Problems in Modern Latin American History

Sources and Interpretations

Completely Revised and Updated

EDITED BY JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN
AND JAMES A. WOOD

SR BOOKS

Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Oxford

XIII

Globalization

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the long period known as the Cold War came to an end. The few Marxist-Leninist-inspired social revolutionary movements that lasted into the mid-1990s were clearly on the retreat worldwide. New patterns of trade and communications began to reshape the globe, including the areas of Latin America that had been wracked by decades of civil war, military rule, and accelerating national debt. A new period in Latin American history was taking shape. Historians, who are naturally cautious about attempts to characterize contemporary trends, have only recently begun to find a single name—globalization—for the multitude of complex dynamics that defines the present moment in modern Latin America.

Globalization is the name of the process by which relationships of all sorts—social, environmental, cultural, and, above all, economic—are cut loose from their local points of origin to float freely in the emerging "global" space created by new transportation and communications technologies. Because of its decentered, borderless nature, globalization threatens to undermine the basic concept of national sovereignty that has existed in the world for centuries. Take the case of foreign trade, for instance. In 1993 a historic piece of legislation, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), was passed by the U.S. Congress. NAFTA, with a few caveats, created a unified market in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. For the purposes of trade, investment, and distribution of goods and services, the borders between these three countries essentially ceased to exist. Or look instead at the issue of ozone depletion and global warming. Without the cooperation of many countries around the world, no individual nation can solve the problem within its own borders. How will Latin Americans fare in this process of globalization?

Historians of Latin America have sought new perspectives from which to gauge the complicated process of globalization. The dominant perspectives of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s do not seem adequate for the task. For one thing, the prospects of social revolution, a primary concern of Latin American

historians during the Cold War, look very different now. Most of the revolutionary insurgents of the 1980s laid down their arms and returned to their fields, factories, churches, and schools in the 1990s. Fidel Castro's brand of social revolution continues in Cuba but faces implacable hostility from the U.S. government. Yet even as the U.S.-backed economic embargo against Cuba enters a new century, connections are forming at the subgovernmental level between the two peoples. The problem of U.S.-Latin American relations also looks different in the post-Cold War era. As the wave of revolutionary energy subsided, U.S. policy shifted away from anticommunism toward regional economic integration. The starkly divided, bipolar world of the Cold War period has become more closely interconnected than ever. Latin America's great cities, now numbering in the dozens, have much more in common with great cities anywhere.

The classical liberal model of economic development, which had been eclipsed in Latin America around the 1930s, returned to its earlier position of dominance in the 1990s. *Neoliberalism* (the revitalized classical liberalism of the 1990s) was implemented in many countries beginning in the 1980s (often under dictatorial military rule). The civilian governments that took over in the 1990s were often even more fervent neoliberals than their military predecessors. Reforms, which fulfilled the International Monetary Fund's prescriptions for "structural adjustment," usually included the selling of state-owned enterprises (called *privatization*, undoing the earlier process of *nationalization*), the reduction of state spending in the public sector, the active courting of foreign investment, and the aggressive exploitation of untapped primary resources. In contemporary Latin America, globalization and neoliberalism go hand in hand.

Globalization and neoliberalism, however, do not go unchallenged in contemporary Latin America. From the start, various groups opposed the neoliberal model. Perhaps the most famous case of opposition is that of the Zapatistas of the state of Chiapas, Mexico. The Zapatistas, members and supporters of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), take their name from the legendary indigenous peasant leader of the Mexican Revolution of the 1910s, Emiliano Zapata. Composed primarily of Mayan peasants, the EZLN launched an armed insurrection against the central government in Mexico City on January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA went into effect. The date was chosen to protest the emergence of a global economic order that worked against Mayan autonomy in Chiapas.

An additional dimension of globalization is worth mentioning. Globalization sometimes seems to threaten the basic concept of national sovereignty. It is also a threat (or at least a challenge) to the concept of national identity. With millions of people moving around the planet—migrating legally or illegally, becoming refugees, conducting business, vacationing, studying abroad

—the traditional ties that bind individuals to local and national communities have eroded. Competing new identities have arisen that straddle old boundaries. Among the places where this trend is most pronounced is the U.S.-Mexico border region, the area that stood between what used to be the Anglo-American culture of the North and the Mexican-American culture of the South. As the excerpt from poet and essayist Gloria Anzaldúa makes clear in the pages that follow, globalization is having a powerful impact on the people who live along the "borderlands/*la frontera*."

The jury on globalization is still out, but in Latin America the reaction against neoliberalism is growing. This chapter's readings will allow students to make their own assessment of the pros and cons of neoliberal globalization in the region.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are the dynamics that define globalization? Is it a single process, or is it more accurate to talk about *globalizations*?

◆

2. If globalization is eroding traditional ideas about sovereign nations and national identities, what are the consequences for people on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border?

◆

3. How has Latin America's return to liberalism affected the process of globalization in the region? Will the process continue as it has in the past decade, or will its opponents reverse or change it in some fundamental way?

---

1. Towards a New Consciousness ◆ Gloria Anzaldúa

Gloria Anzaldúa defies categories. Indeed, she refuses to be categorized. As a Mexican-American poet and essayist she has helped to shape a new kind of writing—the writing of the borderlands. Anzaldúa contends that borders exist primarily within the mind and only secondarily as lines on a map. Division, conflict, and duality are recurrent themes in her work. Although she is highly critical of race relations in the United States, she favors the

From Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 77–87.

concept of cross-racial alliances. The following selection begins with a brief reflection on the work of Mexican nationalist thinker José Vasconcelos, whose idea of the "raza cósmica," *or "cosmic race" (achieved through the blending of the European, Amerindian, and African populations of colonial Mexico), became popular in the decades after the Mexican Revolution. This discussion provides a context for her own reflections. We have not provided the usual translations here because of Anzaldúa's intentional use of bilingualism.*

José Vasconcelos, Mexican philosopher, envisaged *una raza mestiza, una mezcla de razas afines, una raza de color—la primera raza síntesis del globo.* He called it a cosmic race, *la raza cósmica*, a fifth race embracing the four major races of the world. Opposite to the theory of the pure Aryan, and to the policy of racial purity that white America practices, his theory is one of inclusivity. At the confluence of two or more genetic streams, with chromosomes constantly "crossing over," this mixture of races, rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool. From this racial, ideological, cultural, and biological cross-pollinization, an "alien" consciousness is presently in the making—a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer.* It is a consciousness of the Borderlands.

Una lucha de fronteras / A Struggle of Borders

Because I, a *mestiza*,
continually walk out of one culture
and into another,
because I am in all cultures at the same time,
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.
Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan
simultáneamente.

The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The *mestiza*'s dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness.

In a constant state of mental *nepantilism*, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, *la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the *mestiza* faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a dark-skinned mother listen to?

El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. Cradled in one culture, sandwiched

between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*, a cultural collision.

Within us and within *la cultura chicana*, commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block it with a counterstance.

But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. The counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and, for this, it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance stems from a problem with authority—outer as well as inner—it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination. But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.

Somos una gente

Hay tantísimas fronteras
que dividen a la gente,
pero por cada frontera
existe también un puente.
—Gina Valdés

Divided Loyalties

Many women and men of color do not want to have any dealings with white people. It takes too much time and energy to explain to the downwardly mobile, white middle-class women that it's okay for us to want to own "possessions," never having had any nice furniture on our dirt floors or "luxuries" like washing machines. Many feel that whites should help their

own people rid themselves of race hatred and fear first. I, for one, choose to use some of my energy to serve as mediator. I think we need to allow whites to be our allies. Through our literature, art, *corridos*, and folktales we must share our history with them so when they set up committees to help Big Mountain Navajos or the Chicano farmworkers or *los Nicaraguenses* they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorance. They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead.

Individually, but also as a racial entity, we need to voice our needs. We need to say to white society: We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our person-hood, our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution: to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty—you'd rather forget your brutish acts. To say you've split yourself from minority groups, that you disown us, that your dual consciousness splits off parts of yourself, transferring the "negative" parts onto us. (Where there is persecution of minorities, there is shadow projection. Where there is violence and war, there is repression of shadow.) To say that you are afraid of us, that to put distance between us, you wear the mask of contempt. Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger [alter ego] in your psyche. By taking back your collective shadow you heal the intracultural split. And finally, tell us what you need from us.

By Your True Faces We Will Know You

I am visible—see this Indian face—yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't.

The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty. As a people we have resisted and we have taken expedient positions, but we have never been allowed to develop unencumbered—we have never been allowed to be fully ourselves. The whites in power want us people of color to barricade ourselves behind our separate tribal walls so they can pick us off one at a time with their hidden weapons; so they can whitewash and distort history. Ignorance splits people, creates prejudices. A misinformed people is a subjugated people.

Before the Chicano and the undocumented worker and the Mexican from the other side can come together, before the Chicano can have unity

with Native Americans and other groups, we need to know the history of their struggle and they need to know ours. Our mothers, our sisters and brothers, the guys who hang out on street corners, the children in the playgrounds, each of us must know our Indian lineage, our *afro-mestizaje*, our history of resistance.

To the immigrant *mexicano* and the recent arrivals we must teach our history. The 80 million *mexicanos* and the Latinos from Central and South America must know of our struggles. Each one of us must know basic facts about Nicaragua, Chile, and the rest of Latin America. The Latinoist movement (Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Spanish-speaking people working together to combat racial discrimination in the market place) is good but it is not enough. Other than a common culture we will have nothing to hold us together. We need to meet on a broader communal ground.

The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working-class Anglo, Black, Asian —our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

---

2. What Photos Would You Take of the Endless City? ◆ Carlos Monsiváis

Carlos Monsiváis is one of Mexico's most influential contemporary observers. His columns are published in newspapers across the country and around the region. In the following selection, Monsiváis centers his observations on the state of life in the world's largest metropolis. In Mexico City he finds both a nightmare and a miracle: the nightmare of "multitudes accosting multitudes" coexists with the miracle of the whole municipality working just well enough to sustain itself (no small feat for a city of some 20 million). He suggests that the concept of mixture—racial and otherwise—is an ongoing process in such megacities. Does he give us a glimpse into the future?

Visually, Mexico City signifies above all else the superabundance of people. You could, of course, turn away from this most palpable of facts

From Carlos Monsiváis, *Mexican Postcards*, ed. and trans. John Kraniauskas (London: Verso, 1997), 31–35. Reprinted by permission of Verso.

towards abstraction, and photograph desolate dawns, or foreground the aesthetic dimension of walls and squares, even rediscover the perfection of solitude. But in the capital, the multitude that accosts the multitude imposes itself like a permanent obsession. It is the unavoidable theme present in the tactics that everyone, whether they admit it or not, adopts to find and ensconce themselves in even the smallest places the city allows. Intimacy is by permission only, the "poetic licence" that allows you momentarily to forget those around you—never more than an inch away—who make of urban vitality a relentless grind.

Turmoil is the repose of the city-dwellers, a whirlwind set in motion by secret harmonies and lack of public resources. How can one describe Mexico City today? Mass overcrowding and the shame at feeling no shame; the unmeasurable space, where almost everything is possible, because everything works thanks only to what we call a "miracle"—which is no more than the meeting-place of work, technology, and chance. These are the most frequent images of the capital city:

- multitudes on the Underground [subway] (almost six million travelers a day);
- multitudes taking their entrance exam in the University Football Stadium;
- the "Marías" (Mazahua peasant women) selling whatever they can in the streets, resisting police harassment while training their countless kids;
- the underground economy that overflows onto the pavements, making popular marketplaces of the streets. At traffic lights young men and women overwhelm drivers attempting to sell Kleenex, kitchenware, toys, tricks. The vulnerability is so extreme that it becomes artistic, and a young boy makes fire—swallowing it and throwing it up—the axis of his gastronomy;
- mansions built like safes, with guard dogs and private police;
- masked wrestlers, the tutelary gods of the new Teotihuacán of the ring;
- the Templo Mayor: Indian grandeur;
- "*piñatas*" containing all the most important traditional figures: the Devil, the Nahual, Ninja Turtles, Batman, Penguin . . . ;
- the Basilica of Guadalupe;
- the swarm of cars. Suddenly it feels as if all the cars on earth were held up right here, the traffic jam having now become second nature to the species hoping to arrive late at the Last Judgement. Between four and six o'clock in the morning there is some respite, the species seems drowsy . . . but suddenly everything moves on again, the advance cannot be stopped. And in the traffic jam, the automobile becomes a prison on wheels, the cubicle where you can study Radio in the University of Tranquility;
- the flat rooftops, which are the continuation of agrarian life by other means, the natural extension of the farm, the redoubt of Agrarian Reform. Evocations and needs are concentrated on the rooftops. There are goats and hens, and people shout at the helicopters because they frighten the cows and the farmers milking them. Clothes hang there like harvested maize. There are rooms containing families who reproduce and never quite seem to fit. Sons and grandsons come and go, while godparents stay for months, and the room grows, so to speak, eventually to contain the whole village from which its first migrant came;
- the contrasts between rich and poor, the constant antagonism between the shadow of opulence and the formalities of misery;
- the street gangs, less violent than elsewhere, seduced by their own appearance, but somewhat uncomfortable because no one really notices them in the crowd. The street gangs use an international alphabet picked up in the streets of Los Angeles, fence off their territories with graffiti, and show off the aerial prowess of punk hairstyles secure in the knowledge that they are also ancestral, because they really copied them off Emperor Cuauhtemoc. They listen to heavy metal, use drugs, thinner, and cement, destroy themselves, let themselves be photographed in poses they wish were menacing, accept parts as extras in apocalyptic films, feel regret for their street-gang life, and spend the rest of their lives evoking it with secret and public pleasure.

The images are few. One could add the Museum of Anthropology, the Zócalo at any time (day or night), the Cathedral and, perhaps (risking the photographer), a scene of violence in which police beat up street vendors, or arrest youngsters, pick them up by the hair, or swear that they have not beaten anyone. The typical repertoire is now complete, and if I do not include the *mariachis* of Plaza Garibaldi, it is because this text does not come with musical accompaniment. Mexico: another great Latin American city, with its seemingly uncontrollable growth, its irresponsible love of modernity made visible in skyscrapers, malls, fashion shows, spectacles, exclusive restaurants, motorways, cellular phones. Chaos displays its aesthetic offerings, and next to the pyramids of Teotihuacán, the baroque altars, and the more wealthy and elegant districts, the popular city offers its rituals.

On the Causes for Pride that (Should) Make One Shiver

It was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice.
—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Where has that chauvinism of old gone for which, as the saying goes, "There is nowhere like Mexico?" Not far, of course: it has returned as a chauvinism expressed in the language of catastrophe and demography. I will now enumerate the points of pride (psychological compensation):

- Mexico City is the most populated city in the world (the Super-Calcutta!);
- Mexico City is the most polluted city on the planet, whose population, however, does not seem to want to move (the laboratory of the extinction of the species);
- Mexico City is the place where it would be impossible for anything to fail due to a lack of audience. There is public aplenty. In the capital, to counterbalance the lack of clear skies, there are more than enough inhabitants, spectators, car-owners, pedestrians;
- Mexico City is the place where the unlivable has its rewards, the first of which has been to endow survival with a new status.

What makes for an apocalyptic turn of mind? As far as I can see, the opposite of what may be found in Mexico City. Few people actually leave this place whose vital statistics (which tend, for the most part, to be short of the mark) everyone invents at their pleasure. This is because, since it is a secular city after all, very few take seriously the predicted end of the world—at least, of *this* world. So what are the retentive powers of a megalopolis which, without a doubt, has reached its historic limit? And how do we reconcile this sense of having reached a limit with the medium- and long-term plans of every city-dweller? Is it only centralist anxiety that determines the intensity of the city's hold? For many, Mexico City's major charm is precisely its (true and false) "apocalyptic" condition. Here is the first megalopolis to fall victim to its own excess. And how fascinating are all the biblical prophecies, the dismal statistics, and the personal experiences chosen for catastrophic effect! The main topic of conversation at gatherings is whether we are actually living the disaster to come or are among its ruins; and when collective humour describes cityscapes, it does so with all the enthusiasm of a witness sitting in the front row at the Last Judgement: "How awful, three hours in the car just to go two kilometres!" "Did you hear about those people who collapsed in the street because of the pollution?" "In some places there is no more water left." "Three million homes must be built, just for a start. . . ."

The same grandiose explanation is always offered: despite the disasters, twenty million people *cannot leave Mexico City or the Valley of Mexico, because there is nowhere else they want to go; there is nowhere else, really, that they can go.* Such resignation engenders the "aesthetic of multitudes." Centralism lies at the origins of this phenomenon, as does the supreme concentration of powers—which, nevertheless, has certain advantages, the first of which is the identification of liberty and tolerance: "I don't feel like making moral judgements because then I'd have to deal with my neighbours." Tradition is destroyed by the squeeze, the replacement of the extended family by the nuclear family, the wish for extreme individualization that accompanies anomie, the degree of cultural development, the lack of democratic values that would oblige people to—at least minimally—democratize their lives. "What should be abolished" gradually becomes "what I don't like."

To stay in Mexico City is to confront the risks of pollution, ozone, thermic inversion, lead poisoning, violence, the rat race, and the lack of individual meaning. To leave it is to lose the formative and informative advantages of extreme concentration, the experiences of modernity (or postmodernity) that growth and the ungovernability of certain zones due to massification bring. The majority of people, although they may deny it with their complaints and promises to flee, are happy to stay, and stand by the only reasons offered them by hope: "It will get better somehow." "The worst never comes." "We'll have time to leave before disaster strikes." Indeed, the excuses eventually become one: outside the city it's all the same, or worse. Can there now really be any escape from urban violence, overpopulation, industrial waste, the greenhouse effect?

Writers are among the most skeptical. There are no anti-utopias; the city does not represent a great oppressive weight (this is still located in the provinces) but, rather, possible liberty, and in practice, nothing could be further from the spirit of the capital city than the prophecies contained in Carlos Fuentes's novel *Christopher Unborn* and his short story "Andrés Aparicio" in *Burnt Water*. According to Fuentes, the city has reached its limits. One of his characters reflects:

> He was ashamed that a nation of churches and pyramids built for all eternity ended up becoming one with the cardboard, shitty city. They boxed him in, suffocated him, took his sun and air away, his senses of vision and smell.

Even the world of *Christopher Unborn* (one of ecological, political, social and linguistic desolation) is invaded by fun. In the end, although the catastrophe may be very real, catastrophism is the celebration of the incredulous in which irresponsibility mixes with resignation and hope, and

where—not such a secret doctrine in Mexico City—the sensations associated with the end of the world spread: the overcrowding is Hell, and the apotheosis is crowds that consume all the air and water, and are so numerous that they seem to float on the earth. Confidence becomes one with resignation, cynicism, and patience: the apocalyptic city is populated with radical optimists.

In practice, optimism wins out. In the last instance, the advantages seem greater than the horrors. And the result is: *Mexico, the post-apocalyptic city.* The worst has already happened (and the worst is the monstrous population whose growth nothing can stop); nevertheless, the city functions in a way the majority cannot explain, while everyone takes from the resulting chaos the visual and vital rewards they need and which, in a way, compensate for whatever makes life unlivable. Love and hate come together in the vitality of a city that produces spectacles as it goes along: the commerce that invades the pavements, the infinity of architectonic styles, the "street theatre" of the ten million people a day who move about the city, through the Underground system, on buses, motorbikes, bicycles, in trucks and cars. However, the all-star performance is given by the loss of fear at being ridiculed in a society which, not too long ago, was so subjugated by what "others might think." Never-ending mixture also has its aesthetic dimension, and next to the pyramids of Teotihuacán, the baroque altars, and the more wealthy and elegant districts, the popular city projects the most favoured—and the most brutally massified—version of the century that is to come.

3. NAFTA and the U.S. Economy ◆ The Clinton Administration

After the Cold War ended and most social revolutionary groups put down their guns, U.S. governments changed their approach to Latin America. In the 1990s the Clinton administration moved boldly for regional economic integration in the Americas. Such a move was designed to strengthen the U.S. economy at a time when a single, unified European Union was already coming into existence. The Clinton administration pushed the North American Free Trade Agreement through Congress in 1993. In this primary source selection, the administration argues its case for NAFTA's passage.

Adapted from *The NAFTA, Expanding U.S. Exports, Jobs, and Growth: Clinton Administration Statement on the North American Free Trade Agreement* (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, 1993), 3–5.

The case was largely an attack on Mexico's last remaining tariff barriers on U.S. imports. The government of President Carlos Salinas had already begun dismantling such barriers (a vestige of Mexico's earlier experiment with populist economic nationalism) by the mid-1980s, but that was not good enough. Who, according to this selection, was NAFTA designed to help? In the decade since its implementation, have predictions about NAFTA proven accurate?

Every generation of Americans has embraced the challenge of its times. None has shrunk from the task. Our biggest challenge today is economic—to channel a changing international economy to our benefit.

The Clinton Administration is committed to rebuilding the U.S. economy from the ground up. We must prepare our entire work force to compete in the global economy and make sure that nobody gets left behind in the process. We look at trade—and every other issue—from the viewpoint of what is best for ordinary Americans who work hard, play by the rules, and want a chance to get ahead. The key building blocks are economic growth and jobs.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a part of this forward-looking strategy. This Administration supports NAFTA because it will create high-wage U.S. jobs, boost U.S. growth, and expand the base from which U.S. firms and workers can compete in a dynamic global economy.

Creating the Biggest Market in the World

With NAFTA, the United States, Canada, and Mexico will create the biggest market in the world—a combined economy of $6.5 trillion and 370 million people:

- Our competitors are expanding their markets in Europe and Asia. NAFTA is our opportunity to respond and compete.
- By increasing our export opportunities, NAFTA will enable us to take advantage of U.S. economic strengths and remain the world's biggest and best exporter.

Immigration

To the extent that our workers compete with low-paid Mexicans, it is as much through undocumented immigration as trade. This pattern threatens low-paid, low-skilled U.S. workers.

The combination of domestic reforms and NAFTA-related growth in Mexico will keep more Mexicans at home.

- It is likely that a reduction in immigration will increase the real wages of low-skilled urban and rural workers in the United States.

Levelling the Playing Field

Mexico's trade barriers are now much higher than ours. NAFTA will level a playing field now tilted heavily in Mexico's favor.

- Mexico's average tariff against U.S. exports is currently 2.5 times higher than the equivalent U.S. tariff against imports from Mexico.
- By contrast, over 50% of our imports from Mexico already enter duty-free. Our average tariff on imports from Mexico is only 4%.
- Complex Mexican domestic licensing requirements further impede imports into Mexico from the United States.
- Mexico currently has no obligation to continue recent market-opening moves on which thousands of U.S. jobs already depend. NAFTA will not only lock in current access but expand that access.
- NAFTA will eliminate especially burdensome tariffs and non-tariff barriers in a number of key sectors where the United States is competitive vis-à-vis Mexico—such as autos and agriculture.

NAFTA will require relatively little change on our part—while requiring Mexico to sweep away decades of protectionism and overregulation:

- Half of all U.S. exports to Mexico will be eligible for zero Mexican tariffs when NAFTA takes effect on January 1, 1994.
- U.S. exports eligible for tariff-free entry into Mexico include some of our most competitive products.
- Within the first five years after NAFTA is implemented, two-thirds of U.S. industrial exports will enter Mexico duty-free.
- Under NAFTA, Mexico will open its market significantly to U.S. manufactured exports. For example, for automotive parts, Mexico will eliminate 75% of its duties over five years and phase out the rest over ten years.
- NAFTA also will require Mexico to open its market to U.S. service exports (U.S. service exports to Mexico were $8.9 billion in 1992). This will benefit such industries as enhanced telecommunications services, insurance, banking, accounting, and advertising.

Removing Mexican restrictions against U.S. exports means that U.S. companies no longer will have to invest in Mexico or manufacture in Mexico

to supply the Mexican market. NAFTA will eliminate Mexican requirements that force our companies in Mexico to:

- Purchase Mexican goods instead of U.S.-made equipment and components;
- Export their production, usually to the United States, instead of selling directly into the Mexican market; and
- Produce in Mexico to sell in Mexico. For example, the current Auto Decree has the effect of barring automotive imports from the United States through a complex series of investment requirements that will be phased out under NAFTA.

---

4. First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle ◆ Zapatista National Liberation Army

To many of the antiglobalization protestors who joined in the recent demonstrations in Seattle and elsewhere against the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, the Zapatistas were an inspiration. Taking their name from the great peasant hero (and martyr) of the Mexican Revolution, Emiliano Zapata, the Zapatistas of the southern state of Chiapas launched a war on Mexico's central government on January 1, 1994, the day NAFTA officially went into effect. In this selection taken from a Zapatista newspaper, the General Command of the EZLN attempts to justify its declaration of war to the people of Mexico. Note how the Zapatistas place their fight in the long national history of the struggle for independence and self-rule. They also engage in an analysis of the Constitution of 1917, which guaranteed certain rights of indigenous communal landholding (a reversal of the Lerdo Law), and the corruption of the Mexican Revolution by President Carlos Salinas, who worked to pass NAFTA on the Mexican side of the (vanishing) border. As globalization pushes into increasingly remote corners of the world, will this be its reception?

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution

Adapted from *El Despertador Mexicano*, December 31, 1993. This translation comes from http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/Zapatistas/ (accessed August 19, 2002).

and expel the French empire from our soil. Later, the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like [Pancho] Villa and Zapata emerged—poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. We are not able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a seventy-year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups. They are the same ones that opposed [Miguel] Hidalgo and [José María] Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince [Maximilian] to rule our country, the same ones that formed the "scientific" *Porfirista* dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968, the same ones that today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope, after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39, which says:

> National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.

Therefore, according to our constitution, we declare the following to the Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dictatorship that we suffer from, monopolized by a one-party system and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power.

According to this Declaration of War, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to restore the legitimacy and the stability of the nation by overthrowing the dictator.

We also ask that international organizations and the International Red Cross watch over and regulate our battles, so that our efforts are carried

out while still protecting our civilian population. We declare now and always that we are subject to the Geneva Accord, forming the EZLN as the fighting arm of our liberation struggle. We have the Mexican people on our side. We have the beloved tri-colored flag highly respected by our insurgent fighters. We use black and red in our uniform as the symbol of our working people on strike. Our flag carries the following letters, "EZLN," Zapatista National Liberation Army, and we always carry our flag into combat.

At the outset, we rejected any effort to disgrace our just cause by accusing us of being drug traffickers, drug guerrillas, thieves, or other names that might be used by our enemies. Our struggle follows the constitution, which is held high by its call for justice and equality.

Therefore, according to this declaration of war, we give our military forces, the EZLN, the following orders:

First: Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.

Second: Respect the lives of our prisoners and turn over all wounded to the International Red Cross.

Third: Initiate summary judgments against all soldiers of the Mexican federal army and the political police that have received training or have been paid by foreigners, for they are traitors to our country, and against all those that have repressed and treated badly the civil population and robbed or stolen from, or attempted crimes against, the good of the people.

Fourth: Form new troops with all those Mexicans that show their interest in joining our struggle, including enemy soldiers who turn themselves in without having fought against us and promise to take orders from the General Command of the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

Fifth: We ask for the unconditional surrender of the enemy's headquarters before we begin any combat to avoid any loss of life.

Sixth: Suspend the robbery of our natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN.

We, free men and women, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators have waged an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years. Therefore we ask for your participation, your decision to support our struggle for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a free and democratic government.

5. The Fiesta of the Word ◆ June C. Nash

Two years after initiating their uprising against the Mexican government and NAFTA, the Zapatistas were still at war. At that time, in January 1996, they hosted a National Indigenous Forum in the Lacandón jungle of Chiapas state. According to anthropologist June Nash, who was there, the Forum was also called "the fiesta of the word" by one of its Zapatista organizers. The Forum/Fiesta was to provide the numerous Indian minorities of Mexico with the opportunity to issue a set of unified demands to the government. Subcomandante Marcos, the bearded, pipe-smoking guerrilla leader, attended the Forum, as did several academics, journalists, and supporters of the Zapatistas from outside Mexico. According to Nash, the Forum was run like an indigenous village meeting, with the leaders sitting quietly while the rank and file spoke their minds. Nash was clearly impressed by what she calls the "pluriethnic and pluripolitical" nature of the event. Is this a form of globalization, too?

The four-day meeting of the National Indigenous Congress, which Comandante David called "the fiesta of the word," was attended by indigenous people from throughout the country and visitors from Argentina, France, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Spain, and Italy. It signaled the birth of a political front named the Zapatista National Liberation Front (FZLN). In Subcomandante Marcos's words, the FZLN was to be "a civil, peaceful organization, independent and democratic, Mexican and national, that fights for democracy, liberty, and justice in Mexico."

The excitement of the event was palpable as security lines surrounded the House of Culture (*Casa de Cultura*) in San Cristóbal. Subcomandante Marcos was the least-seen member of the EZLN. All of the sessions were led by one or another of the indigenous *comandantes*, and Marcos appeared only briefly on the second day. While the Zapatistas handed over their arms, the government continued to carry out the low-intensity warfare in the rain forest.

My request to attend the forum, approved by Marcos and registered with COCOPA, enabled me to join the four hundred or more indigenous representatives from throughout the nation who attended, along with academics, writers, and supporters from civil society. The agreements reached during the September dialogue were summarized in the presence of twenty-four mem-

From June C. Nash, *Mayan Visions: The Quest for Autonomy in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 149–54. Reprinted by permission of Routledge, part of The Taylor & Francis Group.

bers of the Zapatista high command, four of whom were sitting at each of the six tables. The Zapatistas still wore ski masks since they were still threatened with apprehension or even assassination attempts. They spoke only at the plenary session and the beginning of the discussions at each of the six tables. They were there to listen to the discussion by indigenes from other regions.

Tacho addressed the assembly on January 3, 1996, urging the indigenous people of Mexico to speak with their own voice without asking for permission, and to join in constructing a world where everyone loves without the need to dominate others. Chiding that "the government that we have now has wanted to kill, buy, and silence us," he declared that "now we must form a new Nation." He invoked the meaning of being indigenous in this new movement:

> We are indigenous people; we have suffered centuries of rejection, of persecution, of abandonment, of death. Many times the oppressor has had white skin, but other times death and treason has had dark skin and our same language. The good path also takes on the word of men and women of white skin and of a different language. In the world that the Zapatistas want, all skin colors fit, all the languages and all the paths. The good world has many ways and many paths. And in those paths there is respect and dignity.

The speech was signed with the names of Subcomandante Marcos, David, and Tacho.

Tacho set the stride with his opening attack on the neoliberal policies of the government, a theme that was picked up by an indigenous woman leader from Oaxaca, Bartola Morales García. She excoriated a government which represents only capital interests, while indigenous people have suffered more from the population relocations of the past ten years than any other group. The newly reconstituted Commission for Agreement and Pacification (COCOPA) celebrated the formation of the Zapatista movement as a political force, and the leader of the group, Dr. Castillo, promised to bring the results of the deliberation to the legislature. This was a welcome change from the position of COCOPA that presided at the April dialogue, but many who attended the meeting criticized COCOPA's failure to censure the army's continued presence in the rain forest.

Throughout the five days of meetings, all who attended were allowed to speak, even foreign visitors. The Zapatistas came as listeners and watchers, and except for the opening speeches, they remained an alert audience for what their invited guests said. In the compulsive speechifying of modernizing political life in Mexico, as in the United States, this is a remarkable stance. This, too, is a custom of village politics: each evening *principales* and police officers sit quietly on the benches at the town hall, watching and listening to the people.

The wide range of representation was evident, as people who had never attended a national meeting spoke of conditions in their pueblos for the first time, in the presence of leaders in the popular movements who had been

active in politics since the revolutionary decade of the 1920s, along with academics and intellectuals. Denunciations against the government's mistreatment of people were heard in all the sessions. The contingent from Guerrero, who had fled as mounted police rode into their villages, spoke of the massacre of their people. The women's session was the most contentious, with charges of domination by *mestizas* present in their session.

People were careful to include nonindigenous along with indigenous needs in their statements. A leader of the indigenous proletarian organization called for indigenous representation on the councils; a Huichol asked that their pueblos be free to practice their own religion and called for the self-management of their language; a representative of the Autonomous Pueblos of Chipango talked of the loss of the youth who migrate for lack of land; a representative of the homosexuals of Oaxaca proposed that there be translators in all places of justice, and that the abusers of women and minors should be brought to justice. The impressive variety and forcefulness of these popular representatives were an embodiment of the aspirations for a pluriethnic and pluripolitical governance of the country.

Sunday's plenary session was marked by the sacred atmosphere typical of village celebrations, with pine needles strewn on the floor of the Casa de Cultura, potted palms, and copal incense swung by officiates to purify the air as the people congregated in the large auditorium. Government representatives of COCOPA and CONAI* took their places at a semicircular podium. The twenty-four Zapatistas who filed into the room with the women who acted as their security guards joined them and, as they took their seats, Marcos arrived suddenly and without fanfare. Security precautions were more pronounced in his case, and we were told by members of the security guards outside the Casa de Cultura that they were not allowing Marcos to leave the premises for fear of an assassination attempt.

In his opening address, Tacho reiterated the desire of the EZLN that the struggle for land would continue without fratricidal warfare as they sought a harmonious recognition of cultural variety. He summed up the constitutional changes needed to arrive at an autonomous, pluralistic form of jurisprudence and administration by indigenous pueblos. Self-organization, self-definition, and self-rule were the themes in the constitution of the future, as discussed in the preceding sessions. Marcos spoke very briefly, referring to the rainbow they saw as they rode out of the jungle that portended a peaceful outcome of the conflict.

David opened the plenary session on Monday, January 8, with what sounded to me like a counterpoint to Tacho's opening remarks on January 3, stating that the assembled group did not have to seek the permission of the government to speak their own words, and instead asked permission of *Tatik Dueño de la Creación*, the Lord Father of all Creation, to begin "*la gran fiesta*

*National Mediation Commission.

de la palabra en el gran país de México" (the great Fiesta of the Word in the great country of Mexico). Each of the raconteurs for the six sessions summarized their discussions. Antonio Hernández Cruz of the third session on Indigenous Political Participation invoked the great tradition of treating political authorities as parents as he outlined the new political pact with the state in the framework of a new constitution: communication between government agencies and local authorities should be promoted with provision for conferences of indigenous pueblos in regional assemblies and settlement of land conflicts with autonomous regional councils. He summed up the specific changes called for in the session: changes in the electoral law to include indigenous customs in the choice of their representatives, constitutions of autonomous regions embracing *pueblos indígenas*, participation of women in government at all levels, and an ongoing critique of the methods and practice of self-government. The rights of women in employment, and of those who were forced to migrate, should be recognized and made explicit in the governance of pueblos.

Tuesday's program opened with a quasi-spiritual ceremony conducted by the Hermandad Ch'ol, Sisterhood/Brotherhood of Ch'ol speakers. They were a motley group, with some of the women dressed in the *ladina** clothing of poor countrywomen, others wearing the backstrap-loomed woolen skirts of Chamulas, and two men with ponchos and straw hats typical of the northern states. A very tall, almost gringo-looking young man carried an incense pot with copal, while some carried candles and flowers. Almost as in a pageant celebrating multiculturalism, they circled the room, stopping to pray at each compass point. Facing east, they prayed, "For the new day, the new light, as the Father Sun teaches us to be brothers, as we show and share this work, so we all benefit"; facing west, they invoked the "Lord who will listen to our prayer here in San Cristóbal, thanks to the Lord Father, thanks to the benediction of justice and dignity, the Father Sun who rules us, directed us to pass here and raise ourselves up, the Sun who is the one who created this sun; we unite in this fight, if there is no food there is no peace"; facing north, they spoke, "Those who came here from the north to see our misery, taught us this religion. They established their superiority over us. We now say they are not superior; the north is no longer a symbol of superiority. The north is now converted to a symbol of equality, the place where a new life in which we live in equality will come"; facing south, the *hermandad* prayed, "The god of the south comes with the true voice, we ask him to help our siblings." One of the women then spoke in Ch'ol, saying, "In this forum, let us walk together," then uttered the Lord's Prayer, ending with, "In the reign of peace with justice and dignity," and a song in Tzeltal. Bearing aloft a flaming candle, a woman spoke what an Indian sitting next to me called the "*snichinal k'op*," the flowery word:

*Woman of indigenous descent who has adopted the mainstream, Western culture.

> The whites came 503 years ago to destroy us, but the *Chiba* (sacred plant of the Maya) was not destroyed since its roots are deep. May all its flowers flourish; with water, it can kill us or it can save us. We live from the fruit of the land that comes with water. If there is no water we do not live. The light signifies the life from the night that might kill us. Some who have an evil heart must change; those who want to stultify our work cannot do it. Thus we carry this light so it is not put out. With our money, with our desire, we will light our way with this light. We will go forward to progress. We speak to the Mother Earth, the Father Sun through the media of the roots, which are the passage to make us siblings. The Mother here holds the land that is a gift that she gives with open hands. We speak with the youths who help us with the writing, with the ancients who have the gift of their experience in the school of life. To the siblings who convoked this assembly we unite with our creation, Lord the Father, Lord the Mother (*Tatik Tiosh, Me'tik Tiosh*), the movement of liberation.

This stunning pageant, wedding together five hundred years of traditions retained from the Mayan past and imposed by the Spanish conquest, embodied the pluricultural society the assembly called for. The diversified genetic pool, including indigenes from throughout the country, and with visiting delegates from the hemisphere and Europe, with young and old, men and women, sitting and standing together, unlike the age-, ethnic-, and sex-segregated villages, marked the successful unification of the emergent civil society. In the final plenary session, the "word" was passed to Bishop Samuel Ruíz, who in his own lifetime traversed the road from conventional Christianity to liberation theology and an awakening to his indigenous parishioners. He spoke of "the road of difference, the road of enrichment," invoking the same couplets that are a part of all Mayan prayer forms:

> In our living together, working for change, with the participation of women, all are signs of change in our life and not only in our hope. The pueblos that live together, those of the north who live in "the time of the Indian," we thought they would die, but they are surging forward. The old say it will not happen in two or three days. Some who continue with their own language have reinforced it; others who have experienced change, reinforced it. In this continent and in this world, we do not speak of fantasies, but of reality. We are making history. The search for peace is not lost. The road is much broader than contemplated. We live now in the firm hope for open spaces for a long peace.

The harmonious interweaving of several layers of culturally differentiated syntaxes, with the mingling of Spanish with Ch'ol and Tzeltal resounding in the cavernous space of the overflowing auditorium, was a living expression of the aspirations of the forum.

About the Editors

JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN has taught Latin American History at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, since 1990. He is the author, editor, and translator of numerous books on Latin American history, among them *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (1995); *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (2001); and *National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance* (2004).

JAMES A. WOOD is an assistant professor of history at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. His areas of specialization include modern Latin American and world history. He received his Ph.D. in history in 2000 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, under the direction of John Chasteen. His current research interest is the emergence of civil society and the public sphere in Spanish America.