

Committee  
On  
US  
Latin  
American  
Relations

# CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

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Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University  
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## A New View of the World

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# Interconnectedness: Human Rights, Greed, Order & Grassroots

It seems that the North American public and politicians, so euphoric about having reasserted our kick-ass capacity as the heads of the Economically Free World, have not heard the voice of the unfed people through the din of rallying cries of "Free Markets For All". Despite our own budget debacles, high unemployment figures, huge trade deficits, and the recession/depression (declared over by some economist, by the way), multinational banks and the International Monetary Fund (in which we have a powerful voice) continue to insist on austerity measures and "free market" changes, made in our own image, to correct debtor-nation failures. Might these flaws be inherent to the neo-colonial economies reinforced by world bank policies? (See "Mexico Trade Labyrinth" p.11 and "Bancos y Barrios, p.3)

North American need for control does not stop with simple economic manipulation, as the Gulf War once again proves. We continue (although you probably wouldn't know it if you only read *USA Today*) to spend, spend, spend (at Bush's whim) on repressive governments. This issue's example: millions for our long-time friends, the death squad ARENA government of El Salvador. Surprise! They won again in the March elections. (get the inside scoop from Kathy Johnson, just returned from Salvador, p.8 & 20)

Even here in Ithaca, far from the big decision makers of D.C., we see our part in the cycle of excess, ideology, and greed for power. New York has signed a contract with Canada for electricity from the James Bay project that is guaranteed to cause apocalyptic damage to the area's ecosystems and to the indigenous peoples' land it will flood and destroy. (See Updates p.20) And right here on the Cornell campus, Hispanic Americans, along with many other students, are voicing their frustration

and anger with racism (see What Issues of Race? p.19).

In the face of all this, grassroots efforts for change continue: people from across the nation formed a new human rights network to address abuses in Peru; Quest For Peace continues a campaign to help start sewing co-ops in Nicaragua; the Folger's boycott is on; Ithacans are aiding Mexican appropriate technology co-ops; and CUSLAReños keep plugging.

The disorienting map on the front cover shows a "...one Ocean World, fringed by shoreline fragments..." developed by Buckminster Fuller<sup>1</sup> who inverts our reality with the hope that a new north-south world orientation could change the world dynamic. With all this talk of a "new world order," this map without political boundaries reminds us to look beyond state divisions to recognize the interconnectedness of all life on this planet.

--Janice Degni and Sarah Moseley, editors

<sup>1</sup>Kaiser, W.L. 1987. A New View of the World. Friendship Press.

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The Committee on US-Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) is a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy (CRESP), based at Cornell University. We work in Ithaca and the surrounding area to promote greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. We are particularly concerned with the role of the United States in influencing the social, political and economic conditions of the region.

The CUSLAR Newsletter is published bi-monthly and provides members and other concerned individuals with the opportunity to present information and analysis on topics relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean. The positions of the authors do not necessarily reflect the positions of CUSLAR as an organization. The CUSLAR Newsletter committee cooperates with authors to reach mutually acceptable editorial decisions. If you are interested in writing for the Newsletter or working on the committee, please call the CUSLAR office at (607) 255-7293. We welcome your suggestions and letters to the editors.





VENEZUELA DEBT \$29 billion

## Bancos y Barrios: Some Thoughts on Structural Adjustment

by Francis Adams

On February 27, 1989 residents of the poor barrios of Caracas took to the streets to protest sharp increases in the price of fuel and public transportation. The Venezuelan government declared a state of emergency, suspended the constitution, and brought in the military to put down the disturbance. When the smoke cleared, hundreds of people lay dead in the streets. The government reported 276 fatalities; human rights groups placed the number at over a thousand. Although this incident sent shock waves throughout Latin America, it went largely unnoticed here in the United States.

The price increases which set off the protests came in the wake of the government's decision to implement a comprehensive program of "structural adjustment." [See box p. 4]

The program called for both fiscal austerity (a reduction of state services, subsidies and price controls) and liberalization of the nation's trade, investment,

is to move toward greater reliance on market forces for the distribution of goods and services and increased integration in the global economy.

### Is structural adjustment really the panacea for Latin America's economic woes?

and exchange regimes.

Structural adjustment is not unique to Venezuela. In recent years a number of Latin American nations have responded to severe economic decline and burgeoning foreign debts by reducing state services, slashing import controls, removing restrictions on foreign investment, and devaluing their currencies. The overall objective of these reforms

**The View from the Banks**  
Austerity and market oriented reforms have been applauded in the North, especially by officials of the largest commercial banks. Although the adjustment process will be difficult and painful, as the Venezuelan case demonstrates, it is considered an essential first step toward restoring the economic health of the region. Cutbacks in state services and subsidies will help balance the nation's current accounts; access to foreign markets will stimulate local export production; foreign investment will bring an infusion of much needed capital and advanced technology; and "rationalizing" the exchange



## Structural Adjustment: The Orthodox Perspective

Structural adjustment refers to a combination of orthodox policy reforms which are expected to restore equilibrium to a nation's external accounts. Balance of payments deficits occur when local demand outstrips supply. Consumers and businesses thus turn to importing goods and services which they might otherwise purchase at home. The adjustment process is designed to stem imports by reducing the overall level of aggregate demand. Restrictive fiscal policies, such as cutting food, housing, and transportation subsidies, freezing wages, dismantling price controls, and raising taxes, lessen demand by reducing real income. Tight monetary policies, such as restrictions on domestic credit and money supply and raising interest rates, have the same affect. Lastly, devaluing the currency (which makes exports cheaper and imports more expensive) and liberalizing the nation's trade and investment regimes create more favorable conditions for export production and capital inflows. These policies are expected to restore balance of payments equilibrium by reducing financial outflows and increasing financial inflows to the nation.

rate will reduce capital flight as well as increase export earnings by making local products more competitive internationally.

The benefits from the export sector should then spread throughout the society, laying the foundation for economic growth and development. Of

## Do market oriented reforms and greater integration in the global economy lay the foundation for genuine social and economic development?

course, the expected rise in foreign reserves would also allow these nations to continue servicing their debts.

### Debt and Adjustment

Is structural adjustment really the panacea for Latin America's economic woes? A brief look at the origin and nature of the present crisis, and the long term effects of these reforms, raises

some issues often overlooked by the foreign banks.

Latin America's current economic difficulties are frequently traced back to 1973 when OPEC nations drastically increased the world market price of petroleum. The enormous surpluses which the oil exporting nations accumulated were deposited in commercial banks in Europe and North America. Under pressure to lend these "petro-dollars", the banks turned to the nations of Latin America and other parts of the developing world. The governments of these nations were more than willing to borrow from these capital markets since the money could be used to finance their development programs and interest rates were relatively low at the time.

Toward the end of the 1970s the balance of forces began to turn against the Latin America nations, including oil-exporters such as Venezuela. Creditor nations, grappling with severe inflationary problems at home, (especially after a second round of oil price hikes in 1979), instituted tight monetary policies

which drove up interest rates. Because many of the loans were contracted under floating rate agreements, Latin American nations suddenly faced skyrocketing debt-service obligations. The region's problems were compounded by the 1980-82 global recession as export markets collapsed and commodity prices plummeted.

The combination of higher debt payments and reduced export earnings led to chronic foreign exchange shortages throughout Latin America. New commercial lending also dried up as the banks began to lose confidence in the ability of these nations to repay their past loans. In order to continue purchasing vital imports many Latin American nations turned to the Inter-

## Comparing Paychecks

Relative change in average minimum wage, 1980=100.



Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The New York Times / July 26, 1988



national Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance.

The IMF was originally designed to serve as a lender of last resort for nations experiencing foreign exchange problems. [See Box]

IMF support is contingent on the adoption of certain policy reforms designed to restore "equilibrium" to the nation's internal and external accounts. These reforms include making deep cuts in social programs, lifting price controls on basic necessities, reducing wage rates, selling off government-owned businesses, removing trade and exchange controls, and instituting incentives for foreign direct investment, such as tax concessions, industrial free zones, and debt-for-equity swaps. [See Box]

The reforms reflect the Fund's preference for a market-based allocation of resources between and within nations.

## Underdevelopment and Dependence

Do market oriented reforms and greater integration in the global economy lay the foundation for genuine social and economic development in Latin

## International Monetary Fund

The IMF was founded as part of the package of institutions that emerged from the Bretton Woods Monetary Conference at the end of the Second World War. The Fund was created to promote global trade and investment by ensuring liquidity in the world economy, currency convertibility, and exchange rate stability. The Fund provides short-term support for nations experiencing balance of payments problems in order to lessen the need for restrictive trade practices or competitive devaluations. In recent years, an IMF Agreement has become a virtual prerequisite for receiving other forms of bilateral or multilateral assistance.

151 nations are members of the IMF and voting power is roughly equivalent to each nation's contribution. The United States controls about twenty percent of the votes and the next four largest industrialized nations (Germany, Japan, Britain and France) together control another twenty-five percent of the votes. While developing nations comprise 3/4 of the membership, they hold less than 1/3 of the votes.

America? Clearly a free flow of goods, capital, and services between two nations can be mutually advantageous, helping to meet local consumer needs, stimulate economic growth, generate employment, and disseminate new technologies. However, greater integration of Latin American nations has often worked against their long-term interests.

To begin, we must remember that the export potential of many Latin American nations is limited to a small number of primary

products and raw materials. Because trade relations take place in a highly monopolized world market, largely dominated by the industrialized states, primary products are often undervalued relative to manufactured goods. In fact, there has been a long term decline in the "terms of trade" between primary and secondary products. [See box p. 6]

Reliance on a small number of export products also increases the vulnerability of these nations to market fluctuations from one year to the next. Lastly, opening up the domestic market to an influx of foreign products often undermines local agricultural production and infant industries.

Foreign investment can also inhibit the long-term development of Latin American nations. Such investment often creates small, capital-intensive export enclaves which are largely cut off from the other sectors of the economy. As a result, they absorb local capital and pull scarce resources toward primary rather than industrial production. Latin American nations are "decapitalized" over time, as sur-

## Debt-for-Equity Swaps

In debt-for-equity swaps Latin American nations trade part of their foreign debt obligation for local equity investments. The swaps work as follows: foreign investors purchase part of a nation's debt from a creditor bank at a substantial discount. A three million dollar debt, for example, might be purchased for just one million dollars. The investor then redeems the debt at face value (three million dollars) in the local currency and uses this money to purchase equity investments in the local economy.

Debt-for-equity swaps are often considered beneficial for all parties. While the bank absorbs a loss, this is preferable to not collecting anything on the loan. At the same time, the debtor nation is relieved of hard currency obligations and the investor is able to purchase local assets at a significant discount. These swaps do, however, reduce local ownership and control of the nation's productive resources.



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pluses generated domestically are exported abroad rather than reinvested in the local economy. Once again, domestic production contracts and the nation's human and material resources are used to meet foreign rather than local needs.

Lastly, currency devaluations often increase balance of payments deficits in Latin America. Since a large proportion of imports, such as energy and capital goods, are vital to their domestic economies, it is difficult for these nations to reduce their total volume of imports without encountering severe economic dislocations. As such, devaluations often increase a nation's import bill by increasing the costs of all foreign goods. Also, because primary products exhibit a price inelasticity of demand, (lower prices will not lead to a proportionate increase in the volume of purchases), devalu-

ations rarely increase export earnings.

In short, trade, investment, and exchange liberalization often prevent Latin American nations from developing their own productive capabilities: they become economically dependent on the manufactured goods, capital and technology of the industrialized nations. The integration of these nations into the world market simply preserves colonial economic relations, assuring advanced states ready markets for their manufactured goods and access to cheap labor and primary commodities. This perpetuates the poverty and underdevelopment of these nations.

**...trade, investment, and exchange liberalization often prevent Latin American nations from developing their own productive capabilities...**

### The View from the Barrios

While structural adjustment often preserves and intensifies existing inequalities between rich and poor nations, it can also reproduce inequalities within poor nations. These reforms often favor domestic elites over the rural and urban poor: large landowners benefit from wider markets for their raw materials and agricultural products, commercial groups profit from the expansion of trade, and government officials are able to use foreign exchange inflows to consolidate their positions of power.

Latin America's poor are not as fortunate. The poor are most

### Declining Terms of Trade

Declining terms of trade between primary and secondary products simply means that the value of primary products has declined relative to the value of manufactured products. As such, primary product -- exporting nations must increase their exports to earn the foreign exchange necessary to purchase the same volume of manufactured imports from one year to the next. This "structural bias" in world trade is linked to a lower income elasticity of demand for primary products, the limited market power of producing states, and the development of synthetic substitutes by the industrialized nations.

adversely affected by price increases, wage cuts, and the loss of publicly funded services such as health care, housing, and education. In addition, small farmers are often displaced as production of cash crops for export replaces the production of staples to meet local needs. Without state controls, the best lands become concentrated into the hands of a small economic elite and foreign corporations. Small scale artisans who do not have the capital, economies of scale, advanced technology, or marketing skills to compete with the transnationals, are often displaced as well. Lastly, working conditions tend to deteriorate, especially for women and children, as nations compete with one another to attract foreign investment.

In many respects, structural adjustment represents a redistribution of the nation's surplus from labor to capital. As such, it simply exacerbates inequalities within Latin American nations and reinforces the conditions





which generate poverty in the first place.

## Toward Genuine Development

Because structural adjustment often preserves and intensifies existing inequalities between and within nations, the struggle for genuine development in Latin America must begin by challenging the existing power structures.

The Latin American people must first gain sovereignty and control over their productive resources, land, industry, technology, marketing, and transportation systems. This requires the selective use of tariffs and quotas to support small farmers, infant industries, and local artisans. Measures to control foreign direct investment, including selective nationalization, limits on the repatriation of profits, and requirements for local equity participation, should also be

adopted. Foreign investment should be limited to only those cases where it is consistent with the long-term development objectives of the nation. Carefully structured trade and investment policies can break the pattern of dependency on the industrialized nations and lay the basis for truly self-reliant and self-directed economic development.

Genuine development also requires challenging inequalities within Latin American nations. The land and productive assets of each nation must be redistributed so that the majority of people can achieve a greater degree of power over their own lives and the ability to direct the development process in their interest. Socio-economic policies which assure full employment and equity in income distribution could then be instituted and resources reallocated toward

creating a reasonable standard of living for the entire population.

## International Solidarity

Challenges to the existing power relations between and within nations will no doubt encounter resistance from both transnational actors and local elites. External actors have often tried to thwart economically nationalist policies in the past. Similarly, domestic elites have used repression to block popular demands for a redistribution of income and wealth.

Despite these obstacles, Latin America's poor have often challenged the existing political and economic order. These challenges must receive the support of progressive forces in the U.S. and elsewhere. Hopefully, the next time people take to the streets in protest their voices will not be so easily silenced.

## ! Experience Latin America This Summer!

There are a myriad of opportunities to work, study or travel in Latin America this summer. Possibilities include:

- **Spanish language schools** in Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
- **Service Work with American Friends**
- **Peacework**, joint US/Soviet Volunteer Teams, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, July 24 - Aug 20, 1991. Volunteers from the US and the Soviet Union working together on the construction of houses, clinics, and schools. College-level students and recent graduates encouraged to apply. Cooper House Inc., 305 Washington St., S.W., Blacksburg, VA 24060
- **Global Exchange**, specializing in *Reality Tours*. One of their goals is to foster new models of partnership between First and

Third World people that promote social justice and democratic community development.

- **International Work Camps** with Volunteers for Peace. Workcamps are an inexpensive (\$100 for a 2-3 wk program) and personal way that you can travel, live and work in a foreign country. 800 listings in 34 countries.
- **Institute for International Cooperation and Development, Inc.**, has varied opportunities for study, travel and international solidarity.
- **Amigos de las Americas** - health care oriented service work. Projects include dental hygiene, community sanitation, immunizations, eyecare and others.
- **Delegation to Nicaragua and Panama**, July 22 - August 9, 1991. Cosponsored by Witness for Peace.

• **500 Years of Resistance: AMERICAS CONNECTIONS**, A North/South Exchange. On the eve of the 500th anniversary of the coming of Europeans to the Americas, national chapters of Servicio Paz y Justicia invite North American activists to visit Latin America, learn about their struggles and about popular movement's work around 1992. Sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Resource Center for Nonviolence. Visit the CUSLAR office in G-29 Anabel Taylor Hall for more specific information.





# La Que Nunca Descansa

# She Who Never Rests

*"We are accused of importing feminism from Europe, but we create our own definition of feminism for our own situation, and our situation is war."*

--Isabel A., member of CONAMUS

by Cathy Johnson

The statistics are readily available. It's no secret that more than 70,000 people have been killed in the past decade of war in El Salvador, and that the armed forces (funded and trained by the United States) have done the majority of the killing. That the majority of the victims are unarmed civilians. That more than a million people have been displaced. That disappearances, torture, and assassination are routine methods of the government and army. That the horror of repression is ever shadowed by the violence of a poverty in which the "underemployed", who cannot earn enough to fulfill basic needs, make up more than half of the work force; a poverty in which 55% of the children are seriously malnourished.

But the missing counterpart to this quantification of suffering is the continuing will of the Salvadoran people to work for peace, to struggle for justice, to survive. Salvadoran women have played a crucial role in their people's survival of this war. A number of these women have always joined the public struggle as unionists, activists, and as militants in the FMLN, but a majority have, by necessity, remained heroines of the private sphere. Navigating the triple oppression of poverty, political repression, and machismo every day, they feed and clothe their families; they work for wages that buy less and less; they care for the sick, the old, the young; they search for the missing and bury the dead. As the caretak-

ers of daily life, the problems they encounter are particular to their lives as women.

In the past five years Salvadoran women have begun to speak out from this position of their own experience. In 1985 there were no national women's organizations in the zones of government control, and now there are five - as well as 62 local and regional committees. Salvadoran women have always had to struggle; now by uniting and organizing specifically as women, they are developing their own voice in the movement.

As part of a delegation of North American women recently visiting El Salvador, I was able to spend time with members of the

**Reading classes, basic health clinics, daycare networks, and community centers are among the fruits of their labor.**

Coordinadora Nacional de la Mujer Salvadoreña (CONAMUS), the first national women's organiza-

tion in El Salvador. It was founded mostly by women already involved in popular organizing, either through union work or other community organizations, who saw that certain issues central to the conditions of women's lives were not being addressed by the popular movement. The women of CONAMUS took us to several of their projects and described their struggle for economic, political, and sexual justice.

In each community they form a committee to identify and address the problems that the women there see as most pressing. Through identifying and interpreting their own reality, women move from being objects to being subjects of their own history. The women of CONAMUS believe the first step in this process is to help women organize to meet their basic needs. By doing this, they learn more about how and why they are oppressed, and they prove to themselves and their communities that by organizing



and struggling together they can improve their lives. CONAMUS has a giant banner they bring to rallies: a woman, surrounded by cooking and laundry, with the words "La

munities" (shantytowns inhabited by people displaced by the war), and El Salvador's first battered women's shelter and first rape crisis center. As varied as

Que Nunca Descansa" (The One Who Never Rests). It is not a complaint, but a tribute to the Salvadoran woman who every day faces a mountain of work that goes largely unrecognized.

Isabel A., the head of the education committee, explained to us: "We are different from some of the other women's groups that have evolved in El Salvador because we start with a discussion of problems specific to gender, rather than class.... We find great interest when we go into a community and start talking to the women because we talk with them about the problems that are very real in their lives, things particular to women - like *why* do husbands beat their wives."

Reading classes, basic health clinics, daycare networks, and community centers are among the fruits of their labor. The four projects we visited included the building of a well by the women of an agricultural cooperative in San Martín, a women's center in one of San Salvador's "marginal com-

**The rape crisis clinic... is a revolutionary project in a country where an estimated 80% of all rape, sexual abuse, and domestic violence is committed by members of the armed forces.**

these projects are, they have much in common. The residents of the farm cooperative and the shantytown are people displaced from their homes by the war. These communi-

ties are starting from scratch, in the city and the countryside, to rebuild their lives. Many of the women have lost husbands, lovers, and children in the fighting. So along with their grief they bear the burden of raising a family alone. Because the government provides nothing for most of the poor, something like a well, or a center where women can learn to sew, represents a victory in the struggle to secure the daily bread.

As well as helping women to rebuild lives shattered by the violence of the military war, CONAMUS is leading the struggle to help women rebuild lives shaken by rape and domestic violence. In 1989, they opened the first battered women's shelter and the first rape crisis clinic in the country. The shelter offers women a chance to

cont'd. on p 26.

## BOYCOTT SALVADORAN COFFEE !



"Wealthy coffee growers dominate El Salvador and fund the ARENA Party and the death squads. Neighbor to Neighbor has launched an international boycott of Salvadoran coffee as a way to promote peace in that ravaged land.

The boycott is an effective way to put direct economic pressure on the rulers of El Salvador to seek a negotiated peace in the eleven year old civil war.

The focus of the boycott is Folgers. Why? Folgers is the largest U.S. user of Salvadoran coffee. Buy coffee that is 100% something other than Salvadoran—like Nicaraguan or Colombian."

From Western New York Peace Center Report Jan-Feb. 1991



## Building an Alternative Economy: Experiences with the Cooperative Network in Jalisco, Mexico

by Francis Vanek

Interest in cooperatives in Ciudad Guzman, a city of 50,000 in southern Jalisco, may have begun earlier than 1985. But it grew rapidly in the aftermath of the Mexico city quake which devastated not only much of the Federal District but also the area around Cd. Guzman. Today a growing number of cooperatives provide economic opportunity as well as basic necessities to the population in and around the city.

In 1985, to alleviate housing shortages, Don Serafin, the progressive bishop of Cd. Guzman, and Padre Salvador Urteagga, one of his vicars who specializes in relief work, sought and were awarded a grant from leftover Catholic Relief Service funds. This money had been allocated as seed money for developmental ventures. The bishop's request was handled by Dr. Hugo Pirella, a Venezuelan Ph. D from Cornell and an administrator in Mexico for CRS who was transferred from the direct relief efforts which were winding down to taking charge of distributing the seed money.

At that time, grassroots cooperatives were springing up in several surrounding communities. Residents of the mountain village of Juanacatlan began a cooperative for constructing living room furniture out of local hides and pine wood. Campesinos in the village of El Rincon pooled their resources to obtain a 10-acre plot of land for growing cane, although local authorities obstructed their efforts.

Seeing that these groups lacked a regional network, Don Salvador proposed that the CRS fund a semi-cooperative firm to provide building supplies and technical assistance, as well as organize construction teams in communities seeking to replace damaged housing. "Netlacaneco", the resulting construction center, began in Cd. Guzman in 1988. The name comes from a native word which, loosely translated, means "a strong helping hand." The ten or so members of the new Netlacaneco group were familiar with construction, welding, and business skills. But over the

cont'd. on p. 25

"For months I had been sending telexes as a matter of routine, responding to urgent action alerts that come into the CUSLAR office. I didn't fully grasp the importance of that work until I went to El Salvador. There I met Isabel Ramirez. I had sent telexes denouncing the death threats against her. After meeting her in person I understood the importance of the human rights network in a whole new light. The people on whose behalf we send those messages are very real people in very real danger. They believe the telexes are effective."

-- Cathy Johnson, CUSLAR work/study student, recently returned from El Salvador, 3/91

### HUMAN RIGHTS RESPONSE NETWORK TELEX AUTHORIZATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this a temporary address? \_\_\_\_\_ Until what date? \_\_\_\_\_

You have my permission to send 2 6 12 other telexes per year in my name in response to disappearances, death threats, torture, etc. in Latin American countries. The cost is approximately \$6.50 each. I understand that I will receive a bill and a copy of the message sent in the mail and that this authorization is valid for one (1) year from the date signed.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# The Debt Labyrinth in Mexico

by Adam Sunny Schwartz

While the 1980s may have been "Morning in America", they were the twilight zone in Mexico. Consider just a few items from the roll call of disaster:

- In 1982, it took 45 minutes to earn the wages to buy a pound of chicken; today it takes over 3 hours.

- The UN estimates that half the population eats below internationally recognized nutritional standards.

- Despite a geometrically increasing population, enrollment in elementary education collapsed over the past decade.

The culprit is worth \$80 billion, costs Mexico a third of its export revenue each year just to keep up with interest payments, and doesn't stop growing. Even the *New York Times* recognizes that "public services...have been sacrificed for payments on the debt".

The plight of our neighbors across the Rio Grande ought to concern us, and not only out of appropriate humanitarian sympathy. Falling living standards in Mexico reduce their demand for our goods and services; a Congressional report suggests this may have laid off 100 thousand US workers. Increasing poverty and stagnant growth are the handmaidens of political upheaval, which if occurring would spill over the river as accelerated illegal immigration and lost US investment in Mexico. If we are to profit by the impending Yukon to Yucatan trading block, Mexico must have political stability and an economy that fosters consumer demand.

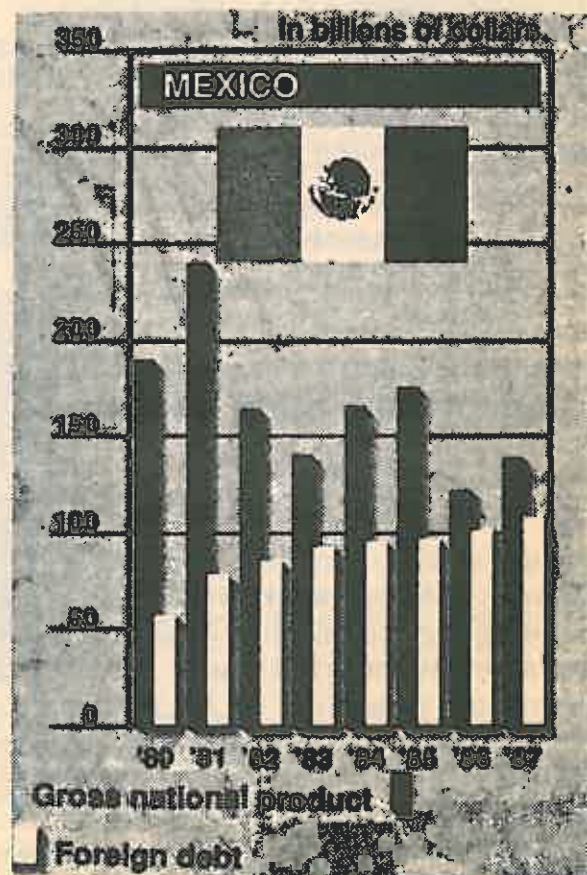
Depending on your ideology of choice, the debt has any of several causes. Free-marketeers decry government ownership of crucial industries (including banking, steel, oil and communications), and assert that the loans were flushed down the toilet

of statist mismanagement. Dependency theorists and neo-Marxists argue that the debt is the historically necessary outcome of unequal terms of trade, and exists to syphon surplus value out of the South and into the North. Although there are grains of truth here (state monopoly can be ineffi-

**Depending on your ideology of choice, the debt has any of several causes.**

cient, and an inferior capital endowment is a trade disadvantage), a more historical look reveals greater complexity.

For the past 60 years, the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) has held together its hegemony by walking a razor's edge between the conflicting demands of workers and capitalists. Faced with growing political antagonism (including a Tian-







amen Square style incident in 1968), the PRI kept the peace by spending beyond its means: it increased allocations to social services and to industrial investment without raising taxes.

Meanwhile, the banks of the North were recycling oil boom profits from the Middle East as new loans. Mexico (a member of OPEC) was earning more from trade than

along for the ride. High finance is a *menage-a-trois* between creditor, debtor, and government regulator, and all should be blamed for these irresponsible loans.

OPEC shattered, so oil prices plummeted. Simultaneously, the United States under Reagan began a program of tight money and fiscal expansion, together driving interest rates unexpectedly high. In 1982, Mexico horrified its 450 creditors by temporarily suspending interest payments. With nowhere else to turn, Mexico signed on with the International Monetary Fund, trading debt rescheduling and new loans for adherence to the Fund's economic program: austerity. Mexico devalued its currency and reduced its fiscal spending and monetary growth, thus improving trade revenue at the cost of growth and living standards.

The 1980's proved that austerity alone won't repay the loans: the debt grew annually as Mexico took out new loans simply to keep up with the interest on the old ones. The same can be said for the rest of the Third World, which today collectively wears a trillion dollar albatross around its neck. So what is to be done? Unilateral

**High finance is a *menage-a-trois* between creditor, debtor, and government regulator, and all should be blamed for these irresponsible loans.**

ever before. When the banks offered money, Mexico didn't hesitate, despite two hazards: debt payments were tied to fluctuations in global interest rates, and trade revenue (the expected source of the debt payments) was tied to fluctuations in global oil prices. Government regulatory agencies throughout the North (which exist to make sure that government insured banks don't take undue risks) all went



default frightens off future loans and foreign investment (as Peru discovered), and as Willy Brandt says, "However great their own efforts, huge sums will be needed to enable the countries of the South...to provide the jobs and incomes necessary to overcome poverty..." A debtor's cartel might have the leverage to overcome this. Unfortunately, Bolivar's bane, that is, the disunity and divergent interests of the Latin American nations (and the South in general), suggests that collective default is politically unlikely, if not utopian.

Of the three former lovers, probably the government regulator (that is, the taxpayers of the North) will get stuck with child support: the ravaging of the South isn't sustainable, and the banks of the North already have too little capital on reserve. At least this debt fiasco will cost us less than our last one, the S&L bail-out. The only silver lining here is that angry taxpayers

CUSLAR invited Raul Garcia Zarate, master of the folk guitar of the Andean highland, to play the evening of March 14. On his way out of Barnes Hall on the afternoon of his concert he slipped on ice and broke his leg. This unfortunate accident forced him to cancel his Ithaca concert as well as the rest of his US tour. Fortunately, Mr. Zarate is recovering well under the care of his nephew Edgar Zarate.

CUSLAR thanks Cornell Life Safety and EMS technicians, Bangs Ambulance Service, the Tompkins County Community Hospital staff, and above all orthopedic surgeons Frank Baldwin, Jr. and William McKeen for the care and consideration they showed in Mr. Zarate's initial treatment and subsequent care.

may begin to demand responsible loaning from the banks insured by the federal government, and lead us to look for new and safer ways to finance development in the South.



## Quest for Peace

Thread - Needles - Straight pins - Safety pins - Scissors

Tailor chalk - Bobbins - Thimbles - Notions - Interfacing



Fabric - Tape measures - Tracing paper - Tracing wheel

Zippers - Buttons - Lace - Patterns - Patches - Sewing machines

## SEWING CAMPAIGN 1990

With used clothing from the Quest, and other grants, the Mothers have built; 32 homes, a community center and kindergarten, 3 foodstands, a hospital restaurant, a soy restaurant, a neighborhood grinding mill which supports an attached day-care center, a sewing co-op, a popular store and a central meeting place. These projects involve more than 650 women and provide permanent employment for more than 80 women.

They now seek additional funds and used clothing to build 9 more homes, a shoe repair cooperative, a vegetable farm, a chicken farm, a dress co-op and a dairy farm. Future plans include ecological education and a Center for Training and Empowerment.

The ousting of the Sandinista government in February 1990 does not in any way ease the need for micro-development projects in the Nicaraguan countryside. In fact, all signs show that it is now more important than ever that we maintain our support for community-based development that will continue to offer the Nicaraguan people a path toward a brighter future.

Local collection contact CUSLAR, 255-7293.



*Ms. Langford delivered this speech on the first day of the U.S. offensive against Iraq. Now in the aftermath of the war, as we watch to see how the U.S. government will manifest its true motives behind the war with Iraq, the question posed in this essay and the argument presented is still very relevant to the work of all who work for social justice. -ed.*

## New World Order, Same Old Hegemony

by Jacob K. Langford

I want to talk about flag waving — on both sides of the line! US bombs have dropped on Iraqi soil. George Bush invites us all to join the “family of nations.” The anti-war movement is stunned that Congress did not do the right thing. It seems an appropriate and urgent moment to take a serious look at questions American “anti-war” and “democracy” movements

have and have not asked — repeatedly. It seems an appropriate and urgent moment to dare to ask — and answer — by whatever means necessary, the serious questions about the “American way of life.”

There are good slaves and bad slaves. There are good slave masters and bad slave masters. This was the clarion call to justice in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s infamous book, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, right before the Civil War. Under this banner, thousands rallied to stand against slavery in the name of justice and democracy, in the name of freedom and equality. Thousands saw themselves as the beacon of justice.

But, what assumptions about the “American way of life” did these thousands of White Northerners burn indelibly in the memory bank of American democracy movements? There are good slaves and bad slaves. There are good slave masters and bad slave masters — that was the banner. Where were, **where are**, the questions about the roots of slavery, the roots of racism, the roots of the master/slave system — in all its variations? Where are the

questions about the fundamental relations of power and ownership? Where are the questions about divinely prescribed White American moral superiority?

**Where are, the questions about the roots of slavery, the roots of racism, the roots of the master/slave system - in all its variations?**

The Civil War was a war for freedom, a war against oppression and exploitation. To this day, children learn this lesson in their classrooms. When do they learn that the this so-

called war for democracy was a war between different systems of ownership? To this day, US history books and the arsenal of patriotic scriptures of all stripes repeat the mythological definitions of liberation, refusing to confront that wars between those invested in systems of power and ownership are never wars of liberation, can never be supported in one way but not another if one is struggling to tackle the root system of power and ownership.

Have we, in the anti-war movement, perhaps, been unable to address the roots of the Gulf conflict because we have been blinded by the good master/bad master model? Have we, perhaps, embraced to close to the cockles of our hearts the myth-based history books written in our names?

More specifically, has faith in so-called “peaceful solutions” directed by the US and



its UN Security Council perhaps kept this movement from asking key questions? Who owns Congress? Who owns the UN?



Turn the page for your ...

## CUSLAR **PULLOUT** CALENDAR

Pin it to your bulletin board  
and leave it there forever!



# CUSLAR CALENDAR

Film Series Film Series Film Series Film Ser

## WED. 10th - Uris - 8:00pm THE NIGHT OF THE PENCILS/ EL NOCHE DE LOS LAPICES

(Argentina) Hector Olivera

A gripping, chilling account of the true story about the 1970s "dirty war" against Argentina's left. Olivera follows six high school students who are kidnapped by the military police in 1976, imprisoned, tortured and forced to confess their affiliations (of which they have none) with guerrilla terrorist groups. Charged with emotional power and riveting drama, this film is an electrifying production. (96 min.)



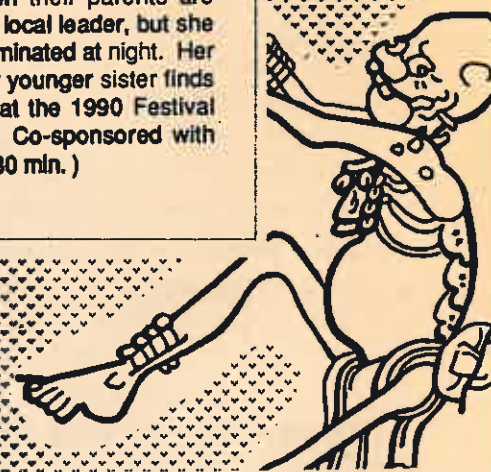
Thank you to all for me to go to El S March. To all the vided raffle prizes the benefit, to the for Peace, and all bought and sold ra helped and attender my heartfelt grati The money we rais penses was donater women's organizat and to CEDEP, a Sa that makes grants development proje I will share sli at the Unitarian April 12 at 7:3

Film Series Film Series Film Series Film Ser

## TUES. 16th - WSH - 7:00pm THE TIGRESS/ LA TIGRA

(Ecuador, 1990) Camilo Luzuriaga

A lushly filmed, luscious jungle story. Three sisters must fend for themselves when their parents are killed. The oldest takes over as local leader, but she likes to drink and be sexually dominated at night. Her position is threatened when her younger sister finds a boyfriend. Named best film at the 1990 Festival Iberoamericano de Caragena. Co-sponsored with Cornell Cinema - not a free film (80 min.)



Take a turn at the  
Ithaca Festival  
Pizza Sale  
June 1st and 2nd  
WE NEED YOUR  
HELP!



Film Series Film Series Film Series Film S

## WED. 24th - Uris - 8:00pm THE CITY AND THE DOGS/ LA CIUDAD Y LOS PERROS

(Peru, 1985) Francisco Lombardi

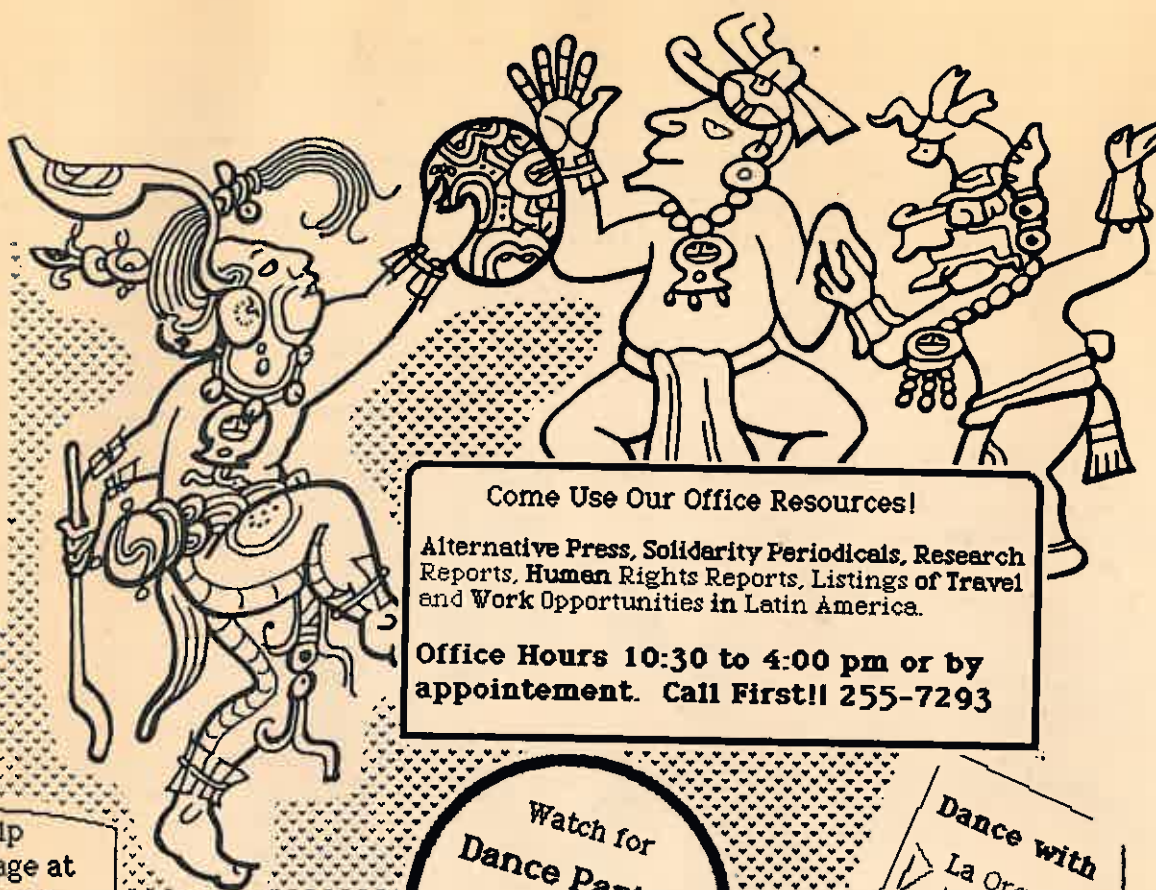
A tough, brutal story about a Peru military academy and its inhabitants. Rebelling against the rigidity and brutality of the military institution, the cadets form their own secret junta with its own hierarchy and oppression. Based on the famous novel by Vargas Llosa. (138 min.)

Check out the CUSLAR video collection!

- "Mysteries of Peru" • "The Hidden Holocaust" (Guat)
- "Cover Up: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair" • & More



who made it possible  
 to work in early  
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 BC the Veterans  
 are individuals who  
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 veteran foundation  
 or grassroots de-  
 ts  
 es from the trip  
 Curch on Friday  
 Pl. -Cathy Johnson



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 Willard Straight  
 Memorial Room

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 \$5 All Proceeds Go To the Children of Villa Franca in Hond.

LA ASOCIACION LATINA PRESENTS:

## VISTA LATINA

Cornell's 13th annual celebration of Latino heritage









When was the last time either Congress or the UN Security Council took committed systematic action for the disenfranchised anywhere in the world?

What makes us believe that these institutions have now miraculously freed themselves from the strings held by those who have owned — and continue to own — the economic and political jugular of world power? And given the history of the US role in "peaceful solutions" to violence it has systematically cultivated — either through economic or military strangulation — why the trust in the repeated mantras to US-sponsored "peace"?

It is time to realize that there are no good slave masters. It is time to confront our own participation in reproducing the myth of good masters and bad masters. Why were we so stunned at Congress? They only did what the people wanted them to do; we said, "Yes, US moral superiority authorizes us to occupy a region already crippled by US economic power." Our only concern was whether our moral superiority would express itself in terms of "patience," — systematically starving the people of Iraq — or "impatience," nuke the bastards. Both are solutions contained within the limits of the good master/ bad master model; we never challenged the legitimacy of the masters themselves. What did we think cultivated the horrors of the region to begin with?

It is time to realize that the stars and stripes contain histories of struggle silenced here and elsewhere, histories of struggle silenced by the mythology of "good masters" working "patiently" for "freedom" and "democracy." It is time to realize, as we wrap ourselves in the flag in the

## Who owns Congress? Who owns the UN?

name of the "brave boys and girls on the front," that this "volunteer" army is the result of the draft, the economic draft. Do we truly want to support those

forced to "volunteer" their bodies for target practice because their country systematically denies them access to

viable education, health and employment? Then let's dare to ask the questions that shatter the chains of good master/ bad master acquiescence!

cont'd. on p 27.





## Peru in the Time of Cholera

by Ann Peters

On February 4th, cases of cholera began to be identified in Chimbote, a coastal city devoted to the fishing industry. The outbreak spread quickly along the coast of Peru, especially in urban areas. By February 20th, more than 100 people had died and some 15 thousand had been diagnosed with the disease. Treatment is straightforward, involving rehydration and antibiotics once a person is at the hospital. Treatment and vaccination campaigns were undertaken with aid from the European Community, and particularly from the French organization 'Doctors without Borders'. Caught up in the war against Iraq, the United States sent no aid. Within two weeks the disease was largely controlled on the coast, but had spread to some degree to the highlands, where many communities lie more than a day's travel from medical care.

For several days, travel into or out of Peru was suspended, and even after the travel ban was lifted for foreigners and incoming travellers, Peruvians continued to be unable to travel abroad. Other nations of the Andean Pact refused to accept imports of Peruvian seafood, even when canned, causing increased economic stress to the already desperate Peruvian economy. It is ironic that these measures have little to do with the actual transmission of the disease, associated with a lack of proper drinking water and sewage disposal and with the handling of fresh food. The sectors of the

population hit by this epidemic are the poor people who do not have access to many municipal services and who are very unlikely to be travelling abroad. For many Peruvians, the worst aspect of the epidemic was its psychological effect on a people who have been able to face 15 years of economic degeneration largely because of their hope, energy and creative solutions to the problems of physical and social survival.

The immediate cause of the epidemic

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### Caught up in the war against Iraq, the United States sent no aid.

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has been ascribed to an Asian ship that had recently docked in Chimbote at the time of the outbreak. But the real cause of the epidemic lies in the poor infrastructure for public health in the cities of the Peruvian coast. The rise of a city around the fish industry at Chimbote is described in the hallucinatory images of a novel by José Maria Arguedas: sprawling shantytowns around the naked mechanisms of fish processing; a vast human gathering camped under a stench of fishmeal hanging in the coastal fog. Neighborhoods sprang up out of woven mats, and became permanent, while public services like water, sewer or electricity came later if at all, and never in an adequate form.

In the capital city of Lima, there is insufficient water for household use. It is rationed in most neighborhoods, or must be bought. For more than five years Lima's water has not been guaranteed to be drinkable. Open sewers still run in many neighborhoods, and rats rummage in quantities of garbage that exceed the municipality's ability for removal. The city's sewer systems run directly into the ocean near the urban beaches that are accessible to that majority of Lima's residents who do not own a private car.





In other areas of the coast, the same problems exist in every town, village or homestead. Raw sewage dumped into irrigation canals may be used downstream to water vegetables. Nothing can be eaten without cooking. Other diseases carried in the human digestive tract, such as typhoid, have been endemic in areas of the Peruvian coast for years.

In the highlands the health problems are similar, particularly in those cities which have swelled as people flee economic hardship and the war of terror between the Peruvian government and the guerrillas of "Shining Path" (Partido Comunista Peruano "Sendero Luminoso"). As the national economy continues to crumble, problems of public health are multiplied by general malnourishment among the impoverished majority of urban dwellers.

These problems are not based in ignorance about appropriate and effective design of water and sewage systems for the desert coast or mountainous highlands. Peru has many competent technicians and medical personnel. As one doctor working in a public clinic on the outskirts of Lima commented in 1984, "We are masters in diagnosis, but without the hospital technology or even the proper medicines for treatment of a disease, there is nothing we can do to help."

The increasing integration of Peru into the world economic system has brought wrenching economic transformations and exploding urbanization without adequate

### **It is ironic that these measures have little to do with the actual transmission of the disease**

public funds for basic infrastructure or health care. Unable to effectively tax multinational corporations operating in Peru, including pharmaceutical companies, Peru has attempted to make cheap medicines available in public hospitals by requiring the companies to produce a discounted generic line. However, there have been recurrent problems with these medicines, considered by both doctors and pa-



tients to be ineffective, not actually containing the indicated dosage.

The entrance of the new government of Alberto Fujimori was seen by the majority of Peruvians as a sign of hope. Not associated with any political party, Fujimori is an agricultural engineer who promised to create a government run by qualified people in each area, representing a wide political spectrum. On entering office his first appointments were consistent with this promise: for instance, he put businessmen and analysts associated with his conservative opponent Mario Vargas Llosa in charge of the Ministry of Economics, while he put educators associated with the United Left opposition coalition in charge of the Ministry of Education. These various groups immediately set to work, and within weeks Fujimori, who had run on a platform promising no economic "shock therapy" for his ravaged nation, had instituted a series of measures that cut real wages to such a degree that neither the working class, middle class nor small entrepreneurs could put food on the table. After achieving initial legislative gains for teachers and schoolchildren and forging comprehensive plans for curriculum development and cultural programs, the Ministry of Education found itself confronted with a payroll freeze that lasted until the Minister resigned under protest, leading to massive resignations in the Ministry and the dismantling of her entire program.

Without a solid political base, Fujimori forged a pact with sectors of the military that has led to an increase in the militarized areas of the country. Meanwhile,



individuals last seen under arrest by the security forces continue to "disappear" or to be found dead and mutilated. New mass graves have been uncovered in the past six months, and community members have been killed after refusing to participate in Guatemala-style "civil patrols" organized by the military. Also, legislation has been passed that places investigation of crimes against civilians by military personnel under the jurisdiction of military courts and prohibits newspapers or human rights organizations from publishing names of the accused.

In late January, neo-liberal Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, now based in Washington, presented a new proposal from the Fujimori government that includes acceptance of the controversial anti-subversive military "aid" (loan) package that the United States has formulated as part of the "drug war." The Administration insists that Peru accept this military package in order for the US to offer Peru even modest economic loans, but initially Fujimori had rejected it, arguing that it did not address the economic basis for coca production and the cocaine trade.

According to the economic theory behind the "shock treatments", hardships now undergone in Peru should lead to a leaner, healthier economy that attracts national and international investment. However, in the short run, the social damage - and damage to national consumer industries - is severe, and may have long term consequences. [See Bancos y Barrios p 3.] Peru opened its doors for international investment under excellent terms for the investor in the early 1980's, without this leading to substantial development, an improved balance of payments, or a better standard of living for most Peruvians. There is ground for doubt that there will be a climate in the next few years for international investment in Peru, or in any Third World nation. Without substantial improvement in the Peruvian economy, no government will have the funds to adequately support public health, education, or any national program.

For Sources See p 26.

#### PERU PEACE NETWORK USA: A New National Network

The founding meeting for the Peru Peace Network was held in late January. It was organized by the Ecumenical Committee on the Andes (ECO-Andes), the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), and the Catholic Diocese of Jefferson City, three institutions which have had a leading role in educational, legislative and human rights work around Peru. The meeting gathered together organizations working on human rights and social justice issues in Latin America, and organizations based in the Catholic Church which do ongoing work in Peru.

The Network wants to reach out more broadly into community-based solidarity and human rights organizations, and particularly into the academic community. The organization hopes to maintain a strong relationship, both informative and advisory, with Peruvians representing a wide range of viewpoints.

Educational work is one of the principal focuses of the Network, since advocacy work must be based on an understanding and appreciation of Peruvian society and the many issues now confronting the Peruvians.

Legislative work will be coordinated by WOLA in Washington and will address issues around the "drug war" and human rights. They plan to oversee the legislative process that leads to approval of military and economic aid packages to Peru, and to make information available to congresspeople that may influence that process.

A third area of work will be providing information to the media and public. This arm will be based in Chicago. Human rights will be another focus. Human rights work will immediately be based on the Amnesty International casework (Peru Cgroup, Oakland), and on the Boletín of the Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos (Lima), which also addresses violations by non-governmental organizations.

The founding of this network offers an opportunity to work for Peru in new ways. Above all, it will enable us to distribute information on human rights, legislative campaigns and background information on current events across the United States. I hope that Peruvians resident in the United States and others interested in Peru will contribute to this budding effort.



## What issues of race?

### Latinos on the Cornell Campus Speak with *La Voz*

by Eduardo Moises Peñalver

Recently, I went with a delegation of latino students from Cornell to the local cable station (channel 13). We appeared on *Jorge Visions* to discuss the newspaper of the latino community at Cornell (*la Voz*) but the conversation quickly spread to a variety of topics that we felt were indicative of the growing plight of latinos and other minorities in this country.

The first issue that we addressed was bilingualism in the public schools. In many countries in southern California and Florida, latinos are a majority, yet in several of these counties, laws have been passed banning bilingualism in schools, the workplace and in public facilities (i.e. voter information pamphlets and street signs). At a time when the performance of latino students has been deteriorating, to further burden and stigmatize them because of their language is unjust and inherently racist.

**The fact is, racism, albeit more subtle racism, is alive and well on the Cornell Campus.**

It is difficult to communicate the significance of discussions about racism in California and Florida to people in New York, because such problems often seem distant, both geographically and politically, from the "enlightened" perspective of the Northeast Liberal. The fact is, racism, albeit more subtle racism, is alive and well on the Cornell campus. The recent vandalism on the second floor of

Goldwin Smith Hall demonstrates the frustration felt by minorities on the predominantly white upper-middle class Cornell campus. The reaction of the Cornell community to such outbursts of anger is reveal-

**How can we have a viable Hispanic American Studies Program at Cornell when we don't even have a viable Hispanic community to lobby for such a program?**

ing. The vandalism in Goldwin Smith was painted over before 8 am the next morning. Cornell does not want to be reminded of its snail's pace in dealing with the issues of race on campus.

"What issues of race?" you ask. Take, for example, the Hispanic American Studies Program (HASP) that has been in "development" stages for several years now. While Cornell finds the funds to expand Olin Library (and pay \$3000 to clean up vandalism within four hours), it can't seem to organize a viable Hispanic American Studies Program.

One of the problems we discussed on *Jorge Visions* was the problem of responsibility. Whose fault is it that we don't have an Hispanic American Studies Program at Cornell. Certainly some of the fault lies with the feet-dragging of the administra-





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## Human Rights and Legislative Updates

### EL SALVADOR

#### Elections

by Cathy Johnson

The New York Times, in announcing the "official" results of El Salvador's March 10 legislative and municipal elections, characterized them as "the first since the war began that were not sabotaged by leftist guerillas of the FMLN." Unfortunately, any possibility of a free and fair election was thoroughly sabotaged by widespread technical "irregularities", intimidation of voters by the armed forces and members of the ruling right-wing ARENA party, and outright fraud in the handling of ballots.

I was among the several hundred international observers in El Salvador on March 10 trying to make sense of the elections. From start to finish, the electoral process in El Salvador is a bureaucratic game of chance, designed to discourage participation - especially of the poor. People told us they had difficulty registering; they were sent from one office to another, and told to return another time, yet many who registered still didn't receive their voting cards by election day. In some places as many as 30% of those who had cards were not allowed to vote, because their names weren't on the list.

The rules for who exactly would be allowed to vote were changed the day before the election, as were locations of many polling places. Some polling places opened as much as four hours late, and at one site people who had been in line since three pm never made it inside - they were sent away at five pm when the doors were locked. Although the government had announced that buses would be free on that day, drivers were not subsidized for lost fares, so

many chose not to drive. This lack of public transport made it especially difficult for poor and rural people to get to polling places.

In Santa Tecla, the logo of the Democratic Convergence (CD) was simply omitted from the ballot for the mayoral election. In other places ballots marked for the Convergence were found hidden in piles marked as "abstentions", dumped in garbage, and even lying in the street. The CD is a coalition of social democratic parties that have been unable to participate in previous elections because of severe repression. They represented the interests of the popular movement in this election, and so posed the greatest threat to ARENA.

Although electoral law stipulates that the armed forces stay at least 300 meters from polling places, this rule was disregarded throughout the country. In one site I visited, soldiers were checking people's papers at the door. Many people recounted instances of coercion and intimidation by the armed forces. For example, in Tenancingo soldiers went door to door the night before, warning people not to vote for the Convergence.

All this took place in a climate of repression that had been building for weeks before the elections: 15 people were massacred at El Zapote in January; in February a UDN candidate was assassinated and the only opposition paper was shut down by arson; in March another opposition candidate was shot in the head. Throughout this period, strikes were militarized and members of labor organizations and opposition parties received death threats.

ARENA, with vastly superior financial resources and the power of the armed forces, emerged from the process with the greatest numbers of ballots. But these elec-

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tions were not a free nor a fair measure of the will of the Salvadoran people. Given the level of repression, leaders of the popular movement consider it a victory that the CD made the greatest gain of any party over previous election results. Furthermore, according to the first ballot count on election night, the CD came in third place, which would give them a position on the Electoral Council that oversees the next election. This last fact is now in dispute, with the latest "official" count giving third place to the National Conciliation Party (PCN), an ARENA ally. But the widespread perception is that third place was stolen from the CD.

Official Election Results 3/23/91:	
	No. of seats
ARENA	39
PDC	26
PCN	9
CD	8
UDN	8
MAC	1

## Human Rights

"With full levels of U.S. military aid to El Salvador restored and international attention riveted on the Persian Gulf, church leaders and human rights monitors [report] that right-wing atrocities are increasing; in fact, they are reminiscent of the early 80's. Preliminary investigations by Salvadoran Archbishop Rivera y Damas implicate the country's U.S. backed armed forces in the murder two weeks ago of 15 civilians in El Azpote... assailants threw grenades into the election headquarters of a leftist party in Usulután last week and an opposition candidate's house was ransacked by members of the Armed Forces in Ahuachapán.

(Christian Science Monitor, 2/5/91)

The United Nations released the annual report on Human Rights in El Salvador, charging that the number of death squad killings has increased 170% since 1989. Executions by the FMLN were down by over 60%. (*Pledge of Resistance Newsletter* 11/24/90)

## Legislative

### Adams-McDermott Bill

Senator Brock Adams and Rep. McDermott of Washington have introduced bills in the Senate and House which would end all military aid to El Salvador, channel all Salvadoran economic aid through private organizations and create an escrow account for the rebuilding of El Salvador (presumably after a ceasefire). The Adams bill in the Senate and the McDermott bill in the House are identical. Military aid, even aid in the pipeline, could only be resumed by a vote of both Houses of Congress and then only if the Salvadoran government were to fulfill eight strong conditions. Any use of economic aid for war related purposes would end; all U.S. advisors would leave; covert operations would be forbidden; and economic aid could only be used for specific purposes such as child nutrition, health, education, etc.

Call or write your Congressional Rep and Senators to encourage them to co-sponsor this bill.

From: National Agenda for Peace in El Salvador Newsletter, February 28, 1991 and ROCLA Update: March 1991.



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## GUATEMALA

### Human Rights

The human rights situation in Guatemala continues to be grim. The December 2 Santiago Atilan army massacre left 13 dead—including three children—and at least 18 wounded. The Guatemala Human Rights Commission/ USA reported 101 disappearances and 653 extrajudicial executions in 1990. The Guatemalan government's Human Rights Ombudsman reported 233 disappearances and 304 political murders in 1990. Americas Watch, Amnesty International and other organizations also reported on the sad and deeply troubling occurrence of the torture and murder of street children by Guatemalan police forces.

Equally distressing is the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of these abuses. Murder, disappearance, torture and other crimes go largely uninvestigated and unpunished, in spite of five years of U.S. assistance to the Guatemalan police forces under the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program.

### Legislative Action

Responding to the deteriorating human rights situation in Guatemala, last October Congress put a cap on Fiscal Year 1991 military spending and placed all of FY 1991 on reprogramming procedures. This requires approval of the chairpersons of the both House and Senate Foreign Operations Subcommittees before aid can be dispersed, allowing Congress to override presidential allocations.<sup>1</sup>

This year Guatemalan solidarity organizations are targeting Economic Support Funds (ESF). This security related assistance is the largest portion of U.S. aid to Guatemala: Congress approved \$56 million

in ESF out of a total aid package of \$126 million in FY 1991. While its intended purpose is to buy petroleum and pay off debts, it frees up money for the purchase of arms and ammunition. To get this aid cut, solidarity groups are working to place strict human rights conditions of ESF as well as military aid.<sup>2</sup>

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Witness For Peace newsletter March 4, 1991.

<sup>2</sup>Network in Solidarity With the People of Guatemala NISGUA newsletter February 1991.

## NY/CANADA

### Human Rights

You may remember the visit of the Kayapo to Ithaca last fall. The Kayapo are native people from Brazil who have organized several struggles against the Brazilian government and even against the world bank to stop so-called development projects that would have destroyed their territories along with their way of life and traditions.

The Kayapo stopped in Ithaca on their way to confer with the Cree and Inuit people in Northern Quebec. The Cree are fighting an energy development project that threatens to destroy them and their culture. The project, divided into 3 phases, includes damming fifteen rivers and building a 100 mile dike across the mouth of James Bay. The tragic repercussions of Phase I, of the James Bay project, which is nearing completion, is reflected in the newly encountered social problems of alcoholism, drugs and suicides, health problems caused by mercury poisoning and the loss of their traditional staple foods and the introduction of junk food.

In addition to the destruction of native peoples, the ecological consequences of this

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**Excerpted from: James Bay II: Fact Sheet and Maps by the James Bay Defense Coalition, New York Chapter. Save James Bay Pamphlet by the Northeast Alliance to Protect James Bay - New York Chapter**



The Honorable -----  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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## The U.S. Army School of the Americas

Hundreds of soldiers from El Salvador, members of one of the world's most repressive armed forces, **are** currently being trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (S.O.A.) at Fort Benning, in Columbus, Georgia. Although **thousands** of Salvadoran soldiers have been trained at the S.O.A. in recent years, **little** media attention has **been** focused on this secretive school and its sordid history.

The School of the Americas was established in 1946 in Panama to train Latin American officers and foster anti-communism. Panama demanded the removal of the School as part of the Panama Canal Treaty, and in 1984 the S.O.A. moved to Ft. Benning in Georgia.

The S.O.A. has produced 45,000 alumni. "Many of the majors and colonels who attended the School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone...helped overthrow constitutional governments all over Latin America. The regimes they installed were invariably maintained by intimidation, and sometimes ... by mass murder."<sup>1</sup>

Salvadorans comprise the largest contingent of the estimated 1,600 Latin American soldiers now at the school.

### Schooling in Hatred

Two Salvadoran soldiers testified to the U.S. Congressional Task Force, headed by Rep Joseph Moakley (D-Mass), investigating the Nov. 16, 1989 massacre of six Jesuit priests, their cook, and her 16 year old daughter:

"While leaving, (Sgt.) Avalos Vargas — nicknamed 'Toad' and 'Satan' by his comrades — passed in front of the guest room where the two women had been shot, and heard them moaning in the darkness. He lit a match and saw the two women on the floor embracing each other. He then ordered a soldier, Jorge Alberto Sierra Ascencio, to "re-kill" them. Sierra Ascencio shot the women about ten times, until they stopped moaning."

According to documentation provided to Moakley's task force by the office of the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Sgt. Avalos Vargas and four of the other eight soldiers arrested for the Jesuit massacre were graduates of Ft. Benning. The Moakley report also reveals that the entire battalion involved in the killings underwent training by U.S. Special Operations Forces in El Salvador just days before the massacre. One unmistakable indication of the school's



Cooperatives, cont'd. from p 10.

course of their first two years sought new solutions outside Jalisco.

For starting cooperatives and construction teams, they worked with an advisory group in Mexico City, "Solidaridad A.C.", which works with large and small cooperatives throughout Mexico. They collaborated with Eco-Solar, a Canadian-funded promoter of alternative technologies, to teach farmers how to build sanitary water storage, animal waste bio-digesters, and other structures out of "ferrocement" (concrete reinforced with a mesh of metal). Eco-Solar delegates also reintroduced indigenous grains such as amaranth to the area, along with organic growing techniques.

Netlacaneco also sought low-cost designs for hand-powered machinery to complement Eco-Solar's work. For this, Dr. Pirella steered the group towards the S.T.E.V.E.N. Foundation (Solar Technology and Energy for Vital Economic Needs), a project of Jaroslav Vanek and myself. The S.T.E.V.E.N. Foundation first demonstrated to the people of Netlacaneco steam-generating parabolic troughs — similar to those which some readers may have seen around Ithaca — and accompanying engines and pumps. Last year the Faculty-in-Service grant awarded by Cornell helped us to install and instruct residents about the construction of one of our handpump designs.

During this expedition last August, we got our most recent glimpse of the cooperatives' progress and perspective. Each group seems to be building on initial success and moving on towards bigger projects. Netlacaneco continues to help communities lay out and construct housing projects and weld doors and windows as well as provide building supplies. Eco-solar has organized several farming communities to take turns constructing a grain processing center. This allows farmers to turn their harvests into finished baked goods and other produced items, thereby circumventing de-



pressed raw grain prices. This group also did S.T.E.V.E.N. a service by transporting one of our handpumps to a projects in Nicaragua. In Juanacatlan, Mexico, the parish is starting a cooperative to build caskets (apparently coffins bought from outside sources are a big financial burden!) and is considering installing a small hydroelectric powerplant on a 30-meter waterfall nearby. The El Rincon co-op also has high aims. Not only are they in the process of installing the S.T.E.V.E.N. handpump to fill the household water tanks on the roof of each house in their community, they would also like to reactivate a turn-of-the-century pumping station for irrigating their cane by using solar collectors and pumps.

Increasing competition and diminishing local control brought on by the trend toward neo-liberal economics challenges the respective cooperatives to come up with facilities that are economically viable. Hopefully, projects such as the grain processing center, hydroelectric plant, and solar pumping station will continue to succeed because the members have experience and

cont'd. p 27.



Descansa cont'd. from p 9.

begin a new life, although we were told that a woman in El Salvador still must carefully consider whether leaving an abuser is the best thing: "A man is not obliged to support the children, so leaving an abusive man can lead a woman to have nothing to feed her children. Her children could starve." Still, for women ready to take the risk, the shelter provides them a place to stay while they look for work and for a new place to live.

The rape crisis clinic offers educational, psychological, medical, and juridical services to victims of rape and abuse. It is a revolutionary project in a country where an estimated 80% of all rape, sexual abuse, and domestic violence is committed by members of the armed forces. To acknowledge the extent of the problem, to give a voice to the survivors, to denounce the perpetrators, is an act of defiance of a system that has institutionalized violence. It is an act of courage.

Isabel told us: "The reason for this clinic is that there's a need that the government doesn't provide for. They have no interest in women. Their goal is to oppress the poor. But the clinic is not exactly a response to the government, rather it is a response to the needs of the women in the communities we work with."

The women of CONAMUS understand that to struggle for justice under the shadow of repression is to risk everything. The danger is not remote: one of their principle members was assassinated in 1988. In November of 1989, during the FMLN offensive, the offices of all the popular organizations, including CONAMUS, were broken into by the armed forces and everything was taken. Isabel Ramirez, now president of the organization,

received death threats in February of this year, and her apartment was broken into and ransacked.

CONAMUS is but one part of the growth of women's organizations in El Salvador. The courage and dedication of the women involved in the struggle in El Salvador testify to the strength of the human spirit, and the projects they have established witness to the power of women working together for justice in their lives.

SOA cont'd. from p 24.

curriculum is a large sign outside one of the classroom which reads, in Spanish, "Classroom for Low Intensity Conflict." **Low Intensity Conflict**

The war strategy known as Low Intensity Conflict targets anyone advocating change in El Salvador's impoverished and unjust society as a "subversive" or "communist." Priests, teachers, health care workers, union leaders, cooperative members, human rights advocates and catechists are among its victims.

*"Low intensity conflict (L.I.C.) utilizes a variety of means in order to control hearts and minds... widespread bombing, humanitarian assistance, and terrorism. The diversity of means employed by LIC strategists blurs classical distinctions between military and economic aid, humanitarian assistance, and military operations. All are part of the same unified war effort."*

"Activism to close the school has been mounting. On November 16, 1990 three veterans, Fr. Roy Bourgeois (a Maryknoll priest and Vietnam veteran), Charles Liteky (a former Ft. Benning

chaplain and recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor in Vietnam) and Patrick Liteky (Who trained at Officer Infantry School at Fort Benning) were arrested at the Headquarters of the S.O.A. They poured human blood on the floor and walls of the S.O.A. headquarters building as a symbol of its complicity in the Jesuit massacre and the suffering and death of many thousands of other Salvadorans. The three have been charged with criminal trespass and damage to government property, a felony which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Their trial began March 25, 1991.

From *Background Information about the School of the Americas*, School of the Americas Watch, an activist organization based in Columbus, Georgia.

<sup>1</sup>Michael Klare & Peter Kornbluh, Eds., *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties* (Pantheon Books, NY, 1988. p.218)

<sup>2</sup>Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *War Against the Poor: Low Intensity Conflict and Christian Faith* (Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1989, p. 30)

<sup>3</sup>Michael Klare, "LIC: the War of the Haves Against the Have-Nots," in *Christianity and Crisis*, Feb. '88

Sources for Cholera p 16.

Brooke, James. "Peru's Neighbors Halt Food Imports" in *The New York Times* Feb. 15, 1991.

Eco-Andes Staff. "The Rights of Children" in *Andean Focus* Vol. VII No. 5, Dec. 1990, Ecumenical Committee on the Andes, New York.

Panfichi, Aldo. "Fujimori's First Six Months" in *Informative* No. 11, Jan.-Feb. 1991, Grupo de Apoyo Peruano, New York.

WOLA staff. "The Killing Fields of Peru" in *Latin America Update* Vol. XV No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1990.



## CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

**New Order cont'd. from p. 15.**

We want to send letters of support to these victims of the economic draft? Then tell them you support their refusal to fight. Tell them you will join them in the struggle, by any means necessary, for their — and everyone's — fundamental right to equal health, education and employment, here and throughout the globe. Let's dare to ask the fundamental questions. Let's not be afraid to confront symbols we have been told are sacrosanct; true justice is our point of reference, not the symbols, not the leaders.

Having just ordered the bombings, Bush announced yesterday that the so-called "new" world order would be dictated by the "rule of law," not the "law of the jungle." The odious racist sneer of this statement begs the question: Whose law, my man? The law of your symbols cloaking the wars you and yours wage at home and abroad in my name? The wars I unwittingly reproduce by accepting your points of interest? Doesn't your rule of law remind me that the red, white and blue is recognized throughout the world today as the symbol of the blood drained from millions, the violence of white supremacy and the aristocracy of ownership by the blue-blooded? Yes, it's time to look again at the

red, white and blue. It's time to recognize the genocide it camouflages.

Until we challenge the history books, change the questions we ask and redefine the channels of appropriate strategy — until we dare to stretch our imaginations into realms our symbols muffle into silence — we will remain an anti-war-for-now movement and never become an end-to-exploitation-once-and-for-all action. Let us dare to break the grip of the good master/bad master structure — NOW!

J.K. Langford, member of the Ithaca Coalition Against War in the Gulf.  
For more info call CAWG: 607-272-0564.

**Co-ops cont'd. from p 25.**

are more confident than ever before.

For its own part, S.T.E.V.E.N. would like to consolidate its work in the area by starting a continuously operational research and dissemination center for its technologies, perhaps in a portion of the Netlacaneco center in Cd. Guzman. We hope to transplant as much of the development process as possible to the target regions to develop local expertise while creating the most "appropriate" technology possible for the conditions. For more information write: 414 Triphammer Rd., Ithaca, attn: Francis Vanek.

**LAL cont'd. from p 19.**

tion, but the fault of the Hispanic community itself can't be ignored. How can we have a viable Hispanic American Studies Program at Cornell when we don't even have a viable Hispanic community to lobby for such a program? Many Hispanics at Cornell refuse to identify themselves with their culture; they are embarrassed of their heritage as latinos. This problem of disunity must be overcome before we can expect to address the issues that face us. As the fastest growing, and soon to be largest, minority group in the country, we need to find a way to join our forces together so that, collectively, we can overcome the forces of conservatism and racism that seek to subjugate our people.



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## CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

CUSLAR, the Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations, is a Cornell University based group which works in Ithaca and the surrounding areas to promote a greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. The members of CUSLAR are a diverse group of people—undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members and community people. We are united in our concern about the role of the United States in influencing the social, political, and economic conditions of the region. Within this context we support the right of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean to self-determination and support their efforts to free themselves from a legacy of colonialism, underdevelopment and oppression.

Through our activities and written materials we try to promote an understanding of the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean not as an expression of East-West conflict or as a political abstraction, but as the living reality for millions of people. We are concerned that the U.S. role in shaping the reality is something too few North Americans recognize and take responsibility for. U.S. military and economic intervention in Latin America has resulted in economies which dedicate most of their resources to the growing of cash crops to the exclusion of food production; regimes that have made death squads, torture and disappearances a fact of life; societies in which diarrhea is the number one cause of death and health care is privilege; where democracy and elections are devoid of meaning since most people cannot read and write and are brutalized by daily work. We hope that from an increased awareness of why the expressions of struggle and resistance in Latin America are growing, active support for the people's efforts to construct a new life will develop.

Many of us who do this work have motivations in addition to sharing with the people of Latin America their aspirations for self-determination. We also aspire to the growth of a truly democratic society here in the United States. When the government claims that U.S. interests are at stake in Central America, exactly whose interests are being defended? Who really makes the decision to use American tax dollars for military aid in Latin American countries? We feel that U.S. foreign policy should be formulated openly, with the informed consent of the people. A policy which is made in secret and "sold" to the people by unsubstantiated fears is a threat to democracy in this country. If our belief in democracy is to be more than an interest in formalities, we must become actively involved in working for democracy here and abroad.

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