SUNY Series in American Labor History
Robert Asher and Amy Kesselman, Editors

Other books in this series include:

Charles Stephenson and Robert Asher eds., *Life and Labor: Dimensions of American Working-Class History*
Joyce Shaw Peterson, *American Automobile Workers, 1900–1933*
Daniel Rosenberg, *New Orleans Dockworkers: Race, Labor, and Unionism 1892–1923*
Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era*
Michael Cassity, *Defending a Way of Life: An American Community in the Nineteenth Century*
Craig Phelan, *William Green: Biography of a Labor Leader*
Salvatore Salerno, *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World*
Richard W. Judd, *Socialist Cities: Municipal Politics and the Grass Roots of American Socialism*
Gerald Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902–1954*
Howard B. Rock ed., *The New York City Artisan, 1789–1825: A Documentry History*
Robert Asher and Charles Stephenson eds., *Labor Divided: Race and Ethnicity in United States Labor Struggles, 1835–1960*
Eugene V. Dennett, *Agitprop: The Life of an American Working-Class Radical: The Autobiography of Eugene V. Dennett*
Amy Kesselman, *Fleeting Opportunities: Women Shipyard Workers in Portland and Vancouver During World War II and Reconversion*
Michael Marmo, *More Profile Than Courage: The New York City Transit Strike of 1966*
Beverly Stadum, *Poor Women and Their Families: Hard-Working Charity Cases, 1900–1930*
Elaine Leeder, *The Gentle General: Rose Pesotta, Anarchist and Labor Organizer*
Perry K. Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in the Anthracite Coal Industry, 1875–1925*
Craig Phelan, *Divided Loyalties: The Public and Private Life of Labor Leader John Mitchell*
James R. Zetka, Jr., *Militancy, Market Dynamics, and Workplace Authority: The Struggle Over Labor Process Outcomes in the U.S. Automobile Industry 1946–1973*
Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*
Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth eds., *Autowork*

The Immigrant Left in the United States

Edited by
Paul Buhle
and Dan Georgakas

State University of New York Press

and killed. The one-armed Molina was arrested and tried in a near-hysterical atmosphere, though a vociferous defense campaign was waged by young New Leftists and members of the Workers World Party,with covert CPUSA backing.[5] This trial augured a more sweeping repression of the 26th of July movement's U.S. wing. Many *fidelistas* returned to Cuba, and vigilante violence escalated in communities like Hoboken and Tampa. During 1962, the 26th of July movement representatives (already forced to register as "foreign agents") were called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, hundreds of Cubans were interrogated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and following the missile crisis, leaders of New York's *Casa Cuba* were arrested as "saboteurs," effectively crushing a once solid constituency.[6] For the next thirty years, a virulent anti-Castroism would be the litmus test for political, social, and cultural acceptability among Cubans in the U.S. Despite the best efforts of a few young Cuban-Americans in the Antonio Maceo Brigade, formed in the early 1970s, the prorevolutionary current within this immigrant community has remained a tiny, despised minority.

The FPCC was a significant building block of the early New Left, however much its example was later submerged. The nuances of Fair Play's relationship to the Cuban Revolution typified what would come later. Individuals and local groups in the U.S. would respond to a crisis through the mediation of exiles as well as personal experience abroad and become radicalized. Solidarity of this episodic character cropped up repeatedly during the 1960s. Three episodes are indicative of this milieu and of the separate strands of the secular and religious Left, which, when linked to an immigrant base, would eventually spawn successful movements. In a delayed reaction to the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, the North America Congress on Latin America (NACLA) was formed in late 1966 by young activist-intellectuals with quiet church backing, as a research center to expose the political economy of informal empire in Latin America. A year later, a group of Maryknoll fathers and nuns were expelled from Guatemala just before setting up a Christian guerrilla front, indicating the effects of the post-Vatican II radicalization of the Latin American church upon thousands of North American missionaries who went south in the fifties and sixties to fight poverty and communism. A third initiative was the previously mentioned Venceremos Brigade.

Lacking the exile influence, none of these efforts led to an ongoing solidarity organization for the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, or Cuba. NACLA adopted a hemisphere-wide focus and

decided early on that it would pursue counterhegemonic research rather than grassroots activism. Similarly, the Maryknolls kicked out of Guatemala had only an indirect immediate influence. Though several went on to long careers in solidarity organizing, the best known were Thomas and Marjorie Melville, who married each other immediately after their superiors put them on a plane to Mexico: their prominence in the U.S. came as members of the famous Catonsville Nine.[7] The role of the Venceremos Brigades should not be scanted, since they brought about the first nationwide organizing campaign opposing U.S. imperialism in Latin America since the long-forgotten FPCC, sending over thirteen hundred young Yankees to Cuba between November 1969 and August 1970 amid massive publicity. But unlike the FPCC, the ongoing brigade and its related milieu (including the Center for Cuban Studies and the Cuba Resource Center) never attempted to create a national solidarity organization, keeping its focus exclusively on bringing people to Cuba and feeding the returnees into other movements. It would require more dramatic and immediately accessible crises—the overthrow of Chile's socialist government and a resurgence of pro-independence feeling among Puerto Ricans—to give a "movement" character to the slowly accumulating solidarity movement.

The Seventies: Sectarianism and Solidarity

During the 1970s, radicalized exiles and immigrants from Chile, Puerto Rico, and numerous other countries, primarily in the Southern Cone and the Caribbean, learned how to call upon the unfocused energies of a U.S. New Left that was simultaneously maturing and disintegrating. Spurred by the Venceremos Brigade's example and the quieter efforts of returned churchpeople to influence their own institutions, a range of solidarity networks rapidly developed. Though they registered many successes, the efforts of that time were also marked by a climate of internecine feuding. This competitive behavior reflected a simple truth about any exile movement in a new country: to the extent that activists are united at home, they can present themselves abroad forcefully and even compel a united front among foreign allies. Conversely, to the extent that a movement is disunited and at odds with itself, it will play out its conflicts in an exaggerated, often petty fashion on foreign stages.

Thus the dynamic potential for an immigrant or exile Left, and

therefore for a solidarity movement, largely relied on an external unity, even an imposed one. Without such unity, there was the continuous potential for "one, two, many" solidarity movements, to twist one of Che Guevara's then popular maxims, as North Americans chose between rival ideological perspectives. At the worst, this meant extolling one or another party as the truly "proletarian" force in a given country, though most tried to avoid this sort of play-acting with somebody else's revolution.

One veteran North American organizer for both the Venceremos Brigade and various Puerto Rican solidarity efforts remembers the maelstrom of competing interests during the seventies thusly: "it was so difficult to do anything then—you had all these parties, and each one of them had to be represented at every meeting, had to have its say, for the whole thing to work." In fact, exile parties and their North American friends often became so inextricably mixed that it is hard to tell where one began and the other ended.

To start with Chile: this movement hardly existed while Allende was in power in 1970–1973. A founding conference for the Non-Intervention in Chile (NICH) network was held in Madison, Wisconsin in 1971, but it remained very small. Instead, a crucial impetus for the sudden growth of Chile solidarity following the September 11, 1973 coup of General Augusto Pinochet came from North Americans returning precipitously, like the Reverend Joseph Eldridge, who helped found the Washington Office on Latin America in 1974, or the late Robert High, who became National Coordinator of NICH when it assumed its identity as the "anti-imperialist" wing of Chile Solidarity in 1975.[8]

In the last months of 1973 and into 1974, these returnees found themselves in a milieu of spontaneous grassroots organizing by a wide range of groups already familiar with a coalitional style of mobilization from years of antiwar protests.[9] Local coalitions and emergency committees formed under a variety of names and programs: the Los Angeles Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy in Chile, the Boston Chile Action Group, the Michigan Committee for a Free Chile, the Colorado May Chile Be Free Committee, the Chicago Citizen's Committee to Save Lives in Chile, the Oregon Fair Trial Committee for Chilean Political Prisoners, and many others.[10] A new element was added to this from-the-bottom-up dynamic when U.S. Communists stepped in. Their organizational resources and capacity, which still dwarfed that of any other national Left organization, allowed CP members to rapidly achieve leadership over the various strands of Chile solidarity.

The CPUSA was aided by being the only national organization that could legitimately claim to represent the *Unidad Popular* (UP). The latter was a classic Popular Front, led by the Chilean Socialist Party and Salvador Allende, in which Chilean Communists played a key role, along with four lesser parties. The U.S. Socialist Party had disintegrated in 1972, and in any case the Chilean socialists were not members of the Socialist International and had for some years declared themselves a revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist organization—albeit one committed to the parliamentary road. U.S. Communists were the only ones with the international contacts and a shared political perspective who could take up the UP's cause here. In early 1974, a first National Chile Solidarity Conference was held at the CPUSA's instigation, succeeded rapidly by a second and larger conference on February 8–9, 1975 in Chicago.[11] From these two conferences emerged the first national solidarity network since the FPCC, the National Coordinating Center in Solidarity with Chile.

The CPUSA and the politics of Popular Unity faced a serious challenge. Many of the North Americans who had lived in Chile and several U.S. citizens killed in the coup's first days supported the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). The MIR had remained outside Allende's government, criticizing it for reliance on bourgeois legality and inciting factory takeovers while preparing for armed struggle. The MIR's argument appeared to be rendered truthful by facts: Allende had been overthrown by the same military men in whom he placed his trust.

From its 1974 founding, the NCCSC, despite its strong CPUSA influence, contained an Anti-Imperialist Caucus (AIC) consisting of the Berkeley, San Francisco, and Seattle NICH groups plus several other key committees. This caucus quarreled repeatedly with the NCCSC over the correct definition of Pinochet's junta—Was it "fascist," as the UP in exile maintained, and the MIR denied, pointing to the lack of a working-class base as in classical fascist states? More practical were arguments over money and speaking tours of exiled Chilean leftists. In 1975, for instance, the AIC accused the NCCSC staff of sabotaging the tour of MIR leader Carmen Castillo. The most fundamental struggle was over the definition of solidarity itself. MIR supporters and other New Leftists in the AIC argued that the Chilean coup should be put into the context of the South American revolutionary struggle and the global confrontation with U.S. capitalism. Working people here should be educated to see their oppression as essentially the same as that faced by the workers of Chile, with the same enemy in the

transnational corporations like ITT and Kennecott Copper that had undermined Allende. This approach required an ideological organizing style, a longer-term perspective, and a focus on less influential sectors of the U.S. body politic. As the Seattle NICH put it: "It is central to our work to educate the people in the U.S. to the issues of 1) How did the repression in Chile come about? and 2) How is the Chilean experience relevant to the people of the U.S.?"[12]

The majority in the National Coordinating Center network did not agree with this approach, stigmatized within the CPUSA as "ultra-left."[13] The Statement of Principles adopted at the NCCSC's Second National Conference's emphasized that "solidarity is sought from all those who favor the restoration of human rights and democracy in Chile and are opposed to fascism. No other condition is imposed"—meaning no allegiance to socialism, armed struggle, or Allende. This pragmatic, goal-oriented strategy won out because it drew upon the prestige associated with UP activists in exile. It was "drafted on the bases of the perspectives for the international movement in solidarity with Chile as outlined by Jose Miguel Insulza, representative of the Chilean anti-fascist resistance." And rather than an explicitly anti-imperialist national program situating the Chilean struggle in a wider American context, the winning position was for an immediate "human rights" campaign to "ACHIEVE VERY CONCRETE AND STRATEGIC GAINS [caps in original]," implicitly by getting as close to powerful liberals and mainstream institutions as possible, so as to stigmatize the junta in the eyes of Western liberal opinion by any means necessary.[14]

Late in 1975, the AIC pulled out of the National Coordinating Center network, and held a national conference to refound the NICH as a national membership organization. Thereafter, the differences within the solidarity movement were in the open. Though divisions could be temporarily submerged when a clearcut issue arose, such as the widespread protests against the participation of the Chilean navy's "torture ship" *Esmerelda* in the 1976 Operation Sail activities, they were exacerbated by the arrival of Chilean political refugees after early 1976, when Pinochet opened some of his prisons. Much of the movement, especially church groups, became involved in sponsoring exiles, including the first Marxists the U.S. had ever accepted as legitimate contenders for asylum.

The total number of Chileans politically active in the United States never constituted an "immigrant base" in the traditional

sense. Although there may have been several thousand living in the U.S. for one reason or another, only a few hundred were involved in the Chile solidarity movement: fifty in Washington D.C., a hundred in New York, perhaps another hundred in Northern California, and smaller groupings elsewhere.[15] However much they imported sectarian rivalries, the presence of these exiles strengthened the movement, bringing a human factor into the equation. Members of the MIR joined NICH committees around the country, where translated MIR "cadre manuals" were widely used for internal education, while CPers developed close fraternal ties to Chilean socialists and communists.[16]

The top Chilean leftist who relocated to the U.S. was the former foreign minister, Orlando Letelier of the Socialist Party. He played a central and notably nonsectarian role in generating concern over Chile, maintaining good relations with all wings of the solidarity movement—the NCCSC, the NICH, the church groups led by WOLA—by positing himself as a diplomat above the fray. Ironically, his brutal assassination by Chilean agents in downtown Washington provided the solidarity movement's emotional climax, gave it a rallying cry, and revealed how fragile was its unity. After the September 21, 1976 carbombing, which also killed Ronni Karpen Moffitt, Letelier's associate at the Institute for Policy Studies, (IPS), a major funeral was planned. But intense disagreements over its format and style lasted up until the last moment. The leadership of the national NICH, based in New York, wanted a militant protest march, loud and forceful. UP representatives and their U.S. supporters, including people from IPS and the NCCSC, intended a solemn cortege, befitting Letelier's rank and the gravity of the situation, to be led by UP leaders flying in for the occasion. The NCCSC refused to compromise, insisting that the UP leaders' visas were at stake, and ten thousand people marched silently, the largest turnout ever for a Chile solidarity demonstration.

The reality of a divided movement persisted through the late 1970s. The NICH took the lead in street actions and exposing the relations of U.S. capital to the Pinochet regime, while the much larger NCCSC focused on lobbying Congress and high-prestige cultural events. The NCCSC founded the Chile Legislative Center in Washington in 1976, which was accepted into the human rights advocacy community led by the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy. Tours in 1977 and 1978 of Chilean nuevo cancion stars Quilapayun and Inti Illimani featured U.S. celebrities like Jon Voight, Pete Seeger, Jane Fonda, Rip Torn, Leonard Bernstein, Holly Near, Tom Paxton and Peter, Paul, and Mary as performers

and speakers such as Senators Edward Kennedy, James Abourezk, and George McGovern.[17]

As late as 1978, the Chile solidarity movement remained quite strong, as indicated by a major anti-Pinochet trade union conference, initiated by Senator Kennedy and the United Steelworkers of America. Within two years, however, it was largely defunct at the national level, though organizing continued at the local level.[18] Meanwhile, as another crisis brewed, the base of the Chile solidarity movement did not so much die out as gravitate into the upsurge around Nicaragua and El Salvador in 1979–1980.

The trajectory of the Puerto Rico solidarity movement of the 1970s resembled that of the movement around Chile. The distinct difference was that Puerto Ricans from the *Partido Socialista Puertoriqueno* (PSP) initiated and led the main solidarity organization, the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (PRSC). The latter grew out of the Committee for Puerto Rican Decolonization (CPRD) and other groups in the New York/New Jersey area. The CPRD started to publish the English-language magazine *Puerto Rico Libre!* after an August 18, 1972 demonstration of thousands at the United Nations headquarters in New York. This in turn led to the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committee, created to promote a massive Madison Square Garden Rally for Puerto Rican independence on October 27, 1974.[19] Twenty thousand people turned out to hear speeches and performances from an impressive array, including Ossie Davis, Phil Ochs, Holly Near, Piri Thomas, James Forman, Irwin Silber, Angela Davis, Jane Fonda, Dave Dellinger, Pete Seeger, Russell Means, and even a young Geraldo Rivera, then a local television reporter. Messages were read from several Nationalist Party members imprisoned since the 1951 armed assault on the U.S. Congress, more contemporary political prisoners, and Bernardine Dohrn, leader of the Weather Underground Organization. Shortly after this impressive event, the Solidarity Day Committee, which had established affiliates around the U.S., became the PRSC at a conference in Newark, New Jersey on March 1–2, 1975.[20]

From the first, the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee was strongly influenced by the PSP. The Executive Director of the PRSDC and first Executive Secretary of the PRSC was Alfredo Lopez, a PSP member, and the PSP's charismatic general secretary, Juan Mari Bras, was the only island political leader who spoke at the Madison Square Garden rally. Given the realities of U.S. politics, both official and Left, this influence could hardly be stated officially, and at its founding conference the PRSC pledged to work "according to the needs of [the] Puerto Rican national liberation

struggle," while adopting "a position of non-exclusion of any political tendencies."[21] In reality, however, the PRSC began as an alliance of the PSP with an array of post-New Left "anti-imperialist" tendencies (the PSP was also part of the NCCSC's Anti-Imperialist Caucus).

In the early 1970s, the PSP was a new and dynamic party. Yet it also had deep roots in the Puerto Rican Left, allowing it to effectively displace the old Communist Party of Puerto Rico as the commonwealth's main Marxist-Leninist organization. It had begun as the *Movimiento Pro-Independencia* (MPI) in 1959, a regrouping of people from the *Partido Independentista Puertoriqueno* (the PIP, always the largest pro-independence force on the island, affiliated with the Socialist International), and others once close to the Communist Party. Over the course of the sixties, the MPI grew into the leading force in radical student and antiwar politics. It also built a base within the labor movement. In 1971, it declared itself the PSP, a vanguard dedicated to achieving national independence through electoral means, but without renouncing the armed struggle. The early seventies were the party's heyday, as *independencismo* briefly flourished on the island in tandem with a wave of labor unrest and widespread repression.[22] Not surprisingly, it was also a propitious time to germinate a solidarity movement in the U.S., drawing together a base in the substantial Puerto Rican immigrant community, post-Vietnam anti-imperialism among whites, and the nationalist solidarity of African-Americans and other people of color.

From its founding, the PRSC declared that its future "depends on our ability to link up the struggle of the Puerto Rican people with the concrete present and long-term interests of many sectors of the American population.[23] It mirrored the New Left's definition of solidarity as a common fight stemming from a raised consciousness among people oppressed by class, color, or colonial status. The PRSC's first national board read like a Who's Who of the multiracial Left of that time, with the key civil rights leader Ella Baker, Clyde Bellecourt of the American Indian movement, Amiri Baraka, the Rev. Ben Chavis of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Dave Dellinger, Arthur Kinoy, Irwin Silber of the *Guardian*, Jim Haughton of Harlem's Fightback, Corky Gonzalez of the Denver-based Crusade for Justice, former SNCC leader Phil Hutchings, and various others.[24]

By late 1976, the PRSC had functioning chapters in twenty U.S. cities, from New Haven to San Diego, and it played a strong role in 1976 countercelebrations with the PSP's call for a "Bicenten-

nial Without Colonies." However, it was increasingly disrupted by a minority identified with the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC), supporters of the Weather Underground Organization. This factional grouping charged that the PRSC was *not* "anti-imperialist" because it did not have the correct relationship to struggles for liberation within the U.S. To put it in the vernacular of the day, the leadership of several chapters, in particular the San Francisco PRSC plus some national staff members, asserted that the PRSC had severely deviated, refusing to recognize "the obstacles of white supremacy and national chauvinism among the ranks of white workers," since "sectors of the white working class do benefit from imperialism at this time."[25] The Prairie Fire supporters wanted the PRSC to recognize publicly that the only revolutionary sectors in the U.S., and thus the only possible sources of solidarity, were African-Americans and other nationally oppressed peoples.

The PFOC also believed that the PRSC's close relationship to the PSP was inappropriate. Strong believers in armed struggle as the only road to liberation, the PFOC and others, including Puerto Ricans from parties hostile to the PSP's dominance, implied in various ways that the PSP was committed to a "legalistic" solution because of its focus on UN decolonization proceedings, and Rep. Ron Dellums's "transfer of powers" congressional resolution. The PRSC minority wanted instead an explicit endorsement for those Puerto Ricans who had chosen the illegal route, not just the aging Nationalist political prisoners, but also the new *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional* (FALN), which carried out various notorious bombings within the U.S. in the 1970s.

The problem of the PRSC's "close political relationship" to the PSP was stated clearly by national staffer Dana Biberman, assessing her own work on the "Campaign to Free the Five Nationalist Political Prisoners":

> This campaign was probably the first time in the PRSC's history that we have worked so closely with more than one Puerto Rican organization [e.g. the Nationalist Party as well as the PSP]; and this process clearly revealed the weaknesses in our having had a close political relationship with only one Party/organization in the Puerto Rican national liberation movement—the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. That relationship has been invaluable to our work, but we have tended to see our solidarity work through their perspectives and strategies only, and have not fully understood what it means for us—in practice—to build solidarity with the *whole* national liberation movement. There is not presently a national liberation front in the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence, and until there is one built, we must fully respect all of the many different parties and organizations that are part of and lead the independence movement.[26]

That it would be impossible to "build solidarity with" and "fully respect" many disparate organizations with radically opposed strategies, and of greatly varying political weight, was not yet fully understood. One final indication of the problems besetting the PRSC is that at its second national conference, February 18–20, 1977 in Chicago, the 34 candidates contesting for twenty national board seats included representatives from at least three Puerto Rican parties and every possible fraction of the U.S. Left: the PFOC, the CPUSA, the Workers World Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the Republic of New Africa, the Mass Party Organizing Committee, and others.[27] The conference plenary heard major political presentations from "Che" Velasquez of the PSP's Central Committee and Luis Angel Torres of the *Frente Revolucionario Anti-Imperialista,* a coalition of several small parties opposing the PSP's electoralist line. The bulk of the conference was devoted not to strategizing a national program of action, but parliamentary maneuvers over whether or not to permit debate on competing "draft political statements"[28]

Under these circumstances, no organization could have long prospered. The PRSC steadily declined after 1977 as *independentista* sentiments receded in Puerto Rico. Although it had brought together Puerto Rican activists with mainland radicals, and helped raise the island's profile on the U.S. Left, the PRSC developed no effective strategy for building a "mass organization" that could influence U.S. policy. To achieve this influence would have required a much more instrumental approach to U.S. politics, including a refusal to permit interventions by North American parties with their own agendas.[29] These were the lessons drawn by the exiles who initiated the Central America movement that lasted throughout the next decade.

The Eighties: "Guaranteeing the Needs"

Key to the Central America movement's success and long life was the circumstance that each of the Central American revolutionary

movements (Nicaragua's *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* [FSLN], El Salvador's *Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional* [FMLN], Guatemala's *Unidad Revolucionario Nacional Guatemalteco* [URNG] achieved sufficient formal unity to speak in one voice in the U.S., presenting relatively few openings for disputatious North American leftists. It is hardly incidental that during this period the U.S. Left became oriented to "single-issue" movements untouched by the polemics of the past.

Only a minority of the most conservative congressmen in the Reagan/Bush era could not attest to the decade-long barrage of telegrams, letters, phone calls, constituent delegations, pickets, and sit-ins at their local offices regarding aid to the Nicaraguan Contras and the "death squad government" of El Salvador. At its peak in the mid-1980s, this activity involved some two thousand local groups, spearheaded by a host of national organizations and networks such as the Pledge of Resistance, Witness for Peace, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), Neighbor to Neighbor, the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), the Nicaragua Network, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the Commission for U.S.-Central American Relations, the Quixote Center's Quest for Peace, the Sanctuary movement, the Religious and Inter-Religious Task Forces on Central America, the Sister City networks, MADRE, and the SHARE and New El Salvador Today Foundations; most of these organizations drew upon donor bases numbering tens of thousands. Although this movement was hardly "mass" on the scale of the Vietnam antiwar protests, it functioned as a recognized interest group at the left end of the liberal spectrum, pushing the Democratic Party into a prolonged struggle with the Reagan administration, which ultimately provoked the Iran-Contra affair.

Two alternative strategies and organizational patterns for the U.S.-based solidarity movement existed, each corresponding to a particular country, Nicaragua or El Salvador. The much smaller Guatemala wing of the Central American movement, also largely refugee-inspired, always operated within the shadow of these larger tendencies.[30]

Nicaraguan exiles played a crucial role in gearing up the late-breaking wave of U.S. solidarity with Nicaragua just before the revolutionary victory of July 19, 1979. They helped found the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People, created at a February 1979 conference in Washington D.C. with sponsorship from the Catholic Church (the Maryknoll Order), labor (the United Auto Workers), and leading liberals (Senator

Edward Kennedy). Most of these refugees soon returned home to help rebuild their nation. In the absence of a pro-Sandinista exile community, the FSLN preferred a pluralist, loosely structured movement in the U.S., a pattern that prevailed for the rest of the decade. The FSLN's main contact with U.S. solidarity activists was in Nicaragua itself, the clearest example of that doubled process of immigration referred to at this essay's beginning.

The massive short-term emigration of U.S. citizens to Nicaragua during the 1980s is a unique phenomenon in the cold war's history. To give a sense of scale, Debra Reuben, executive director of the renamed Nicaragua Network, estimated in 1987 that ten thousand North Americans had gone south as political tourists, temporary harvest laborers, peacemaking "witnesses" in conflictive zones, or long-term technical volunteers like the engineer Benjamin Linder, killed by the Contras at the height of the U.S.-backed border war. This kind of contact was precisely what the ban on travel to Cuba was intended to prevent, and it continually refreshed the spirit and local base of solidarity. It also obviated the need for an exile presence. National coordinators and grassroots Nicaragua solidarity organizers in the U.S. routinely got their political analysis and practical needs assessment directly from the Sandinistas. At one time or another thousands of North Americans met with top FSLN leaders like President Daniel Ortega and Interior Minister Tomas Borge.

The pattern of Nicaragua solidarity organizing vividly highlighted the dynamism of a decentralized model. Sometimes it seemed as if not a thousand flowers, but a thousand different, idiosyncratic material aid projects had bloomed. While the wide-open space for local initiative ultimately generated an extraordinary amount of practical aid, in goods and services, it also proved difficult to focus the energies of this very diverse base. The pitfalls of this localism were rendered most vividly when the plethora of Nicaragua-oriented groups found themselves in an unholy alliance during Ronald Reagan's second term with the "moderate" mainstream of the Democratic Party, led by House of Representatives Speaker Jim Wright. The Democrats were determined to maintain control over foreign policy by opposing the Reagan administration's proxy war in Nicaragua, and treated the solidarity movement as very junior allies, demanding acceptance of whatever compromises in aid to the Contras that the party leadership engineered.

Nonetheless, the Contra war *was* hamstrung by these combined efforts, which proved enormously frustrating to the Reagan administration, setting out on a collision course with the Constitu-

tion via the efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North. Two Nicaragua-focused projects in particular creatively drew upon the autonomist tendencies and the upsurge of faith-based activism in the 1980s to directly influence U.S. policy.[31] One was the Pledge of Resistance, which sprang up in hundreds of congressional districts from late 1984 on, establishing a nationwide network of up to eighty thousand people formally pledged to commit civil disobedience in case of a U.S. invasion. Even more impressive, and longer-lasting, was Witness for Peace, perhaps the purest distillation of the new "emigrant" mode for North American activists. WfP was entirely focused on putting U.S. citizens into Nicaragua, but with a specific, concrete task: "witnessing" and peacekeeping by a public, nonviolent presence in the war zones of northern Nicaragua. Ultimately, the corroborated, detailed reports of thousands of these witnesses helped expose Contra human rights abuses in the mainstream U.S. press such as the *New York Times*, and reached many members of Congress. Witness for Peace was especially successful at recruiting its long- and short-term volunteers outside the usual areas of Left-liberal influence.

Salvadoran exiles, on the other hand, decided early on to organize a highly structured and tightly integrated movement in the U.S., one that could implement a program synchronized with the overall strategic priorities, and even the specific tactical needs, of both their guerrilla army and the unarmed *movimiento popular* in city and countryside. Most of the refugee organizers from the late 1970s on, even before five different political-military organizations formed the FMLN in October 1980, were supporters of one of the five, the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion* (FPL).[32] The FPL's practice in El Salvador combined the rigorous emphasis on personal commitment of both Marxist-Leninist and radical Christian base-building methodologies. Those habits of one-on-one recruitment, self-discipline, and developing complementary organizations to carry out different tasks with different sectors, were all carried over to the U.S. by a core of Salvadorans and a larger number of North Americans who translated this technique and ethos into their own pragmatic, entrepreneurial terms. Starting in 1980 with CISPES, and branching out to other organizations, campaigns, and projects, what one veteran Washington observer called "the interlocking corporate directorship of the El Salvador solidarity movement" scored impressive successes.[33]

The opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador, epitomized by the popular political slogan that forms this essay's title, was a genuinely spontaneous phenomenon. All over the U.S., El Salvador committees sprang into existence, some of them stemming from earlier work around Chile or Nicaragua, but many of them begun in smaller cities or on campuses with no history of Latin American solidarity. The achievement of the Salvadoran exiles and their core of North American associates was to channel this upsurge into CISPES, which in the early eighties already claimed many hundreds of chapters and affiliates.

A much greater achievement, in retrospect, was the cohesion and dynamism displayed by the El Salvador movement in the latter part of the eighties, after Ronald Reagan's reelection in 1984, when it began practicing what Salvadoran Communist Party head Schafick Handal called "new forms of militant solidarity":

> It is no longer solidarity through street protests nor internationalists who join us in our war fronts. It is that popular forms of action in El Salvador are coupled by numerous delegations of organizations and popular sectors of the United States . . .[34]

Public attention, and the bulk of the grassroots anti-interventionist ferment, had shifted to Nicaragua, with the unending battle over Contra aid. Instead of dispersing and declining, the various El Salvador-focused organizations developed new modes of work. They raised millions of dollars in material aid, as well as millions of dollars to fund their own organizing efforts, using the same professional methods employed in the mainstream: direct mail, phonebanking, major donor visits, sustainer programs, and all the rest. CISPES, and others like the NEST and SHARE Foundations, were able to maintain a strong staff presence around the country, which in turn supported a much higher level of volunteer activity by local groups. These groups and others also provided powerful "accompaniment" both in-person and long-distance for the unarmed Salvadoran opposition, then rebuilding after the early eighties bloodbath. Before 1985 only a handful of solidarity activists had ever visited El Salvador; by 1988 it had become a routine event in dozens of committees. These delegations, and thousands of telexes and phone calls every month to Salvadoran officials and the U.S. embassy, were of crucial importance in protecting the unarmed opposition. This human rights work was also a vehicle for rebuilding congressional concern. After the 1984 presidential victory of Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon Duarte, a much admired figure in Congress, the space for meaningful lobbying had shrunk to nil.

This revived solidarity network prepared for the anticipated urban insurrection that the FMLN cadre spoke of with increasing

openness. In January 1989, an emergency national meeting of CISPES organizers in Washington was told they had just "ninety days" to wait, a phrase remembered with some embarrassment and much joking in later days. As it happens, the long-delayed offensive began on November 11, 1989, and ultimately brought an end to the war, convincing both Salvadoran and U.S. governments that there could be no military victory over the FMLN. In its drumbeat of protest before, during, and immediately after the offensive, and in the steady pressure maintained during the drawn-out negotiations from April 1990 to December 1991, the El Salvador-focused organizations at long last managed to cut off substantial portions of military aid in September 1990.

Epilogue

Whether the Central America movement was a final stage in the succeeding waves of cold war anti-interventionism, the stored-up residue of all that came earlier, or whether it truly augurs something "new"—a long-term model for citizen diplomacy and transnational action—remains to be seen. Despite the large, very radical Haitian community in the U.S., there has been no solidarity movement with Haiti equivalent to those that accompanied the struggles of the eighties. The only elements of the Central America movement that moved over to Haiti work were those associated with the religious Left, notably the Quixote Center, though some mainstream black political constituencies have offered support at the elite level, akin to the role they played in the eighties' other major solidarity movement with South Africa.

Nonetheless, the United States is certainly bound to a multicultural future, as the new immigration patterns show no sign of abating. With this prospect, it seems likely that the immigrant/emigrant dynamic so important to recent politics will only expand in scope and force, bringing with it renewed possibilities of radical change.

Notes

Besides documents and her own oral history, Linn Shapiro, a fellow historian, also greatly improved this essay by several acute readings. I also thank Geoff Thale for useful insights on several key issues.

1. In 1987, I wrote a from-the-inside-looking-out account, " 'The North American Front': Central American Solidarity in the Reagan Era" in *Reshaping the U.S. Left: Popular Struggles in the 1980's (Volume III of The Year Left)* ed. Mike Davis and Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1988). Since then, I have investigated the prototype of the Latin American solidarity movement in *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of a New Left* (London: Verso, 1993).

2. This tale was related to me by former SWP leader Peter Camejo in February 1993. He had heard it from someone else many years before.

3. Gosse, *Where the Boys Are*, 123–29, especially 125.

4. See the *New York Times*, July 1, 1957, reporting on a rally of four hundred people, where a signed album of congratulations was presented.

5. Besides the daily press, details on the Molina defense campaign were provided by one of its leaders, Marvin Gettleman, in a January 14, 1992 telephone interview.

6. See the *National Guardian*, November 22 and December 6, 1962 and January 17 and March 14, 1963 for more detail on various of these cases.

7. Among this group were Blase Bonpane, who founded the Office of the Americas, a southern California solidarity center in the 1970s and 1980s, and Gail Phares, who helped found the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala in 1980 and Witness for Peace in 1983. The Melvilles produced a remarkable autobiography, *Whose Heaven? Whose Earth?* (New York: Knopf, 1971), required reading to understand the roots of the solidarity movement.

8. Interviews with Joseph Eldridge, May 30, 1989 and Robert High, December 10, 1988.

9. This is how Susan Borenstein, who became executive secretary of the National Coordinating Center in Solidarity with Chile, remembers the wave of spontaneous demonstrations the day after the coup in all major cities and on many campuses. In Philadelphia, for instance, where she was then living, she called the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the American Friends Service Committee, and Resist, all previously allied in the antiwar struggle, for a September 13 demonstration, which

turned out two hundred people at the federal building and led to the formation of the Philadelphia Chile Emergency Committee (interview, November 8, 1988).

10. These names are taken from the Credentials Report of the first National Chile Solidarity Conference, held in early 1974 in New York City, in Susan Borenstein Personal Papers [hereafter SBPP].

11. As an example of the CPUSA's prominence in the second conference, 22 of the 142 voting delegates were from national organizations, and nine of the 22 votes were held by the Communist Party and associated organizations, including the Emma Lazarus Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, the Anti-Imperialist Committee in Solidarity with African Liberation, Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy (TUAD), and the Young Workers Liberation League. While quite a few other delegates (such as those representing the Fur and Leatherworkers Joint Board of New York, the World Federation of Trade Unionists and Illinois TUAD among the sixteen labor delegates) were also presumably close to the CP, clearly a majority of votes were held by independent local committees, and it appears to have been a highly democratic affair (from the Credentials Report, in SBPP).

12. A proposed amendment in "Response to the Proposed Definition of the Anti-Imperialist Caucus (AIC) of the National Coordinating Center in Solidarity with Chile (NCCSC)," by Seattle Non-Intervention in Chile (n.d., presumably 1975, in SBPP).

13. The disparate churchpeople constituted a de facto third wing of the movement, with no single "line." They were distinguished more by their personal style and theological roots, in contrast to the "partyness" of new and old leftists. Many religious activists based institutions worked outside of the NCCSC in any case, a point made by Susan Borenstein (interview, November 8, 1988). The major Protestant denominations, the National Council of Churches, Church World Service and the Justice and Peace Office of the U.S. Catholic Conference all made major contributions to solidarity, especially in lobbying for the restrictions placed on aid to Chile during the Carter years.

14. All quotations are from a February 19, 1975 mailing containing the credential report and all proposals and resolutions adopted at the Second National Conference, in SBPP. The conference's repeated emphasis on mobilizing "broad constituencies," moving to the center to take the moral high ground, was summarized succinctly in a self-critical Statement on Perspectives:

> . . . to a certain extent, we ourselves lacked an understanding of the political nature of the demand to restore human rights and to free all Chilean political prisoners. Because the issues contain a strongly moral and humanitarian character, there has been a general tendency to leave the initiatives around them to broad, humanitarian organizations not necessarily integrated with the Chile solidarity movement.
>
> As we have gained more experience over the last year and a half, the significance of the human rights campaign has been further clarified. We are striving to build a movement in support of Chile that—in the US—is a reflection of the anti-fascist struggle within Chile. Not only must this be made true by seeking to involve broad constituencies, as is the case in Chile, but also by accurately reflecting the political context of that struggle.

Despite the opaque, neutral character of this comment, it is clear that CPers were concerned that the solidarity movement could be marginalized by the unexpected success of the new liberal, human-rights organizations such as Amnesty International.

15. Interview with Linn Shapiro, member of DC-NICH in the later 1970s, October 9, 1993.

16. Resistance Publications in Oakland, California (closely connected to the NICH), published both the English-language *Resistance Courier: Bulletin of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left Outside Chile,* and also the *Miguel Enriquez Collection: Documents from Chile on Party-Building,* named for the MIR's secretary-general, who had died in combat on October 5, 1974. Linn Shapiro describes the membership of the NICH and its connection to the MIR as follows: "There were NAmerican leftists, unaffiliated with any political party. There were NA leftists affiliated with parties or pre-party formations. There were Chilean MIRistas or MIR-supporters. And then there were NAmericans who were very personally and politically close to the MIR" (Letter, Shapiro to Gosse, October 21, 1993). U.S. Communists meanwhile drew upon a formal relationship that then still had great historical resonance.

17. Borenstein interview, November 8, 1988. When the

NCCSC eventually constituted itself as an organization rather than a "coalition of coalitions," it became simply the National Chile Center, the word "solidarity" being seen as too Left by that time. The principal officers were Detroit City Councilwoman Mary Ann Mahaffey as president, Professor John Coatsworth of the University of Chicago as vice president, and Abe Feinglass of the Amalgamated Meatcutters as treasurer (interview with Susan Borenstein, November 19, 1988).

18. Both the NICH and the NCCSC were gone by 1980, though when the *Chile Alert* newsletter was founded in 1983, it went to over two hundred local contacts around the country (communication from Linn Shapiro). The return of many of the Chilean exiles circa 1980 had a paradoxical effect: while it may have contributed to the break-up of Chile solidarity as a nationally coordinated movement, it also gave local organizers a direct relation in Chile itself.

19. See first issue of *Puerto Rico Libre!* (1973); Letter, Reverend David Garcia to Philip Wheaton, May 13, 1974, in Ecumenical Program for Inter-American Communication and Action (EPICA) Papers, Washington D.C.; interview with Digna Sanchez, December 27, 1988.

20. See program for Madison Square Garden rally, also *Puerto Rico Libre!*, November 1974, both in EPICA Papers.

21. "Political Statement/Discussion Document for Founding National Congress of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, March 1 and 2, 1975," in EPICA Papers.

22. This sketch is largely based on an interview with Jose Soler, former head of the PSP's U.S. section, November 14, 1988.

23. *Ibid.*

24. "Independence for Puerto Rico! Political Statement of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee," leaflet in EPICA Papers.

25. "Minutes of the PRSC Board Meeting, December 11–12, 1976, NYC," in EPICA Papers.

26. From "Evaluation of the Campaign to Free the Five Nationalist Political Prisoners," from Dana Biberman, PRSC Staff and National Coordinator [late 1976], in EPICA Papers.

27. "Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee National Conference/

Nominations for At-Large Board Members" [brief biographies], in EPICA Papers.

28. All of the above is taken from the "Synopsis of PRSC National Conference, February 18–20, 1977, Chicago, Ill.," in EPICA Papers. Following their defeat at this conference, the PFOC forces were forced out, and founded the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican and Mexican Liberation. It was hardly coincidental that the PSP itself was internally riven by these same debates in 1976–1977, losing its earlier momentum. I have not attempted to deal here with yet another sectarian battle that polarized the PRSC internally, involving the New York-based *El Comite*-MINP, which upheld a class orientation focused on Puerto Ricans living in the U.S., as opposed to the PSP's emphasis on a single struggle by all Puerto Ricans for independence.

29. Many a Byzantine tale could be told about how most of the existing U.S. Left parties found themselves out in the cold when it came to the Central American movement, but a few examples should suffice. One is that San Francisco CISPES, the "home chapter" for the largest of the solidarity organizations, had the effrontery to publicly maintain for many years an outright policy of exclusion: no member of a Leninist cadre organization was permitted to belong. Conversely, the disdain felt by party leftists for their Central American confreres (so reminiscent of the attitude towards the Cubans at another time), is indicated by the CPUSA leadership's willingness to hold a party convention on the same weekend in November 1983 as a fullscale national demonstration in Washington D.C.—even though the party-linked U.S. Peace Council had played a major role in the coalition sponsoring that march. And anyone wanting further evidence of how sectarianism could cripple a solidarity movement needed only to look at the U.S.-Grenada Friendship Society prior to the U.S. invasion, mired in infighting between the CP and the SWP. One exception was in the loose network of labor-based solidarity committees, which became a haven for partisans of all sorts, but still did much good work; another was MADRE, the major national women's network around Central America with twenty thousand supporters, which had a strong presence of activists associated with the CPUSA.

30. In 1984, the largest solidarity network, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), briefly proposed to its sister (and much smaller) networks, the NNSNP and NISGUA, that all three merge together into a single, powerful

solidarity alliance for Central America or even the hemisphere (the author helped frame this grandiose proposal outlining an "Alliance for the Americas"). It was defeated at NISGUA's national conference in June of that year because of the solid opposition of the Guatemalan refugees that led the small number of Guatemala-specific committees within NISGUA, such as Chicago's Organization in Solidarity with Guatemala (OSGUA).

31. Given its focus on exiles and the dynamics of immigration/emigration, this essay has given only passing attention to the centrality of the Christian Left from the 1960s on in providing an individual and institutional base for solidarity organizing, and a discourse of justice and human rights that legitimated the movement. Because of various celebrated martyrdoms (Archbishop Oscar Romero; the four U.S. churchwomen killed in El Salvador on December 2, 1980), as well as the highly visible presence of revolutionary Christians in Central America's revolutionary movements, the 1980s brought faith activism—the Christian witness—to the fore, even as the traditional anticlerical U.S. Left parties quickly receded in importance.

32. The other four organizations in the FMLN were the *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP), the *Partido Comunista Salvadoreno* (PCS), the *Resistencia Nacional* (RN), and the *Partido Revolucionario del Trabajadores Centroamericanos* (PRTC). All had some level of representation and activity in this country within the Salvadoran community, but none invested the time and effort in building and maintaining a national structure over the long-term, as did the FPL.

33. Given space constraints, this is a necessarily reductionist picture of El Salvador solidarity organizing, scanting the work of important organizations with their own trajectory, such as Neighbor to Neighbor, a nationwide grassroots lobby important in both Nicaragua and El Salvador work, or *El Rescate*, the major human rights center in Los Angeles. Another FMLN party, the National Resistance (RN), played a main role in the labor solidarity networks. Most complicated is the religious sector, especially the Sanctuary movement, where no one group of exiles had a dominant influence. Having said all that, it remains true that over thirteen years, CISPES and its host of related organizations (including the Washington Center for Central American studies, the U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development, the National

Agenda for Peace in El Salvador) were collectively the leading force at both the grassroots and national levels.

34. Schafick Jorge Handal, *Che Guevara and Latin America* (Liberation Communications Center, n.p, n.d.), 13–14. This was a speech given at a July 1, 1988 conference in Havana, Cuba.