Cuslar Newsletter

Spring 1999

Central NY joins SOA vigil

Chile's Economic Miracle

Puerto Rico Update

On Trial in Guatemala

The Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations
One of the most outstanding wildlife areas in Puerto Rico is Caño Tiburones, a 5,000 acre wetland owned by a public corporation known as the Puerto Rico Lands Authority (PRLA). Caño Tiburones hosts more than 300 animal species, including 100 bird species, of which four are endangered or protected.

For decades the PRLA has used a pump system to drain Caño Tiburones for agricultural irrigation. Wildlife has survived seasonally in the region despite the pumping due to occasional heavy rains that exceed the pumps' capacity.

In 1995 the pumping system broke down and Caño Tiburones reverted to a natural water level, allowing an explosion in wildlife populations. The PRLA fixed the pumps later in the year and dropped water levels to under 3.5 ft. below mean sea level. This caused extensive damage to thousands of acres of recovering wetlands and to resident and migratory bird populations. In response to public outcry over the damage, the Puerto Rico Planning Board designated part of Caño Tiburones as a Natural Reserve (CTNR) in October, 1998. The survival of this new Reserve is uncertain.

The main beneficiaries of the pumping are the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Cornell University. Together they operate a High Frequency Ionospheric Modification Facility (HFIMF) in Caño Tiburones under a lease agreement with the PRLA. The agreement requires that a water level of 3 ft. under mean sea level be maintained.

Cornell has resorted to legal maneuvering in an attempt to duck requirements relating to the CTNR's new status as a Natural Reserve. In January, 1999 Cornell initiated a lawsuit against the Puerto Rican government to ensure that the designation of the CTNR will not change current pumping policy.

Those of us who share a concern for the environment must pressure the NSF and Cornell to relocate the HFIMF or to implement measures that would eliminate it's environmental impact on Caño Tiburones. Please e-mail NSF Director Rita Colwell, rcolwell@nsf.gov, and Cornell's President Hunter Rawlings, pp28@cornell.edu, and ask them to move their facilities out of this wetland or to implement measures that would allow its restoration. Please send a copy of your message to cuslar@cornell.edu.

Thank you for your support,

Abel Vale
President, Citizens of the Karst
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Erin Sheehan
CUSLAR Coordinator
Ithaca, NY

The Committee on U.S./Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) is a Cornell University based group, founded in 1965, which seeks to promote a greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. The members of CUSLAR are a diverse group of people united in our concern about the role of the U.S. in the social, political, and economic affairs 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, exploitation, and oppression. CUSLAR works for peace, justice, and greater mutual understanding in U.S./Latin American relations through education, solidarity, and support of human rights.

If you are interested in writing or editing for the Newsletter, please call the CUSLAR office at (607) 255-7293. Articles and letters to the editor should be sent to: CUSLAR, 316 Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, or via email at cuslar@cornell.edu. The CUSLAR Newsletter is published three times a year.

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Colombian Leader Murdered

On February 17, an assassin shot and killed Julio Alfonso Poveda, the president of the Colombian National Federation of Agrarian Cooperatives. Poveda had a long history of progressive activism, including membership in the Colombian Communist Party and a number of labor unions. According to the human rights program of the National Union School, ten union activists have been murdered in Colombia in 1999 alone, while two others have been assaulted and two more kidnapped.

Reacting to what is clearly a campaign of intimidation and violence against activists, two human rights organizations recently closed their doors in Colombia. Death threats, intimidation, harassment, and murder have caused both the Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace, and the Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners to cease operations in the country. (Escuela Nacional Sindical 2/18/99)

Guatemalan Truth Commission Criticizes U.S.

On February 25, the Historical Clarification Commission of Guatemala released its 3,600 page report on human rights abuses that occurred during the 1960-1996 Guatemalan civil war. The report charges the Guatemalan government with the majority of the abuses, alleging “genocide against groups of the Mayan people.” The URNG and the U.S. government also came under fire from the authors of the report.

According to the report, over 200,000 people were killed during the civil

Continued on next page
war. Of the 658 massacres which occurred during that period, all but 32 were carried out by the government. The government was also found responsible for roughly 93 percent of human rights violations. The report stated that rape and torture were “common” in these circumstances.

The report strongly criticized the U.S. government for its use of the CIA and its support of “illegal state operations.” The report also chided U.S. companies for “[exercising] pressure to maintain the country’s archaic and unjust socio-economic structure.” (NYT 2/26/99, WP 2/26/99, La Nacion (Costa Rica) 2/26/99)

**Honduran Campesinos Protest for Land**

Over 6,000 Honduran campesinos blocked a number of major roads on February 24 to protest the government’s repeal of a law that distributed unused land from large landholders to peasants. The protest was organized by the Coordinating Council of Campesino Organizations of Honduras, which works for the rights of the 300,000 landless campesinos of Honduras. (El Diario-La Prensa 2/25/99 from AFP)

**UN Criticizes Peru**

In a December 3, 1998 decision, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights stated that the Peruvian government has arbitrarily detained U.S. citizen Lori Berenson. The Commission charges Peru with violating Articles 8, 9, and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The UN ordered Peru to take all necessary steps to end Berenson detention as quickly as possible. (Lori Berenson Support Committee Update Bulletin, 2/22/99; El Diario-La Prensa 2/23/99)

**UNITE Criticizes PVH**

Clothing manufacturer Phillips-Van Heusen (PVH) has come under heavy criticism recently by UNITE, the U.S. based Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, for closing its Camisas Modernas S.A. plant after the employees there voted in a union. Camisas Modernas S.A. was the only one of PVH’s 200 tariff-free factories that had voted for a union. The president of UNITE, Jay Mazur, told the
New York Times: "By shutting the factory, Phillips-Van Heusen sent a message to other workers in Guatemala: if you fight for justice, if you fight for a union, we will not honor your contract. We will walk away." (NYT 2/28/99)

Florida Man Trades with the Enemy

Florida businessperson Thomas H. Boylan has been charged by the U.S. Customs Service with trading with the enemy in a planned development of a seaport and airport at Cuba's Port Mariel. Boylan allegedly planned a free-trade zone for the development, and had met with Cuba's economic minister to further his plans, valued in the millions of dollars.

Boylan faces up to ten years in prison and a $1 million dollar fine if convicted. Boylan was caught by an undercover customs agent posing as a potential investor in the Port Mariel development. Currently, Boylan is free on bail. (St. Petersburg (FL) Times)

Kissinger Reassured Pinochet in Meeting

A cable recently declassified for the Spanish human rights trial of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet revealed that former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger knew more, and concealed more, about human right abuses in Chile than was previously thought.

1976 in which Kissinger reassured Pinochet that President Gerald Ford's administration would not punish Chile for its human rights record. It also shows that Kissinger knew that Chile and other oppressive regimes were planning to set up a U.S. office of the terrorist group Operation Condor and did nothing to stop it. Operation Condor engineered the fatal car bombing of Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier and U.S. citizen Ronni Moffitt.

Kissinger also told Pinochet that he did not believe him to be a bad man, that human rights campaigns in the U.S. were nothing more than a "domestic problem," and that Pinochet was "a victim of all left-wing groups around the world, and that your [Pinochet's] greatest sin was that you overthrew a government which was going Communist." (The Guardian 2/27/1999)

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Sam Costello is a CUSLAR member and a junior at Ithaca College.

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Chile’s Economic "Miracle"

BY: Gregory Palast

Cinderella’s Fairy Godmother and Augusto Pinochet have much in common. Both have magic powers. Pinochet is credited with the Miracle of Chile, the successful experiment in free markets, privatization, deregulation and union-free economic expansion whose laissez-faire seeds spread from Santiago to Surrey, from Valparaiso to Virginia.

But Cinderella’s pumpkin did not really turn into a coach, and the Miracle of Chile is just another fairy-tale. The claim that Pinochet begat an economic powerhouse is one of those utterances whose truth rests on its repetition.

In 1973, the year Pinochet seized power, Chile’s unemployment rate was cut by 4.3 percent. In 1983, after 10 years of free-market modernization, unemployment reached 22 percent. Real wages declined by 40 percent under Pinochet’s rule. In 1970, 20 percent of Chile’s population lived in poverty. By 1990, the year ‘President’ Pinochet left office, the number of destitute people had doubled to 40 percent.

Pinochet did not destroy Chile’s economy all by himself. He had the help of academia’s most brilliant minds: a gaggle of Milton Friedman’s trainees, the Chicago Boys. Under their spell, General Pinochet abolished the minimum wage, outlawed union bargaining, privatized the pension system, abolished all taxes on wealth and business profits, slashed public employment, privatized 212 industries and 66 banks and ran a fiscal...
surplus. Free of the dead hand of bureaucracy, taxes and unions, the country took a giant leap ... into bankruptcy and depression. After nine years of Chicago-style economics, Chile's industry keeled over and died.

In 1982 and 1983, GDP dropped by 19 percent. Nevertheless, the mad scientists of Chicago declared a success. The U.S. State Department concluded: 'Chile is a casebook study in sound economic management.' It was Friedman who himself coined the phrase 'Miracle of Chile'. Friedman's sidekick, economist Art Laffer, preened that Pinochet's Chile was, "a showcase of what supply-side economics can do."

More exactly, Chile was a showcase of deregulation gone berserk. The Chicago Boys persuaded the junta that removing restrictions on the nation's banks - at a 40 percent discount against book value. The banks fell into the hands of two conglomerate empires, controlled by speculators Javier Vial and Manuel Cruzat. Using these banks, Vial and Cruzat bought up manufacturers, then leveraged these assets with loans from foreign investors panting for their piece of the state giveaway. By 1982, the pyramid finance game was up. The Vial and Cruzat 'Grupos' defaulted. Industry shut down, private pensions became worthless, and the currency swooned. Riots and strikes by a population too desperate to fear bullets restored the minimum wage and collective bargaining. Having previously decimated the ranks of state employees, he authorized a program to create 500,000 jobs.

Chile was pulled from depression by dull old Keynesian remedies, all Franklin Roosevelt, zero Margaret Thatcher. (The junta even instituted what is today South America's only law restricting the flow of foreign capital.) New Deal tactics rescued Chile from the panic of 1983, but the nation's long-term recovery and growth is the result of (cover the children's ears) a large dose of socialism. To save the nation's pension system, Pinochet nationalized banks and industry on a scale unimaginied by Salvador Allende. The General expropriated at will, offering little or no compensation. While most were eventually repatriated, the state retained ownership of one industry: copper.

For nearly a century,

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The SOA Must Go!

BY: Colleen Kattau

To get to the site of the U.S. Army School of the Americas, follow the strip joints, pawn shops, bars and motels lining the main drag in Columbus, then turn left onto Fort Benning Blvd. Separating the road into and out of the base is a small, triangle shaped patch of grass that widens once you've past the now (in)famous "Welcome to Fort Benning" sign.

A lovely, tree-lined road, somewhat like the entrance to a national park, stretches on ahead for at least another mile or so before leading to where the base's buildings are actually located. Crossing the line and risking arrest means going deeper into the base, to the part that you cannot see from the road...

A few feet from the entrance sign, SOA Watch set up the stage for their annual vigil calling for the close of the School. I got to the stage just in time to see an officer stretch bright yellow police tape from one side of the road to the other to further demarcate the protest area from the base. Interestingly enough, the tape was appropriately marked to continuously read "Crime scene - do not cross" which provided a great photo opportunity since it was perfectly juxtaposed to the "Welcome to Fort Benning" sign just beyond it.

Of course, we were not really welcome there. Every hour or so, one hapless military officer would read a prewritten statement over a loudspeaker telling us how it was unlawful to have partisan gatherings in or around the base. He did not have very many listeners, since the 7,000 strong crowd easily tuned him out.

Thanks to the relentless Roy Bourgeois whose house sits immediately to the left of the
Nearly every part of the Americas was represented, from Alaska to Maine, from Florida to Oregon, and from Vancouver to Chile.

and community to educate herself for the sake of her children. Although she recognized the danger to herself, she could not stand back and be an accomplice to the injustices she witnessed.

Adriana lost members of her family to the repression but miraculously survived by literally crawling her way into the U.S. and receiving sanctuary in a synagogue. She ended her speech by asserting that what makes a country great is the respect for the sacred

drum circles and burned cleansing sage throughout the vigil. While they were performing, the sage smoke had an uncanny way of drifting behind the stage in the direction of the base, indicating that it needed more cleansing than we did.

One of the young members of the Lakota nation hushed the crowd when he challenged us to continue the struggle to close down the SOA. He closed the vigil with a Lakota memorial song which said “Where are you? Your loved ones are looking for you.”

At the end of the vigil, fifteen of us huddled back into our alleged “fifteen person” van (like something out of a Marx Brothers skit), to head back north. During our journey home, it was clear that we could rise to the challenge our Lakota brother had proposed. The commitment of those vigiling, and of the 2,319 folks who crossed the line, will see us through until we finally close the School of the Americas.

Colleen Kasten teaches at Ithaca College and performed at the SOA Watch vigil in November.
Seeking Justice in Guatemala

BY: Daniel Fireside

Jesus Osorio was ten years old on March 13, 1982, the day the massacre happened. "I first saw the soldiers at the edge of town when I went to look for firewood," Jesus, now 27, told the judges. "I went back to warn my mother, sister and little brother to run away, but by then it was too late. There was no escape."

Jesus' father was hiding that day, as were all the other adult men of Rio Negro, a small Mayan village near the town of Rabinal, in central Guatemala. A month earlier a group of men from the town had gone to the nearby community of Xococ, to meet with the army-run militia group, known as the Civil Defense Patrol or PAC. When they arrived, the 72 men from Rio Negro were ambushed and murdered, accused of being guerrilla sympathizers.

After the massacre in Xococ the remaining men of Rio Negro went into hiding. They believed that their wives and children would not be targets of the military's scorched earth program. But on March 13, the Xococ Civil Patrol came to Rio Negro anyway.

"The soldiers surrounded the village and shot anyone trying to escape," said Jesus. "The civil patrollers forced everyone to gather in front of the schoolhouse. They said that the men had all gone off to fight with the guerrillas and that we were guerrillas too. But that wasn't true." The PAC members tied up the children and began taunting the women. "They told them to dance like they danced for the guerrillas," said Jesus, "but they cried and said they had never done anything like that." The women were taken around a hill and raped while the children were forced to listen to their screams. Afterwards the patrollers strangled the women or cut them with machetes and threw their bodies down a ravine into the river. "They began taking the children and smashing them against trees and rocks." Eight hours after the massacre began, 70 women and 107 children lay dead.

The patrollers took aside 18 children and made them an offer: if they wanted to survive, they could live with the patrollers as slaves. If they refused they would suffer the same fate as the others. Jesus was holding his two-year-old brother Jaime, when Pedro González Gómez offered to let him
live. "I began walking with Jaime on my back but [González] stopped me. He said that his wife didn't want to take care of a little kid. I said that I would carry him and take care of him, but he just grabbed him from my arms and killed him with a machete." Jesús and the others lived with their kidnappers for over two years before they managed to escape.

Jesús says that he has dedicated his life to serving the memory of his family and the others who lost their lives that day. He is determined to seek justice and build a future for the survivors. In the early 1990s he joined other massacre survivors and founded the Rabinal Widows and Orphans Committee, an organization that works to promote human rights and community development for massacre survivors.

In 1992 the Committee led a successful effort to bring in a team of forensic anthropologists to exhume the bodies from the Rio Negro massacre. The community performed Mayan ceremonies during the exhumation and reburial, and built a large monument to the victims in the local cemetery. The monument was destroyed by the PAC members within a week but was later rebuilt by the Committee.

In 1996 Jesús received the Reebok International Human Rights Award in recognition of his courageous work on behalf of human rights victims, in the face of ongoing threats and attacks. With the $5,000 prize money Jesús started a scholarship fund for the children of massacre survivors. It has helped fifteen Mayan children attend primary school. Jesús is also trying to start up a community museum that will document the history of the Mayan people in the Rio Negro area.

Despite overwhelming odds, Jesús and the Committee continued to press the government to bring the killers of their families to justice. In October 1998, after years of stalled efforts, a trial of three of the PAC leaders began, including Pedro González.

During Guatemala's 35-year civil war, over 200,000 civilians were killed and over 440 Mayan villages were wiped off the map. The United Nations-sponsored Truth Commission report released in February attributed over 90 percent of the human rights abuses committed during the war to the U.S. backed army and its paramilitary agents. The Civil Patrol of Xococ was identified as having participated in dozens of massacres. Although the war ended in 1996, the trial last October was the first time that a government agent was held legally responsible for war crimes.

While the three accused men were held in jail during the trial, the 23 other PAC members who had participated in the

"They began taking the children and smashing them against trees and rocks."

Courthouse vigil, "Our struggle is against the monster of impunity and injustice."

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On December 13, 1998 Puerto Rican voters chose between statehood, independence, or an updated version of the current form of commonwealth government. The statehood option received 46.5 percent of the vote, independence 2.5 percent, and commonwealth 0.3 percent. The winning option was "none of the above" at 50.2 percent.

What could explain the seeming inability of Puerto Ricans to achieve a viable consensus around their political status? The answer lies in their resistance to 100 years of U.S. colonialism during which the Puerto Rican nation has been economically marginalized, geographically bifurcated, and politically silenced for the benefit of U.S. corporations.

The December vote was the most recent in a series of referendums that have kept largely intact the political status created in 1952 with the approval of Puerto Rico's Constitution. In Spanish, Puerto Rico is called an *estado libre asociado*, literally "free associated state," although the official English translation is "commonwealth."

Although in international forums the U.S. government asserts that Puerto Rico is not a colony, the truth is that any law made by the Puerto Rican legislature is subject to approval of the U.S. Congress. Furthermore, the U.S. government can unilaterally annul the Puerto Rican Constitution and the entire Puerto Rican government at any time. Ultimately, Puerto Rico has even less political autonomy from the U.S. federal government than a U.S. state.

Since 1917 Puerto Ricans have been considered U.S. citizens and are able to obtain U.S. passports. However, the 3.8 million people who live on the island do not pay federal taxes, do not have voting representation in the U.S. Congress, and do not vote in U.S. Presidential elections.

A "resident commissioner" appointed by the Puerto Rican governor sits in the U.S. House of
Representatives, but is not allowed to vote. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans can move freely to the U.S. mainland, where they pay federal taxes and have voting representation like other citizens.

Puerto Rico has no representation in international organizations like the United Nations or the Organization of American States, but does field its own team for the Olympic Games.

This ambiguous political status became the backdrop for the post-war industrial development policy which recurred traditional colonial economic relations under an illusion of modern development. In a policy called "Industrialization by Invitation," the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments collaborated to offer tax-free profit repatriation to American corporations setting up factories on the island.

The final result of the development policy was unemployment. In a country where agriculture and rural life were associated with poverty and oppression, the promise of high-paying industrial jobs led to a rapid and large-scale migration to the urban areas of the island in the 1950s and 1960s. However, the industrial sector could not absorb the huge numbers of impoverished job-seekers.

In order to maintain the illusion of successful capitalist development, the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments responded in two ways. First, they encouraged emigration from the island to urban centers in the northeastern United States where Puerto Rican immigrants worked largely in low-wage manufacturing jobs. Second, they flooded the Puerto Rican economy with welfare-style transfer payments. By 1980 over half of Puerto Ricans were receiving food stamps, and by 1989 nutritional assistance itself accounted for over one-fifth of Puerto Rico's GNP. Despite these efforts, the per capita income of Puerto Rico is less than one-third that of the U.S. and less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest state in the U.S. In 1979 only 44 percent of eligible Puerto Rican adults participated in the labor force. Presently, the nearly 3 million Puerto Ricans residing on the U.S. mainland continue to be the absolute poorest of all ethnic groups.

The final result of the post-war industrial development project appears to be the

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massacres had not been charged. Several of the child survivors, who were now key prosecution witnesses, received death threats in the weeks leading up to the trial. A community mill in Rabinal was burned down a few days before opening arguments. When the government refused to provide protection for the witnesses, international human rights groups sent people to guard them and their families.

The trial was held in a small whitewashed courthouse in the dusty department capital of Salamá. The three defendants, Pedro González, Carlos Chen, and Fermín Laju Xil, sat stone-faced while the forensic experts reconstructed the material evidence in painstaking detail. Then the survivors gave their testimony.

Jesús was the first to be called. At first he spoke in a steady voice, telling his story as he has told it to countless journalists and international audiences. When he described to the panel of three judges how González murdered his brother, Jesús broke down in tears. "Is the man who did this in this room?" a judge asked. "Yes," said Jesús, pointing to González, "That's him sitting there." The courtroom was filled with 100 Mayan men and women from nearby villages that had also been victims of the Xococ Civil Patrol. Most spoke only their indigenous language of Achi and could not understand Jesús' Spanish words, but the meaning of his grief was clear to all. Several of them also began crying.

Over several solemn days, witnesses told parallel accounts of the tragic events of that day. Juan Chen Osorio was 5 years old at the time of the massacre. Juan, now a handsome 21-year-old, broke down in sobs when he described how his mother told him to go with the PAC members to save his life. As he described how he saw his mother waiting for her turn to be strangulated and then heard her scream as a Civil Patroller forced him to look away, the courthouse was filled with the sounds of the audience weeping. Later that day, Juan collapsed and had to be hospitalized.

The defense lawyer did not dispute the fact that a massacre had occurred. He claimed that it was a case of mistaken identity, asserting that the defendants had never participated in a Civil Patrol and were planting trees the day of the massacre. A string of defense witnesses, who had all participated in the massacre, told identical stories of leaving Xococ at 9:00 am to plant trees on a nearby hillside, breaking for lunch at noon, and returning home at 4:00 pm. "Why is it that you remember this day so well, but not the same date five or two years ago?" asked the incredulous judges, receiving no reply.

Although defense witnesses claimed that they had never seen a soldier or guerrilla in their village and were unaware that a civil war had taken place, they were unable to explain why their schoolhouse and health clinic were named for former military dictators.

According to a human rights legal organization that was assisting the prosecution, the defendants originally planned to admit that they had participated in the massacre, but that they were doing their patriotic duty as ordered by the army. The army reportedly appointed a lawyer for them and informed them that if
they chose to use that defense or any other that implicated the military, they would face much worse problems than a trial.

Two high-ranking military officials testified at the trial that they were unaware of any massacres in the area, and claimed that all records from that period had been destroyed.

Ten days after opening arguments the judges issued a verdict. All three defendants were found guilty of murder and were sentenced to death. The sentence was front page news throughout country for several days. The judges promised to issue arrest warrants for other participants in the massacre. The defense vowed an appeal. The government human rights office gave Jesús a special award for his efforts. Some editorials in Guatemala City hailed the verdict but asked why no military officers were on trial. The army refused to comment.

Jesús continues to look to the future. He is married and has two children. "I do this work because I want to set an example for my children. I want them to see that justice can be done if you do what is right."

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Daniel Fitzgerald, former CUSCAR Coordinator, was an observer at the trial.
Email: cuyarido@lgc.org

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Puerto Rico...

Continued from page 13

entrapment of the Puerto Rican people in an internal colonial economy that precludes both the development of a vibrant local economy and the development of a clear vision for a future independent of the United States. Given the colonial context, we must question the extent to which the plebiscite vote of December 13, 1998 actually constituted an opportunity for the Puerto Rican people to express a sovereign democratic will.

On one side, the ways in which the Puerto Rican people have coped with colonial marginalization have tied many people even more strongly to the privileges associated with colonial status, particularly U.S. citizenship. On the other side, Puerto Ricans, with a strong and longstanding national identity, understand the racism and cultural imperialism endemic to U.S. culture and the further suppression of nationalist cultural expression that statehood could bring. Seen retroactively, the victory for "none of the above" in Puerto Rico was inevitable.

Amy Gupskill is a graduate student at Cornell in Developmental Sociology.
The Only Door
by Roberto Sosa

To Juan Octavio Valencia

Somewhere at this very moment
someone
in confused complacency
is setting down in beautiful language
the science of lying.

Meanwhile, at different points on our planet,
groups of ex-children
dazzled by the gleam of cash registers
maim in hunger.

Nevertheless, far or near,
there are other human beings who believe in the right to beauty
who understand
that this morning is the only door
through which we can enter happiness
as a liberated people.

La puerta nica
por Roberto Sosa

A Juan Octavio Valencia

En alguna parte, en estos momentos,
alguien
confusamente complicado escribe en podero idioma
la ciencia de la mentira.

Entretanto sobre numerosos puntos de nuestro planeta
 grupos de exni os
deslumbrados por el brillo del cierre de caja
agonizan de hambre.

Sin embargo, cerca o lejos,
existen otros seres humanos que creen en el derecho a la belleza
y aceptan
que esta mañana refleja la puerta nica
por donde se puede entrar a la felicidad
a título de pueblo liberado.

"Che's idealism and example are the reasons why, as this book shows, the CIA feared him and ordered his murder" - Phillip Agee, former CIA official and author of Inside the Company: CIA Diary.

Attorneys Michael Ratner and Michael Steven Smith obtained portions of the massive FBI file on Ernesto "Che" Guevara through the Freedom of Information Act. The file contains secret police documents, including CIA reports that monitor Guevara's activities and travels throughout Latin America, Africa and the United States. The FBI began to collect information on Guevara in 1954, one year before he met Fidel Castro in Mexico.

The CIA may actually have set up a radio station in Cuba to broadcast false information about Castro and Guevara, including rumors of tension between the two men. After the 1959 revolution, U.S. spy agencies recorded Guevara's every word, giving particular attention to his negative opinions of the United States government. The reports also provide evidence that U.S. spy agencies were plotting to assassinate Guevara. A detailed introduction and a chronological history of Guevara's life helps the reader through the text of these important documents.


"...Menchu's critiques of the modern bureaucrats and systems she discovered abroad are nakedly devastating." - Pamela Constable, The Washington Post Book World.

Continued on next page...
Guatemalan Indian leader, Rigoberta Menchu, continues her autobiography in *Crossing Borders*. This second installment begins with her winning the Nobel Peace Prize for her first book *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Born in 1959, Rigoberta Menchu is the sixth child of a Mayan Indian family.

According to her book, during the 1970s and 1980s the Guatemalan military reduced the population of Menchu’s village from 400 to 12. Only two of Menchu’s siblings survived the massacre. During this period, Menchu lost both of her parents. Menchu fled to Mexico where she lived in exile for twelve years. While in Mexico, she started a support movement for indigenous people living as outlaws in the mountains of Guatemala. *Crossing Borders* is the continuing story of a woman and her advocacy for human rights, especially the rights of indigenous peoples.


Kathleen Staudt, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas, El Paso, analyzes women and men living in low and middle income neighborhoods in her most recent work. Located in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, the communities she examines straddle the border between the United States and Mexico. Staudt studies work, housing, and migration patterns, then examines how policy changes have affected these people during the period of 1992 to 1995.

Policy changes such as the stricter enforcement of immigration laws at the border, the devaluation of the peso and, of course, NAFTA, have had a large impact. Many of these people rely on informal self-employment, such as street vending, as a way to support their families. Informal work is flexible and more appealing than assembly work in maquilas. Although it generates more income than the minimum wage, self-employment lacks the protection of labor standards and major health and pension programs. The policies that came with NAFTA cut Mexico’s official minimum wage, subsequently lowering the standard of living. Kathleen Staudt examines the effects of a globalized economy more concerned “with free trade than fair trade among people desperate for work.” She concludes with a chilling indictment of so-called “free trade.”

Nichole Jeenagle is an intern at CUSLR and a senior at SUNY Cortland.
Close the School of the Americas
Washington, DC May 1, 1999

White House Rally
Saturday May 1, Noon-5pm

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Coyote Loco Brunch
Sunday, April 11
11:00 am & 12:30 pm

Coyote Loco
Next to East Hill Plaza
1876 Judd Falls Road
Ithaca

Vegan and Vegetarian Friendly Menu!

Proceeds to benefit CUSLAR
Committee on U.S. - Latin American Relations

$10-20 suggested donation

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“Miracle” Chile...

Continued from page 7

copper has meant Chile and Chile has meant copper. Dr Janet Finn, metals expert at the University of Montana, remarks: “It’s absurd to describe a nation as a miracle of free enterprise when the engine of the economy remains in government hands.” (And not just any government: a Pinochet law, still in force, gives the military 10 percent of state copper revenues.)

Copper has provided between 30 and 70 percent of the nation’s export earnings. This is the hard currency that has built today’s Chile.

Agribusiness was the second locomotive of the Allende years. Allende broke up feudal estates, creating a new class of productive tiller-owners. Pinochet was never able to fully reverse this land reform. According to Professor Arturo Vasquez of Georgetown University, the tiller-owners, together with corporate and cooperative operators, now bring in a stream of export earnings to rival copper.

“In order to have an economic miracle,” says Dr Vasquez, “maybe you need a socialist government first to commit agrarian reform.” So there we have it. Keynes and Marx saved Chile, not

Friedman. But the myth of the free-market miracle persists because it serves a quasi-religious function. Within the faith of the Reaganauts and Thatcherites, Chile provides the necessary Genesis fable, the ersatz Eden from which laissez-faire dogma sprang, successful and shining.

Half a globe away from Chile, an economic experiment is succeeding quietly and bloodlessly. The southern Indian state of Kerala is the laboratory for the humane development theories of Amartya Sen, winner of 1998’s Nobel Prize for Economics. Committed to income redistribution and universal social services, Kerala built an economy on intensive public education. As the world’s most literate state, it earns its hard

currency from exporting technical assistance to Gulf nations. If you’ve heard little or nothing of Sen and Kerala, maybe it is because they pose an annoying challenge to the neo-liberal consensus.

In November, the international finance Gang of Four - World Bank, IMF, Inter-American Development Bank and Bank for International Settlements, offered a $41.5 billion line of credit to Brazil. But before the agencies hand over the lifeline, they want Brazil to swallow the economic medicine that nearly killed Chile: fire-sale privatizations, flexible labor markets and deficit reduction through savage cuts in government services and social security.

Here in São Paulo the public is assured that these cruel measures will ultimately benefit the average Brazilian. What looks like financial colonialism is sold as the cure-all that had miraculous results in Chile. But that miracle was a hoax, a fraud, a fairy tale in which everyone did not live happily ever after.
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