Chicha and the Days of Reflection:
Nicaraguan Elections 2001

by Cymene Howe
(Cymene is in the Ph.D. program in Anthropology and is currently in Nicaragua doing research.)

In Nicaragua, the populace has four days “to reflect” on their electoral choices. On November 1 all campaigning stops, the closing festivities are held (with only one death and some injuries from rock-throwing incidents) and Nicaraguans are free to contemplate their next president. As I write this, on the night before the elections, I can say that the mood in Nicaragua is tense. Both of the national newspapers have front-page stories about how the army has been deployed, in full battle fatigues and camouflage face-paint, to protect the polls. President Alemán has declared a state of emergency. The more gossip-prone representatives of the two battling political parties (the Liberals and the Sandinistas) have whispered in my ear about planned assassinations, theft of ballots, foreign Sandinista sympathizers paying-off poverty stricken voters with chickens and bags of beans. As an official, international observer working with the Carter Center to oversee the elections, I hope that none of these are true and that the democratic process will avail. Probably the biggest problem facing the democratic process in Nicaragua, despite the hype, is a paucity of resources. If the electoral counts don’t come in correctly, it will more likely be a question of a dilapidated, donated fax machine weakened by tropical climies than it will an assassin hooded in party colors.

This has been the closest presidential race in Nicaraguan history; and for a nation as politicized, often polemized, as is Nicaragua, this leads to an exciting competition. This election has also been the most expensive, per capita, ever held in Latin America. It is estimated that the equivalent of $US 30 has been spent in campaign costs for every vote that will be cast. In a country which rates only second to Haiti in terms of poverty (in the entire western hemisphere) these electoral expenditures say something about the seriousness of politics in Nicaragua. This level of campaign spending also provokes Nicaraguans to question who will benefit from the election of particular candidates. The US would prefer the Liberals for example. The Sandinistas, who have chosen Daniel Ortega to run for office again (his third and probably final

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Letter from the President

Dear Las Noticias readers:

Welcome to the second installment of this semester’s Las Noticias Estudiantiles! As many of you may have noticed, the Student Organization for Latin American Studies (SOLAS) has been working hard to develop services and activities to ensure the best possible experience for its members. We are enthusiastically looking forward to continuing these projects next semester and to creating some new ones, with your input, of course! After all, these ideas stay locked up if our membership doesn’t participate. So, I’d like to send a special thanks to each of you who have sent me feedback on the Listserv; those who attend the SOLAS Film Festivals, the Brown Bag Lecture Series, the Happy Hours (they really are fun, try to make it if you haven’t yet), Model OAS Fest and the meetings.

Speaking of which, please mark your calendars: Our first meeting of next semester will be on Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30 pm. This will be an opportunity for new and old students to get together and bounce some new ideas off one another, plus there is always free food. So, please plan on showing (and stuffing) your beautiful faces.

I would like to take this moment to extend my gratitude to SOLAS Treasurer Sue Taylor for being such a great supporter and hard worker. Go SUE! She was the mastermind behind this semester’s Latin American Film Festival; we can expect next semesters to be just as good, if not better! She was also the woman behind the lovely and bright SOLAS 2001-2002 Directories. We sincerely apologize to anyone who did not make it into this year’s directory but student information is always changing and we just can’t keep up with all of you. I would also like to thank Pat Hughes and Rachel Archer for their spectacular work as co-editors of Las Noticias.

And to all of you: Thank you so much for supporting the SOLAS Brown Bag Lecture Series, this semester’s line up has been amazing and we are quite lucky have had such quality speakers and performers! Look out for our last two Brown Bags of the semester: On Wednesday, December 5th we have internationally acclaimed Afro-Cuban drum and dance ensemble OMO ODDARA who will present on the origins and traditions of Afro-Cuban music. Then, on Friday, December 7th, we have TIM KRAFT, President of Avanti, a political consulting firm, who will give his impression of the recent elections in Nicaragua. I hope to see you all there.

Adelante!

Mónica X. Delgado
SOLAS Presidenta

Letter from the Editor

Hello everyone!

It is so hard to believe that it is almost December. This has been a very busy semester with the film festival and other SOLAS activities as well as classes and the time has gone by very quickly.

I think we have a wonderful issue of Las Noticias this time. We have two student articles – one is a report from Cymene Howe, who observed during the recent Nicaraguan elections, and the other is a very interesting piece about street children in the favelas of Brazil by Carrie Thompson. We also have beautiful poetry submitted by María Rodríguez-Pope. Thanks to all of these students who were willing to share their work with the rest of us. In addition, we hear from students who share with us how they became interested in Latin American Studies.

There are also a couple of pieces with information for you – upcoming events on campus as well as information on next year’s study abroad programs offered through the Latin American and Iberian Institute. In addition, there is information on graduating students and recipients of field research grants from the LAI.

Many thanks to my highly capable and efficient team of editors – Pat, Rachel and Monica, for their contributions in making this the best issue yet!

I hope you all have a wonderful break and a joyous holiday season.

Sue Taylor
Editor
Chicha and the Days of Reflection

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opportunity to run for president since his post-revolution presidency 1980-1990) see this as a final opportunity to rally the populace around the "cult of Daniel" (aka Los Danielistas).

When the Sandinistas came to power in 1979 the colors they flew were the anarchist, red and black. In 2001, in hopes of coming to power once again, the Sandinistas rally around a different hue: pink. What North Americans might call Pepto Bismol pink is, in Nicaragua, called "chicha"—because it is the same color as a national beverage, called chicha, made of slightly fermented ground corn, a lot of sugar and some definitely-dyed red flavoring. Part of the FSLN's (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) strategy in changing their symbolic colors is ideological. The idea being that this is a new kind of Sandinismo, one built on coalition, "la convergencia nacional". The purportedly changed FSLN will, according to one of their campaign slogans, "Construct the future today with Love and Unity"...(by creating) "trabajo, escuelas y paz". More importantly, chicha colored lamp-posts, billboards and t-shirts need to reflect a changed Daniel. Thus, the color of the national drink comes to represent a united nation, one where "love is more powerful than hate" to quote another Sandinista campaign slogan. Chicha-coloring public spaces is also meant, from my perspective, to appeal to "the feminine vote". Unlike the red and black of the eighties, where almost a generation of young men died fighting the US-supported Contras, chicha is a national, maternal embrace. Chicha, in other words, has nothing to do with anything militaristic—something which many voters fear in a Sandinista return to power. As if chicha were not tritely "feminine" enough as it is, the Sandinistas have added blue and yellow daisies to their campaign materials, signs and newspaper ads.

"The feminine vote" that the Sandinistas will need to earn goes beyond the colored symbols of nation and a predictable appeal to "femininity," because would-be-(again) President Daniel continues to be plagued by the question of whether or not he raped/molested his 11 year old step daughter, Zoilamerica Narváez, for years (while he was President of the Republic). Daniel's wife claims that the sexual abuse never took place. Daniel has not responded to the accusation. Nor will he ever have too, as he has signed a pact with the Liberal opposition party which guarantees him a place in the senate for life, and thus immunity from prosecution. As one woman told me, a staunch Sandinista, "I could not, in good faith, as a woman, vote for Daniel...not after what he did to his daughter."

For their part, the Liberal party must skirt an equally sordid, also unproven, story which circulates in the Nicaraguan popular imagination. According to the mythos, the Liberal candidate, Enrique Bolaños, killed his wealthy father by poisoning a bottle of "rojita" soda pop, a crime he pinned on the maid. Rojita, which in my opinion does taste more like insecticide than whatever red fruit it is supposed to represent, would be a perfect conduit for patricide. Thus, if Daniel must distance himself from his past (Zoli America, Sandinista land appropriation in the 1980s, diplomatic relationships with unsavory states, etc) so too must Bolaños distance himself from some closeted skeletons. More importantly, Bolaños must distance himself from Arnoldo Alemán, the sitting president for whom Bolaños acts as vice president. During his reign (1996-present) Alemán has managed to accrue a huge amount of personal wealth (about $20 million) while Nicaragua has accrued the dubious honor of having the fifth most corrupt government in the world. With robbery as rampant as this, Bolaños must work hard to convince the voters that he is not cut from the same cloth as his boss. Bolaños' cheerful slogan/suggestion is "si se puede!" (recall the same slogan of Vicente Fox) and "say no to Nicaragua...say no to Daniel". Simple enough.

The propaganda which screens on all the local TV channels has oscillated between positive affirmations of what each party promises, which are really the same: jobs, peace, democracy. The Sandinistas promise 98,000 new jobs for Nicaraguans; the Liberals are offering 100,000, however how each party plans to accomplish this feat remains unclear. What is clear is that the question of employment is critical, making this election a single issue campaign—but one which is loaded with passionate opinions all around. The PLC and the FSLN never did manage to have a televised debate. There was always a discrepancy, one or the other resisting the time, the place, the topic. For the most part, it is a campaign of personality: the cult of Daniel vs. the businessman savvy and generally "nice guy" motif of Bolaños. While Daniel started the campaigning season with fully 30% of the popular vote (according to polls), throughout the campaign Bolaños and Daniel have swapped percentage points back and forth. For the past couple of months they have been in a statistical tie; each candidate has around 35-40% of the vote, depending on which pollster you believe. The candidates are, on the eve of the elections, literally neck and neck.

Of course, no Nicaraguan electoral race would be complete without a good dose of "suggestions" from their friends in the North, the United States. The US president
UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars:
The first S.O.L.A.S. meeting for next semester will be Tuesday, January 22 at 6:30 PM. Food will be provided.

The Evolution of Cuban Folklore
Direct from Cuba: OMO ODDARA, an Afro-Cuban drum and dance group, will do a presentation on the roots and traditions of Afro-Cuban music and dance on Wednesday, December 5th at Clark Hall, Room 101, from 3 - 4 pm

Presidental Politics in Nicaragua:
The Bush Campaign
TIM KRAFT, president of Avanti Ltd., an international political consulting firm, will be speaking on the recent elections in Nicaragua at the Latin American and Iberian Institute (801 Yale NE) on Friday, Dec. 7th from 12 noon - 1 pm

Water in the Desert:
A 30 Year Anniversary Celebration of Women in Activism, Academics and the Arts
The Women's Resource Center and the Women's Studies Department are sponsoring "Water in the Desert: A 30 year Anniversary Celebration of Women in Activism, Academics and the Arts", March 8-10, 2002 at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131

They are seeking proposals for papers, panels and workshops in lengths of 50 or 80 minutes by individuals or groups. In addition to scholarly papers, we welcome proposals for poster sessions and presentations of visual and creative works. They encourage interdisciplinary and cross-cultural proposals that address women in activism, academics, or the arts over the last 30 years, in contemporary times and projections for the future.

Themes of Water in the Desert pertain to women in activism, academic/scholarly work of women and artistic endeavors of women. We may think of water in the desert as those events, persons and places that provide refreshment, space, nourishment, creativity and rest for women. Other interpretations are most welcome.

Kinds of Proposals Sought:
* A single oral presentation will usually consist of a 30-40 minute presentation pertaining to a theme of the conference followed by 10-20 minutes of discussion.

* A panel consists of three papers or three perspectives pertaining to a theme/themes of the conference. It is expected that panels would be either in the time frame above or 60 minutes of presentations followed by 20 minutes of dialogue or discussion.

* A workshop is an in-depth presentation of 80 minutes designed to share skills, knowledge or experience related to the themes of the conference.

* A poster presentation will consist of a research project, pedagogical or other visual approach or creative project pertaining to a theme of the conference.

Proposal formats are also available at www.unm.edu/~womenst. For further information you may call (505) 277-3854.

Proposals are due on Friday, December 7, 2001. Proposals must be received by 5 PM on that date.

Submissions: Proposals may be submitted the following ways:
1. E-mail: womenst@unm.edu
2. Mail: Women Studies Program
   2132 Mesa Vista Hall
   University of New Mexico
   Albuquerque, NM 87131
3. FAX: (505) 277-0267
Fifth Model Organization of American States 2001

This year the Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) sent seven delegates to the 5th Model Organization of American States (MOAS) held at St. Mary's University in San Antonio on Nov. 9 – 10, 2001. Representing El Salvador, the delegates included Stephanie Barnett, Michael Cooksie, Justin Delacour, Mónica X. Delgado, Margarita Ochoa, Lorena Olmos and Joel Villarreal. Our delegation had representatives on all five committees: The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), The Inter-American Juridical Committee (IAJC), the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) and the Committee on Hemispheric Security (HRC).

The Model Organization of American States (MOAS) is an exciting educational opportunity for college students. This conference simulates the activities of the OAS and its committees by allowing participants to assume the roles of diplomatic representatives to the OAS. Role-playing and heavy debate during committee meetings allows students to gain a better understanding of the problems and complexities of the relationships among member nations.

Overall, the conference was a great learning experience and I believe everyone who attended had a good time.

How I Became Interested in Latin American Studies

We asked several of the new Latin American Studies students how they became interested in LAS. This is what three of them told us:

Darcie Johnson

My interest in Latin America grew over time as a result of familial influence and a string of personal and professional travel opportunities. At an early age, I took an interest in my grandfather's memorabilia from Colombia and Mexico, where he assisted farmers in the formation of agricultural cooperatives. Spanish instructors, who taught culture as well as language, further fueled this interest. Then, from 1997 to 2001, I had the opportunity to manage environmental issues associated with joint venture and licensing projects between U.S. and foreign industries, such as PDVESA and PEMEX. From this experience, I not only further developed an interest in Latin American culture, but also an interest in the distinctions between environmental regulation and enforcement across the Americas.

A. Sandoval

I chose to pursue an MA in LAS to diversify my education. I achieved a BA in Cultural Anthropology with an emphasis on Latin America. Throughout my undergraduate studies I was fascinated with political structures and how they are affected by (and how they affect) cultural structures. During the summer of 2000 I traveled through Chiapas, Mexico and Guatemala with two separate Witness for Peace delegations. I experienced first hand the effects of government policy on both urban and rural areas and their people. Over the course of the next two years I hope to gain a better understanding of Latin America, its culture, and its politics.

Chandria Slaughter

My interest in the Spanish language and Latin American cultures was sparked in high school. I had a Spanish teacher who made learning the language enjoyable and challenging. She introduced the class to the different Latin American cultures and organized weekend trips to Latin American art exhibits.

As an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, I wanted to continue learning about Latin America and its array of cultures, so I majored in Latin American Studies with a Spanish minor. While at William and Mary, I was involved in the two Latino groups on campus (the Latin American Club and La Organización De Los Hispanos Unidos [OHU]). The latter was a volunteer organization dedicated to working with the Latino community in Williamsburg.

During this time my interest in Latin America moved from being only academic to actually visiting the places I had been studying about. I began participating in study abroad programs in Latin America and traveled through Mexico by bus. After deciding to go to law school and focusing on international law, I wanted to compliment my newfound love of the law with my first love, Latin American Studies. Being a Dual Degree JD/MALAS student has allowed me to do that.
Meninos da Rua: Street Children, Innocent Bystanders to Brazil’s Social Inadequacies

by Carrie Thompson

Carrie is an undergraduate student in the Spanish and Portuguese department.

In a bid to assert the country’s economy in the game of the global world market, Brazil placed a wager and gambled without foresight. Brazil bet on a seat at the dinner table of first world nations. After all, it possessed the necessary ingredients: abundant resources, fertile land, and affordable labor. Yet, the stakes were high. During this period of potential growth, Brazil’s government promoted modernization of the economic sector. In turn, millions of Brazilians migrated hundreds of miles, from the desolate interior of Brazil, to the promising cities along the coast, seeking work and a chance for financial reward. Nearly one million migrants settled into Rio de Janeiro between 1940 and 1950. The great influx of migrants to Brazil’s popular cities overwhelmed available employment, leaving migrant families in even more destitute positions than before. Consequently, the vacant hillsides of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo became places where the poor and unemployed could start new lives, build houses, raise families, and create neighborhoods. Today, those shantytowns erected by the poor migrants are known as favelas, and have become a haven for the ills of poverty and crime. From the favelas, generations of young favelados are born without hope. They live in the shadow of modernization, bound to a marginal space within Brazilian society. Brazil’s meninos da rua (street children) are the product of poverty, destined to a life of crime, violence, and discrimination.

Favelas spread across Brazil’s urban landscape and have become home to millions. Typical favela homes are erected from recycled materials like corrugated tin and zinc plates. In most neighborhoods there are no luxuries and many live without adequate plumbing or electricity. Favela streets are littered with trash and are considered dangerous. The police fear these neighborhoods and rarely go there. Drug gangs enforce the law and dominate the blocks. On occasion, gang-related violence leaves behind a mutilated body on the side of a road, reminding neighbors to beware. It is a place that constantly challenges survival. The favelas are places where the maid, the laborer, the small business entrepreneur, the prostitute, the beggar, and the street child return home.

Brazil’s efforts toward modernization established an economic stratum that spawned favela neighborhoods. In his article “Dark Mirror of Modernizaion,” Julio Cesar Pino suggests that favelas were formed in response to the effects of modernization including an increasing population, a rising cost of living, and an unsteady income. Competition for employment was highest among the working classes. As a result, there was a split within the proletariat class. Those that were unable to secure jobs within the service sector were subjected to unpredictable and temporary employment. Pino states that “the subproletariat of Rio de Janeiro, millions of men and women drifting in and out of the workforce, largely shut out of the consumer market and for the most part denied access to health, education, and housing, flocked to the favelas as their last chance for survival.” Migrants who lacked skills to compete within the industrial workforce were paid below the minimum wage and marginalized to sub-proletariat positions like servitude. Many unskilled workers ended up as servants to the upper class and the proletariat, performing odd jobs and cleaning homes. Due to poor wages and lack of affordable housing, favela communities were constructed above the cities, on unclaimed land, away from the expensive high rise apartments and the dominant bourgeoisie class.

The face of the favelas then began to take shape. By the 1960s Rio de Janeiro’s favelas were seventy percent black and forty-eight percent of favelados were under the age of eighteen. The growing youth population greatly increased the favela’s need for civil organizations like public schools, health clinics, and welfare. However, because favelas were squatter settlements on undeveloped land, they were denied recognition as a part of the city. Segregated from the “lighter” center of the city, the “darker” favelas were discriminated against by the government of Rio de Janeiro. The city government ignored responsibilities of civil organization in those areas and overlooked the favela community’s great need for adequate plumbing, sanitation, electricity, education, and crime regulation. In response to their subjugated social position, favelados formulated their communities without any resources or support from city services. The favela matured into a self-contained society, perpetuated by the inescapable force of poverty, which further reinforced its marginality in popular Brazilian culture.

Existing poverty within favela communities has nurtured one of Brazil’s greatest social dilemmas, the existence of street children. For decades, youths have been the fastest growing population in the favelas. Not yet old enough to work, but comprising half of the available work force in their communities, young favelados are often encouraged by parents to find work on the streets. Some children seek work to bring money back to the family, others beg for money to feed themselves because the family doesn’t have enough food. Ten year old Adevaldo, a beggar on the streets of a Pernambuco town affirms, “...I only beg because I am hungry...My mother only cooks for my father, not for me.” Chico, a nine year old from a Pernambuco favela was forced out his home by his mother because she couldn’t afford to keep him.

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Children also seek shelter on the street rather than suffer from abuse in their favela homes. For example, Celina Peres dos Anjos left home when she was merely six years old because of the repeated beatings she received from her father. In Porto Alegre, a remark from sixteen year old Jose, a runaway, reveals his own experience with abuse and the lack of child welfare in Brazil. He asks, "is it true that in your country, [the United States], parents can be jailed for beating their children?" In the favelas, the perversing symptoms of poverty, like hunger and violence, leave children with little recourse but to go to the streets.

Estimates vary when it comes to approximating how many children roam the streets of Brazil. According to the Newsweek article "Dead End Kids," there are almost two hundred thousand kids living on the streets of Brazil. From the Natural History article "Moving Targets," in Brazil’s largest metropolitan city, São Paulo, there are anywhere from five thousand to five hundred thousand street kids. Street kids participate in a variety of activities perceived by society as either reasonable or harmful. In cities like Rio de Janeiro for example, it is not uncommon to see young children selling candy, shining shoes, washing or guarding cars, and begging for money. Unfortunately, it is also not uncommon for children to participate in illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking, and robbery. Perhaps it is difficult to estimate the number of street kids because their presence on the street varies from street vendors (actual workers), to beggars (public nuisance), to drug addicts and criminals (dangers to society). Their classification as "street kids" is not specifically defined as to whether they are entirely homeless, partially dependent on family, or privy to locations of nighttime shelter off the street. It may also be questioned whether the statistics include the children who spend their days on the streets and their nights at home, in contrast to those who live entirely on the streets. It is difficult to make an accurate account of all the children who rely on the street for survival because meninos da rua are a varied group. Regardless of classification, street children struggle to make ends meet and are at risk of violence and crime.

Street children are lured into drug-related activities and the deceiving promises of gang lifestyles. Active participation in organized crime and drug trafficking appeals to young favelados because drug gangs and crime appear as windows of opportunity. It seems likely that street children would find gang life appealing for several reasons. The presence of drug gangs and drug distribution within Brazil’s favelas, especially in Rio de Janeiro, is extremely prevalent. Drug gangs are likely to be involved in dweller’s associations, admired public organizations like samba schools and soccer teams, and it is very common for drug gangs to function in place of the police. To a young favelado who faces isolation and degradation on the street, drugs and gang affiliation represent membership, security, and income. In “Perverse Integration,” expert Alba Zaluar points out in one of her many articles devoted to the subject of drug gangs, “the strategies they [drug gangs] employ in recruiting young members are based on the promise of earning easy money, power, and fame.” Street children can find benefits such as shelter, protection from other gangs, opportunity for promotion within the ranks of the gang hierarchy, and a sense of power through violence, crime, and gun ownership. Many street children, enlisted in drug gang hierarchies, serve in the position of aviões, or “little airplanes.” They function as the essential agent between the drug distributor and client. Although it might seem beneficial to them in several ways, the reality of gang membership is dangerous and often deadly.

Involvement in drug-related activities offers young favelados a false sense of security and power. Street children, enticed by the profit and power associated with gang activity, become targets of drug-related violence. Serving as the lowest members of the drug hierarchy, the aviões are the most expendable and face a variety of threats. Of the six thousand street children under the age of eighteen killed between 1988 and 1992, more than half died at the hands of drug gangs. Usually the first to be arrested and prosecuted by the police, aviões risk the threat of severe beatings and imprisonment, or are forced to pay large amounts of money to corrupt police officers and lawyers. Many aviões become drug addicts, are killed in crossfire, or are quickly “disappeared” after involvement in a highly sensitive operation. “Young men engaged in these crimes [organized robberies and drug trafficking] frequently die in the circles of violence into which they are brought,” argues Alba Zaluar. It is sad and ironic that gang membership, regarded as a form of protection from the street and drug trafficking and considered by many favelados as a means to survive, are accountable factors in the deaths of street kids.

Other prevalent parties involved in the killings of street children include hired death squads and the police. According to the article "Brazil: Moving Targets," the São Paulo chapter of the Brazilian Bar Association estimates one thousand street children were murdered by death squads in 1990. Perhaps the most notorious incident citing police involvement occurred on 23 July 1993 on the steps of Rio de Janeiro’s Candelaria Cathedral. That night, several off duty police officers opened fire on fifty sleeping children, leaving the corpses of ten young victims to be viewed by the public the following morning. Another tragic example of the brutal violence inflicted upon street children occurred against fourteen-year-old Wellington Barbosa who was gunned down while walking on the street by a former cop-turned-hit man called "Friday the 13th." Why do death squads, off duty police officers, and hit men murder children? Street children are rega-

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Meninos da Rua

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tively perceived by society. Popular sentiment among local storeowners in São Paulo is that the presence of street children is "bad for business." In a country that relies heavily on the contribution of tourism, the presence of street children causes great concern. In fact, ridding the streets of meninos da rua is often rationalized as a form of social welfare.15

Pessimistic views contribute to the discrimination and social injustice that street children endure. Street children are associated with crime and violence. Popular negative stereotypes that street children are thieves, drug addicts, prostitutes, criminals, or bichos da África, "animals from Africa," fuel the violence against them. Renowned anthropologist Nancy Schepher-Hughes comments on the Candelaria Church massacre stating that "opinion polls showed considerable public support for the police action. Many 'ordinary' citizens reported being 'fed up' with the criminal and disorderly behavior of the street children."16 It is certain that criminal activity serves as a means for survival for meninos da rua, but it is not certain whether all street children are criminals. It is also important to note, according to statistics provided by children advocacy groups, eighty percent of street kids who are murdered are black. The murder of street children may also be attributed to the justice system. Many of the murders are ignored and suspects are not prosecuted because the crimes are often committed by the police. Also, according to Brazil’s Child Protective Statute, children can not be tried for a crime unless caught red handed, therefore, it is somewhat difficult to prosecute the children who do commit crimes.17 For this reason, it can be speculated that it would be more convenient to invoke murder as justifiable punishment rather than try to prove the child guilty. The negative attitudes toward meninos da rua might also be perpetrated by their murderers, for instance, the Candelaria Church massacre. Citizens were so horrified by the blatant violence committed by the off duty policemen, and the incident was so greatly covered by the media, that the public developed an automatic misguided fear directed toward street children. Street children, in the public’s eye, are thus routinely associated with violence.

The cycle of poverty in Brazil to which street children are born stems from Brazil’s lack of infrastructure in favela communities. The Brazilian government, overly concerned with modernization of the economic sector, gave little foresight into the potentially negative effects of population growth and poverty within the cities. Therefore, the poor migrants who infiltrated coastal cities seeking a portion of the economic miracle, were unjustly marginalized and driven to erect spaces for survival known today as the favelas. It is in the favelas that a long history of poverty has taken shape, producing millions of young unemployed people. In response to the threat of hunger and lack of resources, young favelados flock to the streets where they participate in activities considered by popular society as illegitimate: drug distribution, gang affiliation, and prostitution. As a consequence, young favelados are judged as immoral purveyors of violence and crime. It is not an atypical opinion that favelados are troubling to the well being of society, nor is it unusual that they are repressed by discrimination. In an effort to counter the increasing presence of street children, death squads emerged, and violent killings ensued, causing alarm in the public. Therefore, meninos da rua and violence have become synonymous in the public’s eye, perversely allowing for more killings, and propagating more fear and prejudice. As Brazil’s economy slips further, and the disparity between the rich and poor rises, the distress of underprivileged young children in Brazilian society will persist. There is a significant need for social programs that can offer meninos da rua opportunities like education and financial and familial support. The civil government must acknowledge the correlation between the favelas, poverty, and the vulnerability of street children. If not, will death squads and the mechanical killings continue as a means of social upkeep?

End Notes:


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 34.


"Hope for the No-Hopers," 43.

Larmer and Margolis, 38.

Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 34.


Larmer and Margolis, 38.

Zaluar, 653.

Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 34.

Ibid.

Larmer and Margolis, 38.
ESCRIBE...EL TIEMPO DEL SILENCIO

¡Oh, la historia se repite!
El Alamo marcado por el sol
Y el hambre, hambre de tierra
¡Tierra...Tierra...Tierra!
¿Desde cuándo se convirtió en posesión?

Yo recuerdo
Cuando me miraba el sol
Abierto inundando
Los poros de mi sangre

YO RECUERDO EL VACÍO DEL ABISMO
El sucumbir de la tierra rojiza
Diciendo ¡Te doy mi sangre!

Yo recuerdo las soledades
Placentas de mi gente
Cabalgando como dioses
En el oráculo azul del desierto

Yo recuerdo...Yo te pido
¡Sube a mi montaña suave!
Bésame...Cubreme en las tumbas
Rocas de tu ser!

Yo recuerdo tu halo paciente
Sumbando en horas neutras
¡Oh estás allí tierra mía!

Yo recuerdo el vuelo del sinsonte
Mustio, agrio, sediento

Yo recuerdo el brillo
Del arpon y los escudos
Yo recuerdo el galope
Quebrando mi espíritu

¡Ésto es mío!
¡Ésto es mío!
¡Ésto es mío!

¡Ay de mi...la casa se rompió por dentro!

SUBE LA SANGRE
MASACRADA LA ANGUOSTA
EL GRITO SOBRO DE DOLOR

¡Ay de ti mujer!
Que te obligan
A entregar tu todo
No siembras la semilla del invasor
La placenta se vuelve blanca
¡Sueya!...¡Sueya!...¡Sueya!
¡Atuci!...¡Nupu!...¡Somo!
¡Te Cupé de urú!
¡Ne tin de ápé!
¡Boqué!

LA SANGRE GRITA MI LENGUA
Dime tu voz de ayer
¡No te vayas...No me déjés!
¡Mujer hincate a mi sombra!
Te tengo que mojar en frío
Para que tu espíritu regrese

PAÑA, CON REFLECCIÓN

¿...Habrá paz algún día?
Si miro la ventanas desiertas
Me devuelven el repleto
Opaco de las guerras

Si miro los caminos andados
Veo el desconcierto de los pájaros muertos
Que sudan gotas de sangre

Si miro tus ojos
Me duele el futuro
¿...Habrá paz en la tierra algún día?

Both poems were written by María Rodríguez-Pope who is a graduate student in Bilingual Special Education. She is a poet and visual artist and is from Tucuman, Argentina.
LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN INSTITUTE
SEMESTER EXCHANGES IN LATIN AMERICA AND SPAIN

The Latin American and Iberian Institute announces various ONEON-ONE SEMESTER EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITIES in Latin America and Spain. Students pay full-time UNM tuition prior to their departure, and may use existing scholarships and financial aid. Students are responsible for all travel, housing, medical insurance, books, and personal expenses. Students should have completed 60 hours of coursework, a minimum 3.0 GPA, and will receive UNM credit upon transfer of credits from the host university. In most cases the student must have an excellent knowledge of Spanish (equivalent to 5 semesters; Spanish test required). Application Deadlines are October 1 for the Spring Semester and February 15 for the Fall or Summer Semester (if available). For more information please contact Robyn Côté at the:

Latin American and Iberian Institute
The University of New Mexico
801 Yale NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131-1016
Tel: (505) 277-2961;
FAX (505) 277-5989;
E-mail: rcole@unm.edu

MEXICO

- UNAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (http://www.unam.mx) Also a language program at CEPE (http://www.cepe.unam.mx)
- Universidad de Guadalajara (http://www.ugd.mx). Also a language program at CEPE (http://www.cepe.udg.mx)
- Universidad de las Américas – Puebla (UDLAP) (http://www.udlap.mx)
- ITESM – Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (http://www.mty.itesm.mx/rectoria/pi/study)

ARGENTINA

- Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires (http://www.utdt.edu)
- Universidad Nacional de General San Martín (http://www.unsam.edu.ar)

BOLIVIA

- Universidad Privada Boliviana (http://www.upb.edu)

COSTA RICA

- Universidad de Costa Rica, San José (http://www.ucr.ac.cr)

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- Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (http://www.puce.edu.ec)

PARAGUAY

- Universidad Católica Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (http://www.uc.edu.py/)

VENEZUELA

- Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas (http://www.usb.ve/)

SPAIN

- Universidad de Granada (http://www.ugr.es). Also a language program at the Centro de Lenguas Modernas (http://www.ugr.es/~clm)
- Universidad Pública de Navarra at Pamplona (http://www.unavarra.es). Also a language program at the Centro Superior de Idiomas (http://www.unavarra.es/servicio/idiomas15.htm)
- Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (http://www.usc.es). Also a language program at the Instituto de Idiomas (http://www.usc.es/idiomas/es/beitag.htm).
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (http://www.upv.es)
- Centro de Estudios Superiores Felipe II (http://www.cesfelipesegundo.com)
- Universidad de Extremadura (http://www.unex.es)
- Universidad de Salamanca (http://www.usa.es)
- Universidad de Vigo (http://www.uvigo.es)

Look for information about Short-Term Study Abroad Opportunities in the next issue of Las Noticias, or contact the LAII for more information, 277-2961.
FALL 2001 LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATES

Frederick Gooding – MA, Latin American Studies & JD, Law
James Grubel – MA, Latin American Studies
Hideki Imai – MA, Latin American Studies
Trevor Martenson – MA, Latin American Studies
Michael Ramos – MA, Latin American Studies & MBA
Michael Rayburn – MA, Latin American Studies
Iralien Sainvilmar – MA, Latin American Studies
Lilia Pedrero – BA, Latin America Studies
David Stout – BA, Latin American Studies

There will be a reception for the Fall 2001 LAS graduates: Thursday, December 13 at 4:00 PM at the Latin American and Iberian Institute

FALL FIELD RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS

Kuhl Brown – MA, Community and Regional Planning and Latin American Studies
Teresa Eckmann – Ph.D., Art History
Randi Gladwell – BA Honors, Anthropology
Patrick Staib – Ph.D., Anthropology
Robert Walker – Ph.D., Anthropology
Christa D. Weise – Ph.D., Biology

¡Felicidades!

Introducing Claudia Isaac, the new Latin American Studies Director

Welcome to the new Latin American Studies Director, Claudia Isaac of the Community and Regional Planning Department. A more in-depth article will appear in the next issue of Las Noticias Estudiantiles; however, here are a few informative facts about her.

Claudia hails from Orange, New Jersey. Her BA is in psychology from Bryn Mawr College. Her Masters in Public Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning is from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University where she concentrated on International Affairs and Development Studies. Her Ph.D. is in Urban and Regional Planning from the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA where she concentrated on critical social theory and community development. Her dissertation—My Wife Works As Hard As My Burro: Domestic Subsidy and the Women’s Cooperative Movement in Mexico—is based on her ethnographic research in rural communities in Michoacan, Queretaro and Morelos.

Claudia teaches Latin American-content courses including Women and Economic Development and Latin American Development Planning. Since arriving at UNM in 1988, she has also become involved in planning issues along the US/Mexico border and with the immigrants’ rights movement in Albuquerque.
Chicha and the Days of Reflection

(Continued from page 3)

has said that the US will "respect" Nicaragua's democratic process and the vote of the Nicaraguan people. But, there are also letters in the Nicaraguan papers, addressed to "Nicaraguan voters," from characters such as Jeb Bush (governor of Florida) not-so-subtly suggesting that the US "has concerns" about Daniel Ortega's past. Daniel must thus convince not only the Nicaraguan voters, but US functionaries, that he is not the naughty-communist of yesteryear. US disfavor for the Sandinistas, but really for Daniel in particular, has been an implicit question throughout the campaign; but the events of September 11 have refocused a distinct kind of attention on Daniel's past. A series of TV ads have been screening, which show Daniel embracing Saddam Hussein and Moamar Khadafi. The voice over says, "Daniel Ortega is friends with known terrorists. The United States has said that it will destroy terrorism by any means necessary. Isn't this something that you should consider, Nicaragua, when you go to vote?"

On November 1, the Catholic Cardinal made his always-awaited electoral pronouncement (a fine blend of church and state) which in the past has been damning to the Sandinistas. This time, the Cardinal called on Nicaraguans to vote their conscious. His sermon suggested that voters evaluate the "moral solvency" of each candidate—to consider the candidates' relationship with their families as a guide to their ability to govern. The subtext? Daniel's stepdaughter: Zoílamerica. In the midst of these issues (corruption, "morality," US funding, coffee crises, poisoned rojite) it will be a task for Nicaraguan voters to vote their "conscious," to see the forest for the trees as it were in a tropical jungle. But go to the polls they will, en masse. Tomorrow morning, at 7 am. By dawn on November 5th, after having spent all night at the ballot counting center, I will know the much-awaited results. I think I know who will win. By the time you read this, you will know for certain.