



# CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE ON U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS

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## LINES THAT DIVIDE, LINES THAT UNITE



'LOVE KNOWS NO BORDERS': DOZENS OF FAITH LEADERS WERE ARRESTED IN DECEMBER WHILE PRAYING FOR MIGRANTS. ACTIONS LIKE THIS ONE ARE TAKING PLACE AROUND THE COUNTRY AS INDIGNATION GROWS OVER THE INHUMANE TREATMENT OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AT THE BORDER



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U.S. 'PAYS FOR THAT WALL'  
AT MEXICO-GUATEMALA BORDER

MAYAN GROUPS OPPOSE 'MAYAN TRAIN'

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE WITH MIGRANTS



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BRAZIL UNDER BOLSONARO

A HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL:  
CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION  
IN MESOAMERICA



PAGES 4-5



# Where do we draw the line?

by Tim Shenk, editor

Thousands of people from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala joined together to walk north toward potential asylum in the United States.

"It is easy to blur the truth with a simple linguistic trick," writes Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti. "Start your story from 'Secondly.' ...Simply neglect to speak of what happened first."

The migrant caravans, as they have been referred to since their appearance in U.S. mainstream media in October, are a case of starting a story with "secondly."

Where would we start, if we started from, "First"?

First, we would acknowledge the lines that have divided us.

Expanding exploitation led to lines of the pen to destroy the commons and divide up the world. Military force has enforced those lines. European colonial powers gathered to divide up Africa among themselves. Popes and kings divided up the Americas, then fought each other for the right to exploit the people and the land.

First, we would tell the origin story of the United States of America.

This country was built on genocide and the slave economy, and with the sweat of immigrants from Ireland to Mexico to China. This country was built with ill-gotten raw materials of many other nations, made possible by military intervention, occupation, threat, and economic warfare.

First, we would speak truth about why people leave their homes.

Most human migration today is a form of forced migration. People are fleeing violence and poverty in greater numbers and with greater urgency than perhaps ever before in human history. Climate refugees are on the move, too -- an average of 22 million people have been displaced by major weather events every year since 2008.

Many "firsts" could bring context to the reality at the U.S.-Mexico border today.

Our task is to share both "first" and "second": what's happening, and how we got here. Then, perhaps, we'll have the clarity to propose and work toward deep and lasting solutions.

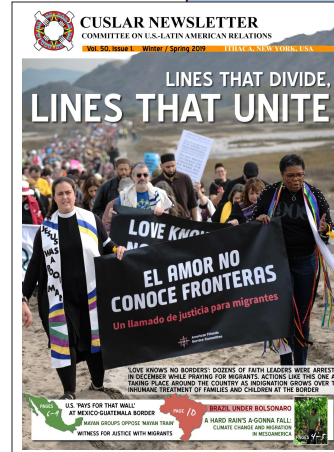
## Charting journeys north

In Honduras, horrific gang violence and state violence by the U.S.-backed Juan Orlando Hernandez regime have made life all but impossible for everyday people.

In addition, Honduran farmers have an increasingly difficult time making a living because of the changing climate. On pages 4 and 5 of this issue, Tomasz Falkowski lays the backdrop for why many have been obligated to leave their homes and travel north.

People band together to form caravans, writes Amelia Frank-Vitale, whose work is referenced on page 7, because "there is safety in numbers and in press attention." Nearly half of the migrants in these caravans are mothers with children who wouldn't otherwise be able to make such an arduous journey.

When migrants reach the Mexico-Guatemala border, they'll find more and more of a high-tech security apparatus funded by the United States, put in place as an extension of



Cover photo: Steve Pavey, [stevepavey.com](http://stevepavey.com).  
Cover design: Tim Shenk.

## About the cover

The cover image shows some of the 400 representatives of diverse faith traditions gathered on December 10 to raise their voices against unjust and inhumane U.S. immigration policy being enacted on the U.S.-Mexico border. Dozens were arrested while praying for justice to be done.

Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis,

National co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival and Co-director of the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice in New York City, spoke about why she attended the action, hosted by American Friends Service Committee and the California Poor People's Campaign:

"We're here with faith leaders, with poor folks, with people from all around this country today to say that we can do better. People are being hurt, and our priorities as a nation are misguided. Our sacred texts tell us to tear down walls, to welcome the immigrant and to treat everyone as God's child. Our politicians and even some of our religious leaders are not living by that. So we're here, and here strong, to make sure that our voice is heard, to make sure justice prevails."

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Photo: Steve Pavey



Rev. Traci Blackmon, left, participated in the December 10 "Love Knows No Borders" action near San Diego, CA calling for justice for migrants. Rev. Blackmon is the Executive Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO. Also pictured are Charon Hribar and Sahar Alsahlani of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

Rev. Blackmon said: "I was compelled to come here because once again our nation is showing its historical roots of ostracizing people. Ostracization of any people is sinful, is what I believe as a person of faith.

The truth is that the world doesn't belong to any of us – it belongs to God. We're simply stewards of these resources while we're alive, these resources that were created for everyone. The same breath of God that breathed into me, breathed into the people trying to cross this border, and breathed into our ancestors.

It is atrocious that we as a people who pronounce ourselves the nation of plenty, the nation of wealth and security, would treat people inhumanely. So if the people

of faith don't stand up, then who? And if we don't, then what faith do we have?

I'm happy to join over 400 faith leaders here today. I make this journey because I choose to, but those on the other side of the border make the journey because they have to. There is a Somali poet who wrote a poem called "Home," and she too is the descendant of refugees. The opening line of the poem is, "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark."

So think about traveling over 2,000 miles just to provide a chance for safety for your children. Who does that unless they are desperate for something better? For us to deny other human beings that which we so abundantly have, that which we so wastefully enjoy, is a sin. And I'm here to stand against it."

U.S. national security, writes Melanie Calderon on page 6.

Thousands of Central American migrants are waiting in Tijuana, Mexico, for their asylum claims to be heard, and more arrive each day. They live together as they can in abandoned buildings and shantytowns.

While the U.S. government spent \$200 million to deploy 15,000 troops to the border late last year, very few resources are mobilized to create an efficient system of hearings. Only 30 or 40 claims are processed each day, Rev. Benjamin Perry reports on page 7.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, as Daniela Rivero writes on pages 8 and 9, controversial development projects such as the high-speed "Mayan Train" for tourists in the Yucatan may cause further displacement. Mayan groups themselves have declared opposition to plans for their land about which they were not consulted.

### So where do we draw the line?

How much human suffering is too much?

Across the country, voices are being raised. Many said "Enough!" last summer after seeing images of small children detained in cages at the U.S.-Mexico border, separated indefinitely from their families, many placed in foster care.

Many more have begun to put their bodies on the line, risking arrest or even deportation, as in the cases of human rights defenders Alejandra Pablos and Eduardo Samaniego.

Amidst actions from coast to coast, large and small, we'll highlight one particular event here. On December 10, International Human Rights Day, more than 400 religious leaders from diverse faiths answered the call of the American Friends Service Committee to gather at the

San Diego-Tijuana border and participate in direct action in solidarity with all who seek refuge in the U.S.

Dozens of clergy were arrested while praying for justice for their migrant brothers and sisters near the border.

These are the lines that unite us: lines of marchers, singers, artists, people of different faiths and no faith -- the true moral leaders required by these times -- who have taken up the call to cry out, Basta! Enough! Not in our name!

The Philadelphia-based media policy organization reminds us that "Movements begin with the telling of untold stories." These stories of hardship and courage are stirring the hearts and minds of the people of this country. Migrants' footsteps are marking the beat of a change coming.

We see ourselves in the migrants -- the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. A mother, blinded with despair and rage when her child is taken from her. A father with no other way to feed his family than to trust strangers to lead him to the North.

Mexican human rights leader Father Alejandro Solalinde has said: "With their footsteps, migrants are signaling the end of an era." He sees the growing migration as the movement of the global poor, part of a rising class of people that the global economy no longer needs for their labor.

According to Solalinde, the movement of the poor is the new motor of history. Migrants are not the dangerous "invaders" as painted by some extremist elements of society and media, and yet they're not simply victims, either. Rather, they are the motor of history for our time -- along with the homeless, the unemployable, the disenfranchised. From these ranks will come the sparks of change that will spread to the rest of society.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it this way: "The only real revolutionary, people say, is a man who has nothing to lose. There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life."

By their movement, migrants, most of whom move because they have nowhere else to go, are forcing the world to consider the violence of the current economic and political system. Yet their demands are not overtly political. They need a place to live in peace and dignity, a place to raise their children and a way to feed them.

*Give us this day, our daily bread.* Could this be the radical demand that brings our unequal, inhumane system to its knees?

READ MORE!

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**The Second Implosion  
of Central America**  
by William I. Robinson  
[nacla.org](http://nacla.org)



# A hard rain's a-gonna fall

## Climate change, migration, and the militarization of the border

by Tomasz Falkowski

Adolfo Chankin, an indigenous Maya farmer, manages the same land in Chiapas, Mexico as his father before him. In this region, heavier rains tend to fall between May and September, but Adolfo notes that, "It has been dry for the rainy season." He breaks apart a clod of soil from his garden between his fingers. It crumbles into a fine dust and falls to the ground.

Many smallholder farmers throughout Mesoamerica have echoed this observation. For these farmers, whose livelihoods are bound to the local environment, the effects of climate change are no longer some distant concern but a present reality.

Some regions have already experienced severe and long-lasting drought conditions that have significantly decreased crop yields. No longer able to survive on their land, families find themselves forced to make a harrowing journey fraught with dangers, including human traffickers, cartel violence, and unreliable access to food and shelter, in the hopes of finding asylum in the United States.

Poverty, violence, and political upheavals are unquestionably important. These are immediate reasons for migrants' unenviable choice to leave the security of their homes to face an uncertain future. However, climate change must also be recognized as an underlying cause for current migration trends, particularly given its effects on traditional smallholder agriculture.

This past June, delegates from around the world met in response to the surge in the number of people displaced by conflict and persecution. The summit ended with the drafting of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, which was formally adopted by the United Nations Intergovernmental Conference in December.

Although this agreement offers an improved framework for addressing international migration, it did not consider the status of "climate refugees." This term is commonly used to describe people displaced due to sea level rise and weather-related disasters, such as storms and droughts.

However, it lacks a generally accepted legal definition, posing a challenge for migrants to claim refugee status on the basis of escaping the ravages of climate change. This is a troubling oversight. An average of 22 million people have been displaced every year since 2008 as a result of catastrophic weather events, and this number is expected to rise. Reports project that up to 143 million people could be displaced by

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*An average of 22 million people have been displaced every year since 2008 as a result of catastrophic weather events, and this number is expected to rise.*

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climate change in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America by 2050.

In fact, these estimates may be conservative in light of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. Published this past October, the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees describes that the effects of climate change are far more imminent and dire than previously anticipated. In contrast to the 2014 IPCC report's moderate forecasts, presenting a

current data are closely tracking the most extreme and least-optimistic climate change models. The new report argues that pervasive, systemic, and radical actions must be taken at a global scale to avoid the 2°C increase in mean annual atmospheric temperature that is seen as the last major threshold before significant and permanent environmental changes.

Current migration trends may be an indicator of future changes in climate and human movement patterns. Most Mesoamerican migrants currently traveling to the United States border are from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, as illustrated by the caravans of asylum seekers currently moving en-masse through Mexico. Unsurprisingly, the most up-to-date and accurate climate change models expect these very regions to experience sharp drops in rainfall and rises in temperature by 2020. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as flooding and

droughts, are also expected to increase in Mesoamerica. For example, extreme weather has caused an annual average of 302 climate-related deaths in Honduras alone. We can expect the number of asylum seekers from Mesoamerica to increase as the effects of climate change there become more drastic.

Precipitation trends in Mesoamerica have been mixed. Some regions have received above-average rainfall in recent years, while precipitation declined in others. As a result, current climate data do not indicate a significant change in annual precipitation in Mesoamerica as a whole.

However, precipitation has become more erratic. It rains more intensely during brief periods followed by long stretches of drought. However, precipitation is not the only factor that impacts water availability. Mean annual temperature has increased by an average of 0.1 to 0.3°C throughout Mesoamerica from 1961 to 2003. This increase may appear to be a modest change, but it has already increased plants' and animals' water demand, worsening drought conditions associated with low precipitation.

The effects of climate change have been and will increasingly become pervasive with regards to the smallholder agriculture, which accounts for the livelihoods of some 2.3 million households in Mesoamerica. The productivity of smallholder farms is already declining, and these agro-ecosystems can no longer ensure food security in the regions worst affected by climate change.

This is particularly unsettling because these same small-holder Mesoamerican agroecosystems have successfully adapted to dramatic climatic shifts in the past, suggesting current changes are all the more rapid. Higher temperatures and stress can reduce the productivity of livestock and crops.

More frequent and intense storms increase erosion, reducing soil fertility. Long periods of below-average rainfall reduce the water availability for irrigation and human consumption. The yields of many staple crops, including corn, rice, and beans, are expected to continue to decline,

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*The residents of the 48 poorest countries, which collectively account for only 1 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, are five times more likely to die from climate-related disasters than the rest of the global population.*

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threatening the viability of an already overextended food system.

In addition to these impacts on agriculture, future climate change is projected to increase the prevalence of diseases, as well as the infrastructure damage and fatalities caused by storms.

Unfortunately, impoverished and marginalized communities who have contributed the least to climate change will bear the first and worst of its impacts because they lack financial resources or political power to protect themselves.

The residents of the 48 poorest countries, which collectively account for only 1 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, are five times more likely to die from climate-related disasters than the rest of the global population.

In the context of agriculture, while large-scale industrial farms may be able to withstand some of the immediate challenges of climate change through extensive use of fertilizer and irrigation, smallholders who rely on the environment to maintain their agroecosystems generally lack the means to purchase additional resources and technology.

Similarly, smallholders often can't pay for medical services and live in remote rural areas with limited access to infrastructure, making them particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as flooding and droughts, are also expected to increase in Mesoamerica. For example, extreme weather has caused an annual average of 302 climate-related deaths in Honduras alone. We can expect the number of asylum seekers from Mesoamerica to increase as the effects of climate change there become more drastic.

In recent years, the United States government's response to these trends in migration has consistently been to further militarize the border with Mexico, as illustrated by President Trump's November decision to mobilize additional security forces in response to Central American migrant caravans. The military-corporate security complex has long acknowledged that climate change may increase socioeconomic volatility, bemoaning that climate change may threaten its access to resources.

However, migration crises, including those driven by climate change, have undoubtedly been a boon to those very same companies and agencies. The United States Border Patrol budget has increased more than tenfold to \$3.8 billion since

1993, while the border security market has grown at an average rate of approximately 8 percent in recent years.

These figures are only expected to increase under President Trump. However, this emphasis on border security is ultimately a response to a non-existent threat. Not one terrorist came from Mexico or Central America in any visa category during the past 43 years, and violent crime tends to decrease in communities with a higher percentage of residents with undocumented immigration status.

As such, the militarization of the border actively undermines meaningful adaptation to climate change. By shifting resources away from real solutions, it helps maintain a status quo that is fundamentally incompatible with the reality of environmental change. It not only bolsters the divide between countries, but between those who are environmentally secure and those who are not: a line that runs parallel to that dividing the rich and poor.

Not enough emphasis has been placed on the United States' responsibility to assist and welcome Mesoamerican asylum seekers given the violence our government has fomented via political, military, and economic interventions throughout Latin America.

The United States is also the second biggest (and the highest per capita) source of greenhouse emissions. As a nation, we will do well to recognize our proportionate responsibility for global climate change fundamentally caused by our neoliberal economic policies and consumption patterns.

We are also partially guilty for the pressures it has disproportionately placed on disenfranchised and impoverished

Photo: Tomasz Falkowski



Many traditional smallholder farmers throughout Mesoamerica have noticed that climate change is affecting the productivity of their agroecosystems.

Mesoamerican migrants. The nexus between climate change and the global expansion in migration underscores the need for integrative policies that meaningfully address both issues, such as collaborating internationally to restructure water management policy in a way that ensures equal access to water and reduces pressures on water resources.

The migration and climate crises we face as a nation and members of a global community are ultimately of our own creation. These issues are not symptoms of broken economic and immigration systems. These systems are sustained by exploiting both people and nature. The humanitarian and ecological catastrophes we face are their inevitable products. We have reached the point where half-measures will not suffice.

Fundamental changes are necessary. We must transition towards an economic system that asks how much we can give rather than how much we can take, towards an immigration system that elevates and celebrates human dignity rather than debases it.

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*The migration and climate crises we face as a global community are ultimately of our own creation. We have reached the point where half-measures will not suffice.*

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# Who's funding the militarization of Mexico's Guatemalan border?

By Melanie Calderon

In recent months, a spotlight has been shone on the U.S.-Mexico border as caravans of thousands of Central Americans travel north seeking asylum in the U.S. Critics who rightly denounce the militarization of the border may be surprised to learn that similar methods being employed at the border between Mexico and Guatemala—a fortification also funded by U.S. taxpayers.

In 2017, while addressing the Wilson Center, Vice President Mike Pence called the purported impermeability of the Mexico-Guatemala border a “great credit to Mexico.” In light of the extensive U.S. funding of the security of that border, his comment says less about Mexico and more about what he considers a successful U.S. investment. And the data tell a similar story of that “success,” with Mexico now apprehending 20,000 more undocumented immigrants than the U.S., according to Business Insider.

Under both the Obama and Trump administrations, U.S. government agencies have been funneling money into the fortification of the Mexico-Guatemala border in an attempt to curb the number of migrants and asylum seekers from precarious situations in Central America. In addition to managing the arrival and deportation of migrants fleeing poverty and violence in Central America each year, the U.S. has extended operations aimed at training Mexican police and military, funded the expansion of deportations in Mexico, and fortified Mexico's southern border technology.

The amount of U.S. monetary aid being funneled into Mexico is significant, making up roughly 2 percent of Mexico's \$10 billion defense budget. Since 2008, the Mérida Initiative has given Mexico at least \$2.8 billion to create a “21st century border” that includes advanced technology for inspections, biometry, and surveillance. The Mérida Initiative remained the foremost financial aid throughout the years in which Mexican migration to the United States stagnated and then became negative in the years following the 2007 recession. However, in 2014 when droves of



Photo: Reuters

Mexican police stand in formation at the Mexico-Guatemala border. The U.S. Mérida Initiative has given \$2.8 billion to the Mexican government for border militarization.

*Although Trump's campaign branded him as an 'America-first' isolationist, his administration has maintained lucrative foreign aid programs prioritizing military expansion.*

unaccompanied minors--mostly from Central America--made their way to U.S. ports of entry, the U.S. again ramped up the amount of money distributed to Mexico through the Programa Frontera Sur and Alliance for Prosperity. Programa Frontera Sur provided Mexico another \$100 million to improve its southern border infrastructure by establishing three mandatory checkpoints in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state, while the Alliance for Prosperity allocated \$750 million for similar objectives. The 2014 child migrant crisis also fueled U.S.-funded deportations in

Mexico that cost \$200 million -- a bill footed by the U.S.

Although President Trump's campaign branded him as an “America-first” isolationist, his administration has maintained these lucrative foreign aid programs. The Alliance for Prosperity has earmarked \$460 million to the program and plan on emphasizing the use of the private sector to expand security features in the plan. Private industries already have benefitted from \$88 million in contracts for biometrics, \$75 million for communications towers along the Guatemalan border and policies that criminalize immigrants and jail them at a \$124-per-day profit to corrections corporations.

Despite this massive financial assistance, the Mexico-Guatemala border remains porous--so much so that multiple caravans with thousands of immigrants each have managed to make it through the checkpoints, security, and fences largely intact even as they journey through Mexico, only mildly dissipating. In addition, according to the Washington Office on Latin America, Grupos Beta — Mexican humanitarian units stationed at the border in charge of assisting migrants on their paths northward--funded by the U.S. government through the \$100 million Programa Frontera Sur have even been accused of extorting cash from migrants and threatening to reveal the migrants' location and have them deported.

The millions being pumped into the Mexico-Guatemala border is part of a larger U.S. military strategy of containment and control in the region.

For example, in addition to southern border militarization, the U.S. Department of Defense continues to fund the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation -- a military school in El Salvador formerly called the School of the Americas, notorious for training human rights abusers.

As financial assistance for military equipment and training continue to flow into Mexico and its neighboring countries for border control, it is imperative that we look beyond the news cycle to denounce not only the callous shows of military strength on U.S. soil, but also the larger regional strategy aimed at controlling the movement of the impoverished of Central America.

*Melanie Calderon is a junior at Cornell University. She is majoring in American Studies with a minor in Law and Society.*

## On the San Diego / Tijuana border: Bearing witness to legislated suffering



Hundreds of faith leaders from diverse traditions, including the author, gathered at the San Diego / Tijuana border to denounce the U.S. government response to asylum-seekers on the U.S. southern border on December 10. Dozens were arrested.

by Rev. Benjamin Perry

In December, I traveled to the Tijuana/San Diego border with Union Theological Seminary students. We witnessed the deepest cruelty in how humans can treat their neighbors, but also how God moves amidst unimaginable tragedy.

The situation on the ground in Tijuana is incredibly dire. When we arrived, an immigration attorney with Al Otro Lado told us, “Welcome to the apocalypse.” They did not lie. If apocalypse is an unveiling or uncovering, this lays bare the inhumanity of our immigration policy.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 people were waiting to file their asylum claims.

Our first day there, on December 8, the U.S. government decided to hear just thirty claims. They heard forty the next day. At this rate, the line never ends, as more people arrive at the border each day. Meanwhile, thousands of refugees huddle together in an abandoned nightclub. It's hard to describe just how bad things are. The air inside the building used to house family units is fetid. Each breath feels thick. We saw dozens of people in clear respiratory distress.

There are children everywhere. Kids who have walked thousands of miles now face an interminable wait in appalling conditions.

Their strength of will trumps anything I've seen, but you can see just how weary they are, how deeply they yearn for a home. Yet our government expresses only bigoted disdain for their plight: To walk around the camp and speak with people — to hear the dangers they're fleeing and the hope they carry — is to be filled with blinding rage.

But, despite all of this, love breaks through in a million, myriad ways. Folks laughing, playing soccer; a young boy sharing his only bowl of food with his infant brother, a girl making an immigration lawyer

a play-doh heart as she helped her mom understand her asylum claim.

The dedicated team of Al Otro Lado lawyers, and volunteer attorneys coming from around the country, run a makeshift

*Our government sent guns to greet us. Even so, I watched as people sang together, prayed together, stood together, and were arrested side by side.*

pro-bono clinic out of the third and fourth floors of a bare concrete warehouse — while hundreds are fed on the floors below. Their clinic has also become known as the spot where people can go to be married.

As clergy, we performed five ceremonies in two days. It was humbling, watching people pledge their lives to one another even as they endure our country's horrific attempts to extinguish that life. Against hate, love breaks through.

On our last day, December 10, we gathered with more than 400 faith leaders in San Diego, and hundreds of other activists, and marched to a militarized border that shouldn't exist. Attempting to bless migrants through the fence, 32 clergy were arrested by border patrol. Evidently, freedom of religion covers people who break the law to discriminate against LGBTQ+ folks but not faith leaders who want to walk across a beach to pray with people through the fence.

Our government sent guns to greet us.

But, even as the government's reception embodied national inhumanity, I watched as people sang together, prayed together, stood together, and were arrested side by side. And no policy can extinguish this love, God cannot be contained by fences, guards or concertina wire.

It's time for people of faith and conscience to embody this Love, to lay it at the feet of those who legislate hatred. Drive your love between the spokes of that unjust wheel, that our border may be rewritten as “Welcome” to thousands who desperately need it.

*Rev. Benjamin Perry is the Deputy Director of Communications and Marketing at Union Theological Seminary and works with the New York Poor People's Campaign. His writing on the intersection of faith and politics has appeared in outlets such as Slate, Bustle, Unbound, Huffington Post and Sojourners. You can follow him on Twitter at @FaithfullyBP.*

On the migrant caravans and their context from Amelia Frank-Vitale:

**From Caravan to Exodus, from Migration to Movement**  
NACLA, November 20, 2018

*A look at the lives of caravan members reveals that fleeing was not a choice, and that strength really does come in numbers.*

**I Live in Honduras, Where People Are in Constant Fear of Being Murdered. It's No Wonder They Join Caravans**  
Fortune, November 23, 2018



# Mayan groups oppose high-speed 'Maya Train'



Mayan communities oppose the 1,000-mile-long "Tren Maya," already under construction before the inauguration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in Mexico. A letter of protest by the indigenous communities states, "no one asked us" whether they approved of this disruptive development in their territory. Source: Mexico News Daily.

by Daniela Rivero

Last summer, Mexico's presidential election resulted in the landslide victory of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, the leftist candidate whose campaign earned unprecedented popular support. He ran on a platform of serious changes to the economy that would focus on benefiting the poor, and new development programs meant to bolster the quality of life and reduce the need for migration. In his acceptance speech, he promised the people of Mexico, "I will not fail you."

Closer analysis of his plans, however, indicates that his proposals are not drastically different from previous government policies that have been harmful to both the environment and to indigenous and rural farming communities.

Global struggles for liberation are inextricably linked with land ownership and management. Those who own the land hold the power to decide what happens on it and to it. Policies to extract more productivity and wealth from poorer regions in Mexico have been synonymous with the displacement of

indigenous people. The struggle over indigenous people's rights to own and live off their land is rooted in anti-colonial resistance, and it has been central to resistance that will persevere as the state enters a new administration.

On November 27, a popular referendum that had been criticized by its low voter turnout approved all 10 of Lopez Obrador's proposed projects. Among them is the construction of the "Maya Train," a high-speed train that would run 1,000 miles across five states in what Lopez Obrador has described as "a regional economic development project that would share the economic boom of Cancun's world-class beach resorts with poorer, more remote parts of the south." Construction of the train had already commenced when Lopez Obrador announced another referendum on December 14.

Mexico's southern region is especially rich in biodiversity, but AMLO has addressed environmental concerns by assuring that his plan to plant 100,000 hectares of fruit and timber trees will offset any environmental impact.

"The truth is that I have polls and I'm very confident that the people are going to vote to build the Maya train, because it won't hurt anyone. On the contrary, it will benefit a lot of people," he said. Erasing the expected carbon footprint of this project however, doesn't necessarily assure that no harm will be done.

Environmental activists and Indigenous groups have expressed opposition to the "Maya Train." Following the referendum, Mexico News Daily reported a document presented by Mayan communities, who declared that "no person outside the Yucatán peninsula" has the right "to decide what can or can't be done" in their territories without first consulting them.

*The logic of development falls apart when you consider that indigenous communities don't want their land to look like the resorts of Cancun.*

Although Lopez Obrador promised in a letter that his proposals would not be carried out without consulting the people whose land is being developed, the Mayan communities declared that, "Nobody asked us" about the Maya Train.

Lopez Obrador's plans for developing Mexico's southern region by bolstering infrastructure and productivity are a continuation of previous president Enrique Peña Nieto's Special Economic Zones (SEZs). SEZs were effort put forth by the government to

develop particular geographical areas through foreign and domestic investment, building infrastructure, and increasing regional productivity. These programs were successful only in benefiting a few local producers and creating wealth for a small group of people at the consequence of increased inequality for the region's already poor farmers and indigenous groups.

Lopez Obrador claims that his administration will divest from the old ways of the establishment. His plans for Mexico's southern region however, are incongruent with his rhetoric of change. Included in Peña Nieto's plans were the development of railroads, and taking advantage of the region's biodiversity for the extraction of natural resources and the



Incoming Mexican president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, promotes the "Mayan Train" project with Mexican officials. Source: lopezobrador.org.mx

cultivation of the agro-industry, plans that Lopez Obrador is revitalizing.

History indicates that within colonial structures, endeavors of "economic development" have meant imposing "progress" upon indigenous people by waging war on their way of life and invading the spaces where they exist. Further, the promotion of development falls apart when considering that indigenous communities don't want their land to look like the resorts of Cancun.

Land ownership of indigenous people and farming communities poses the biggest threat to the extractivist policies of imperialism because it represents a way to live in the world that illegitimizes colonial systems. By opposing extractivist policies presented as development endeavors, they continue to make it clear to the state that neither their land or their way of life is for sale.

*Daniela Rivero is a first-generation Mexican immigrant. She is a sophomore at Ithaca College, studying Social Movements, Indigenous Philosophy, and Latin American Liberation.*



Among new Mexican president Lopez Obrador's plans for developing Mexico's southern region, "Tren Maya" links Mexico's archeological sites of Cancun and Palenque. The yellow line is an existing rail line for cargo train. The red line is the proposed high-speed passenger line, which faces opposition from indigenous groups through whose territories the project would pass.



## A brief history of land tenure and dispossession in Mexico

Before the arrival of Spanish colonizers, land didn't belong to people; we belonged to the land. With colonization, Spanish invaders displaced indigenous people from their land, claimed it for the king of Spain and began extracting its natural resources to create wealth for the empire. Indigenous people were sent to the worst areas of land

in the mountains and hillsides and forced to work for landlords and proprietors for free.

Land ownership laws originated after the Mexican war of Independence, when old landlords became private landowners and indigenous people were granted recognition of their collective property.

Security for these communities, however, is never sustainable under the state, and soon the government passed policies that once again displaced people from their land. In order to maximize the productivity of the country, the Mexican government began to distribute titles of

unfarmed land, as well as seizing and selling communal property that had been allotted during the Spanish rule but didn't have the proper titles under the new government.

The hard-fought *campesino* revolution of the early 1900s led by Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa secured more community land for indigenous people and rural farmers, but throughout the 19th and 20th century, policies such as PROCEDE and free trade agreements have continued to facilitate land grabs by dictating that all land should be "put to use."

- Daniela Rivero



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# Post-truth in action: Brazil under Bolsonaro

by **Gabriel Fernandes**

The 2018 elections in Brazil have come to show that ideological narratives outweigh facts when applied to a context of right-wing populism.

Brazil is a country of extreme inequality and a relatively recent history of dictatorship. So why did 55 percent of Brazilian voters choose Jair Bolsonaro, who is in the words of Harvard University political scientist Scott Mainwaring the “most extreme leader in the history of democratic elections in Latin America”?

Understanding his victory means taking seriously an ideological clash that spoke directly to the hearts of Brazilians voters. In other words, Brazil voted for its new president on the basis of sentiment and how well the ultra-right responded to feelings of indignation and mistrust towards the political class that so rightfully brewed out of all social and economic classes in the country.

The new Bolsonaro presidency brings attention to a social process that is intrinsic to this new digital era: the articulation of Post-Truth — the relativization of facts in the face of multiple discourses simultaneously presented as truthful — as a political tool. The ideological campaign of Bolsonaro would not have been successful without the widespread use of “fake news” sent through the internet and WhatsApp.

Indeed, truth was bent according to the interests of the resurgent extreme right. The Workers’ Party (PT) was painted as the most corrupt organization in the country’s

history, communism again began to be portrayed as a threat, alongside Marxist teaching in schools and fabricated stories that the Left would do “homosexual brainwashing” of youth.

The truth, thoroughly ignored, was Bolsonaro’s extreme sexist, racist and homophobic claims that are yet to be punished.

To understand how this ordinary former congressman, who was forcibly retired from the military due to questions of his sanity, rose to the presidency of the fifth largest country in the world on the basis of ultra-conservative thought, praise of military dictatorship and torture, with a campaign built on fake news, consider the following available at [cuslar.org](http://cuslar.org).

**“Why this far-right candidate won Brazil’s election.” by Danush Parvaneh.**

This video offers precise information about the socio-political circumstances that led to the rise of the far-right in Brazil. It provides data about the economy, street violence, and corruption — specially Operation “Car Wash” and how it was used to demonize the PT and former president Inacio ‘Lula’ da Silva.

**“Centrists paved the way for the far Right in Brazil.” by Rodrigo Nunes.**

Nunes writes convincingly about how the same forces behind the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 opened precedent to allow ultra-conservative movements to defeat both

center-left and center-right parties in 2018: “To understand Jair Bolsonaro’s rise, we need to look at centrist reckless efforts to exploit institutional meltdown.”

**“Did Brazilians Vote Against Democracy On Sunday?”**

This article summarizes the quantitative data found by the research panel *Brazilian Democracy In the Balance*. It analyzes people’s favorable view of the armed forces in the midst of the most significant institutional crisis in Brazil’s history. The article raises important questions about who are Bolsonaro voters and what lessons they might be forgetting from their country’s recent dictatorial history.

**“Americans should know their government had a hand in the return to fascism.” An interview with Brian Mier.**

“Bolsonaro is not a Brazilian Trump; he’s a fascist. Trump may say some things that are fascist, but Jair Bolsonaro is literally a former official from a neo-fascist military government. They used to categorize all people as ‘workers’ or ‘bums,’ so if you were unable to prove to a policeman that you had a job, you would get arrested during the dictatorship.”

**More at: [cuslar.org/bolsonaro](http://cuslar.org/bolsonaro)**

*Gabriel Fernandes is a sophomore Politics major at Ithaca College, with a concentration in international studies. He is from Campinas, Brazil.*



**Sunday, March 3 at 5:30pm, Sage Chapel**

**Sunday, May 12 at 5:30pm, Sage Chapel**

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# Argentina: Macri's return to IMF draws protest

by Mauricio Streb

Protesters have once again become a common sight in the city center of Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires. Argentines of all classes have been flocking to the Plazo de Mayo, located in front of the national congress, to protest President Macri and his Cambiemos party's economic plans. The new budget for 2019, passed this past november with help from the Peronist Justice Party, implemented massive cuts to social spending while increasing foreign debt service payments. Critics argue that the cuts will remove critical support systems making life difficult for working and lower class citizens.

The current president, Mauricio Macri, came to power in 2015 promising to use his business savvy to bring the economy back on track. Argentina had been under center-left governance for twelve years between the financial crisis of 2001-2002 and Macri's election. The previous administrations succeeded in paying off the default from the that crisis but at a cost. Argentina has been largely separated from the international financial community for much of the past decade.

Macri sought to bring his nation back into the fold by removing currency controls, reducing government ministries, promoting foreign investment, and cutting subsidies. These policies left the Argentine economy dependent on continued foreign investment and changes in international markets. As a result, when the US Reserve Bank began hiking interest rates this past April, it caused spikes in interest rates worldwide. The newly strengthened dollar pulled investors away from Argentina and other middle-income countries. The sudden withdrawal of foreign funds led to a precipitous drop in the peso's value this past May which has yet to abate.

The crisis was brought on by a combination of other factors, besides the steady devaluation of the Argentine peso. At the beginning of 2018 the exchange rate stood at 20 pesos to the dollar, it dropped to 41 pesos to the dollar in October and has stabilized between 37 and 38 pesos to the dollar in the months since then. On top of having a falling currency, inflation rose by 6% over the same period while the country was hit with a severe drought that crippled staple crops such as corn and soybeans in the agricultural sector.

In order to address the escalating crisis, Macri has brokered a massive bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) totaling US\$57 billion to prop up the national economy and allow the government to continue paying its debts.



"Out with the IMF": Late 2018 brought protests to Argentina as president Mauricio Macri turned to budget cuts and IMF loans to address runaway inflation.

Source:  
The Guardian

IMF bailouts always come with strings attached. The IMF believes in using the opportunity of a bailout to force what it sees as financial responsibility on its borrowers, usually in the form of austerity.

Austerity requires the receiving country to cut government spending as a condition for receiving continued support, almost always in the form of cutting welfare programs and other social safety nets. In Argentina, the government subsidizes healthcare, transportation, and education; all of which have recently been cut for IMF support. The goal of these cuts is to bring national spending in line with revenue, with a special emphasis on balancing the federal budget, in spite of the pain that will bring to the country, with the poor being hardest hit.

The last major crisis in Argentina occurred at the end of 2001 when the government defaulted on over \$100 billion in public debt. Over the preceding decade Argentina had pegged its currency to the dollar, meaning that the exchange rate was fixed at one peso to one dollar. The government relied on IMF funding, accompanied by lax oversight, to keep the economy stable well into the second half of the nineties in spite of a growing recession.

The system worked as follows: Argentina exchanged its currency at an equal rate with the United States', making the peso as strong as the dollar. However, the Argentine and U.S. economies are not interchangeable. This means that in order to maintain this exchange rate, the Argentine

government had to keep a stockpile of dollars on hand so investors could trade their pesos for dollars whenever they wanted. This is where the IMF came in.

The IMF arranged billions in loans to Argentina between 1991 and the crash in 2001 in order to facilitate the artificial currency exchange. These loans came with the requirement that government run a "zero-deficit" budget. The situation came to a head at the turn of the century as the U.S. overvalued its currency.

This led to a trade deficit in the US but was disastrous for Argentina. Argentina relies heavily on exports, especially crops, and a strong currency makes their goods expensive and non competitive internationally. This led to concerns that the country wouldn't be able to pay its debts, or match peso for dollar, which in turn led the country to ask for ever greater loans until the system collapsed.

Argentina is the third largest economy in Latin America, and this newest round of uncertainty comes at a critical moment. Combined with the recent uncertainty in the region after the Brazilian elections in October, failing to address the mounting inflation and sovereign debt could lead to another decade-long recovery.

Furthermore, the Argentine presidency and national legislature are up for re-election in October 2019. Should the Macri administration fail to find an answer, Argentina may become the latest to elect a radical candidate to office as many other countries have.

## READ MORE!



### "Negotiations with the IMF deepened Argentina's crisis."

The agreements between Macri and the IMF are part of a political intervention masquerading as economic policy. As long as there is a commitment to repay the massive debt to the IMF, it is international capital that will write Argentina's economic policies — not the people — regardless of who sits in the presidential office."

- Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research Dossier 10

Read online at:  
[tinyurl.com/arg-tricontinental](http://tinyurl.com/arg-tricontinental)

**tricontinental**

Mauricio Streb is an educator born in Argentina and currently living and working in Ithaca, NY.

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## VOICES of the Poor People's Campaign

Since 40 Days of Action marked the launch of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival in 2018, many states have hosted Poor People's Hearings to highlight stories of pain and courage from the experiences of some of the 140 million poor and low-income people in the United States today.

In the pages that follow, we print excerpts of a few testimonies here, from Kansas, Indiana, Alabama and Missouri. The red megaphone next to each excerpt indicates that these words were shared at a hearing or gathering of the Poor People's Campaign.

### Guadalupe Magdaleno Sunflower, Kansas

Good evening. My name is Guadalupe Magdaleno. I am a proud mestiza. A brown immigrant. A woman. A mother and grandmother. A community leader born out of the fight for justice. Sunflower is where I organize with many other Black, Brown, and White sisters and brothers and today, I am going to share a little bit of my story.

At the young age of 16, I found myself with a beautiful gift. That was my daughter, her name is Conchita. But at 11 months of age, she developed a life-threatening allergy to dust and insects while also diagnosed with a low immune system that required treatment or she would die.

We migrated to the United States in hopes of being able to provide the medical attention she desperately needed. Shortly after our arrival to this beautiful country, she began to

## 'I had to leave everything to come here, with the hope of saving my daughter's life'

Photo: Kansas Poor People's Campaign



heal and completely recover from her illness.

I can't help but think as we face the current inhumane attack on immigrant families. I continue to thank God every day that my daughter was not ripped from my arms as a two-year-old as many of these stories we are watching in current times, as zero tolerance has been put in place.

I had to leave everything to come to this beautiful country, with the hope of saving my daughter's life. I could not understand at that time why I was never feeling like I belong, that I was welcome. I did not understand much about immigration laws at the time. All I understood is that this beautiful country allowed my daughter to live, and I wanted to be a contributing citizen of this country.

I learned the language, I worked two jobs, I paid taxes, but still, I was less than.

After 20 years, I became a legal permanent resident, 25 years I became a legal citizen, and I was able to petition for my mother to come to this country. But the process in this system is broken and doesn't allow us to be a family. It treats us like we don't deserve to have a mother, a father, a child, a brother, a sister next to us. I was able to file for my mother and as I saw her aging, I was praying to God because I felt that time was running out.

In November of 2010, I was able to bring my mother legally as a permanent resident about 30 years after I came to this country. Only, she was very ill -- she nearly died in Ciudad Juarez when we were going through her interview. I was able to bring her to Kansas just to die. She arrived November 20, and she passed away January 2nd, 2011 at 6:20 am.

I felt that I failed her. That I didn't act quickly, I didn't get to share with her all the dreams, and the progress and the beauty of this country. But I have realized it wasn't me -- I'm not the one who failed her. It's the system. A racist system that's designed to keep us all in place that failed me.

As we know, we are living in difficult times. I keep a picture of my mother near me to remind me why I'm doing what I'm doing. It's all upon us, brothers and sisters, regardless of political party, regardless of beliefs. We have to join together. We have to stand together, fight together, and unite. Get out as one soul, as one body, and change destiny. Things in this country, I believe, can be better. And as a U.S. citizen by choice and a Mexican citizen by blessing, I believe we can do better.

## 'We nurses are on the front line'



### Mary Jane Shanklin, RN Kansas

I'm a proud union member of National Nurses United. You know, the folks wearing red scrubs that show up everywhere giving out Medicare for All signs? That's us! We helped make Bernie and Medicare for All household words, and we are proud allies of the Poor People's Campaign. Because we nurses are on the front line.

We are the ones holding the hands of poor people everywhere who are dying in our ER's and our ICU's of treatable illnesses. People can't afford to get insurance or go to the doctor, so their high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes and mental illnesses are untreated, and folks are dying unnecessarily. And the nurses are really, really tired



Photo: Kansas Poor People's Campaign

of seeing this. It is so hard on everyone, so discouraging, so depressing that we are outraged and are fighting back.

Did you know that in Kansas we have a host of issues that are getting worse and worse because our legislature will not expand Medicaid?

Kansas farmers are committing suicide at a far greater rate than the national average,

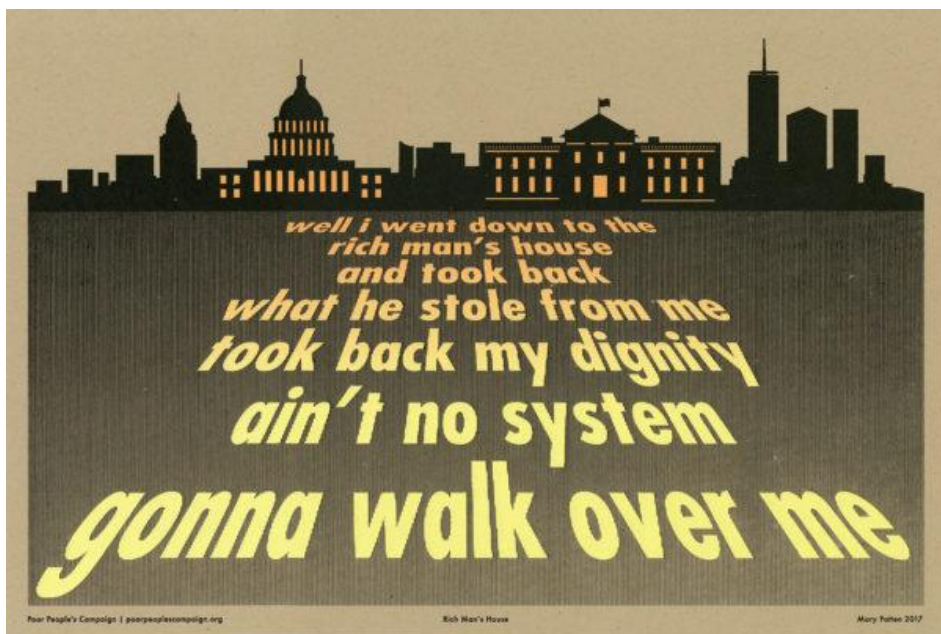
and all the urban average. It is happening worldwide. Why? Because farmers are stressed out.

They are usually in debt up to their eyeballs trying to pay for all the equipment it takes to run a farm: tractors, combines, planters, balers, cattle haulers. They are in the most dangerous line of work there is, yet many can't afford health insurance.

Fifty-two years ago, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote: "If the poor can be helped to take action together, they will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life." Today's Poor People's Campaign is becoming just that.



# We do not live in a 'mom-friendly' country



Left: "Rich Man's House" by Mary Patten, based on song lyrics sung to the tune of "Enemy's Camp," adapted by the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. Just Seeds / Poor People's Campaign.



## Elizabeth Strader Indiana

My name is Elizabeth Strader. I am a proud United States citizen. I am college-educated and have been in the workforce since I was 15 years old. I was raised in a small town of hard-working middle and upper middle class people.

I attended wonderful public schools back when it was safe to do so, and I thrived academically and socially my entire life. If

it were really true that "if you work hard enough, you can achieve the American Dream," then I should be a textbook example of privilege and opportunity.

But instead, I am an underemployed single mother of two living below the federal poverty level, and I am a recipient of SNAP, or Food Stamps.

I've been at my current job for more than six years and in my current profession for thirteen years. Right now I only work about fifteen hours a week. This is

certainly not by choice. I spend *hours* of my life, sometimes daily, trying to procure childcare. I have nothing to offer in return, so I am completely at the mercy of the kindness and availability of trusted friends and coworkers. I live in constant fear that at best I'll miss out on a day of work -- and the money it would provide -- and at worst that I'll be fired for unreliability.

We do not live in a "mom-friendly" or "child-friendly" country. We face inadequate paid maternity leave, abysmal postpartum healthcare, and equally appalling access to quality child care and public education. If these problems didn't exist, I would never have needed to apply for SNAP in the first place.

I feel expendable, and there is an ever-increasing awareness of a logical fallacy that my country seems to be telling me is true: that if I am expendable, so too are my children. And that, I cannot stand for.

I do not represent the poorest in our country, but I do represent those who aren't getting by, and those who truly have no opportunities to make their lives better. We need our government to "provide for the general welfare," but right now we have leadership that is working hard to ensure we don't get it.

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## 'Poverty is violence against the poor'

**Bomani Williams**  
**Mobile, Alabama**

Greetings, my name is Bomani Williams, and I'm originally from Southern California. I've been living in Mobile, Alabama for the last 5 years, where I'm raising three wonderful children, with my beautiful wife Sheena.

I'm here today to talk about violence against children and families in poor communities.

First I will talk about Environmental and Climate Injustice violence. Poor Communities in Alabama, as well as across the nation, are forced to live by toxic waste storage facilities, railroads that carry this waste, and toxic waste dumps. Toxic waste is created by companies that have practices that poison us and the environment. These practices also accelerate the rate at which our climate warms. As a result, warmer climate equals more severe weather each year. Weather that compromises these toxics waste dumps and storage facilities, poisoning and displacing the poor communities they're allowed to operate next to. This is violence.

My family lives in a community as such, a community surrounded by water contaminated by big business. A community where the city is responsible for allowing millions of gallons of sewage to overflow into local waterways. A community that is surrounded by hundreds of toxic chemical storage tanks and toxics dumps, just sitting there waiting for the next weather crisis to hit the Gulf Coast, which will release those harmful chemicals into the community and environment. My back door is about 50 yards from a railroad that transports toxic waste. I often worry about the health

effects my family will have to deal with later on in life because of all this.

The second type of violence I would like to discuss is state-sanctioned violence perpetrated by the police that occupy poor communities.

Poor communities are disproportionately targeted by police.

Poor communities are more likely to experience police terrorism. I call this state-sanctioned

violence because in many cases we see no accountability for police officers' actions when they act outside the law, especially when it comes to poor communities and communities of color.

I live in a community as such: A community that has seen innocent people murdered and assaulted by police with no repercussions, as in the case of Lawrence Hawkins, Michael Moore, Chikesia Clemmons and Quinn Austin-Pugh. A community where citizens are terrified at the sight of police, where the police act more like gangs than community servants. My wife fears for the lives of me and our friends every time we walk out the door.

The most affected group in our poor communities, who also happen to be our most vulnerable and precious, the group that's most worth protecting, are our children. Our children shouldn't have to



Clockwise from top: Bomani Williams, his wife Sheena, and their three children, Zionne, Zakeem and Jalyne, in their community garden in Prichard, Alabama, enjoying their okra harvest. Williams fears ill effects of toxic waste storage near his home as well as state-sanctioned violence perpetrated by police in poor communities. Photo: Lynn Oldshue.

grow up dealing with the adverse effects of poverty or being poor.

We shouldn't have to worry about our children being poisoned and displaced by companies and their inhumane practices. We shouldn't have to have these "when you get pulled over" survival talks, or constantly worry that if our children come into contact with the police that they will be harmed, criminalized, or murdered for an officer's misjudgment. We shouldn't have to worry if our children are going to travel the school-to-prison pipeline. We shouldn't have to worry about our children becoming victims of violence in our communities. We shouldn't have to worry about those things, but poor families do every day. Poverty is violence against the poor.



**Chris Overfelt**  
**Missouri**

My name is Chris Overfelt and I'm with Veterans for Peace. I was a hydraulics mechanic in the Air Force from 2002 to 2011. During that time, I was deployed to Turkey and Qatar, and indirectly participated in the destruction of two sovereign nations, Iraq and Afghanistan. In Qatar, I repaired and maintained the aircraft that refueled the bombers on their way to sow death and destruction in Iraq. Neither of these countries will likely recover from that devastation in my lifetime. Nothing I can ever do in my life will make up for the hundreds of thousands Iraqi and Afghan men, women and children killed in these wars.

When I joined the military, I had no idea that the United States military has over a thousand bases worldwide. Why do we keep such a strong presence

throughout the world? The short answer is to provide western capital with continuous access to foreign resources and markets. Most of the military budget is used not fight wars, but to exercise soft power in the support of American capital.

I want to give just one quick example of this soft power to illustrate the point. In 2005 in Honduras, Manuel Zelaya was elected president. He was a left-leaning president who quickly proposed land reforms to limit the powerful international mining and fruit corporations in the country.

The Honduran military, like in many Latin American countries, for decades has been armed and trained at the School of Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 2009, the Honduran military kidnapped President Zelaya and deposed him from office.

The head of the United States Southern Command at that time was General John

Kelly, who is now President Trump's Chief of Staff. Fast-forward to November 2017. Elections were held in Honduras that were recognized as fraudulent throughout the world, [keeping] a man named Juan Orlando Hernandez in power. It is only with the backing of the United States military weapons and training that he can stay in power. [In 2018] the Honduran military killed 31 men, women and children who protested Hernandez' inauguration.

When I joined the military, I had no idea that the best way to end American militarism abroad is to end it here in our communities. There are 4 ways to do this.

End the occupation of our minority communities by the police.

End the war on drugs.

Provide access to healthcare and education to all people.

And end the war on immigrants by defunding ICE and the border patrol.

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Photo: Steve Pavey



## SPRING 2019 EVENTS

### March 22: On the Ground with the Migrant Caravans

Join us as we explore how the Central American migrant caravans came to dominate discussions of international policy, as well as the experiences of the migrants themselves.

Guest speaker **Margarita Nuñez** is a doctoral student in anthropology who has traveled extensively with the migrant caravans.

**Friday, March 22, 5:00 - 6:30 pm**

**Kaufmann Auditorium, Goldwin Smith Hall G64, Cornell University**

### April 10: Welcoming the Stranger

CUSLAR will host a dialogue exploring religious and ethical responsibility in responding to the injustice of the current migration system.

**Steve Pavey**, documentary photographer, applied anthropologist and activist based in Lexington, KY, will set the tone of the conversation by sharing his photographic work and talk about his experiences in migrant camps.

**Wednesday, April 10, 4:30 - 6:00 pm**

**Durland Alternatives Library, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University**

Above: The February 2016 Border Pilgrimage for Migrant Dignity in El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Mexico was one of the first major demonstrations of solidarity and denunciation of the current U.S. administration's continuation of the nation's unjust immigration policy. The young woman's poster reads, "We must respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation." - Pope Francis



### Cornell-CUSLAR Global Health Program prepares for fifth summer course in DR.

In this 4-credit experience, Cornell undergraduates spend eight weeks in a summer course in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic that includes qualitative research with Dominican university colleagues, language and cultural immersion and a focus on traditional medicine. More at: [human.cornell.edu/dns/academics/undergraduate/globalhealth](http://human.cornell.edu/dns/academics/undergraduate/globalhealth)



### Student work-study at CUSLAR

Fall 2019 application deadline: Aug. 30



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

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



**Committee on  
U.S.-Latin American  
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