

CUSLAR NEWSLETTER

HUGS NOT WALLS THE BORDER ISSUE



GABRIELA MURILLO WAVES TO HER FATHER ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE DURING THE SEVENTH "HUGS NOT WALLS" EVENT, ORGANIZED BY THE BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE EL PASO-JUAREZ BORDER ON OCTOBER 26. PHOTO CREDIT: FROM THE SKYLIGHT FILM "BORDERLAND" _WWW.SKYLIGHT.IS

The Issue

MAKING SANCTUARY: CLAIMING AND DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS 03	17 INDIGENOUS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS: VIOLATIONS AT U.S.-MEXICO BORDER
FERNANDO GARCIA ADDRESSES MILITARIZATION OF BORDER COMMUNITIES 05	18 SAVE OAK FLAT, SACRED APACHE SITE
HUGS NOT WALLS* AND MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS 10	19 MARCO SAAVEDRA, PROTAGONIST OF INFILTRATORS FILM, FACES DEPORTATION
#ELPASOFIRME: BORDER NETWORK BRINGS COMPASSION 12	20 NO PLACE TO CALL HOME: LATINOS SUFFER HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN U.S.
EMPIRE OF BORDERS: THE EXPANDING GLOBAL BORDER SYSTEM 14	22 THE CHALLENGE OF CONSTRUCTING PEACE IN COLOMBIA



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Skylight_From their film "Borderland." Cover, Page 2, top left. Page 10. Page 11, all four photos. Page 24, all three photos.

CUSLAR. Page 5.

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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.

MAKING SANCTUARY: CLAIMING AND DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

By Tim W. Shenk, Editor

*"I love my country
By which I mean
I am indebted joyfully
To all the people throughout its history
Who have fought the government to make right"*

Ani DiFranco, from "Grand Canyon" (2004)

DiFranco argues that making things right often means "fighting the government." Many current struggles for rights – for healthcare, housing, land, dignified work, a quality education, even the right to family – are essentially a confrontation with the state. This issue of the CUSLAR Newsletter reports on a few of these struggles in Latin America, on the U.S.-Mexico border and at home in Central New York.

Creating sanctuary for the oppressed and persecuted is one of many ways of "fighting the government to make right," and it's necessary again today.

A sanctuary is a sacred place, a haven from harm. It's a place where the highest Divine law of justice is to be upheld, at times in defiance of earthly laws.

What has become known as the Sanctuary Movement took hold in the 1980s. More than 440 cities and hundreds of houses of worship across the United States declared themselves sanctuaries, taking a stand to illegally harbor refugees fleeing U.S.-funded wars in El Salvador and Guatemala.

As of 2018, nearly half of U.S. residents live in a "sanctuary jurisdiction" that protects against questioning about immigration status or restricts local law enforcement from cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Ithaca, New York has been an active proponent of sanctuary then and now. Most recently in February 2017, the city updated its 1985 sanctuary resolution. In a unanimous vote, the common council passed an ordinance directing city officials, including police officers, not to ask for a person's immigration status unless the person is actively committing a crime related to their status.

What is sanctuary?

Sanctuary is a practice grounded in the major world religions and ethical traditions. It follows the idea that communities should be obligated to protect people from punishment under unjust laws. It is a particular kind of

nonviolent civil disobedience that cannot be undertaken alone. Sanctuary is an ongoing collective commitment with moral, material and educational components.

More than a symbolic act, sanctuary's goal is to protect the safety of vulnerable members of the community through collective moral force.

In this sense, sanctuary only becomes real if a community makes it real. As with any human right, sanctuary cannot simply be decreed: it must be defended.

Undocumented activist Marco Saavedra said it this way in a November social media post:

"we make asylum/ make sanctuary/ build homes/ erasing strangeness./ governments follow suit." Daniela Rivero reports on Saavedra's activism and asylum case on page 19.

A broad understanding of sanctuary would include the right to a safe place to live. On page 20, Melanie Calderon explores how U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing policy has been discriminatory against the Latinx community. On page 22, Rebekah Jones discusses difficulties in implementing the Colombian Peace Accord, considering especially the complexity of developing a peace that considers justice of land tenure for the millions displaced by war.

Our history: Harboring fugitives in Central New York

In May 1985, the Ithaca Journal editorial staff called on the city to welcome "Esperanza." The young woman was staying in hiding in Ithaca, with primary assistance from local Quakers, Baptists and Jews, after the military in El Salvador murdered her brother.

The Journal staff noted the historical precedent for their stance: "The sanctuary movement is a 20th century version of the 'Underground Railroad,' the individuals who helped slaves escape north to the free states and Canada before the Civil War. Now as then, the motive is humanitarian. Now as then, the action is illegal and runs the risk of prosecution."

The Underground Railroad was active in Central New York and came into being in

response to material conditions: more and more runaways were making their way north.

When arriving fugitives were willing to tell their stories, it made it possible to show the Northern public the true horrors of slavery. According to historian W.E.B. Du Bois, even more than the lives saved, the multiplicative element of the Underground Railroad was its greatest significance. Du Bois writes: "Fugitive slaves, like Frederick Douglass and others ... increased the number of abolitionists by thousands and spelled the doom of slavery." The first-person accounts of life in bondage were a large part of turning the public against slavery.

Providing sanctuary was a dangerous prospect, and it got more dangerous with time. In 1850 the Fugitive Slave Act became law, requiring federal agents anywhere in the United States to assist in returning runaway slaves to their owners and making the harboring of a fugitive punishable by six months in jail and a hefty \$1,000 fine -- almost \$33,000 in today's dollars. At times like these, people's secret commitments to sanctuary were forced out of the shadows and into open confrontation with the state and its agents.

Syracuse, NY: The 1851 'Jerry Rescue'

The "Jerry Rescue" in the abolitionist stronghold of Syracuse, New York became an influential rallying cry for resisters, according to Milton Sernett's account in North Star Country.

Soon after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, 13 Syracusans formed a biracial vigilance committee to protect fugitives. W.H. Burleigh wrote in a letter, "It would be almost certain death to a slave-catcher to appear, on his infernal mission, in our streets. No fugitive can be taken from our midst."

On October 1, 1851, slave catchers did appear. They served a warrant to a local blacksmith, William Henry, known as "Jerry," accusing him of theft. Once in custody, Jerry learned that the property he was accused of stealing was himself.

Church bells all over the city sounded the alarm that a fugitive was in custody. Hundreds of people, black and white, gathered outside the Commissioner's office where a hasty trial was already underway. Jerry's

supporters made so much noise that proceedings had to be adjourned.

Abolitionist leaders then had the afternoon to plan their next move. Gerrit Smith argued that a “bold and forcible rescue” would show much more strength than a simple acquittal. Rev. Jermain Loguen, himself a fugitive escaped from Tennessee, said he and fellow colored men were prepared to “smite down” anyone who held Jerry, and either “rescue him or perish.”

Meanwhile, the local sheriff was overruled when calling to mobilize the national guard. With the military standing down, the abolitionists had a greater chance to implement their plan.

By evening, two to three thousand people had gathered, and a group wielding iron bars and axes rushed the police station where Jerry was being held. When his liberators forced open the doors, Jerry’s captor leapt out of a second-story window. Abolitionists grabbed Jerry, bruised and still shackled, and hid him for a few days before securing a route for him to Canada.

In this case, Syracuse won its designation as a sanctuary not by moral conviction or by legal argument, but by the collective physical force of a community.

Sanctuary violated

Victories in the cause of freedom are possible, as in the cases of Jerry and Esperanza. Yet too often sanctuary is violated despite the best protections of morality and custom. Salvadoran Archbishop Saint Oscar Romero was in a sanctuary of the Catholic Church giving Mass when he was brutally assassinated by a military gunman on March 24, 1980.

Romero had become one of the most prominent defenders of the oppressed in El Salvador, railing against the military’s rampant abuses. He was a marked man for sermons like this one from July 1979:

“I am glad, brothers and sisters, that our church is persecuted precisely for its preferential option for the poor. And for saying to ... the rich and powerful: If you do not concern yourselves with the poverty of our people as though they were your own family, you will not be able to save society.”

In a deeply Catholic country, he called on the rank and file of the Salvadoran army to

“stop murdering your peasant brothers and sisters,” that their military orders were contrary to the law of God, which said, “Thou shalt not kill.”

A day after this sermon, the sacred space of the church was desecrated. Saint Romero was gunned down at the altar.

Some may ask, then, what is the power of sanctuary, if it can’t ultimately protect even a bishop in church from the repressive power of the state?

Romero himself had an answer. Weeks before his murder, he preached: “As a Christian I do not believe in death without resurrection. If I am killed, I will be reborn in the Salvadoran people.”

This response may not be completely satisfying, but it shows a deep belief in the indignation and ultimate power of a united people.

On the border: Sanctuary in a militarized zone

This issue of the CUSLAR Newsletter focuses heavily on the U.S.-Mexico border, with a particular spotlight on the El Paso, Texas-based Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR). With its “Hugs Not Walls” events, BNHR creates a sort of temporary sanctuary at the Rio Grande for three-minute reunions for separated families. Their community power makes it possible, in an increasingly militarized zone, to protect the right of families to be together without intervention or questioning by Border Patrol.

Fernando García, founder and executive director of BNHR, visited Cornell University

and Ithaca College in October. His Cornell lecture from the CUSLAR-Latin American Studies Public Issues Forum has been included on page 4. Kevin Maldonado’s research on border history and operations provides an important complement to García’s talk.

CUSLAR students Gabriel Fernandes and Kimberly St. Fleur participated as support staff at the most recent “Hugs Not Walls” event on October 26. Their reflections appear on pages 10 and 12, respectively.

Also as part of the border theme, Daniela Rivero interviewed Todd Miller, author of *Empire of Borders*, during his CUSLAR-sponsored visit in October. The transcript appears on page 14. On page 17, Joshua Lam shares the effects of the attempted erasure of indigenous rights and claims to border land. He focuses on the Tohono O’odham nation, whose territory spans both sides of the contemporary U.S.-Mexico border.

What’s next

The U.S. economy is driving toward its next major recession, which economists predict for 2020 or 2021. Without a significant shift of national priorities away from the war economy and the racialized criminalization of the poor, social protest is likely to erupt on a broad scale as it already has around the world. We increasingly will be called, even obligated by our sense of right and wrong, to take on more radical positions with regard to the law.

Knowing the history of those who have stood against unjust laws may give us strength for the road ahead.



'WE'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY ATTACKS ON OUR COMMUNITY'

Border Network Leader García Shares Responses to Violence at U.S.-Mexico Border

CUSLAR-LASP Public Issues Forum Lecture by Fernando García



Fernando García, founder and executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights, gave a lecture titled "Border Communities, Racial Inequalities, and Human Rights" at Cornell University on October 1. The CUSLAR-LASP Public Issues Forum was hosted by the Cornell Latin American Studies Program and co-sponsored by the Latina/o Studies Program, Cornell Farmworker Program and Engaged Cornell. The following article is a transcript, edited for brevity and clarity.

Good afternoon and greetings from the U.S.-Mexico border. Today I'll focus on two things: the development and evolution of border enforcement policies and strategies, and the narratives about the border and towards immigrants. Both are extremely important for us at the Border Network for Human Rights.

You hear about the border all the time. It's in the news. It's part of the national discussion. You probably know that many of those narratives are distorted and have been used politically.

I'm going to try to present our vision, and by "our" I mean people working with border communities. How do our families see the border? How do we see ourselves?

You may have heard people say that there is an unprecedented attack against immigrants and border residents. Let me put that in context. In the 21 years that we have been organizing and doing advocacy as part of the Border Network, we've never seen so many attacks at the same time against our community.

Creation of the U.S.-Mexico border

Let's review our history, because history shapes who we are. The U.S.-Mexico border was essentially created in 1847, after the Mexican-American War. The war was used to implement Manifest Destiny, the expansionist doctrine that allowed for the conquest of the West. The U.S. government needed to create a pretext for war with Mexico to open up more land to the West, all the way to California. The current border was established shortly after.

Yet when we can truly start talking about a border is with the establishment of the Border Patrol in 1924. For almost a century up until then, there was virtually no border enforcement. The Border Patrol emerged from the experience of the Texas Rangers, whose function after the Mexican-American War was essentially to drive Mexicans and indigenous people out of Texas and take their lands, often killing them. That's the precursor of the Border Patrol.

At the time of the establishment of

the Border Patrol, the concept toward the border was border control. That means we want to keep a record of who's coming in and out. At that time, you didn't need passports, you just needed some kind of identification to come through a port of entry.

From border control to border security

Ronald Reagan's decision to declare a War on Drugs in the early 1980s changed the concept of the border. That was the next philosophical approach to border, which went from "border control" -- that is, to know who is coming in and out -- to "border security." That meant that every border crosser was defined as a potential drug dealer, a potential criminal. Based on the new concept of border security came the justification to reinforce the border. They also had to develop a new narrative. They had to change the mentality of the agencies and the general public, that we're going to go after everybody, because everybody who crosses the border is a potential trafficker. So we saw from the 1980s to the '90s what we could call a "massification" of enforcement.

Historically there were only a few hundred agents at the border, but by 1993, we had close to 10,000 Border Patrol agents. The new strategy was very clear: to seal the border at traditional crossing points in populated areas: El Paso-Juarez, San Diego-Tijuana, Brownsville-Matamoros, and others. The message being sent by the U.S. government was clear. There were going to be visible agents at the borderline, so people would see them and not cross there. People would be forced to cross in the desert, with more danger and no one to help them. And guess what? People started dying.

This policy was called Prevention through Deterrence. They wanted to make it so difficult for immigrants to come to the United States that they pushed them into these very dangerous areas. The deterrence operations followed the policy: Operation Blockade and Operation Borderline in El Paso, Operation Río Grande in the Río

Grande Valley, and Operation Guardian in San Diego, Tijuana and Arizona.

Since 1993, we have an average of 500 migrants dying per year crossing the border. When I tell you this, it's very personal. They could be my friends, my family members, my uncles and aunts, my cousins, my parents. This is not happening on Mars, even though they want to call us illegal aliens. It's happening right here.

Since Prevention through Deterrence started, we have a record of more than 10,000 migrants who have died at the U.S.-Mexico border due to our policies. This is a catastrophe! This is a human rights crisis.

We have had more migrants die at our border than U.S. soldiers who have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. How can we allow that? Do people even know about it?

'A matter of national security'

In 2001 we saw another change in the conception of the border. After the September 11 attacks, the U.S.-Mexico border would not be only about border security. It would be a matter of national security.

Now, according to the official narrative, everybody crossing the border is not only a potential drug trafficker -- now they're labeled as potential terrorists. This is the narrative that's been built, probably without the public knowing what's happening in these successive moments of what I call the expansion of the criminalization of immigrants.

So immigrants were painted as drug dealers but also as potential terrorists. That narrative must be questioned, and the people telling those lies about us must be held accountable. When they call immigrants criminals, rapists, and animals -- probably you have heard that in the last few months -- it comes out of the construction of a narrative developed over many years. And some people have started believing it.

So by the mid-2000s, we started seeing another element, another system superimposed on the border: the expansion of the militarization of the U.S.-Mex-

ico border. Border Patrol increased its actions as if it was a paramilitary unit, not a civilian enforcement agency.

Calling immigrants criminals was only one part of it. At the same time they were implementing a military strategy of containment. The border walls started in 2005 and 2006, not now. Both Democrat and Republican administrations were equally responsible for this narrative.

Yet border walls were not enough. We needed to add more Border Patrol agents. So we went from funding for 10,000 Border Patrol agents deployed at the U.S.-Mexico border in 1993 to 23,000 today. The actual numbers don't always reach those figures, because they have trouble hiring and keeping that many agents. There's constant turnover at the agency because a lot of agents can't handle the stress of being told they have to arrest children and families.

And yet it was not enough to build walls or increase the Border Patrol. We were told we need to use technology as well. So we have eight different drone systems in the skies over the border. The same drones that are launching missiles in Afghanistan are the ones we have within a hundred miles of the border into the interior. These drone systems monitor the border all the way up to Disneyland in California.

We also have sensors, night vision, everything that you can think of. But again, that was not enough. We were told we needed more border enforcement. The National Guard was deployed in 2005, 2006 and 2010: up to 5,000 guardsmen.

Even that was not enough to contain the so-called "invasion." So we did the unprecedented. When I say "we," I mean it in terms of society. The Powers That Be did it -- the administration did it. Trump declared a National Emergency for the border, saying there was an imminent threat.

I say this was unprecedented, but probably your professors can tell me if this has ever happened before. We deployed 5,900 active-duty soldiers -- Marines -- on American soil. I recall the deployment of the military in the past. I recall the Watts Rebellion in California in 1965. I recall the National Guard be-

ing deployed in the South during the Civil Rights Movement. But here we're talking about battalions of Marines.

How many of you know about the Posse Comitatus Act? I know some of you do. It's a very old provision that prohibits the deployment of the army on American soil for political purposes. It had to be an emergency. An emergency is an internal state of war or a massive catastrophe. None of that is happening at the border.

We have Marines walking through our neighborhoods. Why is this bad? It's violating what I believe are Constitutional standards. But it goes beyond that. It's bad because it's setting a precedent. Whatever happens at the border will happen elsewhere. The border always becomes the country. It always goes to the interior. The borders define the character of the nation.

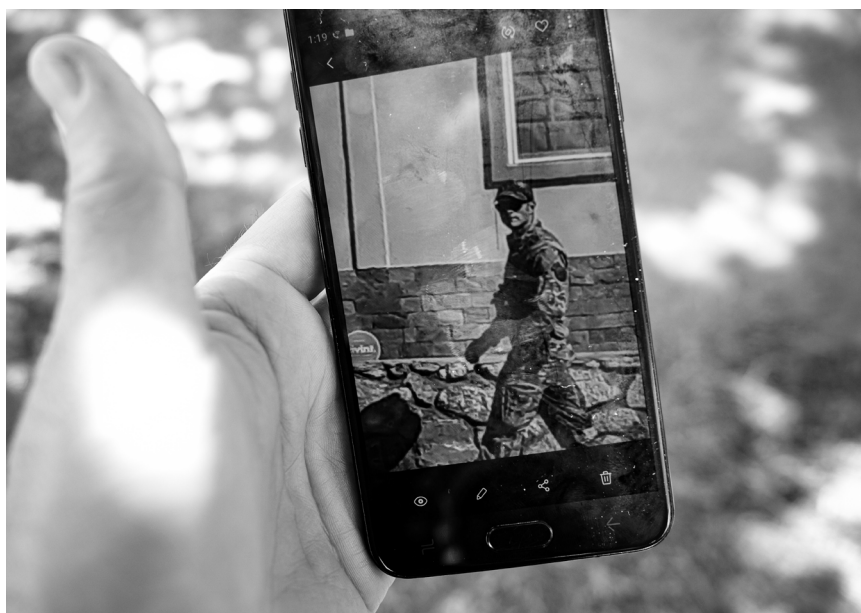
Because of this precedent, the next president could declare a State of Emergency and order Marines into the streets of Chicago or Los Angeles. That is very bad.

The Border Network for Human Rights filed a lawsuit against the National Emergency declaration. We went to court, and we presented our case, the administration presented theirs and we're waiting for the judge's decision. What we observed is that the deployment of Marines has been politically motivated. Why do we say that?

How many of you know of an incident where there were terrorists detained crossing the U.S.-Mexico border? None. Zero.

How many potential terrorists have crossed the U.S.-Canadian border? Right after the September 11 attacks there was a guy who actually crossed the Canadian border with a truck full of explosives, and he was aiming for the Los Angeles airport. They caught him, thankfully. But he was known as the LA bomber.

So why are we not doing the same at the Canadian border if the argument is national security? Why are we not putting walls, drones, border patrol agents in Washington State and Niagara Falls? I don't want that to happen,



but I want to put it in contrast, because national security is the argument.

The Mexican border hasn't seen an incident like that, and the Canadian border has. However, we're not treating them equally. Why? We've got to talk about that. The U.S.-Mexico border is one of the most militarized borders in the world. Right after South Korea, Afghanistan and Israel, we have this border.

Over \$18 billion has been spent at this border. Eighteen billion dollars. What is the intention of that? It seems like

you're preparing for a war. So who is the enemy? Drug traffickers? If that's the case, we lost that war. There are more drugs than ever in the country. It's not about terrorists because we have not seen a pattern of terrorism. So what is this about? When we start analyzing and understanding, the enemy is the immigrant family. That child, that mother, who is fleeing persecution, oppression or poverty.

Border enforcement policies are infused with ideology, specifically white supremacy. That's why we're not seeing

this at the Canadian border. Last March we saw the arrival of armed militias at the border. Mostly white, with a very specific ideology. They were saying they were responding to the call to action by President Trump to stop the invasion. What invasion? Border crossings have reduced dramatically. In 2010, the average number of people arrested crossing the border was 1.5 million a year. In 2018, it was under 400,000. So that's not an invasion. The "invasion" idea was picked up by people who felt empowered in their racism and xenophobia by the highest office in the nation. So these militias went down to El Paso with no authority, and they start detaining people. They became an unofficial expansion of Border Patrol.

Then on August 3rd, somebody drove 600 miles from northern Texas to El Paso and went to the most Mexican Walmart. Why do I say Mexican Walmart? El Paso and Juarez are a bi-national community. This community can only be understood by the interdependence of the two cities. He went to the most Mexican Walmart and started shooting Mexicans. He was selecting them because they looked like Mexicans. The only white person who died there was because he was protecting his Latina wife. Twenty-two people died that day, from our community in El Paso.

That shooting didn't happen in a vacuum. It wasn't circumstantial or random. The violence being carried out against our people is common and it appears to be government policy.

This year, before the shooting, El Paso saw mothers being separated from their babies. Eighteen-month-old babies were in detention. Children were put in cages. I'm not overstating it: we're there, we see it.

The detentions are unbelievably inhumane. In one case fathers, mothers, kids and grandparents were detained and kept under a bridge on rocky ground. They had to sleep there for days, exposed to the elements. They were given no food, no water and no medication. A mother asked one of the agents if he could pass her a bottle of milk that was there, to give to her little girl. The agent grabbed the milk and threw it to the ground.

Thirty people from that makeshift detention center under the bridge were finally taken to an official detention center. They hadn't been allowed a bath for seven days. The ICE agents put them in a cold outdoor courtyard, took a water hose and bathed them collectively with their clothes on. And then they were sent to hieleras, or very cold, cold rooms.

Another thing is that six children have died during a period of six months in Border Patrol stations and ICE stations. Before that it had been years since we had heard about a child dying in a detention center.

The effects of 'zero tolerance'

Since 1996 until recently, if you were detained at the border, you'd be deported back to Mexico. But of course you want to go back to your family in the U.S. Border crossing is basically an issue of people wanting to be with their families. If they catch you crossing a second time, they send you to jail for three to four years.

Last year that changed. Even if it's the very first time you crossed the border, you will be criminally prosecuted. So

the crime of seeking a better life is being punished. The crime of seeking the American Dream is being punished. That's the zero tolerance approach.

This administration stopped accepting asylum seekers trying to cross the border legally. This is how we've been told to do it, to show up and say, "I'm afraid something is going to happen to me or my family," and you ask for a hearing for protection in the U.S.

These people are not trying to sneak into the United States. They are turning themselves in massively because of violence and economic desperation in Central America.

Granting asylum has been the international standard and the historic standard of the United States for those fleeing violence. Do you remember why the pilgrims came here? They were fleeing violence. Many generations have come to the United States fleeing violence. But now we're told the country is not going to accept any more asylum seekers. This administration decided to just return them to Mexico, even if they're not Mexican. So far there have been, I believe, at least five

Central American migrants who have been returned and killed in Mexico.

What we have is the evolution not only of a policy, but the evolution of a narrative. We're very concerned about it because honestly this is not about immigrants. It is about what we are as a nation. What we are doing today represents the character of the nation.

When you think of the Statue of Liberty at Ellis Island, what do you think of? "Bring me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses." Who are the huddled masses? Immigrants. Twelve million immigrants came through Ellis Island from Europe. The Statue of Liberty defined the character of the nation for many decades. *E pluribus unum*. Out of many, one.

That narrative defined America as a nation of immigrants, but we have a new narrative forming now. I believe the U.S.-Mexico border is the new Ellis Island. The immigrants coming right now, who are being deported, incarcerated or waiting in refugee camps in Juarez have the same hopes and aspirations as those European immigrants. They are no different.

The only difference is that today we have immigrants of color coming from the south. So what we're seeing today at the border, including all of these horrific things -- what is really happening is a fight for the soul and character of this country. We are all going to be responsible, not just this administration, for wherever this country goes.

Is this going to be a country that incarcerates children, persecutes immigrants, builds walls, deploys the Marines on American soil? Or is this going to be a country that accepts that we are diverse and resolves to be inclusive? This country will continue to be driven by immigration. We could consider immigrants an asset to our communities, as they have been seen in the past, instead of a national security threat.

Transcription by Melanie Calderon, AnnaClaire Fernandez, Joshua Lam, Kevin Maldonado, Cassidy Vees.

Find the video of García's lecture at: lasp.einaudi.cornell.edu.

CUSLAR SPOTLIGHT: BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



The Border Network for Human Rights general purpose is to facilitate the education, the organizing and the participation of marginalized border communities to defend and promote human and civil rights; to the end that these communities work to create political, economic, and

social conditions where every human being is equal in dignity and rights.

Source: bnhr.org

FERNANDO GARCIA

Fernando García plays an important role in the fight for human rights and immigration reform, as the Founding Director of the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR), the National Coordinator of the National Movement for Legalization and Human Rights, and a member of the Independent Task Force of Immigration and America's Future convened by the Migration Policy Institute.

HISTORY OF THE BORDER PATROL

1823: The Texas Rangers, forerunners of the modern day Border Patrol, were established to provide paramilitary and law enforcement assistance to state and federal militaries and police forces.

1904: Riding on horseback, agents of the U.S. Immigration Service began patrolling the border. Their efforts were irregular and operations would usually be carried out when resources permitted. The inspectors, called Mounted Guards, operated out of El Paso, Texas and never totaled over 75 men.

January 28, 1918: Twelve men and three boys of Mexican descent were indiscriminately killed by the Texas Rangers in Porvenir, Texas, despite lack of evidence that the villagers of Porvenir were involved with any crime. This became known as the Porvenir Massacre.

May 28, 1924: Congress passed the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, officially establishing the U.S. Border Patrol under the Department of Labor to secure the border between inspection stations and apprehend “illegal aliens.” The act provided funds for the expansion of the Border Patrol, resulting in the recruitment of 450 officers from the Texas Rangers, local sheriffs and deputies.

1940: The Immigration and Naturalization Service changed its jurisdiction from under the control of the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice. This shift was accompanied by an approximate doubling of the Border Patrol to 1,531 agents.

1980s-1990s: During this time, Border Patrol began employing modern surveillance technologies such as seismic sensors, infrared night-vision scopes, and modern computer processing systems to track and apprehend migrants.

1992: The Border Patrol numbered at around 4,139 staff members around the country and had an annual budget of \$326 million.

After September 11, 2001, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was established, and the U.S. Border Patrol was integrated into the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a component of DHS.

December 2004: President George W. Bush signed The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, authorizing the hiring of an additional 10,000 agents, thus doubling Border Patrol manpower from 11,000 to 20,558 agents by 2010.

2018: Under the Donald Trump presidency, the Border Patrol’s budget has inflated to \$4.7 billion and consists of 19,555 agents, though budget is approved for 23,000.

Compiled by Kevin Maldonado

MILITARY OPERATIONS ON THE BORDER

Operation Blockade: The country’s first ever mass anti-immigrant exercise in 1993 deployed 400 Border Patrol agents along a 20-mile segment of the U.S.-Mexico border and dealt with repairs to the border fence in downtown El Paso, Texas.

Operation Hold the Line: On September 19, 1993, this operation was established to place agents and technology in concentrated areas, forming a human and vehicle chain across the border to intercept migrants. This first attempt at reducing illegal border crossings into Texas increased the number of people who would die trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border and would establish a new national strategy of “prevention through deterrence.”

Operation Gatekeeper: This operation was implemented in 1994 along the San Diego-Tijuana border and saw a mass concentration of personnel and resources in the congested western area of the California border.

Operation Safeguard: This operation sent Border Patrol agents to the Tucson, Arizona sector. In addition, a new fence was put up in Nogales, dividing the city in two and resulting in a public relations disaster for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Operation Rio Grande: A multi-year Border Patrol plan announced in 1997 that began in the Brownsville area in South Texas and moved its way west along the Rio Grande valley, expanding control over the border connecting Texas and New Mexico.

Operation Guardian Support: In April 2018, in response to reports of a “caravan” of migrants planning to cross into the U.S., President Donald Trump authorized states to voluntarily contribute National Guard troops to assist the Border Patrol. In total, over 2,100 National Guard troops were sent to the border from Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

Operation Faithful Patriot: Today’s “border support operation,” was enacted on October 26, 2018, by President Trump to provide federal assistance to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). This operation authorized sending active-duty soldiers from the Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force to the southwest United States to confront approaching migrant caravans. The act is a clear violation of the Posse Comitatus Act, established in 1878 which makes illegal the mobilization and usage of soldiers on U.S. soil. Over 5,900 active duty soldiers were sent and are still providing logistical assistance to CBP at the time of publication in late 2019.

Compiled by Kevin Maldonado

STANDING IN THE MIDDLE: ‘HUGS NOT WALLS’ AND MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS

By Gabriel Fernandes

On October 26 I got to be part of history being written. For four hours on that day in El Paso, Texas, the border between the United States and Mexico came under the control of the community as the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) organized its seventh “Hugs Not Walls” event.

I was a volunteer, standing halfway across the mostly dry Rio Grande, as more than 250 families separated by U.S. immigration policies came together for a three-minute embrace. Family after family met in the middle of the river — children seeing their parents, grandparents meeting their grandchildren, spouses and siblings briefly reunited.

It was my job to tell families their time was up. I heard their stories and shared their tears. I witnessed atrocities that highlighted the unnatural character of their separation. And, contrastingly, I saw examples of people coming together as a community and being driven by hope and determination to change the course of history.

Due to the large number of people waiting, all affected by the political implications of the border, BNHR had to limit people’s time with their families. Despite it being a short period, it was more than most people had had together in years, even decades. There, families experienced an intense range of emotions: people went from the most ecstatic joy to the deepest grief. Farewell moments were especially hard for everyone. Many didn’t know if a family reunion would be possible again. During those moments, it was not uncommon for faintings to happen due to the emotional shock of such realization. A Mexican Red Cross team was on hand to assist when needed.

It is our duty to share the struggles of these separated families and to denounce the humanitarian catastrophe caused by border enforcement. For those raised in the militarized zone of the borderlands, separation and loss are a daily reality. It should not be necessary to create an event to allow children spend a few minutes with their parents, or to have a crowd of volunteers carry an elderly woman in a wheelchair to the banks of a river so that she could finally meet her grandchildren.



My job that day should not have been necessary: the job of reminding people that, unfortunately, their time with those they love was limited by external constraints. However, the structural conditions at the border make even these brief meetings a victory, possible only when people are united in their claim to having their humanity acknowledged.

“Hugs Not Walls” is nothing more than a necessary response to an unnatural separation. The event began in 2016 under the Barack Obama administration and continues to draw families to the border from all over the United States and Mexico, not primarily because it is a political or symbolic statement against oppressive systems, but because it is a material need for families to be connected.

In my short time in El Paso, I found it to be home to many encounters and contradictions. Different languages and cultural traditions meet and complement each other there. This is a natural process, an intrinsic part of people’s identities. However, as seen above, conflict, violations of human rights, persecution, and white supremacy are all undeniable parts of the region’s history and its present. Even in modern-day El Paso, terrible acts of violence stand in opposition to groundbreaking acts of love and togetherness.

Family separation and demonization of cultures, unfortunately, are not new.

Studying history, we see that the logic of separation used to legitimize westward expansion of the U.S. territory still informs the oppression of people in the borderlands, whether immigrants or U.S.-born.

Gloria Anzaldúa, the renowned Chicana writer and activist, is a necessary voice to understand this process. In her view, as someone who strongly identifies with that area, borders are inherently segregationist. Borders exist to define which places are considered safe, while simultaneously distinguishing those who are like “us” from “them.” Such distinction is heavily dependent on imperialist ideology and white supremacist thinking.

According to Todd Miller, author of *Empire of Borders*, even though official accounts of history often overlook its violent nature, the U.S. southwestern border assumed its current form only in 1854 as the result of an imperial war that led to the confiscation of half of Mexico’s territory, which includes present-day Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California.

The United States redrew its national borders without consideration for those who would directly be affected by it. A region that was once one in terms of geography and culture became divided for the benefit of the empire. As a result, communities sharing the same cultural heritage were unnaturally set apart, families were sepa-

rated, and people were forced to submit to values and ideas that spoke little to their identity. In fact, the only culture considered legitimate and civilized was the culture of the white settlers coming from the east.

The legacy of the 19th century Manifest Destiny expansionist doctrine lives on. It is no coincidence that the current U.S. president evokes a similar rhetoric of separation in his zero-tolerance attitude toward what he has called an “invasion.” It is ironic that the original inhabitants of the land, who maintain deep cultural and historical ties to the area, are painted as the invaders.

One of the merits of “Hugs Not Walls” is to call attention to the arbitrary character of the border separation. The reunion of families coming from both sides of the border reminds us that no artificially imposed line can stop the process of social exchange. Culture can be better understood as a continuum that unfolds naturally, in a constant process of mutual exchange and growth.

In the words of Fernando García, executive director of BNHR, “Hugs Not Walls” turns the impossible into reality. The event succeeds in creating, albeit momentarily, a borderless region where social impositions disappear and people can simply be people. Anzaldúa believes that the key to liberating ourselves from dualistic and hierarchical perceptions of “us” and “them” lies in people who can see in between, such as those brought up in borderlands. In her book *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*, she calls for the recognition of a mestiza consciousness, a worldview that emerges from a multiplicity of voices, cultures, and experiences. In a world where everything is naturally tied together, there can be no legitimate separation.

Ultimately, “Hugs Not Walls” dwells in this new form of consciousness to shake our preconceived notions of what is legitimate, making us seriously reconsider what type of future we want to build in this country. “Hugs Not Walls” taps into the future by celebrating the cultural and human unity that is, paradoxically, both a historical fact and potential that can be fulfilled through community building and resistance.

Garbiel is a junior at Ithaca College studying Political Science and Religious Studies.



#ELPASOFIRME: BORDER NETWORK BRINGS COMPASSION IN MIDST OF VIOLENCE, MILITARIZATION

By Kimberly St. Fleur

“Mommy! Mommy! I see my dad!” Those were some of the words I heard while in El Paso, Texas volunteering at the seventh edition of the event “Hugs Not Walls” at the U.S.-Mexico border on October 26. When first hearing about this event, I admittedly was not very aware of the history of El Paso and the border. I knew about the family separations and the Walmart shooting, but it felt far removed from normal life. Yet being in El Paso and at the border itself made me realize how much of that violence has deeply affected the community and is part of daily life.

On my first night, we drove past a detention center that was actively holding children. The next day, I was painting crosses to commemorate the 22 innocent lives taken by a white supremacist shooter at an El Paso Walmart on August 3 and for seven children who died either in detention centers or from trying to cross the river into the United States.

Beyond El Paso, according to information reported by USA Today, as of August 2019, the United States Border Patrol has apprehended 457,871 migrants arriving as family units. This is a 406 percent increase in the total number of family unit apprehensions during the same period in 2018. From July 2017 to now, the Associated Press has reported the number of migrant children separated from their families at more than 5,400. Though both Democratic and Republican administrations have contributed to the potential for this situation, current rhetoric from the White House has seriously escalated a war on immigrants in the United States.

While in El Paso, I had the immense pleasure of staying with one of the coordinators of Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) and her family. My time with her and her family was the highlight of my time in El Paso. I grew to deeply care for this woman, not only through her kindness and love but also through the story of her family. Her family has been impacted by immigration policy and the violence occurring in El Paso. Her husband was deported several years ago, leaving her as a single parent to three children. One of her sons is one among roughly 700,000 DACA recipients. Her daughter was in Walmart when the aforementioned August 3rd shooting occurred. The experience of her family reflects the story of El Paso over the years. I couldn’t imagine experiencing such pain, separation, and violence. And yet, she is one of the most resilient people I have ever met, and that resiliency has definitely been passed on to her family.

At “Hugs Not Walls,” I learned that the spirit of resiliency wasn’t just a characteris-

tic of this one family, but that is spread out through the whole organization and community. #HugsNotWalls (HNW) is an event run by the Border Network for Human Rights which allows families on both sides of the border reunite in El Rio Grande. Many families coming from the United States side are undocumented. Once they reach the United States, they cannot return home to visit without risking the life they’ve built in the United States. With an agreement with Border Patrol that the agency “look the other way” for four hours, HNW is a great act of compassion that lets families be together again, even for a moment. The most impactful part of the event wasn’t just seeing families reunite in the river, where they had three minutes for an embrace for which most had waited years. It was realizing just how much of the BNHR staff themselves were there to see their own families.

Our host told us she was going to see her husband at the event. Yet, she and her family were also making it possible for 250 other families to reunite that day. They were working the event from 3:30 AM into the mid-afternoon. While I was at the gate on the U.S. side, checking people in, I saw many BNHR members who were working the event also get in line to see family. The little girl who saw her daddy on the other side of the river followed her mother all day as she was all over the place working security. A few other BNHR members working as security, haphazardly put on their passes to indicate that they too would be seeing family. At that moment they weren’t just BNHR members. They became people who have been hurt by the violence of injustice at the hands of the U.S. immigration system.

My story: Immigration and post-earthquake Haiti

As a black, Haitian-American woman from New York, I didn’t know what to expect coming into this event. My life in New York seemed so far away from the issues at the border. However, being at the border and seeing the work and reach of BNHR made me realize the immigration issues affecting my own family and community. The Trump Administration has been trying to end Temporary Protection Service (TPS) for Haitians, which was instated in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. I have a family member currently on TPS and I have seen them try to exhaust any avenues to stay in the United States, which has taken a toll on the family.

Beyond my immediate family, there are 46,000 Haitians in the United States on TPS who have created lives for themselves, families and com-

munities over the last decade. A return to Haiti means returning to a country facing political turmoil and crisis, which can largely be attributed to U.S. foreign policy and interference. While we support the uprising of the Haitian people as they question the electoral process and demand more democratic procedures, we cannot deny the fragility of the country or how a mass influx could strain the country. Furthermore, the United States should not deny the rights of others wanting to live a better and safer life to exercise their inalienable human rights.

This very fact is true among not only Mexican and Haitian immigrants but also for the many immigrants and refugees who are struggling to either reach or stay in safety. The deliberate threats to their safety by the United States government and its people truly shows the white supremacist nature and lack of moral character and compassion from those with power.

My interactions with BNHR and my host family made me realize how much violence and inhumane acts have become a part of life in El Paso. These acts are being used to terrorize a community that just wants to live, to survive. And as a nation, as human beings, we cannot stand and be complacent with the blatant human rights violations happening at El Paso and at the border. Inaction and complacency equate complicity.

Despite acts of violence against immigrants in El Paso, from harassment by government agencies to interminable detention to mass murder, we see through BNHR, a community rising up to denounce, resist and counteract these heinous acts. Through “Hugs Not Walls,” we see a story of great love and mutual support for people on both sides of the border. We see the ongoing story of defiance and resistance, showing the country that they will not be stifled.

Stories of people at the border are vast and wide-ranging: from the Mexican-Americans living in El Paso to Central Americans who have been apprehended at the border or have been deported. All different and yet all have common themes: love, strength, and resilience, but also of survival. As a community, the Border Network continues to work for survival, which is intrinsic to their and all of our rights and dignity as humans.

Kimberly St Fleur is a third year student at Cornell University. She studies Global and Public Health Sciences with a minor in Inequality Studies.



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EMPIRE OF BORDERS: ON SECURITY, DEMOCRACY AND THE MONEY BEHIND THE EXPANDING GLOBAL BORDER SYSTEM

An interview with Todd Miller

Todd Miller, winner of the 2018 Izzy Award for investigative journalism, has written three books about borders. On October 22 he gave a talk at Ithaca College on his newest book, Empire of Borders: The Expansion of the US Border around the World (Verso, 2019).

CUSLAR intern Daniela Rivero spoke with him about his book writing process and the greater implications of his findings. This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Daniela Rivero: How did you get interested in writing about borders?

Todd Miller: I grew up in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and I remember waking up every day and looking at the border. Simultaneously, my grandmother is from the Philippines, so I heard stories about her life in the Philippines and how she came to live in the U.S. Then I lived in Mexico for a year, so those three things were foundational to my interest in borders.

DR: One of the main questions you grapple with in your book is, “What is the U.S. Border?” What threads did you follow, and what conclusions did they bring you to?

TM: I’ve written three books on borders, and in each of those I had some major concepts that I was looking into. The first book, Border Patrol Nation, looks at the post 9/11 expansion of the border. I could see all around where I lived in Tucson, Arizona that there was so much money being put into this border apparatus.

I looked at different angles that were powerful but weren’t being covered. Not just at the border itself, but expanding 100 miles into the interior of the country where Border Patrol has jurisdiction.

There are all kinds of private companies getting contracts, and there are these things called Border Security expos. I started going to those. Those events are wild, because you see vendors trying to sell high-tech cameras and drones, robots, biometrics and facial recognition technologies to government agencies



all in one place. I started getting key interviews with people in those places. I would ask them, “Why are you doing this?” “Where is this industry going?” That was the concept for Border Patrol Nation: what does Border Patrol mean, and what are the facets of it?

The next book, Storming the Wall, is about the relationship between borders and climate change. There are assessments coming from the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security showing that climate change is displacing people. But in their recommendations, there’s not much about a climate refugee status but rather of building up borders. So I started paying attention to that logic.

I went to the Philippines for the first time, to my grandmother’s island. I learned that it was slowly but surely being eaten by the sea. If the sea comes, then you can no longer live there. What does that mean in terms of global migration? What does that mean in a world where there were 15 border walls when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and now there are 77? That book led me to this newest book, Empire of Borders. Here I’m ask-

ing, what is the global border system? What is the United States presence in it? How far does the U.S. border expand? Does it expand all the way around the world? After extensive research, my answer to all those questions was yes.

I followed the money: where it went, what programs it went to, where were these programs located, what were these programs doing in the places they were located. Why are they financing trainings by U.S. Border Patrol agents? Why are they bringing in armored cars from the United States? Why are they getting weapons and surveillance technology?

I went to Kenya looked at the border systems, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol was there. I went to Israel and Palestine, I went to the Syria-Jordan border, the Philippines, the Mexico-Guatemala Border, the Guatemala-Honduran Border. CBP was everywhere. Why?

The most devious thing of it all is that it’s framed with this idea of border security, which is very accepted on a mainstream level. But when you look at borders, they don’t create security for anyone -- they

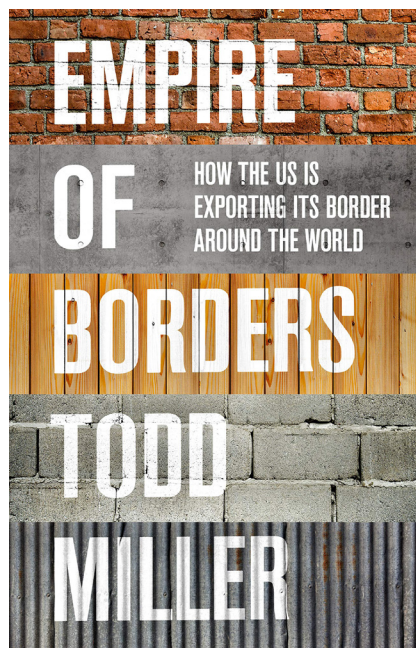
make people's lives insecure. Everywhere you look, borders are designed to make people's lives more insecure. The security is not for people, it's for a system. Its tentacles are going around the world causing upheaval in many places. And if you add ecological impacts, the assessments being done by DHS and the Pentagon are looking at this global border system as a way of managing the blowback of their policies. So that's the way we have to look at it, too.

DR: We are so used to sitting comfortably in the notion of the U.S. as democracy. What are the implications of writing a book about the U.S. Border system and titling it *Empire of Borders*?

TM: You have a territorial border of the United States, and then you have this other border, a bigger one, which expands way further, that you could call the border of the U.S. geopolitical and economic interests. The latter is where you see all these border programs going to. The Middle East is a perfect example. Oil reserves in the Middle East are pumping out oil, and the United States is in Jordan, they are bombing Syria, and then we have the brutal occupation of Iraq. So you have places that are the blowback of U.S. geopolitics and militarism, and those are the same places where you have the border systems going up.

You asked about the notion of democracy. Are we a democracy? We're doing things in other countries that they can't vote upon, and that in terms of electoral democracy is not very democratic. When you think of the border system, every year we see more and more money put toward the global border system without much public debate about it. I think of that as antidemocratic.

I wrote a report recently for the Trans National Institute looking into the corporations that are making money off of border contracts. Every time a budget appropriation cycle goes into effect, these corporations are all over the place, and they're talking to the key appropriation committee members. So while there is a debate going on in terms of territorial border expansion and enforcement, it's behind closed doors.



DR: How does the global expansion of borders affect communities?

TM: After the fall of the Berlin Wall, you have the rise of this new economic world order of globalization and global capitalism. In the '80s you start seeing neoliberal economic models being pushed around the world, and then in the '90s you start seeing free trade agreements. It's interesting to return to the history of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. Doris Meisner, commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), stood in front of a Congressional hearing in 1992 after NAFTA had been passed, and said, "We're going to need to harden our borders because of NAFTA, because it's going to cause immigration from Mexico."

You could call her words prophetic because that's exactly what happened. NAFTA was an open-border policy for corporations, written by corporations. Small farmers in Mexico who were producing corn had a guaranteed price and subsidies from the Mexican government, but that went away under NAFTA. Then companies like Cargill could go in and undercut these farmers. This caused displacement, so Meisner was correct.

Since she was the INS commissioner,

her suggestion that they harden the borders was very much followed. So then you see operation Gatekeeper, Operation Hold the Line, Safeguard, and Rio Grande Valley happening in the 1990s. In Nogales, Arizona where I lived, in March of 1994, three months after the implementation of NAFTA, they took out the chainlink fence and put in the first version of the wall that we see today. And from there you see by the end of the Clinton administration unprecedented growth from \$123 million to \$4.2 billion in funding for immigration enforcement and border security.

Everywhere I visited, the border was an imposition. There wasn't any real reason for a border to be there because they divided people with common cultures, and common languages. In Rantha, Jordan met a man who could no longer visit his grandmother. At the Kenya-Tanzania border, I learned that the border divided the Masai people.

Everywhere you look, borders are an imposition. The African borders came from the Berlin conference of 1884, and not one person from Africa was invited to that conference. It was all European powers that sliced up Africa to their liking, dividing communities. And when independence movements happened in the 20th century, the borders stayed, and they're still there. And even if they're not all heavily enforced, they are debilitating. With the U.S.-Mexico border, the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo seized half of Mexico's territory. The word "treaty" undermines the brutal imposition that actually occurred. It split the Tohono O'odham land in half without ever consulting them, so the colonial nature of the border is very present. You could go to any border, and it's a colonial imposition. No matter where you are, the border is imposed by some other power. Then we're supposed to forget about that moment, and the border becomes sacrosanct. You can't touch the border, and then this necessitates border security. These borders are not natural.

DR: One of the trends you illustrate in your books is a strong solidarity among the global elite in their push to develop a global border system. Do you also see solidarity among affected communities and people who are resist-

ing? What possibilities are present?

TM: I always think about a Palestinian artist named Kalil Gerar. His art has been dedicated to turning walls and immigration enforcement into something more utilitarian. He's one of the artists who took a sledgehammer to the Western Wall and started tearing it down himself. But really what he was doing was taking cement chunks and melting them down to make sculptures. One of his sculptures was of a soccer ball, because he was talking to Palestinian youth who said the wall had cut their soccer field in half. Gerar also did a film called *The Infiltrators* where he documented Palestinian resistance to the walls, and how every day thousands of Palestinians figure out how to get through the walls, around the walls, over the walls, and under the walls for different reasons.

The whole border system, at least in its current manifestation, is actually fairly new. In the '80s, Ronald Reagan famously said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" We were against walls. We went from a world that was more inclined to say "tear down this wall," even coming from a Republican like Reagan, to one that is now galvanized by the rhetoric of "Build the wall!"

The idea of border security is said ad nauseum, and everyone nods their head at that. The word security is not unpacked. Who would be against security? That's how it's put forth not only to politicians but to the public. We need to unpack that word. Why are you telling us that security means putting up a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border to stop somebody on the other side of the wall who's going to take something from us, or kill us. We're being told to fear something

that's elsewhere, so we need a wall.

Simultaneously our children are drinking leaded water that is causing them harm. Affordable housing has been cut so much that when people have their homes foreclosed, they end up living on the streets. Forty million people in the United States live in poverty, and medical bills are driving people into bankruptcy. All of that causes massive insecurity in people. Those sorts of things are not put into the framework on security. When you're talking about security, you're talking about the wellbeing for all of humanity. You're talking about eliminating divisions, and you're looking at a world where everyone has their rights to education and health matched. That's security. So when you think about it in that framework, the border system is dissolved. The world doesn't have to be organized this way.

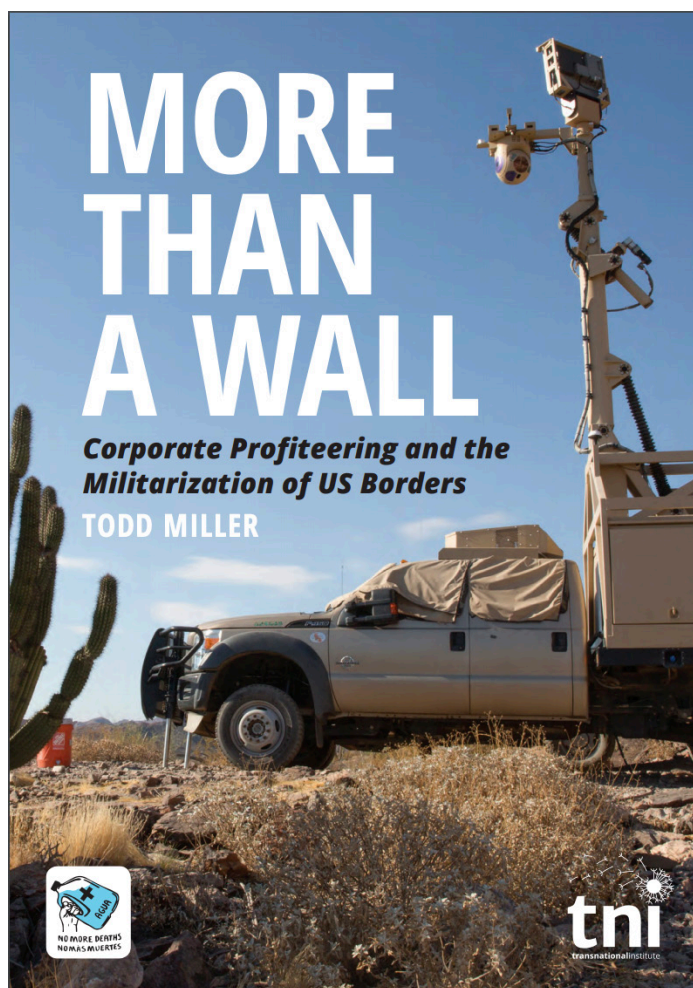
CUSLAR SPOTLIGHT: "MORE THAN A WALL"

"More Than a Wall" is a nearly 100-page report by Todd Miller on the corporate profits being made by militarizing the U.S. borders. The report shows that the Trump administration's border policy is a consolidation of prior policies -- and the money, and profits, involved are astronomical.

"The money paid out to corporations dwarfs that given to humanitarian groups supporting refugees," Miller writes in the executive summary. "For example, in 2016 the Office for Refugee Resettlement designated \$14.9 million to nine non-profit agencies to help people resettle, a tiny fraction of the total contracts given to corporations to stop, monitor, arrest, incarcerate and deport people."

The report states that budgets for border and immigration control reached \$23.9 billion -- billion with a "b" -- in 2018.

Published by the Transnational Institute in September and available online as a PDF, the report is a valuable and accessible resource for researchers and change makers alike. - Ed.



INDIGENOUS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS: VIOLATIONS RAMPANT AT U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

By Joshua Lam



In the early 2000s, Faustino Romero Zepeda was deported to Mexico after returning from tribal business to his Tohono O'odham home north of the border, despite the fact that he was carrying his legal tribal ID. Zepeda ended up being barred from entering the United States for five years.

Although Zepeda did eventually manage to obtain a visa, many believe that Zepeda should have already had U.S. citizenship, too. Like many indigenous people, Zepeda's U.S.-born grandmother was never properly registered with a birth certificate in the U.S., denying Zepeda and his mother their right to citizenship. On the other hand, many Mexican-born indigenous people have the problem of not being properly registered in Mexico, thus unrightfully being unable to apply for visas and passports and being denied access to their native lands above the border.

Contemporary discussions on U.S.-Latin American relations tend to center on the "decolonial," many times referring to neocolonial U.S. practices throughout the Americas. All too often, our decolonial conversations fail to center on the countless number of indigenous groups that are most profoundly impacted by neocolonial and settler colonial practices in the U.S.

The same structures that have maintained dominance over indigenous peoples over the past few hundred years still manifest themselves today and can be seen intersecting at the U.S.-Mexi-

co border such as in cases like that of Zepeda. They harm not only the indigenous communities that exist within the borders of the United States, but also Central American native communities and migrants. The settler state implicitly promotes the eradication of these indigenous groups through political practices and intentional neglect.

Zepeda's case is not isolated, nor is it the first time that the Tohono O'odham nation found problems with borders. In 1848, the Mexican cession resulted in a large group of indigenous nations falling under the United States' jurisdiction. Because of the cession, the Tohono O'odham people found their nation split in two by the newly established U.S.-Mexico border. The Tohono O'odham is one of the largest of the recognized native lands in the United States, amounting to about the size of Connecticut. This excludes Tohono O'odham land in northwestern Mexico, as well as the unrecognized traditional Tohono O'odham lands where the nation's people historically settled.

Because of this split, the Tohono O'odham nation has directly seen the impact of every policy implemented at the U.S.-Mexico Border. Tribal members have become subject to unwarranted deportation, constant surveillance, and harassment by Border Patrol officers.

According to the nation's leaders, 2,000 of its 34,000 members live on the Mexican side of the nation and find themselves more and more isolated as the

border becomes less permeable. Although members of the nation have been involved in protests and have offered resistance against implementation of U.S. border policies, there are also concerns amongst members and especially within the tribal council about the nation's relationship with the United States. The U.S. has recognized the sovereignty of the entire nation, including the Mexican side, theoretically affording all tribal members the same rights and privileges.

However, the tribal government feels immense pressure to approve any proposals given by the United States government. On March 22, the Legislative Council approved new surveillance towers along the border under Elbit Systems, an Israeli company known for its contributions to the militarization of the Israel-Palestine border. Tribal members currently are allowed to travel between the two sides but are subject to criminal punishment if they do so without first consulting a border officer. With the addition of increased surveillance, it becomes more difficult for members of the nation to make regular trips to sacred sites and to visit family members who have passed. Members of the nation have even been deported from the U.S. into Mexico, as is the case of Zepeda.

The tribal government struggles to function under the dynamic that the U.S. has created to keep control over native reservations. The settler state takes advantage of the poor conditions of native reservations, which are both created by and perpetuated by the U.S. government, resulting in a dependency on federal funding and aid. Additionally, the U.S. government offers compensation for the leasing of land for projects like the surveillance towers. It is also becoming increasingly clear that these policies are not meant to only surveil Mexican migrants: Geographer Kenneth Madsen reports that one Border Patrol agent believed that 80-90 percent of Tohono O'odham nation residents were involved in smuggling.

With no extant methods or attempts to address these beliefs, it is unsurprising that the nation's people find themselves being harassed by agents daily. In an interview with MTV news, Raeshaun

Ramon shared that he believes he found a hidden surveillance camera in a bush near his home. Tools like these surveillance towers easily become a way to monitor the everyday lives of Tohono O'odham people, especially since many of them live a walking distance from the physical border.

These policies are problematic but not just for the direct threat they pose to members of the Tohono O'odham nation. They also create a dangerous culture and precedent wherein indigenous nations lose their sovereignty for the interests of the American government, and it poses the risk of nor-

malizing militarization in indigenous communities. These are not isolated incidents. They exist among a variety of projects that benefit the U.S. government, ranging from oil pipelines to extradition and fugitive laws.

In addition to the nations and tribes above the Río Grande, United States immigration policies also affect indigenous peoples migrating from Mexico. Indigenous Mexicans find themselves disproportionately negatively impacted by U.S. immigration policies relative to their non-native counterparts. In 2015, a report by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

showed that seven different indigenous languages were represented significantly in ICE facilities, including K'iche', Mam, Achi, Ixil, Awakatek, Popti, and Q'anjob'al. Although ICE purportedly seeks to improve its language access through working groups and more interpreters, as seen in the same report, cases continue to appear in 2019 where those that speak a language other than Spanish join the large backlog of over 800,000 cases in the immigration court system. Various other policies result in a lack of adequate communication between the judge, the lawyers, and the client, which can pose a serious risk to the client's safety.

Joshua Lam is a senior at Ithaca College studying Spanish.

SAVE OAK FLAT, SACRED APACHE SITE

By Tim W. Shenk

Led by former chair of the San Carlos Apache, Wendsler Nosie, Sr., indigenous leaders have been joined by people of faith from across the country to defend an Apache sacred site at Oak Flat, Arizona from devastating mining operations.

Starting Thanksgiving Day, Nosie traveled 45 miles on foot from the San Carlos reservation to "return home to live" at Oak Flat, a place dotted with petroglyphs and until recently protected as a part of Tonto National Forest. Though Apache people have used the site for prayer and religious ceremonies for generations, Resolution Copper was given permission by the U.S. government to begin copper mining operations.

Nosie writes in an online petition to save Oak Flat:

"We condemn the immoral, racist, and unconstitutional seizure and sale of Oak Flat. Oak Flat is one of the most holy places in the Apache religious tradition, likened to how Christians and Jews regard Mt. Sinai. Resolution Copper's plan would create a crater below Oak Flat two miles wide and 1,000 feet deep."

Please sign and share the petition:
[petitions.moveon.org/
sign/dont-allow-resolution](https://petitions.moveon.org/sign/dont-allow-resolution)



CELEBRATED UNDOCUMENTED ACTIVIST, PROTAGONIST OF INFILTRATORS FILM, FACES DEPORTATION

By Daniela Rivero

Alex Rivera and Cristina Ibarra's 2019 documentary *The Infiltrators* tells the story of two young undocumented activists who successfully infiltrated an ICE detention center in Broward County, Florida in 2012 and organized from within to help get people released. Through interviews and re-enacted scenes, *The Infiltrators* follows Marco Saavedra and Viridiana Martinez as they turn themselves in to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Once they are placed in the facility, they begin gathering information for detainees that is helpful for their deportation cases. After six months, Martinez and Saavedra are discovered and kicked out of the facility, but not before working on over 150 campaigns, stopping several deportations, and getting around 120 people released.

Despite their undocumented status, the activists from the National Immigration Youth Alliance choose to resist openly, giving real meaning to the slogan of their movement, "Undocumented and Unafraid!" Saavedra and Martinez knew that by engaging in direct action to keep people from being deported, they were risking deportation themselves.

In the film, Saavedra asks, "What would you want people to do for those you love?" While being interviewed for *DemocracyNow!* he tells journalist Amy Goodman, "We would go to all lengths and any lengths to help our families."

SAAVEDRA MAKES ASYLUM CLAIM

On November 7, a crowd gathered in New York City to support Saavedra as he went into his final asylum hearing, where he argued that being sent back to Mexico would endanger his life. His case is significant because he sites his activism for migrant and undocumented rights movements as a reason why his life would be threatened if he were deported.

Living in the U.S. since age 3, Saavedra works at La Morada in the Bronx,



a restaurant run by his family that serves Oaxacan cuisine. La Morada has opened its doors as a welcoming space for immigrants. He continues his involvement in the immigrants rights movement, and says that were he to be deported to Mexico, he would advocate for the rights and protection of Central American migrants there as

well. The judge in Saavedra's case will make a ruling by January 17, 2020.

An update to this story will be available after that date at cuslar.org/marco.

Daniela Rivero is a third year student at Ithaca College. She studies Social Movements, Latin American studies, and Art.

NO PLACE TO CALL HOME: LATINOS SUFFER HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN U.S.

By Melanie Calderon

Displacement transcends more than geopolitical borders. It follows the Latino community in the U.S. through discriminatory housing practices and unresponsiveness from federal officials and agencies. And it does more than just leave recent immigrants without a community, but without a literal home.

Though the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was created as a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" -- programs aimed at reducing poverty and racism -- HUD has a history of under-serving the Latino community and turning a blind eye to discrimination even years after the Fair Housing Act.

An internal HUD report, which used the category Hispanic, found that Hispanics are given 12.5 percent fewer options for housing units than whites and shown 7.5 percent fewer housing units than whites. Hispanic renters are also more likely than their white counterparts to be told that there are no homes or apartments available.

The report also noted that Hispanics -- along with Black renters -- are told about one fewer unit is available for every five in-person visits. This mostly undetectable and pernicious form of discrimination, masked with a kind and seemingly polite demeanor, extends even further.

A 2018 Princeton University report concluded that Latinos in New York City are 28 percent less likely to have a landlord return their calls and 49 percent less likely to receive an offer on an apartment or house at all. Moreover, another 2017 Harvard University study found that 31 percent of Latinos reported being discriminated against when looking for housing.

Displacement can take on many forms for migrants. Leaving one's country and community in hopes of finding another in a foreign country is the most salient way. But the systemic racism embedded in the housing market and the limited opportunities for this typically working-class population to find affordable housing also acts as a force on an already highly vulnerable population.

HUD was established in 1965 following the passage of the Fair Housing Act aimed at banning discrimination in housing. HUD replaced the previous Federal Housing Administration (FHA) notorious for its racist lending programs that actively excluded minorities. But these predatory practices disproportionately targeting communities of color followed the new cabinet-level agency of HUD. By the time Richard Nixon was President in 1969, HUD had stopped issuing FHA mortgages in central city areas known for their high-density minority populations. The Reagan administration, 1981-89, also played a minimal role in alleviating discrimination when it turned a blind eye to real estate companies inflating the true values of homes for low-income home seekers. HUD also oversaw various lending scandals that preyed on racial minorities, drowning them in more debt and exacerbating cycles of poverty.

Today, discrimination in housing is far less pronounced. But that's not to say that these discriminatory practices have been eliminated. As outlined above, Latinos still face various forms of discrimination when looking for housing. Apart from being shown less units and called back less often, Latinos are also provided with less advantageous financing information, quoted higher fees, and more extensive application materials than

their white counterparts. And although the actors and policies responsible for the 20th century housing discrimination scandals have all been dealt with, other, less obvious, avenues for discrimination have opened up.

Following the Great Recession's housing crash, lending standards have tightened again, excluding the most vulnerable buyers and leading to what the HUD general deputy assistant secretary for fair housing, Bryan Greene, termed "suspicions of minority creditworthiness" once again. Redlining has made a comeback based on the "credit box" or credit score, which has disproportionately affected racial minorities, including Latinos. Research from NYU's Jacob Faber has even shown that the wealthier black or Latino homebuyers are, the more likely they are to be discriminated against.

So what does this mean for the Latino community in the U.S.? Aside from the less salient forms of discrimination, such as not calling Latinos back or showing them less units, Latinos also face other forms of housing insecurity. Anti-illegal immigrant ordinances have restricted housing for unauthorized immigrants across 29 states from California to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Missouri, leaving them vulnerable to homelessness. In addition to these ordinances, HUD Secretary Ben Carson recently introduced a plan that would require everyone in a public housing unit to have legal status in the U.S., no longer allowing undocumented parents to receive public housing through their children with U.S. citizenship. And even when Latinos are here legally, their occupational status and limited English abilities tend to exacerbate discrimination against them when looking for housing.

CUSLAR SPOTLIGHT: MILKED' REPORT

"Milked: Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers in New York State" reveals the woefully inadequate housing provided to farmworkers in the upstate New York dairy industry, as well as violations of their labor rights. The 2017 report by the Workers' Center of Central New York and the Worker Justice Center of New York was authored by Carly Fox, Rebecca Fuentes, Fabiola Ortiz Valdez, Gretchen Purser and Kathleen Sexsmith.

In 2019 farmworkers and their allies won a significant legislative victory in New York, passing the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act.



When Latinos do find housing, the conditions can be abysmal. Recent Latino migrants to the U.S. are frequently employed in the agricultural industry, working long, laborious hours as farmworkers. These workers live in employer-provided housing, unable to move elsewhere out of fear of deportation.

According to a 2017 report called "Milked: Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers in New York State" by Carly Fox, et. al, this housing is often infected with roaches, has holes in the floor, no locks on the doors, and insufficient ventilation. And although seasonal migrant workers are officially protected from these sorts of abject housing conditions under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, year-round workers are left without an authority with whom to register complaints.

HUD and other federal agencies have done little to help with these gaps in housing assistance. The government takes a reactive rather than a proactive approach to tackling prejudice in the housing market. It relies on complaints filed through FHEA, or Fair Housing and Equity Assessments -- frequently criticized for underreporting -- and encourages filing of these reports through government messaging. Studies done by the University of Chicago have shown that government messaging campaigns are effective at informing Latino communities about the avenues of relief for discrimination in housing. However, such studies do

not distinguish between established Latinos and recent immigrants who may not have the full capacity to communicate in English with a federal agency, nor trust the U.S. government enough to seek help from them.

Housing is, evidently, another avenue of discrimination -- another avenue of displacement yet immobility affecting the Latino community in inconspicuous ways that receive minimal attention and disregard from the federal, state and local governments.

CASE STUDY: HUD FUNDS FAIL TO REACH PUERTO RICO POST HURRICANE

The refusal of funds to aid in Puerto Rico's inordinately long disaster-relief is just the most recent occurrence of prejudice against the Latino community through HUD. Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in September 2017. More than two years after the hurricane devastated the island and killed almost 3,000 people, Puerto Rico has only seen one-third of the \$43 billion allocated by Congress for rebuilding.

Most recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development delayed funding to help rebuild homes damaged by the hurricane. HUD, under the direction of Secretary Ben Carson, failed to issue funding notice

to Puerto Rico, therefore Puerto Rico was unable to draft a plan that would have created structures needed to manage the funds.

Carson claimed that the decision was dictated by "common sense," while other HUD officers attempted to rationalize this by claiming Puerto Rico's alleged corruption, fiscal irregularities, and limited capacity to manage these funds as clear signs that the Puerto Rican government was incapable of receiving such assistance. HUD's Chief Financial Officer, David Woll, also claimed that the department was awaiting a report from the Office of the Inspector General detailing Puerto Rico's "capacity to manage these funds." However, HUD Inspector General Rae Oliver Davis stated that the report would not have significant enough findings to delay the funds to Puerto Rico.

At the moment, Puerto Rico has only received \$1.5 billion of the allocated \$20 billion from the agency's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Program.

Melanie Calderon is a senior at Cornell majoring in American Studies and minoring in Law & Society and Public Policy.



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THE CHALLENGE OF CONSTRUCTING PEACE IN COLOMBIA

By Rebekah Jones

At the heart of any policy lies a core proposition, a request of change in behavior or thought. As Pressman and Wildavsky highlight, to equate policy enactment with implementation fails to address the often-multilateral steps required to achieve the desired outcome.

The proposition offered in the 2016 Colombian peace accord is a large one. More so than a negotiation between highly disputed conflict groups and government actors, it proposes a theory of “peace” that to be achieved requires the cooperation of diverse actors.

One of the most deeply disputed conditions of the peace accord is the granting of impunity and incorporation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) into the nation’s formal political sphere. For many, the FARC represent one of the groups responsible for the massive human rights violations and terror over the country’s past 25 years. The United Nations has attributed that approximately 12 percent of the more than 220,000 deaths in the Colombian conflict to the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN), another highly organized guerilla group. However, for others, the group’s formation signifies the mobilization and protection of the country’s most vulnerable populations. Their demobilization can also be viewed as the acceptance of inequality, a major win for the country’s political and economic elite.

Thus, the resolution carries considerable baggage. The policy essentially requires the Colombian people to universally welcome the FARC into their state. The policy’s “peace” construction almost mandates a nationwide act of forgiveness for the decades of conflict between the FARC and the state’s military and paramilitary forces. Expectedly, this proposition of the peace Accord has been met with extremely mixed reviews. Most all Colombians want peace. Simultaneously, however, many demand a greater recognition and accountability of the FARC for the many acts of



violence to which they are accredited.

Are Colombians denying the prospect of peace? Not likely. It is evident that a single policy cannot change history. It cannot in itself make possible a culture of solidarity necessary to develop true peace in a conflict-prone country like Colombia. Mixed public opinion points to a need of national reconciliation by acknowledgement of all of the people affected by the war.

The proposition of the peace accord requires collective participation and reconciliation of the Colombian people. It also creates a requirement of the state. The FARC guerilla was established in 1964 with the message of anti-imperialism and agrarianism. Their initial call was for a higher quality of life including access to education and workers’ rights. The FARC and other communist groups were repressed by state and state-sponsored actors for their protests and land occupations against the displacement of rural landowners. When leftist groups formed the Unión Patriótica party in an attempt to disarm and participate in elections in the 1980s, hundreds of their candidates were assassinated by the state in the first three years of existence.

Despite the violence and means by which they’ve gone about achieving their goals, the FARC have fought against “land-grabbing” practices that

continue to present an intense problem in the country. In theory, the peace accord necessitates government intervention to address the concerns of the FARC by attending to the structural concerns of inequality and displacement present throughout the history of the country. Except it hasn’t.

Colombia is one of the countries hit heaviest by the mining industry. Many have highlighted the patterns of foreign investment and development on owned land in an effort to build up the country’s economy. This reality is in part why the country is home to the world’s largest internally displaced population.

Skepticism of the state can be justified considering the incorporation of the FARC in the political sphere. This skepticism can also be justified by considering the failure of the state to address the structural problems that have led to the proliferation of suffering and inequality. These decisions, and its backlash, give reason for any individual to question their loyalty. It gives reason to feel disconnected with the state’s conceptualization of “peace”. Peace, one might ask, for whom?

This disconnect is aggregated when said state fails to defend the concerns of their populations. In their 2014 edited volume, *The New Extractivism: A Post-Neoliberal Development Model or*

Imperialism of the Twenty-First Century? Henry Veltmeyer and James Petras highlight the conflict felt in many Latin American states. Tensions arise when governments adopt a neo-extractivist model economy in an effort to increase internal revenue, which usually requires encroachment upon the land-rights of the often most politically isolated groups in the countries. As a result, states are effectively must choose between the financial benefit of foreign interest and poor communities. Veltmeyer and Petras write, “Strategies of accumulation by dispossession are not simply imposed on communities in the periphery by imperial powers, but rather implemented by the ruling classes within the peripheral state.” In this case, one may find a considerable fracture in the relationship between the Colombian state and its vulnerable populations.

The peace accord claimed to support farmers. For example, in addition to financial support for small farms, it included a crop-substitution plan that aimed to stop the growth of coca plants by giving farmers incentive to plant legal

crops. Although many farmers uprooted their livelihood in response to these promises, the funding stopped briefly after President Duque took charge.

As of now, a mere 23 percent of the peace accord has been implemented in Colombia. The state has thus failed in protecting the rights of the economically disadvantaged, and the violence continues. The Institute for Development and Peace Studies has estimated that at least 700 social leaders and indigenous activists have been murdered in their attempts to mobilize communities against neo-extractivist policies and cocoa production. Although the state has employed security in some cases to guard community leaders, their murders signify a failure to address the systemic issues within the state’s mode of operation. The deaths of activists further erode morale and potential of national unification. In essence, the proposition of safety, unity and peace has not come to pass.

The unsettling picture of Colombia’s internal conflict continues three years

after the implementation of the peace Accord. Current President Ivan Duque has expressed his lack of support for the 2016 Accord, defunding key programs and provisions of the agreement. Although he has indicated his interest in renegotiating the terms, he and the next two Colombian presidents are constrained by the Constitutional Court to implement the deal. Conflict between elite initiatives only further aggravate potential of distrust between Colombians and their state. Whether through renegotiation or proper implementation of the accord, a construction of “peace” that requires immense reconciliation on the part of the civil populations, guerillas, and paramilitaries must be properly understood. This peace proposition will require practical steps of trust-building to lead to the unification of the Colombian people. Only then might we construct a proper peace.

Rebekah Jones is a senior at Cornell University studying Development Sociology and Public Policy.



CUSLAR SPOTLIGHT: SEMBRANDOPAZ

The construction of peace in Colombia will come from the ground up. Amongst the organizations working to build solidarity across the diversity of the Colombian people is *Sembrandopaz* (Spanish for “planting peace.”) Located in Sincelejo, Colombia, the group aims to become a restorative space through a pedagogical education of learning by doing, based on non-violent coexistence, spirituality, solidarity, dialogue, democracy, and respect for environment, seeking to generate wealth from the integral development of the person to contribute to a more just and happy society. They work with indigenous and afro-Colombian populations, women and children, displaced persons, victims of conflicts and, peasant farmers.

Find them online: sembrandopaz.org

RECOMMENDED READING

These last months have been full of upheaval in Latin America and on U.S. soil. Sustained protest in Chile, Ecuador and Colombia and a coup in Bolivia have again shifted the terrain for the coming year. Here at home, while the election cycle and impeachment grab the headlines, militarization continues at the border and the homelessness crisis has triggered a resurgence of the National Union of the Homeless.

It can be overwhelming to sift through all of the noise to find quality perspectives on the important issues. We've attempted to curate a few articles we recommend, and we'll continue to add to the list. **Find clickable links at <https://cuslar.org/news2020/>.** - Editors



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Bolivia

What the Coup Against Evo Morales Means to Indigenous People Like Me
By Nick Estes
The Guardian

Bolivia: una deriva reaccionaria
By Liliana Colanzi
El País

Brazil

Lula and Democracy at the Crossroads
By Marcelo Zero
Brasil Wire

Chile

Why Chileans Are Protesting for a New Socioeconomic Order
By Peter Kornbluh
The Nation

What is Happening in Chile is a Revolution Not a Protest or a Riot
By Yvette Montoya
hiplatina.com

Chilean Protesters Are Waving the Mapuche Flag. What's the Mapuche Flag, and Who's Hoisting it?
By Patricia Rodriguez
The Washington Post

Colombia

Colombia protests: What prompted them and where are they headed?
By Steven Grattan
Al Jazeera

¿Qué provocó la ola de protestas en Colombia? (Video)
BBC Mundo

Ecuador

What's Behind Ecuador's October 2019 Uprising?
By Gabriel Fernandes
cuslar.org



Honduras

Berta Caceres Murder: Seven Convicted Men Sentenced up to 50 Years
By Nina Lakhani
The Guardian

Mexico

A Look at Mexico's New National Guard: 'There to Stop Migrants'
By James Frederick
NPR

Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

'Unite the Poor': Strategy of the Poor People's Campaign
By Tim W. Shenk
cuslar.org

'We Need Many Douglasses and Tubmans': Lessons from North Star Country
By Tim W. Shenk
kairoscenter.org

The National Union of the Homeless is the Fastest Growing Union You Haven't Heard of
By the Pennsylvania Poor People's Campaign
medium.com

Apache Man Moving Home to Protest Copper Mine in Arizona
By Felicia Fonseca
Associated Press



PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE SEVENTH "HUGS NOT WALLS" EVENT, ORGANIZED BY THE BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE EL PASO-JUAREZ BORDER ON OCTOBER 26.
PHOTO CREDIT: FROM THE SKYLIGHT FILM "BORDERLAND" _WWW.SKYLIGHT.IS