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To *La Platica del Norte* readers, Beginning 2024 *La Platica* will be published once (1) a year, electronically. Print copies will be limited.
The Editors



Editorial

Bienvenidos a otra edición de La Platica del Norte. Aquí estoy para avisar que I am WOKE. Es decir, I woke up to what is happening in the U.S. and the world. In the U.S., the 1%, the rich who elected Donald Trump, lowered taxes for the rich, took control of the Supreme Court, did away with environmental regulations and attempted to take control of the Capitol and government of the US on 1/6 2021, this was not enough. Now they want to take over the U.S. government period. They believe that if they default on the debt ceiling, the US economy would fall into a depression leading to huge job losses and who knows what else. They would then be able to create a government and economy more to their liking. That is, one with an authoritarian figure such as Trump in power, and without social security or any type of social safety net programs or unions as well as low or no taxes for the rich.

Republicans are demanding massive spending cuts which would disproportionately punish low-income Americans and working families, including making it more difficult for the poor to put food on the table. If Democrats refuse to pay this ransom, the GOP says, Republicans will crash the economy on purpose. Even if they do not manage to crash the economy, they will likely force Biden to make concessions. This seems to happen every few years. Under Trump the debt ceiling was raised three times. Each time the right manages to erode our social safety net a little more to where soon they will succeed in destroying gains that have been made by progressives over the years.

Why do they want to do this? The billionaires and corporations have always dreamed of going back to the days of the Gilded Age (1870-1890) which was a time of great change. Workers arrived in the cities in big numbers to take advantage of industrial jobs. Leaders of large corporations called robber barons made huge fortunes while the majority of the working class lived in poverty. There was no type of social programs such as social security, Medicare, welfare, or public housing. Education was mostly private. Now let's take a look at what Congress finally approved.

What Congress finally approved is the following: 1) the clause in last year's Inflation Reduction Act to allocate 80 billion more to the IRS to help stop rich people from evading taxes is being cut by \$20 billion. 2) Work requirements for people on food stamps will be increased. 3) The bill will approve all remaining permits to complete the Mountain Valley Pipeline in West Virginia delivering a big win for West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin. Environmental groups have fought its construction for years and have managed to hold up construction until now. President Biden has stated that it was a case of bipartisanship. I would call it a case of the representatives of the 1% kowtowing to their corporate donors.

Meanwhile locally, the Las Tusas fire is out. I visited Los Vigiles where I grew up recently and the canal that takes water to Storrie Lake was running. Friends there informed me that its been running all year which is good, but we must remember that one or a few good years does not negate climate change, witness the hot days in the US as well as most of the world, and the fires in Canada. As I write the island of Maui has been virtually destroyed by fire, more people are displaced, and officials wonder how they could have minimized the disaster.

Fittingly, the writings in this issue address misperceptions and injustices, ranging from denial mixed with shame of African mixture in Mexico, to the history of poverty in New Mexico, and the historical genocide of Indigenous peoples in the U.S with its legacy left by the perpetrators to their descendants. Also discussed are uprisings against the authoritarian State in Latin America, organizing against continued destruction of the environment for the sake of police militarization, and opposition to Zionism. We also memorialize an exceptional human being, Dianne Lindsay, who crossed the veil July of this year, 2023 ●

Stay well, *Fred and Yoly*

Africa's Legacy in Mexico: What Is a Mexican?



Africa's Legacy in Mexico: What Is a Mexican?

Miriam Jiménez Román

Originally published for Smithsonian Education as part of the exhibit 'Africa's Legacy in Mexico: Photograph by Tony Gleaton'

Black people in Mexico? The looks of amazement and disbelief on the faces of first-time viewers of Tony Gleaton's photographs are eloquent testimony to the significance of these images. Particularly to those who have little or no knowledge about societies beyond the borders of the United States, these photographs are a revelation. They force us to rethink many of our preconceptions not only about our southern neighbor but more generally about issues such as race, ethnicity, culture, and national identity.

Not long ago, on a hot and humid July day, I rode with friends to the town of Yanga, in the state of Veracruz on Mexico's gulf coast. In recent years, Yanga has received considerable attention as one of the Americas' earliest "maroon communities": settlements founded by fugitive slaves. Originally known as San Lorenzo de los Negros, in 1932 the town was renamed for its founder, a rebellious Muslim man from what is now Nigeria. In 1609, after resisting recapture for 38 years, Yanga negotiated with the Spaniards to establish a free black community.

Today a recently erected statue of Yanga stands on the outskirts of the town, more a testimony to the persistence of a few Mexican anthropologists who "re-discovered" the place than to the historical memory of its founders' descendants. For as I strolled through the area and talked to the residents, and saw the evidence of an African past in their faces, I discovered that they have little more than amused curiosity about the outsiders who express interest in that past. Yanga's people have quite simply been living their lives as they always have, making the adjustments necessary in a changing world and giving little thought to an aspect of their history for which they are now being celebrated.

The story of Yanga and his followers is remarkable for being so typical: The town's relative isolation is the reason for its founding and for its continued existence as a predominately black enclave. Fugitive slave communities were commonly established in difficult-to-reach areas in order to secure their inhabitants from recapture.

But their physical isolation has also led to their being ignored. Particularly since the Revolution (1910-29), the Yangas of Mexico--most found dispersed throughout the states of Veracruz on the gulf coast and Oaxaca and Guerrero south of Acapulco--have been out of sight and out of mind, generally considered unworthy of any special attention. (1, 2). Mexico's African presence has been relegated to an obscured slave past, pushed aside in the interest of a national identity based on a mixture of indigenous and European cultural mestizaje. In practice, this ideology of "racial democracy" favors the European presence; too often the nation's glorious indigenous past is reduced to folklore and ceremonial showcasing. But the handling of the African "third root" is even more dismissive. For all intents and purposes the biological, cultural, and material contributions of more than 200,000 (3) Africans and their descendants to the formation of Mexican society do not figure in the equation at all. Because they live as their neighbors live, carry out the same work, eat the same foods, and make the same music, it is assumed that blacks have assimilated into "Mexican" society. The truth of the matter is, they are Mexican society. The historical record offers compelling evidence that Africans and their descendants contributed enormously to the very formation of Mexican culture.

When Yanga and his followers founded their settlement, the population of Mexico City consisted of approximately 36,000 Africans, 116,000 persons of African ancestry, and only 14,000 (4) Europeans. Escaped slaves added to the overwhelming numbers in the cities, establishing communities in Oaxaca as early as 1523. Beyond their physical presence, Africans and their descendants interacted with indigenous and European peoples in forging nearly every aspect of society. Indeed, the states of Guerrero and Morelos bear the names of two men of African ancestry, heroes of the war of independence that made possible the founding of the republic of Mexico in 1821.

It is within this context that we must view Tony Gleaton's photographs. The people in these images, ignored in the past, now run the risk of being exoticized, of being brought forward to applaud their "Africanness" while ignoring their "Mexicanness." The faces of these children and grandmothers should remind us of the generations that preceded them. But we must not relegate them to history. As always, they remain active participants in their world. To understand the implications of the people of Yanga--and of Cuajinicuilapa, El Ciruelo, Corralero, and other like

communities--we must go beyond physical appearance, cease determining the extent of Africa's influence simply by how much one "looks" African, and go forward to critically examine what indeed is Mexico and who are the Mexicans.

So, yes, there are black people in Mexico. We may marvel at these relatively isolated communities that can still be found along the Pacific and gulf coasts. But of greater significance is recognizing the myriad forms that mark the African presence in Mexican culture, past and present, many of which remain to be discovered by people such as Tony Gleaton and ourselves and certainly by the Mexican people ●

Notes

1. There are notable exceptions to this lack of attention. The anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán's seminal works ("La Población Negra de México, 1519-1810." México: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1946; and "Cuijla: Esbozo Etnográfico de un Pueblo Negro." Veracruz, México: Universidad Veracruzana, 1989) remain among the most important on the subject. Doubtless influenced by the interest in Africans and their descendants in other parts of the world, during the past decade a small but significant group of Mexican intellectuals have begun focusing on black Mexicans.

2. It is true that the state of Veracruz (and especially the port city of the same name) is generally recognized as having "black" people. In fact, there is a widespread tendency to identify all Mexicans who have distinctively "black" features as coming from Veracruz. In addition to its relatively well-known history as a major slave port, Veracruz received significant numbers of descendants of Africa from Haiti and Cuba during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

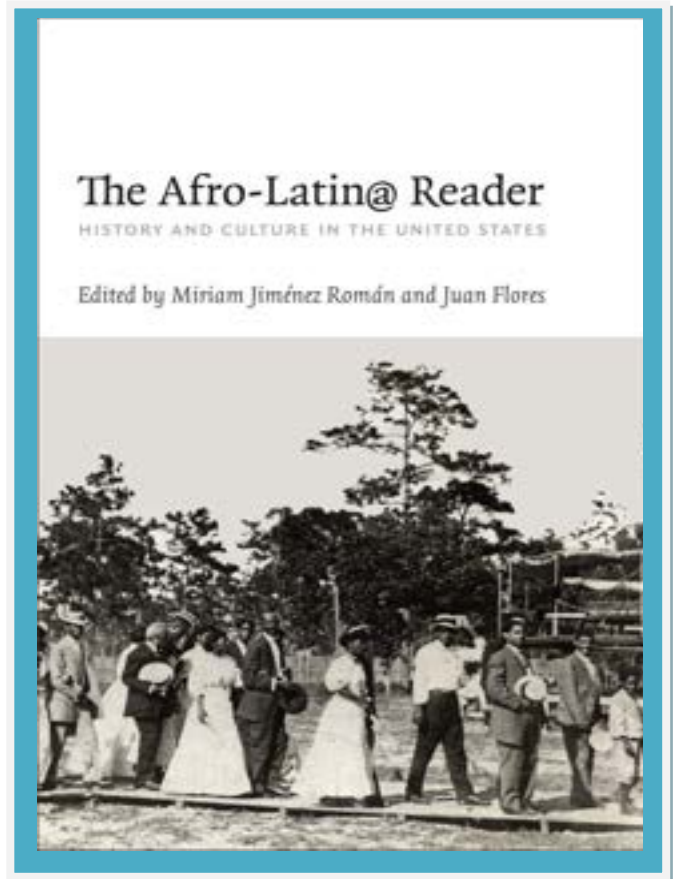
3. It is impossible to arrive at precise figures on the volume of enslaved Africans brought to Mexico or the rest of the Americas. Hungry for slaves and eager to avoid payment of duties, traders and buyers often resorted to smuggling. The 200,000 figure is generally recognized as a conservative estimate.

4. The source of these figures is the census of 1646 of Mexico City, as reported by Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán in "La Población Negra de México" (p. 237). These approximate figures include as persons of African ancestry only those designated as "Afromestizos," in accordance with the caste-system definitions at the time. The census indicates that there were also more than a million indigenous peoples. In fact, such precise

definitions were almost impossible to make, and it is highly probable that the categories "Euromestizos" and "Indomestizos" also included persons of African Descent.

Miriam Jiménez Román was a Puerto-Rican professor, editor, archivist, curator, social theorist, activist and author on Afro-Latino culture who co-edited with Juan Flores *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States*. She founded the afrolatin@ forum, a non-profit that centers Blackness within Latinidad. Miriam walked on in 2020.

Tony Gleaton, an African-American photographer, was born in 1948, Detroit, MI known for many photographs including his series "Africa's Legacy in Mexico" which showcased the legacy of Black people in Mexico and Central America. Tony walked on in 2015.



Other publications by Miriam:

- Jiménez Román, Miriam. "Un hombre (negro) del pueblo: José Celso Barbosa and the Puerto Rican Race Towards Whiteness." *Center for Puerto Rican Studies*, Volume 8, 1996.
- Jiménez Román, Miriam. "Looking at that Middle Ground: Racial Mixing as Panacea?" *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and its Diaspora* 8, no. 1 (Winter, 2005): 65-79.

Renganche 3

Alvin Korte

Poverty is the worst kind of violence

M. Gandhi

Two previous renganche papers were published in an issue of *La Platica del Norte*. The content of this paper owes a lot to Dr. Rubén Donato who has written extensively about the abnegation of a right to education for the beet worker's children, decent housing and fair wages in the Colorado of the late 20s and 30s. The section on the renganche also owes a lot to the writings of Eric Hoffer a San Francisco longshoreman working in the docks by day and at night going to the library to read and ponder some larger questions about the role of the true believer, the passionate state of mind, and the internal and external migration of people seeking a better life. His is in highlighting the struggle of poor people seeking a better life. Dr. Donato's book particularly *Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado Schools and Communities 1920-1960* gave me a better understanding of the period around 1927 when my grandfather's family left Las Vegas, New Mexico bound for La Junta, Colorado and the beet fields of Rocky Ford. Donato's work is important as he considers the social conditions of migrants and the racist attitudes of the beet farmer, unwilling to provide a living wage, housing, and education for migrant children; it considers people's aspirations to be treated fairly.

Eric Hoffer's major idea is "tramps as pioneers." Hoffer wondered why men left their home in search of a better life. These persons, who became known as pioneers, risked everything and went into the wilderness. Hoffer captures the essence of this when he comments further:

All these people craved change, some probably actuated by the naïve belief that change in place brings with it change in luck. Many wanted to go to a place where they were not known and there make a new beginning. Certainly they did not go out deliberately in search of hard work and suffering. If in the end, they shouldered tasks, endured unspeakable hardships, and accomplished the impossible, it was because they had to. They became men of action on the run. They acquired strength and skill in the inescapable struggle for existence. It was a question of do or die. And once they tasted the joy of achievement they craved for more (Hoffer 1963, 115-116).

Both of my grandfathers had strong motives for leaving their homelands for a distant destination. My great grandfather left Germany probably from Bremen or Bremanhaven in 1860 at the Port of New Orleans.

Grandfather Atilano Baca, his wife Francisca, and his eleven children left Tecolotito around 1923 to live and work in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Belarmino Baca, the youngest Baca (Born in 1916) was interviewed in 2007 at his home in Fontana, California. He stated that Atilano Baca Senior took the older men in the family to work at "la escoba" in the Tucumcari, New Mexico area. Belarmino was one of the youngest and remembered going to the Las Vegas dump which was located at the time on the east mesa where the Highlands, West and East schools have their school logos formed by the rocks and painted white. The remaining Baca boys would scour the dump for red bicycle tubes from which his mother would sew into women's purses. She would add beads to dress up the purses. The kids would go to the bars at night to try to sell the purses for whatever they could get. Additionally, Belarmino Baca talked about trying to eat water and flour and getting constipated by the inedible mess. They were starving in Las Vegas. In 1925 thirteen members of the Baca family boarded a "renganche" train to go to La Junta, Colorado. From there they were taken to Rocky Ford, Colorado. Belarmino Baca said that they were taken to a house with two rooms. The large room had a canvas on the floor which became a "mattress" of thin straw (Baca 2007).

Throughout the book, Donato describes the term *greasers* applied to both Mexicans and Hispanos. Mexicans are citizens from the Mexican Republic and Hispanos are from Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. The Mexicans often petitioned the Mexican Consul for different types of assistance to deal with the discrimination. Donato and Hanson offer several pages of pictures which they brought back from the Mexican Archives in Mexico City. (Donato & Hanson 2021). They are largely of doors to establishments in Arkansas with the signs "No Mexicans." The Mexican Consul was located in Denver.

Hispanos from New Mexico and Southern Colorado came to Colorado with a history of social involvement, such as Mutual Assistance committees. They came with a history of doing for themselves and from areas that had no institutions for mutual support and self-government. Atilano Baca, my grandfather, was the head of his

family. He wrote in Spanish for a Las Vegas newspaper *La Voz del Pueblo* to announce his sister's betrothal, and as a witness to a fire. Dan Flores' (2014; 2015) two books on Anton Chico) lists Baca as an attorney. Atilano Baca Senior lost an election for Probate Judge in Guadalupe County by about 50 votes to a man named Cleofas Baca. Along with two or three others in a *resolución de condolencia* (*La Voz del Pueblo*, 1914). He would go with two other members with funds to assist families who had recently lost a family member. In the pages that follow, I present the system by which Atilano Baca's family experienced a pauperization process leaving them poorer and worse off.

Thomas F. Mahoney's View of Poverty

Thomas F. Mahoney was a fighter for social and economic justice from the 1920s to the 1940s in Colorado. He challenged what the beet industry produced namely bad housing, low wages, child labor, and recalcitrant school officials who refused to enforce compulsory attendance rules. Mahoney wasn't involved with a university or the clergy. ... Mahoney's work was supported by the Catholic organization namely the Knights of Columbus of Longmont, Colorado. Mahoney's Mexican Welfare Committee had one focus on wages paid to its workers. We need to point out that the beet company wanted large families units including children to contract for the planting, hoeing and topping to the sugar beets in a delineated parcel of land. Mahoney pointed out how children were to get around compulsory school attendance (Donato 2007, 14-15).

Donato quotes a story in *The New Republic*:

We have it on the authority of Mr. Thomas Mahoney, Chairman of the Mexican Welfare Committee of the Knights of Columbus, that the average earnings of these workers per family of father, mother, and children from seven years up, is but \$600 a year. While they are technically employees of the beet-growers, they are recruited by the sugar companies and assigned to the farmers; they sign labor contracts prepared by the companies; and they are paid by company checks. There are about 28,000 workers in the Colorado beet fields. Many of the children working an average of over nine hours a day, and in some cases ten to fourteen hours a day. Many of the children are out of school, in

violation of the school laws. The shacks provided for these families have only one sleeping room. There is no assurance that the Great Western Sugar company would do anything to improve labor conditions if the duty were increased; its profits are already ample (Donato 2007, 16).

Cervi's Journal Article October 11, 2017

The purpose here is to elucidate life the problem of sanitary conditions at the work camps was a problem in 1971 as this article states. As of this writing and the date of the article in 1971 is 52 years. Much has happened during this prevailing period. It gives one a better understanding of improving the lot of the farm workers who in 1971 were still under the yoke of poverty, ill health and inhospitable conditions in the fields of shame. I take this up with some observations from which I will speculate on what happened to Atilano's family from 1927 on to 1932. We start with the Cervi story.

It doesn't get dark. The dark simply seeps out through the cracks in the ceiling and the walls. The rats have no trouble getting in.

You can smell the morning, it isn't fresh, but it isn't like the city. It should smell like the countryside – of alfalfa and sweet air. It smells like over cooked and greasy double burners of leaky gas two burners. It's the smell the rats come to investigate in the first place.

One of the kids has a kidney infection. His spotted mattress on the floor on one corner of the large single room magnifies the smell inside.

Skunks have wandered down through narrow washes into the camp during the night to scavenge scraps from the open garbage cans.

Finally, you can hear every sound inside the camp. Mothers rise and dress and wake the kids and dress them. The women's showers and lavatories and stools are one side of a corrugated metal shed facing the main dirt road through the labor road.

When breakfast is prepared, the men, bare from the waist up, shuffle out to the long, metal shed

and turn on the rusting fixtures in the showers, then shave in front of the row of the cracked mirrors over the chipped porcelain sinks.

You think of the Army. There is no privacy. And the showers and the sinks and cramped commodes have been used by too many men (Cervi's Journal 1971,1).



Atilano Baca and his family: Rocky Ford, Colorado

If you have a good boss you may get some valued perks such as toilets or cold water out in the fields. Field toilets are based one for every 25 workers and you get 21 dollars an acre on the first weeding, for working from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. and if you don't... You're told belated, "the first weeding was done by machinery, before you arrived. You made \$11—not \$21. Not even \$17.50 if you've thinned with a hoe. And you find the hoe was rented to you. It comes out of your pay. As much as \$3. Another \$2 for FICA, and you've made \$6 an acre, *if* you've gotten to work. It's legal. The grower is within the law. If you complain, who listens?" (Cervi's Journal 1971, 4). There are two other considerations that need to be addressed. One is the problem of sanitation and the other is tuberculosis in the camps. One of the points made about sanitation is that only two Sanitary Officers Department of Health in Colorado in 1971. There were also few dollars for the Colorado Migrant Health Program. One of the consequences of these conditions were stagnant pools of waste water or contaminated water in ditches from fecal matter. Cervi's Journal tells us that,

Health care is threatened, impeded because of the illegals—some 2,500 in the state this year [1971] with an estimated 400 to 1,000 still in the state. Illnesses among the non-immunized illegals are not only worse but of longer duration, than those

of the migrants. You can't find a grower who will admit he has hired an illegal alien, even after seizure of some on his land by immigration officials, such as the 120 recently rounded up in the San Luis Valley (Cervi's Journal, 1971, 5).

Among some of the diseases reported by a public Health Nurse in the 1971 article were rheumatic fever, tuberculosis, glomerulonephritis, tonsillitis and an occasional broken bone in a worker fearful of reporting it. "But she can't get near the illegal aliens—where the incidence is four or five times greater, and the chances of small [pox?] or other epidemic-type disease is a constant worry (Cervi's Journal 1971,4-5).

Early Deaths in the Baca Household

Belarmino Baca in June 2007 son of Atilano Baca in a Fontana, California interview told Pat Baca and myself that it seemed as if "we were burying someone every year" in the Baca household. Indeed even before the interview I had in my possession an inventory developed by my mother in which she listed the following: name of sibling, year born, death year for each of the eleven members of the Atilano Baca family. Actually there were twelve children born. The oldest was named José Bernardo Baca but that is also another story. There were six males and five females in Atilano's family. Atilano Baca died on March 17, 1953. He is buried in the Potter's field part of the Rocky Ford, Colorado cemetery.

In one study produced by the Colorado Agriculture College from Ft. Collins, of 187 beet families studied 443 children had died. In the Arkansas Valley out of 140 families with 1,079 children, 309 (28.6%) children died (Donato 2007, 26). In terms of the Baca family a sheet exists where each family member is listed in terms of year of death, marital status and number of children per marriage. We have a verified year for Octaviano Baca who died in 1927, he was 22 years of age. The following Bacas from the Atilano household died after the 1930 Census, namely his wife Francesca, and adult children namely Alfonso, Luis and Emma. Belarmino noted that each year we were burying someone. Did they die from tuberculosis?

El Contrato

The farmers at that time contracted whole family units to work a given acreage for the weeding, thinning and topping the beets. In the Belarmino Baca interview we learned that the oldest male named Fernando, a 19 year old in the 1930 census was the task master. ► p.14

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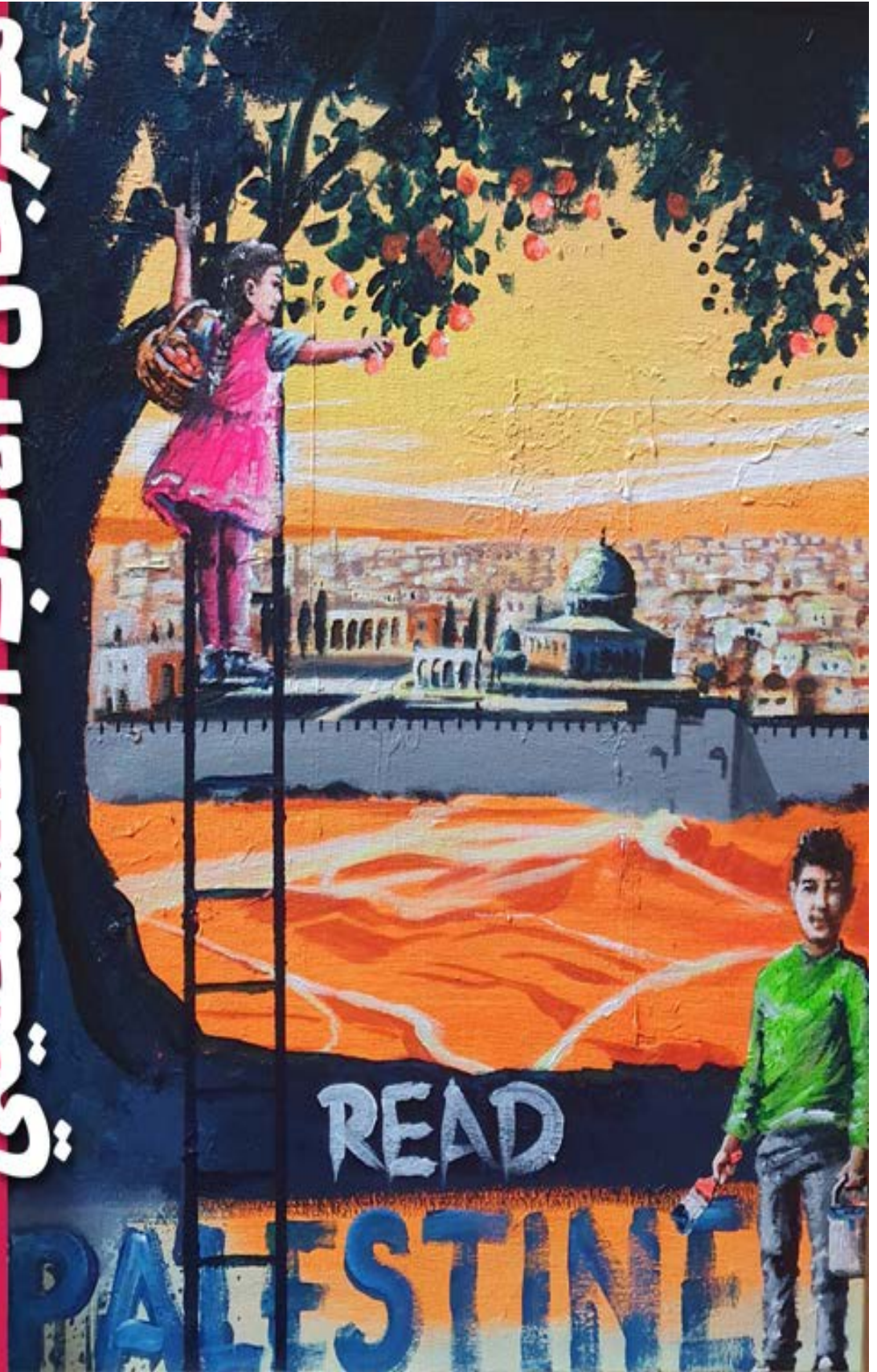
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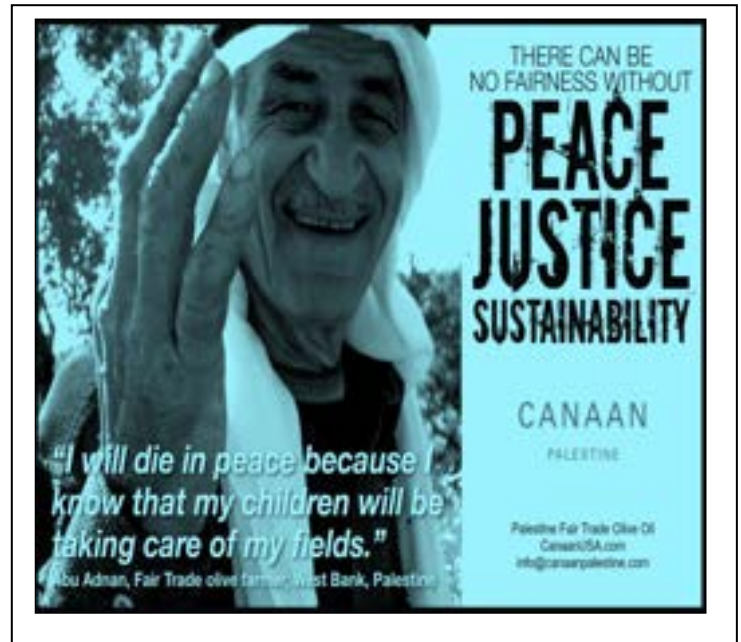
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To *La Platica del Norte* audience-

As of 2024, *La Platica del Norte* will be publishing once a year in electronic form. Hard copies will be limited.

Gracias,
The Editors.



THERE CAN BE
NO FAIRNESS WITHOUT
**PEACE
JUSTICE
SUSTAINABILITY**

CANAAN
PALESTINE

"I will die in peace because I know that my children will be taking care of my fields."
Abu Adnan, Fair Trade olive farmer, West Bank, Palestine

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Que Es La Palestina?
The anti-Zionist Jewish Voice

Yoly Zentella

“Palestinian stories are essential to decolonization, yet they have been suppressed and are often only countenanced if supported by Jewish endorsement. For example, Palestinians have been saying that Israel is an apartheid state for decades, but it wasn’t until B’tselem, the Israeli human rights organization, acknowledged this fact in early 2021 that Israeli apartheid suddenly became universally credible. In an environment where they can only be heard if a Jewish ally confirms what they have been saying, Palestinians understandably grow angry”

(Noura Erakat, excerpt from Foreword in *A Land With A People: Palestinians and Jews Confront Zionism* (2021, p. 6)

Political Zionism, in the instance of Palestine, was a 19th century Jewish nationalist movement with the goal of creating and supporting a Jewish state in Palestine, ancient homeland of the Jews (Zentella, *La Platica del Norte*, V6, N1, 2023, p.12). Decades later, the Holocaust, or the Shoah, the catastrophe, accelerated the movement. Thinking about the still unfolding project of Zionism, takes me back to Bernie, a friend in NYC, early ‘80s, a Holocaust survivor, astutely able to see through the shameful use of the Holocaust as a justification for the occupation of Palestine. The Holocaust, a horrific strategy of World War II, victimized millions of people, Jews, Christians, Roma, communists and other “types” deemed inferior by the Nazis. After the war, the reality of the Holocaust called for immediate action, for re-settlement of displaced victims. It was the graphic image of Jewish refugees waiting afloat in ships, which Zionists used to encourage pity for displaced Jews and support of the Palestine homeland project, while denying any sympathy to native Palestinians, displaced by Zionist forces from their lands and homes, exiled, many killed. And, Bernie understood the issues surrounding the establishment of Israel well, he was a pioneer in opposing the creation of Israel to the detriment of the Palestinians; victimization is not a reason to victimize others.



In 2019, *The Link*, (V52, N1, Jan-Mar) published “Jews Step Forward”, an issue long article written by filmmaker Marjorie Wright, who was raised a Christian Zionist, a religious space where “the words Israeli and Israelite were almost interchangeable terms; still true today across many Christian fundamentalist congregations” (p. 5). This interchangeability of terms, *Israelite* and *Israeli* gives a false perception of contemporary Israelis who are racially and ethnically diverse, considering the migrations from various parts of the world to Israel in an effort to populate the mythically “land without a people”. Now the State of Israel, once the land of Palestine, has been virtually cleansed of Palestinians, save for the *occupied territories*, continually under attack by extremist settlers. Interestingly, Christians in Israel are currently under attack by Israeli extremists as well (ifamericansknew.org “Christians come under attack as Israeli leaders get more extreme”. Aug 4, 2023 Lily Galilli, reposted from *Middle East Eye*.)



In “Jews Step Forward” Wright describes her journey from a Christian Zionist upbringing to pro-Palestinian activist, and the “aha!” moment that led to the latter. To illustrate the evolving political thought by U.S. Jews on Israel, she begins with a brief historical account of Jewish immigration, 1880s to 1920s, to New York’s Ellis Island. Joining the working class, Jews filled the progressive ranks of labor unions and social justice organizations, serving as models for their descendants who engaged in progressive, leftist traditions during the ‘60s, ‘70’s and ‘80s, participating in the opposition to South Africa’s apartheid, and the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. But, a tradition of social justice activism did not always lead to opposing Israeli occupation of Palestine. Instead, support for the State of Israel, established in 1948, appears as the norm even among progressive Jews. Yet, some Jews, like Bernie have “stepped forward”. Scholars like Finkelstein (2000), Pappé (2011), and numbers of others, have described events, details, and machinations, glaringly showing an Israel that compromised victims of the Holocaust and their descendants by making them complicit, particularly through military action, in the Nakba, (1947-1949), the catastrophe. The term Nakba embodies the destruction of Palestinian life continuing today through displacement, confiscation of lands, destruction of homes and people including children, collective punishment, exile, and living within a glaringly abusive apartheid system that injures spiritually both victims and perpetrators.

Wright continues, describing the transformation of numbers of Jews from supporters of Israel to an often painful acknowledgement of what Israel has become. Plainly put by Dorothy Zellner one individual presented in the article, “I could not work to make sure that Black people in Mississippi had the right to vote and then turn around and be supportive of a state where every citizen does not have equal rights before the law . . . it is not a privilege to fight to change our community. It is a moral imperative” (p, 4). Here, Zellner’s willingness to see the contradiction of “justice for some, not for all” is in synch with Avigail Abarbanel’s description of denial and group loyalty in “Exiting Zionism – A former Israeli’s Awakening” (*Mondoweiss*, 2022; reprinted in *La Platica del Norte*, 2023, N1). Abarbanel describes characteristics of the Jewish Israeli belief system being similar to that of cults, “Loyalty to the group is the highest value each individual can have in their life. Loyalty is absolute, even if members think the group is doing something wrong” (*Mondoweiss*, 2022; *La Platica del Norte*, p. 25).

Wright’s awakening about Israel came in the late ‘80s when she learned of “the Israeli military policy of breaking children’s bones if they threw stones, as a punishment and disincentive” (The Link, p. 5), an atrocity that led her to activism – filming interviews, collaborating with other Israeli artists, and producing a documentary based on interviews with Israeli Jewish peace activists, *Voices from Inside, Israelis Speak*; the foundation for the documentary “Jews Step Forward” (Link p. 5). Wright describes the documentary as a “. . . confession by informed Jews who deconstruct Zionism. . .” (p. 6), based on interviews with 24 U.S. Jewish activists, spanning generations, localities, and occupations, describing an evolving Jewish support of Palestinian rights, binding them “. . . the way religion or Zionist loyalty formally did” (p. 6).

Jewish voices addressing the realities of Israel overlapped by Palestinian voices describing their experiences under occupation make for a balanced collective voice, intertwining their individual experiences of Zionism; their coming together is well illustrated in, *A Land With A People* (2021), a collection of writings and photographs. Esther Farmer, one of the volume’s editors, and a Jewish voice of dissent in her own right, recalls her father Harry Gouldin, “My father’s other belief, which has turned out to be extremely significant, is his questioning the rationale for a Jewish state altogether. He had the guts to question why a Jewish state was a good thing”. “He thought it would turn out to be a disaster for Jews and the world, given that Israel was being built on the backs of the Palestinians. He taught us that it was simply not fair to scapegoat Palestinians for the Holocaust, when they had nothing to do with it. He felt strongly that, because of the Holocaust, Jews were vulnerable to being used by powerful players who wanted Israel for their own interests. My father always identified as a Palestinian Jew” (p. 102).

Contrary to mainstream media which generally supports Israel, there have been in the past and continue to be, Jews that have traveled the path from belief in the establishment of Israel no matter what, to understanding the gravity of erasing a people, the Palestinians, from a land in order to have a place that offers Jews a safe place. But does it? This is what my friend Bernie saw decades ago, as I discussed politics with he and his wife Sarah in the living room of their home, and this is what he was so adamant about, this gentle, intelligent man who had been in a camp during the Holocaust. ► p.23

One of the by-products of this system is that children are not in school but working the fields. Most migrant children says Donato only completed the 4th grade (Grammar Schools). Many of the children suffered injuries in the fields or deformations of the spine. Even providing this much education in separate but unequal schools led to children's feelings of inadequacy and under achievement. Registration documents for the draft show that four uncles who served in WWII had only "Grammar" School.

At the end of the harvest, Atilano Baca had a \$300 dollar debt at the company store. He couldn't go back to New Mexico and he could pay a little on the bill if he could find work. There would be little work in the coming winter months. A Japanese American grower told Baca he would pay his bill and he could come work and live in his property. The 1930s saw more mutual aid groups in some parts of Colorado. Others actively raised enough money to send a worker to testify before Congress. Slowly things got better for migrant workers •



Fernando Baca and mother Emilia Romero Baca and children from Anton Chico, New Mexico.

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Book Review

Yoly Zentella

Killing Beauty in North America by Constance Buck. Conneaut Lake, PA: Page Publishing, 2022. 276 pages.

Based on the author’s doctoral dissertation, *Killing Beauty in North America* describes the deep connection between family, legacy, and events representative of the tragic historical beginnings of the United States (U.S.); the genocide of Indigenous peoples by Euro-Americans as they *cleared the land* for the settling of the American West. Based on this period of time, Buck uses the telling of horrific destruction of peoples and their culture as a way of opening a necessary conversation on personal introspection.

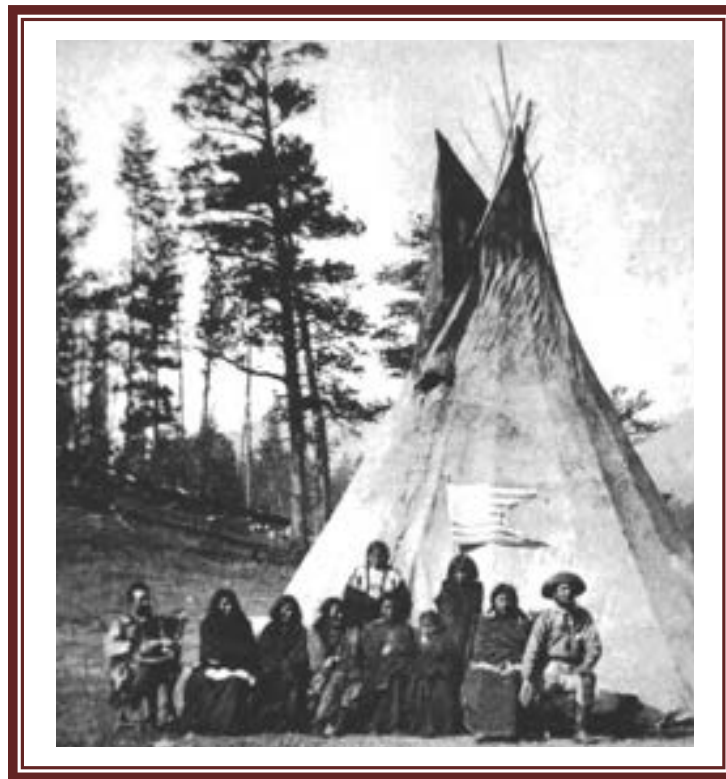
Killing Beauty in North America takes a difficult, personal exploration through the realm of Carl Jung, archetypes, shadow work, and psychoanalysis. This process is described through the author’s phenomenology, taking the reader into her relationship with war trophies from the period of genocide, inherited by the author’s family and directly connected to Buck’s maternal great grandfather Anson Mills’ military career. On her childhood relationship to trophies displayed on a wall of the family home, Buck states, “. . . I was the only member of my family who had adverse physical reactions around these beaded articles of strong feeling that they were events”. (p.21).

Sensitivity to the world an impressive knowledge of psychology discipline, form complex volume as *Killing* Added to this knowledge psychology doctoral degree Institute, decades of the U.S., and teaching and synthesis of Buck’s chapter discussions on analysis, shadow work, personal introspection, and perception, all within the legacy of Euro-American

Killing Beauty in North academic and advanced the discipline of psychology, areas of humanism and also appeals to those psychodynamic,

to psychoanalysts exploring the impact of colonial trauma on both descendants of victims, and descendants of perpetrators. The chapters focusing on history, would be of interest to academics, students, and lay individuals. Yet, most important, the book attracts readers exploring the psychological impact of a universal colonial scheme regardless of geographical location, those willing to examine their souls as legacy holders and bystanders during *any* shameful period in history.

The book’s content is arranged around two main ideas, Indigenous artifacts, war booty, possessed by the author’s maternal great-grandfather, Anson Mills, military commander during the latter 1800s, and, the psychology embedded in acts of colonization, genocide, victimization, and aggression intersecting with the personal process of coming to terms with a family legacy of complicity.



clothing [war booty] and a linked to unfortunate

around her as a child, and specific areas within the the foundation of such a *Beauty in North America*. base is the author’s clinical from Pacifica Graduate extensive travel outside of healing experience. A knowledge is evident in archetypes, Jungian phenomenology and the role of transference in context of exploring a colonization and genocide.

America has appeal to an degree student audience in more specifically in the existentialism. The book interested in the psychoanalytic process, and

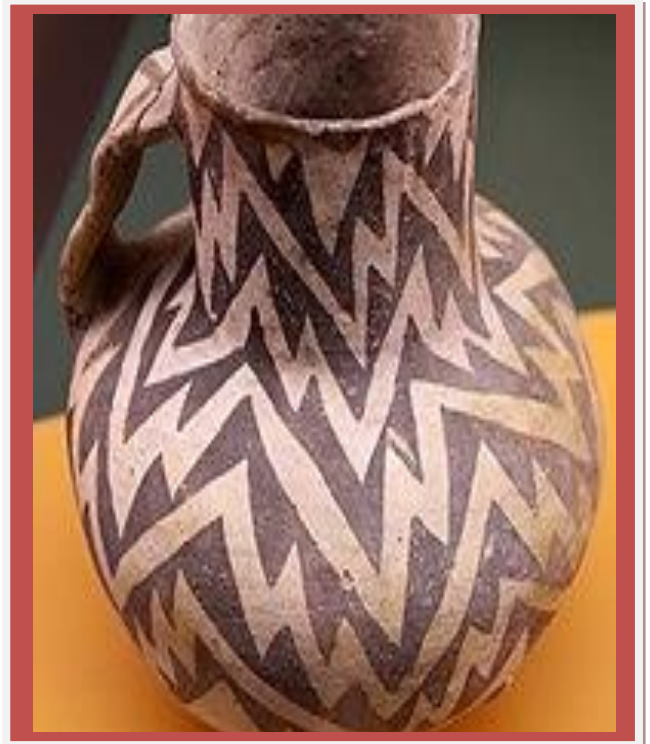
Arranged in 7 chapters, the volume interlaces various related themes. Chapters 1 to 5, present the 1876 extermination of an Indigenous village in the battle of Slim Buttes, South Dakota, by starving soldiers led by General Anson Mills. Food and booty were the objective; stolen artifacts were to be later displayed on a wall of the author's family home. There is a historical background of the period and a discussion of the psychological and social implications of colonization and related images influencing the human psyche. Discussed is the European *discovery* and perspectives of the New World, the idea of savage versus civilized, the European constructs of reality, and military government agendas facilitating the ethnic cleansing of Indigenous populations in the U.S. Also presented, is the *shadow* as cultural trauma and the concept of post traumatic stress, intertwined with a discussion on the historical relationship between beauty, creativity, perversion, and narcissism. Archetypes and Indigenous myth, such as the archetypical coyote are integrated into the material. Chapters 6 and 7, address areas such as the collective as a factor in the survival and destruction of culture, the role of memory in this relationship, the colonial implications of privilege, and counter-transference as a form of suffering

The strength of the books lies in Buck's palpable passion for the topic, her skill in the integration of historical and psychological material, and her fearlessness in presenting areas that not many individuals are willing to engage in, preferring to continually live in denial of personal or cultural complicity past or present. The photos of artifacts, central pieces of the book, add to the power of the author's intelligent and daring narrative. Perhaps the strongest strength is in the book's push to consider one's personal hidden fears in facing past and present implications in genocide.

This is a strongly recommended book to be read slowly and thoughtfully •

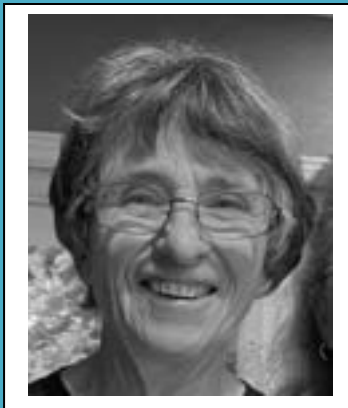


Below: Native American Pottery
Tony Hisgett from Birmingham, UK
13 September 2014, 11:05 (according to [Exif](#) data)
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Native+American+&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=i+image>



Above: Native American ceramic pot above:
Native American Ceramic Pot with black bird designs, circa 1820-1920. Missouri History Museum
URL: <http://images.mohistory.org/image/06C29514-5712-A170-F624-5202BAAAFCD/original.jpg> MHS Open Access
Wiki commons Native American Pottery

Dianne Lindsay 1950 – 2023



Yoly Zentella

This past July I lost a treasured person. Her name is Dianne, not a boastful person, humble, insightful and open to the opinions of others. Approaching people and the world in wonder.

Dianne Lindsay and her partner Cordia Sammet managed the farmers market on Mills Avenue and Hot Springs Blvd, in Las Vegas, NM, this is where I met Dianne. While Las Vegas had two markets, this particular one became my market of choice because of its progressive air. Mills Avenue market was a place to meet the local farmers and discuss politics and environmental issues. For me going to this market became a necessity not only for the wholesome food I could buy, but also for conversation that filled the soul, and for the feeling of community it created, so essential for thriving and surviving.

This July 2023 Dianne crossed the veil and I am thankful to Cordia for letting me know the time had come; I was able to say goodbye to a dear person in my life, the type of person that travels through one's life rarely, and whose memory stays with you always.

Cordia Sammeth

Dianne Lindsay was born in Moscow, Idaho 3/31/1950 and passed July 15th 2023 at 73 years. She helped set up and co-managed the Tierra Encantada Farmers Market for 5 years to bring fresh local produce to the West side which was declared a food desert. Dianne was a woman of many talents, a gardener, woodworker, carpenter, musician, baker, lover of nature and animals and a caring friend and activist for the community. Dianne loved life and worked for people, ALL people. She believed in the possibility of a better world that cares for the earth and all of its creatures. She was a wonderful friend and partner to me for all our 47 years together, I was blessed to share my life with her.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Are you interested in contributing to *La Platica del Norte*? We would like to consider your work! We welcome writing on the following topics –

Cultural/Ethnic Issues, Social and Environmental Justice: history, labor issues, language, culture, traditions religious or secular; people's stories; poetry; indigenous medicine; curanderismo; pre-Christian pagan religions; natural foods; sustainable farming; gentrification, neoliberal policy and its consequences.

Solidarity writing: with populations experiencing the consequences of colonialism, capitalism, racism, gentrification, apartheid and exclusion.

Graphics: black and white line drawings and photos are welcome. All art work/ photos need to include credit and date

If you have a question about a topic you would like to submit email **Yoly at laplaticadelnorte@gmail.com**

Submission information

We do not pay for submitted pieces, we have no \$ to do this. We publish *La Platica* from our own pockets in the interest of the progressive community.

Written submissions should be

- 600 to 1 K words. If your article is longer please email Yoly at laplaticadelnorte@gmail.com
- Send as a **Word doc attachment** only, generally we publish in APA style
- **Please edit your docs, we do not type or edit.** If we feel the doc needs editing we will return it to you for re-writing, or recommend a terrific professional editor
- Allow 12 weeks + for a response on submitted articles, or queries
- We do not publish editorials
- Writing accepted in Spanish, Spanglish, English. Everyday language is encouraged.
- Please include a short bio, 3 sentences at most.
- **Feel free to distribute this call**

Solidarity with the movement to stop Cop City & defend the Weelaunee Forest



We call on all people of good conscience to stand in solidarity with the movement to stop Cop City and defend the Weelaunee Forest in Atlanta.

On January 18, in the course of their latest militarized raid on the forest, police in Atlanta shot and killed a person. This is only the most recent of a series of violent police retaliations against the movement. The official narrative is that Cop City is necessary to make Atlanta “safe,” but this brutal killing reveals what they mean when they use that word.

Forests are the lungs of planet Earth. The destruction of forests affects all of us. So do the gentrification and police violence that the bulldozing of Weelaunee Forest would facilitate. What is happening in Atlanta is not a local issue.

Politicians who support Cop City have attempted to discredit forest defenders as “outside agitators.” This smear has a disgraceful history in the South, where authorities have used it against abolitionists, labor organizers, and the Civil Rights Movement, among others. The goal of those who spread this narrative is to discourage solidarity and isolate communities from each other while offering a pretext to bring in state and federal forces, who are the actual “outside agitators.” The consequence of that strategy is on full display in the tragedy of January 18.

Replacing a forest with a police training center will only create a more violently policed society, in which taxpayer resources enrich police and weapons companies

rather than addressing social needs. Mass incarceration and police militarization have failed to bring down crime or improve conditions for poor and working-class communities.

In Atlanta and across the US, investment in police budgets comes at the expense of access to food, education, childcare, and healthcare, of affordable and stable housing, of parks and public spaces, of transit and the free movement of people, of economic stability for the many. Concentrating resources in the hands of police serves to defend the extreme accumulation of wealth and power by corporations and the very rich.

What do cops do with their increased budgets and their carte blanche from politicians? They kill people, every single day. They incarcerate and traumatize school children, parents, loved ones who are simply struggling to survive. We must not settle for a society organized recklessly upon the values of violence, racism, greed, and careless indifference to life.

The struggle that is playing out in Atlanta is a contest for the future. As the catastrophic effects of climate change hammer our communities with hurricanes, heat waves, and forest fires, the stakes of this contest are clearer than ever. It will determine whether those who come after us inherit an inhabitable Earth or a police state nightmare. It is up to us to create a peaceful society that does not treat human life as expendable.

The forest defenders are trying to create a better world for all of us. We owe it to the people of Atlanta and to future generations everywhere to support them •

Here are some ways to support the defense of the forest in Atlanta:

- **Donate** to the [Atlanta Solidarity Fund](#) to support legal costs for arrested protestors and ongoing legal action.
- **Call** on investors in the project to divest from Cop City ([list of APF investors](#)). **Call** on [builders of the project](#) to drop their construction contracts.
- **Organize** political solidarity bail funds, forest defense funds, and forest defense committees where you live.
- **Participate in** or **organize** local solidarity actions.
- **Endorse** and **circulate** this statement of solidarity by **emailing** defendweelaunee@riseup.net

Right Wing Attacks on Education

Fred Trujillo

Introduction

In recent years there have been right-wing attacks on local school boards including protests over mask requirements, LGBTQ-inclusive school policies, and curricula that teach about the history and literature of Chicanos, Native Americans, African Americans, Arab Americans, or any other nationality that is not white. Conservatives have falsely accused educators of teaching Critical Race Theory (CRT) in K-12 schools. CRT examines the impact of systemic racism on American laws and institutions and is taught in some university programs, not in K-12 schools. The truth is that these attacks on school boards are not dissatisfied parents but the product of a coordinated attack by right wing groups, with political purposes: to stoke fear and anger, to help right-wing groups and candidates win political power in upcoming elections, to instill neoliberal capitalist beliefs in our youth, and to privatize education. Right-wing actions include disrupting school board meetings, ousting liberal school board members, and harassing parents who support teaching about equity issues.

In this article I will address my own experiences in education from elementary school to college in Northern New Mexico, and describe the civil rights movement especially the Chicano Movement at New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, NM, which brought about positive changes, i.e., more Chicano professors and administrators and courses in ethnic and Chicano Studies, although later there was a backslide due to conservatives feeling threatened by people of color having power over their education. Unfortunately, I do not have enough space in this article to cover the 1973 demonstrations at Robertson High School as well as the takeover of the Montezuma Castle and related church properties, and the establishment of an alternative school Escuela Antonio Jose Martinez. This will be covered in the next issue of *La Platica*.

Elementary School

My early years from first to part of third grade were in catholic school, Springer, NM. At the age of 10, I was placed in a foster home in Los Vigiles. There I completed the 3rd grade and continued on in a one room school which housed 6 grades after which students were bused to Las Vegas Jr. High School and Robertson High School (RHS). In school in Los Vigiles, we were forbidden to speak Spanish. Before classes started, we recited the Pledge of Allegiance. In some of our history classes, we had to memorize the Preamble to the

Constitution, the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, and the Gettysburg address. Most of the reading material available was about white culture with Black, Chicano and Native American literature excluded. In music on Friday afternoons, the teacher would play the piano and we would sing songs, Row, Row, Row Your Boat, Old Black Joe, and America the Beautiful.

So, the indoctrination into the white Anglo Saxon system started early as evidenced by the prohibition of speaking Spanish as well as the class content which involve indoctrination into the dominant Anglo history, language, and literature. For Native Americans, indoctrination consisted of youngsters placed in boarding schools, where blatant attempts were made to strip them of their language, culture, history, and sense of self, and where many died or were traumatized for life.



Betita Martinez and Enriqueta Longeaux y Vasquez in their book *Viva La Raza: The Struggle of the Mexican American People*, point out that if we look at world history, we can see that when one nation or people conquer another, the conqueror and colonizer uses certain methods to maintain control. One is to have an army stationed nearby, but an army and guns are not enough and too expensive. So, the colonizer uses other means. One is to control the minds of the colonized. The colonizer sets out to destroy whatever makes them strong as a people—their spirit, their language, their history and culture. Efforts are made to make them hate their true selves, to get them to identify with the dominant culture. The colonizer must make them agree to their own oppression. This starts since the first day of school when Spanish is prohibited. TV and the news media also contribute to The Great Brain Wash. People

are taught to think negatively about themselves. For example, the TV is on in the home of a Chicano family. A commercial comes on about an underarm deodorant. A Mexican man wearing a big sombrero comes on. He is unshaven and looks like a typical Mexican Bandido. The man in the commercial says: *If it works for him it'll work for you.* This is only one example of how TV and other media portray Chicanos.

Junior High School

Once the 6th grade was completed, students were bused to East Las Vegas to attend junior high and high school. Every year in junior high, students were administered an achievement test and based on their scores, they were divided into different tracks: academic, basic, and vocational. A lot of Chicanos ended up in basic classes which were overcrowded and taught by inexperienced teachers. Corporal punishment was allowed. The principal had a paddle in his office, and for those that were considered in need of more serious punishment, a staff member with long arms and a long paddle with holes in the end would administer 15 whacks. Many students mainly Chicanos were assigned to a class Study Hall for several periods a day at the library. This was essentially a class where the librarian was a babysitter.

Part of the curriculum in junior high was history and literature. In literature, not one Chicano writer was even mentioned. I remember one year we covered *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens the following semester. Poetry and short stories were by either English or American authors. American and New Mexico history were more of the same. History was basically whitewashed. The history of slavery, genocide against Native Americans and the theft of their lands, as well as Mexican American history were covered superficially. I remember one teacher telling the class that the reason that Mexican-Americans never advanced was because they did not have the Protestant work ethic. Mexican Americans believed that they would be paid in heaven for all their sufferings in this world. The history about the land grants and loss of land (or theft of lands) in El Norte was left out. It was not until many years later that I found out the true history and contributions of my people.

I graduated from RHS in 1967. I enrolled at NMHU in 1969, me and almost my whole graduating class were taken by the VA by bus for physicals for the Viet Nam draft. My step-father, who was a WWII veteran advised me to get a deferment and register in college, which is what I did. I enrolled at NMHU the winter of 1969. That first year, I learned my way around and made friends

with people from around the state especially the Northern part. It was an exciting time with veterans returning from Viet Nam, the Civil Rights movement, demonstrations against the war, the grape and lettuce boycotts led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta (mid-sixties, early seventies). Reis Lopez Tijerina and heirs from several NM land grants had started the Alianza Federal de Mercedes in 1963 to try to reverse the theft of lands by Anglos who had violated the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In June 1967, as part of these efforts, Tijerina led the Court House Raid in Tierra Amarilla.

Sometime during my 1st year at NMHU, I joined the Spanish American Student Organization (SASO). I attended meetings and began to learn about the Chicano Movement. At one point the NMHU Sociology Club was picketing the Columbia Super Market and Safeway as they had refused to stop selling grapes. Members of SASO including myself joined them. As students became more politicized, the Name SASO was changed to CASO, Chicano Associated Student Association.

In 1969, CASO decided to run candidates for the student senate. We were able to elect the student body president as well as enough senators to gain control. We also elected the student body treasurer and an editor for the NMHU campus news paper named *The Highlands Candle*. Adelita Medina became the second Spanish-surnamed editor of the Candle, the first had been Donaldo (Tiny) Martinez in the mid-1940s. Later, the name of *The Highlands Candle* was changed to *La Mecha*. Control of the Senate gave us control of the \$5.00 student activity fee which students paid every quarter. This fee enabled us to bring cultural events such as speakers, teatros (street theaters), musicians, etc. One of the first speakers was Reis Lopez Tijerina. Others were Corky Gonzales, the Chicano leader from Denver, Cesar Chavez, Jose Angel Gutierrez founder of the Raza Unida Party in Crystal City, Texas. Teatros included El Teatro Campesino, Los Mascarones (from Mexico) and El Teatro de Albuquerque.

CASO also managed to create ties with people in the community who were critical of the entrenched Anglo administration at NMHU. Among them were the District Attorney, Tiny Martinez, Martin Suazo, Ray Leger and other educators from West Las Vegas, who were NMHU alumni, along with Father James T. Burke from Our Lady of Sorrows Church. Tiny was one of the founders of the Chicano Action Committee which supported changes at NMHU, filing a lawsuit against the Board of Regents charging them with meeting in a secret, not public, meeting to elect the new NMHU president and refusing to hire Dr. John Aragon because he was

Chicano. Tiny was also publisher of the underground newspaper *La Revista Norteña*, which published information about the student movement. Martin Suazo was commander of the Las Vegas Chapter of the GI forum. He called for an investigation into possible racial discrimination at NMHU during what was referred to by protestors as the Thomas Donnelly "regime."

Thomas Donnelly, retired in late 1969 after 18 years as president of NMHU, and a search for a new president began. CASO and its allies supported the selection of Dr. John Aragon. On May 19, 1970, Joe L. Otero, the only Hispanic regent, stormed out of a Board of Regents meeting when the Board refused to seriously consider the appointment of Dr. Aragon. They hired Dr. Charles Graham from Wisconsin instead. The next day students led by CASO walked out. There were marches, rallies, and speakouts. We decided to occupy the NMHU Administration Building which we did for 8 days. Eventually Graham decided not to accept the job. In 1971, new regents appointed by Governor Bruce King selected Dr. Frank Angel as President. Although the students had wanted John Aragon, President Angel managed to implement bilingual education and ethnic studies programs as well as support programs for minorities and faculty awareness programs for staff. Also, Chicano faculty and administrators were hired so that one-third of all faculty were Chicano.

Pedro Rodriguez became the first director of Chicano Studies. He sponsored a Chicano advisory body with representation from students, faculty and community. Pedro was an artist. He and students in his art class painted 6 murals on campus. They also traveled to Mexico to receive training from Mexican muralists. Pedro was an activist who believed in community involvement. Pedro Along with Juan Jose Peña, Manuel Archuleta and others established La Raza Unida party in Las Vegas. Eventually Pedro had to leave as he was denied tenure. In late 1973, Chicano students organized a second take-over of the HU Administration Building when the University refused to meet

their demands for the expansion of ethnic studies, some were arrested and jailed. The next day community members raised \$500,000 in property bonds to bail them out. The Board of Regents decided to approve Student demands. Juan Jose Peña was appointed as the new director of Chicano Studies. He expanded course offerings in Ethnic Studies.

By 1975, the movement at HU had diminished although enrollment in Chicano Studies was still above pre demonstration levels. There were several reasons for the change. The State Legislature was controlled by a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats, funding for Chicano Studies was curtailed. President Angel retired, and John Aragon was hired. Aragon, whom Chicano students had supported during the demonstrations turned out to be a vendido (sell out). He pursued an anti-Chicano agenda once he was in office. He reduced ethnic studies programs stating that they should be part of main stream departments. There was also a backlash by conservatives who felt threatened by the liberal policies in education as well as the growing number of people of color in the country in general. → 23



Years ago, I connected with my first mentors on Palestine, with Bernie in conversation and Edward Said through his book, *The Question of Palestine* (1979), establishing my tradition of insight. Their individual perspectives gave me the awareness that there *was* a space where Jewish and Palestinian voices could meet to express sorrow and speak the strength of their convictions. Current activism, writing, film, and conversation by both Palestinians and Jews, continues this awareness that others can learn from and grow as politically healthier human beings •

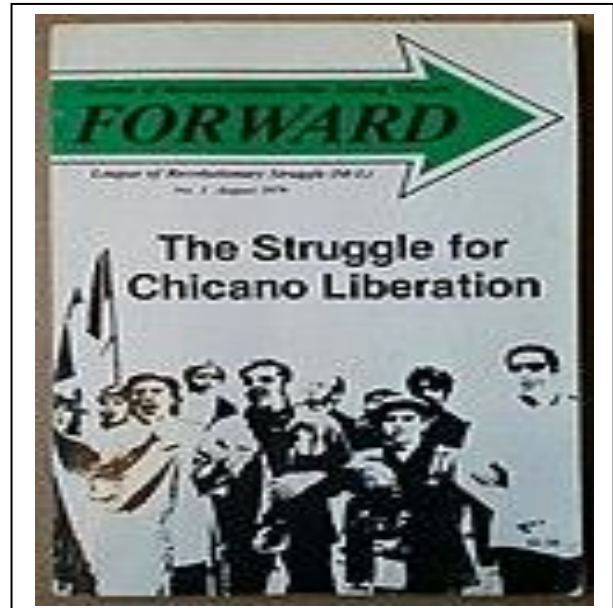


Education (continued)

Conclusion

The prototype for the right-wing agenda is Governor Ron De Santis of Florida. De Santis has put into place a group of reactionary educational policies. These include the banning of books and CRT, requiring teachers to sign loyalty oaths and forcing them to post their syllabi on line. He also established laws that restrict tenure, allow students to film teacher's classes without consent and much more. He calls this a "patriotic education. I call it indoctrination or brain washing. There is an ongoing movement to strike the history of genocide of Indigenous peoples in America, the acceptance of African slavery, as well as Manifest Destiny and its current implications, from our public discourse. That movement manifests itself through travesties like book bans, the removal of ethnic studies in public schools and threats against teachers trying to educate their students. Bueno con esta me despido hasta la proxima when I will continue with the protests at Robertson High School in 1973, as well as the establishment of Escuela Antonio Jose Martinez in Montezuma, New Mexico •

Photo right: East Los Angeles, CA, 1989 MEChA 20th Anniversary Conference & Celebration – Lincoln High School, East Los Angeles. Speakers, workshops, cultural performances, celebration. 'El Plan de MEChA' adopted. Three decades Chicano Movement represented." Source: La Unidadada Newspaper, Author, League of Revolutionary Struggle
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Chicano+Movement+&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>



Chicano Struggle periodical, Forward, August, 1979
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Anarchists vs. the State

Kirwin Shaffer

This is an excerpt of a piece originally published in the Spring 2023 issue of the quarterly *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

<https://nacla.org/anarchists-vs-state>

As Latin America swings left, activists keep alive a long anarchist tradition of critiquing the limits of state power. For them, the real alternatives are in communities, workplaces, and the streets.



Protesters wave a black flag during a demonstration in Santiago, November 12, 2019. (Matias Fernandez / CC BY-SA 4.0)

In October 2019, street protests and violent clashes rocked Chile. As the police and military temporarily lost control of the historic uprising against inequality and neoliberalism, the governing and opposition parties agreed to hold a plebiscite on whether to rewrite the country's dictatorship-era constitution. A constituent assembly convened in 2021 drafted a new constitution, but in a plebiscite on September 4, 2022, voters rejected the proposal. The result came as a blow to the six-month-old government of leftist President Gabriel Boric, who as a member of Congress had helped to negotiate the agreement that opened the door to the constitutional process.

A week after the draft constitution's defeat,

anarchists took to the streets to mark the 49th anniversary of General Augusto Pinochet's 1973 military coup. Although Boric had openly expressed support in 2019 for the mass student-led fare evasions that sparked the uprising, effectively backing a broad coalition with anarchists, on the coup's anniversary, Boric's riot police attacked the anarchists with tear gas and water cannons. Few anarchists were surprised. This is how governments—whether dictatorial or democratic, rightist or leftist—historically have dealt with the most radical wing of the Left.

In eight Latin American countries, leftist leaders have captured one presidential victory after another since 2018. The "Left," however, is not monolithic. Left-wing politics have awakened again in Latin America after a regional rightward turn that marked the decline of the early 21st century Pink Tide. In eight Latin American countries, leftist leaders have captured one presidential victory after another since 2018. The "Left," however, is not monolithic. Nor is the entire Left enamored with controlling state power. In response to Latin America's new left turn, anarchists have resurrected their historical critiques of both free market and state-centered solutions. Despite their anticapitalist rhetoric, leaders of the first Pink Tide continued promoting extractive capitalism with only limited redistributive change. This has led anarchists to predict that today's cohort of leftist governments will do little better.

These critiques carry forward a tradition of anarchist challenges to capitalism and the state dating to the late 1800s. As the oldest wing of Latin American leftist politics, anarchists dominated the Left for decades before the first parliamentary socialists and then Marxist political parties arrived on the scene. Today, with an emphasis on decentralized power and the importance of organizing the working and dominated classes for direct democracy and direct action, Latin American anarchism, too, is awakening. Challenging neoliberal capitalism and the left-leaning governments now in office, anarchist organizations and anarchic forms of decentralized popular activism offer important

alternatives to the limits of the market and state.

Anarchy is not chaos. Rather, anarchists seek political order through local and municipal level direct action that allows people to live, work, create, and socialize on egalitarian terms, with no rulers or managers. In this vision, the liberation of working and dominated classes must not rely on the state or political parties—even working-class political parties—nor engage in the quest for vertical power through electoral politics. Instead, anarchists seek to inspire average people to build power outside of governmental institutions, usually through social movements and direct action, direct democracy, and horizontal cooperation with other dominated classes. This is “social power” or “popular power.”

A constant anarchist fear is that left political parties wish to capture grassroots social movements and coopt their energy for their own party’s political gain—and then maybe they will work to benefit the dominated classes after winning power. So, while anarchists might cooperate with mainstream leftist parties for shared goals and occasionally vote for leftist candidates—especially to replace right-wing or far-right presidents, as in Brazil and Chile—anarchist politics demand constant vigilance of political parties, media, NGOs, and other institutions. For anarchists, vertical political power is incapable of solving the plethora of economic, ethnic, racial, social, gender, and environmental problems facing the hemisphere. In this view, governments—even progressive ones—do little to respond to Indigenous demands, prevent violence against women, rein in extractive capitalism, fight imperialism, or battle authoritarian forces.

Anarchists and the Second Pink Tide *Mexico*

The election of Mexico's Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in 2018 kicked off a new era for the Latin American Left. It also marked the first leftist president elected in Mexico since Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s. However, for many on the far left, several of AMLO's policies, such as cooperating with U.S. President Donald Trump

on immigration, seemed anti-humanitarian and dangerous.

Anarchists joined other critics to condemn the government's planned megaprojects, especially the \$20 billion Mayan Train across the Yucatan Peninsula. While the state has promoted the train as key to southern Mexico's economic development, anarchists joined environmental and Indigenous organizations to argue the project will negatively impact peoples and environments while doing little to improve the lives of poor Mexicans. It is just another lavish state project with little if any say or input from the people it is supposedly aimed to help.



"We demonstrate with glitter because you bathe us in blood." Feminists protest gender violence in Puebla, Mexico, August 16, 2019. (Mayita / CC BY-SA 4.0)

Anarchists also attack the frequent lawlessness of the Mexican military—long at war with the drug cartels, but also susceptible to cartel influence—and the Mexican police departments that do little to investigate murders and disappearances, especially of women. At the same time, anarchist support for and work with the Zapatista movement has kept pace with that movement's growth. In 2019, the Zapatistas organized 11 new resistance centers and 16 new autonomous municipalities, bringing the total of organized territories to 43.

Anarchists have been particularly active in Mexico's growing feminist movement, which expanded in recent years largely in response to police and government inaction in the face of

rampant femicides, transfemicides, and sexual assault, including at the hands of authorities. Anarcha-feminists are important and visible in protests such as the annual March 8 International Women's Day demonstrations. The actions reflect anarchist concepts of popular power and the need to find solutions beyond what they see as AMLO's ineffective, top-down policies.

While many feminists demand that the government actively prosecute perpetrators of rape and gender-based violence, anarchists focus their efforts on decentralized mobilizations of women and men as tools of collective empowerment to expose abusers and generate grassroots organizations.

Brazil

Brazilian anarchists cautioned that even with a Lula victory, centralized state authority would not solve Brazil's structural problems, such as rampant sexual harassment, poverty, and environmental destruction. Brazil's October 2022 presidential elections were one instance where some anarchists cautiously supported electoral politics. Faced with another four years under far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, many anarchists advocated voting for leftist former president Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva to stop a further slide toward fascism and the unrelenting destruction waged against the environment and Indigenous communities. Yet many Brazilian anarchists cautioned that even with a Lula victory, centralized state authority would not solve Brazil's structural problems, such as rampant sexual harassment, poverty, and environmental destruction.

Meanwhile, many anarchists rejected any foray into politics. As union activists and researchers Rafael Viana da Silva, Kauan Willian dos Santos, and Victor Khaled put it: "It makes no sense to harass anarchists to vote." Instead, they argued, activists needed to "maintain [their] internal coherence." Anarchists sought to accumulate social power by penetrating spaces where the working class labored, prayed, played, and lived, not excluding Bolsonaro strongholds like gun clubs, Pentecostal churches, and among

truckers. However, it's questionable how much impact they made. Anarchists also pledged to continue working among trade unions and popular organizations since they feared that after a Lula victory, the Workers' Party-controlled state would use its *comites populares de luta-peoples'* committees mobilized across the country to support Lula's campaign-to coopt unions and popular movements.

Brazilian anarchist scholar Bruno Lima Rocha noted in the lead-up to the presidential runoff that even with Lula as president, major institutions would remain under right-wing and pro-corporate control. For instance, within the country's highly concentrated media landscape, the second-largest conglomerate is owned by the family of a right-wing evangelical bishop who openly endorsed Bolsonaro. This creates power to suppress debate about gender rights, abortion, and LGBTQI+ issues, which became far-right flashpoints under Bolsonaro. Lima Rocha stressed the importance of grassroots "struggle on a societal scale" around these concerns, as national media will not address them.

As some anarchists put it, it was okay to vote, but that was not enough. Regardless of the election outcome, the votes that counted were within unions, community and student associations, and popular movements building grassroots popular power.

Colombia

One of the potentially most radical leftist governments currently in office is that of former guerrilla fighter Gustavo Petro and Afro-Colombian activist Francia Marquez. Though the Petro-Marquez ticket campaigned on numerous left-of-center reforms, they still must navigate the capitalist world system and Colombia's traditionally oligarchic institutions. Anarchists have few illusions that the administration will deliver on reforms to effectively tax the rich, level the gaping class divides, or institute land reform. Land reform offers a case in point. After the new government entered office, Indigenous,

Afrodescendant, and other rural peoples ramped up occupations of private farms, urging the administration to follow through on its promises to address unequal land ownership. But Vice President Marquez called the occupiers "invaders." Although the government reached an agreement to purchase land from cattle ranchers for redistribution to landless and land-poor families, the administration remains firmly committed to guaranteeing private property interests. This leads anarchists to see the Petro-Marquez government as a social democratic, liberal force that will not challenge deeply rooted traditional elites and capitalist structures.

Chile

Leftist former student leader Gabriel Boric assumed the presidency in early 2022 on the heels of the massive 2019 uprising against Chilean neoliberalism. During the unrest, anarchists formed "clans" as part of the frontline protest group known as the Primera Linea to physically confront riot police, point lasers at cops and surveillance drones, and shield protesters from police violence •

Kirwin Shaffer is professor of Latin American Studies at Pennsylvania State University-Berks College. He is author of *Anarchist Cuba* (2019), *Black Flag Boricuas* (2013), and *Anarchists of the Caribbean* (2020).



Curious about Anarchism?

Anarchism, is not, contrary to how it is often portrayed, about chaos.

Check out these materials-

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Graphic above- *Affiche guerre civile d'Espagne*. Propaganda poster during the Spanish Civil War. CNT-FAI, Jan. 1, 1936 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Anarchists+Spanish+civil+war&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

Graphic left- *Les Milicies us necessiten!*, Spanish Anarchist Recruitment poster, 1936, Cattelonia. Attributed to: Arteché, Cristóbal. "You need the militia" Halloween HJB <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Anarchists+Spanish+civil+war&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

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See page 2 for Rini Templeton source

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