



ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA • SPRING 2003

Colombia

Beyond Armed Actors: A Look at Civil Society

Colombia

A Hundred Years of Change

BY JORGE ORLANDO MELO

A hundred years ago, Colombians had at least one reason to be happy: the end of a three-year long civil war that concluded in 1902. However, in general, the life of a typical Colombian was not easy. He was an illiterate peasant whose wife, who had borne him six children, worked from dawn to dusk at home and on the family's small agricultural plot. Their children had a life expectancy of fewer than 30 years. This average citizen was very religious and knew the outside world only from what the parish priest or some rich folk said, talking about the Pope or modern sins—of which a place called Paris was a prime example. Colombians paid few taxes and received a few state services such as schools, roads and railroads.

One of the fundamental changes in Colombia in a hundred years has been in the relations between men and women, transforming the society.

The statistics are clear. In the first decade of the 20th century, only 12 percent of Colombia's four million people lived in cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants. Only 25 percent of the population could read and write; only one out of six children attended school. Furthermore, typhoid, measles and gastrointestinal ailments killed one out of every six infants before they reached their first birthday.

Women, at least in theory, stayed home. They had no political rights and, according to law, had to submit themselves to their husband's authority. In practice, many had small businesses, made handicrafts or planted the earth. The closest thing to professional women were the female teachers in rural schools and nuns working in orphanages and asylums.

In one hundred years, many things have been transformed. The 20th century was one of accelerated change. What was the most important change? Economic transformation, the coffee boom that opened us up to the world, the development of a national industry or the urbanization sparked by the mass exodus of peasants to the cities—making Colombia into an urban nation? Was it general schooling that enabled

all children to attend primary school, with one out of every four Colombians now entering the university? Was the biggest change the eradication of epidemics? Or was it the development of the mass media, replacing the word of the priest or the teacher with newspapers, radio and television that brought us *rancheras* and rock, newscasts and evangelical preaching?

In my opinion, the fundamental change has been in the relations between men and women. Already, in the 1920s, girls were going to primary school at the same rate as boys. Women were filling lowly positions in factories and stores. By the 1940s, young women were getting their doctorates. Today, men and women hold roughly the same number of midlevel posi-

tions in business and institutions and some high political posts. This generation, the first one with more women than men graduating from the university, will almost certainly achieve equality in the workforce. The inertia of machismo and the burdens associated with pregnancy and maternity still linger on. But even peasant women have managed to somewhat liberate themselves from their *machos*—something that seemed impossible fifty years ago.

Obviously, some things have not changed, at least in relative terms. Colombia is a more egalitarian society today. However, although today's poor have access to medical services and their children go to school, they may actually receive a smaller proportion of income than

in the beginning of the 20th century. Despite highly increased individual productivity, the proportion of the overall product that goes to each economic stratum is similar to that of a hundred years ago.

And one thing has changed for worse. A hundred years ago, the end of a bloody war brought a 40-year period of peace. If we now had the same homicide rates as in the 1920s or '30s, Colombia would not have 30,000 dead per year, but barely 2,000. Colombian society substantially improved its quality of life due to talented bureaucrats performing despite bad presidents and unfavorable political conditions. However, the Colombian State and ruling class have, at least since 1947/1948, let themselves get tangled up with the demon of violence and have never found the way to confront this violence effectively. At times, they even fomented it by promoting intransigent, sectarian political models. Intellectual discourse also stimulated violence on occasion by proclaiming armed struggle as the only solution to problems of inequity. It is quite likely that the country is still paying for its inability to carry out agrarian reform in the 1950s and 1960s.

With the idea of changing an unjust country, the guerrillas declared war fifty years ago. The violence of this war—and the demonic responses it has generated—has made Colombia more unjust, poorer and more rigid, but much has still been transformed. If peace should be declared today, more open political institutions and the emerging richer and more democratic civil society culture would enable Colombians to finally come closer to achieving the type of country we all desire.

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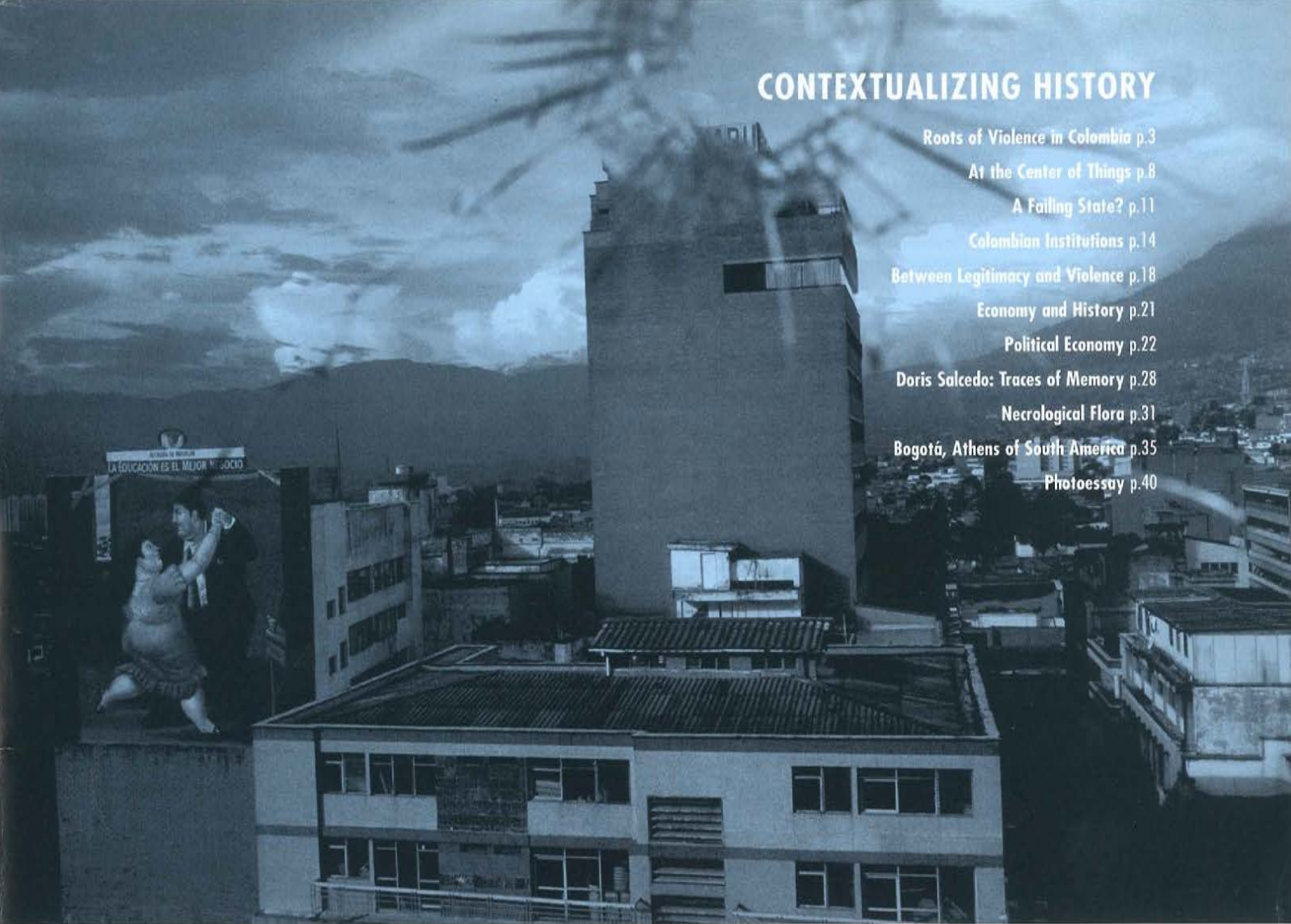
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Roots of Violence in Colombia

Armed Actors and Beyond

BY JOHN H. COATSWORTH

COLOMBIA HAS SUFFERED FROM HIGH LEVELS OF ARMED STRIFE for most of its history. The current strife it is experiencing is not unusual either in length or death toll.

In the 19th century, killing people required more effort because primitive weapons often misfired or missed altogether. Nonetheless, between the 1820s and 1879, an estimated 35,000 Colombians (out of a million or so inhabitants) lost their lives in civil warfare. As a proportion of the population, this is roughly the equivalent of a US death toll of five to ten million between 1950 and 2000. Or about half a million Colombians in the same half century—not far from the rate of the actual numbers.

Colombian violence has reached at least a dozen peaks of intensity since the 1820s. The 20th century dawned over a paroxysm of partisan strife known to history as the War of a Thousand Days. Subsequently, from 1948 to 1964, some 80,000 to 200,000 died in murderous partisan warfare that came to be called “La Violencia.” More than 50,000 died in the Drug Wars of the 1980s and in the esca-

lating guerrilla warfare of the 1990s.

Death tolls this high for such a long time are unusual, even in the 20th century. As many as a million people may have died in the Mexican Revolution, but more perished from disease and dislocation than combat. In more recent times, the last paroxysms of the cold war imposed a heavy toll on Latin America—30,000 died in Argentina between 1976 and 1982, perhaps 300,000 in the Central American wars between 1978 and the early 1990s. Other examples could be cited, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Colombia’s history is one of the most violent in the hemisphere, with organized killing existing at chronically high levels, punctuated with episodes of high-intensity murderousness, for nearly two centuries.

Why has Colombia suffered from high levels of endemic violence for such a long time? What conditions have tended to cause already high homicide rates to escalate into intense periods of mass murder?

Historians of Colombia usually cite two sets of causes for the routinely high rates of homicide Colombia has experienced since the last century. The first is Colombia's exceptionally difficult geography. The second involves the failure of the country's political leaders and their followers to design effective institutions of government and make them work.

In their outstanding survey of Colombian history, published last year and entitled *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, Marco Palacios and Frank Safford argue that "spatial fragmentation...has found expression in economic atomization and cultural differentiation. The country's...most populated areas have been divided by its three mountain ranges...into isolated mountain pockets...that fostered the development of particularized local and regional cultures, regional antagonism and local rivalries..."

Because of its geographic fragmentation, much of rural Colombia did not come to be settled until well into the twentieth century. As Palacios and Safford point out, these internal "frontiers" remained virtually stateless for decades. As in other frontiers, the lack of effective mechanisms for the enforcement of basic property and civil rights promoted violence. Vigilantes, private police working for big landowners, peasant and community defense organiza-

tions, local mafias and clans all proliferated and fought each other.

WHY DID COLOMBIA'S INTERNAL FRONTIERS REMAIN VIRTUALLY LAWLESS and stateless for so much longer than other frontier regions? Two reasons stand out among many. First, imposing orderly government and providing minimal services like police protection, a functioning judiciary, schools and the like are more costly in Colombia's difficult terrain than in most other countries. Second, Colombia's political institutions developed in a way that promoted the development of political parties as substitutes for government.

For much of Colombia's history, local violence was linked to the two main political parties, the Conservative and Liberal parties. Until the 1991 Constitution, 20th-century Colombia operated under rules that gave the president of the country the right to appoint all local and state executives. Local and state legislatures, however, had to be elected every two years. The result was a lethal combination of mayors and governors appointed from Bogotá facing noisy and potentially disruptive local legislatures.

The president's appointees often struggled just to control the urban areas assigned to them. Outside the main cities, and especially in recently settled areas, government barely functioned, with local

Editor's Letter

When I first started working on this *ReVista* issue on Colombia, I thought of dedicating it to the memory of someone who had died. Murdered newspaper editor Guillermo Cano had been my entrée into Colombia when I won an Inter American Press Association fellowship in 1977. Others—journalist Penny Lernoux and photographer Richard Cross—had also committed much of their lives to Colombia, although their untimely deaths were not a product of the country's violence. My mind kept flipping through the sad archive of those I had known, and then the losses of friends of friends. The toll increased with the recent bombing at the El Nogal social club. E-mails started pouring in, telling of the deaths of friends of friends and of the parents of schoolmates of friends' children, the end of the feeling that Bogotá is one safe island in a sea of violence.

Then I caught myself. The sad news was a reality, but I had experienced Colombia in another way—as a vital country with a rich cultural life and a strong collective sense of collaboration. I lived in Bogotá for nine years in the 1970s and 1980s as a foreign correspondent. On arrival to Harvard in

1997, I found myself involved in a dynamic conference called "Law and Democracy in Colombia" organized by then-Nieman Fellow María Cristina Caballero and a group of committed Colombian students. That conference was the springboard for the Colombian Colloquium—an active network of students mainly from Harvard and MIT. Many of them have returned to Colombia to teach and work, but new ones take their place.

Call it civil society. I never really had a name for it until Theodore Macdonald, Rodrigo Villar, and Luis Fernando De Angulo decided to organize another conference "Beyond Armed Actors: Carving a Stronger Role for Civil Society in Colombia." For three days in November 2002, I heard the stories of projects in the midst of war; I experienced the intense exchange of ideas and information between committed Colombians and Harvard faculty.

This issue of *ReVista* grew out of two civil society networks: the Colombian Colloquium and the group from the November conference. And a wonderful thing happened along the way. Looking for photographs, I came across a website: <www.fotografoscolombianos.com>

and made a plea for contributions. Soon, photographers—working for free and in arduous conditions—were sending me images to represent their country. As the word spread, this creative activity—accompanied by an urgent sense of solidarity—transformed these pages by presenting the visual as well as the verbal reality of Colombia. Colombian civil society—photographers, newspaper editors, archivists—responded to my quest for photos with an intensity I'd never experienced with any previous issue. As DRCLAS Director John Coatsworth points out in his provocative introduction to this issue, Colombia is not lacking in civil society.

The challenge is to harness it and carve out a stronger role for peace and social equity. Still, all that being said, I can't resist dedicating this issue to someone: Ana Micaela Ortega Obregón, born September 16, 2002. I hope that she may grow up in a peaceful and socially equitable Colombian society; the society that the authors and photographers in this issue are struggling to create.

Jane C. Erlich



Previous page: Two images of Colombia in Medellín: bulletholes and Botero; above: mourners at a funeral.

people left to fend for themselves. In many areas, the two traditional parties fought for control, often violently. They forged links to local interests, recruited allies, developed or absorbed existing patronage networks, and merged with local mafias and clans. Villages and towns came to be identified as either Liberal or Conservative territory. The areas of internal colonization and frontier lawlessness coincide with the areas of modern guerrilla and paramilitary activity.

Many other problems contributed to the chronic violence of the Colombian countryside, including poverty and inequality. Historians also cite Colombia's Catholic Church as another polarizing element. The Church resisted modernizing trends longer in Colombia than elsewhere; it was staunchly reactionary, wedded to the Conservative Party, and opposed to the separation of church and state as well as public education until the 1960s and 1970s.

Amazingly, over the past half century, Colombia has managed to achieve steady economic growth at a moderate pace, neither as high as the Asian tigers nor as anemic as most other Latin American nations. A modern Colombia of middle classes and urban sprawl thus grew and prospered, despite endemic rural violence. When conditions deteriorated enough to have an impact on life in the cities, as they did from time to time, unhappy urban voters compelled political elites to do something. The most significant of all such efforts,

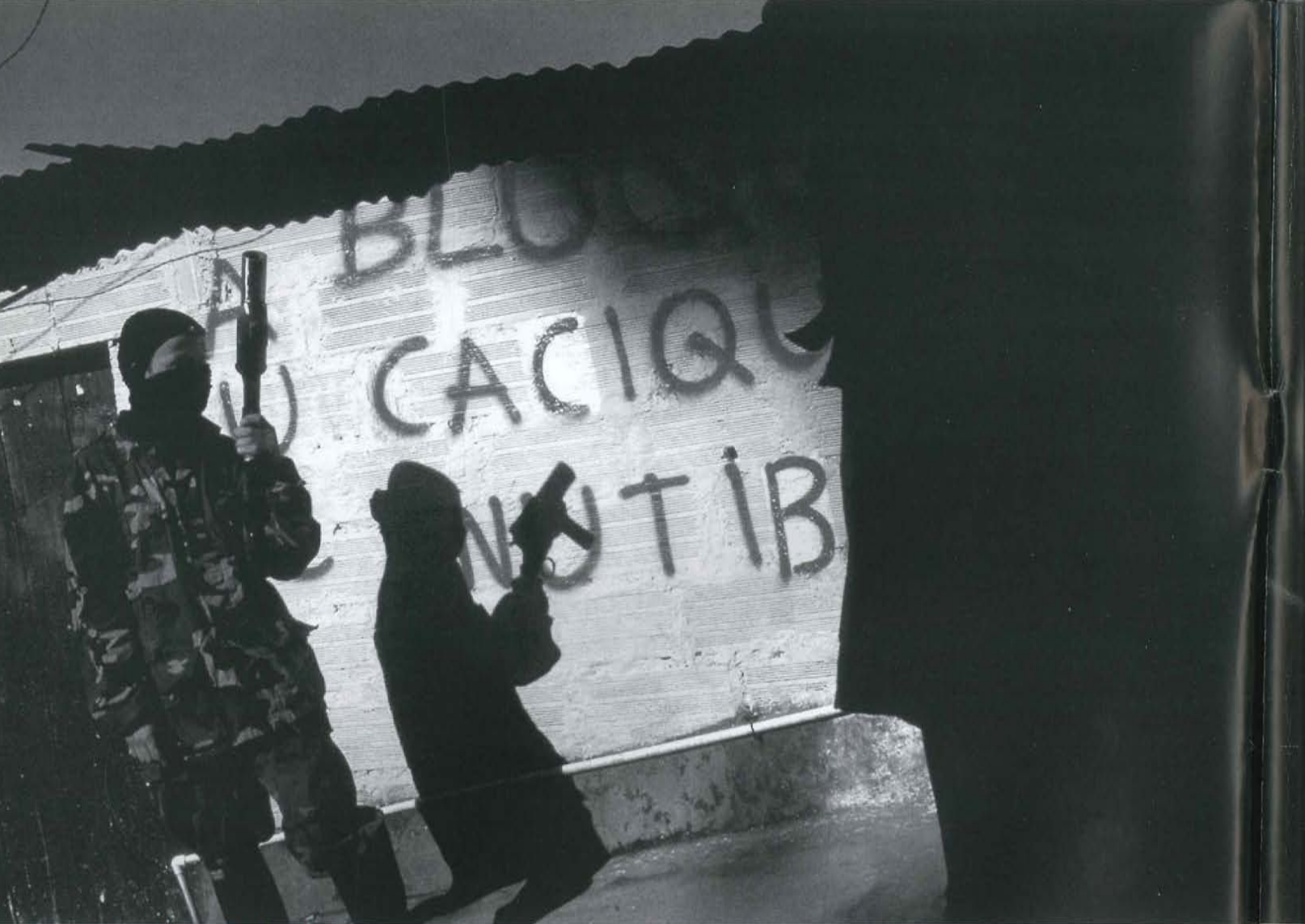
occasioned by the Drug Wars of the 1980s, was the adoption of a new Constitution in 1991, which democratized local and state government by making mayors and governors subject to election for the first time in more than a century.

Unfortunately, the new Constitution did not calm the country, principally for two reasons. First, by the time the Constitution was adopted, the Drug Wars of the late 1980s had nearly destroyed the country's judicial and law enforcement institutions.

Colombian history makes it clear that military victories have never addressed the deeper roots of violence.

Second, the Colombian government had lost credibility as a partner in peace talks with armed guerrillas.

From the 1970s to 1985, chronic violence, especially in the countryside, kept Colombia's homicide rate in the range of 20-39 per 100,000 population, high by international standards, but not much above Brazil and Mexico. Then the leaders of the drug cartels began a campaign of terror and assassination, aimed at stopping the extradition of drug trafficking defendants from Colombia to the United States for trial. They also redoubled their efforts to undermine the police and courts through bribery and threats. Colombia's homi-



Underaged paramilitary boy: kids at war

cide rate soared to 57 in 1985, 86 in 1990 and 95 in 1993. In the Department (province) of Antioquia, which includes the city of Medellín, the homicide rate oscillated between 245 and 400 per 100,000 in the early 1990s. The high murder rates coincided with rapidly increasing rates of all kinds of crimes against property and people as the criminal justice system nearly collapsed. The new constitution could not repair this damage.

Among those who lost their lives in these years were more than 3,000 candidates for public office, including a major presidential contender. Most of those killed were former guerrillas who had accepted a government peace offer, laid down their arms, and agreed to seek peaceful change through the ballot box. Most were assassinated by right wing paramilitary groups, some of whom were collaborating with serving officers and units of the Colombian military or police agencies. The government's failure to protect these former guerrillas running for elective office cast a pall on all subsequent negotiations with rebel groups: another key problem that the new constitution could not solve.

The Constitution of 1991 did help to end the Drug Wars by prohibiting extradition. The government then negotiated the surrender of several key drug cartel leaders by agreeing to give them light sentences served in comfortable surroundings in exchange for their pledges never to engage in drug trading again. But just as the Drug Wars ended, the guerrilla wars heated up.

The two main guerrilla organizations, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), are believed to have benefited from the collapse of law enforcement and the break-up of the drug cartels. Both are said to have provided protection for a new generation of drug producers and traffickers in exchange for taxes and contributions running in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year. They began paying their soldiers monthly salaries and re-equipped them with the best weapons available on the international arms black market. The right wing paramilitary forces are said to rely even more heavily on income derived from drugs.

The United States could help to reduce violence in Colombia by decriminalizing production and sale of prohibited substances to adult consumers. Though unlikely to happen any time soon, such a step would take most of the high risk super profits out of the drug trade and deprive the guerrillas, and especially the paramilitary forces, of their means of financing their activities. Instead, the United States has opted to provide military assistance to the Colombian government to balance the help provided indirectly to the guerrillas and paramilitary groups by U.S. consumers of cocaine and heroin. This strategy calls for intensifying the violence on the theory that the government can win, or at least drive the rebels to negotiate seriously.

The new Colombian president Alvaro Uribe also appears determined to intensify the war against the guerrillas. He has also demanded that the paramilitary forces disarm. It is impossible to predict how



A guerrilla boy from the Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces: kids at war

effective these new military offensives will be. But Colombia's history makes it clear that military victories have never addressed the deeper roots of violence and have thus provided little more than brief respites. To build a peaceful country, Colombians will need to face at least three difficult sets of issues, none easy to address amid violent conflict.

The first issue is how to defend and even restore human rights as the violence intensifies. It is possible for governments to win guerrilla wars by making more effective use of mass murder and brutality than their opponents. This is what the historian Tacitus had in mind when he said of Rome's conquests in Gaul, "They make a desolation and call it peace." As other Latin American cases have amply demonstrated, the dynamic of desolation is hard to stop or even to modify. Yet Colombia's government will not have solved the nation's historic problem of endemic violence unless it can create institutions that effectively protect human, civil, and property rights.

The second issue is how to create, strengthen and institutionalize effective democratic governance throughout Colombia. If the current strife were to end as all others in Colombian history have ended, with exhaustion and bitterness, but without a firm commitment to the costly but indispensable task of creating truly effective and broadly representative governing structures that function everywhere, the homicide rate will not fall below Colombia's chronically high levels of the past, and new episodes of acute violence will follow again sooner rather than later. Essentially, Colombia's urban

middle classes and elites will have to signal a new and unprecedented willingness to pay the huge costs of creating a modern nation—rather than the shaky archipelago of modern cities surrounded by an ocean of neglect that exists now.

The third and final great issue is how to strengthen and engage civil society in the effort to restore and consolidate peace in the country. The fact is that Colombia already has an active, indeed, a hyperactive and engaged civil society. In fact, violence throughout Colombian history has come in large part from the activities of non-governmental civil society organizations, from political parties and vigilantes to paramilitary groups and drug cartels. Creating opportunities for Colombia's vibrant civil society organizations to play a constructive and significant role in making peace in the midst of civil strife may be the most difficult, but possibly the most important challenge facing the Colombian government today.

John H. Coatsworth is the Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American History at Harvard University and the director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS). He was the host for the November 2002 conference "Beyond Armed Actors: Carving a Stronger Role for Civil Society in Colombia," co-sponsored by DRCLAS and the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions and Cultural Survival at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

At the Center of Things

A Nation From Below

BY HERBERT BRAUN

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA occurring in the United States. Before the actual formation of the U.S., the first Anglo colonizers were convinced that they could create new spiritual and material lives for themselves in the "New World." They had separated themselves from the hierarchies of the old social order and in search of liberty, they crossed the ocean never to return. The New England colonizers began forming tiny towns, each one with its small church and one-room schoolhouse, surrounded by little specks of land, which they all worked together. These people thought alike. They rested the Bible on their laps, and read it quietly to themselves. They taught their children that they were the chosen people, for God had picked them to live an exemplary life here on earth and in the hereafter. Each one was to find God within his inner self.

All those who could not conform to the life of these towns, whether because they were deemed to be possessed by the devil or driven by carnal passions or discordant religious convictions, did not fare at all well. They were expelled from their towns, yet they had already been influenced by the settlers' inherent belief that a little further down the road, on the other side of the river, in the next valley, they would build a new town where they could all think alike and remake their lives in their earthly paradise. And thus, that was how those who were beginning to regard themselves as Americans began to separate themselves. They spilled out across the land, searching within themselves for who they were. Alone, in their own solitary ways, in some new place, they sought the liberty and the self-knowledge which has them traveling to this day, from one place to the next.

In America, the pursuit of happiness, which came to be inscribed in the Constitution, is contained within the individual, but can often not even be found only a few feet away. This is the great paradox of American life. In the United States, the individual goes off in search of his essence, of who he truly is. He penetrates the land. The American ideal from the very first days of this civilization can be found in the virgin wilderness. It is located in the masterless individual, in the self-made man, the self-sufficient person who does not depend on anyone but himself. The individual is prior to society. Here the colleges were almost all built far from the city, so that the youth of this society could go out and commit itself to a spiritual and intellectual experience far removed from the corrosive effects of urban life. Centuries later, during the student movement of the 1960s, only in the United States did thousands of young people become motivated by the search for rural communes where they could live amongst one another with their backs to society.

The United States is the land of the cultural non-conformist, the cowboy, the rebel without a cause. Americans are outsiders. They are provincials. They were and remain a people in search of "a marginal world," in the words of Bernard Bailyn, the Harvard historian of the American Revolution.

Few Colombians in their right minds would wander off to be at the margins. Hence, it would be very difficult to imagine Amer-

ican violence in Colombia. It is entirely improbable that a Colombian version of Theodore Kaczynski, a *criollo* unabomber, would emerge. For who in Colombia would wish to go off into the mountains to live in a little hut by himself, year after year, in celebration of poverty and silence, without music, radio and television, without someone to talk and make love to? No Colombian would start sending bombs by mail without anyone knowing he was actually the one sending them. No matter what social class they come from, whether they live in the city or the countryside, or how strong their regional affiliation may be, Colombians seek to be in society, giving and taking, conversing, dancing, and drinking. They want to be at the center of things. They want to be seen, regarded, respected, and honored.

In the long history of the country, there have been no separatist movements of any significance. Back in the 1960s, Conservative Senator Álvaro Gómez Hurtado referred to some emerging areas under guerrilla control as "independent republics," but there is little evidence that these rural people actually wanted to be independent of Colombia. Many years later, in 1988, when he was kidnapped by the M-19 guerrillas, the most urban of all the rebel groups, Gómez Hurtado got a better sense for what the guerrillas stood for in Colombia. "They insisted on ownership of the land, and complained about the isolation of the *campesinos*," the rural people. "They protested," he wrote in his memoir, *Soy Libre*, "against the lack of communication, the lack of services, the lack of teachers, and the bad condition of the roads."

Indeed, the rebels have rarely sought revolution. While they took on a Communist veneer during the Cold War years, more often than not it was the radical urban intellectuals in the late 1960s and early 1970s who were themselves yearning for a socialist future and therefore plastered a revolutionary face on the guerrillas. Colombians, especially those living in outlying areas, are forever complaining that their government does not pay sufficient attention to them. They want to be connected. In contrast, Americans want to be left alone. Colombians are a clamoring people; governing them is certainly no easy matter.

Back on May 27, 1964, when the army had already begun its maneuvers around Marquetalia, the most well known of these "independent republics," a man who was being referred to as "Tirofijo," or "Sureshot"—the same one who some months later would become the leader of the newly formed Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a position which he holds to this day—sent two of his men to intercept a government road inspector and public health official in order to plead with them to deliver a letter to the governor and the colonel in charge of the region. Tirofijo wanted it to be known that while he would not allow soldiers into the area under his control, he welcomed the civilians who wanted to build a road through it. Furthermore, in his letter, Tirofijo implored the government to build schools and clinics in the area. Much later, in 1999, Tirofijo demanded and received the temporary use of a



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Aracataca was the childhood home of writer Gabriel García Márquez. His autobiographical book *Vivir Para Contarla* was just published in Spanish a few months ago and much of the book takes place in Aracataca. Even though Aracataca is in a region with a huge guerrilla presence, the town has been left alone in peace. Many believe this is because of the high regard the rebels have for García Márquez.

huge territory around San Vicente del Caguán from President Andrés Pastrana. The rebels wanted the land in order to better connect with Colombia, to gain strength so they could fight and negotiate more effectively with the government.

Since at least 1983, the rebels and the government have been linked with each other by messengers, letters, telegrams, telephones and e-mails. They have engaged in off-again and on-again conversations. They have joked together and gotten drunk together. They have traveled through Europe together. The rural rebels have become media stars. They have delighted at seeing their faces in pictures in the newspapers, at being followed around by television crews, and visited by the head of the New York Stock Exchange.

Colombians strive to not be left to themselves. Solitude is a sinking feeling. To be left alone is to be humiliated. Had Gabriel García Márquez's masterful novel been a century-long fictional history of the United States, it would certainly have recounted the heroic struggles of individuals to successfully carve out lives for themselves in the wilderness. But not in Colombia. Life in the iso-

Colombians of all social classes, urban and rural, seek to be in society. They want to be at the center of things.

lated tiny town of Aracataca, in Macondo, was pointless, a hundred years of solitude. Colombians feel that their past has been worth little, for the ideal of all living in harmony together has not been accomplished. Too many Colombians have lived separate, isolated, marginal lives.

It might not be entirely preposterous to suggest that one of the many motivating factors for the guerrillas to kidnap members of society—making Colombia the kidnapping capital of the world—is their desire to see them, relate to them, communicate with their families, experience human anguish together, and make themselves present in the private lives of other fellow Colombians. They can say, "We too are here." They can converse and deal, hand over their kidnap victim and receive something in exchange: money, a word of thanks, or simply the reputation that they dealt honorably with their captive. Conversely, as they are the ones who have had to live solitary lives out there in the countryside, might it not be that they feel that it is only fair that some urban people live through that lonely experience as well?

Early on, Spaniards were the ones to come to these lands. They established complete societies with a regulating and paternalistic state, and hierarchies in which each person had his place, above some and below others, where people related to one another and were part of a social organism into which they were integrated in unequal ways. In Colombia, individuals have understood who they are by viewing themselves as members of something larger. Hierarchical ties loosened after independence in the early nineteenth century. With the state unable to reach out and regulate the society, especially the countryside, people began to organize themselves together, from the bottom of the society toward the top. Here lies much of the vitality of Colombia. Those from below have struggled to be part of society, often with considerable success, but at other times not. Tirofijo and the rebels did not go out into the mountains to find themselves, but to find the way to be with us, with the city, with the nation.

For a whole half-century now, we in Colombia have not known

how to bring them in. This is the great paradox of Colombian life. Seeking to be recognized, those from below reach out, often collectively, only to be turned away.

Back in the early 1950s, when the urban Liberal Party politicians broke off their ties with their rural followers in order to remove themselves from all the rural turmoil, the guerrillas clamored for their lost leaders. "What plans do they have?" Tirofijo exclaimed. "Nothing, silenced.... The body just can't take any more humiliation," the rebel leader moaned, time and again, decade after decade. For years and years it seemed that there was little the guerrillas could do to keep from being ignored by the government and the society.

Shortly after the army bombed the "independent republic" of Marquetalia in 1964, the emerging guerrilla movement declared that "We were patient, awaiting that the official promises about the respect for life, honor and property be met... After trying to make ourselves known wherever we could, in the national Parliament and before other representative entities, before the high clergy, the National Government, we were not heard. We have now felt obligated to take up arms and to turn ourselves into a guerrilla movement..." In 1965, the FARC were born.

On May 1, 1964, sixteen days before the already announced "great plan of civic-military action" by the army against Marquetalia was set to begin, the newspaper *El Tiempo* reported that the Cardinal of Colombia, Luis Concha Córdoba, had not given his permission for three of his priests, Monsignor Germán Guzmán, Camilo Torres—the soon-to-be martyred rebel priest—and Gustavo Pérez, to be part of a high-level commission composed of some of the nation's most notable reform-minded intellectuals, that was to travel to the area to help the government come to an understanding with the rebels. The next morning, the three other commission members—Gerardo Molina, who would become the historian of liberal ideas in Colombia, and Orlando Fals-Borda and Eduardo Umaña Luna, the authors, together with Germán Guzmán, of *La Violencia en Colombia*, the extraordinary 1962 book on the rural conflicts of the 1950s—declared that the commission could not carry out its duties without the three clergymen's participation. Bombs fell on Marquetalia. Tirofijo and most of his campesinos escaped.

On November 20, 1992, Gabriel García Márquez and many of Colombia's most important intellectuals, some of whom were the former radicals who had, after 1965, wished the guerrillas to be something they were not, issued a public statement condemning the rebels for their violent methods and ill-defined goals. In an instant reaction, a journalist in *El Tiempo* wrote triumphantly that "now it can be said that the solitude of the guerrillas is monumental." The guerrillas would return to the limelight for a few brief years between 1998 and 2003 during the latest failed peace process in Colombia. They are away again now, but not gone.

Herbert Braun teaches Latin American history at the University of Virginia. He is the author of Our Guerrillas, Our Sidewalks: A Journey into the Violence of Colombia (Rowman and Littlefield, 2nd. Edition, 2003), a memoir of the guerrilla kidnapping of his American brother-in-law in Colombia. A different and longer version of this essay first appeared in Revista Número 29 (Bogotá), June-August 2001.

Colombia

A Failing State?

BY EDUARDO PIZARRO AND ANA MARÍA BEJARANO

DOES COLOMBIA RUN THE RISK OF A STATE COLLAPSE? DOES IT really have to do with a state in the brink of failure? Colombia has worried the international community for several years. One of the worse humanitarian catastrophes in the world, Colombia averages more than 25,000 murders yearly.

Two million refugees have fled from their homes; thousands of acres of forest have been destroyed to plant coca, marijuana or poppies, permanent massacres permanently perpetrated either by delirious extreme left wing groups or by criminal groups of the extreme right.

The so-called “failing states” have become one of the central concerns of the new international agenda in the post cold war. Increasing and alarming cases of collapsed states have occurred in different parts of the world: Lebanon, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan or Somalia. Colombia has not been outside this debate. Some authors sustain that Colombia is a palpable example of a “state on the brink of failure.” Others, with an apocalyptic viewpoint, have come to affirm that the country is *ad portas* of an imminent collapse, because of a threat of secession of territorial sections between the country’s southern region—supposedly controlled by the guerrillas, the north—apparently dominated by extreme right paramilitary groups—and the center under the control of the actual state.

The international community’s growing interest in the “unstable state” phenomena comes from different sources. In the first place, clear connection exists with humanitarian issues: cases of great state precariousness generally are accompanied by multiple humanitarian disasters (massacres, population displacement, massive violations of human rights, etc.). Second, the interest in the collapse of the state has to do with a concern for global safety: In a world highly interconnected and inter-dependent, the inability of a state to guarantee a minimum of order and security inside its frontiers has an immediate regional and international impact. In the words of the Director of the Program on Intrastate Conflict at Harvard University, Robert Rotberg, “state failure threatens global stability because national governments have become the primary building blocks of order. International security relies on states to protect against chaos at home and limit the cancerous spread of anarchy beyond their borders and throughout the world.” (*Foreign Affairs*, 2002, No. 4, p. 130) Third, after September 11, 2001, it has become evident the ease with which international terrorist networks may take shelter in countries that suffer deep internal disorders, as has happened in Afghanistan or Sudan. In Colombia, three Irish Republican Army (IRA) explosive experts are on trial for their ties to the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC).

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COLOMBIA: "THE PARTIAL COLLAPSE OF THE STATE"

How can a "state in the process of bankruptcy" be distinguished from a "collapsed state"? Rotberg says that "a collapsed state is a rare and an extreme version of the failed states, typified by the total lack of authority. In this sense, a collapsed state is an empty shell of political community" (idem., p. 133). The emblematic model of a "collapsed state" is Somalia where the last trace of a central government has disappeared. On the contrary, states in the process of failure still have a certain level of "stability," but in the midst of an increasing deterioration in its capacity to guarantee a minimum of order and security, that on occasion, does not go further than the principal urban centers.

But, are these adequate notions for the Colombian case? Without a doubt many of Colombia's characteristics in the present situation are similar to those exhibited by many states that have collapsed (see box): for example, brutal displacement of peasants from rural zones to urban centers or the existence of powerful paramilitary groups. However from our perspective, in Colombia, it is quite difficult that a state collapse could occur in a fashion similar to that in other countries. Unlike African countries and many Asian nations, constituted like "arbitrary units" after Europe's de-colonization from Europe, Colombia, like the rest of Latin America, has a long histo-

ry of construction of a national state. Without a doubt in Colombia as in almost all the Andean region, we are faced with a weak state but in no way a "Shadow State." In addition, the phenomenon of collapsed states is strongly related to conflicts that face diverse collective identities, for instance, in Sri Lanka or Kosovo.

Colombia is, ethnically speaking, one of the region's most homogeneous countries: it is a *mestizo* country with a Catholic majority, with an indisputable predominance of Spanish and without regionalist centrifuge tendencies. On the other hand, far from being a national community organized by ideological reasons, the immense Colombian majority rejects the violent actors. The guerrilla groups and the paramilitary organizations have minimal support: less than 2% of the population, according to the opinion polls.

From a historical and comparative perspective, the Colombian state has always been small, poor and weak. The historical roots of this weakness could be summarized in a few lines. It has to do with, in the first place, a vast territory with a very complex geography, one of the world's most godforsaken, which has given rise to a multiplicity of markets and disperse populations. It is enough to indicate that, according to the "fragmentation index of population" of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) Colombia occupies third place out of 155 countries.

On the other hand, only in the first decades of the 20th century did Colombia achieve the stabilization of a product in the world market (coffee), which resulted in a late industrialization process, which led to a precarious base of resources for the State. Finally, it is important to stress that in Colombia the strategic resource for the national construction, coffee, was a private product that generated weak income to the central State. Former Colombian President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen states in his prologue to English historian Malcolm Deas' *Del poder y la gramática, y otros ensayos sobre historia, política y literatura colombiana*, (Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1993 p. 14): "beginning with these numbers, the destiny of Colombians is better understood. Unflagging fighters, full time workers in the most adverse circumstances, they have managed to survive without winning any lottery, with no frontier with the U.S. like Mexico has, or oil like Venezuela, or Cuba's tourism (in its time), or the grains and cattle like Argentina and Uruguay, or Brazil's large extension of territory." It all conspired against the survival of the Colombian State, which only in 1975 began to receive income from State coal, the surplus of official oil for export and the Cerromatoso nickel, in addition to traditional tax revenues. Deas correctly points out that for decades the Colombian State only derived income from its salt mines. This new revenue from state sources has been the great transformation in the last 20 years of the 20th century.

The weak Colombian institutions were

STATE COLLAPSE AND EARLY RESPONSE

Agenda for Peace

In 1992 Boutros Boutros Gali launched his known Agenda for Peace. This coincided with the beginning of a change in the United Nations tending to amplify its scope of action to confront the internal conflicts that multiplied in the world after the "bi-polar order." In his Agenda, the United Nations Secretary General pointed out that the cohesion of states is being brutally threatened by ethnic, religious, social, cultural or linguistic disputes. As an answer he stated the need for preventive diplomacy to "avoid that the existing disputes escalate into conflicts, and in case these take place, to limit their expansion." And he added that preventive diplomacy could only be built if there is a "recognized web of early alarm systems." As an answer to this request to the United Nations, several working groups began to come up with a series of dependable indicators to detect when a state is at eminent risk of collapsing. The idea was to build "early alarm" warning systems to transfer international community resources to impede these disastrous episodes from becoming a state collapse.

The most important groups that worked in this sense, were: the Conflict Early Warning Systems (CEWS), an investigative project from the International Council of Social Sciences (ISSC) and two non-governmental agencies located in London: International Alert and The Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER). Additionally, in 1994, then-U.S. Vice President Al Gore, constituted a working group with the same perspective, named the "State Failure Project."

Pauline Baker and John Ausink (1996), for example, detected nine common traits in three nations (Somalia, Sierra Leone and Sudan) in which the state was on the brink of collapse or totally collapsed: a strong demographic pressure, a massive refugee movement, economic growth linked to ethnic division, a long tradition of vengeance and repression, a profound de-legitimization of the state, severe economic crisis, progressive deterioration or elimination of public services, manifest incapacity to implement legal norms, and different freelance security operatives acting as "states within the state."

Pauline Baker and John Ausink "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model," *Parameters US Army War College Quarterly*, V. XXVII).



Previous: Life goes on: "My Little Love"; above: cultivating coca

challenged on two occasions in the 20th century; in both cases, the country suffered a "partial collapse of the State" (Paul Oquist). In other words, some state institutions maintained their solidity, while others broke up. The first partial collapse occurred in mid-century, when Colombia suffered the last of the bi-partisan civil wars during the tragic period known as "La Violencia." At the end of the 1980s a similar situation occurred as a consequence of the so-called "double war," the combination of the war against narco-terrorism of the drug cartels and the war against the insurgents. The weak and precarious Colombian state faced challenges and demands that went beyond its capacity of control and management. Deep "geological fissures," were revealed, particularly in key institutions such as justice and security.

The expressions of this "partial collapse of the state" became evident from the end of the 1980s. Its most visible face has been without a doubt the growth of criminal statistics. At the beginning of the 1990s, Colombia had the highest homicide rate in the world, (80 homicides for each 100,000 habitants), far above the already high, worrisome index of Latin America (20) and the very high index of the U.S. (8) not to mention the astronomical distance that separates Colombia from the European countries (1.5). But this terrible criminality was only a dramatic expression of the State's erosion in carrying out its most important tasks. On one hand, the deep inefficiencies of the National Police were obvious: there were constant revelations of corruption at all levels, negative experiences by the citizens with an authoritarian and repressive police, and indications of police involvement in thefts, deeds of "social cleansing" or massacres. The police profession was the least prestigious of the social scale. On the other hand, in the face of violent escalation and police incapacity, elites decided to opt for private security, thus spawning an unprecedented peak of private security companies and vigilance whose members came to duplicate the number of National Police. This "security privatization" was accompanied by the financing of groups for social cleansing in urban cen-

ters in order to decrease the indexes of criminality.

Others would follow this first privatization of security. The military force's incapacity to undermine the strategic "diffuse expansion" of the guerrillas throughout the country resulted in the privatization of the war against the insurgents. First came the legal constitution of the defense groups protected by the National Security Law (law 48 of 1968). Later, after President Virgilio Barco annulled this law, support grew for the formation of illegal paramilitary groups.

Another state sector deeply affected by this progressive state erosion has been the justice system. Impunity levels have reached scandalous numbers in Colombia. If in the 1970s, 11% of those condemned for murder were sentenced, 20 years later this number had only come down 4%. A murder has more than a 90% chance of never being punished.

Finally this state erosion is expressed in the dramatic increase in the number of weapons owned by the civil population. The strengthening of some armed groups that defy the States' authority (particularly the FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the paramilitary group AUC) and the lack of state presence in some of the country's regions, particularly in the recent areas of colonization have converted many of these regions into "praetorian systems," defined by Samuel Huntington as situations where different social segments are directly confronted by the distribution of power and income, because of the lack of legal institutions to intermediate and solve conflict.

STATE RECONSTRUCTION

At the beginning of the 90s, while the proposal of the minimal state dominated in the world of ideas, Colombia undertook a serious process of reinforcement of state institutions, particularly in the areas responsible for justice and security. Today, Colombia has a larger and better State than 15 years ago, thanks to a strong internal fiscal effort, as well as resources from international cooperation and foreign aid, including the U.S.-supported Plan Colombia.

As part of this state reconstruction, there has been a serious effort of reconstruction of the National Police. In 1993, the Defense Ministry convened two commissions, one internal and the other external, to study police reform: their recommendations were translated into the law 62 of 1993. This has signified a profound renovation of the Police to the point of converting it today into one of the most professional and trustworthy in Latin America. There has also been a substantial improvement of the judicial institutions that still have to support the weight of the hyper-violence and its consequences, (judicial crowding, impunity) that have allowed important victories in the fight against collective actors of violence (for example, against the members of the big drug cartels). Finally, for the last few years, the Armed Forces have been strengthened (in budget, number of men and technology), allowing this institution to recover the military initiative in detriment of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups. It is a process of institutional reconstruction that undoubtedly came late, given that the country was in situation of hyper-violence, subjugated by the illegal drug traffickers and with strong armed actors that dispute large portions of national territory with the state. However, this State reconstruction has impeded the deepening of the crisis. If this effort is sustained, it is possible to think that Colombia may, in the mid-term, overcome partial state collapse.

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Colombian Institutions

On the Paradox of Weakness

BY EDUARDO POSADA CARBÓ

ON ONE OF MY RECENT JOURNEYS TO COLOMBIA, I BOUGHT A toy bus for my kids—a replica of the Transmilenio coaches, the modern line of public transport that crosses Bogotá from north to south in the Avenida Caracas. The toy was sold by street vendors, symbolizing a sort of civic pride that I immediately absorbed as I placed the little red coach in my hand-luggage with the enthusiasm of a child. Transmilenio is just one of the many achievements in the transformation of Bogotá, a city of seven million which, according to *Washington Post* correspondent Scott Wilson, “has become a pleasant anomaly, not only in a country where 3,500 died in war last year, but also across an unsteady continent whose capitals are urban horror stories.”

Despite the recent bombing of social club El Nogal and the incessant specter of terrorism, Bogotanos are turning into proud and generally optimistic citizens. It is certainly a pleasant experience to witness the city’s accomplishments. They are real and for everyone to see. An opinion poll published by *El Tiempo* (9/22/03) also suggests that Bogotanos view the capital’s institutions favorably. This picture of progress and confidence is in sharp contrast with generally held views of Colombia, often portrayed at the verge of breakdown. Thus the “anomaly” of Bogotá. Or is it?

Talk of state weakness in Colombia has become commonplace among academics and policymakers alike. The expression “a collapsing state” has fully entered the vocabulary of those who write about Colombia, both inside and outside the country. Other terms such as “delegitimation,” “crisis of the social contract,” and “national disintegration” convey similar impressions. Those who think that the notion of “state collapse” obscures the origins of the crisis do not always offer an alternative, enlightening explanation; the roots of the problem are thus traced to supposedly fossilized institutions—the lack of structural change.

How weak are Colombian institutions? Is the country suffering from institutional collapse or from institutional inertia? Are the achievements of Bogotá an “anomaly” or the reflection of more complex developments?

THE VALUE OF WEAKNESS

It would be foolish to deny that the Colombian state has been historically weak. Measured against Max Weber’s classical definition, it cannot claim to have controlled the “monopoly of the legitimate physical force.”

By mid-19th century, the Colombian Army numbered the ridiculous figure of 500 men. In 1873 the military body increased to 1,000, an insignificant force for a country the size of France, Spain and Portugal combined. “The army can scarcely be said to exist,” concluded the then-British Minister in Bogotá. The development of a modern police was still far away. A thin army was mirrored in a thin bureaucracy: 1,451 public servants were employed by the central government in 1873; local states managed larger staffs, but the figures hardly added up to anything closer to a state apparatus

for a country of three million people.

The conservative regime that took over after 1885 made efforts to centralize power and expand the Army and the role of the state—in a paternalist attitude hand in glove with the Catholic Church. There were some successes but more frustrations. From 1899 to 1902, the country suffered the consequences of the Thousand-Day War (*Guerra de los Mil Días*), a tragic war that opened the way for Panamá’s secession.

Institutional modernization was therefore a latecomer to Colombia, the process only taking a firm hold in the first decades of the 20th century, although still at a relatively slow pace. Nonetheless, by the 1920s, a few significant inroads had been made. Older institutions were reorganized and new ones created: the professionalization of the Army was underway; a Central Bank was established. Although the national government gained some strength, it remained weak overall as political power continued in practice to be decentralized.

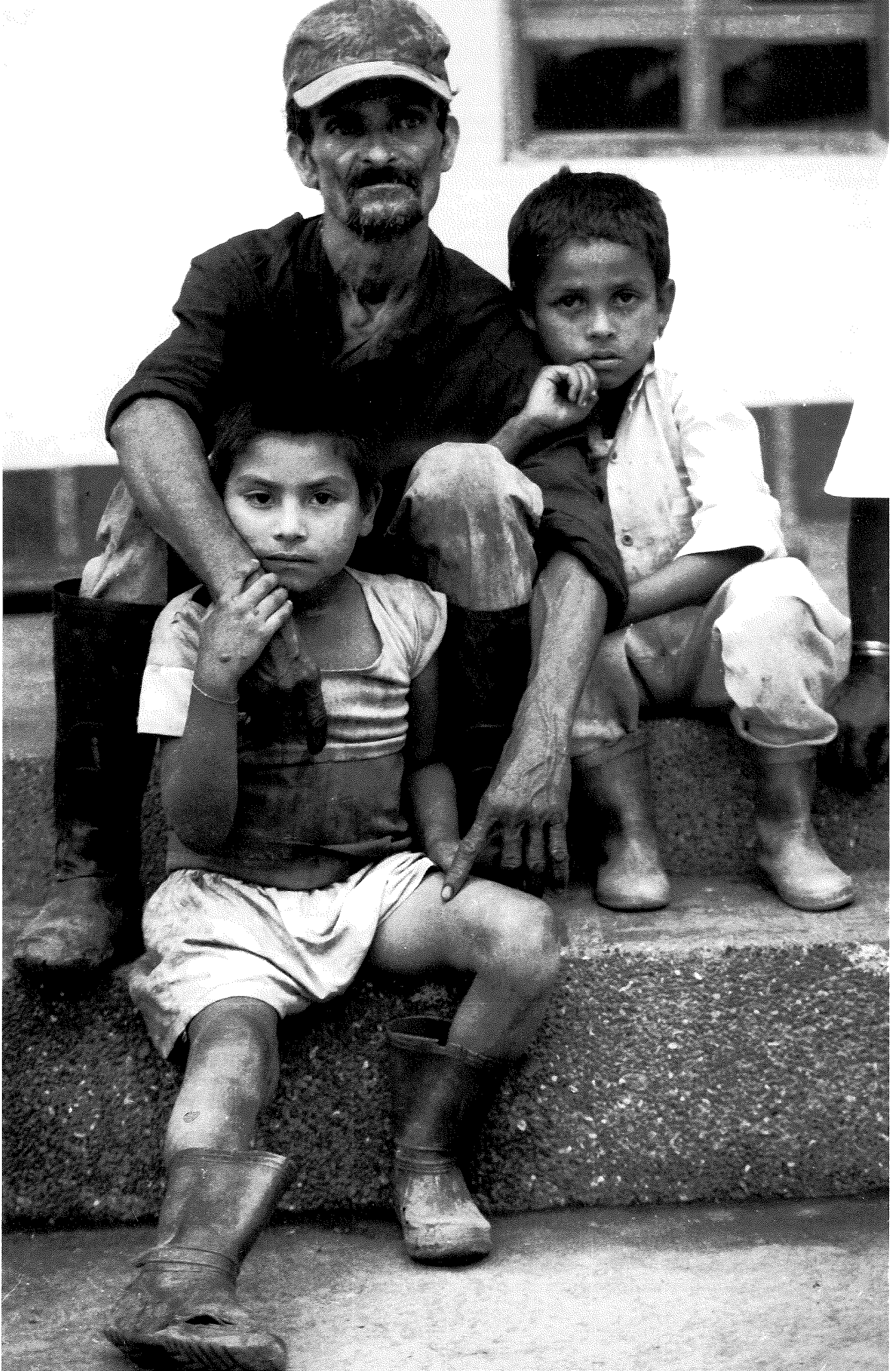
This brief historical sketch only serves to underline the point: the 19th-century left a deep legacy of state weakness in Colombia. A weak state represented a major problem for the maintenance of public order and for securing citizens’ rights. A tradition of a weak state, however, also impeded the monopolization of power by one single individual or sector of society, be it the infamous *caudillos* or the Army. What distinguished Colombia from its Latin American neighbors was the low profile of the military and the general absence of dictatorships.

INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

A weak state did not mean an institutional vacuum. Among the most enduring creations of the 19th century, the political parties stand out. Rooted in the early republic, Conservatives and Liberals took shape as identifiable organizations in 1849–1850. Their competitive struggles often immersed the nation in turmoil, but were also the bases of representative bodies—Congress, local city councils and departmental assemblies. They encouraged an electoral culture based on a wide suffrage with its own plethora of institutions, formal and informal. A tradition of a free press is closely linked to these developments.

The world recession unleashed by the 1929 stock market crash served as a significant test. One after another, with a few exceptions, political regimes broke down in Latin America. In contrast, Colombia underwent a peaceful alternation of power as Liberals displaced Conservatives from the Presidency in the 1930 elections. In 1939, as the shadow of totalitarianism spread in Western Europe and Latin America, Alberto Lleras Camargo—then the editor of *El Liberal*—could review with some pride, in an article in the newspaper, some of the achievements of his country’s democratic institutions.

Colombia could not be isolated from world trends. Nor had the nation overcome the bitter legacy of partisan sectarianism, fueled in the 1930s and 1940s by a confrontation between secular forces and the Catholic Church, among many other serious conflicts with



19th-century undertones. The assassination of popular Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948 triggered a social explosion in Bogotá with widespread consequences.

Students of Colombia are probably familiar with the concept of “state collapse” in trying to understand the origins of “la Violencia” (1940s–1960s)—the bloody conflict that pitted Liberals against Conservatives, particularly in the countryside. Democratic institutions ceased to operate. The Police and the Army became heavily politicized. Impunity was rampant as the judiciary was ineffective, and arbitrary violence took over. Nevertheless, a recent study by historian James Henderson has called our attention to an extraordinary paradox that some may find hard to accept: that “most Colombian institutions grew significantly stronger during the years of violence.”

An impressive array of new private and public institutions were founded from 1945–1960, ranging from state agencies like the ICSS (the Colombian Social Security Institute), Icetex (the Colombian Institute for Study Abroad), Ecopetrol (the Colombian State Oil



Previous: Portraits: father and son; above: Two generations

Company); universities such as the Andes; private sector associations like the ANDI (National Industrialists Association); or radio networks such as Caracol.

To acknowledge these developments does not mean denying the horrors of an extremely painful conflict. The country entered into deep crisis. Prominent intellectual Luis López de Mesa did not exaggerate in observing that Colombia had suffered an “institutional heart attack” in 1949. The escalation of violence severely damaged the rule of law. As political parties lost control, the Presidency collapsed and the Army took power in 1953. But far from absolute paralysis or decay, society was growing in complexity. As Henderson suggests, some of those new institutions described above became “so effective that they were able to coordinate the bloodless coup” against the dictatorship in 1957. Conservatives and Liberals were capable of mobilizing the political nation to support, in a plebiscite under universal suffrage, the constitution that sealed the reemerging democracy in 1958.

BEYOND THE ANOMALIES

The National Front, originally planned to last for sixteen years (1958–1974), was a bipartisan power-sharing agreement designed to put an end to sectarian violence. It has long been commonplace to denounce the anomalies of the regime as a picture of utter failure. A revisionist, less passionate view would offer a mixed record.

Liberals and Conservatives alternated the Presidency while seats in Congress and other representative bodies were allocated equally between them in an electoral system that excluded the participation of third minority parties. The two parties also divided up posts in the judiciary and the bureaucracy. But as political scientist Mario Latorre demonstrated in his superb study on the practices of the Front, third parties were never fully ousted. The growing perception, however, was one of exclusion, particularly after the decision to extend the National Front. The disputed results of the 1970 presidential elections also fed the revolutionary discourse of illegitimacy as a justification for the Marxist guerrilla groups that sprung up in the 1960s.

Efforts to strengthen the national government developed alongside a process of increasing party fragmentation. This splintering was partially the result of an electoral system that prized intra-party over inter-party competition, but also the reflection of a decentralized polity where constant bargaining between the provinces and the center had historically been the norm. Nevertheless, traditional parties did not disappear: they became vehicles of social mobility and the major instrument of what economic historian Miguel Urrutia has described as “a rather sophisticated form of clientelism.” Urrutia, currently the head of the Central Bank, sees the institutionalized party system as the key explanation for the successes of macroeconomic stability from the 1960s.

Colombian presidents had few incentives to embark upon irresponsible populist policies: their power was in any case limited by a complex web of party networks in Congress. Public opinion counted. Economic policies were subject to open debate, conditioning further the decisions of the authorities in the Treasury Ministry and the National Planning Department, institutions that became the niches of a modern technocracy. As Urrutia observes, the system was “not admired by national and foreign intellectuals” but by the late 1980s it had delivered “economic growth, an improved income distribution, and fairly progressive government expenditure.”

The National Front also partially succeeded in two of its major purposes. First, sectarian violence between Liberals and Conservatives was placated with homicide rates falling by the mid-1960s. Nevertheless levels of violence remained high, never returning to pre-1940s levels. New types of revolutionary violence emerged, now influenced by Cuban developments, as guerrilla groups spread: the FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces), ELN (National

It is the resilience of Colombian democratic institutions, not their apparent decay, that needs explanation.

Liberation Army), EPL (Popular Liberation Army), M-19 (the April 19th Movement). Furthermore, violence rose to explosive levels in the late 1970s, triggered by the illegal traffic in drugs.

Second, civilians regained control of the state. But the army’s return to the barracks was followed by decades of relative civilian neglect of the institution: investment in the army as a proportion

of GDP steadily declined, a trend only reversed in the 1990s.

As in the 1930s, the Cold War was another period of significant tests and once again, Colombian liberal democratic institutions survived while most political regimes in Latin American countries fell into the hands of the Army. Another paradox emerges: the struggle of Marxist guerrillas was fruitless in the face of the brutal dictatorships of the Southern Cone, yet they continued to grow under a democratic if imperfect regime in Colombia.

There were many imperfections in the regime, openly denounced in an intense debate. Pressure for reform did not come just from "outsiders." As a university student in the 1970s, I eagerly read *Nueva Frontera*—the magazine directed by former President Carlos Lleras Restrepo with the assistance of Luis Carlos Galán, the Liberal leader later assassinated by the drug traffickers. *Nueva Frontera* led campaigns against clientelism, corruption and the decay of parties. The so-called "political establishment" did not remain still. Several administrations introduced substantial packages of constitutional reform into Congress, but their efforts were subject to the scrutines of a system where the power of the executive is limited—by the legislature, the judiciary, and the electoral cycle.

The pace of reform accelerated after President Betancur launched his policy of "democratic *apertura*" in 1982, calling for negotiations with the guerrillas. Peace talks did not deliver much peace. Under his rule, however, the structure of political power drastically changed: the 1986 constitutional amendment mandated the popular election of city mayors. The movement for reform did not stop here. Betancur's successors also attempted to bring the guerrillas back to the negotiating table. Frustration mounted. Nevertheless during the Gaviria government (1990-1994), a significant number of guerrilla groups demobilized in a process that led to the new 1991 constitution.

AN ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL REVOLCÓN

I have consciously been selective in this *long durée* overview of Colombian institutions. I have risked what some may refer to as "conventional history." Yet the "conventional wisdom" nowadays on Colombia tells the opposite story: tales of horror in a rapidly disintegrating country. Consider recent events: on August 7, 2002, while Alvaro Uribe took oath as the newly elected President, FARC mortars hit the area around the Casa de Nariño. You could focus your attention on the bombs, clear signs of the current disaster. You could also hold your breath, and ponder for a second an alternative image of the presidential inauguration: on how, in spite of being "besieged" by violent and powerful criminal organizations, the nation continues to select its rulers through the ballot box. For, as sociologist Eduardo Pizarro Leongomez suggests, it is the resilience of Colombian democratic institutions, not their apparent decay, that needs an explanation.

The historical record defies the vulgar view that Colombian democracy is a mere myth: in almost two centuries since independence, the number of years under dictatorship can be counted just with the fingers of two hands. Since then, the Congress in this "mythical" democracy has enjoyed a longer life than those in most countries on the continent, and indeed in Europe. Since then, Colombia's mostly civilian presidents have come and gone following the regularity of the electoral calendar. Since then, a tradition of a free press has generally persevered, encouraging the formation of a public opinion that carries weight. During the 19th century these democratic institutions helped Colombians to avoid tyrannical rule.

During the 20th century, they helped them to escape the waves of totalitarianism, populism and military dictatorship that swept both Europe and Latin America for decades.

Radical critics tend to ignore this record, often disparaged as a "rosy picture of the country," in favor of a litany of vices: corruption, violence, misery, drugs, terrorism, party decay, guerrillas, paramilitaries and human rights violations. All these are real and serious problems. A genuinely reformist attitude to tackling them would have more chances of success, however, by acknowledging the achievements of Colombian liberal democratic institutions: they may offer the best and perhaps only way forward. That is unless one believes in miracles, the goodness of tyrants or revolutionary illusions.

Furthermore, a picture of fossilized institutions is simply false. Even if one takes the extreme view that Colombia remained stagnant since independence, or since 1958, it would be wrong to say that nothing has changed since 1991. Here we saw a true exercise of constitutional engineering, the results of which are too early to judge. This is not the place to examine the long list of new institutions that have framed Colombian daily life in the last decade. A recent collection of essays, edited by political scientist Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín analyzes the impact of those institutional changes on the parties—old and new—women, indigenous movements, local governments (*Degradación o cambio: Evolución del sistema político colombiano*, Bogotá: 2002). The authors are far from being complacent. Any complex reality—as they show—requires subtle judgements.

More subtle judgements are indeed necessary to distinguish where the 'weakness' of Colombian institution lies: to distinguish those that have remained stagnant from those that have modernized. The two traditional parties have been long suffering from decay—where not? Given the extraordinary dimensions of violence fed by organized crime—be it guerrillas, paramilitaries, or drug barons—state institutions guaranteeing the security of citizens need to be strengthened. Even here change is taking place: the Police, the Army and the Judiciary are all undergoing processes of reform. The challenges, however, are as immense as the vast territories in the country demanding state attention, and the unpredictability and brutality of terrorism. And any effort to strengthen further the state will always face the limits imposed by a historical preference to be free from the state yoke.

Far from being an anomaly, the transformation of Bogotá is the most visible reflection of a country in flux, in an ongoing institutional *revolcón*—the popular expression to describe the substantial changes of recent years. From a distance, what often appears to be fossilized are not Colombian institutions but the very language used to examine national reality, past and present. At a recent cocktail party, while I was conversing with some intellectuals I had just met, I was criticized—in a cordial and amicable exchange of views—for defending "the decadent Colombian establishment." There is no 'establishment' to defend: if it ever existed, it no longer does. Colombian liberal democratic institutions and traditions, however, are worth defending.

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Between Legitimacy and Violence

Colombia's Three Countries

BY MARCO PALACIOS

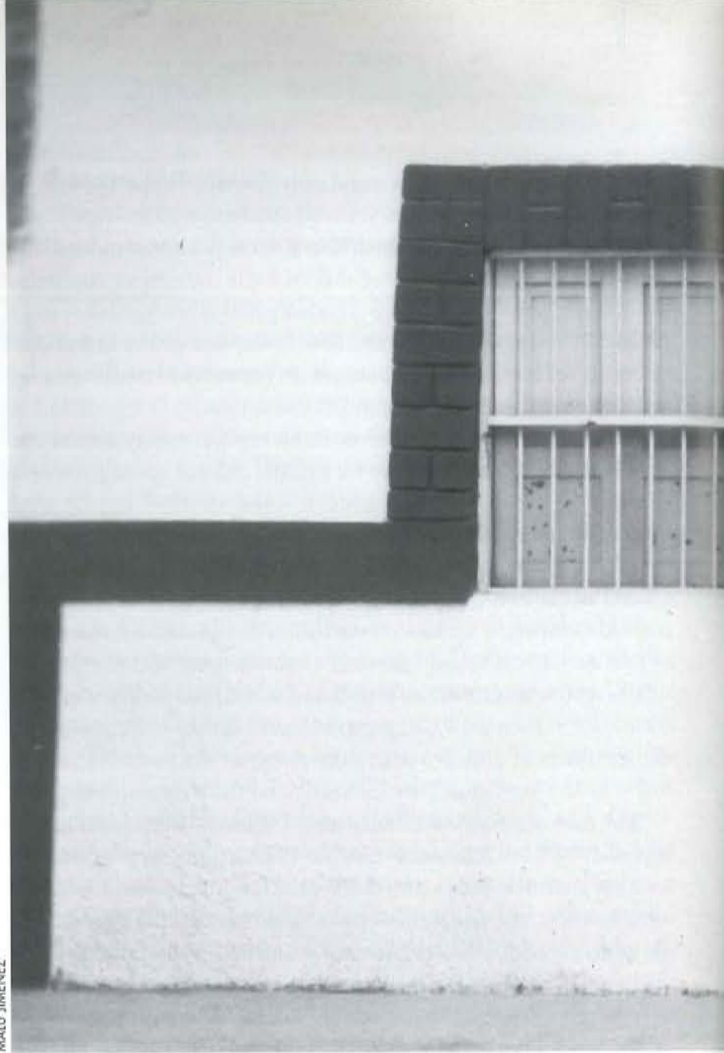
IN THE YEAR 2000, I SPENT A SABBATICAL YEAR AT THE FACULTY of Business Administration at Bogotá's Universidad de los Andes. Not including short visits, ten years had passed since I had left Colombia, and I had a mix of memories and fixed beliefs about Colombian life. In 1994, I had published a piece on Colombian history that a colleague called "a gloomy vision" of the country. It well should have been. I had left Colombia in 1990 in the midst of one of the most horrifying waves of violence and urban terrorism. The drug traffickers were waging war against those who made their life difficult: judges, journalists, union or civic leaders and politicians that disagreed with the ascendancy of the drug trade over public life.

It was a war staged without headquarters between those called the "Medellín and Cali cartels." In those days, with the Berlin Wall about to fall, the leftist guerillas occupied a distant second place in the creation of violence. But the military, the police and detectives, large landowners (many with wealth recently derived from drug trafficking) and clientelist politicians often formed alliances themselves in order to destroy the internal enemy, complying with the guidebook of the sinister Videla dictatorship in Argentina. In this preventative anticommunist war, rightist paramilitary squadrons appeared, carrying out massacres of peasants in the Córdoba province and of banana plantation workers in Urubá who had been identified as guerillas or their supporters.

This extermination campaign resulted in the death of two to three thousand members of the political party Patriotic Union (UP), an organization emerging from the 1984 peace accord that brought together cadres of the Communist party and the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). The UP was an electoral force, an experiment in political peace that could have marked the beginning of the guerilla disarmament.

The drug traffickers' military organizations replied with the same tactics, assassinating three presidential candidates between 1989 and 1990, including the charismatic Luis Carlos Galán, the leader of the liberal party and head of the UP, as well as the former M-19 guerrilla leader Carlos Pizarro. They made terrorism, bombing and kidnapping everyday practices. Governmental formulas did not work against them, and with that backdrop, the corruption of the police and the politicians was more and more palpable.

Ten years later, when I returned to Bogotá, the cruelty and the disorder of that Colombia of 1990 appeared to have lessened. By any reckoning, the capital city was transforming itself, and from that vantage point, Colombia's problems seemed less depressing. The city not only had millions of inhabitants, it now had citizens—a collective soul. The mayors, elected by a direct vote since the constitutional reform of 1986, had to report to the electorate and had incentives for honest administration. Perhaps, as a collective and unconscious answer to the waves of violence that continued to shake



Walking to school: seeds of citizenship

the country, and also as a response to new institutions, the citizens of the capital believed that they could substantially improve their living conditions, including better transportation and the modernization of public schools. Like medieval cathedrals, beautiful public libraries were built in the slums: well-organized and endowed with books, magazines, CDs and videos (see related article, p. 76).

It is emotional to visit them and verify that they are crammed with children, adolescents and poor youths, by themselves or with their mothers, and at times with both parents. These seeds of citizenship have been one of my greatest intellectual stimuli and a solace for my worries about the Colombian citizen.

Without a doubt, I should give warning that the whole country does not offer these doses of hope, nor are all the governmental projects so impressive. The gloominess of the Colombian scene persists and appears to once again be worsening.

Underlying Colombia's global leadership in homicides, kidnappings, and human rights violations is a profound social division and a loss of values not only among the less privileged but also among many sectors of the higher classes. Classical sociology recognizes the anomie—the social breakdown due to loss of standards—of the common man in the transition towards industrial society, but new sociology has not yet come to grips with anomie of the ruling classes in countries such as Colombia, where they have been principal targets of insecurity and violence by "armed actors." On the other hand, many leftist leaders, journalists, union leaders, and primary school teachers have been "disappeared" and tortured by the agents of the State or have fallen into the hands of paramilitary groups.



For those of my university generation (I was born in Bogotá in 1944), there was possibly the matter of the combined inertia of two forces: “La Violencia” (c. 1946-1964) and the Cuban Revolution. In my college years in Bogotá (1962-1967) it was not easy to elude the messianic force of the Cuban revolution. I recall, in the early 1980s, the death of an old friend from a heart attack. At the funeral, a mutual friend pointed out that he was “the first one of us who died a natural death.” That is, that almost all of our friends had died as a result of political violence. This makes me assume that there must be many visions of the Colombian violence, many memories and reinventions of a national trauma that persists in spite of everything. Urban, rural, and village visions, and naturally, those among society’s upper, middle and lower classes are very polarized in terms of the distribution of wealth and of income.

In my work as a historian of the present, I have tried to put this chaos in intellectual order. The question is, how does one focus events in a manner that allows valid lessons to be extracted so that lasting solutions can be found?

First, one must question generalizations such as “the 40-year civil war.” Between 1990 and 1999, 260,690 Colombians were the victims of homicides. Nonetheless, the intensity of the violence has fluctuated: from 1950 to 1965 Colombia maintained significantly high homicide rates, above the Latin American average. From 1965 to 1975 the number of homicides dropped, with rates similar to those of Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, or Panama. But during the 1970s, the murder rate rose rapidly, and ten years later, Colombia was named one of the most homicidal countries of the world.

Yet the national homicide rate varies sharply among different municipalities, counties, and Departments. The national rate per 100,000 inhabitants evolved approximately in the following manner: 32, from 1960 to 1965; from 1970-1975, it dropped to 23, then rose and leveled off at 33 in 1980, and 32 in 1985. It registered a strong increase until it reached 63 murders per 100,000 in 1990, spiraling to its height in 1991-1993 with 78 and lowering to 56 in 1998, although it rose once more to 63 in the two-year period of 1999-2000.

Although the connections between the different types of violence have not been established with sufficient precision, the most accepted hypothesis points to organized drug-trafficking as the trigger that shot up the crime index. Almost 70% of the murders in Colombia are in Bogotá, Medellín or Cali.

Possibly because of the framework of complicity among sectors of the political class and the drug-traffickers, guerilla and paramilitary violence overtook this diversified urban violence. What is for certain is that the peace process with the guerrillas (and now with the paramilitaries) has been a substantial ingredient to Colombian politics for the last 20 years, with paradoxical effects. In the last two decades, the guerrillas, in particular Tirofijo’s FARC, shaped itself as a national political actor, while the traditional parties are exhibiting weakness. The traditional bastion, the Conservative Party, is about to disappear, and the Liberal Party sends signals of division and disability. Yet, the FARC has moved from being “communists” during the Cold War to being “political interlocutors” in the brief golden years of the post-Cold War, and since September

11th, they are, more and more, "terrorists."

It is said, each time with more frequency, that Colombia is at the point of falling apart. The phrase can be developed in various directions. Let us examine a report in *Time* magazine about the extensive demilitarized zone established by then-president Pastrana which, in 1998, warned: "Colombia runs the risk of dividing itself into three countries, following the geography of its mountains. The Marxist guerillas prevail in the south; the government controls the central areas and the primary urban centers; and the paramilitary forces of the right, supported by the Army, are very well rooted in the majority of the north." (Latin American Edition, September 28, 1998)

From the perspective of the actual armed conflict, *Time's* obser-

Colombia doesn't appear to confront Balkanization, but the balance could depend more and more on the "third country" among the "islands of legitimacy."

variations would be more convincing if before the frontier lines of the sovereign proto-states are drawn on the Colombian map, Colombian lines of political legitimacy are drawn. These lines are certainly fluid and somewhat imprecise.

If we briefly develop this exercise, we would see that the majority of Colombian cities would be "islands of legitimacy," while the "guerilla south" and the "paramilitary north" would be niches of factional power. There would also be a "third country," made up of the rest. In the urban part of the country, in general, and not only in Bogotá, political legitimacy is clearer. The rules of representative democracy are more consistent; the business of the State is each time more transparent, institutions and public services more coherent and efficient, and the principle of citizenship more real. Having said this, it is necessary to also recognize the fragility of the foundations, as indicated by the criminal statistics of cities like Medellín and Cali, which place Colombia among the most unsafe and homicidal countries in the world. It must be understood that, on the political level, there are many unpredictable situations, perhaps because the crisis of the political parties has translated into fragmentation, violence and clientelism. A very different situation is lived in the territories of the factional powers—the guerillas and the paramilitary.

The latter includes the nine new zones of recent colonization, zones with very low population density. The failure of agrarian reform policy in the 1930s and then again in the 1960s led land-starved peasants to colonize deep in the jungle. In the second half of the 20th century, the forces of colonization expanded throughout much of the country. In these new territories, "all is negotiable."

THERE, THE HOBBSIAN LAW OF THE STRONGEST RULES: THE TRADITIONAL political clientelist networks; the guerilla and the contra-guerilla; the interests of *latifundismo*, primarily ranching and "*narcolatifundismo*"; the interests surrounding the illicit crops and their processing, the financing and transport of chemical precursors and products (cocaine and heroin); international contraband routes flourish in many places within this geography, including arms traffic. In some of these zones, a prosperous economy revolves around oil, bananas and gold. These export zones witness the high geo-

graphic mobility of young people to whom the State does not offer minimal opportunities of education, and therefore no possibility for social ascent. Localism, high geographic mobility and low social mobility are tied to abundant exportable resources (drugs, gold and oil, primarily) and feed the war that Colombia has been experiencing in the last decade.

In these territories, transitory alliances are forged and private armies are formed, destined to combat guerillas of diverse denominations. The paramilitary formations, highly localized and locally oriented, are gaining autonomy (there are those who speak of guerillas of the right) and they have attempted, unsuccessfully to date, to create a true national organization in the same style as the FARC.

In the country of factional powers, the police, the judicial power, and the electoral system are façades. Nonetheless, the viability of factional powers depends, as paradoxical as it sounds, on the existence of a nation and a State: Colombia. In the nation, there exist the intermediates that make local networks possible, as they do markets; and the State offers legal coverage and cultural reference. Moreover, since the 1991 Constitution, a substantial part of these zones' income derives from oil royalties and/or operational money transferred to the municipalities. This country is thus a permanent framework of "legitimacy and violence" and although the institutions are façades, they provide resources and rules of the game for all the participants, including the guerillas.

Although Colombia does not appear to confront the problem of Balkanization, it is evident that the balance could depend more and more on the "third country" located among the "islands of legitimacy" and the territories of "factional power." This "country" is formed through the joining of the more densely populated provinces with the coastal line of the Caribbean region, the Andean mountain ranges and the coffee belt. This country literally feeds Colombia and political and economic institutions function here, although reliant on traditional clientelistic practices.

Despite everything, it is also evident that in the "third country," the emergence of the middle urban classes has created a more critical attitude, disposed towards forming an independent opinion, and integrating into what is called civil society. This country is now a privileged territory of guerilla predatory activities, primarily by means of extortion known as "boleto," extortion kidnappings and attacks on the road and electric infrastructure, which as a result produce "protection" actions on the part of the paramilitary groups. In this country, the paramilitary have organized another source of income: the systematic robbery of gasoline from Colombia's transport systems.

In conclusion, without a diagnostic that heeds the complexity of the phenomena of violence in Colombia, it will be very difficult to find adequate solutions. Maybe such phenomena are not anything other than the expression of a nation and a State that, as of yet, has not fully formed itself. If that is the case, it would have to be asked if the world today would help the Colombians march towards the correct direction.

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Economy and History

Economic Development and Violence in Twentieth-Century Colombia

BY JOSÉ ANTONIO OCAMPO AND MARÍA ANGELA PARRA

AT THE 20TH CENTURY'S CLOSE, COLOMBIA FOUND ITSELF immersed in a severe crisis entailing both an internal armed conflict and the most severe economic recession in modern history. Although, as various historians have correctly pointed out, violence has *not* been a constant feature of the country's history, the century did begin in the midst of the last and worst civil war of the nineteenth century, the War of a Thousand Days, a result of which was the secession of Panama. Then, in the mid-20th century, another conflict known simply as "La Violencia" (The Violence), erupted. The most recent conflict bears some similarities with those of the past, particularly in terms of the colonization process that, given the peculiarities of Colombian geography, plays a role all over its territory. Other factors are also at work, notably the country's traditional fragmentation of power. Nevertheless, the most recent conflict's scale and severity are associated with an entirely new phenomenon: the extensive damage wrought by drug trafficking in terms of heightened violence and in Colombian society in general.

The second component of this crisis, the economic recession, exhibits previously unknown characteristics. Until recently, Colombia had been undergoing a relatively successful economic development process, avoiding some of the problems troubling other Latin American countries, particularly the severe external debt crisis of the 1980s. Unlike past crises, this one has many of the elements

common to other Latin American countries such as heightened vulnerability to external financial cycles and a failure to fully adjust to an overly rapid trade liberalization. Other elements are more specific to Colombia, particularly the excessive growth in public sector spending resulting in a fiscal crisis. This was a product of efforts to build firmer foundations for peace through a combination of economic liberalization and an expanded scope for State action.

These two histories, of violence and economics, are partially interrelated but to a large extent run parallel to one another. In fact, despite many attempts to calculate this internal conflict's impact upon economic growth, it cannot be proven the cause of the recent economic crisis. Nor can the uneven distribution of wealth and income, so typical of Latin America, be cited as the primary cause of the recent violence. Thus, we should look for clues to understanding the recent violence not in its common "Latin American" features but rather in some specifically Colombian traits—the impact of drug trafficking and the traditional fragmentation of power.

THE COFFEE REVOLUTION AND BEYOND

Three major processes marked Colombia's 20th-century economic history: the "coffee revolution" at the start of the century, the country's successful industrialization between the 1930s and the mid-1970s, and economic liberalization during the century's closing decade. The transition from the first to the second process was



T. LUKE YOUNG

The informal economy is an inventive way of responding to social exclusion: renting cell phones by the minute.

smooth and seamless. The transition from the second to the third, however, was traumatic.

The century began in the midst of a veritable "coffee revolution." Coffee output boomed and forms of production changed radically. The coffee plantations located in the eastern part of the country, hit hard by the War of a Thousand Days and the collapse of international prices, failed to recover when peace was restored and coffee prices started to rise in the first decade of the century. Moreover, these areas were to become one of the focal points of land disputes and the core of the country's first land reform effort. In contrast, in western Colombia, where coffee cultivation prospered in the early decades of the century, production units were generally medium-sized and peasant-owned.

The coffee boom paved the way for the growth of the domestic market and for the development of the modern means of transport essential to integrating such a geographically complex territory. Both of these factors contributed to the industrialization process. Although these processes were in full swing in the 1920s and further quickened their pace thanks to the availability of external financing, the country was still at a very early stage in its industrialization when the Great Depression struck. As in many other Latin American countries, the worldwide crisis of the 1930s was the chief catalyst for the transition from a primary-product exporting economy to a semi-industrialized economy. From then on, until the oil shock of 1973, the economy grew steadily. Sweeping changes in its production structures and rapid urbanization ensued.

In addition to its own dynamic, a number of forces influenced this process of structural change: the integration of the domestic market, the international coffee market's price cycle and econom-

ic policy. By the end of the 1920s, the country at last had the foundations of a modern transportation network. Its impact on the country's industrial development became apparent in the following decade, when manufacturing companies began to design their operations based on the nationwide market rather than confine themselves to local markets. The interface between the domestic market's integration and industrialization continued to be a hallmark of the ensuing decades, with lags in the development of the transportation network as a consistent characteristic of the process. A great deal of the industrialization pattern seen during these years was the result of the combined impact of the domestic market's integration and the linkages generated by the process itself, which led to the development of new sectors producing agricultural and industrial raw materials. Industrialization, in turn, spurred rapid urbanization, helping to fuel the expansion of domestic demand.

The phases of this process were linked to the coffee industry's cycle. When the coffee industry boomed (1945-1955), the availability of foreign exchange buoyed investment. The revaluation of the peso, which made imported goods such as machinery and equipment cheaper, was one of the main incentives for investment during such times. When coffee prices were low (mid 1950s through the 1960s), the devaluation of the currency spurred the development of new import-substituting sectors and non-traditional exports. Thus, the exchange rate functioned as the chief price signal for the diversification of production, acting on both the supply and demand for industrial goods. The instruments of trade policy—tariff protection, import controls and export subsidies—supplemented rather than substituted for the exchange-rate policy. In other words, rather than taking the place of market signals, they rein-

Colombia's Political Economy

Social Inclusion, Economic Growth

BY LUIS JORGE GARAY S.

Colombia is a society characterized by its deep social exclusion. More than 60 percent of the population is poor—more than 11 million Colombians do not even earn a dollar a day and cannot maintain minimal levels of nutrition. Furthermore, 80 percent of the rural population is poor and nearly 60 percent is destitute.

Three out of every five economically active Colombians work outside the formal economy in extremely precarious conditions. One of the most perverse characteristics of the exclusion process is that its inter-generational character is becoming more acute. More than three million school-aged children and youth do not have access to education. It is important to remember, moreover, the lack of reproduction of social capital within the family as the initial environment for human development, and its progressive depreciation. Today, more than 30 percent of Colombian families have a woman as the head of the family; this woman has to perform multiple functions in conditions of uncertain income. Thus, multiple roots of future social exclusion are germinating and reproducing themselves.

One must remember that the 2000 largest debtors in Colombia have access to more than 75 percent of the commercial credit allot-

ted by the commercial financing system. That is, regardless of the fact that there are more than one million informal businesses, more than 12,000 formal manufacturing establishments, and innumerable commercial establishments, only 2000 natural and legal people have access to the vast majority of commercial credit—which accounts for more than 60 percent of all the credit distributed in the economy. In the midst of the current process of economic opening and competition, the concentration of stocks and capital in the country is even denser than it was 15 years ago. Without the democratization of access to active products—whether called financiers of human capital or human production—social inclusion will not be feasible.

The concentration of wealth and property of active products has not been reduced, and has come to be permeated by illegal capital. Income inequality in Colombia is the second highest in Latin America, after Brazil. Twenty percent of the richest homes possess 52 percent of the income; 1.1 percent of Colombia's landowners have more than 55 percent of the exploitable land. Moreover, in the amply rich agricultural zones, 30 or 35 percent of the territory was bought with capital of doubtful origin, generated in drug trafficking or open corruption.

forced the signals generated by the coffee industry's cycle via variations in the real exchange rate.

This phase of rapid structural change coincided with a long-term downward trend in the ratio between exports and national output, indicating that the domestic market was its main engine. Economic policy strengthened this trend in part, but sought to avoid directing import substitution towards production sectors that, because of the market's size, had little chance of success. Even more importantly, as a result of the collapse of coffee prices beginning in the mid-1950s and the 1967 reforms to trade and foreign exchange rules, early on the country shifted to a "mixed model" that combined import substitution with export promotion.

In the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, a significant level of export diversification was in fact achieved, and the country took its first steps toward overcoming its over-dependence on coffee. A third component of this mixed model was economic integration, most clearly manifested in the creation of the Andean Group in 1969. The effects of this latter process, however, were rather limited.

The economic growth rates posted during the period of rapid structural change were not particularly high, since, at an annual level of 4.5%, the average was similar to the rate for the Third World or for Latin America as a whole. The glory days of industrialization came at the end of this period, between 1967 and 1974, when the mixed model was at its height and the Colombian economy boasted an annual growth rate of 6.5%. The most striking features of this long process of change were the highly stable growth

achieved for almost half a century, its regionally heterogeneous base, and the characteristic gradualism and pragmatism of economic policy, which avoided, in particular, excesses in import substitution.

Regional heterogeneity had implications that went far beyond economics. Ever since the founding of the Republic, regional diversity had been manifested in the rejection of any sort of central hege-

The most recent conflict bears some similarities with those of the past, especially in terms of the role being played by the colonization process that, given the peculiarities of Colombian geography, takes place all over its territory.

mony, and hence, in a tradition of limited powers. The strong republican tradition, reflected in the early development of the right to vote and a very firm constitutional division of power, was rooted in the regional elites' need to negotiate with each other. This tendency did not disappear with the return to political centralism in 1886, and was particularly expressed in the constitutional reform of 1910, which rejected the centralist impulses of the preceding years. This tradition of the division—and even fragmentation—of power could also be observed in the way political parties operated and in other spheres of social life. As new actors and social movements emerged, the tendency to avoid the formation of national hegemonies in any sector—whether workers, peasants, civic actors or entrepreneurs—remained strong.

The benefits of economic development were distributed very

Social exclusion also manifests itself through income tax exemptions and the squandering of resources. New forms of public contracts and administration of public services with inadequate regulatory and control frameworks have been producing irregularities.

All of the above creates a perverse process of social exclusion and excessive concentration of power. Social exclusion, therefore, is a stumbling block in the process of society's transformation towards the construction of democracy and becoming a state that provides an adequate safety network. Colombian society must make serious decisions about how to earmark efforts and resources to resolve the issue of social exclusion.

Colombia's economic crisis in the middle of a globalization movement imposes the necessity for it to advance in a process of public finance adjustment, but this process should not be restricted to a single inevitable model. One of the challenges of political economy is demonstrating the possibility of realizing a reasonable adjustment that is not recessionary but is relatively socially progressive.

DILEMMAS, COMPROMISES AND SOCIAL CHOICES

To arrive at a social arrangement that guarantees peace—the coexistence of citizens under a democratic and inclusive order—there will have to be a public debate discussing three fundamental core ideas.

On the economic and social front, a system of social protection and security must truly integrate a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy with the promotion of social inclusion that focuses significant public resources on education, health, pension security, nutrition, and

unemployment insurance.

On the civil and political rights front, there are two basic pillars: justice and defense in addition to security for the coexistence of citizens and social peace. This democratic security requires integrally conceiving the coordination of citizen security, the security of liberty of thought and organization, environmental security, juridical security—application of the law—and national security. The conception of democratic security must not be restricted to the traditional concept of national security.

These are the three essential objectives. In the Colombian case, it is worth the effort to illustrate the greatest challenges and social dilemmas.

THE SOCIAL SPHERE

It would cost the state 2.3 percent of its GNP to ensure that Colombia's 11 million destitute inhabitants will have enough alimentation to satisfy their essential needs. Today, Colombia dedicates less than .7 percent of its Producto Interior Bruto (PIB or GDP) to the serious problem of malnutrition, especially considering that 4 million out of the 11 million destitute and malnourished Colombians are children under 15 years of age.

To comply with the 1991 Constitution, the state should dedicate 1.4 percent of the GNP to properly educate the 3 million school-aged children and youths who are not currently attending school.

Health care for the 40 percent of the population without basic services would require 1.3 percent of the GNP.

unequally. Around 1950, Colombian health, education and housing indicators were typical of a very backward country. With the advent of the National Front (1958-1974), large-scale educational and health programs were set up. Despite substantial improvement in the indicators, significant differences between the urban and rural areas remained. One milestone, the 1957 plebiscite, led to the allocation of a proportion of the public budget to decentralized education and health expenditures, as well as to a formal alternation of the presidency and the equal division of public posts among the two traditional parties (the two central political features of the National Front).

Income distribution and poverty indicators also gradually improved. The available studies suggest that until the 1960s, the benefits of economic growth were concentrated in high-income sectors (both urban and rural) and the skilled workforce, most of it urban. Consequently, until that decade, income distribution deteriorated, and there was little progress in poverty reduction. Then, however, in the 1970s, income distribution and poverty indicators began to improve, thanks to a combination of three factors: (a) a reduction of rural labor surpluses as a result of economic growth and large-scale internal migration; (b) an improved distribution of educational opportunities, thanks to the National Front's social spending programs; and (c) a sharp reduction in the birth rate and, as a result, in household dependency ratios, which facilitated women's entry into the workforce.

Rural violence was a recurrent feature of this period. The high concentration of rural land ownership, the conflictive nature of colonization processes and the lack of a strong State presence in rural areas certainly provided the context for many of these events, but

the methods used and the identities of the groups involved in this violence changed over time. The 1920s and 1930s were marked by an escalation in peasant disputes, especially in the coffee-growing areas of the country where large landholdings prevailed. These conflicts carried over into the next decades, but were gradually eclipsed by the confrontations between conservatives and liberals that characterized "La Violencia." Not without difficulty, the National Front put an end to this, but at that very time new disputes over land ownership were erupting, and some of the first revolutionary guerrillas began to make their appearance in the climate created by the success of the Cuban revolution.

The State responded to these tensions with two fairly modest land reform programs. The first was carried out between the mid-1930s and the mid-1940s and focused on downsizing the coffee plantations. The second agrarian reform program was launched in the 1960s as part of the National Front's social policies. In both cases, rural landowners successfully mobilized against these programs, limited their scope and eventually dismantled them.

THE END OF RAPID STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The international crisis triggered by the oil shock of 1973 signaled not only the end of the boom that had begun in 1967, but also the end of the period of rapid structural change. Industrial growth slowed down sharply, thereby putting a stop to the upward trend in the share of GDP manufacturing provided. Non-coffee commercial agriculture, which had kept pace with the industrial sector, also began to see its growth rates slow in the late 1970s. The expansion of non-traditional exports' share of the country's total foreign sales temporarily came to a halt. Most importantly,

A plan for an inclusive and financially viable pension system must include provisions for the most unprotected such as the elderly poor. Only 19.8 percent of the economically active population is covered by today's pension system, although today's pension debt is equivalent to 200 percent of the GNP.

With more equitable taxation resulting in increased public resources dedicated to the elimination of inequality, the country could provide basic education and healthcare for almost the entire population within the next five years by increasing the percentage of the GNP used for these services from 1.5 to 3.5 percent during that five-year period.

The goal of providing basic education, health and pension subsidies for the country's poorest sector requires resources roughly comparable with that of tax exemptions, deductions and tributary privileges which are not socially justifiable—about 2.5 percent of the GNP is concentrated in a very small number of individuals and companies and this is not even including the percentage of state monies lost to corruption and bureaucratic waste.

THE DEFENSE AND SECURITY SPHERE

Although some argue that defense and security do not receive enough public money, Colombian society spends 5.4 percent of its GNP on defense and security, including 2.1 percent for the military, an additional .3 percent for other security forces, 1.2 percent for the police, and 1.1 percent on private legal security forces such as bodyguards and watchmen. According to the *Superintendencia de Vigilancia y Seguridad*, the current number of private legal guards (more



Girl walks down steps in her military-occupied neighborhood, Comuna 13 in Medellin: Colombia spends 5.4% of its GNP on defense and security.

than 130,000) exceeds those in the armed forces (about 100,000); these figures do not include unregistered private security firms or well-financed illegally armed groups.

Colombia, which spent 3.6 percent of its GNP on defense in 2001 (compared to the 1.9 percent spent in most of Latin America), is expected to spend 4.2 percent to 6.4 percent of its GNP on defense from 2002-2006 including the additional costs of private security; that figure spirals to 7.6 percent of the GNP in 2006 for public safety and private security, a level substantially superior to that of

these ruptures in previous trends coincided with the end of the government's commitment to industrialization, which became evident for the first time under the last National Front Administration. The various components of the "mixed model" were thus abandoned without truly being replaced by a new development strategy. Such a strategy would come only much later, at the beginning of the 1990s. In the interim, the absence of a long-term strat-

Colombia avoided some of the extremes of capital-account liberalization and privatization experienced in other countries.

egy was coupled with an economic policy that shifted back and forth as circumstances changed.

The austerity policies implemented during the 1975-1978 coffee boom allowed the country to improve its external debt indicators significantly. When the boom came to an end, externally financed public-sector investment increased, a process that mirrored that of other Latin American countries in the second half of the 1970s. But this process had not advanced far enough when the Latin American debt crisis cut it short. Thanks to low levels of foreign indebtedness, Colombia did not experience the full force of the debt crisis. Consequently, the country was able to resume its growth in the second half of the 1980s and turned in the best economic performance in all of Latin America for that decade (an annual growth rate of 3.7%, compared to 1.1% for the region as a whole). The policies adopted in response to the crisis, in particular the devalu-

ation of the currency and an increase in export incentives, paved the way for another boom in non-traditional exports, which took place prior to trade liberalization in the early 1990s. Burgeoning growth of non-traditional and mining exports enabled the country to finally overcome its dependence on coffee, and exports reached the highest percentages of GDP seen in half a century.

Despite this relatively satisfactory performance, in the early 1990s the country's economic authorities called for a radical reorientation of its pattern of development. Although the interruption of the process of structural change in the mid-1970s did justify a policy shift, this turnaround actually came more as a result of the prevailing climate in the region as a whole rather than stemming from an actual need to overcome a supposed tendency towards economic stagnation. The ensuing *apertura económica* (economic opening), as it was called in Colombia, was swift and quite radical when considered in terms of the historical patterns of a country characterized by gradualism and pragmatism for more than half a century. Even so, it did avoid some of the extremes of capital-account liberalization and privatization that occurred in other countries of the region.

As in most of Latin America, the results of this effort were, in any case, mediocre. Economic growth, even in the years when production was expanding (1991-1997), did not differ from the rates posted in the 1980s (3.7%) and a number of industries, especially agriculture but also in the manufacturing sector, had severe difficulties coping with the heightened level of external competition. Even more disturbingly, and in contrast to Colombia's previ-

developed countries.

Society must deliberately prioritize these basic objectives to determine the appropriate dedication of resources to each. Colombia appears to be immersed in a classic textbook dilemma more elementary than the economics of the last century, clearly illustrated by MIT's Paul Samuelson's study on the ironic disparity between how much Colombia spends on guns and how little is spent on butter.

THE JUSTICE SPHERE

Justice is characterized today as a socially exclusive system: access is costly and discriminatory towards the poor. Social impunity prevails: more than 70 percent of criminal behavior is not placed under the consideration of the authorities or resolved in a timely and legal fashion. In the worst case scenario, crimes are resolved against the victim and in favor of the victimizer. Therefore, it is necessary to advance a judicial system that guarantees the observance of the fundamental rights of the citizens. But this alone is not sufficient. In the face of existing conflict in Colombian society, a culture geared towards peaceful resolution of conflicts must be simultaneously restored as a sign of a modern, civilized democracy.

Colombian society must open spaces that permit the incorporation of legal mechanisms and regulations that authorize the community itself to directly participate in peaceful resolution of certain types of differences and civic conflicts. Examples of such policies are community judges and justices of the peace who are able to bring the administration of justice close to the citizen himself.

For example, today, 75 percent of civil court activity involves contractual disputes between the financial system and its debtors or cases of restitution of leased property. This is an unnecessary expenditure of state resources. The State must be, in the end, the inalienable and ultimate guarantor of the rights of all citizens. With the same public resources currently destined for the country's justice sector, it would be possible to guarantee a more ample, opportune, efficient, and equitable access to justice with both a formal judicial and duly regulated alternative by invoking new commitment to a culture of peaceful resolution of conflicts and the strict observance of law within the constitution's social guarantees.

THE SPHERE OF ECONOMIC DEMOCRATIZATION

In the face of profound social exclusion, democratization of the access to assets is essential. This access refers not only to certain traditional forms of wealth such as land, but also to conditions of equity and financial, technological, information, and commercialization of assets, for example. It should not be concerned with neo-populist policy, but rather with the construction of an equitable institutional and financial architecture within the context of market systems, enabling the reproduction of its human and physical capital. Policymakers should focus on promoting available resources that society is not presently taking advantage of.

At this point, one must remember that true democracy consists of the exercise of liberties and the development of capacities in conditions of equality; the implication is that the members of the collective

ous experience, macroeconomic policy accentuated the economy's instability. The aggregate domestic demand cycle was particularly intense. The expectations generated by the discovery of extensive oil deposits and the opening of the economy, as well as the avalanche of capital that began to inundate Latin America around that time, formed the background for the boom in private and public spending that took place during 1992-1995. The excessive domestic and external borrowing required to finance the country's hefty current-account deficit rendered the economy highly sensitive to interest-rate hikes and any devaluation of the currency. Both did eventually take place as a consequence of the Asian crisis, resulting in a severe loss of wealth and a sharp adjustment in private-sector spending. In 1999 the Colombian economy experienced the steepest decrease in economic activity since national accounting records have been kept, and the subsequent recovery was weak. As a result, at an annual figure of 0.4%, economic growth for the period 1998-2002 was the lowest in the country's history and below the population's growth rate.

As these economic processes bear strong similarities to those occurring in other Latin American countries, it is difficult to associate them with the increasing violence plaguing the country. Accordingly, although the prevailing violence has certainly struck a blow to the economy, it would be incorrect to attribute the economic crisis to the violence. Nor should the economic crisis, or the aggravation of social conflicts, be seen as the underlying cause of this new wave of violence. Although the marked concentration of ownership and income and the high levels of poverty certainly create ideal con-

ditions for conflict, it is not clear that these problems were growing worse precisely at the time that violence indicators skyrocketed in the 1980s. In fact, poverty rates declined slightly during that decade and continued to do so until 1999, following the more striking improvement of the 1970s. Although the improvement in distribution observed during those years was not maintained, neither were there any clear signs of a deterioration for this variable.

Violence and economic crisis were Colombia's complex legacy as it moved into the new century.

Indeed, there is some degree of consensus that the sharp increase in indicators of violence experienced in the 1980s has a clearly defined cause: the upsurge in drug trafficking, which came to finance all sorts of violence and overwhelmed the police and judicial authorities. Regional fragmentation also contributed to violence. In what amounts to a perpetuation of long-standing structures, the conflicts that arose—associated with guerrilla and paramilitary activities as well as drug trafficking—were largely a summation of local conflicts rather than centralized offensives. This has averted the disintegration of national structures but, on more than one occasion, has also created a feeling of chaos.

Be this as it may, since the 1980s a political awareness of the need to support social reforms in order to lay the groundwork for peace has emerged. This is certainly valid, especially in the case of rural areas, where drug trafficking became intermixed with historical conflicts in the agricultural frontier zones (including those involv-

are exercising the status of social citizenship. However, this cannot be sustained in the midst of progressive impoverishment and social exclusion; as a result, the institution of favorable conditions for economic growth is necessary, although clearly insufficient.

FIXING THE PUBLIC FINANCE SECTOR

In the face of grave structural disequilibrium in public finances, Colombia would have to make fiscal adjustments to assure the sustainability of the public debt and to make advances in urgent social reforms. This would require using 3.5 to 4 percent of the GNP in the next few years—meaning more taxes must be collected while corruption and public misspending is curtailed.

A collective choice for progress, equality, and efficiency of adjustment—hopefully through a rigorous and democratic process of debate—should establish social priorities for the orientation of public resources. The questions of: "How should fiscal adjustment be achieved?", "What is the combination between rationalization of tax structure and tax cuts and the reorientation of public spending?", "What types of tax reform should be undertaken and how?" and "How is sustainability of the debt and the attainment of financing of the Colombian economy guaranteed?" should be answered.

Income tax evasion, which consists of almost 3 percent of the GNP—would have to be curtailed, and other measures will have to be taken in order to dismantle the privileges of a few which come at the expense of the public treasury.

Public spending needs to become more efficient, and there should

be a strategic campaign against government corruption and administrative errors—which surpass 2.5 percent of the yearly GNP. Recent studies find that corruption tends to be profoundly inequitable and facilitates social exclusion by creating, for example, direct obstacles to the access of public services, disproportionately affecting the poor in terms of cost and opportunity.

The fight against corruption and administrative deficiencies requires a true political desire to affect particular powerful interests that unduly profit to the detriment of the public treasury. Clientelism and favoritism in the awarding of government contracts often result in extraordinary gains for certain domestic and international conglomerates. These practices are not illegal—and may even ironically be a perverse source of social inclusion—but they drain public funds.

One of the major problems confronting Colombia, amidst the financial crisis of Latin American countries, is how to administer the public debt and to manage the financing of the economy.

Before the relative "closing" of the international market of capital for the region, the country must introduce a comprehensive strategy to search for adequate retribution, on behalf of the international finance system, for its exceptional condition of "good debtor." Thus, for example, in addition to achieving significant increases in the "exposure" (debt level) of the World Bank in the next few years and the rotation or recycling of the debt with the International Development Bank, the decisive support of the IMF must be relied upon, as well as, ideally, the U.S. Treasury Department, to obtain resources

ing guerrilla activity). In the 1980s, social programs targeted the areas of conflict through the National Rehabilitation Plan. The Constitution of 1991 took a stronger stance, reflecting the consensus concerning the need to confront the country's serious social deficits and, at the same time, to strengthen democracy by handing over more functions and resources to local governments. Economic liberalization efforts thus coincided with the steep rise in decentralized public-sector spending, most of which went to social sectors.

The increase in social public-sector spending—the most rapid of any Latin American country in the 1990s—succeeded in extending the coverage of social services, but also helped set off a fiscal crisis that has made the task of macroeconomic management even more difficult since the mid-1990s. In any case, this strategy cannot be described as “economic populism,” as the succeeding administrations also tried to finance increased spending through a series of insufficient tax reforms. At the same time, the proportion of the urban population living below the poverty line fell from 47% in 1991 to 39% in 1997. However, a commensurate improvement in rural areas did not occur. On the contrary, as a result of the severe agrarian crisis triggered by the opening of the economy, rural poverty actually increased.

The recent crisis stopped these positive trends and, in some cases, reversed them. The worst setback was the increase in the proportion of the urban population living below the poverty line, which in just two years wiped out all the gains of the previous six years. The culprit in this case was the dramatic increase in open unemployment. Informal employment that, unlike the general pattern in Latin America, had diminished during the boom years, burgeoned during this recent crisis, reversing the achievements of

almost an entire decade.

Violence and economic crisis were thus Colombia's complex legacy as it moved into the new century. These are two parallel processes whose interconnections are surprisingly weak. Furthermore, the political process has sought to mitigate the effects of the social deficit as a possible contributing factor to the violence, though only with partial success. These efforts have, moreover, generated fiscal tensions that have made the management of the economic crisis more difficult. Most importantly, Colombian society has many strengths that can help it grapple with these problems. In particular, the country's sturdy republican roots have further been enhanced by the 1991 Constitution, which opened spaces for local and participatory democracy.

The simplistic views—a “failed State,” a “historical tradition” of violence, violence that essentially stems from poverty and a lack of democracy, an economic crisis generated by widespread violence, among others—so commonly voiced in many foreign (and some domestic) analysts' interpretations of the current crisis are of little help. A stronger line of reasoning would recognize the roles of a number of features specific to Colombia, such as the country's traditional fragmentation of power and the extensive damage wrought by drug trafficking, as well as other features common to many Latin American countries, particularly overestimation of the positive and underestimation of the negative effects of economic liberalization.

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under reasonable conditions—in terms of costs and time limits. The payment of the public debt should not be established per se as an obstacle to social inclusion.

THE SPHERE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Since the early 1980s, Colombia has been suffering from a harmful process of production deactivation—deagriculturalization and deindustrialization—that make sustainable annual growth rates superior to 3 to 3.5 percent highly unlikely. However, the World Bank estimates that annual growth rates of 4 to 4.5 percent for the rest of the decade are necessary for Colombia to merely return to its mid-1990s poverty levels.

Economic growth is necessary, although not solely sufficient, to dismantle the structural bases of the social exclusion of significant segments of the population. It is important to develop collective and private funds to achieve structural transformation and to implant policies conducive to a social safety net. Strict governmental coordination is decisive in areas of public policy such as sustainable growth and employment, education, basic health, the alleviation of hunger, public services, housing of social interest, work training and public works projects.

For these objectives a true social contract dealing with social inclusion, the fight against poverty, and growth would have to be developed, with the active help of public policy and in strict consultation with the requirements for stability and macroeconomic adjustment. Clear rules must be laid out for the coordination of macro-

economic policy, social programs and other public plans to shape a clean environment for a model of growth, generator of employment and reactivator of internal demand. It becomes less of an either/or situation when economic growth is linked to a program of social inclusion.

ABOUT THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Colombian society is confronted with serious dilemmas and choices with undeniable repercussions for its economic, political, and social organization. An analysis of the political economy of social transformation must take place with widespread democratic discussion. We intellectuals, specialists, and technicians of diverse social sciences must stimulate this public debate.

It is clear that “social arithmetic” permits the deduction that it is possible to progressively approach inclusion and development, as long as the “arithmetic of power” is fundamentally altered in favor of equality, solidarity, and efficiency in a market regime. Only with a true social transformation will it be possible to think about the construction of a true political, economic, and social democracy.

Luis Jorge Garay, the author of Rethinking Colombia: Towards a New Social Contract, holds a Ph.D. in Economics from MIT. This essay, presented at the conference “Beyond Armed Actors” held at Harvard last year, is partially based on Colombia: Between Exclusion and Development: Proposals for the Transition to a State with Guarantees for Social Rights, Controller's Office, Bogota, August 2002 (under the academic direction of Luis Jorge Garay).

Traces of Memory

Art and Remembrance in Colombia

BY DORIS SALCEDO

"At dawn all was desolation and ruins. Amid the rubble lay the incinerated remains of hostages and guerrillas, their weapons, also calcified, beside them. Few of the bodies retained their human form. The air exuded an unbearable, penetrating stench, record of the destruction of human life."—Report of the Special Inquiry Commission Report on the Palace of Justice

SOME PEOPLE CALL IT THE HOLOCAUST AT THE PALACE OF Justice. November 6 and 7, 1985, were days that changed Colombia forever, the days in which impunity became entrenched in the official facade of democratic institutions and memory erased. No one knows exactly, but around 126 people died, including most of the country's Supreme Court.

Despite desperate attempts by many, including the hostage judges themselves, to get the civilian government to negotiate with guerrillas who had taken the Palace of Justice by force, the Colombian Army immediately retaliated in a brutal way with bullets, bombs, and fire. The mostly one-sided battle lasted for two days. Few human remains were found. Nothing but ashes.

Bolívar Plaza, the site of the old Palace of Justice and its new stone replacement, is located in the very center of Bogotá's downtown. It is a pigeon-filled plaza, filled with strolling lovers and office workers out on a lunch break. I used to work near there—a bustling oasis that all too soon buried and forgot its blood-stained witnessing.

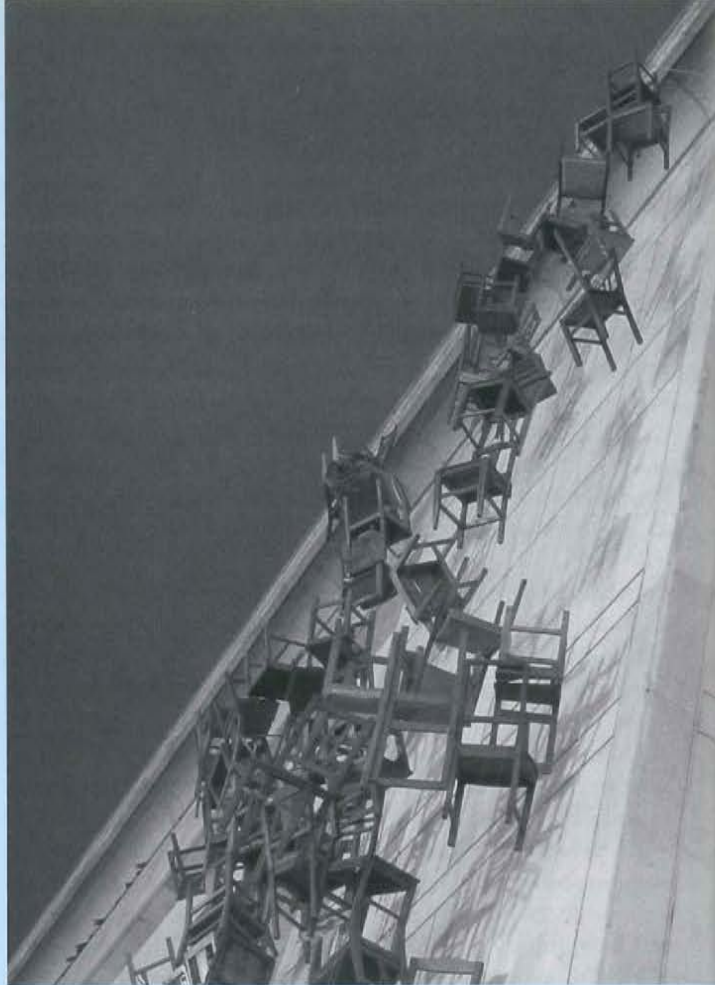
For 17 years, I had wanted to remember, to transform this violent event into remembrance through art. As an artist who works with memory, I confront past events whose memory has purposefully been effaced, in which the objects that bear the traces of violence have been destroyed in order to impose oblivion. In this case, I wanted to try to turn this intentional oblivion, this "no longer present" into "a still here," into a presence. When there are no traces, only one thing remains a date, or, in this case, two: November 6th and 7th.

Last year, on those dates, we commemorated the Palace of Justice deaths for the first time, lowering 280 empty chairs from the roof of the new building, slowly, with no obvious human presence, during the two long days.

For months, I had been collecting the simple wooden chairs and confronting the tangled bureaucracies to obtain the necessary permissions. It was not an announced event, but an integral part of the Plaza life, an event that made people stop and watch and listen and perhaps remember.

This ephemeral artwork was based on the specific memory rooted on the singularity of this date, an irreplaceable date for the families of the victims, and irreplaceable for anyone willing to remember. It is a date that belongs to the past but on each anniversary announces its return, it is also a date to come. As French writer Jacques Derrida put it "The date is a future anterior, a date is also the anniversaries to come."

In forming this art, I needed to break with the event's specific



details, bringing it out of the past so it could become a memento, a memorandum for all of us in the present, not just for the few who actually witnessed the event. A work of art must conjoin several different events, so the same date commemorates heterogeneous events.

Derrida writes in his essay on Celan that a "date is a specter, a commemoration announces the spectral return, of that which unique in its occurrence will never return, what one commemorates will be the date of that which could never come back."

In Colombia, in this most violent of times, we are forced to face the emptiness and the nothingness of the loss in war. The search for meaning focuses on the irrepressible activity of remembrance, which must begin with the inscription of the date in a work of art, if it is to endure. The work of art speaks even if none of its references are intelligible. Art speaks to the other; it addresses an other, an altogether other, even if it does not reach the person it is addressing. The main issue, as Derrida observes, "is that address takes place, even in the absence of a witness." What counts is that address takes place, because the presence of some remainder, some trace of memory, "allowed us to commemorate, celebrate and bless."

In the Palace of Justice work and, indeed in all of my work, I have discovered that to construct an object invested with cultural signification, in order to make a work of art, I have to go toward the other. My work is a relationship with that person, whom I try to express. His presence is a requirement for my work. The victim of violence is prior to my work. The victims of violence invest my work with meaning. My work comes from the experience of the person to whom I am dedicating and addressing my work.

In my work on political violence, I have tried to interpret how human life is manipulated by calculations of power. I have focused



COURTESY OF DORIS SALCEDO

Remembrance through Art: the Palace of Justice, November 6–7, 2002

on extreme forms of political violence, forceful displacement, disappearance, massacres, and persecution that end in death. My work is about the ones that have been expelled from their place and have nothing left, as Paul Celan said, “the ones that are unsheltered even by the traditional tent of the sky.”

All of my work is based on individual cases that are of little interest to historians and to the Colombian justice system. In order to make a piece, I try to find individuals who have endured violence and extreme experiences. I look for individuals as faces, as real presence, but in most cases unfortunately I encounter just the impossibility of finding the person because the person is gone and all that is left is a trace and all that is felt is his silence. All that remains is beyond my possibilities, beyond my reach. There is nothing or very little I can grasp of that life that is gone long ago. This is what my work is about: Impotence, a sum of impotence, not being able to solve anything, or to fix a problem, not knowing, not seeing, not being able to grasp a presence, for me art is a lack of power.

As the viewer looks at my work—whether it is chairs slowly descending from the Palace of Justice or a hollowed table filled with concrete—he or she feels this absence. The viewer is left with the impossibility of seeing which brings about the sensation of proximity—almost a presence and yet only absence.

MY RESEARCH HAS ALWAYS LED ME TO CASES WHERE THE VICTIM IS persecuted beyond the possibility of self-defense. The victim has no defense in language, because the possibility of an apology is ruled out. So the victim becomes a solitary being for whom the mediation of language is not possible anymore. Consequently, there is no one the victim can talk to; no one would listen to him. There

is just silence. Silence as a sign of solitude

I focus on political violence. Violence that is exerted against people who are invisible. There are always plenty of political, historical or personal reasons that motivate those that wish to kill, that declare entire civilian populations as invisible ones, as military targets, so they won't see the individuals who suffer and can center their attention on the historical reason that justifies and legitimates their killings.

As a sculptor I see myself as a crossing point. I see myself as the terrain where the tragic experience of the victims of violence, the material traces left in objects, and some contemporary thinking, meet. To begin a piece, there is first of all a testimony. Then comes the material object, that has traces of every day life, and my intuition is guided by the reading of a thinker—many authors accompany me in silent collaboration.

The first conscious decision I make as an artist is to be immersed in a world where contemplation, distance and indifference are not possible. I decided to live in Colombia, a country at war. I believe that in order to comprehend our situation, our reality, it is not enough to define it or analyze it from a comfortable distance. It is essential to find ourselves in a sensible disposition towards that reality. To think a specific reality is no longer to contemplate it, but to commit oneself to it as the Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas wrote: “To be engulfed by that which one thinks, to be involved, this is the dramatic event of being-in-the-world.” Therefore, I decided to be involved in the world of tragedy, the world of political violence.

My task as an artist is to make sense out of brutal facts. My work is an attempt to make violent reality intelligible—needless to say that a lifetime is not enough for such a task. In the third world we are well aware that human beings do not triumph over external reality, we must produce meaning out of the tensions and chaos generated by our harsh conditions. Making art is a way of understanding, a way of comprehending reality. It is because human actions can become intelligible or have been rendered intelligible, that there is humanity.

Searching for humanity, searching for what is purely human in the middle of inhuman acts and inhuman conditions is what has guided my work. But, what is that element that we can identify as purely human? Where can we find it? I found an answer to these questions in the writings of the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. He explains that what is purely human is what is equal in all of us, and this purely human element is awakened in tragedy.

The common element in all of us is humanness, the human element equal in all of us is not to be found in the peculiarities or in the personality of the individual, nor in race, religion or cultural differences. It is found in the self, the self within man, in what is mute and universal—the self as the expression of the human condition.

Rosenzweig said the hero of Greek tragedy embodies the solitary self, cut off from all relations to the world and his destiny is marked by two fundamental experiences: the encounter with Eros and the encounter with death or Tanathos.

The tragic hero awakens himself in Eros and accomplishes himself in his encounter with death. Death is silence, the impossibility of dialogue. Art is communication without words; art is silence.

Art is also mediation; and therefore it enables a self enclosed in his own tragedy to awaken another self, who is just as solitary. Art is the awakening of the human as tragic solitude: as fear and pity. Fear

and compassion are the only feelings capable of confronting and breaking egoism, capable of awakening solidarity among human being.

As we see, art does not create a direct and true communication as language does, but nevertheless it awakens, outside the boundaries of time, an ephemeral community. This is why I feel it is so important to accompany the community of disappeared ones by making public the silence and private pain of each family. Through

My task as an artist is to make sense out of brutal facts. I choose to remember through my art.

art I am trying to take this problem into the realm of the public, transforming an individual tragedy into a social phenomenon. I am attempting to form an even more ephemeral community, one that takes place during the brief moment the viewer contemplates in silence the work of art. It happens when the interrupted life of the victim—present in the art work—reaches out to find the memories of pain inscribed in each viewer's memory.

THE HISTORICAL EXISTENCE OF MAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF INTEREST TO artists because it is dramatic. Once again, Emmanuel Levinas gives us a perfect example: "Comedy begins with the simplest of our movements, each of which carries with it an inevitable awkwardness. In putting out the hand to approach a chair, I have torn the sleeve of my jacket, I have scratched the floor, and I have dropped the ash of my cigarette. In doing that which I want to do, I have done so many things I did not want to do. The act has not been pure, for I have left some traces. When the awkwardness of the act turns against the goal searched, we are at the height of tragedy."

What is important about this passage is that it emphasizes that our knowledge and our mastery of reality, through consciousness, does not exhaust our relation with reality; it goes far beyond consciousness. Knowledge and control are rather precarious tools to deal with reality. Both comedy and tragedy are always present in our lives—as is the case daily in Colombia. One can quickly turn into the other.

I would like to think of this aspect from Levinas' point of view. When we neglect a person, when we decide not to see his face, not to recognize the totality of a life, not to hear and not to speak to a person, we do this in order to neglect and negate him. Partial negation is the beginning of violence.

Levinas points out that: "Partial negation is violence because it denies the independence of a person: Not to see the face of the other implies to negate his existence." The Greek term *Prosopon* (face) etymologically means, "What stands before the eyes, what gives itself to be seen."

To see the one that is different with indifference is to look at a person as we look at objects—with the same indifference that we gaze at an object that we own; we look on with indifference because we own it, but in contrast we look with great interest at the objects we desire. When someone belongs to me as an object, I can deny his or her existence. When a person is seen as an instrument, a tool, just a means, his life is also an end to fulfill political purposes.

The person that is considered utterly different, the other, whose negation announces his murder, is the sole being that I wish to kill. No one wishes to kill someone that is considered his equal.

Killing is the manifestation of absolute power. And, there is nothing art can do against absolute power. When facing absolute power, we can say that art is useless, impotent in many aspects. But, even if it sounds like a contradiction, it has the tremendous power to bring back into the realm of humanity, the life that have been desecrated. That is why on November 6 and 7, 2002, 17 years after the destruction of memory, I chose to remember through my art.

Making art implies respect for the aesthetic view; it implies paying attention to every single detail of life. When I begin a piece I try to understand the victims of violence in the framework of his own history, his surroundings, his family and habits. At that point, the other, the utterly different, becomes a human being in the splendor of a complete life.

What my work tries to present is the fact that the past cannot be recuperated by representation, even if we use memory or history. There is no aesthetic redemption. In my work, I try in vain to recuperate the irreversible. It is an attempt to synchronize different times; but we know there is no common measure between the past and the present.

When we see a trace, the first thing we know is that someone has already passed. A trace is what is utterly past. What is irreversible, a trace is what signifies without making appearance. Through a trace, we establish a relationship with an irreversible past.

In any given image or in a given object there is the absent content of previous events that each single object carries. Any object, a shoe, a table, or a door carries certain intelligibility that adds meaning to the piece I make. Each object has been invested with memory.

Every object, in consequence, is invested with meaning. I look carefully for the meaning inscribed in each object. And my work simply tries to enhance it, to make it more evident.

Objects, like words, have to be placed in the proper context to be understood. They have to be connected with something that already happened, they have to be connected to history. The identity of things bears the identity of their history.

Just like language, experience does not appear to be made up of isolated elements. One cannot present an isolated image in a space on its own and hope it has a meaning by itself. Images signify on the basis of the world that they refer to, and on the confrontation of the position of the viewer with the position of the artist. I think the meaning of a work of art arises in the confrontation of these different worlds: the world of the victim, my own world, and the world of the viewer.

Man has the need to draw from the past criteria to act in the present. When man does not understand his past, his own history, he is deprived of reference points, and finds himself suspended between a past that is perceived as an accumulation of incompressible events, and a future that he can not possess. Therefore it seems like an abyss in front of him. The past is the only place where we can find both our origins and our destiny.

Doris Salcedo, an internationally renowned artist from Colombia whose work addresses issues of violence and holocaust, was a Visiting Scholar/Artist at the Center for the Study of World Religions at the Harvard Divinity School in 2002.

Necrological Flora

Images for a Political Geography of Plants

BY JOSÉ ROCA

Plants play a role in the moral and political history of mankind; if it is certain that the history of natural objects can only be considered a history of nature, then it is no less certain—according to the definition of one profound thinker—that the very changes in nature acquire a legitimately historical character if they exert influence over human events.

—Humboldt and Bonpland
Ideas for a Geography of Plants, 1803

COLOMBIA'S WORSENING CONFLICT HAS CAUSED MILLIONS OF people to move from rural to urban areas and a significant exodus of the middle and upper classes to foreign countries. It has also created a culture that, by witnessing numerous images of death on a daily basis, has come to visually accept violence. Given that Colombians see crude images on television and in the newspapers almost daily, their visual sensibility has been, in a sense, "anesthetized." In this context, I will argue, the artistic image—with its evocative and allegorical power—can be more effective than an image found in the media with respect to its ability to reinforce the associations between image, feeling and meaning.

This exposure to violence is not new. When we talk about "The Violence" in Colombia, we do not refer to the current situation in the country. We are specifically talking about the 1950s political violence between Conservatives and Liberals that created a predominantly urban country due to the massive influx of peasants into the cities. This accelerated urbanization generated widespread misery, common delinquency and hybrid cultures at the periphery (urban-rural). The fact that we still refer to the 1950s as "The Era of Violence" is rather ironic, since one would assume this phenomenon of violence would have ended by now or at least diminished in its intensity. On the contrary: diverse political and economic factors (particularly drug trafficking) have caused the situation to reach truly absurd extremes, with more than 30,000 violent deaths per year, millions of unemployed people and millions of legal and illegal emigrants. As a result, there has been a progressive and accelerated pauperization of the "oldest democracy in Latin America," one of the rhetorical phrases which we Colombians use to bear all this misery we face.

Latin America's first voyagers were well aware of the deep inequities in the social and political structures that they encountered in their travels—this was evident in their criticism of them in their journals and correspondence. One can say that the true discovery of America took place in the second half of the 18th century when these European scientific expeditions traveled to the New World with the intention of mapping the territory and classifying its flora and fauna. Although voyagers (that rare combination of both an artist and a scientist) were primarily interested in the region's geography, zoology, and botany, their attitude toward their exuberant surroundings and flora contrasted sharply with their condescension and disdain towards the societies they encountered. In the 19th century, many of these societies were in the process of establishing themselves as a nation while they dealt with internal power struggles. Part of the



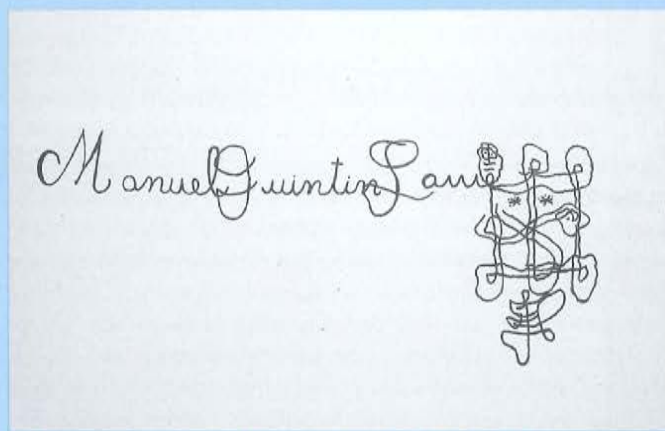
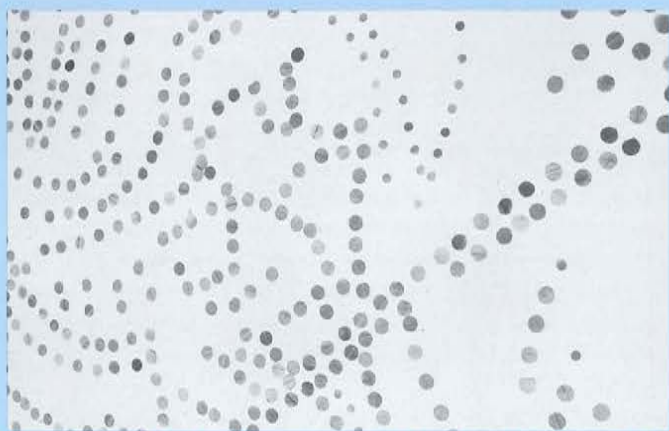
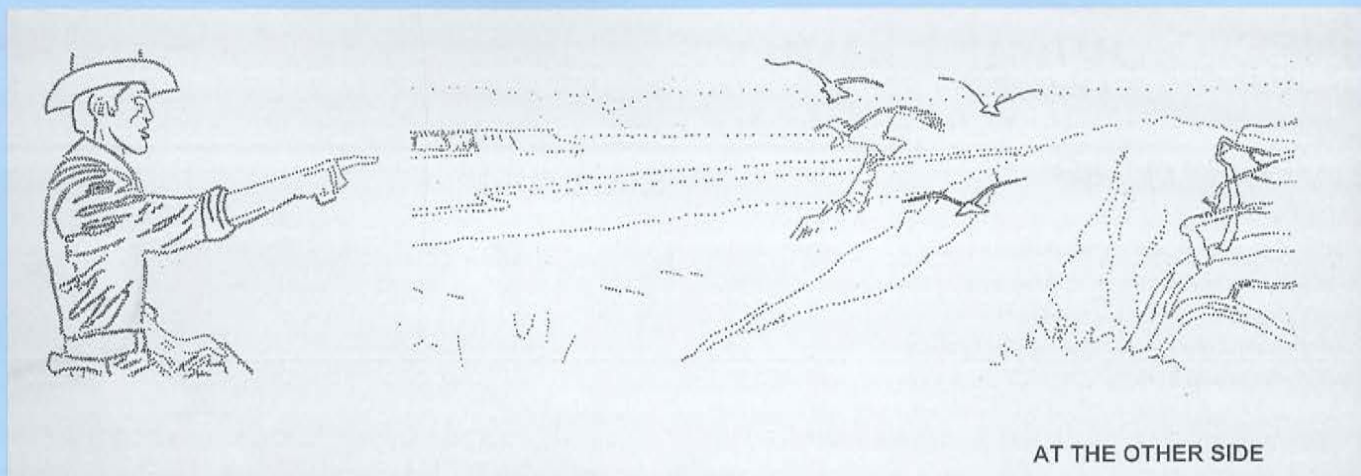
JOSE ALEJANDRO RESTREPO

Installation with video and bananas.

tragedy that derived from this "new conquest" arose from the fact that the scientific viewpoint supported a social order that was based on the idea of exclusion. This social hegemony, blatantly unequal and unjust when viewed from a modern perspective, was made to look as the natural order of things, an order which was by nature unquestionable. Many of the social dysfunctions that have characterized our arduous post-colonial history have sprung from that worldview.

Botany, a discipline associated with the scientific view of the 19th century, has been recaptured from a critical perspective by various Colombian artists. They have established connections between the classification of natural resources in the colonies, itself paving the way for the capitalist exploitation of the land, and the "scientific" establishment of social inequalities as one of the roots of the country's current situation.

José Alejandro Restrepo has turned to video language to establish the historical genealogy of the violence within a continent that was colonized through the use of force. In *Musa Paradisiaca* (1993-1996), an installation using bunches of bananas and video news clips, Restre-



Top: *Go on*, 1999. Coca leaves on a wall; below, from left: *Go on*, 1999. detail; *Homenaje a Manuel Quintín Lame*, 2000. Drawing in achiote on wall.

po shows the strong bonds between violence and the image of the tropics as a terrestrial paradise, an exuberant and exotic America both in natural and sexual ways. In fact, *Musa Paradisiaca* is also the scientific name for one of the most common varieties of banana, a plant that has long been associated with the history of violence in our country. The violence associated with banana crops can be traced back to the days when the United Fruit Company controlled the plantations (the banana workers' massacre referred to by Gabriel García Márquez in *A Hundred Years of Solitude*). On a local scale, this violence relentlessly continues into today's conflict in the Urabá banana-growing region, involving large landowners, banana companies, unions and workers, and guerrillas and paramilitaries. At the same time, internationally, the excruciating negotiations over commercial preferences and market quotes in the so-called "GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) Round" illustrate the tension imposed by globalization.

In the context where crude images have lost their powerful ability to make an impression, the aesthetic process of violent images gives back this visibility to the image. And if death has become aesthetic, what better symbol for it than a flower, the image of which is associated with beauty in all cultures, and sometimes with funerary rites as well? It is not mere coincidence that the image of the flower and a renewed interest in botany in general have reappeared in Colombian art at a time when the war seems to be worse than ever. Just as the view of the natural landscape simultaneously reveals the scene of conflict, the flower metonymically substitutes death,

its direct consequence.

The series of works with plastic flowers done by María Fernanda Cardoso since the beginning of the 1990s maintains a logical relationship with her previous works which involved dissected animals, although its formal aspect makes one think the opposite. In both series the artist recurs to the ready-made—the fake flowers are industrial products while the dead animals are bought at taxidermists' stores—and in both instances there is a reflection on death. Flowers are part of the rites of mourning, usually in the form of crowns that are envisioned as posthumous offerings to the relatives of someone that has passed away. Cardoso's crowns "recreate a contemplative state of death. What is morbid is not what is contained in the work but rather the pain and its manifestation in the colorful groupings of flowers, symbols of beauty, fertility, and life, in order to celebrate the death and feeling of loss that it conveys," as noted by the critic Ana Sokoloff.

One of the visual legacies of "La Violencia" is a series of photographs that document the atrocious practices of the rural guerrillas in the region of Tolima. The famous *cortes* or "cuts," in which the victimizers proceeded to desecrate cadavers using a series of visual codes: *corte de franela* (a cut on the base of the neck, just like a t-shirt); *corte de corbata* (the tongue would appear through a cut in the neck) and the macabre *corte de florero* in which the cadaver's arms and legs were placed where the head would be, using a rather perverse "floral arrangement." The series of images titled "Corte de Florero" by the photographer Juan Manuel Echavarría makes reference to these sin-

ister practices. Echavarría makes artistic arrangements with the bones of anonymous people; he photographs them, names and organizes them in a series of images that are truly beautiful. Its formal composition makes explicit reference to the prints done by the Botanical Expedition, the scientific enterprise of the 18th century that had as its primary goal the classification of American species for the benefit of science and the Spanish crown. These macabre corte practices are still firmly ingrained in our collective memory, despite the fact that few people in the urban centers of the country actually viewed or experienced such atrocities. Echevarría's work gives an actual shape to these blurry memories and impressions in a very poetic manner.

In 1997, Juan Fernando Herrán began a series of images called "Papaver Somniferum," the scientific name for the poppy flower. In his travels, Herrán was able to contrast the differences in perception that are held about poppies in such diverse cultural contexts as Europe, the Middle East, and America. Herrán turns to the poppy plant in order to speak about a crucial problem in the recent history of Colombia: the violence arising from the repression of drug trafficking and production. This problem has serious implications in society, as well as in the distribution and organization of the land. Herrán's series "Papaver Somniferum" uses the image of the poppy, usually associated with concepts such as beauty, romance or solidarity, as a visual representation of the current political and social situation in Colombia. The artist appropriates press images and establishes visual relationships that put into conflict univocal perceptions, the official and privileged versions through strategies of contrast and juxtaposition. In "Untitled" 1999, Herrán amplifies and reproduces a photograph of a soldier who candidly holds a freshly cut bushel of poppies (as a symbol of the effectiveness of the action taken by the military to eradicate illicit crops), generating two symmetrical images. Between the two images lies a great colored surface with horizontal lines of different colors evoking a psychedelic motif. This central image is in reality a fabric that was acquired in Turkey (where the government controls the poppy crop) with a floral imprint on a low-relief surface that can only be seen when viewed from a horizontal angle. The work requires the viewer to give up her privileged position and obligates her to relocate, placing her in a position of marginal vision. In the context of what has been called a "drug problem"—something that involves production and consumption, offer and demand, developed and Third Worlds—this repositioning of one's visual angle brings into questioning the official account and its "correct" point of view.

In the work of Antonio Caro, the botanic appears as a theme and as material. Since the 1960s, Caro used the cornstalk, a symbol of continental character, in order to refer to indigenous communities whose presence has been systematically removed from all political representation. As is characteristic in Caro's work, this image has been redone in various versions and in a variety of media, from the real plant to a drawing made in graffiti over a public wall, making its way even into a mass-circulation postage stamp. "Corn" relates to another work of Caro that touches upon the problem of the indigenous people in Colombia: "Homage to Manuel Quintin Lame," first created in 1972. Caro learned by heart the signature of Lame, a 1930s indigenous leader who studied law to defend his people from the evils of the colonizers and their primary accomplices, the local govern-

ments. Quintin Lame's signature is highly symbolic: a syncretism between typical 19th century calligraphy and an indigenous pictogram. This signature has a formal quality that goes beyond the individual, signifying the presence of two communities in an uncomfortable coexistence. Each time that Caro does the signature in a new context (he has done the last versions in *achiote*, a natural pigment that is found in all of Latin America), Caro is reinstating a presence that the official histories have systematically obliterated.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Miguel Angel Rojas created a series of works with tiny round pornographic photographs made with a paper hole puncher. With these minuscule images, Rojas made drawings in the walls based on children's sketches. These mural drawings were related to previous photographic works covertly taken in pornographic cinemas in downtown Bogotá, many of which have turned into spots for gay encounters. In a conservative and intolerant society, Rojas' work managed to expose the social violence enforcing the exclusion of marginal groups and minorities (Rojas speaks from the perspective of his own homosexuality and indigenous roots). He put the viewer in the uncomfortable position of being watched in the act of watching; therefore, he was making the viewer both an observer and an accomplice to the acts that society usually violently represses. The formal technique reappears in his late 1990s drawings, but the material changes and with it, the political nature of the work.

When viewed from a distance, the drawing "Go On" evokes an illustration taken from a book about the Far East. Viewed up close, it becomes evident that the piece has been constructed patiently with specks of green shaped from coca leaves with the help of a hole puncher. Rojas' installation reminds us of history's bad habit of perpetuating its methods: the conquest of a territory through violent action finds another stage and other actors, but the roles have not changed. Alluding to the conquest of territories through "blood

It is not mere coincidence that a renewed interest in botany has reappeared in Colombian art at a time when the war seems to be worse than ever.

and fire"—converted by Hollywood in mythological saga—Rojas inscribes his work in the current political scene.

In a later version of this work, the title of one of the pop icons (the well-known work of Richard Hamilton, "What makes today's homes so different, so attractive?") is created with pieces of coca leaves in a futuristic typography. The ironic commentary refers to the double moral standard of the international community regarding the drug problem. As Colombia is stigmatized as the principal drug producer, the consumption of drugs in industrialized countries is not only not stigmatized, but it is also associated with a certain glamorous lifestyle, the world of top corporate executives, stockbrokers and artists. In moral terms, the consumption of drugs is something strictly personal, and in a democratic society, the decision to consume or not to consume comes from the right to freely develop one's personality. But criminalization generates the current scenario in which the business prospers, the big dividends stay in the countries that consume it, and Colombia provides the dead people. The drug chain presupposes a series of intermediaries of which Colombia is just one of many: there are the producers of chemi-



Salaqui River Zone, Chocó: Photographer Jesús Abad Colorado documented this crater produced by the Colombian Air Force bombings in zones influenced by the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces. Thousands of farmers were displaced to other parts of the country, May 1997.

icals (they are generally European or North American pharmaceutical companies); the trafficking; the consumption; the money laundering through international banks in countries where the banks' secrecy prevents the circulation of the true dividends of the drug business and guarantees the wellbeing of citizens.

The consumption and the production are intimately related: what is it that makes certain social practices so different, so attractive in some contexts and so condemnable in others?

The interest in botany, a science identified in the imaginary collective with the classificatory craze of the 19th century, has sprung up again as a theme and as an artistic strategy in Colombia. But in the same place where the voyagers saw the symbol of savage nature, pre-cultural and contemporary artists identify the long-term effects of a transplanted economic model and of the resulting asymmetries in the distribution of wealth. The territory that they map is also different, transformed and altered by almost two centuries of internal wars of varied intensity. Jesús Abad Colorado, photographer for *El Colombiano*, one of the most important newspapers of Medellín (which has witnessed the most violent confrontations of the past decade) has had to visually document the most atrocious events perpetrated by all acting parties in the conflict. One of his series, however, is closely related to the visual tradition of the scientific view concerning territory. Abad Colorado has documented human displacement caused by Colombia's internal wars, showing the transformation of the rural landscape due to the political violence. These

black and white photographs are ambiguous: where one believes to be seeing an incommensurable lake, Colorado has documented the blowing up of an oleoduct. Similarly, the image of a deserted landscape, vaguely resembling the moon's surface, turns out to be an area bombarded by the army in its war against guerillas and their sympathizers. A dark streak in a virgin meadow, which appears in its geometric layout to mimic "land art" interventions in the landscape, is actually a trench carved out in the middle of the jungle.

Every possible form of violence has taken place in Colombian territory, from the fratricidal struggles to establish the nation's political model to the anarchic and multi-shaped violence of today, not to overlook the bipartisan fights, the violence of military dictatorship, state terrorism, leftist terrorism and drug trafficking. Consequently, it shouldn't seem absurd that our national flower is the black anthurium a particularly somber variation of this flower commonly used in mortuary rites. Necrological flora, social taxonomy, political botany. When dealing with acts of barbarity, only the most aesthetic image seems to be capable of recovering, by opposition, a critical sense.

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Bogotá

Athens of South America

BY CARLOS RINCÓN

OUR HISPANIC SISTER REPUBLICS HAVE CALLED OUR CAPITAL THE Athens of South America," declared Monsignor María Rafael Carrasquilla, rector of Bogotá's Our Lady of Rosario School in his opening day speech in 1895. The business about the name wasn't true, but what mattered was the pathos of the Monsignor in his determination to attach the prestigious nickname to his provincial city. What's in a name? With the name of "Athens of South America," we are facing an unusually complex case of self-monumentalization that gives it a legitimating aura.

That aura has been utilized to empower the authoritarian state in Colombia and to impose a type of society that excludes the democratic expression of conflicting viewpoints and the pursuit of contradictory political and social goals. It wasn't just a matter of misunderstanding the Athens city-state politician Pericles who compared the social forms of Athens and Sparta in his famous 5 B.C. funeral oration. The idea of Bogotá as the Athens of South America was linked to the Colombian capital's political, military and educational culture. It never conveyed the universal promise of potential autonomy, dignity and equality of the liberal state—the idealized political community associated with the *polis* of "classical" Athens. The 1886 Colombian constitution, the *carta magna* that spelled out the good Christian political order desired for the existing city, barred entire groups of people from access to liberty and citizenship according to political affiliation, religion, race, ethnic and gender specific criteria. The nickname self-monumentalized a Hispano-Christian civilizing ideal of repression choreographed with grammarians as presidents.

Bogotá as the Athens of South America is the emblem of a hierarchical society barricaded against the experience of the political and social change of modernity. Its ideal is an organic social system, a unified complex of religion, metaphysics and politics that effectively destroys the remnants of political life. In a similar fashion, the 1887 Concordat signed between the Vatican and the Colombian government went against the tide of the waning temporal power of the Papacy triggered by Italian unity. This fantasized desire of religious-political community attempted to respond to Europe's "immorality," to the sacrilegious members of the Paris Commune. Catholicism has clearly been central in the development of Colombia in the final decades of the 19th century, when the church assumed the role of regulating social life, education, and the behavior of individuals, replacing state institutions throughout much of Colombia's extensive territory.

The reversal of logic stemming from this concept of the Athens of South America—between the patriarchal estate and the ecclesiastic, perfect Catholic church consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—could be described with the metaphor of a Manichean New Jerusalem. The active investment in power and its anxious projection manifested themselves in the celebration of the Athens of South America during half a century, as did the dynamics of promise of the

Christian community and other-worldly salvation. The imposition of this Manichean New Jerusalem led to the civil War of the Thousand Days, beginning in 1898, a long and bloody war leading to Panama's secession. The collapse of national sovereignty caused disenchantment with the century-long dream of national destiny, tied up with the idea of the integration of national territory and the ambitious task of uniting the two separated oceans through the Panama Canal. But it is not only that. The culture of the Athens of South America, I would argue, while constituting the matrix for modern Colombia's formation, offers a different but necessary route to respond to the present crisis. It gives us insights into the fissures permeating the social realm of the actual city of capitalist private property and modern legal status since the end of the 20th century. To make a long story short, my analyses involve the relationships between the present Colombian crisis and the world of phantasmagoria in which Bogotá appears as the Athens of South America.

REMAPPING THE CRISIS

Social science and humanities researchers generally agree on two salient points about the present Colombian crisis. First, they point out the dynamics of disintegration in both the social and political realms. Second, they emphasize the discussion of the issue of "modernity" in reference to the relationship between the 20th and the 21st centuries. The two strands of analysis are closely linked. In the political arena, they coincide in stressing that the Colombian State, up until now, has been incapable of imposing any authority over civil society. Comparatively speaking, still in the process of formation, the State has had, throughout its history, an extremely limited capacity to integrate its national territory, to maintain its presence there, to redistribute resources, to regulate social relations and to achieve an institutionalization of conflicts. Because of this, a prominent aspect of the systematic examination of the present crisis has meant coming to terms with the perpetuation and recreation of particular hierarchical social relationships, marked by patterns of domi-

The idea of Bogotá as the Athens of South America was linked to the Colombian capital's political, military and educational culture.

nation that reinforce subalternity as a relational identity of large social groups. New answers are being found to provocative questions such as: "Why can't Colombian political parties—resembling only the Peronists and those of Venezuela—really reform themselves?" and "Why doesn't behavior in Colombia seem subject to any general norms, but only to loyalties and inclinations?"

The most significant contributors to the analysis of the factors that led to the breakdown in the social arena stress that a large role was played by the very late process of secularization. One of

political scientist Daniel Pécaut's most important insights is that "secularization took place more in the perspective of catastrophe than that of modernity." The inability to make the transition to a new civil ethic results from that fact. The social actors do not have an attitude of flexible and creative reflection in response to pressures emanating from diversity, disagreements and conflict, even when these could be resolved. Their notoriously intolerant ways of responding to these pressures increase the fragility of the social fabric. The final irony of the social and political situation is the elaboration of the 1991 Constitution which spelled out—as a ritual of change and in accordance with liberal political theory—a structure of institutions to represent and mediate particular wills and the general will. Nevertheless, at the same time, the ruling class did not manage to envision—and even less to negotiate—a minimum agreement for the re-foundation of an inclusive and integrating society.

Despite the general agreement about the tendencies leading to the present Colombian crisis, recent research has tended to overlook the genealogy and the "effective" history of the relationship between social relations, political, economic and cultural institutions and forms of subjectivity in the period spanning across the 19th and the 20th century. This period is crucial for all of Colombia's development—including its vanishing present.

In the decade 1880-90, discontinuous and paradoxical articulations of a modernity in the periphery resulted in crisis throughout Latin America. Around 1880, the literary spokesmen for the established elites and the new middle-class urbanites began to see nationhood as essential and started to talk about the nation as the spiritual body of the State in the ascendant process of consolidating and imposing its sovereignty. In reference to historically-specific discursive practices, the question of Culture became a symbolic battleground in which to negotiate, rearrange and articulate the establishment of a new hegemony. It is this understanding of secularization and modernity—a gradual elaboration of the historical components of the modern national and the discourse of nationalism in Argentina—that differentiates this country from the case of Colombia and the rest of the region. In Colombia, the nation does not exemplify modern social cohesion. It fails in its attempt to constitute this cohesion in such a way that the Athens of South America is emblematic of a particularly questionable cultural construction of nationhood.

A TALE OF THREE CITIES

At the beginning of the 19th century, long before the figure of Bogotá as the Athens of South America came about, Prussia and Massachusetts had almost simultaneously tried to recreate imaginary replicas of classic Athens. In these two pre-industrial societies, in the tension between civic-urban imagination and diverse forms of symbolic, mythic, and utopian imagery, Berlin became *das Spree-Athen*, the Athens on the bank of the Spree River, while Boston was dubbed *the Athens of America*. Impressed by the French revolution and the justified expectations of a possible Swabian Republic, in 1798 Friedrich Hölderlin began to imagine a Greek-Swabian citizen and Friedrich Schiller an "aesthetic State of beautiful semblance" (*ästhetischer Staat des schönen Scheins*). Along these lines, Wilhelm von Humboldt theorized Hellenism in historic, pedagogic and linguistic works, definitively breaking with the tradition of Latin humanism. After the fiasco of these projects and the catastrophic defeat of Prussia in 1808 by Napoleon's troops, military, administrative and educational reforms



Bogotá in the 1950s

were imposed to squelch any revolutionary fervor. Hellenistic studies made up the core of educational reform, based on the idea of *Bildung* as cultural and moral formation. From 1815 on, the neoclassical architectural profile of a reformed Berlin was defined by Karl Schinkel, following the model of what was called "the forms and methods of Greek construction." Schinkel constituted the *Spree-Athen*, endowing it over the course of three decades with buildings destined for theatre as places of education and museums as key epistemological institutions of Enlightenment.

On the other side of the ocean, William Tudor bestowed the name of *The Athens of America* on Boston on 1819. At the beginning of the 19th century, Boston was the most economically and culturally significant city in North America. Its neoclassical profile is the work of Charles Bullfinch, the post-revolutionary U.S. architect with a notable republican civic-urban imagination and an equally notable capacity for planning. Boston would later be described as fifty percent crumbling Calvinist theocracy (permitting it at last to cultivate the arts) and fifty percent super-democratic egalitarian republic. As a constructed architectural reality, the neoclassic style derived from Athens corresponded in both Boston and Berlin to the forms in which these cities tried to represent them-



COURTESY OF EL TIEMPO

selves. It reflected the way in which they construed forms of communication and established rules and regulations with which to organize and understand their new urban life. In situations of crisis of legitimacy, the neoclassical aesthetic gave them a tangible family tree with which they could postulate a cultural continuity which, in fact, had been interrupted.

At the same time, another important process was taking place through which classical antiquity lost its standing as an unattainable model. After the discourse that would make Paris the capital of the 19th century, Victor Hugo began to make Paris the new Memphis, the new Babylon, the new Athens and the new Rome. And while Maxime Ducamp, the intimate friend of Gustav Flaubert, made Paris the city that would replace Thebes, Assyria, Babylon, Athens, Rome and Constantinople. It is against Modernity that Bogotá is proclaimed, toward the end of the century, the Athens of South America. For Bogotá, Paris is the capital of immorality, vice and impiety.

THE TWO STEPS OF BAPTISM

Bogotá's baptism as the Athens of South America took place in two steps. The first, of translation and appropriation, takes place at the same time as the process of Paris' irrepressible ascent as the

capital of the 19th century and the loss of the normative function of classical antiquity. An important part was played by Elisée Reclus, passionate reader of Alexander von Humboldt, who went from Paris to the *Spree-Athen* in 1850 to study with Karl Ritter, the only geographer teaching at that time in Europe. After Louis-Napoléon's 1851 coup, Reclus went into exile as did many other young democrats, first to London and then to New Orleans. For two years, from August 1855, he got involved in a "project of colonization and geographical exploration" in the Sierra Nevada region of Santa Marta in Colombia. Returning ill and penniless to France, he became a tourist guide writer for the Hachette publishing house in 1860.

In a long February 1864 article in the prestigious *Revue de deux mondes*, Reclus observed that every country wanted to have its own Athens: "AngloSaxon America demonstrates its Athens in Boston. The Colombian continent is proud of having many, among them the two principle ones, one in the middle and the other in the north, Buenos Aires and Bogotá." Reclus never lived in those cities. One can only imagine that the second one came out of his pen because of the contagious homophony in French between the vowels of Boston and Bogotá.

Three years after Reclus published his article, José María Vergara published the second volume of the first work of literary historiography written in Colombia, his *Historia de la literatura en la Nueva Granada*. Reclus' name was not mentioned but reference was made to "an illustrious traveler." In the context of an open controversy concerning the Liberal government's education policy, Vergara invoked "the thirst for learning of Bogotá's people" to create hypostasis of this attribute giving an ontological status of identity: the people—the inhabitants—of Bogotá are the "Athenians of South America." The idea that there would be many Athens on the "Colombian continent," or at least another principal Athens, was not mentioned. And it did not occur to anyone in Buenos Aires, based on what Reclus had written, to reclaim the nickname of "Athens of South America" for that city.

The second phase of the name's appropriation took place in the decisive decade of 1880, when fear of subversion (of the European type) put a stamp on the political atmosphere. According to the premises of social philosophy that inspired the ideal that Colombia be an organic Catholic community and not a modern society, there was the impossibility of moral equivalency among its members. From that premise came a reinforcement of the social hierarchy and a restriction on the exchanges and interactions between levels of this hierarchy. The primacy of the Catholic Church, as a representative of moral order—above the authority of the State—and its standing in people's conscience as the source of salvation of one's soul and life above concepts of progress brought with it exclusion from the politics of citizenship. The nation has not been understood politically, in relation to the State. The assimilation of social differences to differences on an imaginary scale of moral perfection in a hierarchical community joined the definition of public good as honesty in work habits with the use of religious discipline and the Christian faith as an instrument of social integration. The ambivalent project of the moral integration of good Christians—not of citizens—in the social hierarchical community assumed, moreover, the rejection of generalized schooling and scientific discourse. Culturally valued knowledge was the spiritual patrimony of an exclusive group.

THE SPECULARY STRUCTURE OF AUTOMONUMENTALIZATION

In the beginning of the 19th century Andrés Bello's interest in Spanish was oriented in accordance with the national strategy of communications. This favored fluid cultural circulation, capitalized by a national State. The Athens and the intellectual Academies, as territorialized spaces in the national, as well as scientific corporations and other actors in the linguistic community primarily, the writers, who, according to Bello, socially articulated the national territory.

From its initial conception and its manner of operating, the Colombian Academy of the Language was precisely the opposite as a political-cultural project. In the decade of 1880, invention of tradition sought to establish permanent identifying links between Colombia and the Spain of Felipe IV and the Restoration. Political groups thus spurred a project that positioned itself definitively in its will to oppose the propagation of European subversion. The celebratory proclamation of Bogotá as the Athens of the Americas implied *ex post facto* the fantasy of identification with the Spain across the mountains, in accordance with its own project of socio-political domination.

What was Bogotá then? It was a big village with pre-modern urban standards, incipient industries, and 80% illiteracy. It had 350 buildings with one floor or more, with the Panopticon begun in 1878, and not a single neoclassical construction. Newspapers had a circulation of 800-1000 copies. Its elite—mostly large estate owners and officials—boasted of 250 writers. It was the capital of a country in which life expectancy was 30 years, with 90 percent of Colombians living in rural area, with only ten percent of those knowing how to read and write, a country without a capital base, respectively holding the last and next-to-last ranks in Latin America in terms of per capita exports and foreign investments. All efforts to attract immigration failed, and yet anti-immigrant discourse prevailed. The only immigrants that managed to set down roots were some hundred European priests and nuns.

It is with this background that in the decade of 1890, the meaning of Bogotá's nickname was renegotiated. In this task, the principle protagonist was one of the most conspicuous figures in the regime: Monsignor Rafael Maria Carrasquilla, Ministerio of Education under Miguel Antonio Caro, rector of the Our Lady of Rosario School for more than 30 years; Monsignor Carrasquilla embodied the contradictions that epitomized a heroic personality in the Athens of South America: the courtliness of the *cachaco*—an imitation of Paris gentlemen during the Second French Empire and the clumsiness and customs of frugality mixed with the indulgent extremes crossed with obedience to the logic of conflict for power. Many indeed were proud of the fact that they had never left Bogotá and its surrounding areas and of never having seen the ocean.

Why in 1895 was the nickname of Athens of South America no longer attributed, as Vergara would say, to "an illustrious traveler"? Because Reclus, who meanwhile had become a world class geographer and had gotten mixed up in the workers' movement, had been jailed after the Paris Commune. The name no longer corresponded to the "people of Bogotá." In 1905, the very conservative erudite Spaniard Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo formulated, in *Historia de la Poesía hispanoamericana*, the nucleus of the narrative about the unchanging Hispanic essence of the culture and identity of Bogotá: "The literary culture of Santa Fe de Bogotá,



Women pray at the Voto Nacional Church in Bogotá, "The 19th century didn't get to Colombia until almost 1935."

destined with time to become the Athens of South America, is as old as the conquest itself."

A more certain fact is that the topography of Bogotá was dominated for centuries by two mountains. For the indigenous Chibcha population in Bacatá, this would have great significance. Later, the mountains were baptized with the Catholic names of Monserrate and Guadalupe. The negation of the indigenous footprints is obvious as is also a return to the repressed, found in the dark-skinned faces of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Christ of Monserrate. With them, subalternity is renegotiated.

HOW TO ASSUME THIS LEGACY?

In his forementioned 1895 speech, Monsignor Carrasquilla explained that "our Hispanic sister republics have called our capital the Athens of South America... [r]ightfully they gave such a distinguished title to a city that was home to philologists such as Cuervo, humanists like Caro, poets like Rafael Pombo, thinkers like Marroquín and a novelist like Jorge Isaacs." Precisely, José Manuel Marroquín as president of Colombia and Miguel Antonio Caro as the principal political figure are protagonists of the secession of



FROM LUIS B. RAMOS, COLOMBIA 1899-1925, BANCO DE LA REPÚBLICA.

Panama, in which the political incapacity to make imaginative, historical, geographical, economic, cultural projections for the construction of a modern nation of the Athens of South America became palpable. In the face of this disorienting redrawing of the world's map that demonstrated an end to the alliance with the spirit of world history, the symbolic resources and the structures of attitude and reference that Bogotá lent to this urgent political moment were very much limited. The paradoxical point, of course, is that Marroquín and Caro, the responsible governors, never explained the incongruities of their strategies of negotiation with the United States. Trying to imagine a ritual with a participatory dynamic, to foster identity and to exorcise the popular discontent for the loss of the not yet constructed Panama Canal, a triumphant tour took place in a decorated coach with a pompous provincial coronation of the very conservative poet Rafael Pombo, in the midst of a display of the feminine eroticism of dancing nymphs on the stage of the Colon Theatre. The symbolic action of the coronation was aimed at perpetuating the norms and values that were claimed as the only legitimate guarantors of the health of the motherland. The ritual was not part of the work of mourning, and thus

the trauma became hereditary.

The Athens of South America tended to become a defensive bastion. Its links with modernity and modernism as well as a heterogeneous aesthetic movement was, in a sense, decidedly innovative and included a postcolonial attitude toward Spain. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Bogotá writer Clímaco Soto Borda implored that "the sublime gods of literature that imposes a sanitary cordon around our Athens to liberate our poets from the terrible contagion of modernism." The 19th century didn't arrive in Colombia until almost 1930. One has to wait until then for Jorge Zalamea, in a report to parliament about the first Liberal Party government, to illustrate the discrepancy between its accomplishments in the area of education and the progress made after forty years of conservative regimes. In this manner, the voices lamenting the end of the Athens of South America can be seen as incongruent. The secularizing force of the Liberal government was inconsistent.

In any case, the structural similarity between Freud's topography and urban topography permits, in the case of Bogotá, the tackling of the aesthetic handling of the problems that the Athens of South America represents as a legacy, that is, not as a legacy that establishes norms, but as a settling of accounts. This is the case of the meanings with which the Plaza Mayor de Santa Fe, converted into the Plaza de Bolívar, has been operating. The design of the plaza has been modified many times and its limits defined by a series of constructions and demolitions which converted the plaza into a locus par excellence for political expression, collective memory, identity, and history of the city and the country. What has happened to it? In 1959 the architect Fernando Martínez tried to symbolically stage the Plaza as a meeting place for citizen participation, of democratic transparency, a space of hope evoking the *polis*. In order to achieve this, Martínez combined in a monumental form an imaginary democratic alternative country with the concern for modern re-engineering to convert it precisely into a political monument, dominated in the middle by Bolívar's statue, thus making the Plaza a symbol of the New Colombia. The problems involved in creating this Plaza divested of the classic are those of the darker side of the Modern. What is notable in the last forty years of Colombian history is that the great painter Gustavo Zalamea, at the end of the 1980s, was asked to bring the sea to the Plaza, to sink it, to place there an unexpected symbol: a white whale. Later, in a solemn series

The very late process of secularization contributed to the breakdown in the social arena.

of large oil paintings in 1999 entitled "The Sea in the Plaza" and "Shipwrecks," the immense symbol of the power of Moby Dick evoked a universe of extremely powerful icons. They range from Carpaccio's "George and the Dragon" to Guericault's "Medusa's Raft" and Rousseau's "War" with the national capitol as the Titanic amidst the raging waves. The Plaza of Bolívar is the Shipwreck.

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EN LOS PINOS, HAN MATADO HASTA GENTE
 SIN VIOLADO NIÑOS. POR EJEMPLO EL AÑO PASADO
 MATARON A UN CENOF LO TORTURARON LE CORTA-
 RON LA MITAD Y LO DEJARON DESNUDO HASTA
 ENCONTRARLOS NIÑOS MUERTOS ALLA AVESES
 VÍCIAN A LOS NIÑOS Y DESPUES LOS MATAN
 Y LAS DEJAN POR ALLI BOTADAS Y LAS ENCU-
 ENTAN. POR eso YO TOME ESTE FOTO.



Shooting for Peace

Disparando para La Paz

TEXT BY ALEX FATTAL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE CHILDREN OF THE SHOOTING FOR PEACE PROJECT

AS THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF REVISTA HIGHLIGHTS, COLOMBIA'S degenerating predicament is a complex one, which needs to be looked at from new perspectives. *Disparando Cámaras para la Paz—Shooting Cameras for Peace* (DCP) provides thirty new perspectives. Thirty displaced children squatting in Bogotá's extreme outskirts, Altos de Cazuca, documented their lives with photographs and spoken narratives. The result is an intimate testimonial from children who do not know the extensive history of violence and vengeance they have been born into, only one of its most violent stages.

DCP attempts to rupture the cycle of violence in various ways; by providing a group of youngsters haunted by armed conflict an opportunity to reflect on the transition they have recently experienced, by allowing them to creatively express themselves, and by compellingly communicating the Colombian conflict from the heart breaking perspective of an innocent child. The result so far has been a small colony of aspiring photographers with an increased sense of self-confidence and a powerful exhibition.

DCP allows subaltern looks and voices to manifest themselves without the sensationalism of the media, in the way it subverts the dominant dynamic of outsider photographers who arrive, shoot, leave, publish, and disappear and create images destined to also disappear in the sea of similar images produced to be consumed, forgotten and die in infinite archives. The images and stories of DCP

in contrast are personal and demand to be treated as living history.

When I founded DCP I had no idea it would yield such compelling results or that it would grow into a dynamic and expanding program. The children and parents, represented through DCP's sister organization, Corporación Fe y Esperanza, a grassroots educational project, all demanded that the program continue. A local staff of Colombian photographers and educators who have built a darkroom in the barrio with the participants is currently directing the program.

DCP is an initiative of *The Aja Project*, a San Diego based international humanitarian aid organization that provides multimedia and vocational education to youth in struggle. It has two other projects; one on the Thailand/Myanmar border with refugees from the Karen ethnic minority, and one in the San Diego area with resettled Afghani, Iraqi, Somali, and Sudanese youth. Be sure to experience all of the online galleries at <www.ajaproject.org>.

Alex Fattal is The Aja Project's Program Director for Africa and Latin America and was a Fulbright Scholar in Colombia from 2001-2002. To make a donation, buy a print, or sponsor a child, (all forms of donation are tax-deductible), call 619.223.7001, visit <www.ajaproject.org> or mail The Aja Project, P.O. Box 70174, San Diego, CA 92167.



Aquí mis PAPIS ESTABAN PELEANDO... PORQUE ES QUE MI PAPI CUANDO TENI A PLATA NO SE DELIA HA MI MAMI Y SE LA GASTABA; YA NO SE ESTAN PELEANDO, Y VIVIMOS MAS FELICES.



LOS Talleres de las niñas de la paz

son divertidos.



tengo temor a caerme... me gustaria que no halla tanta guerra por que ami me da temor... tengo temor que no aia que la guerrilla de pronto por alla el la montaña que hay bases, tengo miedo que sea verdad y se vengan detras de la montaña... A mi me mataron a un tío, que era marihuanero y lo MATO XXXXX creo, me conto mi mamá. El Robaba, estuvo una vez en mi CASA y se desaparecieron algunas cosas, pero despues se fue, Salio de pelea con mis padres y ya se fue. Al mes que se habia hido de mi casa lo mataron en una capilla en SANTA MARTA. No me dolio casi porque lo matarian por JUSTA Razon, por que el Tambien Robaba y fumaba de esas cosas



Ahi duermen mis Tres hermanas. Ellas es TIFFANY y ella VANESA y otra grande de SIETE AÑOS, se llama CAMILA. Ella duerme Tambien con ellas. Ella duerme A Los Pies

Previous page: Playing Dead by Jazmin, 11: In Los Pinos, they've killed a lot of people and raped girls. For example, last year they killed a gentleman and tortured him, cut him in half and left him naked. They've found dead girls and sometimes they rape them and then kill them and they throw the bodies away and kids find them. That's why I took this photo. This page, upper left, clockwise: The Kiss by Wilson, 10: Here my parents were fighting because my daddy didn't tell my mom when he had money and he spent it all; now they aren't fighting and we are all happier. Laughter by Araminta, 11: The workshops for Girls for Peace are a lot of fun. The Shout by Alvaro, 12: I am afraid of falling. I would like for there not to be so much war because it makes me very afraid... I am afraid the guerrillas will attack from beyond the mountains where they have bases. I am afraid they will really come from beyond the mountains. They killed an uncle of mine who messed around with marijuana and I believe X killed him because my mommy told me so. My uncle was always robbing stuff; he was in my house once and some things disappeared. At least he was gone from my house when they killed him in a chapel in Santa Marta. It almost didn't hurt because they killed him for a reason because he was robbing people and smoking that stuff. Girls Sleeping by César, 12: My three sisters are sleeping here. There is Tiffany and Vanesa and a seven-year-old named Camila. She also sleeps in the bed at their feet.

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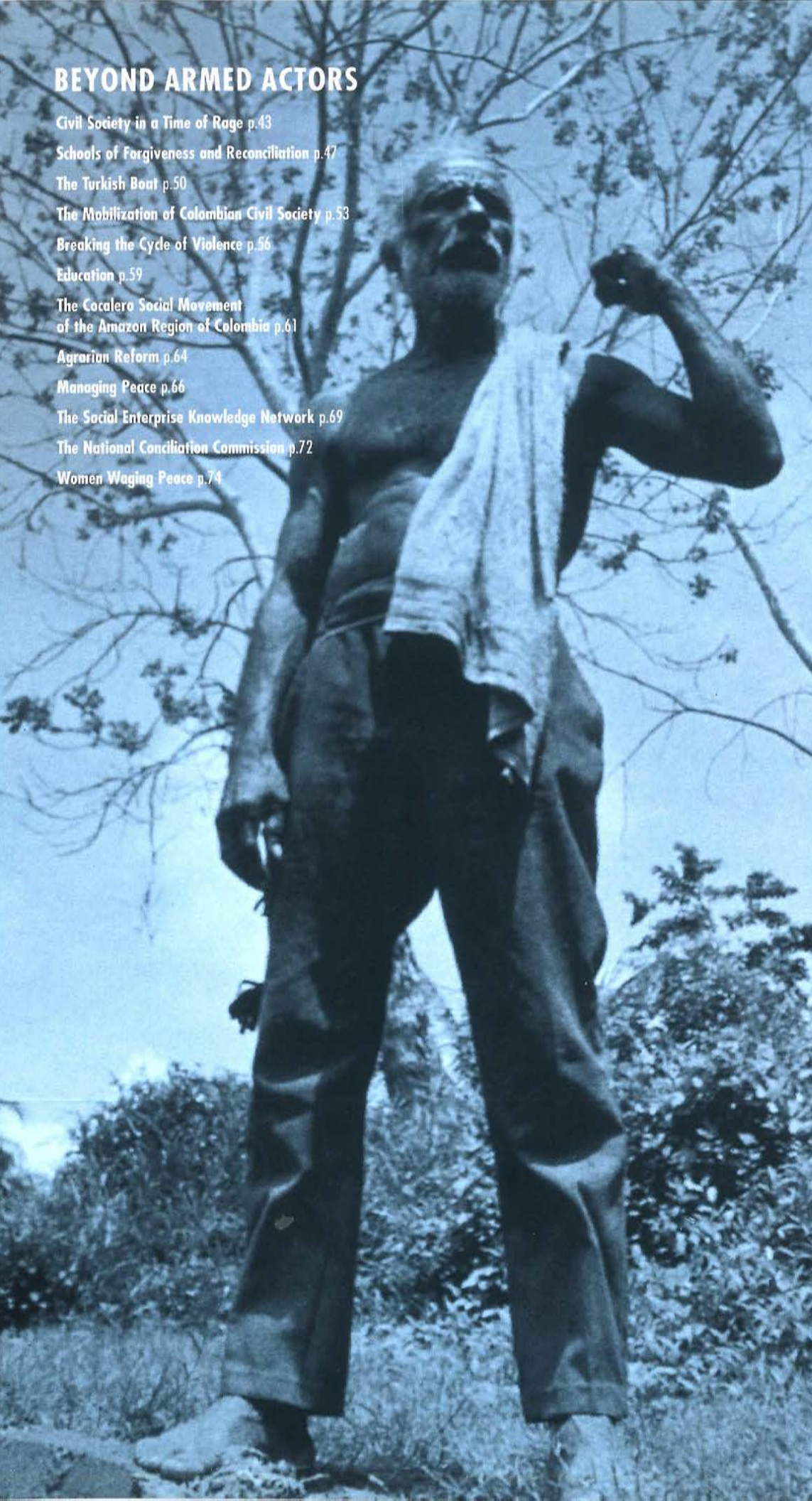
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JESUS ABAD-COLORADO (jabadc@epm.net.co), COURTESY OF EL TIEMPO; MARTHA ELENA LLANO SERNA, STEPHEN FERRY (stephenferry@hotmail.com), with support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism [FII]

A strong, vocal, coordinated, strategically focused, and methodologically sophisticated civil society, Colombian civil society representatives said, is now a social and political necessity, not a Pollyanna attitude, in the face of an all-consuming war often waged in their name but generally in their absence.

Civil Society in a Time of Rage

Beyond Armed Actors

BY THEODORE MACDONALD, LUIS FERNANDO
DE ANGULO, RODRIGO VILLAR, ERNESTO BORDA,
AND ALVARO CAMPOS

LOVE IN 19TH CENTURY COLOMBIA, writes Gabriel García Márquez, flourished amidst Cholera's sickness and death. Civil society, many suggest, must now do the same during the country's current *cólera* (anger and rage) over widespread violence and armed combat. It is not simply a matter of survival but of increasing civil society's visibility and effectiveness as combat blurs and subsumes the other widespread causes and patterns of violence that civil society, in its many forms, is best positioned to confront and control. This was the argument of more than a dozen Colombian civil society representatives at a November 2002 conference hosted by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. A strong, vocal, coordinated, strategically focused, and methodologically sophisticated civil society, they said, is now a social and political necessity, not a Pollyanna attitude, in the face of an all-consuming war often waged in their name but generally in their absence.

The conference, however, was not a Colombian lament. It was a set of constructive, mutually-informing dialogues, comparative examples, and descriptions. For example, as the Colombian representatives listened to Srilatha Batliwala, a Visiting Scholar at Harvard's Hauser Center for Nonprofit Orga-

nizations who has never visited Colombia, describe the development and progressive influence of a mothers' group amidst the endemic violence of Nagaland (Northern India), the value of objective comparative analysis was obvious. While James Austin of the Harvard Business School, who travels to Colombia regularly, described the hemispheric work of the school's Social Enterprise Initiative, opportunities to create new networks and link up with existing ones arose. And so it went, as more than twenty faculty members and researchers met and discussed, resulting in a set of collaborative initiatives.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society in general is often regarded as a sort of Third Estate—an amorphous mass of commoners whose diverse interests and irregular actions stand in contrast to the sharply defined and organized projects of the State and other powers. Impressions of Colombia are no exception. As guerrilla and paramilitary violence (and government efforts to control each) now escalates, it threatens to dwarf local needs and polarize complex interests and concerns.

An exclusive focus on resolving the armed conflict, the conference participants demonstrated, probably misses a critical distinction.

It conflates the actions of insurgents and counter insurgents with other manifestations of violence. While undoubtedly both are related, perhaps symbiotically, in many regions, critical analytical distinctions and causes separate one from the other. Unfortunately, the failure to distinguish between the two diverts national and international attention and resources away from more localized patterns of violence while also permitting the armed conflict to spark or sustain local cleavages, and confuse the resulting relationships and sentiments.

At the same time, in Colombia, as in many countries since the end of World War II, the number and interests of *organized* citizen groups—whether formally recognized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or informal neighborhood, community, and other interest groups—have increased exponentially. Civil society, in general, now proactively contours a more precisely groomed global landscape. Moreover, Colombia's 1991 Constitution empowered the national soci-

ocratic governments. Yet, armed insurrection does not simply persist in Colombia; it is increasing. It should be noted, however, that this is not a civil war, nor is Colombia even a country at war. Most now agree that it is not the government that represses civil society but rather a set of violent actors, each voicing a liberating cry that few accept as legitimate or sincere, and which most agree must be disarmed. Colombian civil society projects *do* receive funding from international donors—ranging from the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank to the Open Society Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation—however, most international economic support for development and strengthening of civil society has gone to where it was most notably absent: the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union. Colombia, by contrast, already has an established, vibrant, and active set of civil society actors. So why are they now seeking to expand their profiles? Why doesn't Colombian civil society simply wait until the current violence dis-

insurrection would come to an end, any more than they could be expected to redirect the United States' current focus on ending the drug trade at its source. Nevertheless, many understandings of the term "violence," as with "peace," have quite distinct patterns. The shadow of armed conflict has easily shifted or transformed many local cleavages and manageable disputes into major breaks with traumatic impact. Civil society is thus not naively ignoring the broad presence and influence of the armed actors. It is attempting to put their actions into appropriate local contexts. This permits a broader understanding of systemic violence and suggests the sort of immediate interventions in which the idea of peace extends beyond the cessation of warfare and acknowledges the broad systemic violence.

Despite the armed combatants' currently high national and international visibility, they are not the principal sources of violence or cause of death. The country holds the dubious distinction of the world's highest homicide rate—26,000 per year, or 70 per 100,000 inhabitants. However, some argue that as few as 15% of the homicides originate directly from armed conflict. Most of Colombia's violence is the result of common crime, vigilantism, vendettas, as well as new and intricate forms of organized crime such as drug trafficking, money laundering, infrastructure sabotage and related environmental degradation.

The Colombian National Planning Department has estimated that the total gross costs of urban violence and armed conflict in the country consume an average of 4.2% of the GDP per year. That figure would probably rise significantly if one factored in the regional impacts of forced displacement, corruption, weakened judiciary, and inequitable distribution of resources. These broad and numerous ruptures of social relations and the related collapse of social capital explain, in large part, the high levels of violence as a national phenomenon, while also suggesting that regional mapping is essential for analysis and management.

In brief, Colombia's armed conflict has obviously hindered economic development, justice, and an improved quality of life. Yet no cease-fire will simultaneously eliminate the broader patterns of violence and exclusion. Unless some of the local and regional sources of violence are identified, confronted, and reconciled, the likelihood that they will remain glossed over, or even hidden, within the frame of armed conflict increases.

DRCLAS and PONSACS hosted a broad inter-faculty conference with a broad range of representatives from Colombian universities, government, private sector, and civil society organizations.

ety, formally at least, through its emphasis on public participation, consultation, and consensus. Practice, however, has lagged behind formal rule making. Some argue that, again, as in most countries, it will simply take time to close that gap, and at present there are other national priorities.

However, others suggest that waiting and seeing may not be the right approach for Colombia. Civil society, they say, is not off track in its sense of timing. Though faced with some quite common organizational needs and unique conditions, there is a sense of urgency, which is not a misplaced priority in the face of increasing illicit violence.

COLOMBIA: WHY NOW?

In many countries—e.g., the former Soviet Union, South Africa, and Guatemala—and with the exception of human rights NGOs, civil society (and the international support for it) arose anew, like Phoenix, from the ashes of violence or the remains of repressive unde-

appears so that it can increase its activities unencumbered? Won't the work be easier? And won't international support be more readily available?

Colombians, for quite good reasons, argue that civil society cannot stand aside and wait until the current warfare ends. Those at the Harvard conference stated that if a new, post-armed conflict, society takes shape without strong and prior input from civil society organizations, the resulting shape will not be a Phoenix but a Hydra, in which the old threat simply reemerges with multiple heads and no long-term peace. Just as there was no means to hold the negotiators at the government-FARC peace negotiations at San Vicente de Caguan accountable to civil society, the broad processes of participatory and deliberative democracy needed to sustain civil society in any arena will be similarly hobbled.

Civil society is not so naïve as to assume that, if it took the reins of power in negotiations or even if they sat at the table, armed

There is, therefore, a growing sense that broad civil participation, through new channels and local scenarios, is essential. This, some suggest, will begin to generate the pressure needed to advance the various interests of civil society and institutionalize its presence in democratic forums, rather than having those interests simply defined or invoked by those who currently retain power through force of arms. Civil society must continue to create the means and widen the channels for active participation such that any peace process becomes both a setting for a present event and an example for future patterns of governance.

These are not unrealistic expectations. Despite a history and current infamy of violence, Colombia is the second oldest uninterrupted democracy in the Americas, after the United States. Unlike its neighbors, Colombia has not experienced coups d'état, long dictatorial regimes, concentrations of power, or power vacuums. Since 1991, the country's constitution has formally strengthened its formal capacity for broad participatory democracy, thus improving the checks and balances on State power. As such, the country sits in a paradoxical position—suffering enormous internal violence while strengthening its local institutions and a vigorous democracy.

While the specific sources of violence vary widely due to the country's regionalism, many suggest that a single term best encompasses the multiple causes of violence: *exclusion*. Exclusion is understood broadly as the simultaneous presence of, but inability of some to access, desired services, goods, educational and economic opportunities, and political voice and participation. These patterns of exclusion and related sentiments are compounded by corruption and other abuses of power and resources by public institutions.

Civil society alone cannot expect to reverse the structural issues that lead to exclusion. They will all require the broader will and powers of the State. However, as those at the Harvard conference suggested, civil society can respond first by acknowledging the pervasive and heterogeneous nature of violence, giving voice to those who can speak from such experiences, revealing the associated sentiments, and seeking ways to demonstrate that inclusion is not a *gift* from those who currently hold power but a *right* of those citizens who do not. This, they argued, would begin a process that confronts the root causes of violence in local settings



COURTESY OF LEONEL NARVAEZ



MARCELA RUEDA <www.fotografiascolombianas.com>

Previous spread, clockwise from left: Protest against fumigation, a girl ponders her future, boy at checkpoint; citizen power; this page, from top: schools of forgiveness and reconciliation; children in Villa de Leiva

and thus separates the sort of violence and related needs that civil society can manage from that which it cannot.

THE DILEMMAS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The limited and often frustrated role of Colombian civil society within government-initiated peace processes, the inadequate impact of civil sector peace initiatives, and the dispersed nature of these local peace and development projects reveal some of the basic weaknesses of civil society.

An absence of coordination and opportunities for reflective, critical analysis;

Few opportunities to evaluate critically their work or for others to draw from it and adapt it in their own cases;

The absence of ties to universities or other academic bodies, which can provide methods for analysis and forums for evaluating patterns of success and failure.

Consequently, the national and international focus on resolving the conflicts with guerrilla forces through government-led agreements has not only failed to produce peace, but has left much of civil society as a passive spectator rather than a principle actor. The dilemma of civil society is compounded by the independent nature of its few peace and development initiatives. With the exception of networks such as the Red Prodepaz and Colombian Confederation of NGOs, which was represented at the conference, most projects are relatively autonomous and geographically dispersed.

Given the variety of interests and needs, civil society actors now need access to academic and technical resources to produce and reproduce the educational and other methodological tools. These will enable civil society leaders to act jointly against violence, work locally toward reconciliation, and build or rebuild institutions as changing conditions require.

A RESPONSE AT HARVARD

In November 2002, Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, in collaboration with the Program on Non-violent Sanctions and Cultural Survival at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, hosted a broad inter-faculty conference with an equally broad range of representatives from Colombian universities, government, private sector, and civil society organizations. The conference drew on the research experiences and initiatives of various Projects, Programs,

and Centers with more than twenty faculty and other researchers from five of Harvard University's schools that *seemed* to coincide with the participants' expressed needs—Arts and Sciences, Law, Business, Education, and the JFK School of Government. Workshops exposed the Colombian representatives to the experiences of other societies in conflict, encouraged them to jointly rethink paradigms for engagement and participation, and illustrated methods to document, explicate, transform, and replicate experiences from Colombia's dispersed peace and development projects to the wider community.

Prior to the conference, the Colombian participants had indicated that, despite many Colombian academics' well-sharpened tools and other skills for analysis of their current situation, their ability to link analytical skills to practical solutions was deficient. Conversely, practitioners working at a local level felt the need to consider, analyze, and evaluate their work. They also suggested that they could benefit from sympathetic but nonetheless objective external insights and comparative experiences. In brief, Colombians did not solicit help in defining and analyzing their situation. Rather, they acknowledged the need to develop dialogue and collaboration with researchers at Harvard and jointly develop sound practical methods for inclusion in the peace process and in a participatory democracy in general.

During more than nine months of communication, coordination, and visits to Harvard by representatives of Colombian regional peace programs, universities, intellectuals, and the National Reconciliation Commission, there *appeared* to be a correspondence of some of the needs in Colombia and the means at Harvard to meet them. The conference workshops tested this perceived correspondence and, more importantly, considered whether experiences and methods could be transformed into a practical and theoretical collaborative initiative.

The conference format introduced the Colombian participants to specific research experiences and initiatives at Harvard. They were clustered into three areas.

**HUMAN RIGHTS
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, CONSENSUS
BUILDING, AND RECONCILIATION
CIVIL SECTOR EDUCATION, STRENGTHENING, AND MOBILIZATION**

Following the workshops, the participants,

joined by Colombia's Vice-President Francisco Santos, suggested a collaborative initiative in which communication and collaboration from the various Harvard programs would be channeled through an alliance linked to Colombia's widely known and respected National Reconciliation Commission. Several from Harvard accepted the idea—now titled the Colombian Civil Sector Initiative—and initial exchanges, capacity building and research projects have been planned. In the broadest sense, the project will draw from the three broad research areas mentioned above and will channel communication and collaboration through the Commission to Colombian universities. They, in turn, will pass on and adapt the work in collaboration with local grass roots organizations and projects. This organizational structure is not simply efficient but also permits the sort of multiplier effect that is often absent in international projects.

The Colombian Civil Sector Initiative will, most would humbly agree, not break the fever of that country's *colera*. However, it may demonstrate that "violence" has become a paralyzing gloss. By first distinguishing one form of violence—the armed conflict—from another—the product of exclusion and unrealized capabilities—the Initiative can shift some popular sentiments away from increasing frustration and cynicism. By then moving towards some of the participatory civic actions that respond to the frustrated expressions of violence, the process alone can simultaneously highlight a broad set of problems and initiate a means to approach them.

Theodore Macdonald, an anthropologist, is the Associate Director for the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions and Cultural Survival (PONSACS) at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. Luis Fernando De Angulo is a Visiting Scholar at PONSACS and founder of the Fundación El Alcaravan, a non-profit grassroots development agency. Rodrigo Villar is Coordinator of the Program in Philanthropy, Civil Society, and Social Change (PASCA) at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Ernesto Borda, is the Director of the Institute of Human Rights and International Relations at Bogotá's Universidad Javeriana. Alvaro Campos is Executive Secretary of the Colombian Conciliation Commission (CNN).

Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Constructing Peace

BY LEONEL NARVAEZ

The subject of forgiveness and reconciliation is, in a certain sense, new. In today's world, a variety of specialists study this subject in different universities. Psychology ignored this subject for a very long time and only recently has begun to give importance to the personal processes of forgiveness and reconciliation. Throughout the years, forgiveness was thought of as something upon which priests and churches had a monopoly. In Bogotá, forgiveness workshops promoting interpersonal reconciliation, have become popular as an important contributor to the construction of peace in Colombia. These workshops, Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, are known by their Spanish acronym ESPERE—which in Spanish means "hope."

I MET WITH HIM A COUPLE OF TIMES, BUT they were quite significant meetings. I remember on one occasion, I was trying to suggest that hatred and anger primarily affect the person who experiences those feelings. The man snapped, "Get down from

the clouds, priest... you do it, you pay for it!"... That man was Manuel Marulanda, also known as Tirofijo, chief director of the FARC (Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces), who was remembering with bitter rage all his family members who were cruelly murdered during the violence of the 1950s.

He was and is still now nicknamed Tirofijo—sure-shot—because he knew how to avenge himself by flawless shooting. Every time I saw him I was perplexed by the contrasting expressions on his face. On one hand, he had expressions full of hate and resentment towards the official government. But on the other, one would see in his eyes a nostalgic desire for peace and tranquility in his life. In Genova (Quindío), the town where he was born, the elderly still comment: "the rage and the desire for vengeance ate him up."

These words "Get down from the clouds, priest" are still resonating in my mind. Could it be that in reality vengeance is a human necessity or more to the point, a collective blindness? Could it be that forgiveness is pos-

sible? Could it be that reconciliation makes some sense? How can one achieve forgiveness and reconciliation without sacrificing truth and justice? Isn't punishment another way of perpetuating injustice?

I felt uneasy about the fact that the social sciences didn't worry enough about such a common and yet complex subject. I understood very well that in the case of violence in Colombia, political peace alone was not enough, and that in addition it was necessary to construct social peace. How then can we popularize forgiveness and reconciliation and not allow them to remain solely as a privilege of those who were close to their churches or who could pay the high costs of psychologists and psychiatrists?

The studies conducted on violence normally give more weight to its objective causes (socio-economic and political deficiencies) than to its subjective causes (settling accounts, emotional manipulation, including rage, hatred, resentment and the desire for vengeance). The fact that rage at being



COURTESY OF LEONEL NARVAEZ

The faces of "ESPERE"

poor makes that person even poorer is something that is commonly ignored. It is not a matter of anesthetizing social conscience, but rather of finding constructive ways to achieve justice and peace.

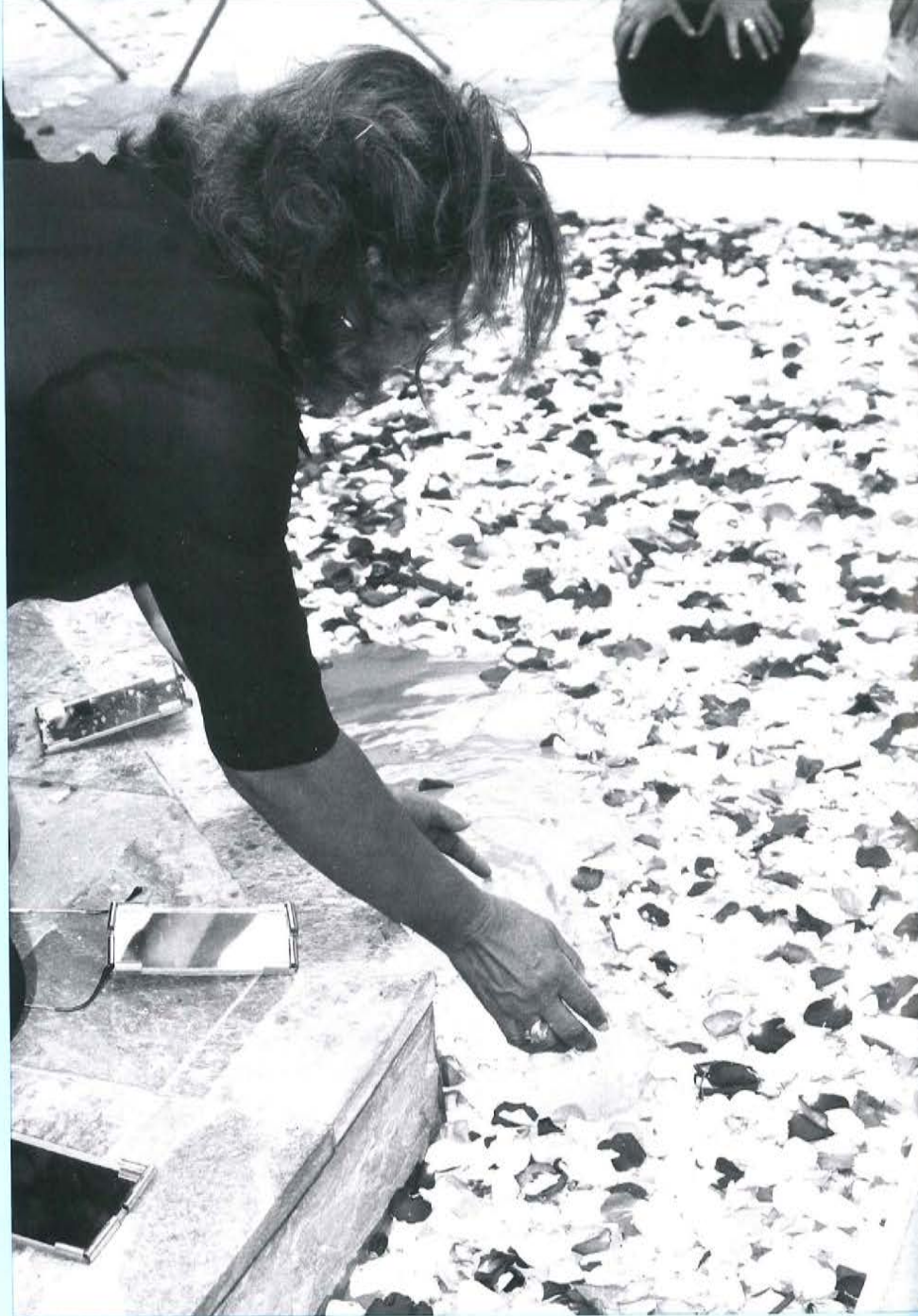
It is not a matter of forgetting since the mere act of forgetting one's pain is impossible. It is a matter of remembering but with other eyes. In fact, the individual rage and resentment of a person end up accumulating over time, rather than being forgotten, and even worse for communal development, this rage and hatred are also collective, ethnic, and among groups.

At the crux of these reflections, I began to understand that forgiveness and reconciliation could not continue to exist as a monopoly held by churches and priests. On the contrary, it was necessary to convert them into indispensable elements of everyday life. For many years, we were taught to practice forgiveness and vertical reconciliation (with God) and soon we forgot about forgiveness and horizontal reconciliation (with our neighbors).

At Harvard University, with the support of experts in various disciplines, in the year 2000 we were able to formalize the prospect of the "Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation" (ESPERE). Our thinking was that while the government and institutions—reasonably enough—worried about achieving political peace in our country, in the whole drama of the conflict and violence that Colombia suffers through, other initiatives to construct social peace at the base of Colombian society were necessary as well.

Thousands of Colombians have suffered through the cruelty of violence; they keep the rage, hatred, resentment and desires of vengeance to themselves. The victims, failing to positively develop their rage and hatred, as shown by recent statistics in the case of Bogotá, run a high risk of claiming justice by their own hands and thus, converting themselves into victimizers.

In the last three years, 59 neighborhoods in the most violent and conflict-ridden zones of Bogotá have been implementing these so-called Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation (ESPERE). The backbone of this project is the training of *animadores* or motivators. Animadores are the heart and soul of this initiative. The *animador* comes from social, political, religious, or cultural grassroots organizations or is a person with a strong interest in eliminating the difficulties of society's cohabitation. Last year, 180 neighbor-



Learning to practice forgiveness

hood *animadores* were educated and trained in methodologies of forgiveness and reconciliation. After they complete their training, they inaugurate neighborhood schools of forgiveness and reconciliation. These schools are made up by 10 to 15 people personally chosen and motivated by the animador to begin the journey of forgiveness and reconciliation.

To that end, ESPERE designed a 10-module methodology that takes about 80 hours of work (8 hours per module) to complete. The motivator along with the chosen students get together in private homes, in classrooms, in churches, in public spaces or in agreed upon places and tries to replicate the experience that he himself has previously lived

through during his training. It is then a form of group exercise, where the accumulated wisdom of the participants is converted into valuable support for those individuals that have been victims of all sorts of violence.

Until now, the social sciences have done a laudable job with regards to conflict resolution, mediation, conciliation, arbitrage, and similar activities. In fact, theoretical work of great value and trained personnel both exist in that sense. However, people's hearts have yet to be reached by touching those spaces where effective solutions are created and fostering the ability to coexist on a long-term basis. The ESPERE training seeks to reach those spaces in everyone's

heart. The heart is where violence is born, and thus it is there where peace and agreement can be reborn. The participants of the ESPERE schools basically learn to transform their rage, their hatred and resentment, and thus to promote concrete actions that take them not to the escalation of violence but to a state of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The ten modules mentioned have been carefully designed to facilitate the difficult and complex road to forgiveness and reconciliation. These 10 steps are:

1. **Motivation and agreements of total privacy**
2. **I decide to move from darkness to light**
3. **I choose to forgive**
4. **I see with new eyes**
5. **I share the pain**
6. **I accept the other within me**
7. **I construct the truth**
8. **I guarantee justice**
9. **I agree on a pact**
10. **I organize the celebration.**

These ten work modules are structured within a common framework: a safe environment, case presentation, theoretical inspiration, commitment and ritual. These modules and the route they take are filled with a strong symbolic concentration, where the colors, aromas, music, rituals, games, representations, and agreements play an important role.

Without pretending that the ESPERE schools are some sort of miraculous cure, significant changes are being noted in the transformation of familial and neighborhood conflicts. Violence within families seems to have decreased, along with a marked strengthening of personal and communal relationships.

Those attending the School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation talk about important changes in their own reality: they regain a sense of meaning in their lives, their sense of security, and community belonging. At the end of the 80-hour course, participants usually prepare a celebration of *memory and restitution*. In this celebration, those who have been victims of any form of violence or injustice have the opportunity to bear witness to their tragedy, to receive recognition for their pain along with a restitution, most of the times symbolic, offered by their

neighborhood community.

The animadores of the ESPERE Schools have now begun to receive the support of university students, especially those in the social sciences, in providing more professional support to those people that have suffered through complex traumas. This service has been named “*consultorios de paz*” (peace consulting-rooms).

It is important to note that the animador is initially chosen by the Board of Communal Action of the Neighborhood; the same board most of the times provides all necessary support to the animadores.

To guarantee the sustainability of the ESPERE Schools, a professional team facilitates communication and integration among various ESPERE schools, performing follow-up and providing methodological and theoretical reinforcement. The ESPERE Schools have begun to diversify their services over time with schools for teenagers, smaller children, church groups, and priests, as well as other religious representatives. The ESPERE Schools are currently in 14 city locations. In each one, a coordinator completes the tasks of motivation, support and management.

Daily practice has allowed the appropriation and development of even better conceptual and methodological tools, which have begun to be used by other institutions that work towards peace from other perspectives. In association with REDEPAZ—the largest Colombian network of initiatives

sets of individual and collective dynamics in the work towards forgiveness and reconciliation: the problem of emotional control, the lack of institutional mediators in the community and the lack of knowledge of conflict resolution techniques.

Frequently, crime and violence increase because positive institutional mediators don't exist or simply don't work. Instead, negative institutional mediators are being strengthened (subversive groups, juvenile delinquency, organized street crime). Therefore, the social capital for peace is converted into the social capital for violence. In this sense, the ESPERE Schools are gradually creating positive *social capital* that works both as an institutional mediation for the prevention of violent behavior and as also much as the assertive negotiation of various conflicts.

Certain paradigms have begun to form part of the everyday language of the ESPERE Schools. Against the irrationality of violence it is necessary to propose the irrationality of forgiveness, as well as demonstrate that cities are built from inside out, that forgiveness is not forgetting but rather remembering with different eyes, that without reconciliation there is no future, that hatred and resentment have grave somatic and psychological effects, that truth and justice are indispensable elements of reconciliation, and, finally, that compassion and tenderness must be reinstated as basic elements of the culture of peace.

It is not a matter of anesthetizing social conscience, but rather of finding constructive ways to achieve justice and peace.

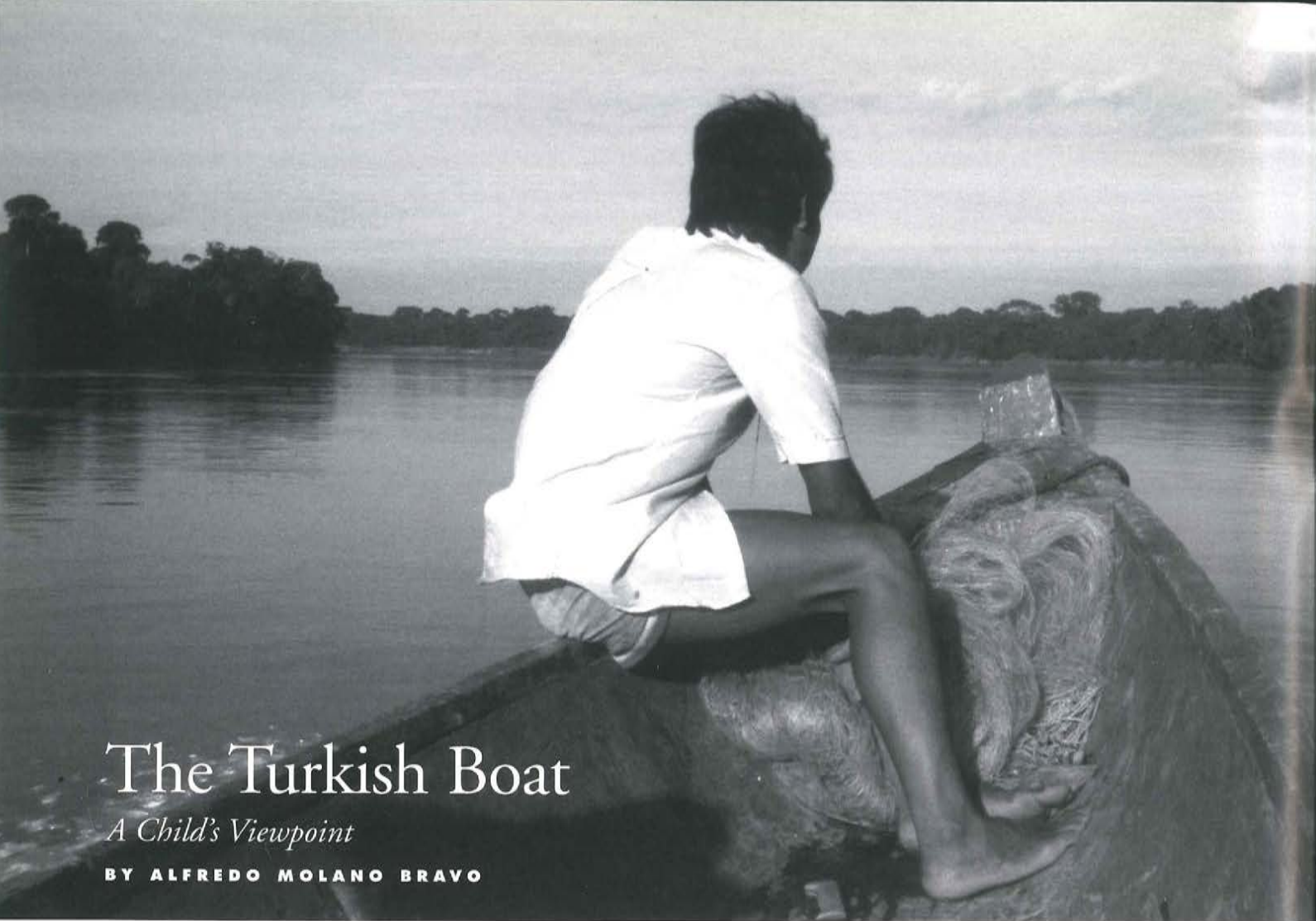
for peace—on one hand, and with the Colombian Catholic Episcopal Conference, on the other, this service soon will be offered in other Colombian cities, especially those with the highest rates of violence.

For centuries, the strategies of peacemaking and citizen security have strongly emphasized rationality and law enforcement. ESPERE Schools want to offer a different paradigm by designing communal work techniques that are sustained through the strengthening of the emotional intelligence.

Without overlooking current theoretical discussions about the root causes of Colombia's increased criminality, the ESPERE Schools have chosen to concentrate on three

Quite possibly, some day I will run into Tirofijo again and this time I will be the one to say with great respect: “*Get down from the clouds, Don Manuel: without forgiveness and without reconciliation there is no future. Not for you, and not for anyone!!!*”

Leonel Narváez Gómez is a Colombian Catholic priest. He received his M.Phil degree in rural sociology from the University of Cambridge in England and his Masters in Theology from the Harvard Divinity School. He has participated very closely in the peace negotiations with the leftist guerrillas in Colombia. He can be reached at <leonel_narvaez@post.harvard.edu>.



The Turkish Boat

A Child's Viewpoint

BY ALFREDO MOLANO BRAVO

Toñito was the last child baptized in Father Eustaquí's evangelizing campaign. The proof is that all his younger friends have names that are not Christian such as Bryan, Wilmer and Hayler. The Franciscan priests used to come by every year baptizing the babies and marrying their parents. They hadn't returned since those lands of the Atrato River filled up with people from Medellín who initially set up sawmills and later dedicated themselves to drug trafficking.

Life was never the same as in those days when the women sang the praises to St. Lawrence for the wind to blow and to whisk away the hulls of rice they were cleaning. Toño was brought up on the banks of the Chajeadó River.

He learned to swim before he learned to walk, watching women scrub their clothes on wooden boards because there were no rocks in this land; a rock there is a treasure. He did not go to school because there weren't any schools and no one was interested in learning to read since people had radios. The old folks only knew how to add and subtract because that way they could figure out how much they were owed by the sawmills in Riosucio, three days down the river, where they sold their wood.

Neither Toñito nor anyone knew how or why one day people came burning down the houses. He still trembles from fear when he recounts what happened that morning:

I WAS MAKING A TOP BECAUSE I WAS BORED with boats and kites. It wasn't time to harvest the rice yet and so I had time to play. Because when rice is ready to harvest, it comes like the rising river, and there is no time to do anything. The adult men cut the rice with machetes and the women carry it to town. We children do errands and they really keep us busy....

It's hard to make a top because there's nothing to shape it with.... That's why I sometimes prefer to make boats and set them floating down the river to find their destiny. I love to go with the boats along the river until they drift out of sight. The motor boats going up the river and the logs floating downstream drown a lot of my boats, but I keep on making them because I hope some of them will make it to the sea. All of the waters go to the sea, my father told me, and

my grandfather thought that he would go down to the sea to die. It's true: the river carries everything to the sea...even the garbage that one throws away goes down to the sea....

One day my uncle got into a fight with his bosses at the sawmill because they didn't want to pay him everything that he was owed. He ended up punching out the manager and the police went after him. He got to our house and didn't go out again. But he came here knowing how the lumber business worked. He'd calculate, in Ríosucio, the wood is worth so much and in Río León, it's worth so much, so why isn't it worth hardly anything in Cartagena? My uncle got courageous and started calculating all this and telling the sawyers from the Curvaradó river. That's why they put a contract on his life and that's why they killed him; they drowned him after beating him over the head with a shovel. His body emerged three days down the river, swelled up like a manatee and as white as one of those pale guys from Medellín. My grandfather said that we ought to keep my uncle's death hushed up because vengeance always brings a lot of deaths with it. But no one paid atten-

tion to him. There were deaths here and there; corpses appeared here and there, until the lumber business disappeared.

One day the warriors came by here, people who know the mountains and the beasts well. No one knew them here; they were passing through with two injured men, as thin and shriveled up as the Holy Christ of Buchadó. They asked for help. We folks are always wary about people wandering into town, but we always help them out. So they rested, ate, washed their clothes and slept. They seemed nervous about their wounded, who were getting paler by the minute. Nothing was helping: not medicines or curing waters or prayers. They died because they didn't have a lot of blood left. We buried them at the edge of town. The commander told us that we shouldn't say to anyone who had buried their dead there. "If you tell," he said "we'll come back and don't even ask what is going to happen."

Time passed and other times came, and these were bad times indeed. The people from the Curvaradó river region spent three years eating nothing but rice and banana mush because they didn't want to give their lumber away for nothing. And then other people came from Medellín with their backpacks filled with business deals and they made everything seem so very easy. Many people here took their chances and got involved with the coca business that the Medellín people—*paisas*—made seem so easy. You planted coca, cultivated it and then just put the money in your backpack. It all started off great; the outsiders kept their word and paid up. I was taking everything in because I'd always had wanderlust and my dream was to get away from the river, get to Cartagena and look at the sea. That was what I was dreaming. The coca is a business that sucks you in. If people get involved with this bad stuff, things go bad for them. My mom doesn't like this business of always chasing after money, but there were lots of folks who saw a chance to get ahead and bet everything on the coca business. Then one day some buyers showed up with arms and said, "We'll pay such-and-such" which was a lot less than people had been getting paid. Then they threatened, "And if you don't like the price, it doesn't matter, because you have been involved with the guerrillas and we're not going to stand for that." My grand-

The river carries everything down to the sea.

father stood his ground, "That wasn't the agreement; if you don't pay us what you promised, we're not doing business with you any more," and all of the adults supported my grandfather. But the devils insisted, "You are guerrillas, and that's why you are not collaborating with us." They paid the price they wanted to and didn't even say goodbye. We all thought it would end there, without any more fights. But my grandfather said, "No, these devils are going to come back; it's better that we take shelter in the mountains."

And they came back. My grandfather kept on getting up that night, and I thought he had to relieve himself a lot and that kept him awake because he'd always get up shaking and then go out to the garden and come back all relaxed. But that time was different. Even the animals were quiet, but I thought, if not even the dogs bark, then no one is coming. Sometime between dark and dawn, the first shouts were heard, "You damn guerrillas, we are going to burn down your ranch; come out so we can see your faces." My grandfather managed to tell me, "Get into the bags of rice and don't make any noise; nothing will happen to you there." He went out of the house. They killed him in the doorway and I couldn't even give him my hand to keep the memory of his body heat with me.

Time passed and other times came, and these were bad times indeed.

After that, they were forcing all the adults out of the houses and tying them together as if they were logs to throw into the river. The women were screaming and praying and the children were running all around without knowing where they were going. The head of the devils was shooting off his guns as if we were trogon birds. I couldn't move; I could hardly breathe and if I even started to make a noise, I was dying of fright. Everyone was going this way and that; the town was groaning from pain. As my grandfather had ordered, I ran off toward the mountain. The shots followed us; the devils were shooting like crazy. The dead were left in the patios, in the port, in the houses. If anyone tried to pick them up, they'd kill him with a machete. I don't know how I ran so fast. I was falling down, and it was as if someone had thrown me on a mattress; I'd get tangled up in thorny places, and it was as if someone had tickled

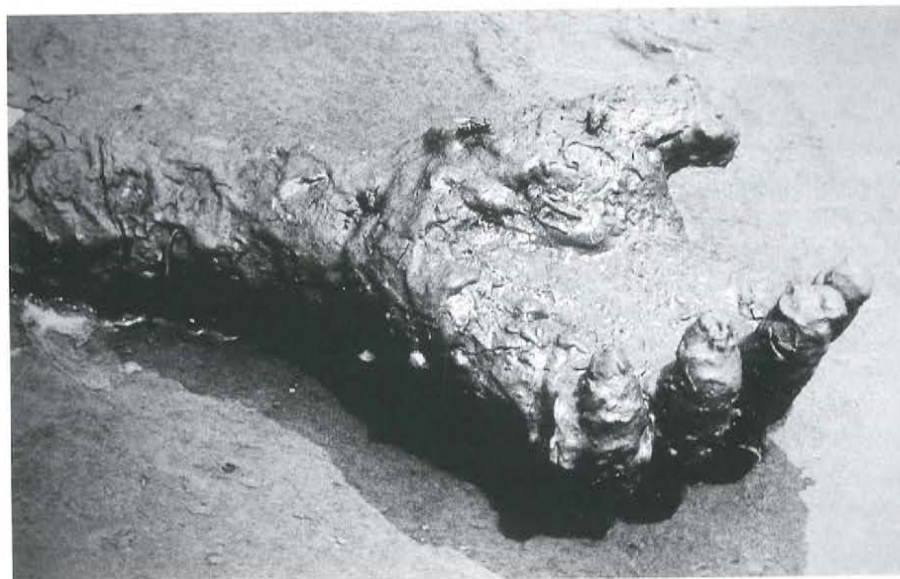
me. I ran and ran until I stopped hearing screams. I was afraid someone would come and I was afraid that no one would come. Afraid of the night and afraid of the tigers. Afraid of the dead they had killed, afraid that they had killed my parents and my brothers. Afraid that they hadn't killed them, but that they were wandering lost in the bogs....

I woke up when the sun was already warming the earth. The fear had been left behind in the night, but now hunger was gnawing at me and my stomach was growling. I said to myself, it's better to die than that they kill me. I won't leave. And I gathered some berries like my grandfather had shown me. But when night came again, the fear returned....

The following morning, I got up and said, it's better to go looking for death than to have death come to me. But where was I going to go if I'd been going around in circles not knowing where I was going? I remembered what my grandfather had said: The waters will take you. I was getting to water that was wider and wider and so, little by little, to the river, and finally, going along the banks back to my town. Everything there was quiet; everything was empty; one couldn't even hear the wind. There was no one there to tell me if anyone had been left alive. There were no bodies of people from the town, but they had dug up the dead guerrillas and the dogs had torn the

bodies to pieces. I sat down to cry on the spot where they had killed my grandfather. His body was not there nor any of the bodies of the townsfolk, but bloody tracks led to the river. I cried a lot, a lot, and then I went to the river to see to see if someone would carry me downstream. But there were no boats—big or small—near the bank, and I shouted and shouted and waved my hands. No one wanted to know what had happened in the town because they would have to testify to the law about what they had seen. Everyone knew and no one wanted to know....

I finally got a boat to take me to Moya. I was not alone. There were people from the town waiting there for three days in a row to see who was coming. The women were praying at an altar they had made to the Miraculous Christ. The men were drinking and talking softly. Everyone was hoping to find their dead ones to bury them. One of my neigh-



Hand in the sand.

mother to these rivers, and everyone heads there when things get rough and also when things are going good. When I got to Mandela, the first thing I thought was that the devils had who did away with my town might be there. But I said to myself that it was impossible that here—among so many people—that they would come to kill us again....

The day I arrived in the neighborhood, it was already late, and I ran into Don Tato, a cousin of my dad's. He was a well-off old guy and a good person. I was really happy because I thought he was going to give me a place to live, as was the custom in the river-towns....But Don Tato took one look at me and he must have read my mind because he said, "Here it is not like there. Here everyone is on his own." He didn't help me a bit....

I ended up on the streets. One night we got into a sewer, kind of a big hole, and around two in the morning I heard someone talking; the other kids had sniffed glue and they were off in their dreams, but I didn't want to because I had a headache. Before I knew it, we were on fire. I jumped up screaming and as I was the first to wake up, the flames had not gathered force. But in any case, I burned my foot. The others didn't make it out. They died like chicken on a spit. I figured out it was the guy from the store who had ordered the fire because the police came to take out the bodies in big plastic garbage bags so no one would notice. No one knows they died or who ordered their deaths. I said to myself: I'm going, I'm going, I'm going, I'm going wherever the boats go.

And so Toñito left in the Turkish boat.

I've asked permission to adopt the kid and I've filled out all the paperwork. But now the Institute of Family Welfare has come with this business that he's not an orphan because his parents have not legally been declared dead, and they aren't disappeared because no one reported their disappearance to the authorities. So I'll have to wait a good long while to see if someone shows up for him or if his parents show up and claim him from the Institute. Judging from the slowness of the process, Toñito just might grow up before a judge gives me permission to adopt him.

Alfredo Molano is a Colombian writer and a journalist, now living in California. This testimony is based on interviews in Cartagena with a doctor and a child, whose names have been omitted for obvious reasons.

bors, Doña Edelmira, said that the dead who are buried in the water turn into fish. At the end of the day, the body of Don Anastasio, the owner of a little store called My Pride, appeared. He was totally swollen and he didn't have eyes. They took him out of the water, bit by bit, and they prayed for him. No one could find his family. Then the body of a cousin of mine appeared and I shouted, "He's mine." They helped me fish him out and they helped me to bury him. And I felt very important because everyone was offering me sympathy, and I felt sad because he was my own blood. The harvest began at dawn. One body after another appeared, and the holes the people had dug weren't enough to bury all the bodies. I was hearing "this is mine," "this is mine." With each body, I was hoping that it would be my father, my mother, my brothers, so I could bury them. But no. As much as I looked and looked at the bodies arriving on the banks of the river, mine did not arrive....

That afternoon the devils showed up. They told us that it was forbidden to fish for the dead....We left and went to Vigía del Fuerte. The boat left us off there and we could see the police headquarters, the mayor's office, the agrarian bank had all been burnt to the ground and were still sending up smoke. Someone said, "The guerrillas were getting even for what happened in Río Chajeadó." No one spoke about it anymore. "My grandfather," I said, "was right."

....We finally got to Turbo and I arranged with a boat owner to take me to Cartagena in exchange for washing the boat and helping to bring it to shore.

THE DOCTOR

Toñito arrived at the hospital between life and death. I was on duty in the emergency room, and I received him in a state of coma. He had been in the water for so long that he was almost dying from hypothermia. We revived him and bit by bit, he returned to life. The story is short: Toñito hid himself in a boat on route to New York. The sailors discovered him and the captain ordered them to throw him into the sea... Toñito wasn't afraid of the water because he had been born in it and knew how to get around in the water. But a boat is a boat and that one was a big one. He swallowed a lot of water, but he knew not to resist the waves.... The calm returned and he floated for a long time, understanding that by swimming he would never reach the shore.... Some fishermen picked him up, but feared he was dead. They rubbed him down with turtle oil to warm him and gave him coconut water until he began to breathe again. But breathing is not the same as reviving, and so they took him to the hospital. He began to recuperate slowly. At first he would not talk because he was afraid he would be thrown into jail, but he began confiding in me.... He told me that he had decided to leave Cartagena for "wherever the wind blew" because he was afraid of being "burnt."

"I lived with a group of kids on the street, and we got by however we could....In the (Cartagena) neighborhood of Mandela, there were thousands of families, all of them fleeing, leaving a path of dead ones behind. Many were from Atrato and quite a few from Río Chajeadó. Cartagena has always been like a

The Mobilization of Colombian Civil Society

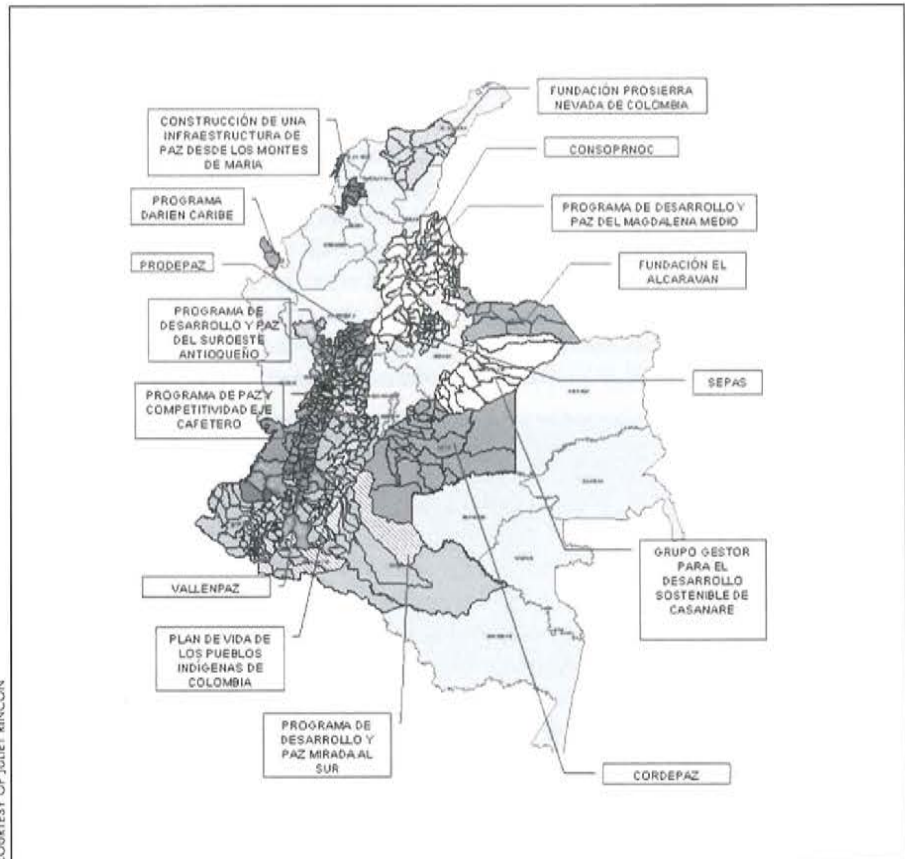
Towards Peace and Development Programs

BY JULIET RINCÓN

AS A MEMBER OF THE RATHER AMORPHOUS Colombian civil society, I sometimes ask myself what it is that has moved those of us who belong to private companies, universities, churches, chambers of commerce and other organizations to advocate on behalf of the communities in our region that are being plagued by violence or by poverty. I must turn to the brutal facts such as the *Pertinentes* publication that Father Francisco de Roux, director of the Peace and Development Consortium of Magdalena Medio, sends to us: *"Mónica Paola Pulido Jerez- This is the name of the little one of only eight years, victim of a landmine found in the fields of Taraje, in the border between San Pablo and Yondó. Territory belonging to the Peace Laboratory. Mónica has lost an arm, she can end up blind, and to this day, February 24th, she is fighting for her life in a hospital. It is the horrible reality of the Colombian farmers' land being used as a battlefield by groups that create a war in which 99 percent of us Colombians do not want."*

Experiences like this, added to the fact that the State is incapable of preventing these painful everyday circumstances for Colombians or responding to necessities in many regions, provide a strong motivation for civil society action. That's why so many of us pushed for the creation of the so-called "Programs of Integral Development and Peace" in these regions.

As we progressively became aware that the circumstances were too much for our capacity, we have gone beyond this, creating a network among 15 such programs: REDPROPAZ (The National Network of Development and Peace Programs). By sharing various programs' goals, principles, and criteria for taking action, we can work together towards strengthening each other in order to create conditions that will make Colombia a country in which human, integral, sustainable, equal, and unifying development of its population is possible.



The National Network of Development and Peace Programs extends throughout Colombia.

These programs, with various routes and action mechanisms, operate in zones that have been highly affected by the armed conflict, which in turn demand significant investment of all kinds of resources. Some of these programs have been able to consolidate important human groups and logistical support that allows them to effectively reach their main objectives. Others, however, that are beginning to take action, have serious operational hindrances and the important task that they are trying to achieve is being threatened by the impossibility of ensuring the availability of a necessary amount of resources. The need to strengthen them and to ensure the sustainability of their actions is what primarily guides our work in REDPRODEPAZ.

Also, we are united by the goal of constructing a different model of development in Colombia from the local and regional level, adequately interpreting the different logics that are found in each of them. In this necessary measure we take a chance by working together with the national government and by seeking the help of international cooperation, extending to them an invitation to change the traditional way of intervention in which models that are in conflict with their own dynamics of development in the regional communities are imposed.

This challenge involves the possibility of formalizing an alliance with Harvard University through the David Rockefeller Center of Latin American Studies in order to strengthen ourselves through various expe-

periences that have been developed in other parts of the world and that have been used by this institution.

Before I began to coordinate the RED-PRODEPAZ, I was in the process of organizing, operating and directing one of the smaller programs, Peace and Competitiveness in the Center of Coffee-Production. This program is unique because it is operated by a regional university, the Autonomous University of Manizales. Its purpose lies not only in the advancement of developmental projects that benefit the vulnerable communities at the center of coffee production, which face the additional difficulty of not being a top priority for governments or cooperating organizations because they are considered to be located in "not-so vulnerable" zones. Instead, its objective lies in the formation of another category of professionals in Colombia, professionals who are sensitive to our reality,

committed to it, and with an ability to positively and creatively transform it.

This program brings together interdisciplinary groups of senior students—combining professions like mechanical engineers

more viable.

From my point of view, this is a prioritized effort and it is where an important transformation could be generated. Colombia is hurt and destroyed by the incompe-

We are united by the goal of constructing a different model of development in Colombia from the local and regional levels.

with industrial design and physiotherapy in projects—working together in teams, always guided by a researcher from the faculty and supported on a permanent basis by specialized consultants in each area. The activities that result from the program are not left behind after just one academic semester. Rather, they are articulated every semester, generating long-term processes that create continuity and make the supported projects

tence of its leaders in orienting and governing it in an adequate way. The corruption and, in some cases, the incompetence of its government workers and functionaries are evils that are as threatening as the existence of armed groups within the margin of the law.

However, beyond the rhetoric and the altruistic labor of professionals that I have described is the reality of this program as a

VALLENPAZ

A REGIONAL CORPORATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIA

Parish of La María in the outskirts of Cali, May 30, 1999.

As more than one hundred men, women and children of all ages attended Sunday religious services, a heavily armed guerrilla group stormed into the church and shoved the churchgoers out on a long and painful walk through the mountains. They were the victims of the first mass kidnapping in Colombia.

All Colombians and the people of Cali, in particular, were in a state of shock. Some of Cali's leaders organized weekly meetings to discuss possible ways to cope with the situation.

People were suddenly aware of the fact that Cali and its valley were surrounded by heavily armed groups, present in the Central and Western ranges of the Andes as well as in the entire Pacific Coast, including the outskirts of Buenaventura, Colombia's main port. There was also recognition of the fact that, despite the successful development of agro-industrial economic enterprises in the Cauca Valley, peasants from the surrounding mountains were living in extreme poverty and isolation.

Discussion and analysis of the situation led to the conclusion that the solution to violence and its related social problems went beyond law enforcement and military action. Rather, it required effective and efficient interventions to promote the economic development and social reconstruction of isolated peasant communities. This led, in turn, to the decision to create the Corporation for the Development and Peace of South-Western Colombia (VALLENPAZ).

The mission of VALLENPAZ is to contribute to the achievement of peace through social and economic development processes in the rural communities of southwestern Colombia. The Corporation has a wide base of more than seven hundred affiliates from all

ALL PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY VALLENPAZ ARE COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:

PRODUCTION: promotion of organic and clean farming projects with increased productivity and economic sustainability.

EDUCATION: relevant and effective learning processes leading to increased empowerment of the communities to maintain their social and economic reconstruction efforts.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: development of entrepreneurial skills, rebuilding of social tissue and construction of social capital.

MARKETING: linking of productive projects to marketing chains through large supermarkets, marketing chains and export markets.

INFRASTRUCTURE: construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure facilities such as irrigation systems, warehouses, distribution centers, roads, water and sanitation.

TECHNICAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: providing access to technological innovation which leads to increased productivity and environmental responsibility.

product of a similar experience, which was much less structured and supported by the university.

In 1989, when I was a senior in my last semester of Industrial Engineering in the Universidad de los Andes, when corporate practices were being created for the Faculty of Engineering, the mayor of a small municipality in the department of Cundinamarca challenged the University—asserting that not one of the professionals that it was educating with the best techniques in the country, guided by the North American models, had the abilities to confront the problem that he faced on a daily basis in the small municipality of Tabío.

In this way, I got to work in Tabío and joined the Municipal Public Services Company. The skills I obtained at the university meant Tabío had the possibility of improving its quality of service and of generating resources for investment in this and

other prioritized necessities, strengthening the already deteriorated income provided by federal government transfers.

This was an important accomplishment, but what was really significant for me was how it changed my conception of my own life. I went from being a professional worried about landing an important position in a national or family-owned company to actually starting serious work on my own in order to change the conditions within various regions of Colombia. During the remainder of my time at the university, I educated myself on certain topics that would allow me to know Colombia better. From my university base, I worked at the tables of the Constituency (considered in 1990 and 1991 as a base for the constitutional reform of 1991).

As a result of this experience an important initiative for this country was created: "Option Colombia," (see *ReVista*, Giv-

ing and Volunteering, Spring 2002) in which students from various universities work together to support many developmental projects in the most remote and vulnerable municipalities of the different regions of Colombia. My professional work has been dedicated to transforming Colombia's conditions in many ways work in governmental entities, international cooperation organizations, and in the last couple of years, the creation and support of regional programs for peace and development.

Juliet Rincón is an industrial engineer from the Universidad de Los Andes with post-graduate studies in Economics, as well as 12 years of professional experience in the areas of planning institutional development and strengthening, and in national entities. Coordinator for the National Network of Development and Peace Programs, REDPRODEZPAZ.

walks of life. Most of them are citizens who have contributed with a donation of five U.S. dollars; however, some are large companies, financial institutions and non-profit organizations.

The Corporation makes alliances with both the public and private sectors and with international cooperation agencies to channel resources towards community-based productive projects that reactivate local economies.

VALLENPAZ reaches out to the communities most heavily stricken by the armed conflict and encourages them to become organized and plan a feasible, sustainable and environmentally friendly economic project. A team of agronomists, animal scientists and social scientists support the communities through their autonomous process of organization, analysis of alternatives, choice of their project and presentation for financial support.

The Corporation's interventions are based on a solid educational process that includes training and technical assistance to improve productivity and environmental responsibility. This means that at the same time as communities go through the process of organizing themselves and their projects, they are trained in social skills, conflict resolution, anger management, environmentally friendly farming, farm management, accounting and marketing.

VALLENPAZ complements the work of other private and government organizations with similar objectives. However, our Corporation's specific mandate is to reach the bottom of the economic ladder; that is to help the poorest of the poor improve their quality of life as a first step, and then to integrate them into the local and national economies as second and hopefully third steps.

VALLENPAZ is currently working in five municipalities of the Cauca Valley province (Dagua, Cali, Palmira, Cerrito and Jamundí) and three municipalities of the neighboring Cauca province (Buenos Aires, Caloto and Guapi). More than three million dollars have been invested in projects carried out by two thousand families in 1,800 hectares of land. Ten thousand people

have benefited directly from the work of our Corporation.

Expected results at the end of a five-year period include: strengthened community organizations as rural enterprises fully integrate into the local economy; improvement of productivity through the use of environmentally-friendly technical innovations; establishment of permanent marketing chains and diversification of marketing opportunities; permanent production of food in home gardens to improve nutrition; and adequate supportive infrastructure for production and commercialization.

It is too early to evaluate the impact of VALLENPAZ in terms of the reduction of violence. Two facts, however, are worth mentioning in this respect. The first is that the enthusiastic support of peasant communities has enabled the workers of VALLENPAZ to move freely and undisturbed through guerrilla and paramilitary-controlled areas; the second is the observation that peasant families who participate in our projects remain in their villages despite occasional confrontations and do not flee towards refugee settlements in the cities, as peasants usually do in other parts of Colombia.

VALLENPAZ accepts many different types of collaboration from all kinds of constituents. International Cooperation Agencies as well as private ONGs may fund specific projects, financial institutions may grant small loans to farmers, professionals may offer voluntary work, and other businesses, organizations and people may offer in-kind donations. VALLENPAZ is a meeting point for all those who love Colombia and want to build a better future for its people.

Rodrigo Guerrero is a physician who holds a M.Sc. in Hygiene and a Ph.D. in epidemiology from Harvard University. Previously, he was elected Mayor of Cali, Colombia and currently serves as the director of International Programs at Fundación Carvajal, he also leads Vallenpaz, a peace and development program in the Cauca Valley.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Through Education

BY ENRIQUE CHAUX AND ANGELA BERMUDEZ

It's 10:30 a.m. on a bright and sunny morning in Bogotá. Children in the school El Sauce are enjoying their class break. Many are running around or talking about last night's T.V. show. But not Alberto, an eight-year-old boy who is sitting by himself (names are fictitious). He looks frightened. He just received a menace from two of his third-grade classmates. He needs to stop giving hugs to Milena, or else the children will hurt him with a needle. They both seem to like Milena and they don't want Alberto to mess with her. Although the two boys later said that they were not thinking about carrying out their threat, they actually showed Alberto a needle they were carrying.

WHY DO EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS RESORT TO such violent threats to solve an otherwise ordinary dispute among classmates? Why didn't they see other alternatives? How come incidents like this one—and much worse—occur daily in many schools in Colombia and frequently escalate rapidly? We consider that high levels of societal violence where these boys and girls are growing up are a significant factor. But at the same time, we think that challenging the negative influence of a violent social context and developing alternative ways of dealing with life conflicts is possible. And this is exactly what several educational programs in Colombia are trying to accomplish.

Colombia continues to be one of the most violent countries in the world. Most of its violence is not *directly* related to the armed conflict but to common types of violence such as fights, revenge killings and settling of scores between individuals or delinquent groups. However, the decades-old political armed conflict and the extremely profitable illegal drug trade business may have had an *indirect* effect on these more common types of violence. In fact, several have demonstrated a clear spatial correspondence between levels of common violence and the presence of armed groups and/or drug trafficking businesses. Somehow the presence of political violence and organized crime creates a fertile environment

for more common types of violence.

One of the mechanisms through which political violence and drug-related crime may have indirectly contributed to the high violence levels in Colombia is from what children have been learning from their social context during these years. Other mechanisms—often reinforcing these early childhood lessons—seem to be undermining the judicial system, the availability of weapons, and the diffusion of a *know-how* related to the organization of criminal activities. Children who grow up a violent environment may learn that violence is a legitimate and effective way to reach their goals and to deal with their conflicts. They have many opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to use violence in their daily life, as Alberto's classmates demonstrate. And as children grow older, they are likely to contribute to the violence of their social contexts, therefore closing a cycle of violence: children experiencing and observing violence in context → learning aggressive behaviors → sustaining violence in context. Indeed, several international studies are showing an increased risk of children developing aggressive behaviors by growing up in communities where violence is widespread. Furthermore, since aggressive behaviors are highly stable throughout life, those children are likely to contribute to sustain (or increase)

The educational system may be able to partially compensate for the violence children are learning from their environment.

the violence in their communities. That is, if nothing is done to prevent the cycle of violence from occurring.

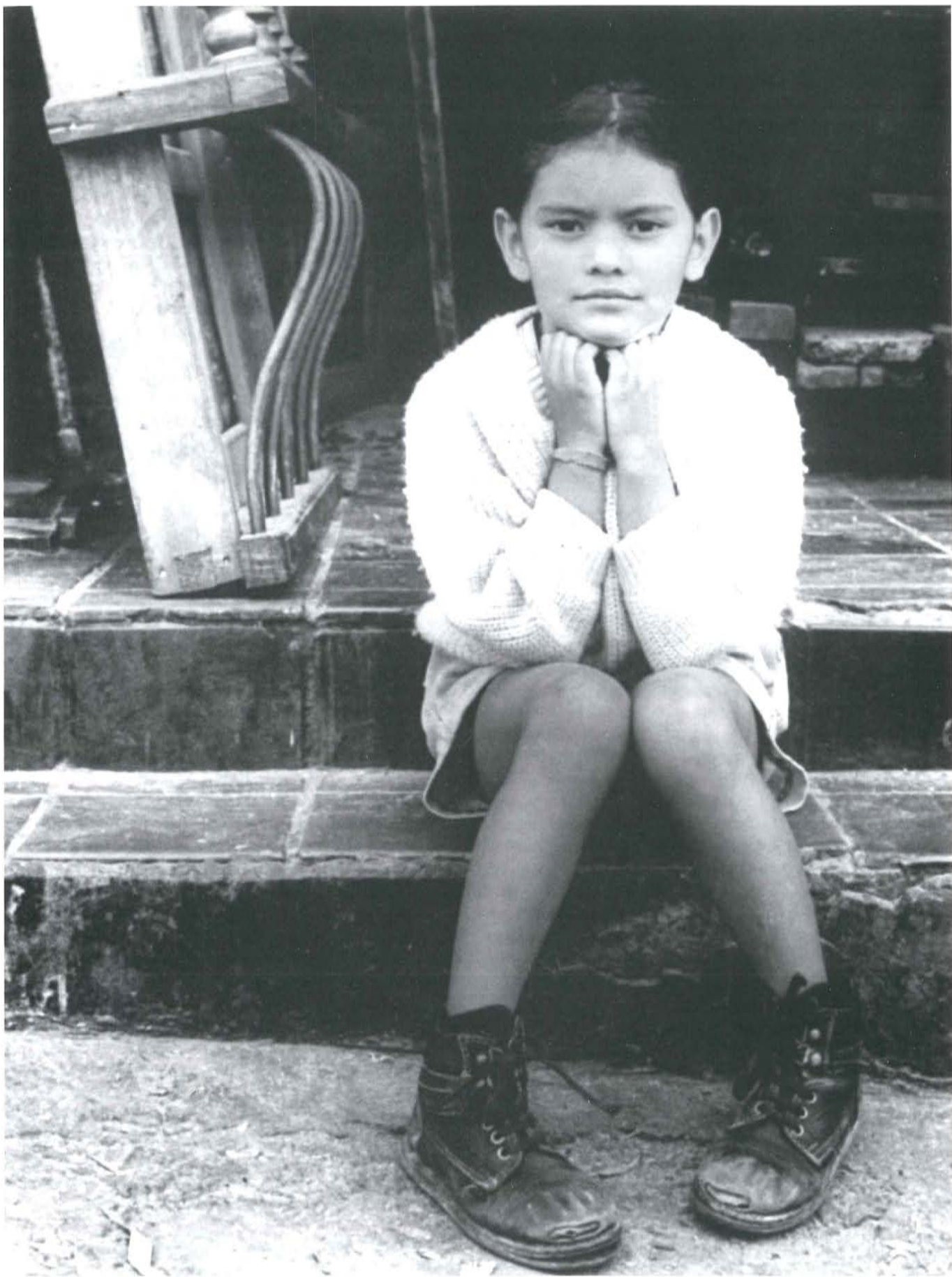
The cycle of violence needs to be broken in several places. Different policies can be implemented to try to decrease political violence, organized crime and common violence in the communities. Many public and non-governmental institutions are working at that level and in some cities, like Bogotá, with impressive results. However, even if the levels of violence in society and

in local communities remain high, the cycle of violence can be broken by trying to affect its mechanisms of reproduction. In particular, the educational system may be able to compensate for part of what children are learning from their environment. For example, children can be taught in schools to delegitimize violence as a way to reach goals. Good teaching can help students think of the consequences of actions beyond their immediate effects, understand the perspectives of others involved in the conflicts and control the impulse to impose one's own way violently. Students can learn and have opportunities to practice alternative non-violent ways of dealing with their interpersonal disputes. In the following paragraphs, we briefly present two innovative programs in Bogotá that, although in their early phases, are already providing interesting lessons.

One of these initiatives is the "*Prueba de Comprensión y Sensibilidad Ciudadana*" of the Department of Education of Bogotá. This is a city-wide program for the assessment of citizenship understanding and sensibility of school-age students. In 1998 the Department of Education started a program to assess the development of basic competencies in students in elementary and middle school. It initially focused on language literacy and math, but it soon extended to

incorporate citizenship as a crucial area. A set of instruments were designed or adapted by an interdisciplinary team during four years of research and experimental applications. (Both authors of this article are part of this team. Angela Bermudez was, together with Rosario Jaramillo, co-director of the program from 1998 to 2001 and currently serves as consultant, and Enrique Chaux was

Students can have opportunities to learn non-violence.



recently involved).

Three basic dimensions of citizenship understanding and sensibility are assessed:

- a) the student's *knowledge* about the basic principles, institutions and procedures of a democratic government and instances for the participation of civil society;
- b) the student's attitudes and opinions regarding diverse citizenship issues (i.e.: political participation, trust in institutions, law, violence and war, informal and formal agreements);
- c) the student's development of social and ethical competencies.

Interesting information about students' understanding of citizenship has already emerged from the experimental applications carried out in past years. However, a new base-line application of this study is sampling about 12,000 students in 7th, 9th and 11th grade in public and private schools.

In the context of this program, Bogotá's Department of Education and the Harvard Graduate School of Education recently agreed on a formal academic collaboration. The jointly-sponsored Study of Citizenship Understanding and Sensibility will incorporate the "Relationship Questionnaire" (Rel-Q), designed by Professors Robert Selman and Lynn Schultz from the Group for the Study of Interpersonal Development. The Rel-Q is a composite measure to assess the social competencies of students from 4th (ages 8-9) through 12th grade (ages 16-18). Social competence is defined by this group as 'relationship maturity' or the capacity for forming and maintaining healthy relationships with other people. Based on the assessment of the central ability to differentiate and coordinate the social perspectives of self and others, the Rel-Q informs about the development of three components of social competence: (1) students' knowledge and understanding about the nature of general interpersonal relationships, (2) students' skills in the intimacy and autonomy strategies used to deal with interpersonal conflicts (that is, sustaining close relationships and connection while asserting one's own needs and perspectives), and (3) the personal meaning students give to particular personal relationships and their emotional investment in them. As a whole, the Rel-Q also provides an interesting assessment of the school's social climate that can influence students' development.

The Program aims to assess students'

development to provide feedback and support to teachers, schools, districts and central policy-makers on how to improve pedagogical practices. Results will be reported about the schools and districts as a whole and not about individual students. In this sense, it is not an exam that students pass or fail. The results of these assessments will hopefully provide crucial information to those working on school institutional projects, curriculum development, teacher education programs and educational policies. One example of the potential beneficiaries of the results obtained with the "Prueba de Comprensión y Sensibilidad Ciudadana" is the other initiative we want to describe in this article.

Two years ago, Universidad de los Andes, a prestigious private university in Colombia, joined efforts with the elite private schools Nogales, San Carlos and Nueva Granada and took over the academic and administrative leadership of five newly created public schools in Bogotá's poorest areas. This project is part of a larger program led by the Department of Education of Bogotá which has handed over the administration of new public schools to private schools, universities and not-for-profit organizations. This program enables institutions with a nationally recognized knowledge about education to transfer that knowledge to public schools in underprivileged areas of Bogotá. And it seems to be working. Many agree that students are getting a high-quality education that they would not get otherwise.

With the support of a business foundation called Genesis led by Harvard graduate Claudia Ordoñez, more than 20 professors, researchers and graduate students from the Universidad de los Andes, and high school teachers from Nogales, San Carlos and Nueva Granada, are working together with the public school teachers to construct and try an innovative curriculum. One of us (Enrique Chaux) is leading within this project an area called Democracy, Moral Development and Peaceful Relationships (*Convivencia*, in Spanish). The goal is to construct guidelines, examples, and methodologies that could be helpful to teachers from all academic areas working with students from all grades.

Some examples of projects carried by graduate students and researchers will illustrate parts of this innovative effort. Marcela Ossa, inspired by Boston's Facing History and Ourselves program, is designing lessons to teach about Colombia's history of political violence

in ways that directly relate that history to the daily life of students. Lina Saldarriaga is analyzing how math could be taught in ways that promote cooperation and peaceful relationships among the students. Laura Vega is using children's literature as a means to promote empathy, interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills among the students in ways similar to Boston's "Voices of Love and Freedom" program (both "Facing History and Ourselves" and "Voices of Love and Freedom" have institutional partnerships with Harvard's Graduate School of Education and are planning ways to work in Colombia). Diana Trujillo is analyzing how arts and music education can promote caring about the self and others. Fernando Mejía is analyzing how examples of moral dilemmas created by Harvard's professor Larry Kohlberg may help students analyze, make decisions and reach consensus about difficult real-life situations. Berta Cecilia Daza is constructing ways in which caring for self, others, animals and the environment could be promoted in science classes. The idea is that all academic areas can provide opportunities for the promotion of democratic participation, moral development, caring, cooperation, and peaceful and harmonious relationships. If this idea works, it is likely that these lessons will be useful to many other schools in Colombia.

It is difficult to determine exactly what led children like Alberto's classmates to consider violent means to reach their goals. To be sure, violence in Colombia will not be reduced if the only thing we do is create the kind of innovative educational programs described here. But these programs can definitively make a contribution. And maybe, in the long term, that can lead to fewer adults using violence in the larger communities. We would have taken a step towards breaking the cycle of violence in Colombia.

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Education in Colombia

Partnering to Change

BY MARIA CAROLINA NIETO

IN A HOTEL BAR IN MEDELLÍN A YEAR AND a half ago, Governor of Antioquia Guillermo Gaviria, World Bank education specialist Martha Laverde, and Saúl Pineda, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) regional officer in Antioquia, shared cocktails and contemplated how to improve public education in Colombia. Since the Colombian educational system was decentralized about 20 years ago, local entities have identified problems and created their own solutions. Most of the Colombia's 34 departments (the equivalent of U.S. states) have a secretary of education, each of whom deals day by day with short-term conflicts. Yet, as Gaviria pointed out to his companions, these officials were accumulating the knowledge and experience to help create a long-term plan for national educational reform.

Gaviria—dedicated to finding a political solution to 30 years of political armed conflict and a highly active leader in promoting peace talks in Antioquia—went on to affirm that education should have two major purposes: First, it should provide children with

the key to living harmoniously—an understanding and acceptance of cultural and political differences. And second, education should confer the abilities necessary to thrive in a *modern* society. With technology advancing everyday and communities faced with increasingly complex problems, children must learn to learn throughout their lives.

His companions agreed. What started as a casual conversation soon developed into a plan for a unique kind of partnership. Gaviria, Laverde and Pineda determined that transforming education should not be the exclusive responsibility of educators, but rather that members of the economic sector should also embrace this goal. They decided to organize a project in which the fiscal and education sectors would work hand in hand towards a long-term plan for public education. Gaviria proposed that other governors be invited to participate and recommended that the World Bank and UNDP join as active members of a new partnership called "Equity of Educational Opportunities and Regional Competitiveness." The

three pioneers toasted to the future, confident that a local initiative could mobilize technical and financial resources and achieve radical, far-reaching changes.

PERSEVERANCE UNDER DURESS

After receiving my Master's degree in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2001, I returned home to Colombia, where the project had taken off despite threats of violence from guerillas and paramilitaries. Martha Laverde invited me to work for the World Bank on the project. From 1998 to 2000 I had served as secretary of education for Cundinamarca, and was aware of the need for a long-term vision for education and cooperation with different sectors of society. I had witnessed that secretaries of education, who ostensibly directed policies, generally devoted too much time to "administrative" duties. I was thus happy to participate in a project that would

Education should provide children with the key to living harmoniously: view from Medellín.

encourage secretaries to conduct a cross-sector dialogue about how education was responding to social changes.

Some weeks after my appointment, the project was sketched out in a ten-page document and representatives from Antioquia met with their counterparts from two adjacent departments, Santander and Caldas, to discuss broad policy guidelines and define basic operations. However, in May 2002, Gaviria was kidnapped by the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) while leading a peaceful demonstration against guerrilla and paramilitary activism in the region. In spite of voices raised throughout the country to demand his liberation, at this moment Gaviria remains a prisoner somewhere in the mountains of Colombia.

Laverde, the UNDP, the governors of Santander and Caldas, and the interim governor of Antioquia resumed their efforts with a renewed impetus. Carrying on with the project demonstrated that most Colombians willingly work for change in the face of violence. Indeed, the project itself was not only a bet to improve public education, but also an invitation to an open dialogue on peace in Colombia.

The World Bank was appointed technical secretary of the partnership. In February 2002, the first meeting took place in Bogotá. By then, seven territorial entities—Antioquia, Caldas, Cundinamarca, Santander, Medellín, Cartagena, Pasto and Manizales—and two international organizations—the World Bank and the UNDP—had become active partners.

FORGING COMMON CONNECTIONS

As the partnership aims to achieve “equity of educational opportunities and regional competitiveness,” it challenges previously disconnected sectors to establish a constructive dialogue. All members contributed to two different versions of a technical document attempting to define the principles, goals and means of the partnership. As yet there is no final version. In fact, as the project moves on, new evidence appears about how difficult it is to come up with a common understanding of concepts such as equity, competitiveness, and development. These are not “neutral” notions, but are used for different purposes by dissimilar agents and reveal distinct—even opposing—views about what society *ought to be*.

Rather than dancing around these chal-

lenging topics, the partnership has promoted a one-year agenda of panels and seminars aimed at feeding the debate. Last January, we invited the local director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss educational challenges in Latin America. Harvard Graduate School of Education professors Richard Murnane and Fernando Reimers will participate in a panel through videoconferencing this spring and we expect French scholar Edgar Morin to visit us in the fall.

So far, members agree on the principle that sustainable development requires universal education of the highest quality so that

The project sheds new light on how communities, states, nations and international organizations can work together to overcome diverse interests and achieve change.

people have the capability to learn, transform, create and improve their living conditions. We reject the idea of building competitive industries or competitive economies based on low salaries and poor working conditions. We disagree with the assumption that elite education for a few guarantees economic growth. Instead, we strongly believe that the provision of real and universal opportunities to learn and progress through the formal education system is the key to a just society and a strong economy.

However, the crucial issue we face is how to transform education in order to achieve equity and competitiveness in each of the partnership's distinct regions. The seven member territories share some features, namely the problems of poverty, violence and internal displacement, but differ significantly in others. By size they range from 400,000 to three million inhabitants. Pasto's economy is based on agriculture, Antioquia's on industry and Cartagena's on culture and tourism. Hence, an enormous challenge for the partnership is to allow each territory to find its own condition-specific solutions while also contributing to a general policy for the country.

Each one of the seven territories has selected a local research institution to explore how education and the economic sector interact and how this relationship should promote equity and competitiveness. The researchers first determine their region's educational and economic profile. They conduct

interviews and focus groups with corporations, school administrations, teachers and students. Finally, researchers organize open forums to air different points of view about how education could contribute to equity and competitiveness and how other sectors—the economic sector in particular—might support educators in achieving such goals.

Four out of seven members have decided to adopt the project's approach and data to create a ten-year educational plan. They will have to establish different strategies to involve as many people as possible in discussing the future of education and society in general. Even if this process does not rad-

ically change the course of education in Colombia, it nevertheless will contribute to a new way of thinking and, hopefully, a new practice. As an example of the potential of a long-term commitment of different social sectors to transform educational policies, the project sheds new light on how communities, states, nations and international organizations can work together to overcome diverse interests, establish common purposes, and ultimately achieve change.

No doubt, this will be a great learning experience for all involved. International partnership members must be prepared to learn rather than “prescribe” and reconsider their own development policies. Educators and education policy makers might learn to talk constructively with economists and planners. Economists and technocrats face the challenge of understanding public education beyond strikes and fiscal deficits. Personally, the greatest challenge I face is integrating the discourse about *equity* and *competitiveness* into an actual viable project. I know that realizing this ideal might be a lifelong project for me.

María Carolina Nieto did her undergraduate studies in law and received a Master's degree in politics at Essex University in the United Kingdom and her M.Ed. at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She lives in Bogotá with her husband and three-year-old child and enjoys poetry and the Colombian countryside.

The Cocalero Social Movement of the Amazon Region of Colombia

The Quest for Citizenship Rights

BY MARÍA CLEMENCIA RAMÍREZ

MORE THAN 200,000 PEASANTS, including women, children and indigenous people, marched from their farms to the nearest towns and government seats to protest a threat to their principal source of income. The marches continued for three solid months. That was 1996, and the crops these farmers were growing was coca, the plant used to make coca paste—the basis for cocaine. The protests were the spark that ignited the *cocalero* social movement, a civil society effort to overcome the marginalization of these peasants.

The United States had just decertified the Colombian government from receiving further U.S. aid because the counter-narcotic efforts of the Latin American country did not meet U.S. standards. The Colombian government responded by increasing aerial spraying of coca plantations in the Amazon region and exerting more control over the sale of gray cement and gasoline, used for processing coca into coca paste. This increased enforcement of laws against illicit drug cultivation and processing set off an uprising among coca growers and harvesters (*cocaleros*) in the departments (states) of Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, and the Baja Bota region of the Cauca department in the Colombian Amazon.

The *cocalero* social movement was a response to state policies. Its intention was to expose the social and economic reality of the small coca growers in Amazonia and demand recognition as social actors. It can be said that in Colombia, the state has excluded its citizens by maintaining the long-term structural marginality of Amazonia. Social movements respond to this exclusion by demanding inclusion through a *concertación*, a coordinated effort with government agencies to meet their needs for the provision of certain basic services. In negotiations, while being supported by the civic strike, movement leaders confronted the power of the state and compelled its representatives to hear them and take their per-

spectives into account. The result was a mutual agreement.

THE STATE IN THE AMAZON REGION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In this area of armed conflict, the civil state is looked upon as the institution that can support alternatives to the conflict. The paradox is that *cocaleros* have gained the state's attention only because of the increasing expansion of the coca economy. Stigmatized as guerrilla auxiliaries and criminals, *cocaleros* began demanding political recognition and increased participation in decision making. In other words, state-fostered repression and marginalization has created a strong civic movement that demands state protection and economic aid.

Although the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) has supplanted state authority in the case of the Amazon region, official institutions are still working in the area. Peasants demand that these institutions develop economic and social programs for

rillas and asked the government not to continue the aerial sprayings with herbicides because coca-growing needed to be recognized as the peasant's main income. The mayor assured that the strike was organized by the Communal Action Councils (Juntas de Acción Comunal) and peasant leaders, and denied the guerrillas' involvement (*El Tiempo*, July 29, 1996). It was clear that the guerrillas participated in the organization of the *cocaleros*' marches, supporting the social, economic and hence, political vindication of the peasants. The guerrillas took advantage of the delegitimization of the state resulting from its failure to fulfill the agreements with the peasants, as well as the violence and repression that was exercised by the military against the social movement.

It is important to examine how the state is perceived, represented, and interpreted from below, by the people under its rule, as well as how it constitutes political reality and produces concrete effects. Everyday prac-

The cocaleros social movement illustrates not only how a new collective identity can be constructed under extreme adverse circumstances, but also how a new civil society can rise, paradoxically, from the ashes of rejection, stigmatization, criminalization and scapegoating.

their benefit. Moreover, local authorities, such as mayors and *personeros* (municipal attorneys), are perceived as allies in the peasants' fight to gain recognition as political and social actors.

The internal divisions among state functionaries in the local, regional and national levels were highlighted by the *cocaleros* social movement: while the central government characterized the movement as "guerrilla-instigated," the mayor of Puerto Asís (Putumayo) declared to the media that the strike was not supported by the guer-

rities and specific historical and cultural situations become crucial to achieving an understanding of how the state is constructed locally. In the Amazon region, the FARC has played an important role in constructing the way people perceive the state, and within this theoretical framework, FARC's discourse can be seen as part of this local complexity. The FARC supported the *cocaleros* social movement, making it possible for their strike to last for months and enabling the peasants to negotiate with the central government from a strong position. Although the FARC

assumes disciplinary functions among the population, it is not replacing the state in this respect. The state is expected and demanded to carry out its constitutional obligations in the area, both by the FARC and the inhabitants of the Amazon region. The FARC oversees the mayor's office, supervising city revenues and payments and municipal employments. Moreover, the FARC is promoting the exercise of citizens' rights in these places, arguing that increased participation results in increased local power. FARC's support of, rather than suppression of, local participatory power politics merits careful analysis. However, as FARC's discourse, which conveys the need to construct participatory democracy, is, in most cases, not backed up by specific actions such as socio-economic plans for the people, political violence continues to be the status quo. Guerrilla authoritarianism, of course, is antithetical to democratic participation. In October of 1997, FARC did not permit elections for mayors and governors to take place in some towns. This action produced strong enough opposition to lead to elections (although with a poor turnout) in spite of FARC's order, with some popular candidates being elected. In other towns, the FARC's candidates were elected. In some cases, popularly elected independent candidates were later forced to renounce office and were replaced by those appointed by the guerrilla group.

After the *cocaleros'* social movement and in response to the political and territorial power of the guerrillas, paramilitaries increased their presence in the Putumayo, Caquetá and Guaviare departments, beginning in 1998. As a consequence, the number of confrontations with the FARC increased, along with the number of instances where peasants were caught in the crossfire. The leaders of the *cocaleros* movement were accused of being guerrillas and their lives were threatened to the point that they had to disappear from the political scene. During January and February of 1998, paramilitaries killed 38 suspected guerrilla supporters in Puerto Asís alone. The mayor accused the army of providing helicopter support for the paramilitaries. As a result, citizens of the Putumayo began denouncing the suspected coalition between paramilitaries and the army, as well as the "black lists" that contained names of citizens to be killed because they were suspected

of being guerrilla supporters. In an area where guerrilla groups have been supplanting the rule of the state since 1984, it is very easy to be considered a guerrilla collaborator.

In June of 1998, 500 peasant leaders from the Putumayo went to see then-President Ernesto Samper in Bogotá to condemn the serious level of human rights abuse in the Putumayo due to the presence of paramilitaries acting with the complicity of the Army. Citizens of the Putumayo, organized into a Committee for the Defense of Life, asked Samper to protect their lives and to set up an international tribunal. Moreover, peasant leaders cautioned that if the state did not take prompt action on this issue, they would be forced to arm themselves in self-defense. Meanwhile, the massacres of peasants accused of being guer-

rilla supporters continued—for example, in January 1999, 28 peasants were killed by paramilitaries in El Tigre, Putumayo, and 20 were killed in Zabaleta, Caquetá, on March 9, 1999.

It is clear that in the case of Colombia, the power and terror exercised by paramilitary and guerrilla groups in the coca growing areas necessitates the strengthening of civil society in order to confront these armed authoritarian actors. Although Colombia has not experienced a dictatorship, the long-term armed conflict has forced civil society to organize and make itself visible. It has been pointed out that in the Amazon region, the paramilitary organizations are acting with the support and acquiescence of the Armed Forces, as many local residents have testified. One movement leader characterized this situation as a "national policy of state terror"



Cocaleros protest in Putumayo.

COURTESY OF EL TIEMPO

(Intervención en la toma de la Defensoría del Pueblo, 1998). Human Rights Watch, in a February 2000 report, presented evidence of close ties between the Colombian Army and paramilitary groups. Paradoxically, while the Armed Forces were promoting violence, the civil government was conducting peace negotiations. In this context, civil society cannot be conceived as opposition to an evil state. In contrast, continuity between the state and civil society has to be encouraged for the sake of the Amazon region. The armed conflict has blurred the boundaries between civil society and the state, and the assumption that achieving a strong civil society requires autonomy from the state has to be reconsidered. Thus, how the "authoritarian" is transformed into the "political" through collective action becomes a central issue in the social movements emerging in

this conflict area.

It can be expected that in the Amazon region, where illegal activities have become the rule of law, if the state continues repressive action through an ill-conceived "drug war," the civilians will be forced to take sides by joining either military, paramilitary or guerrilla groups. Paradoxically, the result is less state authority, an empowered insurrectionist movement, an increasingly armed citizenry, escalating violence, and a decrease in public spaces within which to build a civil society and reestablish links to the state.

TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CIVIL WAR

In this war context, it is necessary to examine the kinds of local-state articulation that results in either increased or decreased political space, permitting or preventing the development of participatory democratic institutions.

I contend that in the Amazon region, collective identities are shaped by the sense of exclusion and abandonment by the state, and in this context, the act of exercising citizenry has a cultural meaning that has to be examined. It was evident during the 1996 marches that being defined as a *colono* (settler) and/or a *cocalero* (coca grower) became an exclusive category. It meant not only to be considered as migrants with no regional identity and/or delinquents, but also to be pinpointed as people to whom the central state does not ascribe a place within society and as such, can be objects of state violence. As a consequence, the construction of a new citizenship becomes central for these social movements, which emerge independently from the traditional political parties, and which demand participation in local state policies and development plans. Thus, the introduction of negotiation procedures (i.e. negotiation tables between official representatives and leaders of the *cocaleros'* movement) as a means to collectively participate in decision-making clearly was a main catalyst in turning the *cocaleros* movement into a social and political movement.

Through the *cocaleros* social movement, peasants of the Amazon region achieved collective empowerment. As a group, they were able to generate policy proposals that sought to both gain veto power over policies that affected them as a recognized differentiat-

ed group (*colonos campesinos and/or campesinos cocaleros*) and guaranteed that public officials would respond to their concerns once agreements were signed. Thus, leaders of the *cocaleros'* social movement were seeking social justice through the exercise of participatory democracy.

The 1991 Colombian Constitution opened spaces of democratic participation that the inhabitants of the Amazon region have since used in order to exercise citizen rights and participate in the process of democratization in what has been a traditionally hegemonic and actively exclusive state. Such was the case of the *tutela* action that the *Personero Municipal* of San Jose del Fragua instituted against the Armed Forces in Caquetá during the 1996 social movement. In Puerto Asis (Putumayo), *cabildos abiertos* (open councils) to promote peace and oversee local government administration have been organized since 1997; they allow civil society to propose alternatives to the armed conflict or to demand that the central government support local civil organizations' alternative economic initiatives to coca cultivation. As Michael Walzer has claimed, "To call the state to the rescue of civil society" is a central issue in the context of the Colombian armed conflict among guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations and the military.

The *cocaleros* social movement illustrates not only how a new collective identity can be constructed under extreme adverse circumstances, but also how a new civil society can rise, paradoxically, from the ashes of rejection, stigmatization, criminalization, and scapegoating. The *cocaleros* demanded their right to be recognized and included as part of the nation of Colombian citizens, and are showing their will to enhance participatory democracy instead of aggression.

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Agrarian Reform in Colombia

The Role of Civil Society

BY MARÍA PAULINA MOGOLLÓN

IT WAS A TYPICAL JULY DAY IN THE Colombian coastal tropics: sweltering heat, glaring sun, and severe humidity. Even in the shade of the big mango tree where I was sitting, my back was moist and sweat trickled down my forehead. Around me the voices of one hundred indignant peasants argued back and forth. They were *usuarios*, members or literally ‘users’ of the irrigation district, and they were congregated for the third General Assembly meeting of the summer. The Board of Directors that they had elected two years ago had been mismanaging the district, and the peasants were determined to depose it and name a new one. As they awkwardly advanced through the formal procedural steps, I took the first notes for my thesis.

The next six weeks of research were to be intense, and this meeting was very representative: heat, unpunctuality, disorderliness and the painstakingly inefficient formalities of bureaucracy. Ahead of me were two to four daily interviews and a significant amount of data collection in chaotic government offices.

This was the summer of 2002, in which I traveled to the northern coast of Colombia to research three irrigation districts built by the government as part of the agrarian reform efforts of the 1960s. In them was a puzzle that had always intrigued me, and my thesis was my excuse to explore it. Though the three dis-

tricts—La Doctrina, Montería-Cerete and María La Baja—were similar on an infinite number of levels, their administrative performance differed immensely. While one provided its *usuarios* with comparatively satisfactory service, the other two were marred in corruption and choked by debt. Through my six weeks of research and the 60 interviews I conducted, my plan was to find out why.

I had a suspicion as to the cause of such a noticeable difference—the ability of the peasants of each district to work together. It was their civil society, defined by Oxhorn as a “rich social fabric formed by a multiplicity of territorially and functionally based units,” that really differentiated the districts. While in the relatively successful district, the organization and mobilization of peasants towards a common goal was done easily and expertly, in the other two this seemed to be a nearly impossible feat.

That was to be my hypothesis: the civil society within each district was determinative of its administrative performance. This statement engulfed my attention for the remaining weeks of the summer, and my objective was to evaluate its accuracy and explain how such a strong civil society had come to be.

Most of the information I gathered was collected through interviewing each district’s peasants. I had hoped for a decent amount

of numbers and hard data as well, but records keep very poorly in the tropics and termites are the enemies of history. I looked for information on the social movements of the region in the 1960s when the districts began, but the few documents I found were so brittle, yellowed and termite-ridden that reading them was impossible.

The hours of formal and informal interviews, therefore, were not only incredibly enriching but they also became my most consistent and reliable source of information. The questions I asked during those interviews were geared towards two issues: the government’s institutional influence and support since the construction of the irrigation districts and the trajectory of organization and collective action henceforth among the peasants.

By the end of the six weeks, I had gathered substantive evidence to support my hypothesis. I discovered that in the irrigation district with the best administrative performance and the most civil society, the peasants had repeatedly invaded the property of the area’s largest landowners until the government agreed to buy that land and turn it over to the peasants. The organizational effort that went into so many of those invasions was monumental, and the peasants quickly learned to mobilize and work together.

I found that, in one of the two districts with poor administrative performance, there



Area peasants at work: civil society within irrigation districts determined performance.

had once been a strong peasant social movement shortly after the government built the district. When I inquired as to its legacy, my interviewees were silent. Without exception they asked me to stop my tape recorder and put my pencil down. The region was the paramilitary's stronghold and the answer to my question was a delicate issue. I soon found out the paramilitaries had decimated the leftist-leaning peasant leaders during the 1980s,

ants failed to come to such a realization, their path led to doom. In effect, today only the district that had a strong civil society and did not endure a decade of paramilitary killings succeeds today. For me, such evidence was very telling, and by the end of my six weeks on the Colombian coast, I knew I had found an important story.

Beyond my actual research, there were myriad unforgettable moments during my

and well-used. In addition, many peasants remembered my grandparents fondly and plunged into myriad stories about them.

Perhaps the most disturbing information that I learned from my interviews was the male-oriented character of the agrarian reform and the extent to which it had reinforced the strong macho culture of the region. The government distributed land to the head of the family—who was usually male—and henceforth all of the loans and programs that they sponsored were geared towards that individual. This resulted in the men of the region obtaining most of the government's aid while their wives only could hope that some financial support would trickle down to them and their children. Within five years, brothels sprung up next to every district and the peasants themselves openly told me that they kept three or more women in addition to their wife. Only recently has the government realized its colossal mistake, and it is only lately that its has actually tried to take women into account.

Such is a glimpse into my summer experience and the things I learned. I returned to Harvard with a story and a hypothesis I could prove, but more importantly, I came back with a better understanding of the peasants of the Colombian coast, of their life and of myself.

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In the relatively successful district, the peasants organized towards a common goal, but in the other two districts this seemed to be a nearly impossible feat. With organized civil society, peasants quickly learned to mobilize and work together.

and since then no peasant dared organize for fear of them.

The third irrigation district, also of poor administrative performance, confirmed my hypothesis. In its 40-year history, it never had a substantive amount of civil society, and today its peasants were running into serious organizational difficulties with its administration.

My thesis research helped me understand the importance of civil society and the empowerment of the commons. When the peasants in two of the irrigation districts realized the strength of their numbers and the power they could garner by organizing towards a shared purpose, the likelihood of their administrative performance increased ten-fold. For the third district whose peas-

interviews, many more important to me than the actual thesis research. The peasants' generosity struck me: I left most interviews with bulging sacks of guavas, mangos or corn, and while I was in their homes, *tinto* (black coffee) would flow from the kitchen. Considering their meager levels of income, I was stunned.

Other gratifying interviewing experiences were those on the land that had once belonged to my family. During the agrarian reform of the 1960s, my grandparents were forced to sell much of their land for worthless government bonds and I was able to interview the peasants that now lived on it. Though my feelings toward the usefulness and success of the agrarian reform are still mixed, it was comforting to know the land was inhabited



Managing Peace

Private Sector and Peace Processes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia

BY ANGELIKA RETTBERG

IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, A SALVADORAN businessman recalled what ex-combatants of the demobilized Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) told him when they met: "The worst mistake we made since [the government of President] Duarte was that we negotiated with politicians; we should have negotiated with the owners of this country, the business people."

This assertion emphasizes the fundamental role business plays, and indeed should play, both in peace negotiations and the subsequent implementation of a peace agreement. Business controls and generates many of the necessary resources for building peace, by means of production and taxation. As a result, business decisions—to invest, produce and hire—limit, condition and shape the agenda and scope of peace negotiations. In addition, in many Latin American countries, the private sector has historically enjoyed privileged access to government decision-making, which increases its veto power over the policy process.

The evidence from three very different peace processes in Latin America supports these declarations. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia all underwent internal peace negotiations in the past decade. While the Central American cases ended in peace accords—in 1992 in El Salvador and in 1996 in Guatemala—in Colombia, the peace negotiations failed in 2002. In each of the three cases, the domestic business sector played key, albeit quite different, roles. These case studies thus lend themselves to an exploration of the manifold ways in which business has responded to the possibility of a peaceful resolution of conflict and of the factors that shape the very different relationships between business and peace.

Just last year, Salvadorans celebrated the tenth anniversary of the signing of their peace agreements. Under the leadership of President Alfredo Cristiani (1989-1994), the government and the FMLN agreed on several institutional reforms aimed at broadening the political space, reorganizing the ill-reputed military apparatus and reforming the judi-

cial system. Previous attempts at negotiating peace in El Salvador had failed, mainly because there was fierce resistance from the private sector. This raises the question: what made peace talks finally possible in El Salvador and how was the support of the Salvadoran business community ensured?

The answer may be found in a profound shift that occurred in the structure of the Salvadoran business community during the 1980s. The emphasis on the production of traditional agricultural export goods that had been the pillar of the Salvadoran economy gave way to increased diversification into new sectors such as commerce, agri-business, and financial services. While El Salvador is still not a model of a diversified economy, it has steadily moved away from being under the legendary control of 14 families. In practice, a new "modern" elite has emerged.

Much of this transformation was induced by targeted U.S. intervention. The creation of the *Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo* (FUSADES), which dispensed credit and supported activities in new sectors of the economy to the detriment of traditional

on principles of increased competition among economic actors and the limitation of the state's role in the economy, brought home the idea to El Salvador's business elite that the profound changes ahead required minimizing the diversion of attention and resources by conflict-related factors.

It thus came as no surprise when businessman Alfredo Cristiani, disciple of FUSADES, and member of ARENA, the conservative party formed in the 1980s, won the presidency in 1989 on a political platform of peace and adjustment. A true representative of the new business generation, Cristiani convened meetings with the FMLN immediately upon winning the presidency. Although they were not part of the official negotiating team, representatives of Cristiani's business group maintained close relations with the government during negotiations.

To a large extent, the Salvadoran private sector's close relationship with the government and its firm, if informal, grip over the peace agenda explains the absence of more ambitious socioeconomic provisions in the peace agenda. Considered by some as

Colombian companies are involved in peacebuilding and philanthropic activities.

products, played a key role in shifting the balance among sectors of the economy. The strategy was successful inasmuch as it reared many of the leaders of the new business generation who began occupying leadership roles in business associations and in government. In contrast with their parents, members of this new business generation regarded the Salvadoran conflict as more a matter of missed opportunities than one of principles. In fact, conflict imposed a great cost: the destruction of infrastructure, kidnappings, and lost investment all led to the realization that this was too high a price to pay.

Furthermore, conflict interfered with the consolidation of the new economic model dubbed the Washington Consensus. Actively promoted by FUSADES, the model, based

an asset—as it sets verifiable and viable goals—limiting the accords to political and judicial reforms while keeping the socioeconomic part to provisions specifically aimed at the demobilized rebels represented a triumph of the new business elite. With the accords, the private sector got what it wanted: stability at home and new economic rules that enabled them to compete in a new international macroeconomic environment.

The first post-accord years confirmed hopes that the Salvadoran peace agreement was a triumph—at least from a business perspective. Despite increasing crime levels and poverty, Salvadoran business boomed and the economy grew at unprecedented levels. Although much of the growth can be attributed to the remittances of Salvadorans abroad,

the words of a company president still ring true: "The peace accords in El Salvador really have been a success. One of the winners has been the private sector. [...] No matter how costly the peace, it will be cheaper than war."

Things did not go as smoothly in Guatemala—as a Guatemalan banker revealed, "We came out of the frying pan into the fire." In fact, Guatemala's experience with peace has been less than ideal. As in El Salvador, the post-conflict crime rate in Guatemala has risen, but unlike in El Salvador, it has not been compensated for with economic performance. In many ways, Guatemala's lukewarm peace record can be attributed to its private sector's consistently more distant and ambiguous relationship with peace negotiations. In contrast with El Salvador, Guatemalan business exercised less leadership and control over peace negotiations overall. The private sector vetoed key issues during negotiations and implementation of the accords, rather than cooperating with the government to achieve a mutual goal. The resulting relationship between business and peace has contributed to the instability that marks the consolidation of peace in Guatemala.

Different factors explain these differences between the Salvadoran and Guatemalan cases. While both countries underwent economic transformations during the 1980s, this process was less profound in Guatemala—in part due to less U.S. funding for economic remodeling. As a result, the sector in Guatemala most prone to benefit from negotiations gained neither economic nor political predominance, as in El Salvador. This was in addition to the fierce opposition from agrarian interests, which were less weakened than similar interests in El Salvador and thus were more belligerent and effective in vetoing key aspects of the peace process. In fact, opposition from agrarian interests reached the point of filing lawsuits against government negotiators for treason.

There are other, more qualitative differences between the Guatemalan and Salvadoran conflicts that may also explain the disparity in the position of the private sector. The Salvadoran conflict was of shorter duration yet it was more intense than in Guatemala and inflicted great costs to business interests. In Guatemala, in contrast, conflict lingered for decades in the countryside, leading many business people to believe that a negotiated solution was not warranted, as



PHOTO BY GERMAN ENCISO. COURTESY OF EL TIEMPO

Fourteen Colombian business leaders talk with FARC commander Manuel Marulanda "Tirofijo" in San Vicente del Caguan.

the conflict did not sufficiently interfere with economic activity to represent a true obstacle. As a result, fewer Guatemalan business people were committed to ending conflict in order to secure their livelihood.

A third factor relates to the multiple modifications that the Guatemalan peace policy experienced during the reign of three very different governments over the negotiation process. This differed significantly from the tight control that one business-friendly government exerted over negotiations from beginning to end in El Salvador, and that fostered tensions and distrust in the case of Guatemala.

Another key aspect distinguishes the Guatemalan experience. In contrast with El Salvador, the Guatemalan peace accords include a Socioeconomic Accord stipulating a 50-percent tax increase to finance accord implementation. Intense private-sector lobbying tied the increase to an ambitious—and highly unlikely—6% growth rate. Presently, effective private sector resistance to tax increases has required several reschedulings of the accords while Guatemala remains one of the countries with the lowest tax rates in Latin America.

While the Salvadoran peace was largely a business project, and Guatemala's peace has stuck despite business skepticism and resistance, Colombia offers yet another variation on the business-peace relationship. Here, the last round of peace negotiations failed. However, in contrast with previous attempts, business involvement in negotiations has been on the rise. When negotiations were launched by

President Andrés Pastrana, enthusiastic business leaders offered to finance guerrilla members in exchange for a ceasefire. Business representatives participated in meetings with both guerrilla groups—the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)—and were part of the government negotiating team.

In addition, the question of private sector involvement in the conflict as well as peacebuilding has, more than ever, been on the agenda of both companies and associations in Colombia. In contrast with Central America, more Colombian companies have been involved in peacebuilding and philanthropic activities, notwithstanding the events at the negotiating table. Different business-led peace initiatives at the regional and local levels have spawned projects motivated by the belief that the development of conflict-ridden areas will likely bring peace sooner than official negotiations. While most private companies do not invest their own financial resources, but rather serve as intermediaries of international and public funding, the willingness to invest managerial know-how and time may develop into an important private-sector contribution to sub-national development, and possibly, peace.

Different factors explain this business-peace relationship. First, Colombia's economy underwent a process of diversification earlier than those in Central America. As a result, entrenched rural interests—such as those that led most of the opposition in Central America—are comparatively weaker in Colombia while industrial, financial, commercial,

and even an incipient service industry have developed vigorously. In addition, as in pre-negotiation El Salvador, the Colombian conflict is increasingly interfering with economic activity. While many costs associated with conflict were internalized during decades of conflict, an increase in conflict intensity during the past years has affected a growing number of sectors of production. This has solidified the notion that “peace is better business,” as one Colombian executive stated.

This is not a consensual view, however. Shortly before talks broke down in Colombia, business associations convened a national, publicly broadcast meeting to pay homage to the Armed Forces. As in Central America, many Colombian business people have been found to support paramilitary activity to protect their companies and property. After Alvaro Uribe's election, and in light of abundant U.S. funding through Plan Colombia, many in the private-sector hope for a military solution to the Colombian conflict. This may explain their willingness to pay higher taxes to support the military effort, an important contrast with the Central American countries where the availability of other resources prevented governments from exact-

ing taxes from business.

However, ongoing business support of a get-tough policy is not necessarily guaranteed. Already, business associations have anticipated the possibility of transforming exceptional compulsory and government-issued “war bonds” into permanent taxes in order to gain significant results in the counterinsurgency campaign. Given the diverse nature of Colombia's conflict and its lucrative funding source—narcotics—this poses a difficult challenge. Already there are signs that President Uribe's security strategy is not yielding its intended effects: the number of kidnappings is stable while conflict rages on in the countryside and expands to the cities (as most recently witnessed in the bombing of El Nogal, a club closely linked to business interests). Businesses' reservations are likely to increase as the IMF-sponsored fiscal adjustment program promoted by the government imposes greater strain on companies. Meanwhile, business-led peace initiatives are reaching wider audiences with the compelling message that the solution might not be solely of a military nature.

Eventually, it is likely that the pendulum of peace disposition among Colombia's private sector will swing back to favor a nego-

tiated solution to conflict. When it does, as suggested by the Salvadoran and Guatemalan cases, it will be crucial to incorporate the private sector in the negotiations. This inclusion will have advantages and disadvantages; as shown by the Salvadoran case, a closed business front may ensure an efficient transition from conflict to peace. However, this closed front can also impose limits on the agenda that may alienate other actors. In contrast, the Guatemalan case suggests that a divided business community, of which important parts are not involved in the process, can also compromise peace stability. Notably, both cases imply that the whole business community need not be in full support of the peace project—only a critical mass of peace stakeholders is required. This mass is growing in Colombia.

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FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Several Colombian businesses, with foresight and comprehension of their responsibilities, have been spurred by their country's harsh reality to develop, support, and/or finance non-profit organizations specialized in assisting the processes that are being constructed from the base of civil society—foundations.

For example, foundations such as Actuar Bolívar in Cartagena on the Caribbean coast and Alto Magdalena in the Southern Andes of Colombia have been creating methodologies and working with citizens displaced by violence.

The Foundations HOCOL, the non-profit organization of the Hocol Oil company, and the pipeline Oleoducto de Colombia (ODC) try to strengthen grassroots organizations. This focus seeks to strengthen the capacity for mobilization, participation, collective construction, and the quest for an improvement in the quality of life. This effort is complemented with programs for strengthening institutions in which mayors and local or regional governments are trained to improve decision-making and to create spaces for dialogue for a collective construction that ethically includes and benefits everyone.

It is important to stress that these foundations have been working for several years in an isolated fashion in the development of knowledge, methodology and experiences.

Members of Colombian civil society had the opportunity to participate in an academic conference in November 2002, organized at Harvard University by PONSACS (Program on Nonviolent Sanc-

tions and Cultural Survival) and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

To see ourselves from the viewpoint of the academy, to be recognized and to understand ourselves through the experiences of Harvard professors, to be able to reflect on our own experience through those with similar experiences and to share successes and frustrations creates a space that will always be our best reference point for learning.

The results are today a reality. The HOCOL foundation and the Universidad de los Andes have begun a process of documentation of experiences and methodologies to create case studies. In addition, the foundation País Libre is interested in sharing its know-how for the handling of thousands of cases of kidnappings.

The office of the High Commissioner for Peace and Coexistence of the Presidency of the Republic is evaluating the experiences of the School for Democracy and the strengthening of grassroots organizations in order to duplicate the experience in other regions.

The conference at Harvard was only a beginning: we Colombians who had the fortune to participate in the experience in Cambridge will continue to work as a group to generate ideas for the participation of civil society in the progression toward peace.

Ramiro Santa is president of the HOCOL Foundation and a member of the board of directors of the Alto Magdalena, Fundación ODC, País Libre and Corporación Actuar Bolívar Foundations.

The Social Enterprise Knowledge Network

Civil Society: How Can Universities Contribute?

BY ROBERTO GUTIÉRREZ AND JAMES E. AUSTIN

IN COLOMBIA, A WAR-TORN COUNTRY WITH a civil society attempting to address the economic and social marginalization of many of its citizens, one is continually faced with unanswered questions: How does one create or revitalize programs that strike an adequate balance between the social and the economic? How does one ensure that social initiatives have economic viability, and that economic projects obtain positive social impact?

Everyone agrees that Colombia is in a crisis. But the perceptions of this crisis often include negative opinions about several sectors. The private sector is said to be indifferent; the social sector is called opportunistic; and the public sector is accused of being corrupt. Yet these images do not take into account the efforts of many organizations to transform the conditions of exclusion and marginality of a large part of the population. We must urgently support those struggling to alleviate these conditions or face the challenge of opening open new spaces for transformation.

In the context of awakened social awareness, universities can collaborate in several ways. For example, teachers can offer students work opportunities through which they gain valuable practical training and further their personal development. The university also benefits society's overall transformation by strengthening the contributions from leaders and organizations in its immediate environment. Teaching and service are indeed two faces of the same coin—a coin minted by research in different areas of knowledge.

In contemporary societies, where organizations play such an important role, the contributions of business schools, nonprofit management education and public administration schools are increasingly important. In the School of Administration at the Universidad de los Andes, we tackled the forementioned crucial questions through the creation of the Program on Social Initiatives, known by its Spanish acronym as IESO. The following is the story of how this program is being institutionalized in the Universidad de los Andes.

REDIRECTING AND CREATING NEW CAPACITIES

The catalyst that triggered IESO's creation was an invitation to join the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN), a coalition consisting of the Harvard Business School (HBS) and other leading business schools in Latin America. Its mission is "to advance the frontiers of knowledge and practice in social enterprise through collaborative research, shared learning, enhanced teaching, and the strengthening of management education institutions' capabilities to serve their communities." The AVINA Foundation, a SEKN partner, provides matching funds and social enterprise field experience to member schools. All SEKN members work to strengthen their institutions' engagement in the social sector.

Placing a new initiative in a pre-existing agenda required the redirection of faculty attention. We started off with the support of the university rector and with the participation of the Andes Administration School Dean in the Initiative's newly formed Advisory Committee consisting of business and nonprofit sector leaders. We started searching for faculty involvement with the understanding that social concerns are common throughout many disciplines and need to be tackled from different perspectives. It was much more than a matter of creating a new group of specialists. For example, we were looking at the need to study the social impact of specific financial decisions. We had to figure out the transformations influenced by social marketing, and we needed to investigate the effect of innovative strategies that experiment products or services with underprivileged sectors of society. We had to ask ourselves all these questions and many more.

We then faced the challenge of arousing interest among faculty and getting their commitments to participate in a socially-oriented program. Because it's very easy for one to continue with routine and simply disregard any unnecessary changes, we sought to establish an emotional connection and foment

intellectual interest in our program. For example, we invited outstanding business and social leaders to the university. We took a close look at what the leaders needed, and tried to match HBS with faculty interests to determine our research and service projects. During the two first years of the program, we undertook four case studies of collaboration between companies in the private sector and social sector organizations. Furthermore, we defined nine service projects in which we could work with both business and social leaders.

Once the plan for the first two years of the Program on Social Initiatives was elaborated, work began with each one of our stakeholders. We informed several professors about our work, and invited them to participate in the Program's research or service projects. We gave some professors pedagogical cases, academic articles, or syllabi for certain courses that we believed could be of interest to them, extracted from material we had received from the HBS Initiative on Social Enterprise. Although we were invited a few times to discuss cases like Habitat for Humanity or The Cleveland Turnaround in the courses coordinated by these professors, the North American material awoke little enthusiasm. However, there was great enthusiasm for visits by 21 Colombian social leaders from every corner of the country. They have visited more than 60 courses during the past year and a half.

Collaboration between business and social leaders has been central to the IESO program because we believe in the balance between the economic and the social: economic projects with a positive social impact and social projects with economic viability. Many of these leaders have shown us corporate social responsibility practices and social undertakings that were so valuable that we have begun to document them. We have also created informal and formal spaces for dialogue about these important experiences.

In the University's programs for continuing education for executives, we have participated in the program for company

WHEN THE DISCIPLE IS READY

A University Student's Testimony About Work With Street Vendors

Not too long ago a street vendor told me he was meeting with other colleagues and with several Universidad de los Andes professors to see how difficulties in their trade could be overcome. I attended a pair of these meetings in which a noticeable general skepticism permeated. I later decided to undertake a "guided project" to study some of the coexistence processes within the *Friends of the Andes* group, discussing how to legitimate the work of selling products and working on the street in the informal sector. Regardless of internal divisions, I no longer found the earlier skepticism and found their bonds to be much tighter. It was always clear to me that my role there could not be that of a protagonist, but rather of a facilitator and witness of what they were experiencing. I learned that it is not efficient for an external agent to decide which road to take. The internal logic of an organization differs greatly from how one thinks it should function. In this sense, my relationship with the *Friends of the Andes* was a small reality check since some of their achievements were realized by means of a logic that, for me, was not ideal. This is a great lesson which has allowed me to work with the *Friends of the Andes*. In the universities, it is assumed that we are the ones who "know" and are able to understand the world, and for that reason we ought to be the ones who correct the errors that surround us. In other words, we are taught to intervene. I have learned that there are other methods of learning—beyond those of pure intellectualism—that are equally valid and actually more appropriate at times to resolve certain problems. If we assume this responsibility of facilitators, and not of supervisors, we can be more useful in these types of activities.

Having completed my project, I distanced myself from the group and I heard of some problems that practically dissolved the organization. Recently, however, I accompanied the street vendors to a meeting. At the last session, I still perceived some of the old disagreements. Nevertheless, in a matter of seconds, everyone decided to put together a collection to help one of the vendors who was in very bad health. In the end, we all left with our backs a little straighter, knowing that little by little, the street vendors were learning to provide for themselves, not because someone from the Andes has shown them how and why to do it, but rather because they themselves have decided to do so.

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presidents, in a corporate program and in the program for development of export capacity for small- and medium-sized businesses. In these three programs, more than sixty high-level executives have focused on observing some of the practices of corporate social responsibility. We have also had the opportunity to make joint presentations with business leaders to different audiences.

Beginning the first semester of 2002, undergraduate students had the opportunity to participate in a course on "Innovative and Responsible Management" or to become involved in a project on "Consulting for Social Enterprises." In the latter, we created groups in which a social enterprise representative and one or two students worked together with a professional consultant. In addition, last year

Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students had the opportunity to take the elective "Business Contributions in Society." Nine undergraduate and graduate students decided to write their theses on social undertakings, and three alumni volunteer as advisors participated in the "Consulting for Social Enterprises" project. We have been able to generate certain interest among students by creating new courses and using participant-centered learning approaches.

Professors, students, leaders, organizations and trade associations have been intimately involved with the process of constructing IESO. The prestige of the Universidad de los Andes in the Colombian milieu, and academic and financial endorsement from abroad helped the Initiative get off the ground. There-

after, we have been able to bring the academic environment closer to enlightening practical experiences and to accept interesting projects. In the university setting, the talent and energy of students to carry out such projects is as important as the ideas themselves. When a necessity exists, and leaders approach the university, we look to the students to collaborate in the context of classwork or thesis projects. The relative success of the invitation for commitment by the students pressures professors to participate.

Over time, we have begun creating an identity within and outside the university. Publicizing our initiative accomplishes at least two purposes: (1) It communicates our accomplishments to attract an organization in need of help, and (2) it motivates the participation of those who can provide that help. An online bi-monthly newsletter and a website have laid the groundwork for future publications and videos, including collaboration with mass media.

Outside interest groups can become involved in a variety of ways, ranging from membership in the IESO Advisory Committee to the consideration of which type of products and services we should offer to ensure the inclusion of diverse groups. In addition to the research and service projects mentioned above, our support of social leaders has included the elaboration of business plans for promising ideas and workshops to strengthen the boards of directors of nonprofit organizations. In addition to working with leaders and their organizations, we have also worked with the public sector and with a couple of trade associations. The exceptional examples of sustainability of some of the social organizations contrast with the great administrative necessities of the majority. The petitions for support that come to the university are increasing proportionally to the degree that the cost of service is defrayed by Colombian and international foundations.

Our participation in SEKN's joint research project served to engage us deeply in the study of collaborations between nonprofit organizations and business in Colombia. But it also extended our borders, allowing us to share experiences with other SEKN member countries—Argentina, Brazil, Central America, Chile, and Mexico. This deepened our learning and ability to share with other institutions and networks in Colombia.

In addition to our initial participation in the SEKN, we have collaborated in the cre-

ation of three Colombian networks. One is a network of universities committed to ethics and social responsibility. A second network is made up of different organizations interested in social development leadership. Yet another network brings together peace and development initiatives.

TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALIZATION

In Colombian society, there are countless opportunities to make a contribution. We have just described the way in which the Administration School at the Universidad de los Andes faced the challenges of constructing a strategy that increases the impact of efforts to confront certain social problems.

When some professors redirected their energy toward social issues, a distinct organizational structure evolved, followed by the

development of new abilities in several of our interest groups. The SEKN network has facilitated the entrepreneurial activity of the Colombian Program on Social Initiatives. IESO's creation and its diverse working groups guarantee, in the near future, the collaboration of researchers and students with dedicated business and social leaders. The products and services generated by the Program already have had a positive impact on the work of dozens of social entrepreneurs and in the life of their communities. Moreover, these efforts are a fountain of knowledge for others. Is this not the vocation of a university?

Roberto Gutiérrez, Ph.D., is the director of the Program on Social Initiatives in the School of Administration at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia.

Along with his interests in educational settings, his present research and publications focus on the ways in which collaboration between private and social sectors helps to solve social problems. James E. Austin is the Snider Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School. A member of the DRCLAS Executive Committee, he now serves as the Chair of the HBS Initiative on Social Enterprise. An author of 16 books, dozens of articles and more than a hundred case studies on business and nonprofit organizations, Austin's most recent book is The Collaboration Challenge: How Nonprofits and Businesses Succeed Through Strategic Alliances (Jossey-Bass Publishers). For more information on IESO, see <<http://administracion.uniandes.edu.colieso>>.

THE COLOMBIAN COLLOQUIUM

A SHORT HISTORY

The long-standing Colombian crisis has sparked a growing interest within the U.S.-based academic community. The realization as to the complexity of the Colombian crisis has been accompanied by a growing need to understand the diverse dynamics and challenges faced by Colombia today.

In this context, Colombian graduate students in the Boston area founded the Colombian Colloquium in 1997. The Colloquium's main objectives have been to link the Colombian community in the Boston area with the Harvard academic community; to learn more about the country by taking advantage of the interdisciplinary exchanges with colleagues and guests; and to contribute to the formation and strengthening of a Colombian academic community while at Harvard and other Boston schools.

In biweekly meetings, Colombians and other residents in the Boston area have had the opportunity to attend a series of talks to stimulate discussion on a variety of topics related to Colombia. A wide variety of Colombian and non-Colombian public figures and academic experts have been invited to discuss diverse issues. From the beginning, a conscious effort was made to choose interdisciplinary topics. Talks have covered a wide scope of approaches, including Colombian history, ecological concerns, epidemiology of Colombian violence, questions of territorial decentralization, indigenous rights, Colombian cinema, and issues facing successful peace negotiations.

This year the Colloquium will complete six years of operations and, to the extent of our knowledge, is the only permanent forum about Colombia in the U.S. It has attracted successive generations of students and other Colombians in Boston and elsewhere and has helped those interested in Colombia gain a space for critical, interdisciplinary and open dialogue on political, economic, social and cultural issues related to Colombia, a possibility which is not offered in any class or student organization at Harvard or elsewhere.

In addition to talks, the Colombian Graduate Students worked very closely with Colboston, an informal organization of Colombians and Colombianists resident in the Boston area. Through Colboston's extensive e-mail network, the Colombian Graduate Students at Harvard have reached out into the community. The Colloquium also developed ties to the Colombian consulate in Boston, which has supported several events.

The Colloquium has had effects in two directions. On the one hand, the exchange of ideas has provided opportunities for Colombian policy makers, academics and other professionals to learn from each other and from specialists on different topics relevant to Colombia while studying and living in Boston. Upon returning to Colombia, they bring this knowledge with them. On the other hand, the Colloquium has broadened the Colombian presence in Boston, both academically and culturally.

Financial support from DRCLAS and the MIT Colombian Student Association has helped consolidate the colloquium. This has enabled Colloquium organizers to invite scholars from different parts of the U.S. and even from abroad. In addition, several faculty members have provided support.

Looking forward, the colloquium will continue its current efforts to be a space for discussion for those interested in Colombia; to be a place of gathering and support for students working on Colombia; to collaborate with other organizations and universities in order to broaden its scope and activities; and, finally, to become a place for inspiration for more faculty and academics to do work and research in Colombia.

For information about the Colombian Colloquium, please contact <Claudia_Pineda@gse.harvard.edu>.

Francisco Ortega, Liliana Obregón, Angelika Rettberg, Enrique Chaux, and Claudia Pineda represent three generations of the Colombian Colloquium.

The National Conciliation Commission

A Hope for Peace

BY ALVARO E. CAMPOS

REMEMBER IT CLEARLY. I PICKED UP the phone at Flota Mercante Gran-colombiana, a soon-to-be liquidated Colombian shipping line where I served as an external legal advisor. On the other line was human rights advocate Ernesto Borda, who asked me if I wanted to help in a mission to verify the first-ever agreement reached between the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN). It was October 25, 1997.

Only a few days before, I had been talking with Monsignor Alberto Giraldo about the possibility of replacing my good friend Miguel Ceballos as Executive Secretary to the National Conciliation Commission. I said yes to Borda immediately—I was glad to grab the chance to move away from the cold and austere offices of the now vanishing ocean fleet—and went off, with my wife's and parents' blessing, to the first "baptism of fire" in my new position as secretary of the National Conciliation Commission.

The agreement I was to verify involved the release of three Organization of American States electoral observers kidnapped by guerrillas as they were serving as witnesses to the proper conduct of parliamentary elections in remote municipalities of eastern Antioquia, a beautiful bucolic region where most of Colombia's hydro-electric power is generated. The verification commission was to ensure that both guerrilla and army forces would not engage in "offensive military operations" during the liberation process.

The verification commission was headed by Monsignor Alberto Giraldo Jaramillo, the Archbishop of Medellín and then President of the Episcopal Conference and of the National Conciliation Commission, and by OAS Colombia Director Félix Palma. Its members included representatives of the National Conciliation Commission, including myself, the parish priests of Granada and Cocorná, and some of the non-Colombian OAS officials who had been observers to the recent October 1997 parliamentary elections, and whose colleagues had been abducted.

The "verifiers" organized ourselves under Borda's leadership in the field in the town of Granada—which would be completely destroyed in 2001 by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas—and set out for four days to patrol the roads and mountains of the region, from Cocorná and La Piñuela to San Luis in the Bogotá-Medellín Highway, San Carlos and San Francisco. The latter town had already been attacked

To pursue its goals, the Commission set out in its early stages to propose the foundations and guidelines for a *national permanent peace policy*, which would congregate the wills of all sectors and regions of Colombian society under a common understanding of what such a policy means and what it seeks to achieve. For this, the Commission engaged in a wide ranging promotion of its document proposal, "Towards

The fifteen members of the National Conciliation Commission are prominent, generous Colombians from all sectors of society.

once by ELN bombs in 1997, and would be flattened by the same guerrillas in 2001. While we patrolled these beleaguered towns, high level arrangements were being made for the liberation of the captives in the town of Santa Ana.

The National Conciliation Commission was created by the President of the Colombian Episcopal Conference on August 4, 1995, as an autonomous and independent entity with the fundamental objective of generating conditions of trust between the government and the various insurgent movements in order to reach a negotiated political solution to the Colombian armed conflict. The Commission, which aims to create confidence in and build consensus among society, devises and proposes formulas to overcome the difficulties that obstruct the concurrence of the conflicting parties, and motivates society to participate in the construction of peace.

The fifteen members of the Commission, led today by its founder Cardinal Pedro Rubiano Sáenz, Archbishop of Bogotá and current President of the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church, are prominent Colombians summoned by Sáenz from all sectors of society; former Ministers of State, trade unionists, journalists, businessmen and university scholars are all brought together to serve their country in the quest for peace.

the Shaping of a National Permanent Peace Policy," which has been the subject of national discussion, review and improvement by Colombian society and has also elicited reflections and comments from the insurgent groups.

A fundamental pillar of this policy is the conviction that, in order to achieve genuine and lasting peace, Colombia requires a negotiated solution to the armed conflict as well as the active participation of its civil society in building the groundwork for a Nation in which peace is supported by equality and social justice. Civil society's agenda for peace is therefore broad and work is just beginning.

Another element of the policy is the defense and promotion of human rights, and the application of principles of international humanitarian law to non-international conflicts, as proclaimed in Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol II. The Colombian government has ratified both the conventions and their protocol, but the Commission has insisted that Article 3 is imperative to all parties to the conflict, and not only for government forces to observe. In 1998 the Commission, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and *Universidad Javeriana* produced and presented a proposal for a humanitarian agreement, incorporating the principles

and rules of humanitarian law into a comprehensive document to be negotiated and signed by the government and armed groups as a first, confidence-building phase in the road towards peace negotiations.

With its work, the National Conciliation Commission has obtained the confidence of the parties and of Colombian society. State officials have expressed such confidence in the Commission that they have sought it to mediate with the guerrillas. The guerrillas have also expressed in various ways, including press releases and communiqués, their confidence in the National Conciliation Commission and the acknowledgment of its validity as a counterpart in peace and humanitarian dialogue. Former Commission President Monsignor Giraldo Jaramillo was an active member of the negotiation table during the peace process between 1998 and 2002, and despite the failure of the talks on February 20, 2002, he still maintains a high degree of trust from left and right-wing illegal armed movements.

The international community has also made encouraging and meaningful gestures of trust and confidence towards the Commission, and has commended its work as one that creates hope in achieving a politi-

cal solution to the Colombian conflict. Also of relevance has been the support received by the Commission by the Holy See, various Episcopal Conferences around the world, the World Council of Churches, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, the United Nations, the OAS, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international organizations, as well as the constant encouragement and assistance from ambassadors accredited in Colombia.

The Commission continues to be engaged in seeking peace and creating the necessary conditions for negotiations. Today three of its members—former Minister of Labor and social and labor activist Angelino Garzón, Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro, Archbishop of Tunja and Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference, and Father Darío Echeverry, General Secretary of the Commission—constitute the Facilitation Commission set up in January 2003 to seek a humanitarian agreement between the government and the FARC. They and other Commission members are also involved in the Civil Commission to Facilitate the Dialogue with ELN. Furthermore, the Commission is providing support to members of the Catholic Church who are involved in

the government's efforts to achieve a peace settlement with right-wing paramilitary organizations.

In addition to that, since early 2002, the Commission has been a member of the Harvard-Colombia Initiative and is committed to advancing this project as one of its main objectives for the coming years. This initiative, together with its plans to create and sponsor Regional Conciliation Commissions, constitute its strategy to renew its efforts to promote and strengthen the participation of Colombian civil society in the political solution of the Colombian armed conflict.

The National Conciliation Commission, with the support and blessing of the Church, will not falter in its efforts to seek peace and reconciliation among Colombians and will continue to be a true instrument of hope for peace in Colombia.

Alvaro E. Campos is Executive Secretary to the National Conciliation Commission in Colombia. He is also a member of the Human Rights and International Relations Institute at Universidad Javeriana and has been a professor and lecturer at the same university in the School of Political Science and International Relations.

FUNDACIÓN SOCIAL

THOUGHTS AGAINST THE BULLETS

Colombia—well you all know the statistics are quite famous: if in the United States the same number of homicides were to be proportionally committed as in Colombia, 1.5 million people per year would be dying rather than 28,000 people! In our country, 10 tragedies, each equivalent in loss to September 11th, are produced each year. How can Harvard help in a genocide of this magnitude? With that question in mind, I came to Harvard to participate in a dialogue with a group of world-renowned professors.

As a graduate student in the social sciences (philosophy, history, and economics), I have been involved with poor neighborhoods since I first visited one at age 11—I have never stopped going back. For the past 22 years, I've been working in the social service area of a Colombian non-governmental organization called "Fundación Social" that strives to provide support in the struggle to overcome poverty and violence. We provide ways to create social organizations, education for civilians, work training, and an improvement in quality of life—all through different processes of Developmental Participatory Strategizing and Planning. These programs are active throughout Colombia.

With this extensive experience, one might ask why I would go to this conference at Harvard. It is because I think that the Har-

vard academia has put forth its best effort to become more involved in solving the problems of poverty and violence in various parts of the world. From this effort, we get important lessons and valuable analytical and procedural modules. This prompted me to get involved with the Harvard-Colombia dialogue, which hopefully will become an ongoing one. Of course it must be noted that the Colombian reality, in many cases, goes beyond analytical efforts and action-taking proposals—this constitutes a great opportunity for academia. If solutions for some of Colombia's problems are found, then significant advancements will be made in the social sciences, and above all, in the process of humanizing the entire planet. This monumental mess that we have created of poverty, guerrillas, paramilitaries, corruption, social indiscipline and drug trafficking—constituting a painful black hole that takes a toll of 30,000 dead people every year—is not easy to untangle. We need resources but we also need ideas and solidarity. From Harvard we especially hope to receive the latter two.

Rodrigo Quintero has held a variety of roles in community and micro-enterprise projects within the Fundación Social, a diverse not-for-profit organization of the Society of Jesus.



Women Waging Peace

A Civil Society Initiative

BY MARTHA QUINTERO, ROCÍO PINEDO, ROSA E. SALAMANCA, MARTHA E. SEGURA, NANCY TAPIAS, AND PILAR HERNÁNDEZ

COLOMBIA'S HISTORY OF POLITICAL AND social violence goes back about 50 years, weakening its institutions and killing its children. Four percent of the Colombian population has died in the domestic armed conflict. Every day, it becomes more and more necessary to find a political solution—however, political negotiations have consistently failed since 1982.

The solution to this 50-year old problem of intense and debasing violence is difficult, slow and complex. The creation of a new model of State that is universally acceptable and respected takes time and requires sacrifices and concessions by all sides. Mistrust, impatience and the lack of solidarity and commitment by civil society to reach a social and political consensus must be overcome. Different corporate and individual interests must be put aside to establish rules that are based on the idea of "justice as equity," to use the phrase of John Rawls. This consensus must be broad enough to encompass different social interests and precise enough to overcome the devastating effects of violence, drug trafficking and subversion through the creation of a socially-conscious State grounded in political responsibility.

The peace movement, in particular the women's movement for peace, is concerned about the sense of defenselessness created in the face of the degradation and uncertainty caused by the new manifestations and upsurge of the conflict in Colombia.

What do we Colombian women have to say as we resist seeing and living passively in this situation?

Among many other initiatives of civil society, we Colombian women who form part of Women Waging Peace have been working in the construction of social capital and spaces of reconciliation. We are involved with support for the underprivileged, especially female victims of the conflict, on the regional, national and international levels.

We work from different spheres, including universities, foundations, non-governmental organizations and State entities.

We speak and act out to stop this war from continuing; the search for fair solutions is an integral part of resolving the multi-polar conflict we are experiencing. Although we women come from different viewpoints—the movement is not homogeneous nor do we pretend it is—we demonstrate together to ask for a ceasefire and a constructive dialogue toward peace. We support the following ideals:

- Respect for human rights by the armed actors in the conflict.
- No to the forced recruitment of our sons and daughters.
- Yes to the respect for indigenous women, for their traditions and autonomy.
- Yes to the respect for women of African descent, in whose lands battles are fought for territorial control.
- No to violence among families and to the increase of these cases because of the conflict and the use of women as conquests of war.

In the specific case of indigenous women, the gravity of the situation has not been sufficiently documented. The principal reasons for this lack of knowledge are:

- Indigenous people are generally found in remote areas not easily accessed and the women do not have the means to go out to information centers.
- In a similar fashion, there are cultural problems that hinder understanding, including language and customs.
- The internal regulations of the indigenous people do not always permit the women to find the space in which to present their denunciations. However, the most frequent type of violations found at present, according to research and testimonies, are: the persecution of mothers because their children belong to the guerrillas; the paramilitary, or government forces; forced recruitment and use of

poor girls as messengers and lookouts; forced displacement; sexual violence; widowhood; intrafamily violence; increased alcoholism; increased unemployment, especially in women's tasks, and a worsening of economic necessities.

Here are their voices:

We feel limited, and there is no freedom. We cannot do our traditional work in the night because if they see a group gathering, they think we are planning something against them. If some group or another comes and asks for food or water, the group on the opposing side accuses us of being "collaborators." This situation causes us much grief and many losses. We women and our people want to live in harmony with nature and to perform their traditional work that our fathers and mothers have always done. We want to be respected. We don't want this war. Many women don't even understand what is happening and why strange people come to our lands to order us around. What is it that we owe them? It is like a new conquest. How many more people do we have to lose before they respect us? We are now just a few indigenous people in this country; do they want to see not a single one left?

We take advantage of this published space to ask the international public to understand that the Colombian tragedy is not a simple problem of drug trafficking or of violence. It is a war with deep roots of discrimination and inequality. It is vital for all of us—men and women—to stop the war through the instrument of negotiation. And at the same time, we clamor for the release of all the kidnap victims and for peace in the land. This is what we women want, we women who do not want to lose one more son or daughter to the war.

Martha Quintero, Rocío Pinedo, Rosa E. Salamanca, Martha E. Segura, Nancy Tapias and Pilar Hernández are members of Women Waging Peace in Colombia.

Woman protesting the kidnapping of a bishop

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Bogotá Libraries

Temples of Culture in the Middle of Poverty

BY MARGARITA MARTINEZ

LAST YEAR, 9-YEAR-OLD JONATHAN HUERTAS AND HIS THREE younger siblings spent their vacation indoors watching television—their mother was too afraid to let them play in the streets of their impoverished Bogotá neighborhood.

This year, instead of playing with their soccer ball on the dirt floors of their one-room house or watching TV, the brothers spent everyday in the library, a modern temple of culture.

“Coming here is the best part of the day,” said Jonathan while he played chess and waited for his turn to use the computer—which he mastered fast, considering that he had never before had access to one.

Nearby, Andrés, his 8-year-old brother, read a lavishly designed children’s book out loud while his mother discreetly breast-fed her baby daughter in a window seat in a room full of light.

Boys and girls talked about chess, computers and over all this, you could hear the whispers of the little ones who were softly reading their first words on whale or bear-shaped giant seat cushions.

“The kids are happier here, they do whatever I say so they can come here as soon as possible,” said their mother, Luz María, who occasionally works as a maid to provide her family with extra income. Her husband sells wood knick-knacks on the streets for a living. There is not a single book in the house.

During the inauguration of the \$10 million library, Bogotá mayor Antanas Mockus declared, “Here there is a conflict that the protagonists say is caused by social injustice. Public projects like these

generate equality. The books are arms that open the way.”

The El Tintal library, one of three recently opened in poor and middle-class Bogotá neighborhoods, is part of the city government’s ambitious plan to improve urban life and encourage education and outdoor activity. The neighborhood associations are requesting activities, and there’s a group called “youth in action” and another called “grandparents’ corner,” not to mention opera performances, movie programs and workshops in computers and theatre.

City Hall expects the three new libraries to be receiving 12,000 visitors daily this year. A fourth library, the main one in the city, already receives 9,000 visitors a day, more than the National Library of Paris or the main public library in New York City.

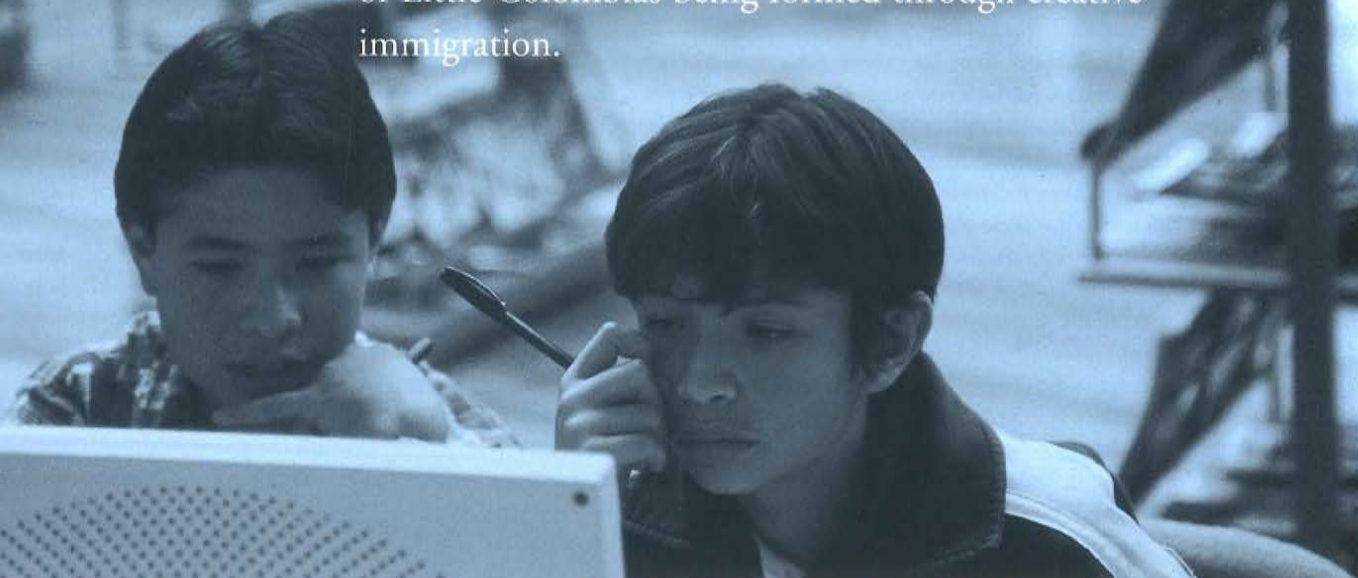
“I see the library as a piece of a jigsaw puzzle showing a different way of life, one more civilized where what counts is to read, to be outdoors—not to buy and have material things,” said Enrique Peñalosa, the former Bogotá mayor who envisioned and constructed the libraries.

Peñalosa, who left office a year ago, and Mockus are considered the leaders behind an incredible transformation of the city. The results are even more impressive given the violent conflict.

Peñalosa said he insisted that the buildings, constructed by some of the best architects in the country, be spectacular urban icons, just like the cathedrals of the Middle Ages—and definitely more aesthetically pleasing and welcoming than shopping malls.

“There was an emphasis on not only that the libraries were func-

When one thinks of Colombia, one often thinks of violence and civil strife. But there is another Colombia too: a world of art and literature and film, a world of black and indigenous people, and a growing landscape of Little Colombias being formed through creative immigration.



Left: The outside of the Barco library; right: using computers at the library

tional, but also that they had to be majestic, in homage to every child, every citizen who would enter there," said Peñalosa, now a visiting scholar at New York University.

Bogotá's leaders, however, realize they're facing an uphill battle. After all, it is the capital of Latin America's only country in the middle of a war. And new parks and libraries can only go so far toward solving the country's woes.

In Bogotá, an average of 41 people seeking refuge arrive in the city every day, fleeing the civil war simmering in the countryside. In every corner of the city there are displaced people carrying heart-breaking banners asking for money, with several children at their side.

Terrorism showed its face in a deadly attack on February 7, 2002, that killed 36 people in an exclusive social club in northern Bogotá—evidence that the war, largely fought in rural areas, is creeping into Colombia's cities.

But still, Bogotá's turnaround is impressive. Murder rates have consistently gone down to levels below other Latin American capitals. Also, the quality of life—if not the average income—has improved dramatically; as a result, the United Nations has begun to export the Bogotá model to other third-world cities.

Bogotá's network of libraries has received international recognition. Last year they won the Access to Learning Award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which granted them one million dollars to be used to improve the computer network and to fund programs in computer training.

"Bogotá's new libraries match up with the best in the world, meeting community demands and providing excellent access to information and materials," said Barbara J. Ford, director of the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois. "With the commitment we have seen, they are

on the way to developing a network of strong libraries."

Miguel Angel Clavijo, director of the library in Jonathan's neighborhood, said he's had no trouble with violence since the library opened in mid-2001.

"Maybe it's the combination of beauty and functionality... that has prevented any problems," he said.

City Hall expects that, by the end of the year, the three new libraries will be receiving 12,000 visitors a day. A fourth library, the main one in the city, already receives 9,000 visitors a day, more than the National Library of Paris or the main public library in New York City.

The library frequented by Jonathan, which sits on top of what used to be a garbage recycling plant, draws more than readers. It has become a neighborhood meeting place. While Jonathan's mother chats with another mother about the difficulties of breast-feeding, two men talk in the corner about their troubles finding a job. Jonathan and Andrés meet friends and cousins.

But above all, the library provides support and the new civic environment necessary for children with limited resources to blossom and perhaps become the city's next leaders.

"In a few years, we will have the next (Colombian nobel laureate) Gabriel García Márquez coming out of these libraries," Peñalosa said. "But over all, happier children just make better societies."

Jonathan might have the last say. Everyday, the eager nine-year-old begs his mother to take him the four blocks from his two-room home to the new El Tintal library. It is too dangerous, his mother believes, to walk alone.

Margarita Martínez, a graduate of Columbia Journalism School and Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs, works for the Associated Press in Bogotá.

At the Movies

Colombian Film: A Tentative Renaissance?

BY CLAUDIA MEJÍA

IN 1993, COLOMBIANS WERE NOT UNUSED TO SEEING PRESIDENT César Gaviria on national television giving the latest reports on the wars on drugs and against the guerrillas. This time, though, the President had something else in mind. He was appearing in a commercial for *La Estrategia del Caracol* (*The Strategy of the Snail*), the latest film from well-known Colombian director Sergio Cabrera. The President's appeal worked. For the first time, Colombians turned out en masse to see a nationally-produced film, quickly making the movie a major box-office success. The domestic success of Cabrera's film followed the first-ever selection of a Colombian film to the Cannes Film Festival in 1990, Víctor Gaviria's *Rodrigo D.* Many believed the Colombian film industry was on the road to a bright new future.

Colombia, with Latin America's third largest population, hosts major film festivals like those in Cartagena and Bogotá. It has produced internationally acclaimed directors and its film industry has periodically received state support. Nevertheless, technical limitations, monetary constraints, uneven production quality, and a lack of support in the domestic market historically have plagued the industry.

The Colombian film industry thus far has failed to reach maturity and dynamism. Despite the notable successes of the early nineties, by 1994 we find Cabrera himself confessing to the press that "Colombian cinema does not exist." Today, almost ten years later, do these words hold true?

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The optimistic outlook of the early 1990s was not a new phenomenon but part of a pattern of such periods throughout the last century. At the beginning of the 20th century, two Italians—the Di Domenico brothers, pioneers of the Colombian cinema—confidently proclaimed that "cinema production in Colombia is as easy as anywhere else in the world." During the next three decades, the Di Domenicos and other Colombians created production companies throughout the country with high hopes, but their successes were ephemeral. In an environment that lacked sufficient funds, technical support and state aid, these companies quickly ended up bankrupt with little to show for their expectations. In reality, by the end of the 1920s, the Colombian film industry no longer existed and *Cine Colombia*, the one successful company that had emerged during the decade, was dedicated solely to importing and distributing foreign movies rather than supporting local production. The arrival of sound greatly widened the gap between limited amateur domestic productions and more sophisticated movies coming from abroad. Indeed, it was not until 1941, almost two decades after the arrival of sound to the movies, that the first Colombian talking feature film was produced.

During the next decades, all efforts made to recover the Colombian film industry were in vain. Only in the 1970s, when the state began to finance cinematographic productions in the country, did the optimism rise again. A surcharge law (*ley de sobreprecio*) came into effect in 1971 to support the production of short films through

an increase in movie ticket prices. The law also provided for the exhibition of a domestically produced short film alongside every feature presentation. The production of short films went into overdrive, and many young directors were able to find a forum for their work, though the general quality of the shorts was not high.

Around the same time, a new wave of filmmakers began to spring up around the country independent of the state-sponsored industry. This younger generation, pioneered by Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, started to produce highly critical documentaries about Colombia's social and political situation. Others, including Víctor Gaviria, worked on low budget experimental productions using super-8 and 16-millimeter film. And as feminist consciousness emerged in the country, *Cine mujer* (Women's Cinema) was created as a feminist media collective promoting awareness of the needs



and demands of Colombian women, later evolving into a successful independent production company.

At the end of the 1970s, the state-owned company FOCINE (*Compañía de fomento cinematográfico*), was founded to spur the production of feature films. Over a decade, FOCINE financed and co-produced several films, yet despite some significant successes proved to be an extremely unprofitable and inefficient institution. FOCINE did not withstand the first round of privatizations that swept the Colombian economy during the early 1990s.

THE INDUSTRY TODAY

Colombia's state-sponsored cinema died with FOCINE, and new initiatives were desperately needed if the Colombian film industry was to regain life. The impetus came from independent film producers, young and old, and their desire to continue creating new films dealing with the rapidly deteriorating socio-political reality of life in the country. Marta Rodríguez, who has been making documentaries in Colombia for the past 30 years, is convinced of the vitality of the documentary movement, citing the emergence of two new groups of young video producers in Medellín and Cali. The work of this "narcotrafic generation," as Rodríguez calls them, gravitates toward the realities of inner-city violence in present-day Colombia. Their videos focus on the death, kidnappings and generalized violence that afflict modern Colombia.

Additional initiatives are now shaping and enriching Colombia's filmmaking. These endeavors are creating opportunities for the community to reflect upon its cultural identity and social reality through films. Daniel Piñakué, a former guerrilla turned documentary and television filmmaker, encourages indigenous communities to use

audiovisual media to portray their own communities and leave historical evidence of their present lives. Indigenous communities from the interior have begun to make documentaries, especially in digital format, through their own foundation *Sol y Tierra* (Sun and Land). Likewise, Catalina Villar, a Colombian filmmaker living in France, has worked on another significant project since 2000: *Talleres Varan en Colombia*. Collaborating with the French embassy in Colombia and the Colombian Ministry of Culture, the project has been running film workshops for a new generation of young filmmakers. The participants in these workshops have started to produce excellent pieces that are now distributed both locally and abroad.

Colombian filmmakers have also found useful venues for their work in new domestic film festivals. One example is the annual Santa Fe de Antioquia video and film festival, which had its third exhibi-

New endeavors are creating opportunities for the community to reflect upon its cultural identity and social reality through films.

tion, entitled *Colombian Cinema, Memory and Oblivion*, in December 2002. This festival also engaged the community, running several open workshops on film production and appreciation. In addition, for the past four years *Alados* (Association of Documentary Producers of Colombia) has been organizing an international documentary show, *Muestra Internacional Documental*, and this year *Monogotary*, a Colombian cinema distribution company, is organizing their second documentary festival, *Toma Cinco* (Take Five).

Television has become another important medium for the dispersion of new productions. University-owned, regional and national channels have become an open forum to exhibit new documentaries produced in the country, offering filmmakers from indigenous and other ethnic minority populations slots to present their productions. Very significantly, the Ministry of Culture and the national channel *Señal Colombia* created a miniseries, *Diálogos de Nación* (National Dialogues), that deals with a variety of contemporary national issues, and an educational series about film appreciation, *Imágenes en Movimiento* (Images in Movement).

While all these efforts, just a sample of what Colombia is producing today, are a very encouraging sign that film production is still alive in the country, in terms of production quality and quantity there remain huge roadblocks to the Colombian film industry attaining its potential. Marta Rodríguez points out that despite this moment of great creativity in Colombia, state support is still much needed, as lack of resources has limited production: "There is a movement, but we are far from producing what we should be producing in a moment of crisis," she explains. State support for filmmaking is actually declining at



Left: Lisandro Duque, the director of the film "Los niños invisibles"; above: Sergio Cabrera filming "La estrategia del Caracol"

ALL PHOTOS (left spread) COURTESY OF EL ESPECTADOR

present. The cinematography office of the Ministry of Culture offers less support. Where there used to be four or five awards to assist in the production of documentaries, now there is only one. This, Rodríguez concludes, points to veiled censorship by the government, which offers no economic support to projects that deal with thorny issues such as internal displacement or massacres.

To Lisandro Duque, who has been making films in and about Colombia for many years, the situation is stark: "Over the last few years there has been the appearance of high levels of productivity in Colombia, but this is just that, appearances. On average there have been one and a half productions each year. We are still waiting for dozens of young producers to wrap up projects they began five or six years ago. Last year, people were saying that there were 18 movies produced, yet nobody said that they began being filmed almost six years ago."

According to Duque, producing a film in Colombia now is a quixotic activity. "If you get support from the Ministry of Culture, you might expect to receive close to \$60,000, compared to the \$150,000 we used to receive two years ago. Then you have to go to *Ibermedia*, the only international organization that is funding anything these days. There you might expect to get a reasonable loan of around \$170,000. For the rest, you have to renounce your salary as scriptwriter, movie director, and executive producer. You are just gambling that the movie will break even and then produce some extra money to cover the investments." The completion of a film isn't the final challenge for Colombian filmmakers, who

face considerable challenges distributing their work because, as Duque explains, the cinematographic division of the Ministry of Culture has no money for distribution. Duque's frustration with the situation is almost tangible and he bemoans the fact that "there are several movies that could not be taken overseas for distribution, they are just briefly exhibited locally and that is it."

PROSPECTS

The most recent government attempt to help the Colombian film industry began in 1997 with the approval of the *Ley General de Cultura* (General Culture Law). This law created a new entity, *Proimágenes en Movimiento*, that united the efforts of the public and private sectors to encourage and facilitate Colombian film production. But the founding of *Proimágenes* coincided with the worst economic depression ever to hit the country and has yet to be the engine that will drive the Colombian film industry into the future.

According to special projects director Andrés Bayona, *Proimágenes* is not yet in a position to support any new productions. Though hampered by a lack of resources, they are striving to market Colombian movies by putting together a catalog of films distributed both in the country and abroad and producing a virtual bulletin with the latest Colombian film industry news. They are also focusing on distributing a selection of Colombian movies called the *Maleta Itinerante* (*Itinerant Suitcase*) at home and abroad.

Notwithstanding these activities, *Proimágenes* is most concerned with trying to work out the practical details of a draft law designed to protect and foster the production of movies in Colombia. "*Proimágenes*," Bayona explains, "is the meeting point of all the different sectors that are related to the movie industry in Colombia and we are all together waiting for this draft law to become a reality." The project intends to channel all the money from ticket sales back into the movie sector. *Proimágenes* will solely administer this money, thus preventing its dispersion into other branches of the administration. The institution will be in charge of providing loans and other aid to those seeking to produce new cinema, but in the hopes of not repeating FOCINE's mistakes will not be permitted to co-produce movies.

Sergio Cabrera once said that Colombian cinema was a field with just one tree where at least a small forest should exist. We might say that now there are new trees growing in this field with the hope that in the near future we might be able to talk of a Colombian cinema. This glimmer of hope comes from the emergence of new festivals and new creative projects, the recent international recognition of several Colombian productions, and the perseverance and talent of well-known and new directors alike. Perhaps it is too soon to proclaim a renaissance. But the rise of a new diverse community of filmmakers, new legislation designed to protect and stimulate new productions, a more receptive, engaged and educated audience, and the availability of new and cheaper production formats readies Colombian cinema to speak with multiple voices and explore new avenues of development. While the transformation and recasting of the Colombian movie industry into a tool of peace and democracy may seem snail-like, there is hope that at last there is real strategy.



COURTESY OF EL ESPECTADOR



COURTESY OF EL ESPECTADOR

Top: A scene from the movie "Ilona llega con la lluvia"; above: A scene from the movie "La gente de la Universal"

Claudia Mejía is a Lecturer in Romance Languages and Literature at Tufts University. She has hosted an annual Colombian Film Festival there since 1999.

ria Buchholz



On the Verge of Combustion

Colombian Narrative Authors Since the 1990s

BY FRANCISCO A. ORTEGA WITH ANA MICAELA ORTEGA OBREGÓN

AN EXCEPTIONAL NARRATIVE RENEWAL IS TAKING PLACE IN Colombia. And yet, there is neither a dazzling figure who has captured the hearts of million of readers in the continent—as Jorge Isaac, José Eustasio Rivera and Gabriel García Márquez did in the past—nor the militancy and unity of a literary movement. Rather, what is taking place might be best described as the emergence of a variety of vigorous, incisive, and compelling narrative projects that have gained national and international attention and have collected prestigious literary awards. The story of such a literary moment still remains to be told and this essay is certainly not an attempt to do so. It is too early to give such an account (many of these new writers barely have a book or two published). Instead, I will provide a selective reading of this changing and exciting narrative landscape by focusing on a few of the most notable novels of the last ten years in the hope that some of the *ReVisita's* readers take up one these books and experience firsthand their manifest power.

Serafin, a character invented by Bernardo Davanzati, a fictional author in Hector Abad Faciolince's award winning novel *Basura* (2000) says: "Sentía un odio lleno de amor por ese costeño al que sin querer había aprendido de memoria." ("I was feeling a hate full of love for this man from the Coast whom without wanting

to, I had learned by heart.") This humorous impugnation of Gabriel García Márquez' well-known literary style—so-called Magical Realism—indicates the ambivalent relationship younger Colombian authors maintain with their literary legacy. The fact that it happens within a game of references—a fictional character made up by a fictional author—suggests that these narratives constitute themselves both as continuity and rupture with previous aesthetics modes. On the one hand, there is an unequivocal self-consciousness about writing and recognition of its political dimension—both important features of the *boom* generation.

On the other, the new authors' writings exhibit a will to transgress literary conventions and produce an aesthetic of rupture. They grew certain that Colombia was changing at a vertiginous pace, that the chaotic logic of its megalopolises exceeded all forethought; that many, fragmented and disorienting *violencias* replaced *La Violencia* of yesteryear, and that accepted literary conventions were radically unable to give account of such novel experiences. Readers also began to demand a literary practice responsive to changes happening all over the continent and particularly in Colombia: explosive urban growth, the emergence of mass media as the ultimate arbiter of cultural life,

[Browsing Literature in the Buchholz bookstore.](#)

and the consolidation of popular culture as the primary realm for a truly collective symbolic language. But above all, and somewhat more intensely than in other countries, Colombians yearned to see the chronic violences that corroded the country shaped into literary form. They demanded a poetic exploration of these novel phenomena, its unremitting brutality and devastating effects and the complacency with which many coexisted with the agents of countless daily aggressions. Like the helpless detective in Mario Mendoza's bleak *Scorpio City* (1998), the average Colombian's capacity to trust others and her basic sense of security was fast disappearing, "se están viniendo abajo, están siendo minados por la diversidad y complejidad de la ciudad" ("they are crumbling; they are being undermined by the diversity and complexity of the city.")

Serafín's remark on García Márquez also indicates the degree to which the newer generation perceives normative literary expectations as stifling. Indeed, for a brief, magical and terrifying moment in the 1980s, it seemed that the *boom* had cast the final word. That was, at least, a recurrent feeling among young Colombian novelists who came to their literary awakening during the early part of that decade, when the author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) was honored with the Nobel Prize in 1982. In fact, many of the writers who began to publish at that time—authors as diverse as Ramón Illán Bacca, Rodrigo Parra-Sandoval, Roberto Burgos-Cantor, and Fernando Vallejo—whose literature deviated from the aesthetic norm, had to wait several years for their works to enjoy the public acclaim they deserved.

Fernando Vallejo, one of Colombia's best-known authors, stirred debate in 1994 with his acerbic *La virgen de los sicarios* (1994), a love story—as Vallejo remarked—in a country of hate. In the novel Fernando, a homosexual writer, returns to his native Medellín after many years abroad and takes up a young lover named Alexis, a 16 year-old, trigger-happy *sicario* (hit man). The narrator casually describes the chain of killings committed by Alexis, which only ends when one of Alexis' enemies, Wilmar, kills him in revenge. Though Fernando initially wants to retaliate, he eventually falls in love with Wilmar and proposes they leave the country to avoid certain death. Just before they leave, however, Wilmar is killed by another young *sicario*, and the cycle of death is set to begin all over again

in this present that has no future. Though exasperating, the unflappable narrator effectively conveys the extreme devaluation of life in Medellín. In 2000, French director Barbet Schroeder's film version of the novel caused so much commotion in Colombia that some cultural functionaries called for the movie to be banned for tarnishing the country's international image.

If there is a turning point in the history of this new aesthetic mode it might be the publication of Rafael Chaparro Madiedo's *Opio en las nubes* (1992). Indebted to the North American beat novels, as well as to Colombian Andrés Caicedo's *¿Qué viva la música!* (1977), and to the rock and punk scene of the nineties, the notion of an aesthetic rupture was precisely the reason the jury awarded him the 1992 national literature prize. This innovative narrative undoubtedly can be regarded as one of the most radical poetizations of the urban experience in contemporary Latin America. In the novel, several self-absorbed characters—and two cats—meander the filth-reeking Avenue Blanchot, dotted with bars of outrageous names, in search of the solace only drugs and alcohol can afford. It is precisely space—and not time—that constitutes the unifying thread of a text that no longer has a recognizable plot. We are left with a bunch of hoodlums in whom the social referent is lost and an imaginary city in which time stands still and space is everywhere fragmented. *Opio en las nubes* powerfully stages the bankruptcy of a society that has grown callous, numb or cynical in face of the suffering of others. The aesthetic door opened by this novel is evident in the way newer narratives—Rubén Vélez' *Veinticinco centímetros* (1997), Octavio Escobar Giraldo's *De música ligera* (1998), and Efraím Medina's *Técnicas de masturbación entre Batman y Robin* (2002)—construe an imaginary social cartography, employ film and musical techniques, use grotesque humor, and explore the moral limits of sexuality.

Most of the new writers still treasure the craft of story telling. Plots often involve the underworld, where drugs commingle with scandalous institutional corruption, guerrilla attacks, death squads, and common crime. Favored genres are the hardboiled, thrillers, crime novels, pulp fiction, and even journalistic fiction, though by no means do these exhaust the wide variety of writing practices. In all cases, the binaries inherent to these popular genres (good vs. evil; hero vs. criminal; etc.) are subverted in order to develop an artistic language capable of alluding to a more complex situation. Santiago Gamboa uses the detective novel in *Perder es cuestión de método* (1997) to explore the role of the truth-seeker in a society governed by the powerful. The premise of the genre, to uncover the author of the crime and to restore good over evil, is turned upside down as journalist Víctor Silampa tries to solve the mystery of an impaled body in the outskirts of Bogotá and stumbles upon an all-powerful mafia. At the end, the journalist might have glimpsed the truth behind the crime, but he has lost his girlfriend, complete confidence in all public institutions, the possibility of righting wrong, and worst of all, his faith in journalism to make the truth be known. Defeated, one may assume, the

PRIZE-WINNERS

Juan Carlos Botero won the XIX Latin American Short-Story contest (Puebla-Mexico) in 1990; Enrique Serrano received the Juan Rulfo for best short story in 1996; Laura Restrepo, Mexico's Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the Prix France Culture in 1997 for *Dulce compañía*; Julio Cesar Londoño won the Rulfo Prize for *Los geógrafos* in 1998; Luis Noriega's *Iménez* won the prestigious UPC European Science Fiction Award; Jorge Franco's *Rosario Tijeras* picked up the 2000 Hammett International for Novels in Guijón (Spain); Héctor Abad Faciolince's *Basura* won the Spanish Casa de América de Narrativa Americana Innovadora in 2000; Mendoza's *Satanas* was awarded the prestigious Premio Biblioteca Breve in 2002. Many of these young authors have been translated into several European languages, are regular contributor to international magazines and are invited to international colloquia. Additionally, Alvaro Mutis was given the Cervantes prize for lifetime achievement in 2001 and older Colombian authors—such as Germán Espinosa, Rodrigo Parra-Sandoval, and Rafael Moreno Durán—are beginning to be recognized beyond national boundaries.

reporter takes up the pen and writes the novel we are reading. Fiction, therefore, seems to be the only realm wherein truth still exists. Other authors who use the detective genre to explore the limits and responsibilities of truth telling are Hugo Chaparro-Valderrama, Mario Mendoza, and Luis Noriega.

Perhaps, the most notorious trait of these contemporary novels is their steady focus on the precariousness of life. The ever-growing reach and randomness of the country's social violence sets the stage for the proliferation of the defeated and the victim. Many of these authors focus on characters and situations whose hold on life is tenuous as a result of social violence: kidnapped victims, *desechables* (those considered to be "disposable" human beings), journalists, police, judges,

Colombians yearned to see the recurring violences that corroded the country shaped into literary form.

sicarios, prostitutes, homosexuals and drag queens—a world on the verge of combustion, as says the narrator of Laura Restrepo's acclaimed *La novia oscura* (1999), a fictional account of a prostitute in Barrancabermeja, the country's oil center. As with the subsequent *La multitud errante* (2001), a novel about the thousands of internally displaced by war, the absence of an ultimate arbitrator, determines that the narrator takes charge of exploring the world of the outcasts through their own language. The epic narrative breadth of her account, the use of characters and settings related to the marvelous and strange, and the employment of a baroque linguistic construction, makes her one of the best heirs of García Márquez's novelistic saga.

Jorge Franco's *Rosario Tijeras* (1999) offers a disturbing portrayal of the fugacity of life in Medellín. The novel explores the complicity of the social elite with the drug cartels through the story of Rosario, an impoverished young woman who is the lover of a drug lord and who also has a relationship with Emilio, an upper middle-class young man. The story is told by Antonio, Emilio's best friend, who is secretly in love with Rosario and who has found her agonizing, her body riddled with bullets. While Antonio waits outside the hospital, he struggles to find the language to tell the story of her turbulent life—and his place in it. Like Gamboa's Victor Silampa, Antonio narrates from complete defeat. The ensuing textual fragmentation corresponds to the ruins left after the catastrophe—as if the margin's sense of temporality and destiny became the tempo of the whole.

Even though many of these novels feature strong women, contemporary writing—at least what is being published—exudes a masculinist character. It is not only that many of the preferred genres privilege a masculine ethos, but also that there are not many women among those who are being published for the first time. That is not to say that there are no women writers. Indeed, there are many excellent female poets and recent evidence—such as the 2002 publication of the anthology *Rompiendo el silencio*—suggests that many novelists, as Monserrat Ordóñez (a recently deceased literary critic) would have said, continue the tradition of hidden or unread writing. However, other well established women authors include Carmen Cecilia Suárez, with her popular short story collection *Un vestido rojo para bailar boleros* (1988), Freda Mosquera's *Cuentos de seda y sangre* (1997), Consuelo Triviño's *Prohibido salir a la calle* (1998), María Cristina Restrepo López's *De una vez y para siempre*

(2000), and the poets-turned-novelists Orietta Lozano (*Luminar*, 1994) and Piedad Bonnett (*Después de todo*, 2001). The latter has strived to create a language of intimacy to explore the most private dilemmas of human existence. Making use of a sustained economy of expression and an elegant yet sober literary architecture, Bonnett's *Después de todo* explores an artist's sudden realization that the socially acceptable means of fulfillment have not been able to satisfy her spiritually and emotionally.

Like Piedad Bonnett, many young writers—Enrique Serrano, Philip Potdevin, Juan Carlos Botero, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Ricardo Silva, among others—prefer to explore a more universal and even philosophical condition than to directly chronicle the country's social violence. Serrano's *De parte de Dios* (2000), for instance, is a collection of short tales about notorious mystics from around the world. The stories are poignant and have a touch of irony that brings together history and philosophy to suggest an intense dramatic quality to life.

The result is similar to Jorge Luis Borges' *Historia universal de la infamia*. Similarly, Vásquez' stories are often set in European cities and explore the burden of the family past, the inherent solitude of the human condition, and the idea of identity.

This brief overview of recent Colombian narrative is necessarily schematic. I had to leave out many excellent authors and novels—not to mention other narrative genres, such as testimonial and journalistic accounts—and focus instead on few representative works to outline how Colombian readers are discovering new artistic languages. These languages do not seek to produce a scathing social critique in the hope that authorities right social wrongs. They are not the product of politically committed authors, at least not in the sense in which *compromiso* was understood in the sixties. Rather, one might argue that these texts maintain an oblique relation with politics and that their literary practices have to do with the profound crisis that oppositional culture experienced during the eighties. They do not view literature as a pedagogical tool nor as a platform for a political project. Instead, they poetize social experience in order to create a distancing effect and stage it more successfully. This staging allows for a greater exploration of social dreams and symbolic limits, and emphasizes the special capacity of writing to preserve memory. Thus, the fictitious writer Simón Tebcheranny, the implicit narrator in Mario Mendoza's *Scorpio City*, decides to confront those with power (at great risk for his own life) in order to write the story of a hideous crime. He knows well that by saving the story we save for the future the possibility of having a history. And, in the end, that is really what matters.

Francisco Ortega, an Assistant Professor at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, is currently a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the History Department of the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá, Colombia. He was a Visiting Scholar and Teaching Assistant at Harvard's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures from 1995 to 1999 and one of the founders of the Colombian Colloquium at Harvard in 1997. Ana Micaela Ortega Obregón is a pre-scholar who participated—though in an embryonic form—in several academic events at Harvard and who assisted in keeping her father awake enough nights to finish this article.

Black in Colombia

Organizing to Promote Afrocolombian Territorial Rights

BY PIEDAD CORDOBA RUIZ

ONE OUT OF FOUR COLOMBIANS IS BLACK. YET, COLOMBIA'S black community historically has faced discrimination on a racial, social, political, economic and cultural basis. And the community now faces a new risk. On the Pacific Coast, in particular, it is caught in the crossfire between guerrillas and paramilitary. Forced displacement has resulted in a serious humanitarian crisis.

The Afrocolombians in these areas suffer directly from violence, forced migrations, internal and external displacement. In Atrato Chocó, for example, 40,000 families have been displaced, virtually threatening the Afrocolombians' existence as an ethnic group.

In addition, a law from 1959, designating the Pacific Basin as a reservation zone, set up regulations to conserve and protect natural resources, limiting the black communities' access to individual and collective rule of their traditional lands. As a result they lost 40 percent of their traditional territory, which was divided among diverse institutions, mostly private businesses. Since then, legal efforts to grant Afrocolombians' autonomy in their territories have been realized on paper only.

As for policy making, the primarily Afrocolombian territories lag behind. Due to poor technical capacity and a lack of professional, stable and qualified employees, the management and administration of local governments is inadequate.

To resolve this inequality, the Constitution of 1991 mandated that the state recognize and protect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the nation, enacting a special law securing the definitive recognition of black communities' ethnic, territorial, cultural, economic and political rights. These constitutional mandates have spurred many important legislative sanctions for indigenous peoples to assume control of their own institutions and ways of life and maintain and strengthen their cultural identities.

Arguably the most significant piece of legislation was "Law 70" of 1993, which granted black communities the right to own collective property within their ancestral territories. The law takes into consideration traditional practices of production—rooted in the relationship between Afrocolombian peoples and nature—and promotes their sustainable development. Especially in the Pacific region, Afrocolombians now collectively own their land and thus enjoy more freedom to practice traditional means of earning a living, such as farming. As a result, they help conserve Colombia's most abundant and rich variety of natural resources and bio-diversity.

So far, the Colombian government has awarded black communities 113 titles equaling more than 9.88 million acres. Almost 50,000 families and 256,848 people have benefited, but nevertheless people are still without land. The government still must distribute an additional 3.21 million acres to reach their projected goal.

And, as collective titles are not possible in urban areas, Law 70 guarantees individual rights to buy land.

Law 70 also recognized Afrocolombians as a diverse ethnic group with their own cultural identity. It signaled the state's obligation to design special and suitable means of promoting the Afrocolombians' economic and social development, guarantee their autonomy in administering and benefiting from their existing natural resources, strengthening their organization processes and stimulating their participation in decisions of concern to the country.

Despite Law 70's mandate for the creation of a sustainable development strategy for black communities, ten years later not one concrete action has been taken. But hope remains: the Senate just recently adopted a "national plan for development for black communities," a simple but strategic plan to guarantee that resources—both current and potential—of import to the Afrocolombian community will be utilized to their advantage.

The national government also vowed to recognize Colombia's black community as an ethnic group. In looking towards the country's future, policy makers must recognize that ethnic and cultural diversity are an advantage. Indeed, it must be understood that Afrocolombians have contributed to the creation of the multiethnic, cultural and biologically diverse nation that is Colombia. To finally grant the Afrocolombian community their merited value, every form of discrimination, racism and social exclusion must be eliminated.

Afrocolombians now face the highest poverty, illiteracy, and mortality rates compared with the rest of the country. 74% of the black community lacks health care, compared to the national average of 24%. And this is only one example.

The Constitution of 1991 mandated that the state recognize and protect cultural and ethnic diversity, including black communities' rights.

Since 1993 there have been a handful of black delegates in national advisories: two in the national advisory for agrarian reform and rural development, one delegate in the national advisory on the environment, one in the national advisory for peace, and another in culture. An Institute for Environmental Investigations of the Pacific, the Pedagogical Commission for Black Communities in the Ministry of Education and the University of the Pacific were also created. This looks like progress on paper, but in reality there has been meager concrete progress because these new entities lack the financial resources or necessary infrastructure to intervene in a significant manner in the life of black communities.

Navigating in the Atrato Chocó.

Most of the norms created under Law 70 remain ideas only. Colombia continues to be a racist, exclusionary and discriminatory society. To influence policy makers to make good on promises made a decade ago, Afrocolombian communities and organizations are uniting with national and international NGOs. The teaming of grassroots efforts with groups of national and international clout will help ensure that the government immediately transforms the ethnic and territorial rights Afrocolombians have won into realizable projects.

Towards this end, the associations have demanded the continued distribution of collective land titles to black communities until the goal of 13.84 million acres is reached, hopefully in 2004. They also promote continued support for the formation and strengthening of community councils, the internal administration of newly titled territory. It is important to strengthen the community advisors' judicial and management capacities, thus providing them with the legal, institutional, financial and logistic tools they need to effectively administer political, social and economic proceedings in Afrocolombian community territories.

The coalitions are also demanding that the Colombian government support financial projects that favor traditional production practices of these communities—money-making projects

in agricultural, fishing, forestry, agro-industry, artisanship and ecotourism oriented towards commercialization and production of a surplus. In addition, they are calling for the commercialization of environmental services based on the abundant offering of oxygen, water, biodiversity and other natural resources in their territories and the strengthening of micro-businesses and farm industries. Indeed, financial rights need to be of greater consideration, especially in blacks' collective territories. The coalitions are thus lobbying the government to let communities create associations and unions to safeguard the sustainable benefits of their resources.

Equally, this course of action will support the strengthening of Colombia's black community at the local, regional, and national levels. Cooperation—from the grassroots Afrocolombian associations all the way to international organizations—will catch and retain the ear of the Colombian government. As such, organizing and lobbying efforts will secure and defend the collective territories against the effects of racism and violence wrought by civil war, eventually replacing it with the socioeconomic revival and consolidation of Afrocolombian communities.

Piedad Cordoba Ruiz is a Colombian Senator.





COURTESY OF EL ESPECTADOR

Colombian Immigration

Fighting Back: Activism in New York

BY TANYA PÉREZ-BRENNAN

A WALK ALONG ROOSEVELT AVENUE IN JACKSON HEIGHTS, Queens, reveals the world of Little Colombia: neighborhood streets lined with small bakeries; the smell of fresh bread and *arepas* blend with the sounds of *cumbia*, the national musical style. A quick glance into the windows of *La Pequeña Colombia* restaurant unveils scores of Colombians talking heatedly about the news as they sip steaming cups of coffee, cultivated high in the Andes.

According to the 2000 Census, there are 13,338 Colombians in Jackson Heights alone, with 84,404 Colombians total in the New York City area. These numbers may not reflect many undocumented Colombians.

For more than 50 years in their own country, Colombians have been subjected to terrorism—massacred villages, displaced children, and kidnapped politicians, along with a widespread drug trade. The decades-long Colombian conflict has the Colombian state, leftist guerrillas, and right-wing paramilitaries pitted against each other. But even in faraway New York, not all have given up on finding a solution to the war. Several people have decided to fight back.

Ramón Mejía, in the U.S. for 45 years, has never stopped thinking of returning to Colombia. But living away from his country has not deterred him from doing something.

He helped found the local group Movement for Peace (Movimiento Por la Paz) three years ago, holding meetings in his

Queens apartment and organizing activities targeted towards the Colombian community. These events, almost always in Spanish, range from inviting Colombian journalists and politicians to speak at local venues, to participating in protest marches in front of the United Nations. When he went to a 1999 peace march called No More! (No Más!), which drew millions of Colombians, he realized the necessity of branching out.

“From the beginning we should have realized that we had to get the American public more involved,” he said. “We didn’t realize the importance of lobbying. Today we consider it to be very important and do it much more than before.”

“What impacted me was that, for the first time, I saw 3,000 Colombians together, most waving white handkerchiefs for peace,” he said.

“We have strength in numbers,” said Martha Hauze, a social worker who helped found the group. During that protest both witnessed many Colombians demanding the unconditional end to the guerrillas. And that was Mejía and Hauze decided to focus their efforts on the idea of peace and social justice for all.

“Peace is not imposed, it is not accomplished by force. Peace

The daily line at the embassy includes would-be tourists, but also many would-be immigrants. To read a delightful story on the theme, “The Nehushtan” by Azriel Bibliowitz, see <<http://drclas.fas.harvard.edu/publications>>.

is obtained through dialogue and negotiation," Mejía explained.

Twenty-three years ago Hauze came here from Medellín where, as a woman with seven brothers, she was expected to be submissive and servile.

She rebelled by lifting weights and physically fending off her brother's blows. She calls her experiences as a woman "the source of my political consciousness."

According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the number of Colombians applying for asylum status increased sharply in 2000, with 2,728 new claims. Of these, 80 percent of cases were denied. Applicants must prove that they are members of a political, social, or religious organization and are being persecuted for their related activities.

Many community leaders have embraced the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) movement, part of a nationwide effort to secure the special measure granted by the Justice Department for circumstances such as environmental disasters or other extraordinary and temporary conditions for Colombians.

Zoilo Nieto founded the TPS Committee for Colombia two years ago because of the horrible stories he kept hearing from people coming from Colombia.

"That was the basis for my interest in Colombia and, from there, we started to work on a way to help our community that would not be based on the same old rhetoric, that would benefit everyone," said Nieto.

Carlos Manzano, the only elected Colombian official in New York, represents the 64th Assembly district of Manhattan and has been one of the staunchest advocates for TPS in the city. His efforts have included lobbying politicians in Washington, organizing protests and holding press conferences.

Manzano emigrated from Cali at age 15, and attended school in Queens. Right now he is working towards a Master's in Public Administration at New York University. He is planning to run for Manhattan Borough President in 2005. He saw there was more of an open space for political participation here.

"In the U.S., it's quite different from Colombia in the sense that if you do get involved, if you do organize people and you bring different issues to the forefront as a group, you can be very effective," he said.

Mercedes Cano is a Colombian lawyer who practices in Jackson Heights, where the vast number of her clients are undocu-

mented Colombians, as she once was. She has noticed a change in the kind of immigrants coming from Colombia.

"Before, Colombian immigrants who came here worked in factories, came young, and came exclusively to support the family back home. And then Colombians started to come to settle down," she said. This was partly what prompted her to join the fight for TPS.

If anyone's life encapsulates the struggle to fight against greater obstacles, it's Cano. She came here from Medellín at age 15 with her aunt, and immediately knew she wanted to stay. "I hated the cultural pressure of having to do what all women in Colombia do at the time: marry and have kids."

She worked as an undocumented Colombian without English skills, not to mention the fact that she was born without hearing in one ear. After years of menial jobs and homelessness, she eventually married and became a legal resident. In her work, first as a taxi driver and then in the Post Office, she found her ability to advocate for others. She translated for tenants in her building, then represented cab drivers in administrative hearings during a 1982 strike, and served as a Union Steward for Local 300.

"Even with my limited English," she said. "I was able to speak out for somebody else."

Graduating with honors from Queens College in 1989, she was accepted to CUNY Law School. Upon graduation two years ago, she received a \$13,000 grant from Yale University and started operating the Centro Comunitario y de Asesoría Legal (Community Center of Legal Counsel), where she helps her fellow Colombians in her new capacity as a lawyer.

Through journalism, Mario Murillo has found a way to provoke change. He is half Colombian and half Puerto Rican and grew up in New York, studying political science and journalism at NYU. In 1991 he took a leave of absence from his job at WBAI and traveled around Colombia for two months. His interest and concern for the situation intensified, and in 1993 he founded the Colombia Media Project, part of the national Colombia Human Rights Network.

He says the whole point was to be a pro-peace, human rights group focusing on the relationship between Colombia and U.S. policy.

"Colombia has exploded to a point that nobody could ignore it anymore," he said. "We were part of that growing awareness."

In Jackson Heights, everyday Colombians scurry off to work, past the stores blasting *cumbias*, past the travel agencies advertising daily flights to every major Colombian city. The covers of Colombian newspapers scream headlines of more bloodshed and the local Colombian radio, RCN, is heard through apartment windows—booming voices debating the future of their damaged country.

At the remitter agencies scattered throughout the neighborhood, Colombians send home a fixed amount of money, knowing their contribution, however limited, adds to the national economy. It is another symptom that this drawn-out war will keep tearing the fabric of Colombian society unless its gaping holes can be mended by the weaving of community and resistance if even by a few, fearless hands.

Tanya Pérez-Brennan, formerly DRCLAS Visiting Scholars Coordinator, is now a student at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. She is writing her Master's Thesis on Colombian activism in New York.

THE COLOMBIAN DIASPORA

Colombian immigrants are creating citizen spaces all over the United States. See the article on Bajucol, next page. South Florida is also a major destination for Colombian immigrants. "The Colombian Diaspora in South Florida: A Report on the Colombian Studies Institute's Diaspora Project," published by the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center at Florida International University, examines three waves of Colombian immigration. See <http://lacc.fiu.edu/publications_resources/working_papers/working_paper_01.htm>.

Bajucol

Colombian Youth in Boston

BY CLAUDIA G. PINEDA

THE CURTAIN GOES UP, AND TO THE BEAT OF MAPALE, A GROUP of youngsters start their annual dance performance. The Colombian Youth Folklore Ballet (Bajucol), a group of Colombian adolescents and young adults in Boston, is led by Miguel Vargas, a Colombian financial professional who loves dancing. Bajucol brings together about 20 youngsters ages 14-24 twice a week to rehearse different traditional Colombian dances. They plan and practice for occasional presentations and for their annual show (one drew about 1,000 people) in Boston. Parents help with the customs, the flower arrangements and with encouragement to their children. Youth learn about the origins of the dances, the customs, and the celebrations when they are performed. In this way, Bajucol helps them reinstate and shape a different Colombian identity for themselves that at the same time promotes a positive image of Colombian culture to others and for others. This is especially powerful because dancing becomes a buffer against drug-related stigma and provides a supportive place to meet with peers.

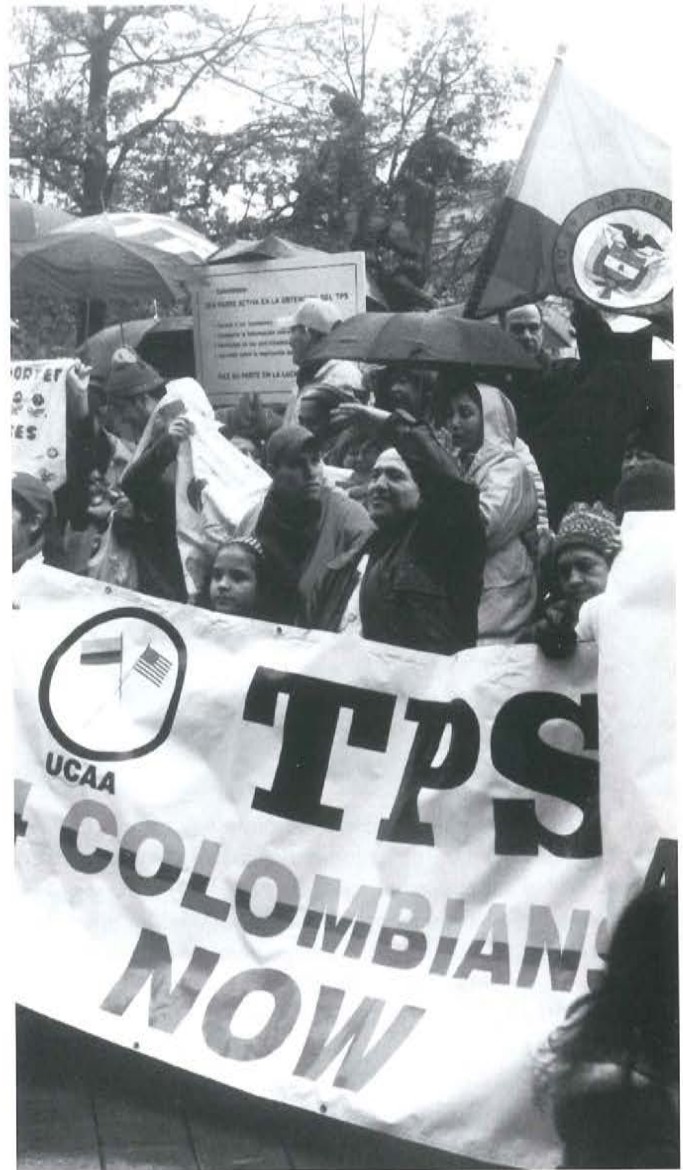
Most of these youth have lived in Boston for fewer than six years and some have been born to Colombian parents. Bajucol provides a supportive place to establish positive relationships with peers and adults, such as, Miguel who the kids refer to as a father figure. For the newly arrived, Bajucol becomes a supportive environment while they adapt to the U.S. In the context of the U.S. where there are mixed messages about immigrants, either making them exotic, a threat or the object of racial discrimination, alternative cultural and artistic representations make such negative messages palatable for both youngsters and others.

During 1999–2001 the group inspired Colombian professionals to get involved with planning the annual show, allowing Bajucol to become a fertile space for a mentoring program. Professionals had the opportunity to interact and learn from the youngsters, gaining some understanding of the challenges that immigrant youth go through in the U.S.

In the context of the Colombian diaspora, Bajucol became a “safe place” where Colombians from different class backgrounds interacted and learnt from each other. Especially during the two

For more information about Bajucol, see its website:
<http://babel.massart.edu/~sonerito/1bajucol.html>.

years that the group of the professionals participated and collaborated with the group Bajucol, the circulation of social capital in terms of knowledge, networks, and material resources were utilized by the group. An example is a Colombian professional at the Berklee School of Music who negotiated with the university an internship with Bajucol. During her year-long internship she participated and helped put together the annual show; brought professional



ZILIA CASTRILLON - zilia_castrillon@leisat.com.co

musicians to perform along with the youngsters; and brought her expertise in helping coordinate the other professionals.

While the youngsters were being taught, their families were exposed to other resources as well. Given their expressed need to learn about legal issues related to immigration, the mentoring portion of the intervention brought a panel of lawyers and educators to inform their youngsters and their families about the topic. While

this meeting served families by providing education about the topic, it also exposed other Colombian professionals to the difficulties some of the families have to endure in this country. Initiatives like Bajucol and the effort of Miguel Vargas are great exam-

ples of how to bring together youth, adults and the larger Colombian community to feel connected to the Colombian reality in different ways.

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The Politics of Representation

David Maybury-Lewis, editor, *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*. David Rockefeller Center Series on Latin American Studies/Harvard University, 2002, 386 pages

Kay B. Warren and Jean E. Jackson, editors, *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State in Latin America*. University of Texas, 2002, 294 pages

REVIEW BY WENDY CALL

ON JANUARY 18, 2003, COLOMBIAN paramilitary combatants attacked two Kuna villages in Panama's Darién region. They murdered four village leaders, stole livestock, burned homes, and planted landmines. They also kidnapped three foreign visitors.

Part of this event received widespread media coverage in the United States. CNN and the *Washington Post*, among others, reported only the kidnapping of journalist Robert Young Pelton, author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*. The *Post* quoted Pelton as saying on his release, "Even though we were not happy about being kidnapped... they had a reason to do so. After all, it is their country and their war."

It was not their country and the Kuna are not at war. Before Pelton's release, Kuna activist Ibe Wilson sent an open letter via e-mail, writing on behalf of the Indigenous Movement of Panama: "Four pillars of our community have been killed. If we compare this to western culture it is to say that our Library of Congress, our Chief Magistrate, our Minister of Culture, and our Nobel Peace Prize winners were killed." Ignored by mainstream U.S. media, this message circulated widely on the internet, translated into several languages.

This story illustrates several key issues raised in *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples*

in Latin American States, edited by David Maybury-Lewis (David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies/Harvard University Press) and *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State in Latin America*, edited by Kay B. Warren (Harvard University) and Jean E. Jackson (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). In a chapter of *The Politics of Ethnicity*, Jean Jackson—the only contributor to both volumes—notes that the U.S. government justifies military aid to Colombia by focusing on the links between guerrilla movements and the drug trade, "paying much less attention to the paramilitaries' involvement with narcotrafficking or their appalling record of human rights abuses. The U.S. mass media for the most part reflect this distortion." This assertion reflects the activist tone of both volumes; most of the authors support the movements they study.

Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State wrestles—at times brilliantly—with the crucial issue of communication: Who speaks for the indigenous community? How does that affect power relations, within the community and within the state? In her chapter on the Xavante of Brazil, Laura Graham writes about a young, bilingual community member who learned from repeated intercultural encounters "the power of

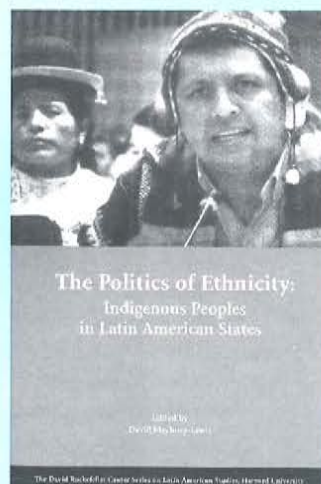
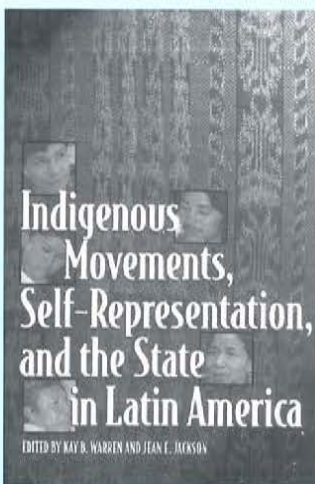
language and representation and what certain outsiders want to hear from Indians," in a way that his monolingual elders could not. Contributor Victor Montejo notes, "[L]iterate Maya, like most Guatemalans, do not have the habit of reading, and the few who want to write in national newspapers are not given the space by those who control the media. In other words, print capitalism is not yet fully available to the Maya." In the case of the Kuna tragedy, the grace with which Ibe Wilson uses western cultural references successfully mobilizes "print capitalism"—or in this case, "digital capitalism"—to support the Kuna struggle.

Warren and Jackson's book focuses on Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala—two nations with sparse indigenous populations who enjoy relatively well-established legal status (though that often translates poorly into actual rights), and one with an indigenous majority still recovering from recent massacres. The eight authors' widely varying views on representation make for rich exchange.

The Politics of Ethnicity includes the three countries covered in Warren and Jackson's

book, as well as Mexico, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Where Warren and Jackson go deep, Maybury-Lewis goes broad. Highlights of his smoothly edited book include Jerome Levi's analysis of the roots of indigenous-government conflict in Mexico, Jennifer Schirmer's anthropology of terror—a look at the organizing principles of the Guatemalan military, Jackson's chapter on Colombia's indigenous movement in the 1990s, and Maybury-Lewis' analysis of the Brazilian government's indigenous policy.

Jackson raises a key issue untouched in the book's first three chapters: Just who is an indigenous person? And who decides? Though her essay reaches no firm conclusion, a footnote hints at one. She notes the Cononuco people are "less able to perform indigeness successfully because they have lost their language years ago; nor do they wear pueblo-specific dress." *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and State* offers several responses to her notation. In his fascinating—if thickly written—critique of a Kayapó-made documentary video about a truce between two leaders, Terence Turner laments "the vacuousness



of the notion of authenticity as a critical standard in discussions of hybrid cultural forms." In her chapter—perhaps the volume's best—Laura Graham argues that these hybrid forms (for example, documentaries by indigenous filmmakers) "must not be taken as evidence of 'culture loss'...." She asserts, "The concept of authenticity is a colonial folk category that emerges out of contact imperialism.... It becomes an essentialized quality which entails a new moment of colonial subjectivity."

Writing in *The Politics of Ethnicity*, Theodore Macdonald, Jr.

lifts the question "Who is indigenous?" from the individual to the community level. He outlines shifting boundaries of indigenous identity in Ecuador, then concludes, "Whether or not some Quichua populations later redefine their pueblos as *nacionalidades* remains an open question. In the meantime, there is absolute clarity as to the desired end result—inclusion as equals in a plurinational state." Macdonald's conclusion holds for most of the movements covered in Maybury-Lewis' book.

Taken together, the two volumes provide an excellent

overview of the phenomenal recent growth in Latin American indigenous peoples' movements. Both books grew out of conferences, hence the lively interplay among the chapters and the occasionally uneven prose—especially in *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State*. Both books would benefit from more maps, as the few included are very helpful. While taking very different paths, both books converge at similar points. In their introduction, Warren and Jackson note, "One way of understanding indigenous movements is to see them

as a postnationalist phenomenon." Maybury-Lewis concludes his book with the observation that indigenous movements in the Americas call into question "not merely who controls the state, but the nature of the state itself...."

Wendy Call is a freelance writer who divides her time between Massachusetts and Oaxaca. A recent Fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs, she is working on a book entitled No Word for Welcome: Mexican Villages Face the Future. She can be reached at <wendycall@world.oberlin.edu>.

Structural Violence and Human Rights

Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2003

REVIEW BY STEPHEN MARKS

PAUL FARMER, FOUNDER OF Partners in Health, professor in the Department of Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and physician in Brigham and Women's Hospital, has a passionate and uncompromising commitment to the poor. His personal involvement with people suffering from AIDS in Haiti, with community health in Chiapas, Mexico, with prisoners suffering from tuberculosis in Russia, and with treatment of people with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) in Lima, Peru, have merited him the sobriquet of the "good doctor" in a *The New Yorker* profile. His compassionate and selfless intervention to assist the poor who are suffering from treatable diseases is only part of the picture.

He is equally committed to understanding and communicating the deeper causes of these diseases. In his previous book, *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*, he identified social and economic inequality as the explanation for not only the dis-

tribution of infectious diseases (focusing on AIDS and TB) but also for negative health outcomes among the poor, to the point that inequality constituted "our modern plague."

He has returned to and expanded upon that theme in his new book, *Pathologies of Power*.

Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor. The book begins with a warm forward by Amartya Sen, describing Farmer as "a great doctor" and the book as a "powerful [and] remarkable book, which is hard to put down." The praise is genuine and well deserved. Sen's interest is also motivated by the book's insights on the way power inequalities work, making a virtue out of what others might find a weakness, namely, that Farmer does not attempt to define and

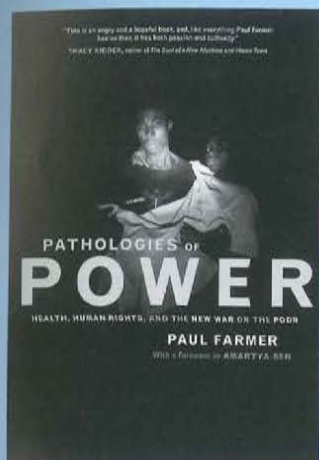
ing and action for its failure to focus adequately on the needs of the poor. He should not be judged for his failure to present a general theory or a systematic analysis of either but for providing first-hand evidence along with a wide survey of the literature to buttress his experientially-based and passionately held views about both. Farmer's own introduction and the first and last chapters provide the thread that gives coherence to the enterprise.

The book reflects the depth of perception that comes from an author who is both a medical doctor and an anthropologist.

theorize with misleadingly exact terms but rather proceeds by exemplification.

This caveat is valuable to the reader, for Farmer has ambitions in social theory, primarily the resuscitation of structural violence as an explanatory concept and a critique of human rights think-

The book reflects the depth of perception that comes from an author who is both a medical doctor and an anthropologist. Its structure suggests the anthropologist's approach of collecting personal observation, then analyzing what is happening locally, and only after



case analysis venturing into generalized ideas of more global implications. Thus the first half of the book is called "bearing witness" and provides often moving accounts of the treatment of Haitian refugees with HIV/AIDS in U.S. hands in Guantánamo, Cuba, the significance of the Zapatista rebellion for the human rights of the people in Chiapas, and the phenomenon of "tuberculosis-as-punishment" in Russia.

Part II is modestly entitled "one physician's perspective on human rights," precisely because he does not wish to overstate the claim of providing a full-flown analysis and because he is "humbled by the suffering of the destitute sick" and prefers to respond to that suffering rather than to academic theory, although he does both. He begins with approaches to development and here he finds liberation theology to provide not only a preference for the poor but also a methodology to observe, judge and act as relevant to medicine and health policy. The human rights impact of drug resistant TB leads him into a critique of market-based medicine. He then discusses the failure of ethics and human rights to deal with the most vulnerable, the destitute sick; and, finally calls for a "paradigm shift" in human rights thinking.

Of particular value is the linking of a critique of structures of

power as being responsible for harm done to the poor (structural violence) with a critique of the human rights discourse, which, in his view, gives short shrift to economic, social and cultural rights. Having worked for many decades on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights in teaching, writing and advocacy, I could question his indictment but acknowledge that our difference of perspective should not obscure our shared priority for economic, social and cultural rights, consistent with the "true value of the human rights movement's central documents...to protect the rights of those who are most likely to have their rights violated." (212). Intergovernmental organizations have adopted a more balanced position on the relative importance of different types of rights than Farmer's characterization and, more important, the civil society organizations in Latin America, Asia and Africa, have considered economic, social and cultural rights basic to their struggle.

Farmer's critique of contemporary human rights in no way diminishes his more important point that "making social and economic rights a reality is the key goal for health and human rights in the twenty-first century." (219) He describes the twentieth century as one of scientific and technological advances for medicine and asks as "a twenty-first century decision: where will healers stand in the struggle for health care as a human right?" (178) This question is vital not only for the United States, whose official position is not to recognize health as a human right, but throughout the world. There are examples in Latin America of countries that are approaching health care as a human rights issue, such as Venezuela whose new constitution includes a

justiciable right to health and whose Constitutional Court held that the right to treatment applied to all persons covered by the state health system (social security), using a holistic approach to human rights. This constitutional development is the result in large part of a human rights struggle in Latin America and the direction Farmer would no doubt like to see the human rights movement take worldwide.

The interest of this book for Latin America is evident. One of Farmer's favorite authors, frequently cited in the book, is Eduardo H. Galeano, author of *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, and several chapters deal with liberation theology, citing Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and others. The

cases of Haiti and Mexico are covered in detail and frequent references are made to Peru and Cuba, as well as Argentina, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

The book has informative and valuable footnotes, a splendid bibliography and thorough index. It is thus of some scholarly interest, along with achieving its main goal of "telling the truth and serving the victims."

Stephen P. Marks is the François-Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Health and Human Rights and director of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health. He frequently visited Latin America for UNESCO and the Ford Foundation, before he began his academic career at Princeton, Columbia and now Harvard.

COMING IN FALL 2003 BOOK TALK featuring:

Richard N. Cooper and Richard Layard, editors, *What the Future Holds: Insights from Social Science* (MIT Press, 2003, 285 pages). Review by Lorena Barberia.

Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Review by Rebecca Cantu.

Robert L. Selman, *The Promotion of Social Awareness: Powerful Lesson from the Partnership of Developmental Theory and Classroom Practice* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2003). Review by Richard Mora.

Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala*. (Houghton Mifflin, 2003). Review by David Stoll.

Luis Millones, *Las confesiones de don Juan Vásquez* (2003). Review by Gary Urton.

José Antonio Mazzotti, *Poéticas del flujo. Migración y violencia verbales en el Perú de los 80* (Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2002). Review by Rafael Espinosa.

Gary Urton, *Signs of the Inca Khipu: Primary Coding in the Andean Knotted String Records*. Review by Thomas B. F. Cummins.

Inca Culture

Thomas B. F. Cummins, *Toasts with the Inca: Andean Abstraction and Colonial Images on Quero Vessels*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 377 pages, 2003.

REVIEW BY LUIS MILLONES

IMAGES OF THE MATERIAL PRODUCTION of the Inca culture can be found nowadays in hundreds of books, magazines, newspapers and even postcards, giving the sensation that it is not possible to say anything new about it. Tom Cummins' book demonstrates the opposite.

Toasts with the Inca is a treatise about the manners, courtesy and ceremonial behavior styles that were displayed during the period from the rise of *Tahuantinsuyu* until the first moment of the colonial times. The focus of this study is centered in the Quero and Quilla, which were vessels made out of wood and metal that contained chicha, that was used to make toasts and thereby establish a relationship,

able interest on finding out the objects' original names, which were almost forgotten due to the tourist publicity. This is how a vessel of big dimensions, arbitrarily named as "Aribalo" (similar to the Greek vessel's name), recovers its original name: Urpu. In the same way, the carved figures of the Queros' borders receive the name of Katari, taken from the Andean sources.

The book also presents an intense inquiry of colonial times, when human images and its surroundings have a colorful presence in the Queros' surfaces. This new decoration did not alter, in its essence, the pattern of behavior displayed by those who used this objects.

Tracing the roots of this

humans. Cummins also calls our attention to one of the Andean chronicles written by a native, don Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua. In this early text, Santa Cruz Pachacuti narrates a detail of a long encounter between the lords of Cuzco and the Collas, lords of one of the kingdoms surrounding lake Titicaca. In their conversation, amid toasts made with Aqcha, a maize drink served in the Queros, they alternate menaces and gallantries that are recited to one another.

Was it possible to translate this ceremonial language to the European invaders? A long process of interaction might have been necessary for both societies to comprehend the advantages of using this ceremonial language. In any case, the Queros had a long lasting presence, even going beyond the times of evangelization and prosecution of idolatries, when any image made by the natives on wood,

Toasts with the Inca is a treatise about the manners, courtesy and ceremonial behavior styles that were displayed during the period from the rise of *Tahuantinsuyu* until the first moment of colonial times.

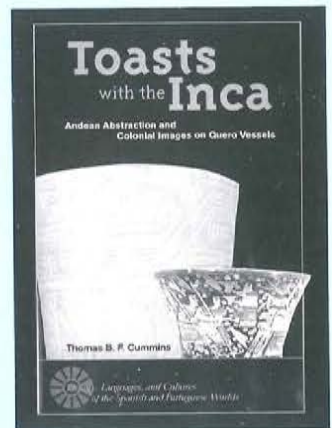
seal a pact or make an alliance with the Incas.

Through the study of these objects, Cummins describes the social universe in which the participants of the toast were involved. His book illustrates the materials that were used to make the vessels, the way they were decorated, their symbolic value, and the behavior involved with the pouring, toasting and drinking with the lords of Cuzco.

The author displays a remark-

behavior, the author takes us to the monoliths of Lake Titicaca's basin, where the humanoid sculptures seem provided with two left hands that carry many chicha vessels. What did the Tiwanakotas try to tell us by omitting the right hand when they could have easily sculpted it? We don't know. But the images renew the importance of the offering that consisted of chicha, a drink made of maize, used as part of the dialog between gods and

clay or metal, was seen with suspicion by the Spaniards. However, the replacement of geometrical drawings with scenes portraying human activities or their natural surroundings, marks the artists' efforts to translate in drawings their culture, ranging from myths, like the notorious one of Incarri and Collari, to the agricultural chores, or nature's beauty, with an abundance of flowers and hummingbirds, which seem to refer to the fertility of fields,



deeply affected by the Spanish invasion.

This step forward to realist art links the Quero spaces to other cultural expressions that were maintained in colonial times. Such is the case of the "Tocapus" or tassels which were placed in two or three lines adorning the lower part of the "Cumbis" or imperial noble dresses, that subsisted even in the colonial period. The Queros reflected these color painted designs, which once were interpreted as a kind of writing. Even though this hypothesis was discarded, such ornaments still distinguished the Incas elite's clothing, which was now reborn in the Queros, covering not only the object's surface but also used as part of the human figures represented.

But let's go back to the question that originated this line of thought. It is not possible to know whether the Spanish understood all the implications of the pre-Columbian Andean courtesy. In any case, the author, using Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's words, considers a positive answer, at least referring to its functionality. This is why he points out one of the most interesting drawings of the mentioned chronicle, where Guaman Poma portrays the Spanish authorities and

the indigenous that exploit the common man of the Andes, the Hatun Runa, having a toast. Cummins detects in this image the use of the toast and the Queros as a way to reassure the asymmetrical interpersonal relationships. The confrontation established between the one who offers and the one who receives the chicha is not casual, neither is the fact that these vessels have been always found in pairs, even when they are discovered in pre-Columbian tombs.

To help us understand this situation, Cummins reminds us of

the validity of the system of halves, which sustained the Andean society. When the toasters drank, in a simple ceremony, they offered to complete and asked for completion of a compromise or "Manay", as the ethnographical sources tell us. That is why the rebuff constituted, and still does, more than an insult, rather a real aggression.

Was that a sign of the encounter between Francisco Pizarro and the Inca Atahualpa going through the wrong path? With great insight, Cummins examines the scene of Caja-

marca and, following Titu Cussi Yupanqui's testimony, realizes that Father Vicente Valverde's indignation when he saw the "holy gospel on the ground" (barely mentioned in Titu Cussi's account) could not be compared to the aggression inflicted by Pizarro due to his refusal to drink the chicha offered by the Inca.

As any good book, *Toasts with the Inca* suggests more than it tells, and every paragraph becomes an incentive to learn even more of the subject. I am sure that this book will attract the attention of historians, anthro-

pologists and art historians; its quality makes any praise seem unnecessary.

Luis Millones, an Emeritus Professor of Universidad Nacional de Human-ga, in Ayacucho, Perú, is a Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor at Harvard. He is the author of *Las Confesiones de don Juan Vásquez*, to be reviewed in *Book Talk*, *ReVista*, Fall 2003. He is a member of the *Andean Seminar of Interdisciplinary Studies of the Andes*, Lima, Peru and a Professor of Graduate Studies at the University of San Marcos, Lima.

European and Andean Concepts of Time

Victoria Cox, *Guaman Poma de Ayala entre los conceptos andino y europeo del tiempo*. Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 2002.

REVIEW BY JOSÉ ANTONIO MAZZOTTI

WITH THE DISCOVERY OF Guaman Poma's manuscript of the *Primer nueva coronica y buen gobierno* in 1908 and its first publication in 1936, the image of the Incas and the Andean world in general began to change. Guaman Poma's work is one of the most important chronicles of the so-called "colonial" period. Its richness of detail, both in terms of texts and graphics, continues to inspire new and revealing scholarly studies. In her first book, Victoria Cox, a 2001 Library Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, analyzes the calendar system presented by Guaman Poma in order to explore Incan concepts of time and its organization. Cox suggests that Guaman Poma, even while grounding his presentation in European calendars and "reper-

torios", still managed to introduce those elements of Andean cosmogony which embody a native conception of time.

Cox, an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Appalachian State University, begins by describing the Incan calendar, which was based on the distribution of ceques or imaginary lines radiating from the religious center of Cuzco. Each ceque was marked by a number of huacas, or shrines, which were worshipped on specific days of the year. The Incan calendar was largely based on the agricultural cycles of cultivation and harvest, and therefore had solar, lunar and stellar components. All ritual life depended upon the cosmic cycles of insemination and reproduction. In the second chapter, Cox presents the main European sources for Guaman Poma, which stand in contrast to Incan conceptions of



time. Principal among these sources were Andrés de Li's *Repertorio de los tiempos* (1493) and Andrés de Zamorano's *Cronología y repertorio de la razón de los tiempos* (1594). Through her analysis of both texts, Cox is able to show in Chapter Three that Guaman Poma utilized many elements of the iconographies presented by Li and Zamorano in his description of the ritual and agricultural calendar of the Incas. Finally, Cox devotes her final chapter to underscoring the differences between Guaman Poma and his Spanish

sources; these include, most notably, Guaman Poma's particular use of the sun and the moon in some of his drawings, the Inca's role as the living center of the universe, and the presence of women in agricultural activities.

Victoria Cox's book is useful for those interested in the complexity of Guaman Poma's work. As Cox recognizes, there is still a need for a comparative, philological study of the texts of the "reperitorios" and the prose of Guaman Poma's. There is also a need to expand the discussion of references to include other European calendars and treatises about time. Nonetheless, Cox's book is a good introduction to the problem and will prove of interest to scholars in different disciplines.

José Antonio Mazzotti is an Associate Professor and Undergraduate Advisor in Latin American Studies, Dept. of Romance Languages & Literatures, at Harvard University. He is the author of *Poéticas del flujo, Migración y violencias verbales en el Perú de los '80*.

Shakespeare's Richard III

When Two Worlds Collide

BY REBECCA CANTU

TRUE TO HIS REPUTATION, Shakespeare continues to be a formidable foe for many, as his unfamiliar speech and complex plots are even further removed from our modern sensibilities by their temporal and geographical distance setting. Regardless, the past decade witnessed a revival of Shakespeare in American popular culture, with his more popular plays packaged for mass consumption. Their hip, cool spin, and twenty-something actors have successfully made Shakespeare more accessible and salient to the younger generation.

However, revamping and modernization has been reserved for the more "sexy" plays, in which intrigue and death revolve around issues of love. Yet, as historical tragedies in which court intrigue and power struggles occur within the framework of a historical era, many of Shakespeare's plays do not lend themselves to reinterpretation. Shakespeare's second longest play, *Richard III*, is one such example, whose plot is not only particularly complex, but also decidedly English in flavor.

Due to the efforts of a group of Harvard undergraduates, led by director Ken Herrera '03 and producer Mike Donahue '06, and the collaboration of Professor David Carrasco, the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club, and the ART theater company, *Richard III* is undergoing its own metamorphosis. Although Herrera's version of *Richard III* will reinterpret the classic style of the play, it departs from the general trend of placing Shakespeare in modern settings; rather, Herrera is keeping temporal continuity, chang-

ing geographic and cultural setting instead—the fall of the Aztec empire.

"We were all drawn by the concept of rethinking a classic play. It's the opportunity to sever history from its history," says Donahue. "It speaks to the human condition, and that's why it can cross cultural boundaries."

Richard III is the tale of the Duke of Gloucester, the brother of King Edward IV, who plots to seize the throne, which can only be realized if he removes the obstacles—and the people—that stand in his way. According to Herrera, because Richard is shunned by his society because of his looks, he decides to manipulate the mechanisms that direct behavior in that society. By skillfully controlling the court and those in power, Richard rises along the line of succession, only to find himself with few allies, and under attack by Henry Tudor, the future king of England (Henry VII) during his moment of triumph. Ultimately, Richard is not only undone by the political forces that seek to prevent his rule, but also by the ghosts of his murder victims, who plague him and drive him to madness.

The fall of Richard III is an event particular to English history, yet, as in other Shakespearean plays, the plot reveals itself to be unconstrained by the fetters of the era, as the setting and the people serve only as means to explore human turmoil.

"During the 15th century, there is only one world view, and every sphere, religious, political or otherwise, is combined. By abusing the mechanisms that operate in the singular world view, when you get to the top,



Anne and Richard

you undercut that which supported your rise, and that eventually leads to your downfall," says Herrera.

Beyond the continuity of human nature that allows the transfer of late 15th century England to the fall of the Aztec Empire (early 16th century), the two settings also share the occurrence of an invasion that leads to the downfall of the government in power. On the British side, there is the invasion by Henry Tudor and the death of Richard III, which Herrera has paralleled with the invasion of the Aztec empire by Hernán Cortez, and the death of Montezuma. "Besides the invasion motif, the themes of the sun/moon and that of men/women work will in both cultural contexts," says Herrera.

Herrera, who has directed two other productions during his time at Harvard, explains that he was drawn to *Richard III* because of the play's powerful images. "It was the imagery that caught me, and what I wanted to explore theatrically. I also thought that *returning* to the imagery is what could be particularly powerful on stage and

what could be brought to life." The imagery's focus is two fold: first, the Aztec temple, which dominates the stage and draws the gaze of the audience to a pinnacle, and second, the skull rack, made of roughly hewn wood and foam skulls, which juxtaposes death and beauty. Particularly important to the production is the use of color and costume. The costumes and the sets feature bright, vibrant colors, with many blues and turquoises to create, in Herrera's words, a "bright, bright world."

Inspiration for the vivid costumes and scenery came from the Diego Rivera murals in Mexico City that depict Tenochtitlán and the glory of the Aztec empire. The Rivera murals provided an access point both for Herrera and for the production in general, evoking the desire to create a world that is as equally lively and vibrant.

Given the complex nature of the play itself, and the exoticness of the Aztec culture, the overall goal of the production is to "allow people to access the images," says Herrera, and to provide a very light contrast

(through the imagery) to the dark actions and themes that exist throughout the play.

Donahue is careful to point out that *Richard III* is not a strict revival of Aztec culture, but rather, a stylized and slightly abstract interpretation of the culture.

"It's hard to go into that world with a 20th century sensibility," says Donahue, "but we want to provide a way to learn about the Aztec Culture." As a result, the production focuses on the exterior and performative nature of the Aztec religion through the music and dance interspersed in the play. It is precisely for this reason that the temple is such an integral part of the set, as it conveys the stature of religion in Aztec life and its use as a site of every-day celebration. "People sometimes get too caught up in the language, and we want to show more of the human emotion

that exists in both the play and in the Aztec culture," he adds.

In another departure from the classic interpretation of the play, Herrera has incorporated traditional Aztec dancing throughout the play. One of the dances will end in a reenactment of a ritual sacrifice, although both Herrera and Donahue point out that the sacrifice is not meant to glorify death or gore, but rather to demonstrate the aesthetic beauty embodied in another culture's rituals.

"We really want to show Aztec dance as vibrant and colorful in order to reduce the audience's shock brought to the death and sacrifice in the play. We are trying to focus on other aspects of the culture and bring out the beauty," says Raudel Yanez '06, the production's choreographer. The production will feature three separate dances, the first of which will have at least ten people. In

the subsequent dances, the number of dancers becomes smaller, paralleling the overall decrease of characters (as a result of numerous murders) and the growing sense of horror.

In addition to targeting the traditional theater audience—season ticket holders and Shakespeare lovers—the cast and crew of *Richard III* hopes to reach a more diverse audience through its advertising efforts. The cast hopes to attract large groups and classes that are interested in Aztec and Hispanic culture through group discounts, bilingual posters, postering in Hispanic neighborhoods, and targeting Latinos and Latino groups.

Although Shakespeare purists may critique this new version of *Richard III*, particularly because it reinterprets the play through a cultural lens that is entirely foreign to the original setting, this

reinterpretation is especially important given its Hispanic view point. Professor Carrasco, who shared his research on Latin-American religions with the cast and crew, explains, in an email, the necessity of reinterpreting classic literature: "We have now entered a cultural period which I call the "Brown Millennium" meaning that Latino/a cultural and political forms and creativities are beginning to renovate various dimensions of U.S. society. There is a growing sense of urgency that the Brown faces, families, stories and imaginations be given social and artistic space and support so that, in my words, the new demography can contribute to a new democracy."

Rebecca Cantu is a junior at Harvard College, where she is active in Baile Folklorico. She is an intern in the DRCLAS publications department.

Letters to the Editor

Dear June,

Along these years I have witnessed how DRCLAS has grown from the former Committee for Latin American and Iberian Studies. A new building, brand new publications, many new activities, and, later on, a new periodical, *ReVista* have stated an impressive deployment of Harvard's commitment with Latin American studies.

Yet, no matter how impressive and praised all these achievements have been, and I congratulate you all, I feel some major ingredient has been lost along the road: the Iberian peninsula. When I was appointed as a Visiting Scholar in 1994 to the Committee and, later on, to DRCLAS, Spain and Portugal were not only parts of the Latin American dimension but also a field of study by itself. Now no Iberian perspective seems to count, by itself or as a collateral ingredient, in the *ReVista*. Would it be possible to reconsider

ReVista not just as a "Harvard Review of Latin America" in a narrow sense and widens its scope to, at least, the Iberian participation and perspectives of Latin America?

My concerns are not a product of my national origins but a genuine worry aroused by my own understanding of the Americas. I have witnessed along these years how Spain has retreated from really considering itself a part of Latin America—to be European is not an exclusive identity. I believe DRCLAS, and particularly, the *ReVista* is an excellent academic space to encourage serious research and academic exchange on Latin America and those distant but really connected outliers to that continent that are the Portugal and Spain.

—FERNANDO MONGE
ASSOCIATE RESEARCHER
DEPARTAMENTO DE HISTORIA DE AMÉRICA,
CSIC SPAIN

Editor's Response:

Fernando, that's a very valuable point you are making. I'll keep it in mind in future issues.

CONTACT REVISTA

Letters to the editor are welcome in English, Spanish or Portuguese!

Please send your comments, suggestions and complaints to:

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or

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Cambridge, MA 02138

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COLOMBIA



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