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COMMITTEE ON U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS

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DEVELOPMENT

WHO'S IN, WHO'S OUT



CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1965-2015

IN THIS ISSUE

OUR AUTHORS TAKE A HARD LOOK AT DEVELOPMENT. WHO BENEFITS, AND WHO'S LOSING OUT? WE ALSO SHED LIGHT ON THE HISTORY THAT SHAPED CUSLAR: REVOLUTIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND NICARAGUA, AND THE LIFE AND WORK OF SALVADORAN ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO.

Their development and ours

by Tim Shenk

Development seems like such a simple concept -- it implies making things better. Development is growth, maturation, progress. No one can be against that. Governments, aid workers and non-profits promote different aspects of it: economic development, community development, child development.

So why do many communities across the hemisphere cringe when they hear the word? Why do they block the roads, turn away the bulldozers and cement trucks, and reject the pesticide-resistant seeds?

Sociologist Andre Gunder Frank described the shadow side of development in the 1960s. He noted that all too often, development and wealth production for some requires the underdevelopment and impoverishment of too many others.

In 1970, the late Eduardo Galeano brought these ideas into the mainstream: "Latin America is the region of open veins," he wrote in a biting history of colonialism, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*.

Galeano described the contradictions of development: "The winners happen to have won thanks to our losing: the history of Latin America's underdevelopment is, as someone has said, an integral part of the history of world capitalism's development. Our defeat was always implicit in the victory of others;



About the cover image:

This mural brightens the corner of Buffalo and South Meadow Streets in Ithaca, New York at Greenstar's 'The Space' and educates the public about the work of farmworkers in the United States. It notes that farmworkers take home a mere 0.3 percent of U.S. food production income each year. The mural was painted in April 2015 by artists Paloma, of Peru, and Kazoo, of Oakland, Calif. Their visit was coordinated by Caleb Thomas through the City of Ithaca Public Art Commission.

Cover design: Tim Shenk.

our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others -- the empires and their native overseers."

We'll miss Galeano, a journalist, historian and poet with a barbed tongue, who was a model for a generation of social critics and revolutionaries. He died April 13 at age 74.

Baltimore:

a case of unequal development

Today's winners and losers in development are no longer necessarily separated by continents but can exist together in the same city. Baltimore, Maryland is an illustrative key case study.

Baltimore has made international news recently as protests have highlighted police brutality in the death of Freddie Gray and others. Yet as the Baltimore-based United Workers point out, the less visible, ongoing tragedy of economic inequality has been going on much longer.

In a recent human rights report, "Hidden in Plain Sight," the United Workers reveal that city-wide development strategies have consistently favored wealthy investors at the expense of regular Baltimoreans: "Government bodies have spent \$2 billion in building and maintaining the city's tourist facilities since the 1970s,

and hundreds of millions more in subsidies to tourism-related businesses."

While private investors use public funds and tax breaks to maximize profits, the report notes that the tourism industry workforce earns poverty wages with no healthcare or educational benefits.

Minimum-wage jobs in restaurants and sports stadiums are the norm in the Baltimore downtown redevelopment project called the Inner Harbor, where workers suffer chronic wage theft, irregular hours that keep them from attending school, and verbal abuse and bribery by supervisors. Meanwhile, workers' taxes subsidize their employers' profits.

In this context of unfair, unequal development resulting in rampant poverty, police brutality becomes a problem. Police forces are tasked with "keeping social peace." This becomes nearly impossible when police are required to control a growing population of unemployed and marginally employed people rightfully indignant about the lack of opportunities to feed their families. In order to end police brutality, we must find ways to solve underlying problems such as poverty-producing development projects that funnel public funds into private accounts.

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CUSLAR

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Talk sheds light on Ayotzinapa disappearances



Opinion editor and columnist at Mexico City daily *La Jornada*, Luis Hernández Navarro, speaks at Cornell University March 16. Interpreting at left is CUSLAR Coordinator Tim Shenk.

In September 2014, 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in the Mexican state of Guerrero disappeared after an attack by police that left six dead and more than 20 injured. The incident has sparked ongoing nationwide protests and international condemnation.

On Monday, March 16, 2015 CUSLAR, Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and MEChA de Cornell invited Mexican journalist Luis Hernández Navarro to discuss the event, its aftermath, and the implications for Mexican politics.

In the excerpts below, Hernández Navarro highlights four key factors that created the conditions for the September 2014 massacre: the stigma faced by the rural colleges, a culture of impunity, the existence of a narco-state, and the cartels' struggles over territorial control and their networks of complicity.

*Luis Hernández Navarro is an opinion editor and columnist for the Mexico City daily *La Jornada*. A writer, consultant, social activist and political analyst, he has been an astute commentator on Mexican politics and social movements for over thirty years.*

Luis Hernández Navarro

For the last five months, Mexico has been living days of pain and anger that stem from the disappearance of 43 young men and the killing of six others.

In this brief talk, I will try to explain what happened, in what context it happened, and what it seems may happen in the future.

Let's start at the beginning. On September 26, a group of approximately 80 students from Ayotzinapa traveled from their school to the city of Iguala, about 120 miles away. The purpose of their trip was to organize solidarity work around a trip they were planning to take on October 2, a very important date in Mexican social movements because it commemorates the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968.

On that day, September 26, there were three armed aggressions against these 80 students. First, municipal police surrounded the buses and shot at the young men, and they wounded one young man who is now brain dead. Second, about three hours later, close to midnight, the students who had survived the first attack, as well as teachers, held a press conference. During the press conference, there were masked civilians with high caliber rifles and police protection who began to shoot. There, two more students were killed. The third direct aggression happened minutes after

this second attack when the police and masked civilians attacked a bus full of soccer players, whom they confused with the students from Ayotzinapa.

There were three deaths. The next morning, another student was found dead in the street, with the skin of his face pulled off and his eyes gouged out. In sum, the final count was six deaths and one more student who is brain dead. After the first attack, the police and other actors took 43 students as prisoners. These young men are still unaccounted for today.

In this operation, the Mexican army participated through participation and omission. The 27th Infantry Battalion is headquartered in Iguala, and it has a history of disappearing people. In the Dirty War between 1969 and 1979, almost 500 people were disappeared and the primary responsibility was on this battalion.

There are several contradictory and different versions of what happened next. The official government story is that the municipal police handed over the 43 students to members of the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel. Then the cartel members ostensibly took the 43 young men to a city dump in nearby Cocula where they assassinated the young men and burned their bodies. Their ashes were then thrown into a river. Many specialists have seriously questioned this version, highlighting, among other reasons, that it was raining the day the bodies were supposedly burned. The remains that should have been found in the dump, such as the residue of burned tires, were never located. Officially, these 43 young men are disappeared. However, as I've mentioned, the official story tells us the students were killed and burned.



Mexican journalist Hernández speaks on disappeared students

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Context

So, in what context did this happen? I want to talk about the context and then return to the explanation. The young men were students from Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' College. The Rural Teachers College is a place where one studies to become a teacher in a rural area. These are schools of poor people, for poor people. They are boarding schools, where students are guaranteed room and board, a library, and a place to study. The Rural Teachers' Colleges were created in Mexico in the 1920s and they encapsulate the two great aspirations from the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17. First: secular, free, and obligatory education, and second, the agrarian reform that would end large landholdings and redistribute the land to peasants.

Rural Teachers' Colleges have a reputation of conflict. Part of that reputation has to do with the fact that the government has time and time again attempted to shut down these colleges. Students have fought to keep the schools open. The government turns off the faucet

of resources for these schools and the students fight to re-open it. For example, the amount of money that a student in one of those schools has to eat every day is five dollars. As a result, these students at these colleges live in permanent conflict, through protests and marches, which has led to a stigmatization in society. To call a student Ayotzinapo, is to refer to him in one of the most degrading ways possible. This is the first element we need to take into account: the stigma attached to the rural schools and their students.

This brings us to the second element that helps us understand what happened, which is impunity. In Guerrero, as with all of Mexico, impunity is the name of the game. A report from the International Human Rights Commission highlights that 65 percent of the crimes committed in Mexico are not reported because people are afraid of the offenders who commit the crime and the government who is connected to them. Bishop Raul Vera, one of the most important ethical figures in the country and was in charge of one of the Altamirano diocese in the state of Guerrero, said that

impunity is the state's largest problem.

This impunity has gotten worse because of an additional factor: Guerrero is a narco-state in a context where the production of drugs in Mexico has become more and more significant. Ten percent of Mexico's GDP is due to criminal activity, of which approximately 45 percent is linked to drug production and trafficking, which is between \$50 and \$65 billion. This money enters the circuits of the formal economy for laundering through financial markets, real estate, tourism, and other activities, and a portion of the money goes directly toward buying politicians, police, and other branches of the state.

LEARN MORE!

For updates about the 43 disappeared students, check the following news outlets:

In English

democracynow.org, aljazeera.com

In Spanish

lajornada.unam.mx,
elpresentedelpasado.com



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Photo: Manu Ureste

Students demand the return of 43 students from Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in the state of Guerrero, who were disappeared by the Mexican police in Sept. 2014.

Guerrero is a key state in the drug network in Mexico. After Afghanistan and Myanmar, Mexico is the third largest producer of heroin in the world, and approximately 60 percent of all heroin produced in Mexico comes from Guerrero. Many synthetic drugs are also produced there, with chemical inputs from Asia arriving at the ports of Lázaro Cárdenas and Manzanillo. In addition, it's a point of entry for cocaine on its way from countries in South America to the United States. Most of this business was controlled by the Beltrán-Leyva Cartel, but as a result of the War on Drugs in the last presidential administration, it disintegrated into 20 to 25 smaller cartels fighting over territory, markets and routes.

In this landscape, Iguala, where the 43 students were disappeared, is a key city because it is connected to many other cities via transit routes and is surrounded by mountains where many of these products are produced. Because of its strategic location, in Iguala and surrounding cities, there have been ongoing and violent territorial disputes between cartels over who will control these cities. As you can imagine, narcotrafficking cannot survive without networks of complicity, which extend from politicians to armed forces. In that sense, the state of Guerrero is a narco-state. A considerable number of the most important politicians are well-connected to the cartels.

Aftermath

This begs the question, why were these young men attacked?

Why were some disappeared and others killed? The first response is that they were young, poor, and they were from the Rural Teachers' College. They killed and disappeared them because they knew that they could do that without any repercussions. During Angel Aguirre's three-year governorship, 17 leaders from popular movements were assassinated and 30 more were disappeared. I'm referring to ecologists, feminists and student leaders. Do you want to know how many of these crimes have been cleared up? Not one. This is the climate in which this aggression happened, which is part of a more general climate throughout the country.

As a result of the War on Drugs of 2006-2012 that Calderón's administration began, and which Peña Nieto's administration has discretely continued, there have been 120,000 murders and between 23,000 and 30,000 disappearances. The United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) published a harsh critique of the Mexican government in February because of these numbers.

Ayotzinapa is the last straw. What sets it apart from other situations, where people were in remote and isolated areas, is that it was a large, organized group that was disappeared. Many young people thought

they could have been "number 44" and we, as parents, began to think that it could have happened to any one of our children. Consequently, there has been a huge national upheaval because of this situation. Thousands and thousands of people, mostly young people, began to take to the streets. After nine days of protest, the demands shifted from "they were taken alive, we want them back alive" to "Fuera Peña," or calls for the president to resign. While the official strategy has been to put responsibility on a few individuals by accusing them of murder, the general sense has been to treat this as a state crime and to frame these enforced disappearances as a crime against humanity.

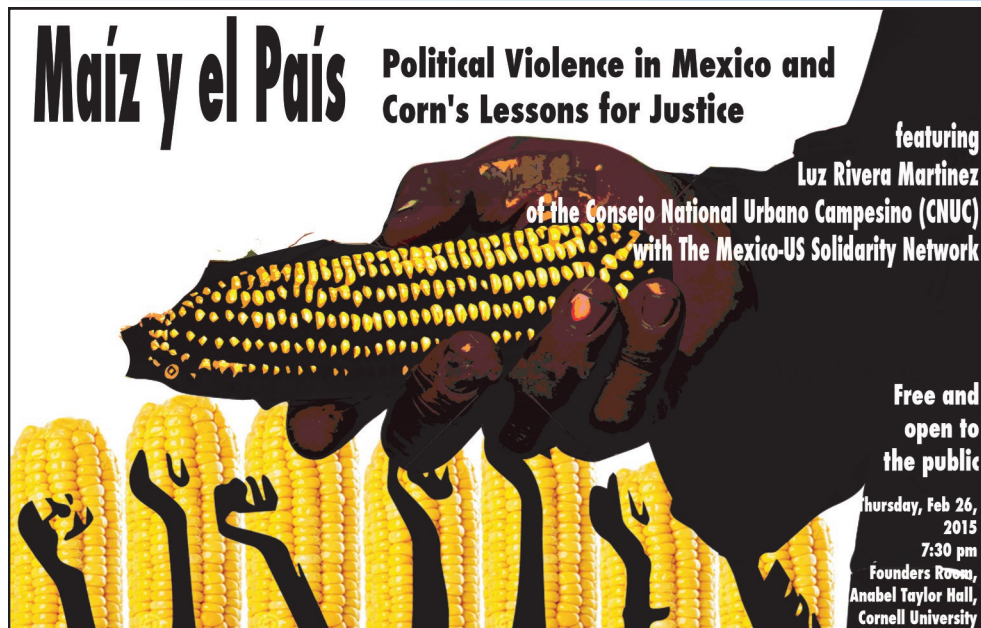
This framing is extremely important because the case may reach the International Criminal Court. There have been protests all over the world demanding the return of these young men, alive. In an unusual move, the White House showed their concern for these young men. The Pope has expressed his pain and has prayed for the young men, dead or disappeared, and their families. In addition, two United Nations commissions have intervened. There has been a relative isolation of the Mexican government on the international scale. And currently, as an agreement between parents and the federal government, a commission of experts from the International Commission on Human rights is conducting an investigation. In the public sphere, there's a huge debate. On

There is a strong dispute between memory and forgetting, a clash between justice and amnesia.

one hand, the federal government wants these events to be forgotten and left behind. But on the other hand, parents, universities and huge sectors of society are

demanding a clarification of the facts and for the students to return home alive.

There is a strong dispute between memory and forgetting, a clash between justice and amnesia. The state of Guerrero is in a state of pandemonium. At the beginning of June, there will be federal elections and in Guerrero, there will also be state elections. Yet there is a broad movement calling for these elections not to happen. For example, close to half of the 81 municipalities in Guerrero have been taken over by the people. The next months leading up to June 2015 will be full of social upheaval around the two words that drive this lecture: pain, for crimes that have not found justice, and hope, for these enormous citizen mobilizations, mostly of young people, will be able to change this country.



Corn: A thousand-year-old genetic science under threat

by Anshu Gaur

Beads of purple and red, black and orange, yellow and brown are colors of corn we do not see in the United States, but they are at home on Mexican soil. The genetic modification and privatization of corn in Mexico would not only destroy the physical beauty of the corn, its colors, texture, quality, and nutritional content, but also bury a rich culture and tradition, taking away the autonomy of Mexicans in their own homeland.

Luz Rivera Martinez, a strong-willed and compassionate woman, has spent the last 30 years trying to reclaim the autonomy of Mexican people. Thin layers of short brown hair surround her bronze freckled face. She has a warm energy within her that seems to overflow in every word she speaks.

Rivera comes from a small town in the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico. As a person who grew up in this rural society, Rivera has become a powerful voice for the plight of farmers.

She founded the Consejo Nacional Urbano y Campesino (National Urban and Rural Council) to garner resistance against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. Today the organization includes thousands of peasant families across the state of Tlaxcala. In recent years Rivera has been travelling to various universities in the United States to speak out

against multinational and government efforts to privatize corn in Mexico.

On February 26, Rivera came to Cornell University with her interpreter, Stuart Schussler, from the Mexico Solidarity Network. She relayed the importance of corn to the people of Mexico. "We see ourselves as people of corn," Rivera said. "It is for survival. It is culture. It is our lives." She spoke about the genetic science used by Mexican men and women, who for thousands of years have strategically selected the finest ears of corn to give birth

"We developed 56 varieties of corn in Tlaxcala to feed human beings, not airplanes!"

Luz Rivera, Founder of National Urban and Rural Council, Tlaxcala, Mexico

to the bountiful beads of color that exist today. These precious ears of corn are in danger now from a GMO model that portends to privatize and profit off of the thousand-year labor of the Mexican people.

Rivera voiced her disgust for Monsanto, a transnational agricultural company known for its controversial practices. She explained that seeking patents on production and genetically modified seeds signifies theft from the Mexican people. Rivera stressed the destructive nature of the agribusiness production of ethanol and the creation of a monoculture crop system. "We developed 56 varieties of corn in Tlaxcala to feed human beings, not airplanes!" she said.

Rivera's efforts have involved building a social movement against NAFTA, an agreement between Mexico, Canada, and the United States which eliminated

protective tariffs in Mexico.

As a result, corn imports poured into Mexico, pushing native farmers out of the market. To create a legal avenue for this damaging implementation, President Salinas of Mexico made a reform to Article 27 of the Constitution, breaking up the ejido system of collective land ownership and taking away what millions had fought for in the Revolution of 1910. "They had to change the laws of our country so they could displace us, an elegant way of saying that they robbed us," Rivera said, speaking of the profit-driven collaboration between the United States and Mexican government.

Rivera shared her frustration with the Mexican government, who "wanted to sow the seeds of individualism with this new reform, and through this individualism, dispossession." The corrupt Mexican government sought to disintegrate the power of people in numbers. Individualizing the ownership of land caused the collapse of collectives, which served as a unifying power for people to support one another.

Rivera urged her audience to stand in solidarity with the men and women of corn: for the beads of color, and the culture and independence that they represent.

"My hope is that you will see Mexicans as a proud people who love our land and our corn, not as illegals, because these national borders were not created by us."



Photo: Tim Shenk

Luz Rivera gave talks at Ithaca College and Cornell University on February 26, titled, "Maíz y el País: Political Violence in Mexico and Corn's Lessons for Justice." At left is interpreter Stuart Schussler of Mexico Solidarity Network. The events were co-sponsored by CUSLAR, the Cornell Departments of Development Sociology and Government, LASP, the Student Activities Finance Commission, and the Ithaca College Latin American Studies Minor.

Anshu Gaur is a sophomore at Cornell University, studying Nutrition and Global Health.

From the PPP to Proyecto Mesoamérica: Vampires and zombies of development

by Alicia Swords

In Mesoamerica, the Inter-American Development Bank is funding an "Aid-for-Trade" Initiative to enhance the region's position in the global marketplace. The efforts initiated in 2008, when Mexican President Felipe Calderón with leaders from nine member countries launched the Proyecto Mesoamérica (PM).

The PM describes itself as a "space for dialogue" to reduce trade and transport costs, increase foreign investment and enhance trade competitiveness from Mexico to Colombia. To do so, it advances infrastructure to reduce highway travel time, cut border-crossing time, trim costs for electric power, and diminish the "digital gap."

What is not clear from its colorful website is that the PM repackages and extends the Plan Puebla-Panamá (PPP), a development and integration proposal that by 2004 was widely acknowledged as a failure.

In 2000, the PPP was born as a temporary consensus among the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Mesoamerican governments, investors, and international institutions. The PPP's vision was for "social and ethnic development" by integrating the region's economies with the global market.

The PPP didn't receive the welcome its proponents desired. After September 11, 2001, investment became harder to mobilize, and the IDB refused to offer preferential financing rates, leaving the PPP without the public and private financing it hoped for.

Critics were troubled by the plan's lack of public consultation. The plan envisioned transnational extractive industries, strategic infrastructure for transportation and communication, tourism, and biological and agricultural technologies. As news spread, the PPP appeared as a threat to local livelihoods and to indigenous and democratic rights. Within a few months of its birth, a network of civil society organizations emerged to oppose to the plan.

"And this is development":

At right is a drawing from popular education materials used to oppose the PPP in Mexico.

Alicia Swords is Associate Professor of Sociology at Ithaca College and CUSLAR advisory board member.

Zapatista sympathizers saw the PPP as part of the government's counterinsurgency plan. In March 2001, when the Zapatistas and 250,000 people marched on Mexico City, the Vicente Fox government clearly ignored the movement's demands for the indigenous rights law in favor of the PPP.

Because the PPP's projects were transnational, resistance to it also became transnational. From 2001 to 2004, grassroots and non-governmental organizations combining left politics, labor, liberation theology, campesino, women's and indigenous struggles convened a series of political forums to raise awareness about the PPP. Hundreds participated. On October 12, 2002, the anti-PPP network organized a day of protest, blocking the Pan-American Highway at various points throughout the region.

By 2004, *The Economist* declared that "there was no trace of the PPP in southern Mexico." Grassroots efforts contributed, along with financial and political obstacles, to the disintegration of the PPP in Mexico.

In a 2013 interview, Francisco Gallardo of the NGO Transforma Chiapas explained that ten years later, many PPP projects were still incomplete. Gallardo likened the projects to vampires and zombies. Though they do not fulfill their development goals, like zombies, they never really die.

Construction companies and financiers must still be paid, so the projects suck, vampire-like, from the public purse. While the Tuxtla-San Cristóbal highway was finished, airports in Comitán and San Cristóbal were built but closed and never used; the Chiapas marine port is not in operation; and the trans-Isthmus railway was never built. Gallardo said, "Construction is the business."

He explained that because profits were



Marchers express their opposition to neoliberalism and accompanying development projects in the municipality of Huitiupán, Chiapas, Mexico, during the "3rd Chiapan Gathering against Neoliberalism" on March 24, 2004. Photo: Alicia Swords.

derived from financing and construction, project completion was not necessary.

The plan didn't die completely either. From 2003 to 2008, the Mexican government and IDB worked to restructure the PPP. In southern Mexico, its projects continued under other names, and South of Mexico, the IDB hired public relations company Fleishman-Hillard International to improve the plan's image.

By 2008, when the PM took on the PPP's projects, resistance weakened. Regional forums continue on specific topics, such as dams, water, and mining, as does resistance to specific projects, including La Parota Dam in Guerrero, wind farms in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, El Tigre Dam on the Honduras-El Salvador border, and others, but it remains to be seen if transnational resistance will resume strength to challenge the PM.

Today, there are important questions to ask about the MP. Why should investors commit to financing infrastructure projects that failed ten years ago? How can grassroots organizing keep up with the fast moving targets of mobile transnational capital and its development projects? What alternative development might civil society imagine instead?



Dams, development and democracy:

by Maya Tellman

The widespread construction of large hydroelectric dams over the last half century represents a fascinating conflict within global development that has spurred major controversy. On one hand, large dams are celebrated for their energy production, job creation, and as symbols of modernity. On the other, the social and environmental problems that typically accompany these megaprojects raise serious doubts about their overall benefits, engendering conflict among three main stakeholders: the state, private corporations, and civil society.

Brazil, a nation whose use of hydropower as a means of economic growth predates the 20th century, is a crucial actor in this debate. By 2021, Brazilian companies, alongside foreign conglomerates, aim to construct 92 dams in an effort to increase the country's energy capacity by over 50 percent. Hydropower already makes up nearly 30 percent of Brazil's energy supply and over 80 percent of the country's electricity, positioning Brazil as the world's second largest producer of hydroelectricity behind only China. (Empresa de Pesquisa Energética 2013).

Over 60 of these proposed dams are planned throughout the Brazilian Amazon. Until 1985 with the fall of Brazil's military regime, policy had been executed in a largely technocratic, centralized form, manipulating distance between the severe, and often localized, social and environmental impacts of these projects in northern Amazonia and the decisions being made by the national government in Brasília. But, in an effort to accommodate a range of perspectives, state-mandated participatory platforms have now been put into place, jointly spurred by the nation's transition to democracy, international pressures, and local organizing.

One of the main forces behind this governance reform has been the highly contested Belo Monte dam project along the northern Xingu River. Indigenous resistance movements and cracks in the project's proposal have collectively stalled the construction of the hydroelectric facility by about three decades, with

construction not having fully commenced until June 2011. Either to appease contesting local parties or out of genuine development reform, the Brazilian government responded by instituting a package of initiatives intended to meet the

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development needs of the region closest to and most affected by the construction. One of these, Operação Cidadania Xingue (OCX - Operation Xingu Citizenship), offered citizens in the region the opportunity to title their land, receive an array of health services, and have direct access to a number of other government and social services.

In Altamira, the city closest to the site of Belo Monte's hydroelectric facility, mayors, federal ministers, the state minister of energy, and Norte Energia representatives, met in 2013 for a press conference in which the project's ensuing completion was touted as different than those of Brazil's past. They described Belo Monte as a sustainable development initiative that would offer clean energy, jobs, and local infrastructure development. However, local pushback groups concerned with a rapidly rising cost of living and the prospect of displacement crowded outside of the proceedings chanting, "Fora Norte Energia! Queremos Moradia!" ("Get out Norte Energia! We want housing!"). They caused so much disruption that the opening ceremony of the program was cancelled indefinitely.

The series of delays experienced by this project and the international attention it has attracted exemplifies the important role of civil society in these mega-project initiatives. Contestations surrounding the controversial Belo Monte project are ongoing, and the current conflict is a clear indication that the introduction of "participatory governance" in the decision-making process and remuneration programs has not been a panacea. However, it has successfully demonstrated the

newfound power of local negotiation that was largely absent in earlier projects under Brazil's authoritarian regime.

An important grassroots actor in this conflict is the Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB), or Movement of People Affected by Dams, a Brazilian political organization that seeks to support the rights of displaced or affected parties. The group first gained traction in 1979 in response to preliminary studies suggesting the untapped hydroelectric potential of the Amazon region. The first national congress of MAB was held in 1991; however the efforts put forth by MAB to gain legitimacy for local stakeholders were not officially recognized by the federal government until 2012. On March 15 of that year, members of MAB met with policy makers to create a resettlement agreement for affected families.

While this meeting of grassroots and national actors represents a strong shift away from the pre-1985 military governance of northern mega-development projects, the struggle still remains strong at the local level as construction on the Belo Monte dam pushes forward and the rights of those affected remain ambiguous at best.



Photo: Survival International

Brazil's state development bank BNDES is providing much of the funding for the mega-dams planned in the Amazon region, which threaten the lives, homes and livelihood of thousands of tribal peoples.

The story of Belo Monte in Brazil



Photo: International Rivers

Indigenous groups march in protest in December 2011 after a Brazilian federal judge in the state of Pará revoked his decision to suspend construction on the Belo Monte dam.

On March 14, 2014, a day now deemed the “International Day of Struggle Against Dams” in Brazil, thousands of people affected by dams mobilized across ten Brazilian states, demanding national reform and a decrease in the price of electrical energy.

Protest actions took place in several affected areas and were comprised of a range of affected actors. In Altamira, in the northern state of Pará, protesters took to the streets in opposition of the Belo Monte project and demanded Norte Energia to formally commit to a plan for remuneration and relocation in light of continued destructive practices. In Minas Gerais, women affected by the dams physically protested by blocking trains operating by the mining company, Vale do Rio Doce. In Sao Paulo, local activists occupied the toll passage on a major state highway with the intention of raising awareness of local agendas and the need for a national policy that better represents local rights. In Paraná, prolonged occupation of the energy company, COPEL’s, headquarters even convinced the state governor to cede to popular pressure and compromise by agreeing to create a state policy of rights of dam affected people.

While MAB has demonstrated success in recent years in bolstering protest, facilitating conversation, and initiating reform at the state level, it has become evident that enhanced national reform is

crucial in achieving proper recognition of local concerns. Brazil’s contemporary democratic developmental state is a unique product of state-led development of the mid-20th century, neoliberal reforms of the 1990s, and social welfare ideologies of the Workers’ Party (PT), the leftist political party that has held presidency and a significant amount of control in the national congress since 2003.

The State is simultaneously attempting to achieve immense economic growth while also deepening democratic practices through increased local participation. The inevitable failure of a development discourse constructed around opposing goals is overwhelming apparent in the continued contestation surrounding projects such as Belo Monte.

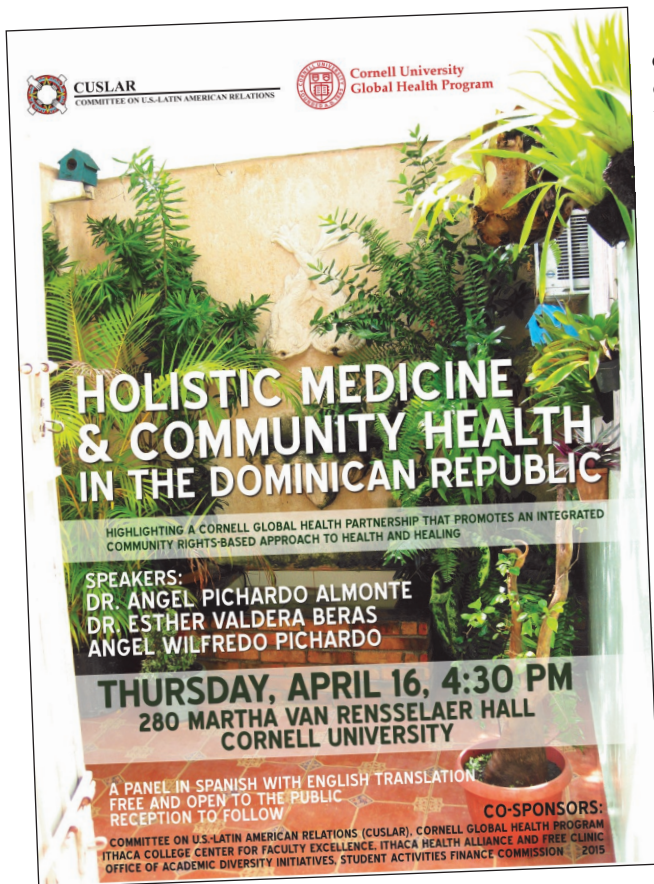
This confluence of historically situated ideological positions has led to a distinct Brazilian political identity that guides its contemporary development projects. In the context of dam construction, and several other mega-development initiatives, the State is simultaneously attempting to achieve immense economic growth and secure its position as a primary actor in the emerging global marketplace while also deepening democratic practices through increased local participation in decision-making processes. This conflict between development and democratic success has fostered not only a contradictory environment, but also one doomed to advantage those with political and financial power, as in the state and its associated energy companies, and exploit those without, meaning local stakeholders.

The inevitable failure of a development discourse constructed around opposing goals is overwhelmingly apparent in the continued contestation surrounding projects such as Belo Monte. The question then remains not how to achieve success through the current democratic developmental state, but instead how the conflicting intersections it has produced between local political and social dynamics and national-level policies can be converted into productive rather than oppressive spaces.

As change makers in Brazil look to develop democratic systems that promote equity, the incorporation of underrepresented groups in decision-making processes is not just relevant, but necessary. The organizing power and local knowledge of indigenous stakeholders is unparalleled and cannot be sustainably ignored at the current proposed rate of development in the Brazilian Amazon. As the Belo Monte project and dozens like it push forward, a commitment must be made to local wellbeing that rivals, if not exceeds, Brazil’s national commitment to energy production and rise within the global marketplace.

Maya Tellman is a senior Urban & Regional Studies major in the College of Architecture, Art, & Planning at Cornell University. Her studies primarily focus on issues of development equity and indigenous rights throughout the Global South. In March 2016 she will travel to northern Brazil on a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant to further explore participatory governance in response to hydroelectric development in the Amazon.

Dominican Global Health colleague Dr. Angel Pichardo Almonte: 'Our medicine was sequestered by economic elites'



by Noemi Plaza-Sánchez

Three partners from the CUSLAR-Global Health program in the Dominican Republic visited Cornell University to discuss holistic medicine and community health in a series of talks from April 16 to 21.

Dr. Angel Pichardo Almonte, Dr. Esther Valdera, and Angel Wilfredo Pichardo spoke to diverse audiences of students and faculty during their weeklong visit, drawing on experiences from their holistic practice at the ANDA medical clinic in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo.

Angel Wilfredo Pichardo, a student of philosophy and Chinese medicine, began the April 17 event at Martha Van Rensselaer Hall by presenting the philosophical and theoretical basis of the work at ANDA.

"The philosophy of Descartes, specifically his dualist vision that separates mind and body, influences modern medicine in fundamental ways. Dualism leads to a mechanized view of the body. This is seen reflected in modern medicine as the understating of the human body as a machine. As a result, the body is separated into distinct parts that are analyzed in isolation. Doctors specialize in a specific part of the body, leading us to forget that the body is a whole organism.

"At ANDA, we distance ourselves from this basic tenet of Western medicine. We understand that humans are multidimensional. We each have physical, mental, spiritual and social dimensions.

"The body is the dimension that is affected when the harmony among these four is broken. Our understanding of healing is based on how we see illness: as a physical and temporal manifestation of a disequilibrium in our four dimensions. Instead of simply treating a symptom, as modern reductionist medicine might do, we ask different questions when a patient comes to see us. We want to know if the person is sleeping well, and how is their family life. Are they in a stressful situation at work, or are they stressed because they're out of work. All of those questions are important to us in figuring out a proper intervention."

Angel Pichardo Almonte

continued the conversation in a separate presentation the next day. There, he presented an economically focused criticism of the western modern medical system.

"Our medicine was sequestered by an ideology of the economic elites. The system takes advantage of aspiring doctors and lies to them, teaching them a very limited and often incorrect understanding of how to heal the sick.

"In reality, modern medicine often only keeps people in a state of illness, dependent on expensive procedures and medications. The hegemonic system of medicine does not benefit from people being truly healed.

"In this way, an economic discourse has become a medical discourse, with regard to pharmaceutical, nutritional and personal hygiene products. When these economic discourses are spoken by doctors, you think it is a medical discourse, but it isn't. Why isn't holistic medicine more widely practiced? It's not profitable. Everything that does not create wealth for a certain elite will always be undermined."

Esther Valdera Beras, a primary care physician practicing medicine alongside Dr. Pichardo at ANDA, spoke of her experience with holistic medicine as well. Valdera works in the mornings at a community dispensary clinic, and she contrasted the treatment and overall experience of the two medical centers.

"There is a big difference in the way we see patients in the dispensary versus how we see them at ANDA. In the dispensary, the patients come with their illness and we see them in 15-minute visits. They come in desperate, very much in a hurry, and expect to see the doctor immediately. People in the waiting room get upset if you take longer than 15 minutes with a patient. At ANDA, we dedicate more than an hour to each person.

"We distance ourselves from the dualist vision of Western medicine. We understand that humans are multidimensional. We each have physical, mental, spiritual and social dimensions."

- Angel Wilfredo Pichardo

"In the dispensary, we resort to pharmacological treatment. The culture is one of quick fixes, and most patients think it's easier to take a pill than a natural plant that may take longer. People go with an expectation that they'll get cured right away.

"At ANDA, as soon as a person steps through our door, we start speaking to them as if they are already well. We don't like to continue putting that negative connotation of illness on people. Many times, people will behave very differently if they believe they can get better, if they believe a miracle can happen."

In a world so dominated by a single pervasive medical system, it is important for us to become aware and remain open to alternative forms of healing.

Noemi Plaza Sanchez is a 2015 graduate of Cornell University, with a degree in Biology and Society.

LEARN MORE!



Cornell Global Health students interested in applying for the Summer 2016 Dominican Republic program can find resources and student reflections at: globalhealthindr.wordpress.com

Revolution of 1965 shaped resistance in Dominican Republic, United States

by Tim Shenk

April marked the 50th anniversary of the 1965 revolution in the Dominican Republic, a landmark not only for the people of that Caribbean nation but a turning point for many in the United States in considering their government's role in Latin America.

The 1965 Revolution

On April 24, 1965, Dominicans poured into the streets of Santo Domingo to overthrow the military triumvirate that had ousted the democratic administration of Juan Bosch 19 months before. Fighting ensued that brought to light schisms among the country's institutions and armed forces. Generals still loyal to the Rafael Trujillo dictatorship of 1930-61 fought the popular Constitutionalist rebellion, led by Bosch's Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), the Maoist Movimiento Popular Dominicano (MPD), the urban poor and the lower ranks of the military, led by colonel-turned-revolutionary Francisco Caamaño.

The Constitutionlists, so named because of their aim to reinstate Bosch and the populist 1963 constitution, took over the National Palace and Armory and dug in against the tank and aerial barrage of the conservative wing of the Dominican Armed Forces.

After four days, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson chose to intervene. On April 28, the first of 42,000 U.S. soldiers came ashore in the Dominican Republic under the pretext of saving lives and protecting U.S. interests, but with a covert motive of "preventing the emergence of a second Cuba in Latin America." Though hardly unprecedented in U.S. foreign policy, this massive military presence on the agrarian Caribbean island dwarfed the U.S. force in Vietnam at the time.

U.S. Marines joined the Trujilloist forces, slowing Constitutionalist momentum and forcing negotiations that would lead to the bloodstained election of Joaquin Balaguer in June 1966.

In the first half of that year, Balaguer's Partido Reformista and Trujilloist army officers had led a terror campaign that assassinated over 350 leaders from the PRD, MPD and other left parties in order to secure victory.

One response: CUSLAR founded in Ithaca, New York

In 1965, one response to the stifled revolution in the Dominican Republic was that Cornell University students, with university chaplain Bill Rogers, founded the Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) in Ithaca, New York. Many of them had been to Brazil in 1964 and witnessed the aftermath of the CIA-backed coup d'état against the democratic government of João Goulart. Cornellians were equally incensed at their government the next spring for again supporting the dismantling of a democratic process and supporting a dictatorship for the benefit of economic elites.

CUSLAR quickly took leadership in educating the campus and broader U.S. public about its government's foreign policy and the connections between government and big business. Learning about U.S. tax dollars supporting repression of democracy and political assassinations led many on a path to radical critique and organizing. By 1968, Rogers and others had made a shift from being self-described "Kennedy liberals" to calling for "a new internationalism, trusting that



This photo depicts the unarmed Dominican Jacobo Rincón facing down a U.S. Marine in Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone during the 1965 intervention. Juan Perez Terrero's photography brought attention to the Caribbean island at a moment when the U.S. had more troops in the Dominican Republic than in Vietnam. Rincón's intensity still represents popular resistance and human dignity in the face of a violent power.

we may find other hands that will work with us in the struggle for justice in the hemisphere."

Rogers wrote powerfully on the need for people in the United States to work for justice in the hemisphere: "The use of American power in Latin America is, for North Americans, a domestic issue. When American students show concern for development problems in Latin America and for the way in which the United States Government, U.S. corporations, foundations, universities and churches are relating to these problems they are not necessarily turning their backs on problems at home and meddling in the affairs of others. They are, or at least may be, acting as responsible citizens of a world power."

CUSLAR's work today

Today, it has become more clear that inequality is not only a North-South problem, but also an issue of an extreme concentration of wealth and expanding poverty in the Global North.

Past and present struggles in the Dominican Republic, just as the demands of teachers, immigrants or fast-food workers in the United States, point to the necessity to "globalize the struggle, globalize hope," as Brazil's Movimento Sem Terra says. May we lay to rest a past of inequality and violence and together build a movement based on the right of all people to life with dignity.

READ MORE!

A full version of this article originally appeared on TeleSur English. Find the link at:

[cuslar.org/
dominican-revolution-1965](http://cuslar.org/dominican-revolution-1965)



'If they kill me I will be reborn': Oscar Romero nearer to sainthood

"As a Christian I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will be reborn in the Salvadoran people."

— Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, March 1980

by Tim Shenk and Celina Foran

A few days after Monsignor Oscar Romero pronounced these words, a member of the Salvadoran National Police did kill him -- at the altar, in the middle of mass. On February 3rd, 2015, progress was made toward official church recognition of one of Latin America's greatest leaders in the struggle for the rights and dignity of the poor. When Pope Francis ruled that Romero was a martyr -- someone killed for his Catholic faith -- he opened the door for Romero's beatification, to happen in a ceremony in San Salvador on May 23, 2015.

Who was Oscar Arnulfo Romero? What transformed him from a bookish, status-quo priest into the fearless prophet who denounced the behavior of national and international elites and demanded a preferential option for the poor? Romero's life and prophetic voice were forged through contact with the suffering -- and the powerful organization -- of "the least of these" in El Salvador. We see the study of how leaders develop as integral to building a social movement to end poverty today.

ROMERO, A LONGTIME SKEPTIC OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Based on nudgings from their flocks, Latin American Catholic leaders in the 1950s began to advocate a more populist approach to the church. In response to the striking inequality and desolation of the poor shadowing industrialization and tyrannical dictatorships, they envisioned a new role for the Catholic Church.

The philosophy of liberation theology was most famously articulated by the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez in his book,

A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation.

Informed by growing movements and discussions throughout Latin America, Gutierrez's outline addresses questions raised by both theologians and activists, prompted by their pastoral experience, such as: "what does Christian love mean in a class society? How should the mission of the church be defined? What does Jesus' saying 'Blessed are the poor' mean today?"

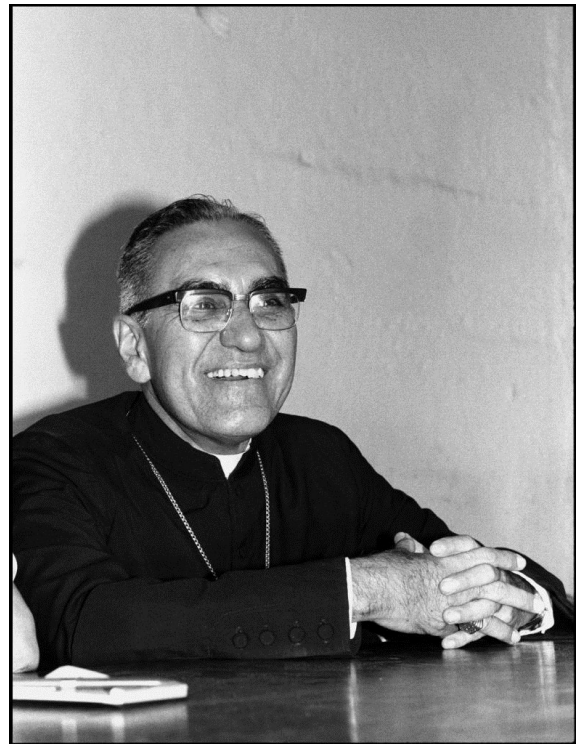
In Gutierrez's major conclusions to these questions, he critiqued the practices of development that led to dependency in Latin America, and he resituated poverty as a social sin, rather than focusing on individual sin.

Local lay leaders and groups later known as Christian Base Communities called the church to be the savior of the poor and encouraged priests to begin programs reaching out to and promoting the dignity of the common people. This movement, liberation theology, was so popular that when bishops met at the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, from 1962-65, in a new spirit of openness, they encouraged more critical examination of the situation of the church.

In 1968, at the Medellin Conference of Latin American Bishops, liberation theology was further endorsed as a new generation of priests and sisters on the front lines expressed their concerns and criticisms of the church's role in society, promoting a new pastoral initiative of the Catholic Church in Latin America.

Meanwhile, in El Salvador in the late 1970s, 60 percent of the land in a largely agricultural country belonged to 2 percent of the population, and the country was second-to-last in per-capita income in Latin America. A national oligarchy backed by U.S. government aid utilized death squads to gain brutal advantage in what the International Labour Organisation called "the open explosion of the class antagonism between agricultural workers and the landowners."

It was within this context that Romero studied Scripture, preached, and rose in



importance in the Salvadoran church. For most of his adult life, despite the rise of liberation theology, he was not moved to align himself with the poor. From 1942 when he was ordained until a few years before his assassination in 1980, he largely ignored the cries and demands of the majorities. It was not, then, his biblical exegesis or scholarship that led him to a personal revolution of values: this came about through face-to-face encounters with injustice and increased contact with the emerging movements of the poor in El Salvador.

A TRANSFORMATION LED BY THE POOR

Oscar Romero's brief term from 1974 to 1977 as bishop of the rural diocese of Santiago de Maria significantly impacted his attitudes about the role of the Church through witnessing the suffering -- and insight -- of the landless poor in El Salvador. Further, the murder of his close friend Father Rutilio Grande, a Jesuit priest who worked with the poor in El Salvador, marked a major turning point in Romero's perspective.

When he was named archbishop of San Salvador in 1977, he had not done much yet to call into question his reputation as a humble conservative, skeptical of Vatican II and progressive trends in the church in Latin America. His appointment was welcomed by the Salvadoran government, who expected him to comfortably maintain the status quo,

READ MORE!

See a full version of this article at
cuslar.org/2015/02/05/romero

Tim Shenk is CUSLAR Coordinator, and Celina Foran is a graduating senior at Ithaca College studying History and Sociology. Jennifer Wilder and Jason Shenk also contributed to this article.

and was a disappointment to religious progressives.

Thus, it was a surprise to many that soon after his appointment, Romero became outspoken against the injustice, poverty, corruption, and violence confronting his people during the outset of the civil war that would take the lives of over 75,000 Salvadorans.

Crowds gathered to hear him preach in the cathedral and even more listened to his sermons over the archdiocesan radio station. According to John Dickson, broadcasts of his Sunday sermons reached 73

percent of the rural population in El Salvador and 47 percent in urban areas, as well as listeners across Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

As assassinations and disappearances mounted, and as the Salvadoran population became increasingly radicalized by conditions and by applying the message of Jesus of Nazareth to their everyday lives, there could be no turning back for Romero. Backed by Scripture and embracing an unequivocal alignment with the poor and dispossessed, he welcomed backlash if detractors disagreed with his reading of the role of Christians in society.

Romero was assassinated at the altar on March 24, 1980, a day after calling the Salvadoran police and military rank and file to obey the higher law of God rather than the orders of their superiors: "I would like to make a special appeal to the men of the army, and specifically to the ranks of the National Guard, the police and the military. Brothers, you come from our own people. You are killing your own brother peasants when any human order to kill must be subordinate to the law of God which says, 'Thou shalt not kill.' No soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God."

LESSONS FOR TODAY'S MOVEMENT TO END POVERTY

We have much to learn today from Archbishop Oscar Romero and the poor Salvadoran communities who by their faith and action shaped their leader. More and more people from every walk of life,

from people like Oscar Romero to people like the peasants who listened to his Sunday sermons, are finding it necessary to build a global movement to end poverty.

Today, the world faces monumental challenges, perhaps on an even greater

scale than when a global revolutionary spirit led the Catholic Church to embrace the social doctrines of Vatican II in the 1960s. Since the 2008 recession, we have seen higher rates of inequality than anytime since the Great Depression.

In the global north, former welfare states are shaken by austerity and the state repression that comes with trying to maintain social control in unlivable situations. The middle strata of society are in free fall, with labor-eliminating technologies encroaching on heavy industry and professional jobs alike. In the global south, even as GDP rises, displacement and precarity have not lessened.

*"I am glad, brothers and sisters,
That our church is persecuted
Precisely for its preferential option
for the poor
And for trying to become incarnate
in the interest of the poor
And for saying to all the people
To rulers, to the rich and powerful:
If you do not become poor,
If you do not concern yourselves
for the poverty of our people
As though they were your own family,
You will not be able to save society."*

-Archbishop Oscar Romero,
from his July 15, 1979 sermon

The social rebellions in Tunisia, Egypt, Brazil, and around the globe are fresh in the memories of many.

There will come a time, perhaps sooner than we think, when every institution in society will have to grapple with the urgent question of whether to continue in a poverty-producing system or to be part of a "radical restructuring of society," as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted late in his life.

Dr. King, as Pope Francis today, called for the building of "a freedom church of the poor." These calls challenge the sections of the political left that have abandoned the spiritual aspect of the human experience and have been less connected to the struggles of everyday people because of it. Our faith goes deeper than an intellectual argument: it is what helped our ancestors survive war, slavery and untold hardships, and our souls continue to seek the God of justice and liberation.

Today, we also embrace the necessity of a global movement to "concern ourselves for the poverty of our people as though they were our own family," as Romero said. Because they are our families.

We see our role as helping to raise up leaders with the clarity and connectedness of Oscar Romero to support the right to human dignity for everyone. May Romero be reborn, not only in the Salvadoran people, but in every community where people come together to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with their God.

FAITH AND JUSTICE: THE LEGACY OF OSCAR ROMERO

Wednesday
March 18, 2015
6:30pm
Anabel Taylor Hall Café
Cornell University

How does faith inform your
engagement in social justice?
Join us for a conversation.

All are welcome!
Mass at 5:15, Dinner at 5:45.



In commemoration of the 35th anniversary of Romero's assassination on March 24, 1980, CUSLAR and the Cornell Catholic community led an educational event and discussion on faith and justice. The discussion highlighted how our beliefs, values and assumptions inform our responses to injustice, and what it would look like for us to be Romeros in our world. Publicity and event leadership: Celina Foran.

'People to People' delegation coordinator Dudley reflects on 1982 Nicaragua exchange



Photo: Lynn Moncure, Cortland Standard

From left, Mary Jo Dudley, Jane Mt. Pleasant, Lory Peck, and Michael Cohen speak about their experience in Nicaragua in Cortland, NY on February 16, 1982.

To celebrate CUSLAR's 50th anniversary, we have been collecting stories about projects from CUSLAR's history. Pueblo a Pueblo, or People to People, was a 1982 trip that hoped to connect everyday Americans with everyday Nicaraguans to dispel myths about both countries, especially in response to the 1979 Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua.

Thirty-five people, 16 from Boston and 19 from upstate New York, joined the two-week trip. Included were lawyers, union workers, musicians, carpenters, professors, students, a doctor, a nurse, a publisher, and others. They stayed one week near Managua meeting with various government and organizational leaders. The second week they spent picking cotton alongside farmworkers on state-owned agricultural cooperatives.

Mary Jo Dudley was CUSLAR Coordinator from 1981-1987 and the Co-coordinator of the Pueblo a Pueblo project.

Mary Jo Dudley

There were several groups in upstate New York State that were working on issues related to Nicaraguan solidarity and education about societal change in Latin America. In 1980, I was coordinating the upstate network, an organization that coordinated speaking tours and campaigns with groups in Syracuse, Rochester, Albany and other communities.

I was invited by the newly formed FSLN (Sandinista) government to represent Upstate communities at a meeting in Nicaragua -- El Primer Encuentro de Solidaridad Internacional, or the First

International Solidarity Summit. The newly formed International Relations Department of the FSLN brought together people from around the world who had been involved in solidarity work during the Nicaragua civil war. At that gathering, we discussed how to best educate our communities at home about the new health, literacy and education programs the Sandinista government hoped to promote.

We all made a commitment to educating our communities about what factors contributed to the civil war, the nature of the coalitions that emerged in opposition to the Somoza dictatorship, and how this new

coalition (FSLN) planned to address inequities, poverty and discrimination in Nicaragua. One way to accomplish this could be by bringing together Nicaraguans from all walks of life with an equally diverse group of U.S. citizens.

We wanted to create bridges between people in the U.S. and people in Nicaragua. We hoped this "pueblo a pueblo," or "people to people" approach would help to change stereotypes, and in particular stereotypes that were presented by the media based on strong political perspectives in opposition to the FSLN.

Fundamentally, we wanted to challenge the paradigm that presented Nicaragua and other Latin American countries as the "backyard of the U.S." determined to follow the directives of U.S. policymakers.

We hoped that "people to people" encounters would help U.S. citizens to understand the meaning of sovereignty and provide insights on how Nicaraguans were making decisions about self governance, where resources should be directed and how young people could contribute to these broader goals through national literacy and health efforts. Individuals who had worked side by side with Nicaraguans might be better informed and enabled to challenge misinformation coming from Washington, D.C.

These trips began as an experiment for both the U.S. and Nicaraguan participants. Just as the trip provided an opportunity for us to talk with Nicaraguans about their

On the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua

From 1927 to 1979, Nicaragua was governed by the hereditary military dictatorship of the Somoza family. In 1961 the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a leftist political party, was founded to resist the Somoza regime.

A 1972 earthquake devastated Nicaragua's capital city of Managua and revealed the magnitude of Somoza's corruption. As Somoza embezzled funds meant for relief, the Sandinistas were flooded with disaffected Nicaraguans.

After nearly a decade of violent struggle, the Sandinistas took power in July 1979 instituting mass literacy campaigns and dedicating significant resources to healthcare and agriculture reform. The Sandinistas were initially supported under the Carter presidency, on the conditional that they did not support insurrections in neighboring countries.

However, under the Reagan administration, the U.S. shifted to outright support for the anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionary rebels, known as contras. The Contra War lasted from 1981-1990 and took the lives of nearly 30,000 Nicaraguans.

Nicaragua was one of the major proxy battlegrounds of the Cold War. Both collections of rightist and leftist parties received significant amounts of aid from the U.S. and Soviet Union respectively, and events in Nicaragua rose to international attention. Highlighting the importance of Nicaragua to U.S. foreign policy, Reagan stated, "Defeat for the contras would mean a second Cuba on the mainland of North America. It would mean consolidation of a privileged sanctuary for terrorists and subversives just two days' driving time from Harlingen, Texas." -Celina Foran

history, was the first time the Nicaraguans we met had an opportunity to ask us questions. We met with a wide cross-section of people in Nicaragua: high-level officials in charge of promoting national efforts in the areas of health, education, agrarian reform, and human rights; students; university professors and writers; trade unionists; religious leaders; and rural Nicaraguan workers who were in the process of transitioning from landless peasants to co-owners of newly formed agricultural cooperatives. The impact of the war was evident in the physical destruction of homes and other buildings, but this exchange allowed us to learn more about the societal changes which contributed to the defeat of the Somoza dictatorship, and the resolve of our hosts in working together to build a new Nicaragua.

For example, at the time we went to Nicaragua, the government was recruiting young people to participate in the national literacy brigades. Nicaragua had a very high illiteracy level in 1979, estimated at 75 to 90 percent in rural areas and 50 percent nationwide. Nearly 60,000 young people of high school and college age and 30,000 adults were trained in literacy approaches and sent to live in rural communities to teach Spanish. The second phase of the campaign included literacy instruction in Sumo, Miskito and various creole languages. We were encouraged to

join them in this effort by raising funds in the U.S. to support the purchase of materials for the campaign, including the denim blue jeans that *brigadistas* were given. We met with leaders of the national health brigades, who organized volunteers to clean up stagnant water sources and providing medicines to aid in eliminating malaria. We accompanied the Minister of Agriculture and volunteer harvest brigade members in harvesting crops on lands that had been abandoned or were being converted into cooperatives. We also observed the distribution of land titles to former landless peasants.

As a result of Pueblo a Pueblo in 1982, we felt we should organize people from the U.S. to volunteer with the harvest brigades. So after we came back I organized harvest brigades from here. CUSLAR played a central role in getting things organized: we started out with 30 people, 60 people, then 110 people, and then it became a huge operation that outgrew CUSLAR's capacity to organize it.

Part of Pueblo a Pueblo's efforts included raising money to buy the denim for the *brigadistas*. We held a campaign in Ithaca. We had a gigantic thermometer on The Commons where we kept track of how much money

we had raised through bake sales, contra "contras" dances, and many different activities in the community. Everybody who went on Pueblo a Pueblo made a commitment to come back and do educational presentations among their co-workers, neighbors and members of their faith organization and to help fundraise.

In terms of reflecting on the question, "How would you build that now?" a big piece of CUSLAR centers on creating community. So, how do you create community? One thing that was critical for Pueblo a Pueblo was that it wasn't just about taking this group of people to Nicaragua and interacting with Nicaraguans. It was about sharing what we learned with others and encouraging them to get involved in any way they could. At its very core Pueblo a Pueblo emphasized a reexamination of U.S.-Latin American relations and the active participation of community members in supporting justice and respect for human rights and sovereignty in Latin America.

Interview by Hazel Guardado, junior at Cornell University studying Anthropology and International Relations.

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In this issue: Unequal development



Mexican journalist Luis Hernández Navarro spoke at Cornell University on March 16. His talk, "Ayotzinapa: Between Pain and Hope," was sponsored by CUSLAR, the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and MEChA de Cornell. See the transcript of his lecture on page 3. Photo: Pamela Sertzen.

In this 50th anniversary issue of the CUSLAR Newsletter, our authors take a hard look at development. Who benefits, and who's losing out?

On pages 3-5, Mexican journalist Luis Hernández Navarro explains the **significance of the disappearance of the 43 students of the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College**. He notes that the Rural

Teachers' Colleges are schools "of the poor, for the poor," and graduates are responsible for advocating for fair and integrated development in Mexico's rural and indigenous communities.

On page 6, Anshu Gaur **recounts the February visit of Luz Rivera Martínez**, founder of the National Urban and Rural Council of Mexico. Rivera denounced that thousands of years of collective genetic science are at risk by private patenting of corn and other organisms.

On page 7, Alicia Swords **reports on the mega-development project** for energy and transportation first known as Plan Puebla-Panamá.

The PPP disappeared in 2004 but was later reborn as Proyecto Mesoamérica. Swords notes that many of the development components, such as ports and airports, were never even finished because construction and financing were what generated profits.

On pages 8-9, Maya Tellman explores the **confusing discourses of development**

and participation utilized by the Brazilian government, which plans to build 92 hydroelectric dams by 2021 to supply electricity to cities bursting at the seams.

The second half of the newsletter sheds light on some of the region's history that shaped CUSLAR.

Page 11 connects CUSLAR's founding to the U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and notes CUSLAR founder Bill Rogers' "call for a new internationalism." Pages 12-13 are a reflection of how the struggles of the Salvadoran poor transformed Oscar Romero from a bookish, status-quo priest into the revolutionary Archbishop and saint we know today.

On pages 15-16, we hear from Mary Jo Dudley, who was CUSLAR Coordinator from 1981-86. She shares memories and lessons from a people-to-people delegation she led through CUSLAR in 1982 to Nicaragua, called "Pueblo a Pueblo."

Be a CUSLAR Student Intern

Fall 2015 application deadline: Aug. 28

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