afford food.

Instead, the movement advocates "agro-ecology," an approach to agriculture that eliminates exploitation and respects people's relationship with the land.

The MST also supports an international movement against the practice of

"In contemporary Brazil, the MST has practically eclipsed organized political parties and labor unions as the main agents of social transformation."

Peruvian scholar Wilder Robles

monoculture, and has proven a successful example for other countries to emulate. It is an active member of Via Campesina, an international organization of social movements.

Part of what makes the MST so successful is its continued focus on local grassroots work, despite being

a national organization. It has consistently prioritized getting local communities the services and land they need, which has led to many autonomous and productive settlements. Indeed, such communities not only provide land but also education and an access to political activity.

In his study of the politics of the MST, Leandro Vergara-Camus notes that such settlements provide a "space of political socialization," in which ordinary people can get involved in the running of their society. Maintaining an ongoing relationship with both political institutions and important local actors makes this formula especially successful. Decisions are in a collective, grassroots manner, which also reflect these leadership opportunities. Additionally, many MST members have run for local elected office, increasing their representation within government institutions.

Yet this locally focused movement has had a serious impact on the national stage as well. In a scholarly paper on the Landless Workers' Movement, Wilder Robles observes: "It is fair to say that in contemporary Brazil, the MST has practically eclipsed organized political parties and labor unions as the main agents of social transformation." With a simple and well-executed purpose, the MST has effectively become a national presence both socially and politically, without having a tangent political agenda.

CUSLAR eagerly anticipates hosting a representative from the MST in fall 2013, launching with this visit the Paulo Freire Engaged Practitioners Program. In this issue of the CUSLAR Newsletter, we hope

to foster dialogue about the MST's creative, large-scale strategies for human rights-based social change.



MORE ON THE MST

On page 4, Dawn Plummer shares excerpts from her work on *formação*, the MST's leadership development approach.

On page 5, Célia Regina Vendramini and Ryan Nehring look at the MST's formal and informal rural education programs.

On page 6, Dan Jones reflects on his experiences with the MST in Brazil and calls for a popular approach to human rights, following the Landless Workers.

Formação: A key concept to understand MST success

by Dawn Plummer

As the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) has become increasingly prominent on the national and international stage, its leaders have reflected on the growing need for skilled and capable leaders. To meet this need, an MST national leader pointed to education as one of the most important parts of the movement: "When we aren't in a struggle [for land], we are studying."

The consciousness-raising work, political education, and leadership development that occur within the MST are encompassed in the Portuguese term, *formação*, pronounced "for-mah-sao." It is defined in an MST National School document as:

"The force that makes ideas, strategies, the program, the methodology and the organizational principles and structures known and collectively commonly constructed. It is information made into knowledge, a material force that transforms nature and society and is never simply scholarship or academicism.... Leaders must understand and take in the contents and methodology of formação in order to creatively multiply leadership, instead of being the simple reproduction of obedient followers."

The Contribution of MST's Formação to Pedagogical Methods

The MST has developed fundamental principles upon which all of their educational work -- with both children and adults -- is based. These principles and practices draw from thinkers and practitioners like Paulo Freire, Moisey Pistrak, Antonio Gramsci, José Martí and Anton Makarenko.

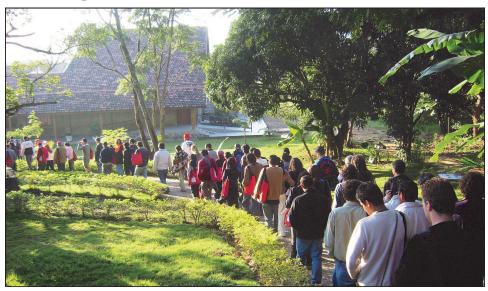
Some principles emerge from these historical teachers of the oppressed and others from MST experiences.

First is a belief in people as agents of change who must first understand their own reality as a point from which to begin social transformation.

The relationship between teachers and students is nontraditional in the sense that both learn from one another. Students actively participate in all aspects of the organization of the school, including decision-making, planning, reflection and collective evaluation. This emphasizes the important MST principle of self-organization.

These collective processes create new forms of social relations and promote the democratic participation of each student. Courses prepare students for both practical and intellectual work.

The MST's educational work "recovers



Students enter the campus of the MST's Florestan Fernandes National School. Built by members of the movement and opened in 2005, the National School offers a high level of training to MST members and allies in areas such as political economy, history, food sovereignty and technical courses. Photo by Daneil Vigletti, courtesy of the MST.

and encourages values such as solidarity, discipline, camaraderie, collective work, collective leadership, responsibility and love for the people's causes," according to Marta Harnecker.

The MST believes it is not enough to change the curriculum and methodology of a classroom. An MST manual states, "The way a school is organized and the social relations thus generated are as important as the content and the methods."

Students form ten-member study circles for reading aloud and debating, similar to adults' *núcleos de base* in encampments. Each group elects a representative to participate on the coordinating body with teachers and coordinators.

Each student signs up for maintenance tasks at the school, such as cleaning, organizing the library or agricultural work to supply food for the school.

Each day is broken into two segments, generally five hours for study and three hours for tasks. All students participate in a process of "criticism/self-criticism" to reflect on their own and others' participation at school in a productive, positive, yet critical way. Students write a final research project on a topic that will be useful to them when they return to their community.

Dawn Plummer is the former National Coordinator of the Friends of the MST and long-time link between U.S.-based grassroots organizations of the poor and dispossessed to the MST.

She is currently the development coordinator of the Poverty Initiative.

Informal *Formação*: *Mística* and Movement Life

In the MST, much education and training happen largely outside of the realm of formal classroom-based course study. Members also learn informally from their experience of living and working within the movement's organizational culture.

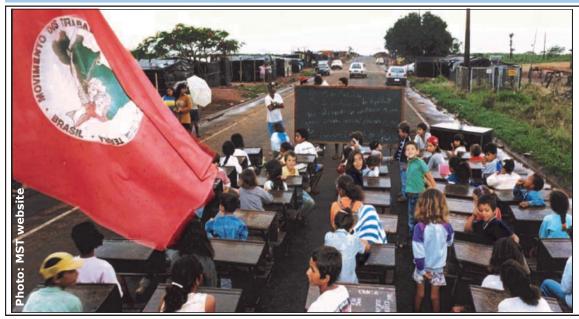
Among the practices that serve to create a sense of agency within Brazilian history is what the MST calls *mística*.

Mistica draws from Catholic ritual and the spiritual mysticism of liberation theology. Author Daniela Issa describes it as the "representation through words, art, symbolism and music of the struggles and the reality" of the MST. Mistica can also refer to the "feeling of empowerment, love and solidarity that serves as a mobilizing force by inspiring self- sacrifice, humility and courage," according to Issa.

Most scholars attribute the MST's success to its highly contentious land occupations, but this is only half of the story. The role of *formação* is deeply important in expanding the MST's leadership base and increasing its effectiveness.

This article is a collection of edited excerpts from *Leadership Development* and Formação in Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST), Plummer's 2008 Master's thesis at The City University of New York.

The full thesis can be found at: http://mstbrazil.org/resource/leadership -development-formação-brazil's-landless -workers-movement



Formal and informal education are keys to the work of the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil.

Here, an itinerant school was set up by the Landless Workers in the middle of a road in the state of Rio Grande do Sul as part of a march to voice concerns over land and access to government services.

Education among the Landless Workers

by Célia Regina Vendramini and Ryan Nehring

The Landless Workers' Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, or MST, has been fighting for agrarian reform in Brazil for 30 years. As a result of their efforts, some 350,000 families now have arable land and agrarian concerns have been put on the national political agenda. Since its origin, the MST has included education as a central part of its mission.

The Movement's first initiatives for education were an attempt to cater to the educational needs of children that accompanied their parents while occupying land. However, the MST's educational needs have increased over time and have become more complex, not only with respect to children, but also providing secondary education and training for adolescents and adults.

It is crucial to understand two forms of education within the MST: 1) informal learning through action, and 2) formal education in settlement and encampment schools. The first form is present in the struggle for land: occupying unused areas, establishing encampments

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Ryan Nehring is a research associate with the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell University.

and acquiring the ownership of land through the development of settlements.

Individual experiences and learning within the organization range from participating in meetings to taking formal courses. In this sense, education for the MST is much more than classroom instruction and also extends beyond the physical occupation of land and into the realm of political action.

"During these last eight years, our fight for land was like receiving a college degree," said an MST member in Santa Catarina, Brazil. "I think even the training we have received has been in the field of a more political understanding that analyzes the actual situation of life. The difficulties that people face are not God's will, but have a political project behind it. We have gone through changes in behavior, and it has transformed our ideas about life."

In addition, the Movement has created an educational system in a more formal sense. When built in encampments, MST schools are called itinerant because of their diverse curriculum and experimentation with various forms of education and different places to study. These schools assemble at MST conferences, meetings and protests throughout the country to educate youth while they travel with their families. For example, during a march to voice concerns over land in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, an MST school was located on a busy road, with tables, desks and chairs.

The names of the schools honor historical figures, such as Paulo Freire or Zumbi dos Palmares, MST leaders such as Iraci Salate Strozak -- a leader who died in 1997 -- or other names that beckon alternative political futures, such as the School of

Seeds for Tomorrow.

Itinerant schools have a strategic role in the settlements. Evictions have been avoided due to the existence of a school and the presence of children studying in the encampments. Additionally, these schools have been responsible for educating current leaders and educators of the MST who carry on the legacy and political struggle of the MST.

The educational sector of the MST forms one of the foundational pillars of the organization that offers political, professional and formal education. This education is developed and organized by the group but also benefits from partnerships with universities, public schools and municipal governments.

Today there are over 2,000 public schools in MST encampments and settlements with some 160,000 students in elementary, secondary and high school. There are 50,000 adults in literacy programs and more than 100 college courses in partnership with universities throughout the country.

The trajectory of the MST shows three core elements that mobilize in the fight for education: struggles for social change, the relationship between work and education, and political activism.

We note that the process of struggle for land greatly influenced MST activists in their thinking, notions and concepts, analytical capacity and degree of training and information. The Movement's educational foundation has shaped not only the way they see and interact with the world but has shared new visions and possibilities of alternative futures.

MST: A model for human rights struggles

by Dan Jones

In nine weeks in northeastern Brazil with the *Movimento Sem Terra* last summer, I gained a deep appreciation for the MST, which I believe represents one of the best hopes for the project of human rights in our time.

MST leaders described three primary organizational objectives: struggle for land, agrarian reform and social transformations. We most often hear about MST land occupations, whose goal is to turn this unproductive land into an agrarian reform settlement.

These kinds of projects are linked to the broader struggle for a "popular agrarian reform," which includes not only the redistribution of land, but an overhaul of the political and economic system in Brazil, with a focus on the production and distribution of food.

The MST's proposal for a popular agrarian reform -- found in Portuguese on their website -- states that such a reform is "part of a broad process of changes in our society and, fundamentally, of alteration of the current structure of organization of production and of the relation between human beings and nature. This process, involving the entirety of rural development and organization, will lead to the elimination of exploitation, political domination, ideological alienation and ecological destruction."

The document lists as objectives the elimination of rural poverty, full employment, food sovereignty for all of Brazil, equal participation of women in rural society and the preservation of cultural and biological diversity.

These objectives make it clear that struggles for land and agrarian reform are linked to the struggle for "social transformations." These can be seen as fundamental changes in how national political and economic power is organized. The necessity for social transformation is directly linked to the first two objectives. The MST understands that existing structures actually cannot meet the needs outlined in their agrarian reform proposal, that "agro-ecology" and "agribusiness" represent two models of rural life that cannot coexist. Because of fundamental transformations structure of society are required.

Dan Jones is a student at New York University, a member of NYU Students for Economic Justice and a participant in the Poverty Scholars Program of the Poverty Initiative.



A Landless Workers' encampment along the lower São Francisco river in the state of Sergipe, Brazil. Photo courtesy of the MST.

Access to school is not enough

A similar logic can be applied to a call for a popular notion of human rights. Take education, for example: The dominant understanding of the human right to education relies on demands for access to school. But what kind of school and what kind of education? Led by whom? In the U.S., the answer is too often a hollow, anti-democratic and unaccountable school, with methodologies and pedagogies provided by the likes of Bill Gates and the Walton Family of Walmart fame.

Demanding access to school, then, is not enough. If we apply human rights principles like those developed in the Vermont Workers' Center's "Healthcare is a Human Right" campaign, we can begin to demand not just access to a school but control over what kind of school we'll have.

A human right to education means a right to an education embedded in community and built on the value and importance of community. It's an education devoted to doing away with the poverty-producing system that billions of us are struggling against across the planet. It's an education dedicated to the fulfillment of human rights.

However, a poverty-producing system can't coexist with that kind of education. In this way, the call for human rights becomes a call for abolishing that system root and branch, in the same way that the MST's language of agrarian reform becomes a call to transform fundamental social relations in the Brazilian countryside.

This call doesn't just represent a shift in one sector, but for the entirety of society. For this reason, it's critical to insist on the indivisibility, or unity, of civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights. That is, "human rights" doesn't represent a list of discrete obligations to be fulfilled by governments, but rather an integral vision for another world.

It means articulating new priorities and basic assumptions, a "revolution of values and other things," as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. described what was needed to end poverty. Human rights has to be understood and practiced as a totality.

The MST provides a model of how to connect a struggle organized primarily around one front -- a Popular Agrarian Reform -- and one category of the poor -- landless workers -- to a broader vision and practice. This vision and practice recognize the entirety of the forces they're up against. In doing so they seek to bring about a deep and far-reaching "revolution of values" so urgently needed in these times.

LEARN MORE!

Vermont Workers' Center's human rights principles: Universality, Equity, Accountability, Transparency and Participation: www.workerscenter.org/human-rights-principles-for-healthcare.

Philadelphia Student Union exists to build the power of young people to demand a high quality education in the Philadelphia public school system. www.phillystudentunion.org

Paulo Freire and the politics of knowledge

by Tom Archibald

Scene One: Standing in the shade of banana and bougainvillea on a Honduran hillside farm, a group of farmers discusses techniques for starting tree nurseries using locally available materials. Influenced by the "Finca Humana" approach championed by Milton Flores and the late Don José Elias Sánchez, these farmers realize that the path away from backbreaking, unproductive, unsustainable agriculture isn't paved with the technological fixes and

external inputs often required as part of large "development projects." Rather, the path is created through farmers' own hands, heads and hearts, using local knowledge, shared among peers, to find appropriate solutions.

Scene Two:

A community-based

HIV prevention organization has crafted an educational program that works well within their context -- the Catholic school system in Kenya. But now, their major U.S. funder is requiring that they use "evidence-based programs," or EBPs. EBPs are curricula that have been created by U.S. university researchers, couched in U.S. cultural norms, and then subjected to "rigorous, scientific" testing to establish proof of their effectiveness. The Kenyan educators, who know their context well, must negotiate the tensions between their own expertise as community educators and the funder's requirement to implement the EBPs.

These two stories raise some questions. What is education? What is knowledge? Whose knowledge counts? These questions, however brief, are quite complex and deeply political. They hint at the need for all of us to be more critically aware of and reflective about the politics of knowledge.

One of my most important guides on this subject has been Paulo Freire. All of Freire's work deals with the politics of knowledge. Through his abiding focus on finding, practicing and sharing a liberatory educational praxis, he dealt directly with the problematic fact that some ways of knowing and being are valued over other ways.

Freire challenged the knowledge hierarchies implicit in the "banking" model of education, in which the teacher deposits knowledge in the heads of recipient learners. In that dominant model, the teacher is the knowing subject while the learner is the passive object. By focusing education on respectful reflective dialogue rooted in people's lived realities, Freire proposed an alternative perspective on the notion that valuable knowledge comes exclusively from the outside.

Freire was among the first to value learners' active construction of knowledge. Because constructivism is now more common, teachers may claim "the Freirean method" without realizing the full import

What is education?

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of Freire's take on knowledge and on education.

On one hand, it is good that people at least know Freire's name. According to one of my education professors, it is possible to get a graduate degree in education from some top U.S. schools of

education and never hear Freire's name mentioned. On the other hand, we must avoid depoliticizing Freire.

To better understand Freire's politics of knowledge, let us consider some scholars who were inspired by Freire's trailblazing work. Many leaders in the participatory action research (PAR) movement, such as Orlando Fals Borda, have connected their work to that of Freire. PAR is an approach to knowledge generation and action in which multiple, diverse stakeholders are meaningfully involved in all steps of the research process. Like Freire's work, PAR is about democratizing and decolonizing knowledge production.

Scholars engaged in other decolonizing methodologies, such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Chela Sandoval, are also inspired by Freire. Lastly, the notion of cognitive or epistemic justice, which I first learned about from John Gaventa, author of *Power and Powerlessness*, draws from Freire and has stark implications

This article is part of an ongoing study of the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and his lifetime of work about the most effective methods for teaching and learning have served generations of people Paulo seeking a Freire just society.

for how we understand and work within contentious knowledge politics.

An idea developed by Bonaventura de Sousa Santos and Shiv Visvanhathan, epistemic justice is "the constitutional right of different systems of knowledge to exist as part of dialogue and debate." According to Stephen Toulmin, it "has to do with the coexistence of many knowledges in the world and the relation between the abstract hierarchies which constitute them and the unequal economic and political power relations which produce and reproduce increasingly more severe social injustice."

Building on Freire, epistemic justice provides a practical theory, reminding us that theories of knowledge (and of whose knowledge counts) are not remote, abstract ideas. Rather, they affect peoples' autonomy, well-being and life choices, and as such are deeply and unavoidably political. Especially for those of us involved with universities -- so often seen as the only legitimate site of knowledge production -- let us not forget Freire's legacy regarding the politics of knowledge.

Tom Archibald is a PhD candidate at Cornell University studying Adult & Extension Education and a Graduate Research Assistant with the Cornell Office for Research on Evaluation.

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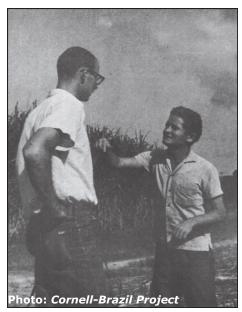
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From the CUSLAR History Vault: The Cornell-Brazil Project, 1965-67 Brazil exchange sought transformation



A Brazilian student makes a point with a Cornell University peer in 1965. Debate centered on the Brazilian reality of underdevelopment and poverty in the context of a U.S.-backed military regime.

Some of the most fulfilling and transformative educational experiences can happen on study abroad. At its best, study abroad can encourage deep relationships, challenge stereotypes and inequalities, and shape participants' life paths and vocations. As CUSLAR develops new opportunities for international learning, we reflect on one of the organization's early experiences abroad.

by Grace Woodward

The Cornell-Brazil Project was carried out by Cornell University faculty and clergy in the 1960s and greatly shaped the politics and perspective of what CUSLAR would be. Bill Rogers, a Cornell chaplain and CUSLAR co-founder, was a prominent director of this project and later co-authored a book titled *The Cornell-Brazil Project*, where the details of the preparation and summer programs are insightfully outlined.

The purpose of the project was for Cornell students to engage with Brazilian students in understanding issues such as underdevelopment. Consisting of multiple phases of preparation for the country they would be visiting – seminars, language study, reading, then direct involvement – the Cornell-Brazil Project was intended to build cross-cultural communication

Grace Woodward is a junior at Ithaca College studying sociology.

and create relationships between the peoples of the United States and Brazil in the context of U.S. government support of Brazil's right-wing military coup.

The trip's intention was to be a transformative educational opportunity for Cornell students rather than a service trip. Rogers explains:

"Let us say flatly: it is highly unlikely that North American students will learn what they need to know about Latin America without sustained, structured and abrasive contact with Latin American students. Simply working as North Americans in a peasant village or an urban slum is not enough. Teaching literacy, organizing volleyball teams, showing farmers how to grow hybrid corn, building schools, may all be worthy efforts in themselves, but if they stand in the way of or become a substitute for the critical, traumatic and even revolutionary learning that most North American students need to go through with respect to Latin America, they may be a positive menace. There can be no more effective check on the weaknesses of North American perspectives on Latin American problems than the critique which active and critical Latin American students can provide."

A somewhat expected amount of cultural tension ensued between the two student groups. Some Brazilians got a sense of being "used" by the Cornell contingent and regarded the study sessions as a time to help the Americans come to terms with the "Brazilian Reality." The interesting dynamic of this trip was the varying demonstration of thought. The Cornellians tended to be pragmatic and gradualist in their approach to problems whereas their Brazilian counterparts were often skeptical of development programs and were prone to speak of revolutionary change.

Rogers noted that "some Americans have difficulty seeing the overall, or contextual, 'forest' because of their preoccupation with the immediate technical problems at hand (the trees) while the reverse seems more often true of the Brazilians." This tension and resulting discussion was overall valuable, building bridges in communication where bridges had been burned in the past. "The entire [first] summer was a long and painful struggle toward understanding," Rogers said.

Two successful trips were completed in 1965 and 1966. While a third group of Cornell students prepared by studying the intensive preparation curriculum, unfortunate news came. Brazilian directors expressed concern because a rumor had surfaced that the project was funded by the CIA. While this was not accurate, Brazilian representatives no longer felt it would be safe to continue the program.

While disappointed, the Cornell students understood the complexity of the situation. Ivan Illich, a prominent figure in critical pedagogy and the author of the foreword of The Cornell-Brazil Project, wrote, "The discontinuation of the Cornell-Brazil Project marks its success." The decision by Cornell leadership to respect the Brazilians' judgment showed that the program truly was meant for mutual benefit. Rogers and others were unwilling to simply go to Brazil as tourists without robust interaction with Brazilian students. Over the next decade, Rogers would sponsor dozens of powerful exchanges between Cornell students and Latin American students, scholars and leaders through CUSLAR and the Protestant organization Mutuality in Mission.

It is inspiring to look back on such a thoughtful program connected with our organization. It is clear that the mission and values of CUSLAR grew out of the educational transformation that took place in Brazil during those two summers. While challenging and not emphasized in many programs, the empowerment rendered by traveling, studying and building relationships is the ideal goal of any international experience.



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'Human beings in communion liberate each other': From service to solidarity in Nicaragua

Our dreams had us separated, in folding cots and bed mats (each of us dreaming our own dream) but our awakening reunites us. -Ernesto Cardenal

by Paul Treadwell

Every time I step off the plane and into Managua there is a distinctive smell – cigars, vegetation and an overtone of burning garbage tempered with humidity. There is also, like a shadow, a hope and aspiration that walks beside me as I head to the queue to enter the country. If I am being honest, in the beginning this hope was a projection I cast over things as I encountered farmers and weavers and shopkeepers. But at some point you have to wake, leaving the dream of the revolution that almost was and enter into Nicaragua as it is. A living country, volcanic and trying, lush and lacking.

Today when I step off the plane and into Nicaragua, hope still walks beside me. But it is awakened and more solid -- not a phantom but something more vital and shopworn. It is the wakening to reality that still sees possibility amidst the struggle for daily survival. It is a more practical hope, growing in the necessary attempts to reconcile what is with what could be.

Struggling with service

The question that rides the coattails of this hope is – what can we do to change this world? Something has to be done! Over the past several years I have facilitated groups traveling to Nicaragua. I am always asked, "What do you do there?" We don't go to build houses or sanitation systems: there is no "service." The easiest way to describe what we do is to say that I hope we are present and open. We "are" in Nicaragua.

Resisting the impulse to "help" is a challenge for us – we privileged North Americans who travel abroad. Well intentioned, eager and so often filled with the hope that projects our fantasies over others' realities, we want to make the world a better place. Building something will surely help. We can build a school and return home knowing we have done something good.

And I wrestle with this. If a new roof is constructed, it shelters someone, and this is good. But if that is the endpoint of our generosity then we enact what Paulo Freire would call false generosity.

Our benevolence has positioned those receiving it in a subordinate role. Our good works do nothing to change,

Don Teofilo, a resident of the mountainous region of Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

Treadwell writes:



or even reveal, the structural inequities that demand the objectification of some so that others can enjoy their freedom.

To understand that even our best intentions can oppress, is a moment of breaking open. This began for me on a warm evening in the mountains of Matagalpa, when I encountered Don Teofilo and his family. It was a moment of communion, and liberation, of what Freire meant when he said, "human beings in communion liberate each other." It was an awakening to be reunited in the world. It was the beginning of solidarity.

From service to solidarity

True solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these 'beings for another.' - Paulo Freire

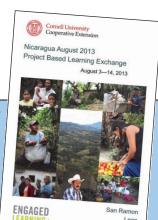
And so we travel to Nicaragua to replace false hope with a hope born in communion. We go to replace false generosities with solidarity. It is from here that we move from being to acting.

Paul Treadwell led the first Cornell Cooperative Extension delegation to Nicaragua in 2012 and is currently planning a return trip for August 2013.

To learn more, visit: blogs.cornell.edu/ccenica2012/ or contact Paul directly at pt36@cornell.edu.

And in this moment of action we begin to speak our first words together. These words, tentative and stammering, are the first threads of trust – trust in the possibilities of coming together, of our ability to act together. This is the trust that Freire identifies as a result of "the encounter in which persons are co-Subjects in denouncing the world, as part of the world's transformation."

This is no small thing but it is a task laid clearly in our hands. Together, in dialogue and trust, we begin to speak the words that denounce. And in denouncing we announce a transformed world.



Brown hopeful about peace in Colombia

by Laura Amaya

Peace processes have been an important part of Colombian history over the past half-century. Dana Brown, director of the United States Office on Colombia, shared her deeply informed perspective on the current peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) during her tour of Central New York in April.

The peace process started in 2012 and should conclude by November 2013. Dialogues take place in Havana, Cuba, a neutral territory, where representatives of both parties address five key points to set a base for peace and political stability.

Brown, a 2002 Cornell graduate and former CUSLAR Coordinator, has a strong background in United States policy and first-hand experience in Latin America. She explained how this effort is different in many ways to previous attempts and shared her optimism regarding peace in Colombia.

Several months into the process,

negotiations are kept secret following strict regulations on media Dana Brown was encouraged access.

Brown, an advocate government transparency, praised this decision as a wise one and defended it as a crucial measure for avoiding polarization.

Civil society should not be restricted from analyzing the process, she argued. However, if every debate became public,

it would prove unproductive both for the process and for Colombian society.

In her words, "there is more potential for reaching a viable agreement if we don't bother [the negotiators] too much."

The current peace process sets aside specific political agendas and focuses on five main conciliation points.

Laura Amaya is a 2013 Bachelor of Architecture graduate from Cornell University with minors in Urban and Regional Studies and Latin American Studies, and was president of PorColombia Cornell in 2012-13.

The first point addresses land reform and agrarian development and is considered the most difficult. Traditionally, land reform has shifted the balance of power in Latin American societies. However, today Colombia's population is nearly 80 percent urban.

Brown argued that the issue of land is extremely complex and cannot be decided only at the negotiating table: "The people must have the power to decide whether they can or desire to go back to the land from which they were displaced." She sees land reform as moving beyond property titles. It essentially addresses the problem arising from mono-crop plantations, often the in hands multinational corporations.

"sustainable In response, practices that diversify the

by the April 9 peace march

in Bogotá, Colombia.

The million-person march

brought together workers,

union leaders, political

activists, left-wing leaders

and government members,

all supporting the

reconciliation of a society

that has been fragmented

for over 50 years.

agrarian economy are vital in maintaining peace by securing selfagricultural sufficiency."

Related to this is the War on Drugs, another point the agenda, which, according to Brown, should be discussed alongside agrarian development. "The War on Drugs itself is slightly less relevant today than it was for the past couple of decades, although it is

the point with the heaviest United States involvement."

On one hand, legalizing coca growth -which has been done in Bolivia -- has not been discarded, and the Colombian government seems more open to discuss this option. On the other, the FARC is only one of many groups with a stake in drug trade. Thus, the most crucial aspect of this point, said Brown, is dealing with justice and extradition: "These questions are among the trickiest in a peace process.'

The challenge is finding an acceptable form of transitional justice by which



the Colombian population can accept former militants of the FARC back into civil society.

The other points -- political participation, victim recognition and conflict culmination -depend on the convergence of civil society.

On April 9, the day prior to Brown's visit to Cornell, Colombia saw an impressive demonstration of civic acceptance and respect, as over a million people marched for peace in the Colombian capital of Bogotá.

Brown described the Marcha por la Paz as instrumental in showing support for the peace process. It showed society coming together. She emphasized its importance, stating how the march "showed the international community that Colombians support the process, at a point when it was beginning to peter out." Workers, union leaders, political activists, left-wing leaders and members of the government all marched together to support the reconciliation of a society that has been fragmented for over 50 This was a light of hope in Colombia's long and painful road to long-lasting peace.

LEARN MORE!

The United States Office on Colombia, a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C., mediates between U.S.

policymakers and Colombian civil society, with a specific focus on human rights. usofficeoncolombia.org

Pichardo promotes holistic health approach

by Amanda Colon

"They tell you your stomach is like a blender."

Ángel Pichardo Almonte beamed as he began his March 28 talk, "Holistic medicine and social change," at the Burtt House Friends Center in Ithaca, NY. CUSLAR and Ithaca Health Alliance co-sponsored.

he continued. Our bodies, are understood by the Western medical paradigm as a collection of parts that can be fixed or replaced as they break or grow old. This paradigm assumes that the body is a machine, like a blender, that can be fragmented. This "mechanization" of the body subtracts the human element from the health picture. Yet how can the body be removed from its time and space context, from its culture and history, its spirituality?

As a university professor of sociology, a medical doctor and founder of the organization Justicia Global, Pichardo aims to help people take back control of their bodies and their health. A practicing brings a holistic physician, Pichardo approach to health care, integrating nutrition, reiki, medicinal plants and Chinese medicine into his repertoire for healing. His clinic facilitates the formation of support groups

and education circles for patients with similar health problems, which address social, cultural and that from people getting sick. economic factors general contribute to illness health or communities.

His visit to Ithaca in March marked the start of collaboration among Sociedad Comunitaria, the non-profit that houses his clinic in the Dominican the Cornell Republic,

University Global Health Program and CUSLAR in an effort to share an interdisciplinary and integral approach to health and health care.

LEARN MORE! Watch Dr. Pichardo's full lecture at: vimeo.com/65906728



Ángel Pichardo Almonte, left, a medical doctor from Dominican Republic, spoke on holistic medicine in March in Ithaca. **CUSLAR** Coordinator Tim Shenk, right, provided Spanish-English interpretation. Pichardo's visit marked the beginning of a collaboration to promote an integral approach to health and health care.

Pichardo introduced himself as a helper of healers. The healers, he explained, are the people. Unlike the reductionist view taken by many in the Western tradition, holistic medicine views the health of individuals as part of the larger whole, taking into account their family and work lives, their spirituality and traditions. People are not their illness. They are complex beings deeply embedded in the world around them.

Pichardo gave an example of a diabetic

"We are caught in

a system that benefits

Providing information

and options to people

helps them take back

control of their bodies

and their health."

Dr. Ángel Pichardo Almonte

woman who giving herself three shots of insulin a day when she arrived at his clinic. Her life was dictated by her identification with her illness. "What do you eat?" he asked her. "How do you What is your eat? relationship with your partner, your kids? What do you do each day?"

Leaving the clinic with a prescription that included changing her diet, exercise -- and even laughter! -- the woman was able to shift her lifestyle. Months later she would go off of insulin completely with the support of her endocrinologist.

Western medical discourse is based on the authority of academia. rather than Institutions. tradition or culture, tell us what to eat and when, how to treat illness and deal with disease. This medical discourse is often an economic discourse in disguise, as the pharmaceutical industry influences the

education and decisions made by doctors. According to Pichardo, we are caught in a system that benefits from people getting sick.

Pichardo believes that by providing information and increased options to patients, people can take back control of their bodies and their health. One such resource is a support group called the "testimonios de sanación." Led by a circle of women healers, this group discusses their own healing processes, illuminating different methods employed in their different lives.

With the support of the group, participants are able to unravel the lifestyle choices, habits and emotions feeding their illness. This discussion is aimed at recuperating the whole person and breaking the link between identity and illness, thus bringing what Pichardo calls the freedom of health back to the people. It also serves to revive the traditional healing practices passed down from earlier generations that are often quashed by modern medicine. "Doctors are burying the knowledge of our grandmothers," the doctor warned, calling us to reclaim ancestral wisdom.

Our bodies are not machines. We do not have "parts" that can simply be replaced or thrown out when no longer functional. Health is about complex people. It is about their families and relationships, their beliefs and lifestyles. Pichardo maintains that the body cannot be taken out of this context.

stomachs, it turns aren't blenders after all.

Amanda Colon is a CUSLAR contributor living in Groton, NY.

Building a public safety net for U.S. day laborers

by Gemma Tamariz

Every school day for four years I made the five-minute drive to my high school located in Denver. Every day I saw day laborers standing at the corner of Federal and 20th Street, and every day, I failed to question why they were there or their role in our society.

An educational lecture on immigration reform introduced me to an interesting idea. Melissa García Velez, a leader in the New York State Youth Leadership Council, argued that "coming out of the shadows" and being openly undocumented offered many immigrants, like DREAMers, a safety net, as communities can more easily mobilize to protest deportations once they know who is vulnerable.

DREAMers are young adults potentially elegible for the DREAM Act who came to the U.S. as children without proper documentation. This led me to ask, if day laborers occupy public spaces across the nation on a daily basis, does a public "safety net" exist for them?

Day laborers are men and women actively seeking employment in public areas. The first National Day Labor study, done in 2006, identified day laborers as undocumented and documented. They come from Mexico, South America, and the U.S., earning \$1,500 on a good month, \$500 on a bad month, and an average annual salary below the poverty line.

The Program on Health, Equity, and Sustainability published day laborer video interviews titled "Nuestro Trabajo es Bien Honesto," or Our Work Is Very Honest.



Day laborers have been an integral part of the cleanup in New York and New Jersey after the October 2012 Superstorm Sandy. Here, day laborers work to remove debris on Coney Island.

This is the story of day laborer Juan Francisco:

"We went to paint a house in Fillmore Heights. One of the beams was sitting on a piece of concrete that jutted out. It came loose and fell and hit my elbow, and I turned off the saw, but my elbow had been hurt. The saw continued and it became stuck. That's where the saw came back towards me and cut my leg. I held the edges of the wound together so that it wouldn't continue to bleed. I got out of there the best I could, supporting myself with the wall until I could get to the car. [My boss] took me to the hospital. He left me at the door and took off. He didn't stop to see how I was doing. It was a very sad day for me."

Juan Francisco's story is not uncommon for day laborers. In addition to on-the-job injuries, many day laborers report wage theft, insults from employers and lack of breaks, food and water.

In order to protect day laborers' rights, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) was founded 2001. Currently, NDLON has 36 member organizations across the nation that work "improve the lives day laborers" of by educating them about their rights.

A volunteer at El Centro Humanitario for Day Laborers, an NDLON center in Colorado, stated that she worked alongside a day laborer who suffered from prostate cancer. She was amazed at his will and determination to keep working despite his condition.

When describing work, Leon Victoriano García said, "I am looking for work and this is the challenge. It is a struggle for existence. If a job comes my way, I'm going to grab it. I'm not going to say no. I am like a drowning man who grabs any old tree branch in order to keep afloat."

Like Leon, many day laborers are in the U.S. to work because they simply want to exist.

On the other hand, anti-immigrant groups argue that hiring day laborers is criminal, that day laborer worker centers increase immigration, and that day laborers are stealing American jobs. In short, day laborers are also subjects of the immigration debate, but unlike DREAMers, their issues have remained hidden.

Thus, in order to guarantee day laborers' rights, we not only have to push for economic and social policies to change, but our society has to restructure its mindset on immigration. The ideology behind immigration reform is a much greater force than policy. That is, ideology drives the policy. In order to institute change, day laborers need to be brought into the spotlight in order for the "safety net" of all immigrants to become effective. Ultimately, uniting all immigrants will allow the movement to gain social power.

LEARN MORE!

Often working in dangerous conditions with no guarantees of employment stability or a dignified wage, day laborers experience the brunt of the ongoing U.S. economic crisis. Organizations like the **National Day Laborer Organizing Network** build leadership among day laborers and mobilize to expand civil, labor and human rights: **ndlon.org.**

See also: Valenzuela, Jr. Abel. 2003. "Day-Labor Work." Annual Review of Sociology. 29(1):307-333.

Gemma Tamariz is a 2013 graduate of the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

La Visión Latinoamericana and CUSLAR organize Sept. **Latin American conference**

The theme is "Democracy and Dictatorship." Confirmed speakers include representatives from the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo of Argentina and the Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil.

The history of Latin America has been marked by the struggle between democracy and dictatorship. The political system and its repeated shifts have impacted economic and social development in each country.

In order to contribute to dialogue and promote increased understanding of issues affecting Latin America today, the Cornell University student organization Visión Latinoamericana and CUSLAR are organizing a conference on Latin American Democracy and Dictatorship on September 27 and 28, 2013 on the Cornell campus.

Confirmed keynote speakers at the time of this publication are Estela Barnes de Carlotto, a human rights activist from Argentina and leader of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo organization,

and a representative from Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement.

While some Latin American countries last experienced dictatorship during the 1950s, like Colombia, dictatorships in Central America and the Southern Cone have been much more recent.

Today, though most Latin American countries have regular elections, they are shaped to different degrees by past dictatorships and past and present human rights violations. Countries have taken different paths regarding the economic models and human rights violations that took place during the dictatorships of the 1970s and '80s.

"One main objective of this conference is to analyze how our young democracies cope with their dictatorial heritage," said Nicolás Cosentino, a director of programs at La Visión Latinoamericana and a Cornell Ph.D. student.

"In La Visión Latinoamericana, it is our goal to promote the academic community's



Conference speaker Estela Barnes de Carlotto, Argentine human rights leader.

knowledge and understanding of the social, political and cultural realities of the countries of Latin America," said Antonio Henríquez García, the group's executive director and a Cornell undergraduate. "We hope that this conference will also help to promote the ideal of greater regional cooperation."

The conference, which has gained support from Cornell's Latin American Studies Program and History Government departments, as well as Ithaca College, will consist of keynote addresses and a series of roundtable discussions over

The conference is open to the public and more information can be found at www.visionlatinoamericana.org.

> Latin American Studies Program



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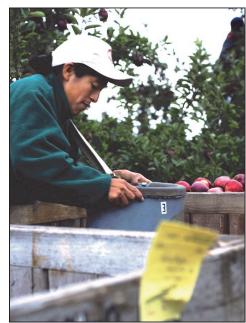
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- Visit gradschool.cornell.edu/policies for a list of LASP Field Members.

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After I Pick the Fruit humanizes migrant women



A woman sorts apples at harvest time in upstate New York. Photo: Nancy Ghertner.

by Kathleen Sexsmith

In the recently released documentary After I Pick the Fruit, director Nancy Ghertner uses ethnographic film-making methods to show how migrant women defy arduous conditions of work and the tactics of U.S. Border Patrol agents to "find a place" for their families in her hometown of Sodus, New York.

This moving portrayal of the lives of five migrant women takes viewers into their homes, workplaces and communities over a ten-year period, intimately capturing their fears over the future of their families as immigration enforcement pressures intensify in this northern border town.

Yet the significance of the film extends beyond its timely and deeply human contribution to the contemporary immigration debate. By highlighting the commitments and meaningful relationships these women form with Sodus community members, Ghertner provides a cautiously hopeful analysis of possibilities for immigrant acceptance into the fabric of rural New York life.

The central question of finding place is explored through a framing borrowed from cultural geography. In a fluid and cohesive narration style, Ghertner analyzes what she calls the geographies of work, individual and family needs, and security from the perspectives of migrant women. Her close personal ties to the community and to the women allow her to provide insights into the ways that the seasonality of East Coast agriculture and the politics of immigration come together with personal

migration histories.

Focusing on New York's apple industry -- the second largest in the U.S. -- Ghertner follows Vierge, a Haitian refugee, and her family on their annual migrations from the orange orchards of Florida to Sodus, where she can earn up to twice the per-bin rate for the fruit she harvests. Yet, the higher price Vierge can fetch for her labor in apples bears a significant human cost. The conditions faced by migrant farmworkers -- and persistence of Jim Crow era agricultural workplace laws -- are vividly depicted when Elisa, a Mexican immigrant, tells senators she faces inadequate access to bathrooms, clean water and a day of rest.

Ghertner shows that the materiality of agricultural work is linked to the relationships these women establish with their employers in

their employers surprising ways.

That is, although their labor is low-paid and physically stressful, Ghertner takes care to show how farmers deem their immigrant workforce to be highly skilled and invaluable

to their enterprises. Since the price of apples depends on the number of bruises, growers express the importance of hiring the same workers who have accumulated a delicate touch and broad familiarity with the farm year after year.

As workers spend time on a particular farm, they develop personal ties with growers who offer free housing and camaraderie. This is vividly demonstrated when Mexican immigrant Maria and her husband describe their employers as "wonderful people," or when one grower recounts his devastation over the deportation of a ten-year Mexican employee he had come to see as "one of us". At the same time, Maria and her

On April 15, filmmaker Nancy Ghertner screened "After I Pick the Fruit" at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

In sponsoring the event, CUSLAR partnered with the Cornell Farmworker Program, Latin American Studies Program, Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, Friends of Farmworkers and the Immigrant Farmworker Initiative.

For more information about the film, go to: **AfterIPickTheFruit.com**

husband decided to take advantage of their legal status acquired through the 1997 amnesty to purchase their own home, because of the latent possibility of becoming homeless if the farmer should decide to "kick them out." Through these stories, Ghertner skillfully demonstrates the palpable unease in labor relationships on farms. She examines the important question of how workers negotiate the tension between the exploitation and support from employers that they feel.

The position of the film's director as a respected and long-term resident of Sodus enabled her to establish the trust and access necessary to bring out these tensions in a close-up way. Apart from this central strength, *After I Pick the Fruit* is commendable for its holistic account of

This moving documentary

takes viewers into

the homes, workplaces

and communities of

five migrant women

in upstate New York

over a ten-year period.

immigrant life using multiple sites and perspectives.

Ghertner travels
throughout her
community and
as far as Mexico,
accompanying
migrants in their

migrants in their everyday lives as

they send money home, celebrate Mexican culture at parties and in Catholic services, long for their family members left behind, adapt to the shock of loved ones' deportations, and make the difficult decision to stay or go. This film will transform the way we care about how, and at what cost, our food is picked.

Kathy Sexsmith is a PhD student in Development Sociology at Cornell University studying the experiences of migrant workers on New York dairy farms





Harvest of Empire uncovers roots of immigration debate

by Malcolm Temple

We've all heard the media commentaries: "Immigrants are invading the country, exploiting our benefits, and taking our resources." As the Latino population increases, anti-immigrant sentiment continues to plague the U.S. Yet, not enough questions are asked about why so many migrants from Latin America have arrived over the past six decades.

In an engrossing documentary that spares no graphic detail, *Harvest of Empire* answers that precise question. This eye-opening, full-length film, based on the groundbreaking book by journalist and Democracy Now! co-host Juan González, unveils the untold story of why millions of people from Latin America have journeyed to the U.S.

Directed by Eduardo López and produced by Wendy Thompson-Márquez, the film features numerous real-life accounts and rarely seen archival footage to make the convincing case that the unprecedented influx of Latinos directly correlates with U.S. government actions in their home nations for over 100 years.

The film focuses particular attention on U.S. media, pointing out the distorted image mainstream networks have painted of the Latino immigrant story. "People in the U.S. have no idea why we come to this country," exclaims one Nicaraguan woman in the film, "...and if they do, it's probably the wrong idea." The film argues that conservative talk radio and Fox News, other news outlets, stigmatized Latino immigrants by playing upon Americans' fear of demographic change and economic uncertainty to ultimately conceal the true origins of the immigration crisis.

While revealing how the media have hoodwinked million of Americans on this issue, the film asserts U.S. intervention in Latin America has triggered political instability, economic turmoil, and even

civil wars that has left millions of people from the region with no option but to seek refuge in the U.S. -- with or without papers.

Yet, the filmmakers do not make this bold argument without backing it up. The film touches upon everything from the wars for territorial expansion that gave the U.S. control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and more than half of Mexico, to the secret military support for oppressive dictatorships in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. In the film, viewers see each individually, where personal accounts and specifically discussed events show how U.S. meddling led to mass exodus.

In Guatemala, for example, the film illuminates the way in which the U.S. secretly government assisted the destabilization and overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954. The President at the time, Jacobo Árbenz, wanted to redistribute the nation's land more equally. This directly threatened the United Fruit Company and other U.S. businesses operating on thousands of acres of land in Guatemala. In an effort to protect U.S. economic interests, the U.S. government helped orchestrate a coup that resulted in a 36-year-long civil war and genocide against the nation's population.

The film further notes that less than 2 percent of Guatemalan applicants were granted political asylum in the U.S. The sentiment of the Guatemalan people is summed up in an interview with Mayan Nobel Peace Prize Winner Rigoberta Menchú: "If what exists in Guatemala is persecution, murder, killing, if what you have is insecurity, then I prefer to cross the border and go to a place where I feel safe." As the film goes on, viewers see these words convey the feeling of many other Latin Americans who, due to U.S. actions, have faced similar circumstances.

Malcolm Temple is a junior at Ithaca College studying Culture and Communication with a minor in Latin American Studies. The filmmakers' abundant use of interviews coupled with jarring statistic evidence makes a compelling argument that connects the dots in the unexamined pattern of Latin American migration. Harvest of Empire complexifies the immigration debate by pointing to a larger moral issue. It transforms the idea of immigration reform from an act of benevolence and empathy for Latino immigrants, to a matter of justice and responsibility of the U.S. government given the history of its own actions.

Intrinsic to the immigration debate is the fact that Latino immigrants are transforming U.S. culture to the reluctance of many Americans. The filmmakers do not look past this fact and set out to dissolve the pernicious misconceptions surrounding immigrants. López says, "For far too long, the national debate immigration has been dominated by voices of intolerance and ignorance. Our hope is that Harvest of Empire can help our fellow citizens to recognize and appreciate the tremendous contributions of Latino immigrants to the U.S."

Resolving the immigration issue will require more people to understand its root causes as well as our nation's growing diversity. Harvest of Empire is more than a glimpse into the negative consequences of U.S. foreign policy. It's more than the untold story of Latino immigrants. It is an important missing piece in U.S. history that deserves to be taken seriously.



Film screening & discussion with director Eduardo López

Sept. 16, 2013, 7 pm Willard Straight Theatre Cornell University

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Summer & Fall Events 2013

A representative of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, or Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil, will be the inaugural visitor in CUSLAR's Paulo Freire Engaged Practitioners Program launching in fall 2013.

CUSLAR to sponsor extended visits of human rights leaders: Paulo Freire Engaged Practitioners Program

Through the Paulo Freire Program, CUSLAR will periodically host human rights practitioners and social movement leaders from Latin America to broaden dialogue and understanding of pivotal human rights issues. These leaders will share knowledge and experience in extended visits through lectures and workshops and engage with university populations and U.S. social movements.

Inspired by the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, the program allows

students, faculty and local organizations to engage with leading Latin American practitioners in fields such as education, sociology, international and human development and political economy. Freire insists that the educator should prepare students to think critically about their social surroundings, solve social problems collectively and work toward ending oppression. The first Engaged Practitioner will be a representative from the Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil.

Highlighting CUSLAR's spring 2013 events



Filmmaker Nancy Ghertner at Cornell University April 15.

March 28: Ángel Pichardo Almonte, a medical doctor from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, presented experiences of healing and hope from his medical clinic in a talk titled, "Holistic Medicine and Social Change." (See page 11)

April 8: Alyshia Galvez, Director of the CUNY Center for Mexican Studies, and Melissa García Velez, co-founder of the Lehman College DREAMers, spoke on immigration reform.

April 10: Dana Brown, director of the U.S. Office on Colombia, explained the complex peace negotiation process currently taking place in Colombia. (See page 10)

April 15: Filmmaker Nancy Ghertner led a discussion about immigration reform after a screening of "After I Pick the Fruit," her documentary that follows the lives of women farmworkers in upstate New York. (See page 14)



Harvest of Empire director to visit Cornell Sept. 16

Film director Eduardo López will screen his documentary, *Harvest of Empire*, at Cornell University on September 16.

The film tells "the untold story of Latinos in America." López writes: "We are living through truly historic times for immigrants and for Latino families in the U.S. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need to understand and accept the fact that the growing Latino presence is the unintended consequence of our own country's actions in Latin America."

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JULY 5-7, 2013 - ITHACA, NY

CUSLAR on the web



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