COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN NEOIMPERIAL WORLD: REVISITING THE BANDUNG 50 YEARS LATER

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
Nina Berman, Department of Comparative Studies

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The goal of this conference is to think through the role played by community-based local and transnational organizations, particularly in areas of the formerly colonized countries, in light of the failures of states and transnational organizations to address the needs of local communities. The principles formulated at the conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, will serve as guidelines to evaluate the present-day situation. This conference is designed to explore the ways in which the issues discussed at Bandung continue to structure present-day relations between countries and within communities around the globe. Much has changed in the past fifty years, yet neither political independence nor the end of the Cold War has brought peace and prosperity to the countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. On the contrary, nations in the developing world have seen their GNP decrease in the context of economic globalization and have been confronted with a wide range of unprecedented crises: ethnic violence, religiously motivated wars, diseases, environmental disasters, and struggles over resources (especially water, oil, and gas), all of which have had devastating repercussions on the populations of many countries. The conference will present pragmatic alternatives to the failures of national and international development policies. It will address the struggles of many communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe face by focusing on community-based organizations (CBOs), which have developed specific models in response to various
forms of crisis. Four areas are of particular interest: 1) Ecological Dimension, 2) Health Care, 3) Economic Aspects: Informal Economy/Contraband/Gray Markets, 4) Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of Violent Conflicts. The conference will feature panels on each of these topics, and bring together scholars and community activists who have studies or are involved in projects in one or more of these areas. Practitioners will present the initiatives with which they are involved and then evaluate them in light of their relations to and possible impact on national and international policy. Researchers will likewise discuss the initiatives and national and international policy.

PROJECT TIMELINE: November 2005

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STUDYING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTITUTIONS DESIGNED TO CONTROL STATE CRIME IN MEXICO

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
Sara Schatz, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Center for Latin American Studies

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
Democratization in Mexico has produced the paradoxical result of an increase in state crimes coupled with the rise of juridic certainty for electrons. By 2004, deaths in electorally-related violence have decreased markedly, election fraud is by down by 90%, and some punishments have been meted out against state officials responsible for torture. The "relative" success of Mexican legal institutions provides an interesting counterpoint case those "double" transitions in many Eurasian and African nations which have produced a weaker rule of law. Thus, a speaker series on controlling state crime seems a timely one given this continuing global problem. A number of institutional reforms to ameliorate the problem state crime in Mexico have been implemented since the mid-1990s including the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, a Federal Electoral Authority, a series of Federal and State Electoral Courts, a Special Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes (FEPADE) within the Mexican Attorney General's Office, and the Special Prosecutor for Political and Social Movements of the Past. Most of these institutions have become increasingly autonomous from ex-dominant party control, especially those at the federal level. This speaker series proposes 10 examine
the effectiveness of those institutions designed to control state crime in Mexico with a hi-monthly speaker for the ten-week Spring Quarter (2006). The proposed speakers for the talks include academics and human rights scholars who are experts on those institutions designed to control state crime in Mexico, i.e. the National Human Rights Commission, the Electoral Courts, the various special prosecutors, etc. (see proposed speaker list for details). Each speaker will discuss the past and present capacity of these institutions to protect human and political rights for citizens and political party members, to deal with abuses committed under the old regime as well as recent reforms to increase the prosecutorial powers of Mexico's institutions designed to control state crime in a period of democratizing reforms. The proposed speaker series will be held at The Mershon Center as part of their "Citizenship Speaker Series" which draws its audience from the Center and the general public. Another target audience of the series will include members of the class Globalization in Latin America, sponsored by the Center for Latin American Studies. Furthermore, this speaker series includes the participation of OSU faculty in their capacity as respondents to the papers including but not limited to Ileana Rodriguez of the Spanish and Portuguese Department and John Quigley in the Law School and various members of the Political Science Department.

PROJECT TIMELINE: Spring Quarter 2006

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WITH US OR AGAINST US: AMERICAN CULTURE AND ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD – AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
Alexander Stephan, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The key premise of this ongoing project on American Culture and Anti-Americanism in different regions of the world and the subsequent conference is that in and era of globalization, international security and international relations are determined not only by political and economic factors, but also by our understanding of cultural differences. Insight gained from the study of intercultural relations may, therefore, have an impact on the policies developed by the governments of the United States and other countries. One of the substantive concerns of the Mershon Center is the role culture plays
in international security. At the same time, the Office of International Affairs and the Area Studies Centers at The Ohio State University have developed a strong interest in cooperative, international, and interdisciplinary activities, which bring the expertise of the Centers and faculty from OSU, the US, and international institutions. As contribution to these foci, the present project proposes a comparative conference on the international impact of American culture and the relation between culture and security in different regions of the world. Included in this study are an investigation of cultural or “soft” diplomacy before and, after the events of September 11, an examination of the impact of American high and popular culture on different regions of the world, and the study of the adaptation, creolization, or rejection of American culture, including cultural anti-Americanism. The proposed three-day international conference will revisit in a comparative way the most important topics from the regional symposia organized during the past year in conjunction with the OSU Area Studies Centers. The conference will include specialists who can address in a comparative fashion the following topics as they are relevant for key countries and regions in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South and East Asia: 1) Historical review of U.S. influences, 2) U.S. government programs (libraries, exchanges, official publications), 3) High brow culture (literature, theater, arts, music, museums), 4) Popular culture (jazz/rock/pop, film, TV, youth culture, lifestyle), 5) Anti-Americanism (government initiatives, religion, conservative and leftist reactions, regionalism/nationalism).

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SEVENTEENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LATIN AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURES

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
Ulises Zevallos-Aguilar, Department of Spanish and Portuguese

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The Latin American Indian Literatures Association is a prestigious
international organization that was founded in 1982. Since then LAILA's symposia have been sponsored by fifteen universities in the United States including University of Pittsburgh, George Washington University, Cornell University, as well as national universities in Mexico, Argentina and Peru. This year The Ohio State University will have the great honor of hosting The Seventeenth International Symposium of LAILA/ALILA (Latin American Indian Literatures Association/Asociación de Literaturas Indígenas de Latino América). The symposium is interdisciplinary and international by nature. The organizers are interested in comparing Native Americans (USA), First Peoples (Canada) and Latin American indigenous peoples. The theme of the symposium will be “The State of the Art of Latin American Indian Representations”. The objectives the LAILA Symposia are to stimulate and develop interest in Latin American Indian Cultures; to facilitate the collaboration of researchers, teachers, students, and interested professionals; to provide a means for the exchange of ideas and information; to encourage research and publication of texts and scholarly studies; and to support the creative literary expression of diverse Indian groups from Latin America. One of the ways in which these goals are promoted is through the meeting of the Association held every two years. The priority of the Seventeenth Symposium is to enhance its international character by bringing together scholars from Canada, the United States, Latin America, and Europe. The Symposium will be of special interest to the OSU community. Academicians and indigenous leaders will be available for open forums such as workshops and round table discussions that will impact on the community at large. Grassroots organizations from around the area including Native Americans and Latin American Indigenous people who now call the greater Columbus areas home will also be invited to attend and participate in the event.

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