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Report From the Field

No Pasa Nada:

Zapatismo and Visions from the Jungle

By Duncan Earle and Jeanne Simonelli

Abstract: Something has been happening in the indigenous communities of Chiapas. From the remote jungles of the Lacandona Forest, word has been issued that reiterates Zapatista solidarity with indigenous struggles. This essay reports on the goings-on leading up to the Red Alert by the Zapatistas in the summer of 2005. The authors find resistance and resiliency on the *milpas* of Chiapas where small farmers and *ejido* members join the growing chorus of those saying "no" to state and international development plans. The resistance is inspired by an understanding that these "development" plans (including the building of a dam) will flood homesteads, lead to privatization, and ultimately displace the people of Chiapas from their ancestral land and way of life. The authors offer ethnographic vignettes that give voice to the concerns and activities of both rural *campesinos* and urban vendors of San Cristóbal.

Key words: Zapatista, Chiapas, development, neoliberalism, *ejidos*, privatization

"No Pasa Nada" declared the headline this past July 11 in Mexico City's daily paper La Jornada. "Nothing is going on" was the official word of a government worried that the Red Alert announced by the Zapatistas in mid-June amounted to some new threat to Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state. Those who claim that "nothing is happening" in the remote strongholds of indigenous power, established by the Zapatistas as

a result of the January 1, 1994 uprising there, are either not listening or trying to create an illusion. In fact, the Alert was followed two weeks later by the first formal declaration by the Zapatistas in seven years. By mid-August 2005, the Zapatistas held a series of preparation meetings for a special plenary of solidarity groups and organizations. In the period up to now, the EZLN (*Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*) has been working on a restructuring in order to be more responsive to its support communities while decreasing the role of the central command. The EZLN flagships are readying themselves for a new journey into the sea of the *patria*, the nation.

"That is why they said from the beginning 'Nacional,' in the name we gave to ourselves," commented one of the civil leaders, running her hand through the hair of her young child. "It is about bringing the Zapatista view -- the autonomy idea -- to other places in Mexico, where we have been asked to help. That is why they are planning the caravans. This is a national question."

To understand exactly how much is going on in Zapatista communities, it is necessary to appreciate the political landscape of Mexico, the role the Zapatistas see themselves as having, and the social evolution of the movement. This constitutes the context within which the Zapatistas tie their internal development with efforts to transform the world (the nation, for now) into a place where "many worlds are possible."

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The Red Alert drew the Zapatista membership into its centers this past summer. The consultation in the jungle yielded a series of conclusions, including a reiteration of the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle that restates the mission of the group. Included among the Zapatista principles are their rejection of violence as a means toward transformation, and an embracing of a policy of national outreach and international dialogue to create an alternative politics that parallels their alternative approaches to development. Reaffirming their position that the current government is not legitimate, the Zapatistas did not take a position of support for any of the candidates in the upcoming Presidential elections in 2006. Instead, Zapatista spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos criticized the presidential candidate from the Left, Miguel Lopez Obrador, and his party (the PRD), accusing them of corruption, inactivity, and calling them to task for what they have not done or spoken out on, with respect to the popular sectors who feel left out -- the "left out Left."

A "Something" that Is Happening in Chiapas

Much of Mexico's national development trajectory is tied to neoliberal transformations, especially privatization and huge foreign speculative investment. The Zapatistas have long known that ongoing governmental policies, positions and alliances with international capital do not benefit the indigenous and *campesino* population of Chiapas, from which its still expanding constituency is drawn. The ability of rank and file Zapatista spokespersons to explain and demonstrate the drawbacks of government development proposals is what the EZLN will take out of Chiapas to the rest of Mexico.

Ten years ago, the then-ruling PRI government feared the Zapatista rebellion would burst out of the borders of Chiapas into other states with large indigenous populations. This fear drove the PRI into an offensive position against the EZLN that included attacks by soldiers, state police, ranch hands, and local paramilitaries, leading to the Acteal Massacre in 1997. The past five years has seen a shift in government strategy designed to overwhelm the Zapatista rebellion: overhead aerial herbicide spraying, flawed development projects,

regional development plans, and land privatization. Zapatismo continues to shift in response, meeting each of the challenges in kind, and timing its response to meet the state offensive from a position of strength.

Some academics and journalists say there is no Left to recruit to the cause in Mexico, and that the Zapatistas are wasting their time looking for a Left that is no longer there. But Mexico's political culture has been leftist in one way or another since the 1910 Revolution, and opposition to the behavior and culture of capitalism has deep roots -- roots linked to notions of Mexican nationalism itself.

From a Mexican nationalist perspective, the World Bank/IMF/Bush policies of privatization comes down to a taking of the treasured resources of the nation -- the collective inheritance of the people -- and selling these off to foreigners for some kick-back cash.

And so, in the hard face of neoliberalism, it may just be that the Zapatistas are reading the political landscape better than are the intellectuals. It would not be the first time. What is a first, however, is that non-Zapatista indigenous and *campesino* communities in Chiapas are hearing the message, recognizing the need to oppose neoliberal development or else "structural terrorism" will obliterate their indigenous way of life.

This is the "something" that is happening in Chiapas.

Gatherings in the Jungle

The threat blowing through Mexico's Indian country hides behind reasonable sounding terms like sustainable development, entrepreneurial opportunity, and youthful enterprise. In the latest round of unending assaults on the land and lives of the rural, indigenous people of Mexico, the financial and political rulers of the Euro-American axis of consumption have launched well-funded new programs. These programs use public money to "combat poverty" by privatizing land and breaking up collective (*ejido*) and smallholder land use. The privatization process began when collective landholders shifted towards the certification of individual property rights as set out in 1993 in PROCEDE (*Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares Urbanes*). According to the government, PROCEDE was

accepted by more than 24,000 communal assemblies out of the 29,942 existing in the country.

For centuries, land has played a central role in indigenous power, identity, autonomy and spirituality, and in the jungle, *campesinos* are becoming increasingly more willing to work to maintain this traditional relationship to land. Some of the most exciting news emanating from the jungles of Chiapas has to do with the actions and activities of the *campesinos*. Old José, for instance, father of a civic leader, recently took visitors to his hill-top fields to show them his way of maintaining his world. At 78, the old man has greater physical stamina than do we -- his much younger visitors.

"Here it begins," says José, as he twists the tip of his machete, rotating the wrist, taking out an errant weed, poking the soil lightly. With the path newly made by José, we enter a dense forest where coffee plants shelter in the deep shade, new ones replacing those that were killed during the jungle fires of 1998.

"This is a *chakal te'*, a big tree, a fine wood, scarce these days," José says, continuing the tour. A little sadness inserts itself into the old man's earnest deadpan, "That fire they set almost finished the jungle around here." He weeds just enough to let us pass by.

We see huge stumps and tree trunks scarred with black, remnants of the era when fires were started in Zapatista areas, blamed on out-of-control individuals who, on investigation, turned out to be paramilitaries loyal to the PRI government. Ecological destruction is a tool in the low intensity war chest, hardly a new tactic in the endless Indian wars.

José is fighting back. In seven years, he has a major restoration under way. The new coffee plants are already producing a respectable crop of beans, commanding a higher price than the previous few years. The new coffee plants are also good for the plants in the tropical undergrowth.

"Here is my *caturro*, it grows faster, gives an earlier harvest. Over there, why it is my *borbon*, a slower plant but with a big bean. Gives less on a plant, but the quality is much better." José is not yet rewarded for the superior crop. "They just throw it all together, the buyers, the coyotes, they have no system to select the differences," the farmer explains the Mexican middleman practice of overlooking market grading for quality.

The Zapatistas have begun to develop a region-wide system of buying and marketing coffee, to compete with outside buyers. Last year they managed to raise the price of coffee the coyotes were willing to pay, though this has yet to be implemented in all zones. The Zapatistas have not been able to construct the purchasing infrastructure to give rewards for coffees with values-added, like organic or superior species. Still, for José, planting varieties of coffee has another value: ecological diversity. This translates to multiple benefits that includes a varied schedule for harvesting (plants don't get picked and pruned at all the same time), different vulnerabilities to diseases, to rains and dry periods, and added variation within the micro-eco-niche José has created out of the damaged jungle.

We pause below a towering hash tree, and José points to a tiny clearing with a small, clearly favored bush emerging from the center.

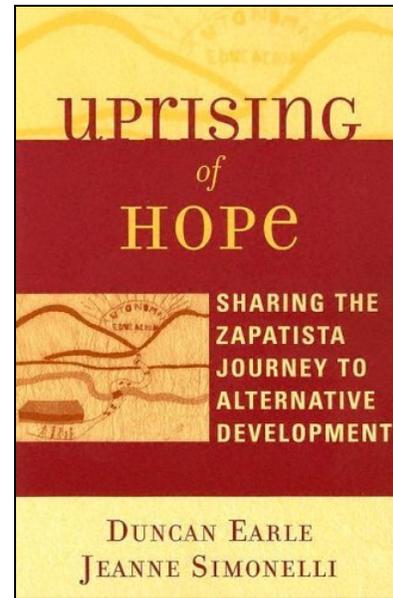
"Cedar," he says. "Don't find that around here much anymore, have to go a lot farther in. My brother gave me these down on the south coast. About 100 seedlings, most of them took." José's rough hand goes out to a tender shoot. "This one I will not see full grown," he tells us with a short sigh, his eyes glimmering above gaunt cheek bones. A silence surrounds him. "But it is so useful, after the 50 years or so, for tables, for chairs, for so many things they will need." This aging Tojolabal Maya is raising trees for children yet unborn, fruit of his 76 descendants, long after he becomes the soil he now works.

This is the face of resistance and resiliency. By José's force of will, he manages, plants, trims, works this field, prunes that one, remaking it into his world. We haven't even gotten to his cornfield, his "milpa" but somehow it is all *milpa*, the same logic is everywhere. Every field is a manicured jungle of interacting species, of nature, food, and value. In this gathering in the jungle, a different development logic grows.

José has been a Zapatista supporter from the beginning, and so we were not surprised to see his fertile fields. But down river, in a community that once threatened to hang young folks who supported the EZLN, big changes are brewing.

Earle and Simonelli, continued on page 5

BOOK GALLERY



Book Description from AltaMira Press:

The Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico, have often been portrayed in reductive, polarized terms; either as saintly activists or dangerous rebels. Cultural anthropologists Duncan Earle and Jeanne Simonelli, drawing on decades-long relationships and fieldwork, attained a collegiality with the Zapatistas that reveals a more complex portrait of a people struggling with self-determination on every level. Seeking a new kind of experimental ethnography, Earle & Simonelli have chronicled a social experiment characterized by resistance, autonomy and communality. Combining their own compelling narrative as participant-observers, and those of their Chiapas compadres, the authors effectively call for an activist approach to research. The result is a unique ethnography that is at once analytical and deeply personal. Uprising of Hope will be compelling reading for scholars and general readers of anthropology, social justice, ethnography, Latin American history and ethnic studies.

Off The Shelf: Books on Topic:

Marcos, Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, Ziga Vodovnik (ed), Noam Chomsky and Naomi Klein (forward). 2004. **Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising.** AK Press.

Nash, June C. 2001. **Mayan Visions : The Quest for Autonomy in an Age of Globalization.** Routledge.

Warren, Kay B. 1998. **Indigenous Movements and Their Critics.** Princeton University Press.

Weinberg, Bill. 2000. **Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico.** Verso Press.

Journeys to Alternative Development

In the summer of 2002, Felipe, age 24, returned from a two year sojourn as an undocumented laborer in the U.S. Dressed in cowboy boots and new blue jeans, Felipe lounged on the front porch of his parent's house in one of the oldest *ejidos* in the southern jungle, spouting pick-up lines to visiting American co-eds. He ignored his aged father, Manuel, bent under the weight of a 55 kilo sack of coffee, and his mother, who struggled to get the small herd of sheep into the yard. What did the old folks know about life? Felipe seemed to be the worst of immigration's by-products.

Manuel is a member of a "pro-government" *ejido*. When the Mexican government offered the chance to obtain individual title to each parcel of collective land under the PROCEDE program, the *ejido* voted to begin the process. Each year, the *ejido* accepted the latest round of small, pork barrel handouts, and Manuel wondered how he would manage and survive without help of his son now turned into a chauvinist cowboy. When rumors began circulating about *Plan Puebla Panama*, an internationally-backed project to dam the river along the Mexico-Guatemala frontier, Manuel knew his home would become lake-front property. The government offered to relocate him in the state of Campeche. Upriver, Zapatista acquaintances talked about organizing against the building of the dam. Manuel, the aging patriarch, pondered the choices he faced.

Fast forward three years, and we are again at Manuel's gate. We share news about our new book that includes the story of the founding of his *ejido*. This gets Manuel to reminisce about the old days, when he was named by his community to speak on their behalf in the state capital, even all the way to Mexico City -- the first indigenous leader of the area. As Manuel speaks, his son Felipe arrives, the fine leather footwear now replaced by rubber farm boots, the jeans showing remnants of a recent trip to the *milpa*. Felipe's eyes gleam as he listens to his father's stories.

"Books are good," Felipe says, reaching out for the copy we have brought to them. "But what we need is a video, something we can show to the children, the grandchildren, about this man's

achievements, so they live on. He is not so long for this world. They can see it after he is gone."

What a strange change in Felipe, we thought. As his father's recollections start to fade, the son picks up the story line.

"We used to be just alone, this *ejido*, what did we know, like we were asleep. But now we are organized, we have leadership, *leaders*. Things have changed. First we were just taking everything the government said. Like PROCEDE, we just invited that engineer in to measure the land for individual parcels. It was a vote. But what did we know? Then we found out that entering PROCEDE, privatizing, gives the government *more* control over what we can do with the land. We just left that engineer there, half way through his work. We did not give up our *ejido* rights. We are connected, not just over the hill, but all along the jungle and border," Felipe gestures toward Guatemala.

"Now the government notices we are organized, because we sent away the engineer, because we do not agree. So then they start talking about programs, projects, money for this and for that, but you have to enter the PROCEDE. This is how they work, they give you more if you want it less, if you resist, if you get organized. Now things have changed. We all have rights now. The children in school, in the family, they have rights. Including the women! You cannot just mistreat your wife because you want to. *Hay derechos (one has rights).*"



photograph by Duncan Earle

**In Chiapas, Earle and Simonelli came upon a sign:
"Stop! We will not permit the entrance of the
PROCEDE engineers."**

Felipe's metamorphosis was astounding. His story continues. "In 1994," says Felipe, "They started this, you know, and things changed for everybody. We should not need to migrate, to abandon our families. We should be able to make a decent living here. And not with the sad few coins the government agencies tossed at us."

The young man has a plan: to launch organic pineapple production. Government credit won't be a part of this venture. If it works, Felipe can circumvent the middle man and enjoy economic success free of such fetters. Even in efforts to commercialize, the *ejido* and its new organizational support system has a decidedly para-Zapatista tone.

These "para-Zapatistas" are finding strength in increasing numbers, in the slow wake of the movement. It is no wonder that the government is seeking outside aid as they try to regain control of the jungle and its frontier. Last year, the state of Chiapas and the European Union entered into a program entitled the *Programa de Desarrollo Sostenible Integrado de la Selva Lacandona* (PRODESIS). This 32 million euro program, the cost of which would be shared between the two entities, has as its projected "beneficiaries" some 850 indigenous communities. Though aimed at the "integrated, sustainable development of the Lacandon Jungle," even a member of the government's own advisory board could find little in the plan that would benefit indigenous communities. In August 2005, the plan was put on hold, at least for the time being. Should the plan be revived, it will be interesting to see what happens when the European people learn their EU money is funding Mexican counterinsurgency against autonomous Maya communities in the name of sustainability

Maria of the Market

Something is happening in rural Chiapas, but what does this mean for the urban areas?

We met Maria in the market of the colonial city of San Cristóbal. Winding our way through back alleys and darkened stalls, we round the corner to two large display cases of herbs, resins, incenses, candles and other materials. Each item has a story, as does Maria, the owner-proprietor. She is Maya, but dressed *mestiza*-style, with a plain cloth on her head and an apron. At first she is quiet, until we ask about the names of her products, sliding into and out of Tzeltal the language of Chanal, her home village. Chanal is very Zapatista, but Maria is not.

"I don't mix with that. I don't want problems," she tells us, launching into a long political discourse about why the Zapatistas are correct, even though she isn't one, that they "*tienen razon...*" are right." Maria describes her own circumstances -- a woman who outlived her abusive husband. She knew she was in a bad relationship, but she knew he would drink himself to death and that she would emerge from the flames with a way to make a living. And this is what she is doing, running her small market business. Maria has no kind words for the local municipal president, who tried to lure support with free tamales for the market people and a little party he threw during his election campaign.

"Like a man giving you flowers when courting." Maria says, gesturing with a mime, handing us an imaginary bouquet. "But no sooner did that politician get in, and up went the taxes on all the posts here. We were misled, just like women are by sweet-talking men. This is what the government is like, all promises when they want something, then later, look out. They screw you over with a smile on their face. That is why the people in Chanal are all Zapatistas. Me, I don't want to get involved."

Sometimes it is hard," she said. "A woman without education. If sales are slow, inventory piles up, I have to borrow, 12 % a month is what they charge. You can end up working for your debt."

Maria's tale is the national story. Mexico, a country with great strength and resources, yet still forced to borrow heavily, and then left in a financial nightmare common to Latin American nations working to pay off the debt. International

March on Washington September 24, 2005



Pictured here is the father of Alexander Arredondo, sitting at the memorial to his son set up at the Washington, D.C. site of Camp Casey during the protest weekend.

lending agencies come in to “restructure” the economy to better fit the interests of international business. This is the legacy of colonialism, lived out in burdened markets rife with corruption and debt dependency. The big lenders operate as a policy monopoly, giving debt relief in exchange for massive privatization and the cutting off of social and health services. Debt serves to keep Maria quiet, as it does many others in Mexico, despite the injustice of it.

More Happenings

Maria, the incense seller, is one of the thousands of Maya living on the margins as *mestizos* in urban areas. She is a silent Zapatista, yet her views are not very far from those expressed by Felipe or even by José. More and more people are discovering that there is something going on in Chiapas -- something big and broad, something more penetrating than the formal movement itself, a sense of common struggle for a better life. Some are watching from the edges, some are fighting against it, some are still silent, or nearly so. The bold moves now being made by Zapatista caravans into the larger nation begin to make more sense. These quiet iterations of a Zapatista attitude reflect what *is* happening, and why, finally, the “happenings” of the state are being brought to the nation.

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photograph by Jay Sokolovsky

Traditional dance extravaganza that marked the opening of the SANA/CASCA/UADY conference in Merida on May 3, 2005.

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Please see related articles in earlier issues of **North American Dialogue (NAD)**

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Pimping Maria from Puebla to Panama:

Peasants, Petroleum & Paramilitaries

by Katherine O'Donnell

From the Screening Room



In May, 2005, the Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA), in conjunction with CASCA and UADY, hosted the conference, Translocality: Discussing Culture and Change in the 21st Century, in Merida, Mexico. Thanks to Jay Sokolovsky (University of South Florida), the following films were shown during the three day-long *New Visions of North America Film Festival*.

Mexico

"Xateros" (2004) Spanish with English subtitles, 40 minutes. "Xateros" (palm cutters), who have worked in the Lacandon forest for decades, find themselves on the lowest rung in a commercial ladder from the rainforest to the USA and Europe. Axel Köhler & Tim Trench, Indigenous Videomakers of the Southern Border Project. axelkoehler@hotmail.com.

Caracoles: New Paths of Resistance (2003) Spanish with English subtitles, 42 minutes. Produced by 18 Zapatista video makers, *Caracoles* celebrates the death of the Aguascalientes and the birth of the Caracoles and the Good Government Assemblies. Chiapas Media Project. <http://promedios.org/eng/index.html>.

We Are Equal: Zapatista Women Speak (2004) Spanish and Tzeltal with English subtitles, 18 minutes. Zapatista women speak about their lives before and after the uprising in 1994. Chiapas Media Project. <http://promedios.org/eng/index.html>.

Rosalba's Quinceañera (2005) Spanish with English subtitles, 20 minutes. *Quinceañera* celebrations are relatively new to the central Mexican indigenous community of San Jeronimo Amanalco, and some find them controversial. This video documents the *quinceañera* held for Rosalba Velazquez, and also follows the life of Rosalba's 14-year-old sister. Videography and editing by Jay Sokolovsky, Ljudost Productions. jsokolov@stpt.usf.edu.

El Pulque (2003) Spanish, 14 minutes. Documents traditions involved with the cultivation and consumption of the alcoholic drink called pulque. Artemio Cruz Leon, Mis Tradiciones Series, Chapingo. artemioc@taurus1.chapingo.mx.

Canada

El Contrato (2003) English and Spanish with subtitles, 51 minutes. *El Contrato* follows a group of Mexican men on their annual migration to southern Ontario, where they pick tomatoes for conditions and wages no local will accept. Director: Min Sook Lee. Producers: Karen King-Chigbo and Silva Basmajian. National Film Board of Canada.

Discordia: When Netanyahu Came to Town (2004) English, 69 minutes. The "Concordia riot" made international news, and *Discordia* documents the fallout—following three campus activists as they negotiate the most formative year of their lives. Directors: Ben Addelman and Samir Mallal. Producer: Adam Symansky. National Film Board of Canada.

Nuclear/NewClear Family (2005) English, 22 minutes. Examines the climate for same-sex parenting in Canada. Written, produced and directed by Ross Wilson and Noelle Carbone, Toronto.

United States

Urban Garden: Fighting for Life and Beauty (2005) English, 38 minutes. Citizen groups, often from poor and neglected neighborhoods, began in the early 1970s reclaiming public lands in NYC. In three decades they created more than 600 community-run green spaces, gardens and farms. Yet the city has attempted to auction off many gardens to real estate developers, often with the false promise of providing "affordable" housing. Jay Sokolovsky, Ljudost Productions. jsokolov@stpt.usf.edu.

Nuestras Acequias (English, 2004) English, 20 minutes. Examines the origins of the Acequia canal system of Northern New Mexico which was brought to North America by Spanish settlers over 400 years ago. The story is told through young and old voices of the community; all are vitally concerned with maintaining the identity and integrity of their culture, way of life and traditional values. Delighted Eye Video. dcdev@cybermesa.com.

American Waitress (2003) English, 66 minutes. This documentary examines the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of waitresses. It is also about life, social structures and human nature. Backseat Productions. info@americanwaitress.com.

The Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin: Water Cultures and Water Systems in a Fragile Eco-Zone

By Tomás Martínez Saldaña

Abstract: There is an environmental crisis now facing the inhabitants of the Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin which lies along the border between the south of New Mexico and the west of Texas in the U.S., and Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas in northern Mexico. This essay examines social, cultural and technological aspects of a water system that had for a long time provided a sustainable living environment in the Basin. We now have a collection of rich information on water rights, irrigation systems, and forms of social organization that emerged with the irrigation systems and on *acequia* culture that includes festivities and celebrations that tie into the irrigation calendar. A key aspect of the system was that water was a community, not private possession, an arrangement that endured for a longer time on the U.S. rather than the Mexican side of the border. The 20th century saw the destruction of the irrigation-based agricultural system, resulting in today's environmental crisis. The author calls for a return to a sound and sustainable water management system for this fragile border region.

Key words: Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin, water, irrigation system, sustainability, border studies, Mexico, U.S.

The regional and border economies of northern Mexico and southwestern United States share an array of social and cultural links. The border zone is marked by growing commercial and industrial integration as people have become more engaged in *maquila* work, border crossings and the exchange of goods and services. The area is also marked by an intensifying environmental crisis centered in large part on the waters of the Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin.

The Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin lies in the region divided by the border between the south of New Mexico and the west of Texas in the U.S., and Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas in northern Mexico. Thanks to traditional management and environmental conservation constructed by local users in the past, people have survived in the Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin for four hundred years. These water management and conservation systems are rooted in the Spanish

colonial settlements of *Nueva Vizcaya* and *Nuevo Mexico*.

The environmental crisis now facing the inhabitants of the Basin defies easy solution. The crisis is intermittent yet recurrent, provoked by a drought that has been fairly constant over the past eleven years. This essay takes us back in time to examine social, cultural and technological aspects of the old system that had for a long time provided a sustainable living environment for the people of the Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin.

A Common Historical Heritage: Water Cultures and Irrigation Systems

The Río Grande–Río Bravo Basin irrigation system in the U.S. and in Mexico share a common legacy. Since the viceroyal epoch, Middle American hydraulic technology and social organization, coordinated by pioneers from Tlaxcala together with the Spanish colonizers, became the agricultural foundations of towns and villages in the north of New Spain. Though rooted in a common system, the two countries followed different legal, economic and political trajectories since the mid-19th century, which have had certain consequences for each side of the Basin region. In Mexico, this trajectory is denoted by Liberal Reform of 1857, the Mexican Revolution and Agrarian Reform. In the United States, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, ending the Mexican-American War, allowed for the preservation of certain Spanish and Mexican privileges and customs for at least seventy years. Even so, a water culture that dates from the 16th century is perceptible today in what is known as "*acequia*" -- the technical and social management of the river, its flora and fauna, and in small irrigation organizations of European, Mexican and Indian origin. Steeped in the traditions of religious brotherhoods, many of these small irrigation organizations are to this day involved in regional festivals, celebrations of saints, and festivities tied to the agricultural calendar.

Today's cultural feasts also reflect contemporaneous political, economic, social and cultural conditions on both sides of the border. The music and dance of *los matachines* in New Mexico and Texas barely resemble those in Mexico. In New Mexico, for example, domesticated *matachines* dancers have become actors in an intimate, local, sacred drama, the elders taking precedence over

younger dancers. Mexican festivities, on the other hand, are regional events and popular fairs that attract multitudes of people of all ages who come to celebrate the Holy Cross and the Virgin of Guadalupe.

The contemporary presence of traditional forms of social organization and hydraulic technology have allowed the survival of communities on both sides of the border in a harsh and fragile desert environment. The contemporary presence of these traditional socio-cultural and technological systems also provides a unique opportunity to study irrigation systems with Middle American roots. At the same time, differences by place, population and political history may also be ethnographically observed in festivals and celebrations as well as in social responses to water management. In all, the story of the Río Grande-Río Bravo Basin allows a cross-border comparison and anthropological study of the culture of water.

In fact, several anthropological studies of the region's "water cultures" have already been published or are underway. These include José A. Rivera's *Acequia Culture: Water, Land, and Community in the Southwest*, a study of traditional "villages" of small farmers in Colorado and New Mexico who had depended on community (not private) irrigation ditches known as *acequias* (1998; see also Meyer 1998; Weber 2000); Enrique Lamadrid's studies of narrative tradition and song along the Rio Grande (1994; 2003); Sylvia Rodríguez's *Matachines of the Rio Grande*, which describes the vivid life of those *danzantes* (1996); and my own research on the expansion of Middle American agriculture (1998) and, with Jacinta Palerm Viqueira, work on Mexico's small irrigation systems (2000).

Traditional Irrigation Systems

Agricultural colonization in northern New Spain was characterized by the use of riparian waters through channels and irrigation ditches. At the beginning of the northward expansion, the local flora, such as nopal (prickly pear), walnut trees and mesquites were used to make protective barriers for irrigation systems. The oldest irrigation ditches in the north were developed in 1563 (in Guadiana and Nombre de Dios, Durango) but the most significant systems were brought by the Tlaxaltecas in 1591 to an area extending from Guadiana to Monterrey and Santa Fe. The systems

that were transferred to the north involved use of orchards, river banks, trenches and plant erosion terraces or irrigated strips sown on the edges with maguey, agave and fruit trees. It is worth mentioning that eighty years of Spanish presence in New Spain created a hybrid technology both in cultivars, fruit plantations and irrigation systems. In this way, native runoff ditches and the flooded fields system merged with the European irrigation system. European and American fruits combined with Mesoamerican and European irrigation to expand resources. This fruit-growing legacy is part of the *acequia* culture.

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photograph by Jay Sokolovsky

Tomás Martínez Saldaña is shown here as discussant in the bi-national (Mexico and U.S.) panel, "Beyond the Shadow of Tlaloc: Multilocal and Global Influences on Community Transformation in a Central Mexican Region," co-chaired by Jay Sokolovsky (U of South Florida) and Roger Magazine (IberoAmerican U, Mexico) at the SANA/ CASCA/ UADY conference in Merida (May 2005).

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The most important aspect of the northern irrigation, spread out all over the Coahuilan desert and the Rio Grande basin, was its ability to handle weather changes and, above all, to preserve environmental humidity, which enabled optimal management of oasis water, small rain runoffs, and wellsprings. The system worked so successfully because it involved more than one modality. Tlaxaltecas used a vast array of systems and knew how to mix them since in their original territory, before the arrival of the Spaniards, they had already created various water utilization

systems. The archaeological record demonstrates that a diverse system was utilized. Today, the ethnographic record documents that a diverse system is still utilized: flooding systems, drained and raised fields, and irrigation are being utilized in contemporary Tlaxcala.

Social Organization in Acequia Water Culture

At the center of *acequia* water culture are rights and privileges as related to water access and its management. Spanish law dictated water rights from the time the Spanish and Tlaxcaltecan settled in the north region even as Tlaxcaltecan practices often took precedence over the law (for example, the Tlaxcaltecan practice of flooding an area under cultivation). The legal base itself became a hybrid – a mixture of Spanish law, Central Mexican traditions and local practices. Water was shared – a community, not private possession -- and water rights were measured by time, not by space. Tlaxcaltecan, Indians and even Spanish colonizers all claimed water as a community right. The fact of this practice underpinned the legal structure for water management throughout the colonial era.

Communal water rights were adaptive to the environment and to the forms of agriculture and animal husbandry that developed in the region. Since most of the region lies in high altitude areas characterized by intense cold, farmers had a short season in which to tend small plots of intensive agriculture. Successful farming was found on riverbanks and in protected ravines, and catered to the needs of minor cattle breeding and buffalo hunting. Of course, these activities nurtured a native tradition based on these resources. Among the cultural traditions born of *acequia* culture was weaving, and the techniques and tools that went along with it. Studies that trace the *serape* have made possible the discovery of linkages between the New Mexican and Saltillo (colonial Tlaxcalan) versions of the shawl (Fisher 1994; Lucero and Baizerman 1999). Likewise, new interest in a range of cultural phenomena, from herbal medicine, to germ plasma, Santero traditions and even the cuisine of North New Mexico lead us to explore Mesoamerican heritage in northern Mexico, Southern Texas and New Mexico (Martínez Saldaña 2002).

During the colonial era, the water system was buttressed by codified law and protected by an organization of irrigators known as *cofradías*, a kind of water management guild. The most important of these legally sanctioned and protected *cofradías* was the Brotherhood of Penitent Brothers whose reach extended a wide swath of territory in the Río Grande region until the mid-19th century. Throughout this time, the *cofradías* also served important social organizational and cultural functions, providing military defense, keeping the religious calendar for social events, and organizing local life-cycle festivities – marriages, baptisms, funerals.

In 1857, The *Reforma* Laws enacted by President Benito Juárez saw the dismantling of the colonial hydraulic system and the legal framework that supported it. During this time, as the idea and practice of individual rights developed sway, the guild privileges of community settlers were abolished, as were the rights and privileges of the councils and stewardships. The local right to manage lands, irrigation systems, cemeteries and churches was lost.

But Mexico no longer held all the territory inherited from Spain because the towns and territory beyond the Río Bravo became part of the U.S. with the Mexican-American War and the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty of 1848. Ironically, since Mexico no longer held all this northern territory, the legal systems and irrigation rights remained just the way they were under Spanish domination.

But in Mexico, town after town all the way to El Paso del Norte, later Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, went through a process in which their hydraulic and legal systems were destroyed. By 1904, virtually all communal lands were lost to Chihuahuan landlords, and the Penitent Brothers lost their civil and community role, being relegated, after the 1860s, to a secondary role in religious festivities. The opposite happened in the United States, whereby the Penitent Brothers retained a prominent role in the social structure of Nuevo Mexican rural areas -- irrigation communities that were able to retain some independence for many years to come.

Contemporary Conditions, Fragility and a Return to Sustainability

As a result of this historical and ethnographic research, we now have a collection of rich information on water rights, on irrigation systems, on forms of social organization that emerged with the irrigation systems and on the festivities and celebrations that tie into the irrigation calendar. The research has also opened up a new dimension in border studies, research that focuses on the cultural heritage of *acequia* in northern Mexico and southwestern U.S. This cultural heritage includes the herbalist tradition, born of the *acequia* and small gardens that produced herbs and other plants for the purposes of curing, feeding and fueling.

Though remnants remain, the past one hundred years has seen the destruction of an irrigation-based agricultural system that had proven to be sustainable for a very long time. During the twentieth century, orchards, walnuts and wine began to disappear, driven out by produce brought to the region by rail. In places like El Paso and Juárez, Casas Grandes and San Buenaventura, the hydraulic and fruit-producing tradition was replaced with multinational factory production. This ecologically fragile area is now covered in asphalt, devoid of trees and riparian vegetation.

Taken all together, results of this historical and ethnographic research have guided the development of a new political agenda and policies that relates to water and cultural resource management for the region. The research shows that small systems of irrigation are ecologically sound, have the potential to be highly productive, can generate healthful environmental effects while producing healthful, organic foodstuffs, and can keep communities alive. But they cannot compete with large-scale farming systems that are underwritten by economic subsidies. It is now time to reclaim the past and reconstruct a sound and sustainable water management system for the Río Grande-Río Bravo Basin.



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**104th Annual Meeting
American Anthropological Association
Bringing the Past into the Present
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Washington DC**

November 30-December 4, 2005

SANA-SPONSORED OR CO-SPONSORED PANELS & EVENTS:

- Biomedicalized Bodies and the Body Politic In Philadelphia (Lisa Hardy)
- Experience-Based Learning and Public Anthropology in the 21st Century University (Sam Beck and Carl Maida)
- Experiences of the Everyday and the Anthropology of Hope (Charles Menzies and Anthony Marcus)
- Families That We Live With, Families That We Live By: Current U.S. Research on Middle-Class Working Families (Brian Hoey)
- Identity, Ethnicity, and Changing Community Forms
- Interdisciplinary Ethnography: A Roundtable Discussion (Carrie Lane Chet)
- In the Name of Security: Anthropology in an Era of Surveillance, Special Event (Maria D. Vesperi and Alisse Waterston)
- North American Experiences: Managing Representation and Identity
- Race, Place, and Poverty in North America
- Regimes of Power: The Contours of Neoliberalism (Catherine Kingfisher)
- Rethinking Exploitation: Imaginering Ethnography and Marxist Praxis Today. (Vincent Lyon-Callo and Boone Shear)
- Student Activism as Public Anthropology (Christopher Carrico)
- What's the Matter with the United States? [With Apologies to Thomas Frank] (Sandra Morgen Jeffry Maskovsky)
- Why the Culture War will not be covered by The History Channel: United States Culture and Change from the 1980s to the Present (J.C. Salyer)
- Worldwide Walmart: A Dialogue with Liza Featherstone and Bill Fletcher On Race, Class, and Gender Warfare (Molly Doane and Jeffry Maskovsky)

PRESIDENTIAL PANELS OF INTEREST TO SANA MEMBERS:

- Anthropology Off the Shelf: Speaking Truth to Power with Books (Alisse Waterston and Maria D. Vesperi), featuring historian Howard Zinn
- Anthropology and Human Rights: Challenges and Prospects (Samuel Martinez)
- Development Disasters: Making the Case for Reparations and the Right to Remedy (Barbara Rylko-Bauer and Barbara Rose Johnston)
- History, Current Practice and Prospects for Organized Labor: The Anthropology of Unions (Paul Durrenberger)
- Placing Ethics at the Discipline's Center: Bringing Past Hopes into Future Realities (Borofsky)
- What's All the Fuss about Same-Sex Marriage? Family, Marriage and the New Culture Wars in America (Christa Craven and Jeffry Maskovsky)

DON'T MISS THE SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY WITH SALSA BAND SIN MIEDO!!

ANTHROPOLOGY OFF THE SHELF

Women of Chiapas:

Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope

Christine Eber and Christine Kovic, eds.

Routledge Press, New York, NY.

By Gerrie Casey

Readers of North American Dialogue will find this anthology an especially compelling resource for research and teaching purposes. Women of Chiapas breaks new ground on both theoretical and methodological levels - a significant feat, considering the large body of ethnographic writing on Maya communities in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, dating back to the early community studies of the 1950s and 1960s (including U.S. ethnographers Frank Cancian, George and Jane Collier, Gary Gossen, Robert Laughlin, June Nash, and Evon Vogt, among others), complemented by a high volume of more recent work focusing on the Zapatista rebellion of 1994 and the continuing movement for indigenous rights and autonomy. Eber and Kovic's edited volume ruptures traditional conceptual divisions by including chapters on Maya women living in the indigenous communities of the highlands, as well as women residing in the colonial city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, and the state capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez. The interdisciplinary essence of the research project and the editors' commitment to crafting new ways to document women's realities "in times of struggle and hope" is reflected in the diversity of the book's contributors and their respective writing styles, including traditional academic research, poetry, plays, and personal memoir. In this organically collaborative venture, Maya women, Ladinas (or

colas, as mestizos are called in Chiapas), and community organizers share space with university-based researchers as authors of separate chapters, woven together to create a unified anthology.

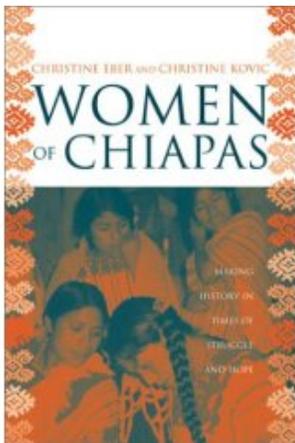
The volume is divided into three sections: poverty, discrimination, and violence; religious change and women's empowerment; and women organizing for social change. The editors provide dense, well-documented introductions for each section, deepening the reader's understanding of the complex interplay between historical conditions and earlier campaigns to achieve empowerment and current projects for social equality, amidst continued Mexican military and paramilitary presence and the ongoing economic, political and social crises faced by the women in Chiapas who work to make history "in times of struggle and hope." The mosaic content and structure of the book render it more compelling and accessible to audiences unfamiliar with the region. As such, Women of Chiapas constitutes an excellent teaching resource for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in women's studies, gender studies and Latin American (Mexican) area studies.

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The Colonias Development Council has a sets of three notecards for sale for \$5 each package. The proceeds from the sales benefit the work of the Colonias Development Council. The cards show three paintings by Preciliana Sandoval, a local artist from Las Cruces, New Mexico, and sixth-generation native of southern New Mexico. She says of her art, "Yo hago lo que me da la gana. I paint what I please. I am self-taught-my education paid for in late book fees from the Branigan Public Library in Las Cruces. My professors were Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Miguel Covarrubias and Georgia O'Keefe." <http://www.colonias.org/notecards.htm>

Women Of Chiapas goes behind the evocative image of the masked and armed Zapatista female warrior to document the much broader struggle for survival, dignity, and justice being waged by hundreds of thousands of women in southern Mexico. The essays provide history and a context for an unanticipated social-change movement which has truly come 'up from under.' Anyone concerned about what is really going on in Chiapas today will want to read this book. -- *Carter Wilson, author of Crazy February: Death and Life in the Mayan Highlands of Mexico.*

From June Nash's forward through plays, prayers, songs, testimonies, and insightful academic articles, this wonderful collection provides a rare window on contemporary gender relations in Chiapas. *Women of Chiapas* is essential reading for understanding the wider context out of which women's struggles emerge. The book provides a deeply human, collaborative, and richly textured description of a range of women's experiences in urban and rural Chiapas. -- *Lynn Stephen, author of Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power From Below and Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico.*



This is a beautiful and extraordinary work of solidarity with those who live in political and economic marginality: the indigenous people of Chiapas. Anyone who wants to know what it means to be a woman in Mexico should read it. It is the deepest understanding of social change in Chiapas that has ever been written. -- *Elena Poniatowska, author of Massacre in Mexico and Here's to You, Jesusa!*

This is the book to read if you want to learn about women in Chiapas in the wake of the Zapatista rebellion. It introduces indigenous women, mestizas, activists and researchers who speak from a broad range of perspectives. You will learn about the experiences they draw upon, the challenges they face, and the alliances that inspire them as they seek gender equity and social justice through grass-roots religious, productive, and political organization. -- *George Collier, author of Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas.*

This book presents the concerns, visions and struggles of women in Chiapas, Mexico in the context of the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). The book is organized around three issues that have taken center state in women's recent struggles-structural violence and armed conflict; religion and empowerment and women's organizing.

Book Description from Routledge Press

VOICES OF DIALOGUE

**Participatory Action Research Crosses the Border:
*Economic development and solidarity between Latinas in New Mexico and Maya women in Chiapas, Mexico***

By Gerrie Casey

Abstract: This article describes the work of activist anthropologist Christine Eber whose participatory action research in Chiapas, Mexico led to the development of a cross-border solidarity project. Eber established the Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection, an advocacy organization that assists women of Chiapas with their grassroots economic development projects. Centered on women's artisanal craft production, the project helps create marketing networks for Maya women's hand-crafted weavings, an effort that grew in significance for the women and their families with the passage of NAFTA in 1994. Since that time, the project has emerged into a cross-border project with the Chaparral Family Development Center in New Mexico. *Creaciones Yuca* (Yucca Creations) involves low-income, immigrant women in the U.S. working in direct economic collaboration with Maya women weavers in Mexico.

Key words: Action research, economic development, women, immigrants, Maya, Chiapas, New Mexico

Based in southern New Mexico, the Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection is a cross-border solidarity project formed in 2003 linking Maya women's craft production in Chiapas, Mexico with the "fair-trade" and "anti-sweat-shop" campaigns in the United States (Eber and Gonzalez 2004). The effort to create marketing networks in the United States for fine, hand-crafted weavings produced by Maya women -- and their fledgling cooperatives -- began as an individual, informally organized project initiated by anthropologist Christine Eber as part of her fieldwork research in Chiapas, Mexico in the late 1980s. Eber conceptualized this project as an integral part of her ethnographic research -- an approach misunderstood by some academics who considered her efforts to market Maya women's crafts a form of charity or social-service work, tangential to the academic enterprise of research and publication. On the contrary, Christine Eber

articulated this activity as an essential part of her intellectual project, emphasizing concepts of mutuality, inter-subjectivity, reciprocity, and deep listening grounded in feminist theoretical constructs and women-centered research methodology (Eber 2003a, 2002, 2000).

From 1987-1993, the network of U.S. supporters purchasing Maya women's weavings grew steadily through Eber's outreach to family, friends and professional contacts, as well as to religious groups and community organizations. But it was the passage of NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement) in 1994 that simultaneously increased the need -- and *possibility* -- for this project to expand, becoming institutionalized and more collective -- on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border. The implementation of NAFTA triggered the Zapatista Rebellion within the indigenous communities in Chiapas, Mexico on January 1, 1994, the date when the NAFTA accords went into affect. The EZLN (the political the military leadership of the uprising) understood that NAFTA would deepen Mexico's social and economic crisis that had become chronic and endemic in Mexico since the international debt crisis began in the 1980s (Kovic and Eber 2003a, 2003b; Harvey 1998; Nash 2001, 1997; Rus et al 2001; Russell 1995).



Christine Eber, New Mexico State University
http://www.nmsu.edu/~anthro/christine_eber.htm

In the United States, NAFTA facilitated the steady out-sourcing of jobs, as corporations pursued low-cost labor and raw materials as well as lower environmental protection standards in Mexico. Popular concern over the massive loss of jobs combined with -- and sometimes butted heads with -- a growing movement of solidarity with Mexican workers confronting increased exploitation, terrible working conditions and poverty wages. These combined forces created a multiplicity of local organizations and national campaigns concentrated among students, religious groups, and trade unions to create an international campaign against sweat-shop labor and the call for *fair* trade not *free* trade. While some sectors of this burgeoning social movement were more concerned over lost jobs in the U.S., tending to view Mexican workers as their enemies, other sectors were more concerned with the impact on Mexican workers and communities. This uneasy coalition continues to grow -- across different agendas and priorities -- as mutual trust and dialogue deepens through unity-in-action on specific campaigns.

Getting Past NAFTA: Women's Work in Artisanal Craft Production

Meanwhile, in Mexico, the economic and social crises triggered by NAFTA have wreaked havoc on the fragile fabric of social life. Within Maya communities in the highlands of Chiapas, increasing numbers of men were left without jobs and women's work in artisanal craft production took on even greater importance for family and community survival. As the Zapatista rebellion called for increased political, social, economic and culture rights and autonomy for indigenous communities in Chiapas, the call for Maya women to play an increased role in decision-making, leadership and public speaking developed a central importance (Kovic and Eber 2003b). The Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection was forged from this vortex of cross-border crisis and solidarity.

In 2003, working with community organizer Megan Snedden, anthropologist Eber expanded her participatory action research project to encompass outreach work with low-income Latinas in the community of Chaparral, New Mexico, a small community on the outskirts of El Paso, Texas (Eber and Snedden 2003). In 2002, the Chapparral

Family Development Center (CFDC) initiated a series of economic development and empowerment projects for U.S. Latinas and immigrant women, mainly of Mexican heritage. One of these projects, *Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser* (Women Learning to Sew) established sewing classes and a small business operation through which participants could market their products, according to the mutual aid and self-help/empowerment frameworks familiar to applied anthropologists working with similar community-based organizations. Three years later, in recognition of the fact that they had *learned* to sew -- and perhaps reflecting their growing confidence as immigrants to the United States and productive workers outside the home -- group members decided to change the name of their sewing collective to *Creaciones Yuca* (Yucca Creations), explaining their decision as follows: "The reason we chose our new name, *Creaciones Yuca*, is that the Yucca Flower is a native New Mexican plant that resists all kinds of heat and storms, just like we have resisted giving in when the challenges of our project were great" (CFDC 2005).

Creaciones Yuca, Maya Women Artisans, the Activist and the Anthropologist

Christine Eber and Megan Snedden initiated a successful joint project between members of *Creaciones Yuca* and the Maya women in Chiapas, Mexico. This project integrated machine-produced items made by the women of *Creaciones Yuca* (pillows, potholders, children's clothing, tote bags, and home decor items) with hand-woven and embroidered fabrics crafted by Maya weavers in Chiapas. Relations of cross-border economic collaboration and trade were transformed into a solidarity project of larger scope when one of the weavers from Chiapas was able to visit *Creaciones Yuca* in New Mexico on two occasions. The women have established an exchange of production ideas and techniques while sharing photographs and stories about their lives, teasing out the threads of mutuality and difference in the process.

This cross-border project of economic cooperation and solidarity also has powerful political and ideological ramifications. It directly

challenges efforts to intensify difference and tension between Latino communities in the U.S. with recently arriving immigrants and indigenous communities of Mexico on the other side of the border. Some U.S. Latino political leaders and media representatives seek to advance the social position of their communities by distancing and disassociating themselves from more recent immigrants and Mexican nationals, whom they pejoratively refer to as *mojados* (wetbacks) or *Mexicanos* in contrast with their self-identification as "Spanish American" or "Hispanic." Given the intensifying tide of racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant campaigns lined up along the United States-Mexico border, this short-sighted and divisive political strategy is disappointing, but also completely understandable.

Christine Eber's action-based solidarity project is situated precisely on the border of research, empowerment projects, political ideology, and applied anthropology. It constitutes a template for advocacy anthropologists in other regions of the country. Interested readers are encouraged to contact the author of this article or professor Christine Eber at ceber@snmu.edu for more information.



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Websites related to these projects:

- http://www.nmsu.edu/~anthro/christine_eber.htm
Creaciones Yuca Catalog
- <http://www.colonias.org/Chaparral.htm>
Chaparral Family Development Center (CFDC)
- http://www.nmsu.edu/~anthro/christine_eber.htm
Christine Eber and the Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection



From the Creaciones Yuca Catalog: We purchase squares of hand-embroidered, hand-woven fabrics from Maya women in Chiapas, Mexico. We use these squares in a variety of products including pillows, potholders, bags, and children's clothing. By working together, our groups help each other.

MEETING NOTES

SANA Panelists Highlight Labor at the 2005 AAA Meetings

By Molly Doane, SANA Program Chair

The 2005 AAA Meetings in Washington D.C. will feature fifteen SANA sponsored panels. The theme this year is "Bringing the Past into the Present." Many of the panels engage this theme, and as always, the panelists represent the wide variety of topical and regional interests of our members. This year, SANA is pleased to sponsor three invited sessions, two of which are co-sponsored with the Society for the Anthropology of Work.

As you all know, the labor struggles of workers at the San Francisco Hilton disrupted our predictable annual conference routine and inspired a dialogue among many anthropologists about our own allegiances and responsibilities in relation to labor questions. The labor dispute has influenced submissions to SANA this year, putting a particular spin on the AAA annual theme "Bringing the Past into the Present." The anthropology of work and labor, as well as the cultural politics of the United States, seem to be back on the front burner.

In fact, SANA is sponsoring, along with the Society for the Anthropology of Work, an invited interlocutor session on the topic of labor this year. SANA periodically organizes interlocutor sessions to feature important work by fellow-traveling non-anthropologists. This year's session was organized by Molly Doane and Jeff Maskovsky and is entitled "Worldwide Wal-Mart: A Dialogue with Liza Featherstone and Bill Fletcher on Race, Class, and Gender Warfare." Featured speaker Liza Featherstone is an investigative journalist and author of Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart and Students against Sweatshops. Also featured is Bill Fletcher, Jr., President of the TransAfrica Forum, an activist and research organization dedicated to causes relevant to the African American community. He has published widely on the topics of U.S. imperialism, racism and the U.S. labor movement. Discussants include Leith Mullings, Neil Smith, Micaela di Leonardo, and Jane Collins. This panel is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 3rd.

Other panels where labor and work feature prominently include a SAW/SANA invited session entitled "Experiences of the Everyday and the Anthropology of Hope," organized by Charles Menzies and Anthony Marcus and "Rethinking Exploitation: Imagining Ethnography and Marxist Praxis Today," organized by Vincent Lyon-Callos and Boone Shear.

The state of U.S. politics also figured prominently in papers and sessions proposed for the 2005 AAA

meetings, including the invited session "What's the Matter with the United States (with apologies to Thomas Frank)." This panel takes as its point of departure Thomas Frank's book What's the Matter with Kansas, which attributes the rightward shift in U.S. national politics to the rise of right wing fundamentalism on the one hand and the decline of left wing economic populism on the other. However, the panelists present a series of ethnographically based challenges to Frank's implication that right wing politics among the working classes are nothing more than a form of false consciousness, suggesting that this rightward shift is rooted not only ideologically but also materially. Panelists include Hilary Cunningham, Jeff Maskovsky, Sandra Morgen, Jane and Peter Schneider, and Ida Susser.

SANA is also sponsoring a special event entitled "In the Name of Security: Anthropology in an Era of Surveillance." This panel, organized by Maria Vesperi and Alisse Waterston, addresses the impact of the Patriot Act on the people with whom we conduct research and on the enterprise of anthropology. Participants include Mary Anglin, David Rosen, Sally Merry, Cheryl Mwaria, and Sandy Smith-Nonini.

Other intriguing sessions with political themes include "Why the Culture War will not be covered by the History Channel: United States Culture and Change from the 1980s to the Present," organized by J.C. Saylor, and "Regimes of Power: the Contours of Neoliberalism," organized by Catherine Kingfisher.

Panels presenting new ethnographic research on topics of interest to North American Anthropologists include: "Race, Poverty, and Place in North America"; "Families We Live With, Families We Live By," organized by Brian Hoey; "North American Experiences: Managing Representation and Identity"; "Identity, Ethnicity, and Changing Community Forms"; and "Biomedicalized Bodies and the Body Politic in Philadelphia," organized by Lisa Hardy.

Our schedule will also include panels concerning research and teaching methods. "Interdisciplinary Ethnography: A Roundtable Discussion" includes roundtable organizer Carrie Lane Chet, Carol Stack, Virginia Dominguez, Quetzal Castañeda, Jane Desmond and John Caughey. Other panels on methodological themes are "Student Activism as Public Anthropology," organized by Chris Carrico and "Experience-based Learning and Public Anthropology in the 21st Century," organized by Carl Maida and Sam Beck.

And please join us for the SANA business meeting December 2 at 12:15. All are invited!

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