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Content

Editorial

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Editorial

The articles in this issue of the magazine cover a wide stretch of both historical time and geographical locations, from nineteenth-century Trinidad, through Cuba and Mexico in the 1930s, to Zimbabwe in the contemporary moment. As such, our contributors take up a range of issues relevant to a systematic understanding of aspects of life in the global south. While Jerome Teelucksingh's article questions media reportage of the tragic killing of Indians in colonial San Fernando to uncover the hidden impulses which initiated the massacre, Caridad Massón Sena's piece – drawing on a project that was funded by a SEPHIS Fellowship – interrogates the varied consequences that the implementation of the policies of the Communist International had in Mexico and Cuba; Percyslage Chigora and Tobias Gyzura's co-authored article brings readers to a recently instituted university in Zimbabwe, struggling to ensure equality between genders in all aspects of its functioning. If, however, a common thread could be identified as binding these articles in some sense, disparate as they are in both theme and methodology, it would be in their concern with understanding the motivations which impel the ruling classes to introduce certain policies of governance, and the sometimes unforeseen reactions that these generate.

Jerome Teelucksingh's article *Tragedy in Trinidad, 1884* devotes itself to thinking about the various factors that culminated in the killing of Indians on the occasion of Hosay or Muharram festival on 30 October 1884 in San Fernando, South Trinidad. The central question that the article poses is why was a peaceful

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religious festival perceived as a threat by the colonial government? Teelucksingh begins his inquiry by giving readers the historical background to the Hosay festival and describing how this festival was celebrated in Trinidad in the nineteenth century. He suggests that contrary to newspaper reports of the massacre, the real motivation for the brutal killings was the sense of fear that consumed the colonial authorities: the fear that solidarities among the working class, forged during the festivity, could constitute a stiff opposition to colonial rule in the region. Teelucksingh contends that the occasion of Hosay in San Fernando saw cohesion not just of the working class, but also of religious and caste groups. The festival witnessed the enthused participation of Hindus of all castes, including Brahmins and untouchables. Significantly, barriers of gender and age were also transcended during the Hosay festival. The killings of 1884 are therefore to be seen, Teelucksingh argues, as a response of the colonial government to the threat of growing racial and religious harmony among the colony's working classes. The ruling elites, afraid of losing their hold on the colonial subjects, took the occasion of the festival to thwart the possibility of resistance. Teelucksingh does not rest content with merely analysing the factors which led to the tragic killing of innocents; in the concluding section of the article, the author follows the series of repercussions that this act of unprovoked violence had on the colonial machinery in San Fernando.

In her article *Mexico and Cuba: From Popular Fronts to National Unity*, Caridad Massón Sena investigates, through a comparative framework, the various consequences of the fluctuating and frequently contradictory policies of the Communist International from 1935 to 1943. The Communist International created Popular Fronts (PFs) to confront fascism on a world scale. The fronts, as Sena tells us, were conceptualised as participatory spaces that would include the proletarian, peasant, petit-bourgeois and intellectual sections of society. The workability of this mode of organisation in Latin America where fascism had taken forms very different from Europe comprises the central concern in this article. Sena conducts her inquiry by detailing the playing out of two such policies in Mexico and Cuba, her chosen areas of study. She concludes that through these policies the Communist International sought to rouse proletarian revolutions; it is this impulse that underlay the introduction of the PF policy in dependent and neo-colonial countries like Mexico and Cuba. However, in suggesting general strategies and tactics towards this end, the Communist International did not pause to consider their applicability in the specific cultural and political contexts of Latin America. Sena argues further that an acknowledgment of the "relative autonomy of the Russian Revolution with respect to the worldwide revolutionary process" would have helped the Mexican and Cuban national-liberation movements to develop in accordance with their contextual needs.

The glaring absence of women in the academy, as leaders, researchers and students, has been a grave concern in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher learning. Percyslage Chigora and Tobias Gyzura's article *Gender Equality in Institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe: A Case of Midlands State University's Experience with Female Advancement, 2004-2007* examines recent efforts by a newly formed university to address this anomaly. Beginning with a historical background to gender disparities in Zimbabwe's higher-education sector, their paper goes on to analyse the various methods that Midlands State University has deployed to achieve the imperative of gender equity in higher education and their impact on recruitment of staff and student enrolment. The authors conclude that these policies seem to be achieving their desired goals only in quantitative terms. The present policies may be able to show some numbers reflecting an increase in women's participation in

the higher-education sector, but such data say very little about the new forms of discrimination that have emerged, for instance against men who come from less privileged backgrounds. The paper argues that the call for gender mainstreaming must take into account the many structural impediments to the realisation of the goal of gender equality. Achieving gender equality, therefore, is reliant on both collective and social responsibility, and efforts towards this end must include not only institutions of learning but also the government and the society at large.

This issue includes a report of 'Globalisation and Social Transformation: The Indian Experience' a conference organised by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, between 17 and 19 February 2012, as part of the institute's platinum jubilee celebrations. In the previous two decades, globalisation has increasingly been recognised as a powerful force crucially influencing relations between nation-states, social interactions, economies, culture, and human development. The conference brought together academics, policymakers, and practitioners in various sites of intervention to discuss the impact of globalisation on economic, social, and cultural institutions in India. Srishtee Sethi's report provides an overview of the key themes that were debated at the conference and summaries of the more interesting presentations.

Priya Sangameswaran's review of Utpal Sandesara and Tom Wooten's *No One had a Tongue to Speak: The Untold Story of One of History's Deadliest Floods*, reflects on the success with which the book records the forgotten story of one of the worst dam disasters in India. The book's achievement, Sangameswaran contends, lies in the complex narrative that it weaves by bringing together different aspects of the disaster – the decision to build the dam, the failure of the administration in anticipating disaster, the relief efforts undertaken for rehabilitation, and the inquiry commission formed to probe the disaster – and yet renders it in a style that is accessible and thought-provoking to a general readership. If the book leaves anything wanting, it is in its hesitance to establish connections between a particular dam-related calamity and the larger structural factors that contribute to human-induced disasters.

In this issue we have also included a brief catalogue of eight recently published books that we hope will be of interest to our readers. These titles range from Andean music in Japan, the politics of waiting in Argentina, literature and film in colonial South Korea, to the governance of climate change in the global order.

The editorial team has enjoyed putting together this edition of the magazine; we hope that the selection of pieces will engage our readers.

Editorial Team

Tragedy in Trinidad, 1884

This article examines the factors responsible for the tragic killing of Indians in the Hosay festival in Trinidad in October 1884. The Indians who participated in the festival belonged to the working class and comprised mainly Hindus. The oppressive action undertaken by the colonial authorities was due to the fear that religious, racial and class unity was occurring among certain sections of the society. Additionally, gender and age barriers were also transcended in the Hosay festival.

Jerome Teelucksingh

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The colony of Trinidad and Tobago experienced one of its darkest days when a grim scene unfolded on Thursday 30 October 1884 in San Fernando in South Trinidad. What were the real historical facts behind this event in 1884? Have newspapers of the 1880s, commentators and researchers been subjective and prejudiced in their interpretations of all that occurred then? What were the inter-related economic, cultural and political factors that caused this national tragedy?

Origins of Hosay

There is a need to examine the Hosay or Muharram festival since many may be unaware of the activities surrounding this annual festival which is celebrated worldwide by millions of Muslims. The Hosay festival re-enacts the historical events which led to the deaths of Prophet Mohammed's two grandsons-Hassan and Hussain. After Prophet Mohammed died in 632 A.D. there was a struggle for power. The result was the death of both men. Hassan was killed by poison in 669 A.D. and Hussain was killed in battle in present-day Iraq in 680 A.D.[1] The devotees and faithful supporters of the two slain grandsons believed that both men were martyrs. This was the beginning of a major schism in Islam. The supporters of the grandsons were referred to by Muslim detractors as 'Shi'ites' or 'Shias'. The opponents of the Shias referred to themselves as Sunnis or orthodox believers in the Prophet. The Shia commemorative festival of the martyrdom of Hassan and Husain, i.e. Muharram, lasts for ten days and ends with an elaborate street procession. The festival begins on the evening before the first month in which there is the sighting of a new moon.

Major Islamic denominations in Trinidad and Tobago – the Trinidad Muslim League (TML) and Anjuman Sunnat-ul Jamaat (ASJA) – do not endorse or observe Hosay. Mufti Waseem Khan, of the Dar-ul Uloom in Trinidad and Tobago, neither accepts Hosay as a religious festival nor views it as conducive to the teachings of Islam. In an article entitled 'Hosay - A Totally Un-Islamic Celebration', Khan argues, 'everything associated with this festival contradicts the teachings as well as the spirit of Islam. The beating of the drums, the stick fight, the usage of intoxicants, the dancing and prancing on the streets, and all the other acts of hosay have been totally condemned in Islamic teachings'.[2] Furthermore, in Trinidad and other parts of the world, orthodox Muslims have tended to distance themselves from the annual 'Muharram mourning' or 'Muharram procession' in which paraders or mourners inflict wounds upon themselves by striking their bodies with swords, knives and chains.

What is the Correct Title?

Numerous labels have been attached to the event and the incident involving the cold-blooded killing of the participants. In the second half of the nineteenth century, newspaper reports, locals and officials referred to 'Hosay' as either the Coolie Carnival, Hosein Festival, Coolie Hosein, Temiterna Festival, Hoosay, Mohurrum Festival, Hose or Madrasse Festival.

After 30 October 1884, there were also various terms used to describe the tragic event. The Royal Commissioner's Report of 1885, conducted by Sir Henry Norman, (also known as the Norman Commission) officially called it 'The Coolie Disturbances in Trinidad at the Mohurrum festival'.[3] The *Berbice Gazette*, a newspaper from nearby British Guiana (present-day Guyana), in November 1884 labelled it 'The Coolie Massacre in Trinidad'. The *Port-of-Spain Gazette* dubbed it 'The Hosein Calamity'.

Academics have sought to formulate a term which best captures the historical event. In 1983, Kenneth Parmasad in his master's thesis referred to the event as the 'Hosea Riots'. In 1988, Kelvin Singh in his seminal work *Bloodstained Tombs* referred to it as 'The Muharram Massacre of 1884'. Furthermore, Singh also referred to the tragic day as 'Martyrs' Day'.

Observance of Hosay in Trinidad

How was this festival celebrated in Trinidad during the nineteenth century? By this time it had gradually developed into a national event. Hosay was also celebrated in St. James near Port-of-Spain in North Trinidad. The celebration seemed to have been associated with unruly behaviour. For instance, in 1859 there was a report of 'boisterous parades in Port-of-Spain and a riot at St. Joseph'.[4]

In the late nineteenth century St. James was known as 'Coolie Town' or 'Peru Village'. The

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geographical location of St. James could explain the absence of a violent confrontation. Port-of-Spain was not the central meeting place for the processions. The procession took the route to the grounds in St. Clair and then to Peru Bay which was part of the Gulf of Paria.[5] It is possible that the Indians in St. James were more aware of the brute force of the colonial police and more intimidated by them, than were the Indians in South Trinidad with respect to the regulations which sought to restrict their movement.

After the massacre in 1884 the celebration of Hosay fizzled out in San Fernando. The fear of another massacre and more injuries remained in the minds of many who witnessed the event. The 1884 massacre in San Fernando was also responsible for the growth of the festival in St. James. There were some small observances in rural areas but these ended eventually. The grand finale of the procession culminated in San Fernando. This was due to the vast hinterland of sugar estates.

The overwhelming majority of the participants in this religious celebration were simple, working-class Indians from the sugar estates. These indentured labourers were employed for a specific time – usually five years under the indentureship system. These East Indians worked on estates at Jordan Hill, Tarouba, Petit Morne, Union Hall, Bien Venue, Corinth, Philippine, Cupar Grange and Palmyra. In 1881 there were 48,820 Indians in Trinidad who comprised 31.8 per cent of the colony's population.[6]

Hindus constituted the majority of the participants. According to Singh, 'Hindus participated in the construction of the tazias, the processions, the drumming and the ritual mock battles, which occasionally turned out to be serious'.[7] The occasion also provided a great release for all those who participated. It was one of the few days in the year that these labourers could get away from the toil of plantation life and participate in the procession wholeheartedly.

Other participants in the Hosay included free Indians who had completed their indentured contracts, and the working-class Africans. These Africans were descendants of ex-slaves who once worked on the sugar estates under the traumatic and oppressive slavery system which ended in 1838.

It was in the streets of San Fernando that thousands witnessed the magnificently decorated tazias or tadjahs which were in the shape of a truncated pyramid, built on a bamboo framework and covered with coloured paper. In 1857 an article in the *Trinidad Sentinel* referred to the tadjahs as 'paper-decorated coolie castles' and the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* referred to them as 'locomotive temples'.[8] The flags and drums are symbolic of those used in wars in the seventh century. On the sides of the tadjahs were colourful and elaborate designs. The red and green half-moons are representative of the death of both Hassan and his brother Hussain. The colours are also significant as red represented the blood of Hussain that was shed at Karbala and green for the poisoning of Hassan.

These tadjahs represented the Prophet's two grandsons and occupied considerable space in the procession. Each sugar estate would produce its own tadjah and would compete with other estates for precedence, trying to outshine others during the procession.

On the final day of the celebration almost a dozen tadjahs would be drawn in slow procession and eventually disposed into the sea off the San Fernando jetty. Some of the tadjahs were thrown into ponds in the estates. There was a pond at Sir Norman Lamonte Estate at Palmiste and another at Vistabella where today there is a street known as 'Pond Street'.

Factors Contributing to the Explosion of 30 October 1884

Any form of solidarity among the working class created fear among the government officials and estate owners in Trinidad. The elites were accustomed to maintaining power by their 'divide and rule' strategies. From the beginning of indentureship in 1845, the managers, overseers and estate owners of British, French and Scottish extraction, who were a minority, always lived in fear of an uprising involving united Africans and Indians. Thus both the government and estate owners were content in ruling a fragmented and polarised society. The upper class desired only economic gain and political power and thus refused to bridge the cultural, linguistic and racial divisions separating the Indians and Africans.

However, the medium of culture, particularly the Hosay, threatened the ruling elite. Why did a religious, and seemingly peaceful, festival pose a threat to colonial authorities? Firstly, this occasion was a crucible of religious and working class unity. Hindus of all castes including Brahmins and untouchables were present. There were also some Muslims and Indo-Christians (including Presbyterians, Anglicans and Roman Catholics), who were not only onlookers but participated in the festivity. Indeed, Hosay attracted a

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wide cross-section of the population including a few curious White estate owners who were onlookers. Singh noted, 'Negroes often helped to carry the tazias on their shoulders and some participated in the drumming, while many more joined the people gathering in the main towns to witness the annual spectacle'.[10]   These Africans usually lived near many of the estates and belonged to various Christian denominations: Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists and Roman Catholics.

Others of the plantation diaspora, such as the Chinese and Portuguese, would have also been onlookers of the Hosay and aware of its preparations. The Chinese with their stores in the villages provided material such as string and coloured paper for the tadjahs. The absence of these ethnic minorities as participants in the Hosay reflects a society in which mutual distrust existed among groups. Also many were cautious of leaving their cultural cocoons.

Gender and age barriers were also transcended. African and Indian women were present in the procession. Women, especially those of the Shia sect, were present in the procession and usually surrounded the tadjahs. However, there was not a large contingent of women. This was due to the conservative upbringing of most Hindu and Muslim women who opted to remain in the barracks to avoid public exposure. The presence of children and youths in the procession was a normal feature. Young sons, brothers and nephews often accompanied the older men.

In retrospect, 1884 provided a golden opportunity for the white ruling class to sabotage what they interpreted as a growing racial and religious/cultural harmony among the colony's working class. The white rulers were afraid of losing their power.

There were long-term factors which culminated in this confrontation between the Hosay celebrants and the police in 1884. Firstly, the depression in the sugar industry in the 1880s had negatively impacted plantation labour, resulting in a reduction of both wages and work days. Dissatisfaction in field labour had exploded in strikes, and though limited to a few estates, this was not without justification. In addition to deplorable living conditions in estate barracks, planters manipulated the statutory minimum-wage agreement of 25 cents for indentured workers, by lengthening and increasing tasks for the same wage.[11] The disturbances on the estates in the 1880s indicated that pacifist strategies of protest such as absenteeism and faked illness had given way to confrontation in defiance of injustices by employers. Between 1882 and 1884 there were 25 strikes.[12] Seven occurred in 1882, six in 1883 and twelve in 1884. These moments of unrest on the estates ought to be understood against a background of oppression which was maintained through strict labour regulations, police harassment and judicial partiality.[13]

Secondly, the Africans in their Canboulay celebrations of 1881, 1883 and 1884 had clashed with the police leading to the banning of the Canboulay night processions.[14] Thirdly, in 1882 an ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council. This was a result of a petition in 1881 presented to the governor by 107 Muslims who requested, on religious grounds, that the Hosay festival be stopped. This ordinance gave the governor the power to regulate the processions of immigrants.

Finally on 30 July 1884 the issuing of an oppressive piece of legislation by J. Scott Bushe, the colonial secretary, banned non-Indians from participating in the festival and also prohibited the procession from entering San Fernando. Among the ten regulations were:

- No such procession will be allowed to enter the precincts of the towns of Port-of-Spain or San Fernando, nor will any such procession be allowed to use or cross any high road or public road except on the express permission in writing of the stipendiary magistrate of the district through which the procession shall pass.
- Immigrants not residing on plantations may, with the consent of the proprietor or manager of any plantation and on the written authority of the stipendiary magistrate of the district, be permitted to join the immigrants residing on any plantation for the celebration of this festival, but they will not be permitted to bring any tadjah into such plantations.
- No hakka sticks or other offensive weapons or torches or fire sticks shall be carried by any immigrant in any such procession on any high road or public road.
- None other than an immigrant or the descendants of immigrants shall take part in any such procession or in any way interfere with such procession.

The last regulation stated that only immigrants or their descendants could participate in Hosay. Indeed the association of Africans with the Indian festival of Muharram created further uneasiness for the ruling

elite because 'there was now the added fear that Negroes joining the Muharram would carry over the confrontational spirit of the Carnival to the Indians and challenge the White authority structure'.[15] Additionally, non-estate residents had to obtain permission from a manager and stipendiary magistrate to join the procession. These non-estate residents included free Indians who were former indentured labourers.

The government and estate owners feared the rhythm of the drums in the festival. Since the days of slavery there was always a fear of these 'talking drums' that were being used as a medium of communication. In 1884, there was uneasiness among planters who feared the drums would be used to agitate the crowds. Thus, it was no surprise that in 1884 the government banned sticks, torches or firesticks and other offensive weapons from the celebration.

Ken Parmasad argued that the purpose of these 1884 regulations was 'to isolate the Hosea on the plantations, to rip the militant heart out of celebrations and… to deny the Indians an important forum to express their frustrations and discontent thereby suppressing them both culturally and politically'.[16] It is debatable as to whether Parmasad is accurate in claiming that the political sentiments of Indians were affected. Indians did not possess voting rights at that time. Parmasad elaborated on the political ramifications of the massacre, '[p]olitically it manifested itself in a demonstration of greater self-confidence, a greater sense of independence and self-assuredness'.[17]

On that fateful day in October 1884, there were three different processions heading for San Fernando, each with approximately 900-1000 persons. There was a heavy police presence at the entrance of the three routes into San Fernando. Firstly, police forces were stationed at the Pointe-a-Pierre and St. Joseph road junction. They were expecting a procession from Couva. Newspaper reports indicated that the celebrants were allowed to throw their tadjahs into Tarouba Bay and Guaracara River.

The massacres occurred at the Mon Repos (French words meaning 'My Rest') and Cipero entrances into San Fernando between 2.30 pm and 3.30 pm which is close to the present site of the police station. Labourers from Pointe-a-Pierre, Marabella and Tarouba would have to pass through Vistabella and later converge at Mon Repos.[18] At the Mon Repos junction of the Circular and Prince Town roads, police were stationed and despite efforts by Indian shopkeepers and stipendiary magistrates, the procession continued. After the stipendiary magistrate read the Riot Act, the police proceeded to fire on the celebrants. The second massacre occurred at the entrance to Cipero Street where a contingent of police was deployed. Labourers from Penal, Debe and Picton would have converged at this site. After the reading of the Riot Act the police were given instructions to fire at the participants.

Responses and Revulsion

The state found an appropriate occasion to invoke its authority with armed forces during these Muharram celebrations in October 1884 when sixteen Indians were killed and more than 100 wounded in San Fernando, some of whom were treated at the Coolie Hospital which was later known as the San Fernando General Hospital. Some of the wounded also included Africans. Not surprisingly, there was an official attempt to minimise casualties and a government report indicated that only twelve persons died. It was obvious that the government's motive was to intimidate and inflict on the Indians 'a bloody lesson in obedience'.[19]

From the early 1880s many concerns of actions and plans were used by the authorities which 'were to culminate in the repression, though not complete elimination, of the celebration'.[20] After the cowardly act of firing on an unarmed and defenceless crowd, the colony's security forces sought to justify their actions. In providing evidence to the Norman Commission, Captain Arthur Baker, Inspector Commandant of Police, indicated that this was a well-planned assault. Baker recounted that he left Port-of-Spain for San Fernando with seventy-two armed police and twenty soldiers. Two warships – *H.M.S. Dido* and *H.M.S. Flamingo* – were stationed in San Fernando, ready to lend assistance to the police. Baker claimed that persons in the crowd had hacker sticks and were in a state of great excitement, rushing forward with the intention of breaking their ranks.

A letter from J.E. André, a sympathetic Trinidad-born white, to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society claimed, '[t]he just demands of the coolies were treated with contemptuous indifference'. André expressed surprise that the response was 'a force of police, soldiers and marines… concentrated

near the town of San Fernando'.[21] Such a response from a white man is a good indicator that not all whites were supportive of the dastardly acts perpetrated by the government against a segment of the working class.

During that era, the Hosay festival was considered pagan or heathen by the Christian authorities and planters. They wanted an opportunity to suppress a celebration by non-Christians. Indeed to be properly socialised within a Christian environment, one of the strategies was to eliminate foreign festivals and cultures.

After the massacre, Rev. John Morton (a Canadian missionary and founder of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad), testified before the Norman Commission and said '[n]othing would have stopped the procession but actual force, and the firing was absolutely necessary. I think the Government was quite right in issuing the orders concerning the regulation of the Hosea procession….'[22] Morton also added that during this occasion the Indians smoked ganja and drank rum. Singh described Rev. Morton as a 'narrow-minded zealot' and an 'obnoxious clergyman'.[23] However, such an assessment of Morton is too harsh. Morton would have felt some form of revulsion to know that recent Presbyterian converts were participating in this non-Christian festival but there were more serious underlying factors. It seemed that Morton had to play along with the farce of the commission, because the government provided financial assistance to Presbyterian churches and Canadian Mission Indian (CMI) schools and more importantly allowed Canadian missionaries to enter the colony. Also, the planters allowed the missionaries to visit the barracks and preach to the Indians.

Undoubtedly, the brutal lesson of 30 October 1884 was intended for the colony's entire working class including the Africans who dared to defy the police when there were official attempts to suppress the Canboulay celebrations. The massacre of 1884 epitomised the ruthlessness of these colonial overlords, both political and economic, in responding to threats, real or perceived, to the established social structure of the colony. It can also be undoubtedly said that the tragic events of 1884 created a ripple effect which undermined colonial power to some extent and perhaps constituted one of the factors that contributed to the abolishing of indentureship.

1. For more information see Frank J. Korom, *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2002.
2. Mufti Waseem Khan, "Hosay - A Totally unIslamic Celebration", http://www.darululoomtt.org/articles13.shtml. Accessed on 1 December 2011.
3. It has also been referred to as the Norman Commission of Enquiry.
4. Donald Wood, *Trinidad in Transition,* Oxford University Press, London, 1968, p. 152.
5. Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884,* Macmillan Publishers, London, 1988, p. 31.
6. "Hosay Riots", *Sunday Newsday,* 24 September 2000.
7. Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs,* p. 6.
8. "The Trinidad Sentinel 6 August 1857", *Port-of-Spain Gazette,* 13 July 1859.
9. Among the persons killed in the tragedy were Hindus and five Muslims. Among the injured were one Christian, Hindus and nineteen Muslims. See Prabhu P. Mohapatra, *The Politics of Representation in the Indian Labour Diaspora: West Indies, 1880-1920.* http://www.indialabourarchives.org/publications/prabhu2.htm. Accessed on 1 December 2011.
10. Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs,* p.7. See also Chapter 5 in Neil A. Sookdeo, *Freedom, Festivals and Caste in Trinidad After Slavery: A Society in Transition,* Xlibris, Indiana, 2001.
11. Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962,* Heinemann, London, 1981, p.107.
12. Kenneth Parmasad, "The Hosea Riots of 1884 (Trinidad)," M.A. thesis, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, p. 43. 1983.
13. See Jerome Teelucksingh, "The Contribution of Labour to the Social and Political Development of Trinidad and Tobago 1897-1950," Ph.D. dissertation, University of the West Indies, Trinidad, 2004, p. 15.
14. Canboulay was the procession of lighted torches associated with Carnival. The government sought to

prohibit the festival which produced social disorder.

15. Singh *Bloodstained Tombs,* p. 15. See also Marion O'Callaghan, "The Hosay Massacre and colonial police," Newsday, 2 November 2009.

16. Parmasad, "Hosea Riots" p. 35.

17. Ibid., p. 48.

18. Interview with Louis Homer, San Fernando, 26 October 2006.

19. Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs* p.17.

20. Ibid., p. 8.

21. Ibid., p. 97.

22. Ibid., p. 133.

23. Kelvin Singh, "The Hosay Massacre in San Fernando- A Centenary Review," pp. 12-13.Unpublished paper, no date.

Mexico and Cuba:
From Popular Fronts to National Unity

The essay summarises the results of *Comintern and Communism in Mexico and Cuba: Comparative Analysis,* a research work recently concluded with a Sephis fellowship. Various consequences of the implementation of shifting and contradictory policies of the Communist International from 1935 to 1943 are examined.

Caridad Massón Sena

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The creation of Popular Fronts (PFs) was the tactic favoured by the Communist International to achieve unity in order to confront fascism worldwide. The fronts were conceived as spaces for the participation and struggle of proletarian, peasant, petit-bourgeois and intellectual sections. They first achieved positive results in France in 1934. So the fronts were definitely adopted the following year during the seventh Comintern Congress.

This mode of organisation and action, which could be turned into the centre of Communist activity in Europe, did not work comparatively well in Latin America, where the infiltration of fascism had taken other forms. Nevertheless, despite its Eurocentric approach, the idea of a PF was beneficial, since it allowed the individual organisations to progressively abandon the sectarian tactic of 'class versus class'. Such an approach had precluded alliances with those political groups that did not accept their tenets; when it was abandoned, scope for work with the reformist unions and bourgeois parliaments opened up.

From that moment on, the Mexican and Cuban communist parties began once again to employ combative methods which were more flexible and appropriate to their needs. This original conception, though, was afterwards modified in keeping with Soviet foreign-policy interests. This produced very complex and contradictory results, not always favourable to their respective liberation programmes.

Two Parties, Two Contexts

Figure 1: Lázaro Cárdenas, President of Mexico (1934-1940) greets the multitude.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Mexico and Cuba had both been nation-states, but they showed remarkable economic, political, social and cultural differences. The former was 17.5 times larger than the Caribbean island, had a lot more natural resources and five times its population. Its complex national structure integrated dozens of culturally and linguistically differentiated communities; there was a marked contrast between rural and urban areas, and motley production relations, with a predominance of capitalist ones. Cuba, on the other hand, with a higher concentration of population, whose origins were also heterogeneous, had been able to consolidate a strong national identity in the midst of a capitalist dependent economy.

Both countries had been Spanish colonies and victims of the expansionist policy of the United States. The US had snatched vast areas of Mexico's territory and taken possession of important branches of its economic patrimony. In the case of Cuba, they had alienated a significant part of its sovereignty and vital production and service branches. However, the Mexican bourgeoisie had proven to be more consistent in the defence of its national interests than the Cuban oligarchy, completely subordinated to the US metropolis.

The Mexican Communist Party (Partido Comunista Mexicano or PCM) was founded and became consolidated in the midst of a revolutionary and post-revolutionary democratic-bourgeois process. It tried to influence the intense transformations that were taking place in order to become the vanguard in the struggle for social justice. Some Comintern emissaries participated in its institutionalisation process, but, in general, during its first five years, it developed a certain degree of autonomy. Nevertheless, since 1924 it adopted the Bolshevisation policy which demanded of the communist parties that they adopt the Russian model, which included an anti-intellectual pro-proletarian structure, a very strong discipline and few possibilities for internal democracy.

The Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba or PCC) was founded around the same time, coinciding with the beginnings of Gerardo Machado's dictatorship.[1] The organisation became

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immediately involved in a broad revolutionary movement that ended with the tyrant fleeing the country in 1933 and the institution of a regime which tried to implement popular and anti-imperialist measures, the *Gobierno de los 100 Días* (Hundred Days' Government).[2] Nevertheless, this government, due to its left-sectarian position, lost favour with the PCC and the party chose to oppose the government, thus contributing to its fall.

In the crucial year of 1934, while the International was undertaking its strategic and tactical reorientation, a new tyranny was established in Cuba. In Mexico, the nationalist General Lázaro Cárdenas was installed at the head of a nationalist government.[3]

Adumbration of Two Policies
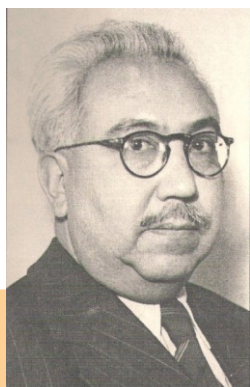
Mexico

Figure 2: Hernán Laborde, General Secretary of the Mexican Communist Party.

Since its inception, the Cárdenas government tried to 'vindicate the state's role as the ruler of national life, subordinating all political and production forces'[4], endeavoured to reinforce the local industry and bourgeoisie, and worked towards improving the margins of gain. To do so, it needed mass support. As such, it increased workers' salaries and supported some strikes, granted lands to peasants, and appeared to be friendly towards unions and the PCM.

In the beginning, the Party could not figure out what was happening. Its secretary general, Hernán Laborde,[5] declared that the government was the main source of fascist peril. All the same, when in June 1935 the president backed the workers' demands and declared that he would not repress strikes, Laborde started to change his opinion on the matter.[6]

The Mexican delegates to the seventh Congress of Comintern were incriminated for the Party's actions and, after re-analysing the situation, they conceded that their policy had been erroneous. The administration was classified as national-reformist with leftist positions, and it was agreed that the Party's response should be to maintain good relations with its main representatives. The communists made a commitment to establish the Anti-Imperialist Popular Front (Frente Popular Antimperialista or FPA) with workers, peasants, youths, students, women, Catholics and indigenous people.[7]

Step by step, they started to apply the new guidelines. In November, the Central Committee (CC) decided that the Front should include Cárdenas's Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party). Months later, Laborde declared that the struggle for socialism was not one of the party's priorities, and that it instead favoured a national, democratic and anti-imperialist process that would reignite the 1910 Revolution.[8]

To favour unity, the communists helped create in 1936 the Workers' Confederation of Mexico (Confederación de Trabajadores de México or CTM) under the leadership of Vicente Lombardo Toledano[9] and accepted the demands of a right-wing group that was trying to control the key positions in the new organisation. Despite the Confederation's agreement to contribute to the creation of the FPA, its right-wing members created obstacles, by means of manipulation and corruption, while Toledano mediated in the conflict.

The sixth Congress of the PCM, held in January 1937, evaluated in positive terms the results of the policy change as well as the president's position with respect to the Spanish Republic, while condemning his decision to grant political asylum to the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky. It agreed to keep the

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Party's independence and to provide Cárdenas conditional support.[10]

Lombardo Toledano, who felt uncomfortable with the way his relations with communists were evolving and foresaw new problems inside the CTM, wrote a letter to the International with a copy sent to the secretary general of the US Communist Party, Earl Browder. He complained that the PCM was not correctly implementing the FP principle and was misbehaving inside the Confederation.[11]

As soon as the letter reached Browder, he summoned a meeting — chaired by himself and the Argentine leader Vittorio Codovilla — in which he instructed Laborde to 'keep the unity with the CTM at all costs'.[12] This instruction was accepted by the CC's plenary held on June 1937 and was extended to Cárdenas, following Browder's and Codovilla's injunction.

The nationalisation of foreign oil companies in March 1938 increased the people's support for Cárdenas. Besides, the president had declared his aim of making his party an organisation representative of four social sectors: Proletarians, peasants, the popular sector at large and the military. Thus the Party of the Mexican Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Mexicana or PRM) was founded. The PC recognised it as a genuine PF.

During a communist convention in the US, Laborde praised Cárdenas's performance (the nationalisations, land grants, educational advances). He pointed out that the only black spot in his trajectory was the way he was dealing with Trotskyism.[13] He believed that Trotsky was isolated and politically defeated.[14]

In early 1939 participants in the seventh Congress of the PCM considered that the policy of 'unity at all costs' had been correct, and that it explained the increase in the number of party members. A few months later, several of its leaders asked Browder for advice regarding Trotsky. The possibility of an assassination was already being discussed, and they were against it.

Figure 3: El Machete, official newspaper of PCM.

When the signing of a non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR became known, the CC publicly supported it, but decided not to cooperate with the Soviet secret services in the organisation of the Russian politician's murder. This was one of the reasons why the International sent Codovilla to organise an extraordinary congress aimed at 'correcting the Party line'.

On 14 December, after criticising the Party's inability to take advantage of the revolutionary period in order to increase its influence, the Argentine leader declared that the organisation was plagued with Trotskyism, espionage, corruption and indiscipline. He accused it of not making a public and constant defence of the USSR and of its failure to include the struggle against Trotskyism as a priority in the congress's agenda.[15] Several members of the CC were accused of opportunism, corruption, and passivity. Codovilla then proceeded to set up a purging committee which eventually decided to expel the accused members and also to displace the veteran leaders Hernán Laborde and Valentín Campa for their lack of cooperation on the detection of enemy agents and for open self-criticism. Two weeks later, Dionisio Encina, a worker, became the ad interim secretary general.

In the meeting held in March 1940, the party concluded that Laborde and Campa had followed a sectarian line when Cárdenas had started his reforms and had later adopted the 'unity at all costs' line, which had driven them to right-wing opportunism. Actually, they were only following the orders of the Comintern. The Party's conclusions favoured the adoption of repressive and absurd methods that led to a progressive weakening of the Party.

These changes were taking place at the same time as the preparations for Trotsky's murder were underway. On 24 May 1940, a commando attacked his home, but failed. Less than three months later, on 20 August, the homicide finally took place, at the hands of a Catalonian: Ramón Mercader del Río.[16] The Mexican Party categorically denied that any of its members had participated in the attempts against Trotsky's life.

By this time, Cárdenas's progressive measures had become slower and shallower, but both the CTM and the PC decided to vote for the official candidate, Manuel Ávila Camacho. The exhaustion of the revolutionary current inside the ruling class had led to a strengthening of the reactionary forces.

In April 1941, when war was knocking at the doors of Moscow, the USSR proposed the need to create National Anti-Fascist Fronts and dissolve the International. With USSR under attack, the PCM came to be directly advised by Browder and the secretary general of the Cuban Communist Party, Blas Roca.[17]

On 8 December, the Mexican communist leadership met to evaluate the consequences of the Japanese aggression against the US base at Pearl Harbour. Blas Roca, who was also present, emphasised the danger that threatened all countries if the Nazis won in the end. He proposed to issue a document detailing the need for an anti-fascist unity. In the assembly, problems of an internal order were also addressed; several participants criticised Dionisio Encina's performance, but Roca tried to avoid a new crisis by exhorting them to give him a chance to learn how to do his job.[18]

The main goal of the National Conference held in 1942 was to analyse the tasks facing communists during the war. A National Committee of Struggle against Fascism was created in order to attract all the patriotic forces ready to defend the country. However, in 1943 it became evident that the results of the Party's work were quite poor and that its membership and influence had dwindled. An issue around which there were numerous discrepancies was the proposal to accept Laborde and Campa back. Blas Roca opposed the motion.[19]

In mid-1943, the CC approved the setting up of a joint committee with Lombardo Toledano to discuss the creation of a new Marxist unified party. However, the committee's task was never fulfilled, since other internal divergences and new expulsions gave birth to a renewed crisis.

After the dissolution of the Comintern, the Mexican communists agreed to support the agreements arrived at in Tehran by the Allies, and to continue supporting the anti-fascist unity policy, now more influenced by the class-conciliation ideas posed by Browder, who thought that once the World War ended, relations of cooperation and peaceful coexistence would reign among all countries.

Cuba

Figure 4: Fulgencio Batista (center), Commanding Officer of the Cuban Army.

In early 1934, the army, headed by Fulgencio Batista, with the support of the US embassy in Havana, deposed the Hundred Days' Government and placed on the presidential chair the bourgeois politician Carlos Mendieta. Immediately, repression and assassinations became daily events, the unions were shattered, but even so, rebelliousness mounted. The University of Havana became a place for its articulation: A students' strike was organised in early March 1935. Soon after, protest became generalised, but as no conditions existed for its triumph, it was crushed by the regime. Two months later, with the assassination of Antonio Guiteras, all revolutionary perspectives came to an end in the island.

After the seventh Congress of the Comintern, the PCC declared that the Cuban revolution was in a stage of struggle for real independence and against imperialism, and that a broad PF should be created

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with the participation of the national bourgeoisie and democratic landowners.[20] The bourgeoisie should not be considered a monolith; instead, the different tendencies should be acknowledged. This line was not shared by all the party members and leaders.

During this period, a number of nationalist organisations coexisted, but the divergences among them prevailed over their affinities. So in December 1935, the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano) and Young Cuba (Joven Cuba) signed a pact aimed at sparking an insurrection, but excluded the communists. On the other hand, the Revolutionary Left (Izquierda Revolucionaria or IR) and the Anti-imperialist Cuban Revolutionary Organisation (Organización Revolucionaria Cubana Antimperialista or ORCA) exhorted them to create a single combat organisation, but they did not accept, arguing that they had a historical mission to accomplish.

Figure 5: Blas Roca, General Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party.

When in January 1939, José Miguel Gómez, the candidate of the civilian sections, won the elections, the PC called on the masses to fight against the army and to demand a new Constitutional Assembly. Meanwhile, in July, representatives of several left-wing organisations met with the Communist Party in Miami in order to create a National Liberation Front which never came to be. Some days later, the Party was able to establish direct contact with the Comintern and ratified that the Cuban revolution was in a national-liberation stage and that Batista was its main enemy; so it would try to isolate and outmanoeuvre him. It was then that the creation of an auxiliary party with electoral objectives was authorised.[21] At the end of the year, Batista was able to achieve the removal of President Gómez and put Federico Laredo Bru — a politician he could easily manipulate — in his place.

The eight Plenary of the CC, held in 1937, called for the creation of the FP not only with the revolutionary sectors but also with traditional political parties, and started to organise its electoral party, Revolutionary Union (Unión Revolucionaria or UR). Later that year, the communists met with the Chinese leader Van Ming, who approved of the strategic and tactical positions adopted, but expressed his doubts about the fact that the communists were considering Batista the greatest threat. To illustrate his analysis he used the example of his own country, where the nationalist forces headed by Chiang Kai Shek had allied themselves with the communists.[22]

Figure 6: Flier used by the Communist Revolutionary Union Party.

While the left-wing forces continued to split into a variety of organisations and engaged in fierce political and ideological debates, Batista worked ceaselessly to gain a social base for a future presidential

candidacy. To this end, he used a mixture of tolerance, demagogy and bribery, distributed lands among the peasants, granted amnesty to three thousand political prisoners, promised to convene a Constitutional Assembly, and authorised proletarian demonstrations.

His attitude was evaluated by the PC on July 1938 as proof that it was possible to push the military leader away from the most reactionary forces and win a favourable position for the people. Cleverly, Batista responded by granting new concessions: He allowed the legalisation of the PCC and other opposition groups, the bargaining for collective work contracts, the repealing of the rules that forbade the holding of public events and the reconstruction of the national workers' movement.

In its January assembly, the Party declared fascism to be its main enemy. Thus it embraced the idea of implementing 'national unity without any exclusions' and an electoral alliance with the army chief, both for the elections to the Constitutional Assembly and the general elections. This position helped increase the Party's contradictions with the rest of the nationalist organisations.

On 11 February 1939, the PCC's secretary general and Colonel Batista met at the Cuban embassy in Mexico. Five days later, Batista was welcomed in Havana with a huge rally in which he was praised by the communists.

As the elections drew closer, the PCC and UR merged to form the Communist Revolutionary Union Party (Partido Unión Revolucionaria Comunista or PURC). It was August 1939 and the new party immediately and publicly supported the Russian-German pact of non-aggression which claimed that German imperialism favoured peace while the English and French governments were encouraging an arms race.

As a member of the Democratic Socialist Coalition (Coalición Socialista Democrática) headed by Batista, the PURC was able to elect six members to the Constitutional Assembly. In spite of the constant ideological disputes among left-wing representatives in the Assembly sessions, the 1940 Constitution was one of the most progressive in Latin America. The notion that the positive ends of the Constitution would be achieved by the passing of complementary laws drove the PURC to follow the path of legalism, increased its economistic trends and confirmed its decision to participate in the general elections as a member of the Coalition. In the end, it got elected eighty councilmen, ten representatives to the Chamber and two mayors. Now, it would start trying to force Batista to fulfil his programme. In the face of the risks of systemic corruption, it agreed that its representatives in the government would hand in their salaries so that the Party could put it to organisational use.

Though the PURC was not officially affiliated to the Comintern, it followed its guidelines; so after coming to know of the fascist attack on the USSR, it published a document explaining that the character of the war had changed and that it was necessary to join the anti-fascist block, organise compulsory military service, strengthen the coalition of the allied countries, and avoid interruptions of production so as not to affect the supplies for soldiers. It also proclaimed the foundation of the Anti-Fascist National Front.

All of these factors allowed the Party to increase its votes in 1942 and to have a minister in the Cabinet in 1943. Drugged by its achievements and enthusiasm for its new short-term goals, it lost sight of the essential boundaries that should have been taken into account in the coordination with bourgeois forces, used demagogy and unjustified acclaim and, above all, shunted to the background the revolutionary strategy aimed at gaining power, thus accepting Browder's conciliatory proposals.

Conclusion

Viewed from a global perspective, the Communist International tried to stimulate proletarian revolutions by issuing general strategies and tactics to be adopted in the most dissimilar contexts. From 1935 to 1937, it decreed that in dependent and neo-colonial countries like Mexico and Cuba, the Communist Parties should adopt the PF policy. Though the circumstances were not the same, the sense of unity those tactics generated was positive for both organisations since it paved the way for alliances with left-wing nationalist forces, until then considered enemies. The PCM granted President Cárdenas a conditional support and contributed through the unions to the consolidation of the workers' movement; meanwhile, in the midst of ferocious repression, the PCC, together with other political forces, drove the regime little by little towards democratic bourgeois channels. But neither the reactionaries nor some left-wing elements understood the reasons for such a shift, and in the face of the obstacles to a unified action, the Comintern pushed for

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collaboration at all costs. In Mexico, this strategy was called 'unity at all costs' while in Cuba it received the name of 'unity without exclusions'. They both generated inadequate alliances and even though their adoption allowed the communists to gain some ground, they contributed to make them follow the path of legalism, reformism and class conciliation.

In addition, the refusal of the Mexican Communist Party to get involved in Trotsky's assassination caused the removal of its main leaders in 1940. Beyond sectarianism, corruption and opportunism of the Central Committee headed by Laborde, the solutions imposed by the Comintern representatives were truly destructive and resulted in a crisis of big proportions within the organisation.

If the International had consciously acknowledged the relative autonomy of the Russian Revolution with respect to the worldwide revolutionary process and had allowed everybody to act in consequence, it would have probably been possible to avoid mistakes which have been elaborated here. And the Mexican and Cuban national-liberation movements would have developed in a manner better attuned to their immediate, contextual needs.

1. Gerardo Machado (1871-1939). Cuban President since May 1925. His government was characterised by a brutal repression of the opposition. He was deposed by a revolutionary strike on 12 August 1933.
2. The Hundred Days' Government was established after Machado's fall in September 1933. Its president was Professor Ramón Grau San Martín and one of its ministers was the revolutionary Antonio Guiteras, who implemented several laws of popular and anti-imperialist content. The government fell following a *coup d'état* in January 1934.
3. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río (1895-1970), a Mexican officer and politician who was president from 1934 to 1940.
4. Raúl Trejo, "Historia del movimiento obrero en México, 1860-1982", in Pablo González Casanova (ed.) *Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina*, V. 1, Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1984.
5. Hernán Laborde (1896-1955), a railroad worker, joined the PCM in 1925, and was its secretary general from 1930 to 1940.
6. *Ni con Calles ni con Cárdenas. Unidad de acción y lucha independiente del proletariado*, Mexico, 16 June 1935, p. 4.
7. "Informe sobre México para el Comintern", Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (RGASPI), 495, 17, 251, in Daniela Spenser, *"Unidad a toda costa": La Tercera Internacional en México durante la presidencia de Lázaro Cárdenas*, CIESAS, México, 2007, p. 183.
8. Gerardo Peláez Ramos, *El PCM durante el período de Lázaro Cárdenas*, unpublished, p. 32.
9. Vicente Lombardo Toledano (1894-1968), a teacher of socialist ideas who made an important contribution to the organisation of Mexican and Latin American workers.
10. "Resolución general adoptada por el VI Congreso Nacional del PCM", México, 1937, RGASPI, 495, 17, 205, Manuel Orozco Library, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), México.
11. "Carta de Vicente Lombardo Toledano a Alexander Losovsky", Mexico, 15 April 1937, RGASPI, 495, 108,198. Manuel Orozco Library, INAH.
12. Earl Browder, "Informe sobre el Partido Comunista de México al Sub-Comité del PC de los EEUU", 5 May 1937, RGASPI, 495, 108, 197, in Spenser, *"Unidad a toda costa"*, pp. 290-296.
13. "Discurso de Hernán Laborde en la Convención del PCEU", New York, 31 May 1938, RGASPI, 495, 108, 203, in Spenser, *"Unidad a toda costa"*, pp. 331-340.
14. Hernán Laborde, "Memorándum sobre México escrito para el Comintern", 1938, RGASPI, 495, 17, 212, in Spenser, *"Unidad a toda costa"*, pp. 340- 357.
15. Vittorio Codovilla, "Intervención en los trabajos preparatorios para organizar el Congreso Extraordinario del PC de M", México, 14 December 1939, RGASPI, 495, 17, 122, in Spenser, *"Unidad a toda costa"*, p. 414- 444.
16. Olivia Gall, "El papel del PCM y de Lombardo en la guerra del Kremlin, la Comintern y la GPU contra Trotsky", in Elvira Concheiro, Massimo Modonesi and Horacio Crespo (eds.), *El comunismo: otras miradas desde América Latina,* Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades de la UNAM, México, 2007, pp. 634-638.

17. Blas Roca was the pseudonym used by the Cuban professor and craftsman Francisco Calderius (1908-1987), who was Secretary General of the PCC from 1934 to 1961.

18. "Intervención de Blas Roca sobre los problemas organizativos en el Buró Político", Archivo Sánchez Cárdenas, Centro de Estudios del Movimiento Obrero y Socialista (CEMOS), pp. 1-2.

19. "México en la guerra justa de los pueblos, las tareas de los comunistas", 31 July, 1 and 2 August 1942, Archivo Sánchez Cárdenas, CEMOS.

20. Blas Roca, "Informe al VI Pleno del CC del PCC", 1935, in Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, Vol. 4, Part II, Pueblo y Educación, Havana, 1980, p. 13.

21. "Informe sobre la línea y actividad del P. a la luz de las decisiones de la IC", Archivo del Instituto de Historia de Cuba (AIHC), Fondo Primer Partido.

22. "La justeza de nuestra línea y las nuevas tareas fundamentales que se plantean a nuestro Partido", n.d., AIHC, Fondo Primer Partido.

Gender Equality in Institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe: A Case of Midlands State University's Experience with Female Advancement, 2004-2007

Gender equality is rapidly becoming a prerequisite in all spheres of life, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Institutions of higher learning have not been spared. The consistent lagging behind of women in leadership positions, academic positions and students enrolment in Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning has been the order of the day for quite some time. Recently there have been attempts to address this anomaly. This paper analyses Midlands State University's experience with the quest for gender equality. The paper highlights how the university has sought to bridge gender disparities that have been in existence in institutions of higher learning. It further tries to establish how much ground has been covered in the gender equality crusade vis-à-vis student enrolment and staff recruitment.

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Introduction

Issues of gender in institutions of higher learning, a matter of global importance, have been the subject of debate for some time. Of the major highlights has been the dominance of men in terms of enrolment into programmes as well as the staff, both administrative and academic. For long, old institutions have struggled in theory as well as in practical terms to achieve gender equality. To this end, newly created institutions have faced the same predicament as gender disparities have been in favour of men in all respects. In developing countries the gap has largely remained wide, given the adverse effects of economic and socio-cultural factors. Institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe have not been spared either, and the sprouting of a number of universities, both state and private, at the turn of the twenty-first century, has met same disparities in terms of gender. Using the case of Midlands State University, which came into being in 2000, the paper seeks to analyse the experiences with issues of gender inequality and the policies that were put in place to address these discrepancies. The overall effects (positive or negative) of the policies will be examined in greater detail with the intention of speculating on the future of female advancement in the institutions of higher learning, not only in Zimbabwe but also in other developing countries and in the world in general.

Conceptual Issues and Historical Background to Gender Equality in Higher Education

Pertinent conceptual issues for the purpose of this research centre around equality, advancement and higher education. In simple terms 'equalism' is a term used to refer to forms of advocacy of equal treatment for those concerned. Thus the equalists believe that society must be perfectly fair to everyone, in this case, irrespective of whether one is male or female. This becomes gender equality, where equalists seek to promote the rights of women and men equally. In practical and specific terms gender equality therefore refers to:

Promoting the equal participation of women and men in making decisions; supporting women and girls so that they can fully exercise their rights; and reducing the gap between women's and men's access to and control of resources and the benefits of development which are still out of reach for most women worldwide.[1]

Historically, the struggle for equality has its origins in the writings and practice of John Stuart Mill (1806-1893). Mill during his time as a member of the parliament became the first person to demand voting rights for women.[2]

Despite the longevity of the struggles for gender equality, realisation of the goal seems to remain far from being achieved. According to the Canadian Internatinal Development Agency, women continue to have fewer rights, lower education and health status, less income, and less access to resources and decision-making than men.[3]

The trends in some sectors, like higher-education, continue to be dominated by lack of gender equality and female advancement, despite calls to address this anomaly. As Mashingaidze rightly observed in relation to Zimbabwe: 'Most people in the Zimbabwean higher education sector seem aware of the need for gender equity and equality but reality on the ground proves otherwise. Women are grossly under-represented as students, lecturers and administrators. Most universities do not have clear-cut gender-mainstreaming policies. Some have affirmative action policies; but these appear to be mere policy frameworks which do not have any significant bearing on reality. There are no gender equity policies with reference to staff recruitment, retention and promotion, as well as staff development policies'.[4]

The historical background of gender disparities and bias in Zimbabw's education sector has well been articulated by Gudyanga and Chibaya. They have traced this history from the colonial period.[5] First, 'some education policies served the interests of the white male-dominated colonial socio-economic order. The colonial education system in the then Rhodesia did not have a specific policy for the education of women and girls.'[6] Secondly, 'the colonial education system had a policy of bottle-necking in the education of African children. Only 12.5% of all African children completing primary education could be

allowed to proceed to secondary education'.[7] In the end it is the women who were affected most, since socio-culturally, it is perceived as more beneficial to educate a male child than a girl child. In addition to these patriarchal attitudes, religious groups who started schools accessible to all foreign religions also had their negative impacts. For instance, Christianity and Islam introduced 'new patriarchal religious values, women sometimes lost opportunities to occupy important and high positions in society. Christianity is a very male-dominated religion such that women have to fight for leadership roles.'[8] In addition this comes out of the already-biased traditional society which is male dominated. Hence, the girl suffers from three cultures, i.e. traditional, Christianity and Islamic.

At independence the new government made efforts to restructure the education system. Its policy on education was first enunciated in the ZANU (PF) Party's 1980 Election Manifesto in which the ZANU (PF) government pledged to maintain a uniform educational system, abolish the distinction between African and European education, introduce free and compulsory primary and secondary education for all children regardless of race and above all, to abolish sex discrimination in the education system.[9]

These disparities at lower levels of education adversely affected gender equality at institutions of higher learning. At the time of independence, the number of female students at the University of Zimbabwe, the only university in the country at this time, was very low.[10] The explanation that women were less intelligent to tackle issues of higher learning was in itself a gross misrepresentation of facts, as the real causes stemmed from the education at lower levels which supplied higher education. The reasons for this have been alluded to earlier.

Theory and practice have remained at par for long to the extent that for the first four years into the new millennium the situation had remained grim in terms of achieving gender equality in institutions of higher learning. In fact, Mashingaidze observed that: 'Since the university also served as the training ground for future lecturers, over the years, women have continued to be underrepresented in the Zimbabwean higher education system as students, lecturers and administrators. Men have continued to predominantly occupy most of the executive posts, such as those of deans, librarians, bursars, registrars, pro-vice-chancellors and vice chancellors. Only two universities, namely the Zimbabwe Open University and the Women's University in Africa have female vice chancellors, of the more than a dozen universities in the country. At the Midlands State University, out of the fourteen executive posts, women occupy only three, with one being a librarian and the other two being executive deans. All the Directors are males and even the Deputy Bursar, Deputy Librarian and Deputy Registrar are also males. Resulting from such a scenario at nearly all the universities has been the introduction of a policy of affirmative action by the government'.[11]

Mashingaidze also captures aptly the policy discrepancies that emerged particularly from what was enunciated in theory and the realities that existed on the ground. According to him: '…in spite of affirmative action policies women still constitute less than a third of the student and teaching staff complements of most Zimbabwean universities. Enrolment figures aside, women are also much marginalised when it comes to leadership positions in student leadership bodies, such as Student Representative Councils, where they constitute less than 20%. The University of Zimbabwe only got its first female in a top post in 1997 with the election of the first female Secretary General Commence Muchena. In May 2004, Gladys Hlatswayo was appointed to the same position, becoming only the second female to occupy one of the top three posts. However, the need for mainstreaming was clearly shown when Muchena resigned from the post in April 1998 due to harassment by male students and lack of support from female students'[12].

In the 2004/5 academic year, the Midlands State University scored a first when it had the first female SRC president in any of the country's universities.[13] Such a situation in student politics is representative of the situation at the national level where politics has an androcentric face. National political space is heavily androcentric; with females who dare enter the political fray being viewed as acultural and odd in society. Furthermore, at these institutions, most females fall victim to male instigated harassment especially when they dress in a manner seen as unbecoming by their male counterparts.

Till 2004, the main observations have been 'women's increased access to schooling and extended years in education, the knowledge and skills they have acquired in school tend to reproduce rather than alter gender ideologies.'[14] Where strides have been made, though at a slow pace, situation arrived at is that female students are concentrated in the humanities with very few going for the hard/natural sciences. The historical factors of religion that affected lower education in the past have entered into higher education as well, where Christian universities like Solusi, Africa and Catholic universities still emphasise Christian values, which in turn enhance male dominance and female subordination. Thus certain degree programmes become gender discriminatory, while humanities and nursing professions are still dominated by women. Men on the other hand still dominate the sciences, especially the fields of medicine, engineering and architecture. This is perhaps the reason why the National University of Science and Technology, which began operating in 1991, saw an increase in enrolment figures from 1,268 in 1995 to 2,046 in 2000 (an increase of sixty per cent). The proportion of females to total enrolment, however, remained low at nineteen per cent.[15]

In essence, therefore, using the total national female population, the general situation was that women (both as students and staff) were clearly under-represented in the institutions of higher learning till 2004 and that included Midlands State University which came into existence in 2000.

The Midlands University's Experience

Noticing the disparities that have continued in terms of gender equality, the policy makers at Midlands State University formulated policies and took actions to address this perennial problem bedevilling institutions of higher leaning. This was done in areas of training, teaching, recruitment of staff and staff development. First, training programmes were designed to sensitise strategic staff in gender issues and mainstreaming as a way of avoiding resistance in policy implementation. Thus strategic staff that included heads of departments, deans and faculty administrators was trained in such areas as basic gender-awareness and sensitisation, gender analysis, gender planning, and the use of gender sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluation.[16]

Secondly, there was a move to introduce modules and programmes to encourage gender awareness particularly to students. This begun with the Midlands State University M.A. degree in Education which has a compulsory gender studies module. This enables all the teachers attending the programme to appreciate the fundamentals of gender issues.[17] The same faculty of education went on to introduce the Department of Gender Studies which offered a compulsory gender module, taught to all students enrolled in the university in level two semester one. The intention here was to sensitise every graduate from the university about gender issues.

In terms of student recruitment there has been an increase in the number of females enrolled in various degree programmes. This was made possible by reducing the number of points for females enrolling into various degree programmes. The diagram below represents the statistics.
Female Student Population Growth Percentages[18]

Academic Year	Female Student Population Portion
2000	31.22%
2001	32.22%
2002	37.95%
2003	33.59%
2004	35.67%
2005	38.18%
2006	41.98%
2007	42.36%

It is important to note that despite this phenomenal growth illustrated above, the female student population

has over the years mainly been increasing within the humanities stream. For example, by June 2006, the Faculty of Arts had secured a 56.8 per cent female student population, Education 50.4 per cent, Social Sciences 49.6 per cent and Natural Resources Management and Agriculture 40.7 per cent.[19] The Science and Technology Faculty still show a heavy skew in favour of male students. This gap in policy and action was identified and measures were soon put in place to address the anomaly.

A move was made to introduce a Bridging Programme for females in the natural sciences. Under this programme, females with the bare minimum of advanced level points, enabling them to enter university, underwent a one-semester course meant to bring them at par with their colleagues with higher points. If at the end of the semester they performed well, they were then free to join the programme of their choice in the University Faculty of Science and Technology.

In terms of staff composition the affected sector has been the academic sector and senior management. Out of the total strength of 500 academic staff, the number of females is only 120. The management instituted two main ways of solving this problem. First, recruitment was intentionally made biased towards women. Hereby, in an interview a woman is deemed worthy of selection in preference to a man scoring higher points, and is also offered employment for management and academic posts.

Secondly, for junior academic staff i.e. teaching assistance, bias was shifted towards female candidates and staff development fellowship were awarded to females to encourage them to join academia upon completion of their higher degree programmes.

The results of these policies seemed to be achieving their desired goals, however only in quantitative terms. The unintended policy outcomes are starting to surface in some respects and others are yet to surface. Once they do, the society at large ought to live with these or will have to design ways of circumventing them. The policies and actions have had their negative effects in enabling development of females, not only in these institutions, but the entire society at large. First, resistance came from those who entered the university with high points. These included female and male as well as those males who were left behind by their female counterparts with the same entry qualifications as themselves. These males viewed female students who acquired places at the institution through affirmative action as backdoor intruders. When these females sometimes fail some modules, or get low marks, lecturers also look down on them. The lecturers are not only male but those females who once competed fairly with their male counterparts before the introduction of affirmative action.

Secondly, what seems to have emerged is discrimination against males who come from less-privileged backgrounds. It is assumed that the girl child is worthy of receiving the help. At the same time the truth about affirmative action is that it tends to disregard, and in reality punishes, the disadvantaged boy child. It seems to deny or disregard that there are some males who also have shortcomings that would need to be addressed when they enter the university. For example, there are a number of boys from disadvantaged families or those from Child Headed Household whose performance could also have been affected by their circumstances. But no one seems to take note of these, or care for these students, and they are left to compete on an equal footing with their privileged counterparts. In some instances the females who are beneficiaries of affirmative action are actually better off compared to these disadvantaged males. In this regard, there is an element of marginalisation of the disadvantaged boy, simply because he is a male.

Thirdly, the increase in quantity with regard to female enrolment as well as recruitment has not translated to an increase in quality. Changing ratios towards parity however do not reflect lowering standards or quality either, or that discriminatory factors are embedded in the system. For instance, there is need to move further and examine the promotion of females to males who have been made to retake, repeat, and withdraw modules. There appears to be a disturbing trend that quite a sizable number of the female students admitted under affirmative action either drop out or record below-minimum performance in most of the courses. They cannot cope with the high standards expected of them in comparison to those who fare excellently in their work because they came to the university with good qualifications.

Furthermore, in societies like Zimbabwe, female academics are often torn between opposing career and family responsibilities. This results in added stress for women in workplaces. Family responsibilities

exist for these women as almost a second profession. Here, once the bride price has been paid, expectation of motherhood becomes central for a woman. Any failure in this task often results in societal punishments. In this light, it is hardly surprising why nearly half of the women who stay in academics remain either single, childless or divorced, raising the question of how work/family conflicts influence the choices women make.[20] This in turn raises an important issue because the university, more than any other place of employment, is highly influenced by the life outside of work, and are training grounds for future leaders. Universities therefore need to offer an effective model on how to balance family and career towards the betterment of the individual in particular and the entire society in general.

In addition, societal attitudes towards pregnancy and marriage continue to mean that some girls do not complete school because they get embroiled in family care at an early point in their lives, making academic careers practically impossible to pursue. The overlapping of their peak childbearing years and period of pursuing tenure make academic jobs increasingly difficult for them.[21]

Lastly, when policies are instituted there is often a tendency to discriminate in a much more subtle and systemic way. According to Hensel Nancy this is because, 'Academia has long been dominated by men, and the male perspective in policy development, performance evaluation, and interpersonal interactions generally prevails. Student evaluations indicate that women's classroom performance is often evaluated more critically than men's. Research by women or about women is frequently undervalued by male colleagues. Initial salary differentials between men and women increase in favor of men as faculty progress through the ranks. Women take two to ten years longer than men to achieve promotion and tenure; women's greater child care responsibilities may account for some of this differential. Each of these issues leads to a cumulative disadvantage for the female professor. Women who earn doctorates are more likely than men to desire an academic career but are not being hired at equal rates; the cumulative disadvantage also results in women leaving the profession in greater numbers than men'.[22]

As institutions of higher learning continue their attempt to achieve gender equality, there is need to move further and address some pertinent issues to enable the success of the policies. First, considerable efforts have been made to improve access to schooling and, in particular, to target female enrolment. On a more radical stance, abolition of fees for the girl child appears to be the most drastic step, as poverty affects the schooling opportunities of girls. On a more practical note, having a girl child at an institution of higher learning on government sponsorship will motivate the females and do away with segregation that comes with poverty.

Secondly, instead of continuing to admit female students with lower points, the disparities that cause performance gaps should be addressed. This should only be done at lower levels of education where incentives and policy measures are put in place to give support for the attainment of higher grades, rather than waiting to solve the problem using affirmative action later. Here political will plays a much more important role. At times the institution might also consider introducing catch-up programmes for a year, before the students are admitted into their main degree programmes.

Lastly, formal and informal policies which consider the needs of diverse individuals must be broadly adopted and enforced.[23] Putting all females in the same category seems to be the major cause of the negative after-effects of the policies. For instance, if one were to take two cases, one of a girl who grew up in a low density suburb and had no domestic chores to perform, and another girl from a rural background who had to walk long distances to and from her school and also had to take care of some household work, their experiences will be entirely different. In case they both secure low points in the same subject, questions like who should get affirmative action benefit, and with what effect, will definitely arise. Therefore in designing, implementing and evaluating these policies, closer and more careful analysis should be done.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is important to highlight that gender equality and other efforts to enhance female advancement in institutions of higher learning have remained a challenge despite certain quantitative improvements. In essence, obstacles to women's participation in higher education still very much exist.

As the present paper has argued, though there is a call for gender mainstreaming the recruitment, enrolments, promotions and organisational structures, there are still underlying structural and societal impediments towards a full realisation of female advancement. Achieving gender equality hinges on collective and social responsibility for the consequences that come alongside the need to promote gender equality, not only for the concerned institutions but also for the government and the society at large.

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Report on 'Globalisation and Social Transformation: The Indian Experience', Platinum Jubilee Conference organised by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, between 17 and 19 February 2012

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Srishtee Sethi

Keynote Address by Prof. Saskia Sassen on 'Our Global Challenges: Can Cities Take Us Beyond Asymmetric War And Racisms?'

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences organised a three-day conference on 'Globalisation and Social Transformation: The Indian Experience', as part of the institute's platinum-jubilee celebrations. The aim of the conference was to provide a platform to academics, policymakers and practitioners from multiple disciplines and areas of work, nationally and internationally, to debate globalisation as a transformative process and its consequent effects on economic, social, and cultural institutions in India.

In two very eventful decades of globalisation and neo-liberalism, India has rapidly integrated itself with the global economic market, experienced acceleration of its economic growth rate, and emerged as a super-economic power from the South. As India enters the third decade of neo-liberalism, there is a need to introspect the gains and losses made so far and identify India's future path of development. It is time to ask if globalisation has led to social transformation in India and what has been her experience of

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this process thus far.

The three-day conference was organised around eight key themes which were addressed through numerous roundtables, parallel paper presentations and lectures. The following themes were discussed:

Theme 1: Economic Growth, Equality and Human Development
Theme 2: Organisation, Work and Innovation
Theme 3: State, Governance and Citizenship
Theme 4: Community, Identity and Marginalisation
Theme 5: Environment, Resources and Resistence
Theme 6: Inequalities, Vulnerabilities, Human Health and Well-Being
Theme 7: Transforming Role of Social Institutions in Global Society
Theme 8: Culture, Nation and Change

The conference also provided space for an art exhibition by students of the institute. 'Biplap: The Shades of Struggle' showcased paintings on the issue of violence against Dalits. In addition to this there was a seed festival called 'Celebrating our Bio-cultural Heritage', a joint initiative of groups from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttarakhand that are working towards promotion of seed diversity. This made available information and knowledge on collective bio-cultural heritage that is evolved, preserved and shared by the indigenous people and farming communities of India. The art exhibition, seed festival, and a book exhibition proceeded parallel to other events of the conference.

Environmental Sustainability and Equity Talk by Prof. T Jayaraman (Dean, School of Habitat Studies, TISS)

Key inaugural addresses included one on 'Demographic and Economic Transitions in India' by Prof. Amitabh Kundu, and a keynote address by Prof. Saskia Sassen on 'Our Global Challenges: Can Cities Take Us Beyond Asymmetric War and Racisms?' Here are the summaries of some key presentations and discussions.

Seed Festival Celebrating our Bio-cultural Heritage: Conservation and promotion of seed diversity and related knowledge, collective bio-cultural heritage, evolved, preserved and shared by indigenous peoples and farming communities in India.

Dr. Sharachchandra Lele's keynote address, titled 'Rethinking Indian Environmentalism' interrogated the sub-theme 'Environment, Resources and Resistance'. The starting point of the paper was the idea that,

while the environment problem is certainly to be seen as a social problem, it is one which requires application of science and technology. The paper traced a history of environmentalism in India, with particular emphasis on green activism, the fact that environment is seen not as a conservation issue but as an issue of survival, and questions of forest management. Lele concluded the talk by framing the problem of climate change for India as a problem of equity and by elaborating the dilemmas of translating theories into action.

Prof. Richard Black, University of Sussex

The talk by Prof. Surinder Jodhka followed by discussions on the sub-theme 'Community, Identity and Marginalisation' was also seen as a highlight of the conference. Jodhka spoke of changes that had taken place since the time of village studies in the 1960s, dissolution of kinship-based economy, geographical dispersion, modernisation, mobilisation around identity, and community as a resource/network. Prof. Gopal Guru's lecture elaborated on caste as a basis of marginalisation under the above sub-theme.

Dr Sandhya Iyer Co-Convener of the Conference and faculty, TISS

The final day of the conference saw a roundtable on 'News Media and the Construction of Conflict' conducted under the sub-theme 'Culture, Nation and Change', anchored by the Centre for Media and Cultural Studies at the institute. Participants Smruti Kopikar, Sameera Khan (chair) and Mrinmayee Ranade discussed how the news media covers local conflicts, acts of violence, especially those which are slow, deliberate and everyday. The main focus of the roundtable was on exploring in detail three 'essential functions' played by the media today, that is, to reflect, posit and create conflict and understand within

**Corruption and Anti-Corruption: Challenges and Pitfalls
Dr. Dan Hough, University of Sussex**

The keynote address for the sub-theme 'Inequalities, Vulnerabilities, Human Health and Well-Being' by Dr Ravi Duggal discussed the structural impact of globalisation on health and universal access to healthcare.

Community, Identity and Marginalisation
Invited speaker: Prof. Gopal Guru

While the declared aim of the conference was to deliberate on globalisation's impact on the local, with specific focus on India, the presentations and discussions also charted lessons for global society. The success of the conference was that it enhanced understandings of the relationship between globalisation and the social, identified newer areas for intervention and methods by which this can be carried out, and policy advocacy tools for dealing with the changes wrought by globalisation.

Dammed Memories

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Priya Sangameswaran

Utpal Sandesara and Tom Wooten, *No One had a Tongue to Speak: The Untold Story of One of History's Deadliest Floods,* **Prometheus Books, New York, 2011, pp. xxxii + 411.**

For many people within and outside India, the state of Gujarat in western India and a reference to dams would immediately bring to mind the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river, one of the most controversial dams in the history of modern India, and one that raises concerns about the appropriate mode of development of water resources, the relationship of tribal populations with natural resources, the kind of discourses of development at work, questions of displacement and rehabilitation, and the role of international financial institutions. The Machhu dam in Saurashtra district of Gujarat – whose construction in 1972, breaking in 1979 and after-effects form the subject of Utpal Sandesara and Tom Wooten's *No One had a Tongue to Speak* – was rooted in the same discourse of modernity and development as the Sardar Sarovar dam that followed it about a decade later, but was also different on a number of counts. Smaller in scale, financed by the state government, and built at a time when the effects of dams were not as publicly debated, the Machhu dam was located in a milieu that represented the early stages of the quintessential modernist transition from agriculture to industry and from the rural to the urban. Yet, the dam and large parts of the region in the Machhu river valley were soon washed away in a flood that epitomised both the hubris of modernity (particularly the ability of 'man'[1] to overcome nature) as well as the messiness and contingencies of the actual unfolding of modernity's numerous projects. But perhaps the most crucial difference between the Sardar Sarovar dam and the Machhu dam is the fact that the disaster that the latter gave rise to is one that did not survive for long in popular and official memory. It is this, more than anything else, that seems to have motivated the authors to re-construct the story of the Machhu dam.

The book starts with a description of the 'model city' of Morbi and the infamous town of Maliya along with the principal characters of the story that unfolds in the ensuing chapters. There are glimpses here not just of the history and socio-economic background of these areas prior to the breaking of the dam, but also of divisions along lines of caste,

religion and occupations that came into play in the aftermath of the disaster. The decision to build a dam on the Machhu River, and the circumstances under which the government of Gujarat used a dam design that did not adequately take into account the kind of pressure that heavy monsoon floods might exert on it, form the subject of the second chapter. This chapter can easily be read as an anthropology of a particular instance of policy-making (albeit with the caveat that this is an account that is put together from memory and historical records) and also of how the so-called technical and objective knowledge of engineering experts comes to be constructed. The faulty dam design, combined with a government apparatus that failed to anticipate the possibility of dam failure and the lack of availability of timely counteractive measures (such as the issuance of warnings) even after dam failure became imminent, meant that the heavy monsoon floods of August 1979 led to the washing away of the earthenworks of the dam as well as the flooding of Morbi city and other areas in the immediate vicinity of the dam, along with Maliya town and its environs which were located further downstream.

The subsequent chapters deal with the immediate relief efforts undertaken and the measures for long-term rehabilitation; in both cases, aid by the government of Gujarat and by a variety of civil-society actors and individual volunteers played a crucial role, even though locals were also often forced to just fend for themselves. There are a number of striking features of this discussion. The first is the stories of dedication and bravery in the face of adversity (be they an individual official acting against hierarchical/bureaucratic norms or concentrated efforts by different groups to ensure the re-opening of a betel leaf shop, within four days of the flooding). The second is the political economy of the post-disaster reconstruction, with prejudices against particular ethnic communities and spaces, sometimes resulting in lack of recognition of even the need for aid (as in the case of the *Miyanas* of Maliya), differences in the willingness and ability of individuals and groups in the same locality to access social and official networks, and the state's privileging of industrial rehabilitation over agricultural rehabilitation.

The final chapters of the book also discuss the inquiry commission instituted by the government of Gujarat to probe the Machhu dam disaster, the lack of cooperation it encountered from the government and finally, the termination of the inquiry commission in 1981 in a bid to protect the engineers who had contributed to the Machhu dam project. In its place, a one-man technical investigation team was appointed; but even though the team managed to thoroughly investigate the areas within its mandate, it did not have the same legal status as the inquiry commission and its report was not widely circulated or known outside engineering circles. The paradox of an inquiry commission being dependent on the actions of the very body whose working the commission is supposed to scrutinise is a familiar one and one that poses a key dilemma in ensuring democratic accountability; it also provides at least part of the rationale for recent trends towards a reconsideration of relations between different arms of the government and an emphasis on depoliticisation in liberal democratic societies.

The book is written in an accessible narrative style that is at the same time gripping and thought-provoking. This, in turn, means that it can be read as a story of a particular human-induced disaster that also draws attention to a wide range of issues, from the adequacy of the 'technical' knowledge of engineers and the responses of governments to disasters, to the politics of inquiry commissions and of rehabilitation efforts and the role of the media. The problem, however, is that many of these individual issues can also be linked to larger arguments that have been made in social sciences about the 'rule of experts', the relationship between democracy and development, and so on, as well as to more structural factors. However, there is a risk of losing sight of these larger/structural linkages in a work that allows too easy a reading. That said, it must be acknowledged that each mode of writing and reading has its own merits.

Finally, I would like to briefly dwell on the method and aim of the book. The reconstruction of a particular set of historical events that have not been recorded is not an easy task, but the authors undertake this ably on the basis of interviews and archival sources collected over a three-month period in the summer of 2006. It is perhaps unfair to expect an extended discussion of all the methodological issues involved in such an exercise, given that this would require engagement with a now large literature on oral history and archives. However, even a limited reflection along these lines – drawing on some of the contradictions

between different sources that are already indicated in the book – would have brought out to a greater extent the complexities involved in re-constructing a relatively forgotten part of history; this is also important given that one of the authors has a personal connection to the tragedy.

The book aims at ensuring that no 'page of history' is forgotten. By carefully knitting together different strands connected to the Machhu dam disaster and bringing new information into the public domain (such as the findings of the technical investigation team), the authors hope that the story re-enters the consciousness of a people who have begun to forget it. The fact that the research for the book triggered interest in the regional media and led to a renewed focus on the Machhu dam disaster illustrates the success of this objective. Yet, what it means to remember and whose memory counts are uneasy questions that linger in one's mind. The authors have themselves pointed out that the Machhu dam was rebuilt in 1989, this time funded by the World Bank; more crucially, the design of the dam (and particularly its mechanism to deal with floods) was once again the subject of controversy. In general, history is replete with instances of mistakes being forgotten and repeated and/or remembrance by common people going hand-in-hand with official amnesia. The relation between remembering and forgetting, between the memory of a past and the discourse of a future, is necessarily always power-laden; a book such as *No One had a Tongue to Speak* serves to remind us of this.

1. The use of 'man' here is deliberate, since the engineer – the figure most commonly associated with the kind of expert knowledge that is believed to be required to tame nature – was (and continues to be) a highly gendered being.

Book Notice

1. Laura A. Lewis's book *Chocolate and Corn Flour: History, Race, and Place in the Making of 'Black' Mexico* offers an in-depth l ok at the history and contemporary culture of San Nicolás. It explores local inhabitants' experiences and understanding of race, blackness, and indigeneity, by situating these reactions within the cultural values that outsiders assign to the community. Lewis argues that inhabitants of San Nicolás have a complex relationship with blackness, with respect to both identity and as a racial and cultural category, which neither claims membership to an African diaspora nor denies their heritage.
Source:
http://www.dukeupress.edu/Catalog/Vie wProduct.php?productid=47406
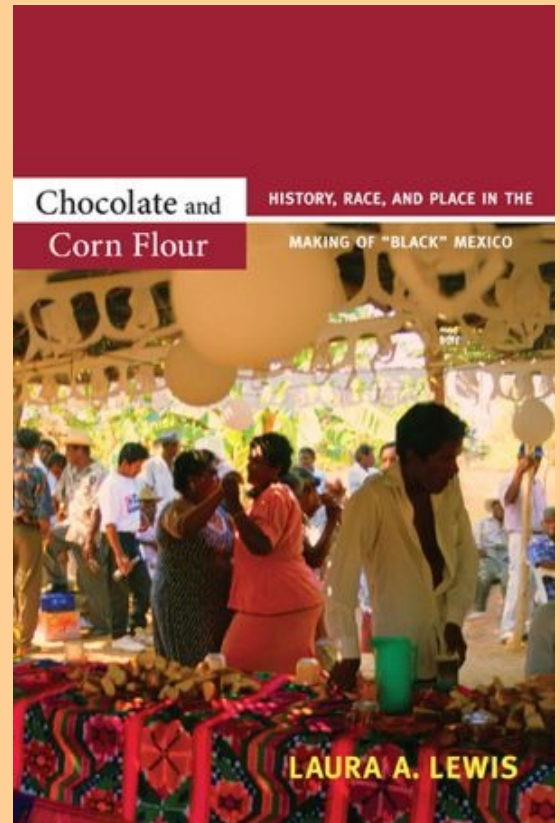
Chocolate and Corn Flour
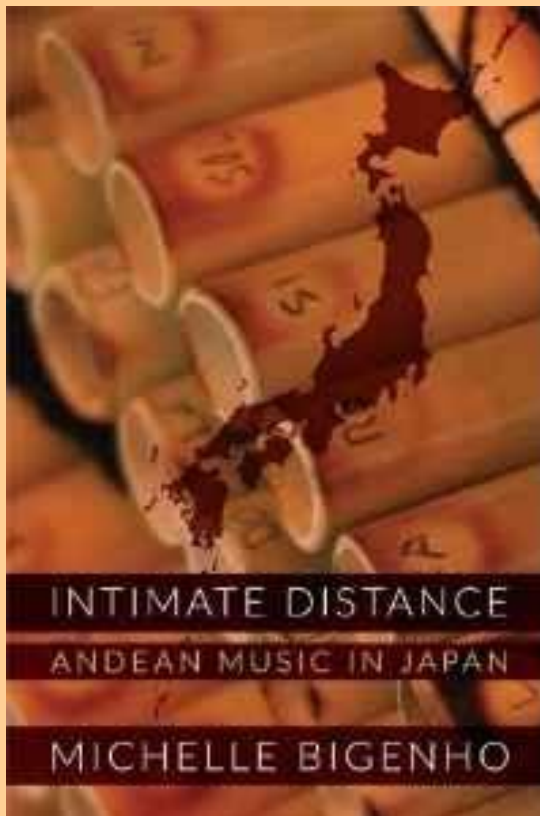
2. *Intimate Distance: Andean Music in Japan* tells a complex story of Bolivian musicians who tour Japan playing Andean music and Japanese audiences who adopt this musical genre as hobbyists and sometimes even as professional musicians. Drawing on her ethnographic experience while performing with Bolivian musicians during their Japan tour and interviews with musicians from both countries, Michelle Bigenho showcases how transcultural intimacies are forged through the sharing of Andean musical forms and styles of performance.
Source:
http://www.amazon.com/Intimate-Distance-Andean-Music-Japan/dp/0822352354

Intimate Distance
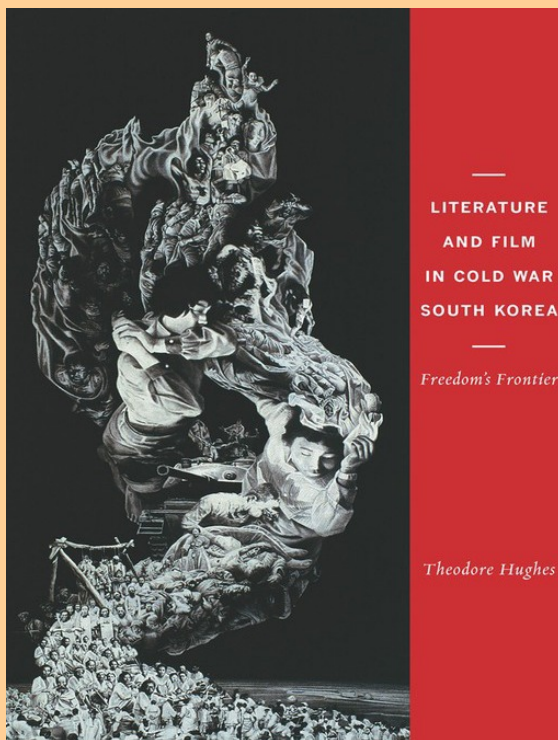
www.sephisemagazine.org

Book Notice

3. Based on ethnographic research in the waiting area of the main welfare office in Buenos Aires, Javier Auyero's book *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina* provides a fascinating account of the connections between poor persons' experiences of lengthy waits and strategies of state control in the dynamics of everyday life. By calling attention to the mundane interactions between the poor and the state, the author reveals the power-play that underpins disenfranchised people's confusion and uncertainty about the administrative processes that govern their lives.
Source:
http://www.dukeupress.edu/Catalog/View Product.php?productid=48636&viewby= subject&categoryid=357&sort=newest
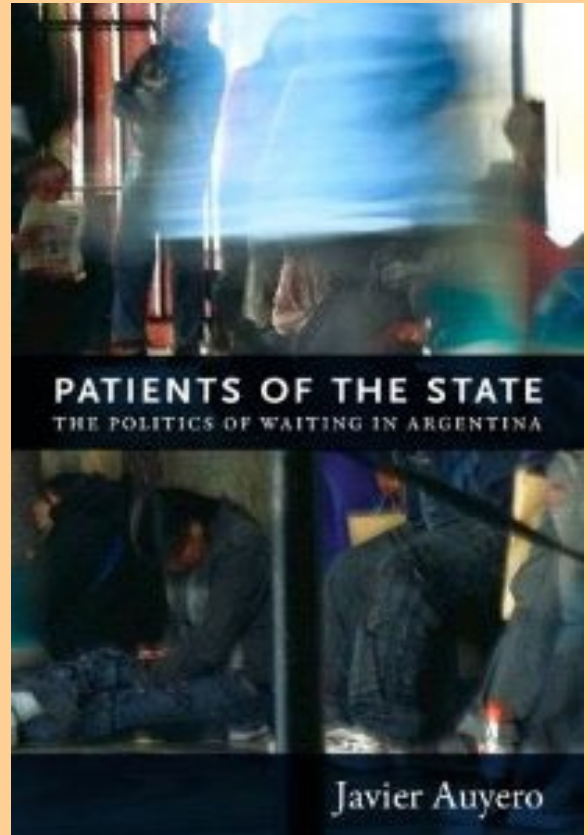
Patients of the State

**Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea**

4. In *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* Theodore Hughes investigates the layered relations between literature, film, and art in Korea's colonial period. He argues that in the early twentieth century, Korean artists and filmmakers deployed new forms of media practice to give creative expression to the realities of colonialism and global modernity in the region.
Source: http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-15748-3/literature-and-film-in-cold-war-south-korea

5. *Latin America: From Resistance to Revolution* by Mike Gonzalez is a compelling recall of major public events in recent Latin American history. Beginning with the structural adjustment programmes of the 1970s, Gonzalez analyses the strengths and weaknesses of resistance movements, the prospects for 'Socialism for the twenty-first century' and the dangers of the current disorientation in the movement.
Source:
http://www.lawbooks.com.au/book/latin-america-from-resistance-to-revolution.do
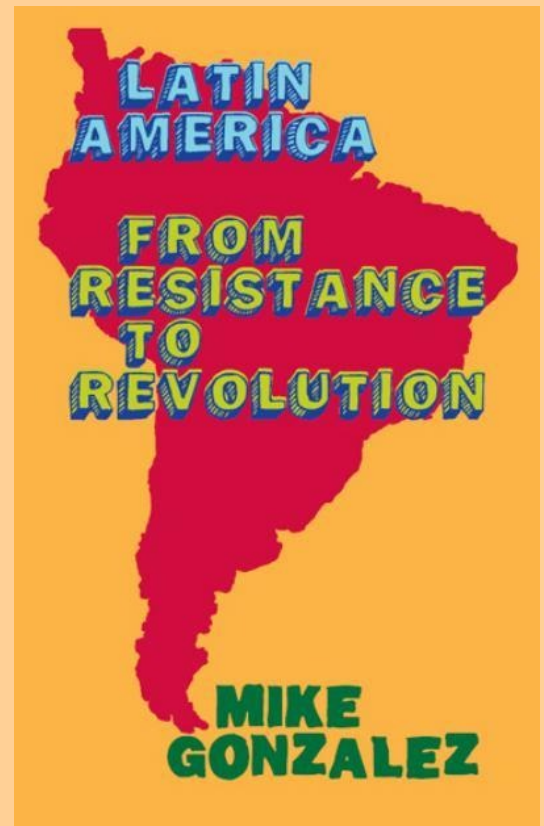
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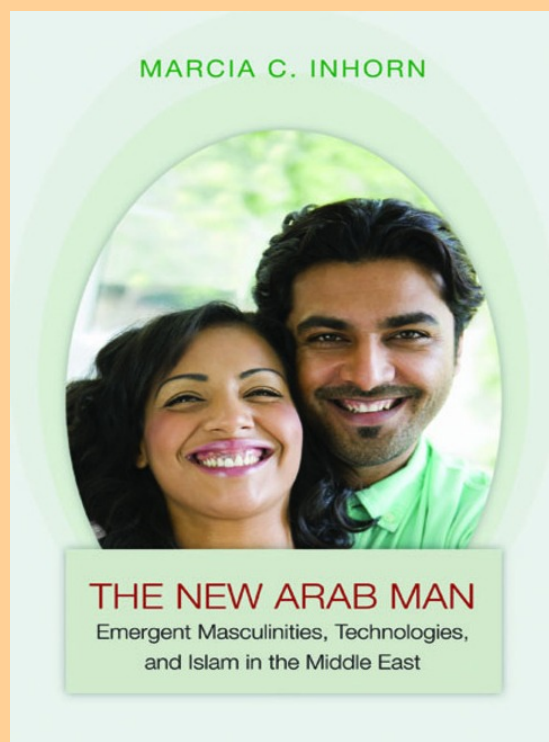
6. Images of Middle Eastern Muslim men, more often than not, visualise them as terrorists, religious zealots, and brutal oppressors of women. *The New Arab Man: Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East* by Marcia C. Inhorn throws a lie to these stereotypical images by narrating stories of ordinary Middle Eastern men as they grapple with issues of infertility and childlessness through assisted reproduction. Poignant, even as it is rigorous, this evocative book traces the emergence of new masculinities in the Middle East in the era of biotechnology.
Source:
http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9758.html

The New Arab Man

7. ***The Governance of Climate Change: Science, Politics and Ethics*** brings together leading scientists, political theorists, high-profile policymakers and practitioners to interrogate the close linkages between the science, politics, economics and ethics of climate change. Contributors to this edited volume offer a new critical approach to the pressing issue of climate change and help readers to think about a more sustainable way of life.
Source:
http://www.polity.co.uk/book.asp?ref=9780745652016
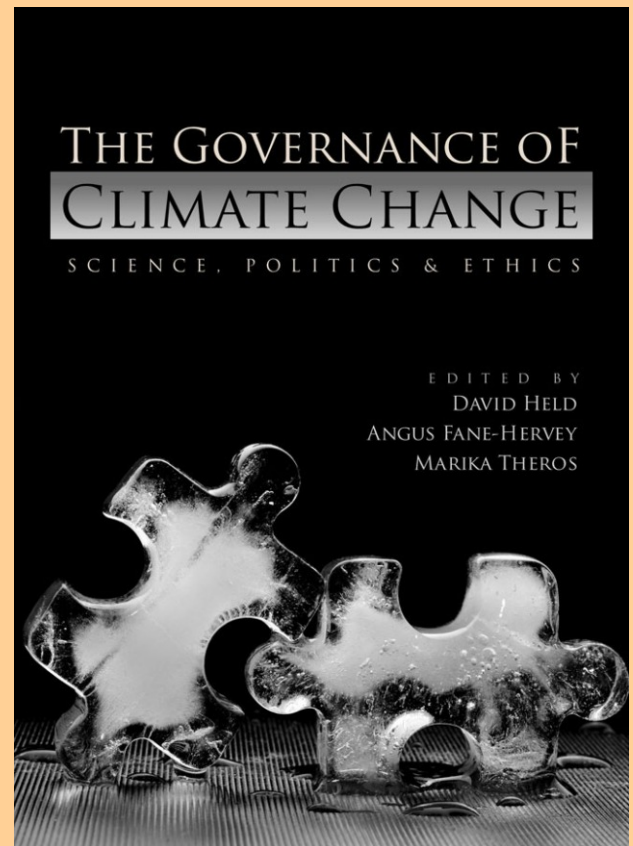
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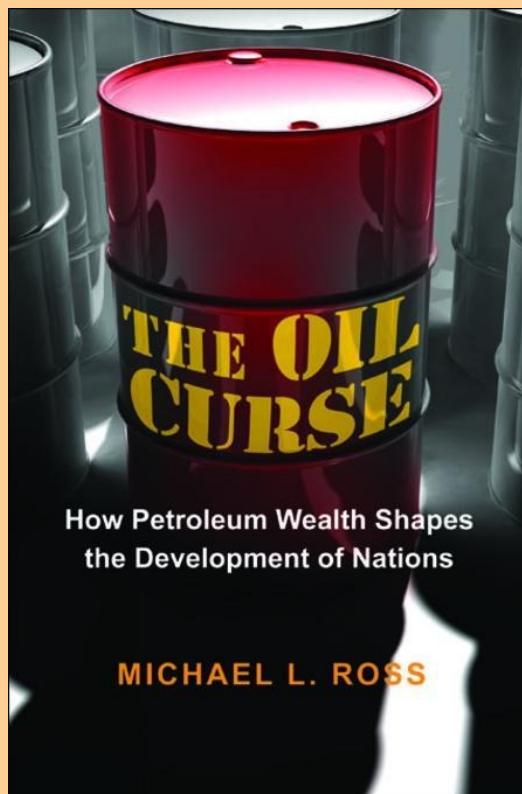
The Oil Curse

8. The received understanding is that countries that are rich in petroleum are undemocratic, struggle to find economic stability, and are frequently torn asunder by civil wars. In ***The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*** Michael L. Ross helps throw light on this peculiar conundrum by demonstrating the precise ways in which developing nations are shaped by their mineral wealth and how the oil curse can be turned into a blessing.
Source:
http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9686.html

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