

proofs of the reality of the *soldaderas*, women who in the majority of cases have remained anonymous.

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—GABRIELA CANO

## SOLIDARIDAD, PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE (PRONASOL)

The National Solidarity Program was President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's flagship social program—simultaneously a project for political change, a social shock-absorber, and an ideological banner. The Solidaridad program was based on four principles: “respect for the will, initiatives, and organizational forms of individuals and communities, . . . full and effective participation and organization by the communities[, and] . . . co-responsibility [in project management] and transparency [in the handling of resources].” The strategy was inspired in part by Salinas's Harvard dissertation, which was concerned with the relationship between social programs and political support for the regime. Solidaridad also drew on the uneven trend in the 1980s toward *concertación social*, a less heavy-handed style of bargaining with social movements over development projects.

Solidaridad was one of many “demand-driven” social programs that governments in developing countries used in the late 1980s to manage the political cost of macroeconomic adjustment. This new generation of social programs generally tried to bypass conventional line agencies, which often were considered unresponsive and inefficient. Solidaridad had its own unique qualities, however, including its revitalization of the state's long-standing penetration of society (in contrast to the partnerships with nongovernmental organizations increasingly common elsewhere) and Solidaridad's short-term national political success. As many critics were quick to point out, Solidaridad was a key part of Salinas's effort to legitimate his presidency after the hotly contested 1988 presidential election, both by delivering immediate and visible benefits to localities and by encouraging grassroots groups to steer clear of electoral opposition.

Both poverty and inequality had worsened significantly since 1982. The government estimated that 41 percent of Mexicans were poor with 16 percent considered to be in “extreme poverty,” mainly in rural areas. According to World Bank/Inter-American Development Bank data, approximately 42 percent of children under five years old were malnourished. In response, the Salinas administration increased social spending significantly, from 33.2 percent of the 1988 budget to 52.6 percent in 1994. Although the vast bulk of

Mexico's social spending went to maintain the education system, health services, and food subsidies, Solidaridad's local investments became the key reference point for the government's social policy more generally for both the president's supporters and critics alike.

Solidaridad's public image was closely associated with the president, who inaugurated local projects around the country virtually every week of his administration. By the 1991 midterm elections, polls found both Salinas and Solidaridad to be much more popular than Salinas's own Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, or Institutional Revolutionary Party). Policy analysts and political leaders concluded that Solidaridad was a highly centralized program, designed to bypass both old-fashioned PRI apparatchiks and opposition challenges at the state and local level. Later in the Salinas administration, however, Solidaridad resource allocation decisions were shifted increasingly to state and local governments. By 1994, the secretary of social development announced that Solidaridad was “the most decentralized federal program” because it transferred 95 percent of its resources to state governments; 50 percent of the resources went to municipal governments.

Solidaridad funded a diverse array of programs through the federal budget's Line 26 (Regional Development). This budget category provided matching funds for state and local government, outside the less discretionary and more “formula-driven” federal revenue-sharing flows. The programs under the Solidaridad umbrella varied widely in terms of their degree of targeting of the poorest citizens and the degree to which they strengthened local government and community participation, making generalizations difficult. More than 100,000 local Solidaridad committees were formed, although most probably did not continue beyond the period of project construction.

The government claimed impressive achievements for Solidaridad's investments, including the installation of electricity for 13 million people, piped water for 11 million, and sewerage for 8.5 million. Solidaridad certainly began to make up for the lack of social infrastructure investment since the 1982 economic crisis, although comprehensive independent

assessments of the scope and sustainability of Solidaridad's social impact are still lacking.

The following review shows the distribution of Solidaridad's US\$ 2.2 billion 1992 budget in terms of its larger subcomponents, based on a World Bank review of public spending. Most spending was for infrastructure, with a much smaller fraction for income-generating projects. The Water Supply and Sanitation program supported larger-scale, mainly urban works (14 percent). The Rural Roads program (14 percent) funded government agencies to build new routes, in spite of the great need for better maintenance of existing roads and for locally managed maintenance programs. Education-related funding accounted for 13 percent of Solidaridad spending, with 8 percent for school upgrading (*Escuela Digna*) and 5 percent for a children's program (*Niños en Solidaridad*). The school upgrading program was based on parental involvement in construction. The children's program provided cash allowances to selected low-income students as an incentive to keep them in school (although school meal programs would have had much greater social impact). The Neighborhood Urban Development for Colonias and Comunidades Program, accounting for 9 percent of Solidaridad funding in 1992, supported street paving, drainage, and water supply in low-income urban neighborhoods. Health-related investments received 5 percent of Solidaridad funding in 1992, including construction of hospitals and health posts. This effort was poorly coordinated with health authorities, and a significant (although unknown) fraction of new clinics were not equipped or staffed (as in Chiapas, for example).

The Municipal Solidaridad Funds, a community development block grant program, received 11 percent of 1992 Solidaridad funding. State governments generally decided how to allocate funding between municipalities, but once received, Municipal Funds were largely under local government control, in contrast to other Solidaridad programs that flowed through local government but remained under the control of state or federal government. Supported by large loans from the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, the Municipal Funds widely were considered among the more effective Solidaridad programs, especially in those states where rural municipalities were given priority.

In terms of productive investments, 9 percent of 1992 Solidaridad funding went to Solidaridad Production Funds for *campesinos* (peasants) considered economically unviable by the formal agricultural banking system. These small loans were made to individuals chosen by mayors, and community organization was not encouraged. Solidaridad's several other income-generating programs added up to 12 percent of 1992 spending and were more consistent with the spirit of the program. The National Fund for Solidaridad Enterprises (FONAES) provided federal government matching "risk capital" to producer groups and used standardized project appraisal methods. *Mujeres en Solidaridad* provided grants for women-run community-based projects but was among the smallest

Solidaridad programs. The Solidaridad program of the National Indigenous Institute (INI) capitalized the creation of the Regional Funds. The INI policy was to turn these regionally based revolving credit funds over to pluralistic councils of representative indigenous organizations, and this policy was implemented in a significant minority of cases. This was the only Solidaridad program where resource allocation decision-making was devolved to civil society organizations. In most Solidaridad programs that encouraged community participation, such participation was limited officially to proposing and implementing local projects whose approval and supervision remained in the hands of municipal, state, or federal authorities.

Overall, the impact of the Salinas administration's increased spending on social services and development investments for poverty alleviation was limited by its lack of targeting to the poorest regions of the country. In per capita terms, government spending and investment patterns were biased against poor states and in some cases also against the poorest regions of those states. This pattern was notable in regular health and education spending, and it was not offset by Solidaridad investments. Geographically, Solidaridad was targeted more to the middle-income than to the poorest states in per capita terms, at least in its first four years. Nevertheless, this geographic pattern does not permit clear conclusions about the social distribution of resources. The funds may well have reached lower-income citizens in the middle-income states (although Solidaridad officials treated more disaggregated data as highly confidential, making such research impossible). Indeed, the targeting of low-income citizens in middle-income states is consistent with the statistical finding that state and local electoral competition significantly influenced resource allocation: elections were more contested in middle and lower-middle income states than in the poorest states. At the aggregate geographic level, to the degree Solidaridad funding was politicized, it appears to have "rewarded" opposition, although at the individual citizen's level, the distribution pattern may have been quite different.

Solidaridad spending in Chiapas certainly rose in 1993 and 1994, but it was too little, too late, and was controlled largely by the authoritarian governor. The indigenous rebellion's popularity revealed Solidaridad's failure to produce the increased political loyalty that was Carlos Salinas's original concern. The rebellion largely undid Solidaridad's contribution to political legitimation more broadly, since it symbolically revealed the limited impact of government poverty reduction efforts.

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—JONATHAN FOX

## SOLÓRZANO, CARLOS

1922– • Playwright

Carlos Solórzano was born into a wealthy and distinguished family in San Marcos, Guatemala, where he received his early education, but in 1939 he moved to Mexico to continue studies in literature and architecture. In 1946 he earned a doctorate at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM, or National Autonomous University of Mexico) with a thesis on Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo. With a Rockefeller grant he spent the years 1948 to 1950 in France, where he met Albert Camus, Michel de Ghelderode, and other European playwrights and directors who influenced him greatly. From 1952 to 1962 he served as director of the University Theater in Mexico, in 1962 he was named professor of dramatic art, and in 1966 he was named director of humanities at the UNAM. During the presidency of José López Portillo (1976–82), he served as executive director of an ambitious project under Social Security to organize a national theater project. Throughout his career he has actively fostered theater with his own plays, books on theater criticism, and regular entries in periodicals (such as *Siempre*, *Novedades y México en su cultura*). He was the first to legitimate the field of Latin American theater with two critical books (1962 and 1964) that elaborated a panoramic vision of playwrights and theater movements, enhanced by a two-volume anthology of plays.

Solórzano's works are cosmopolitan and eclectic, with elements of classic theater, but his exposure to existentialism left a major mark. His characters rebel against the norms established by government, church, and society and seek the personal space to develop as authentic individuals with a sense of self-worth. Solórzano often adopted Christian symbolism with an ironic twist, much like Unamuno, in order to dramatize the terrible anguish and desperation of the soul in pain. His objective was to question traditional authority and

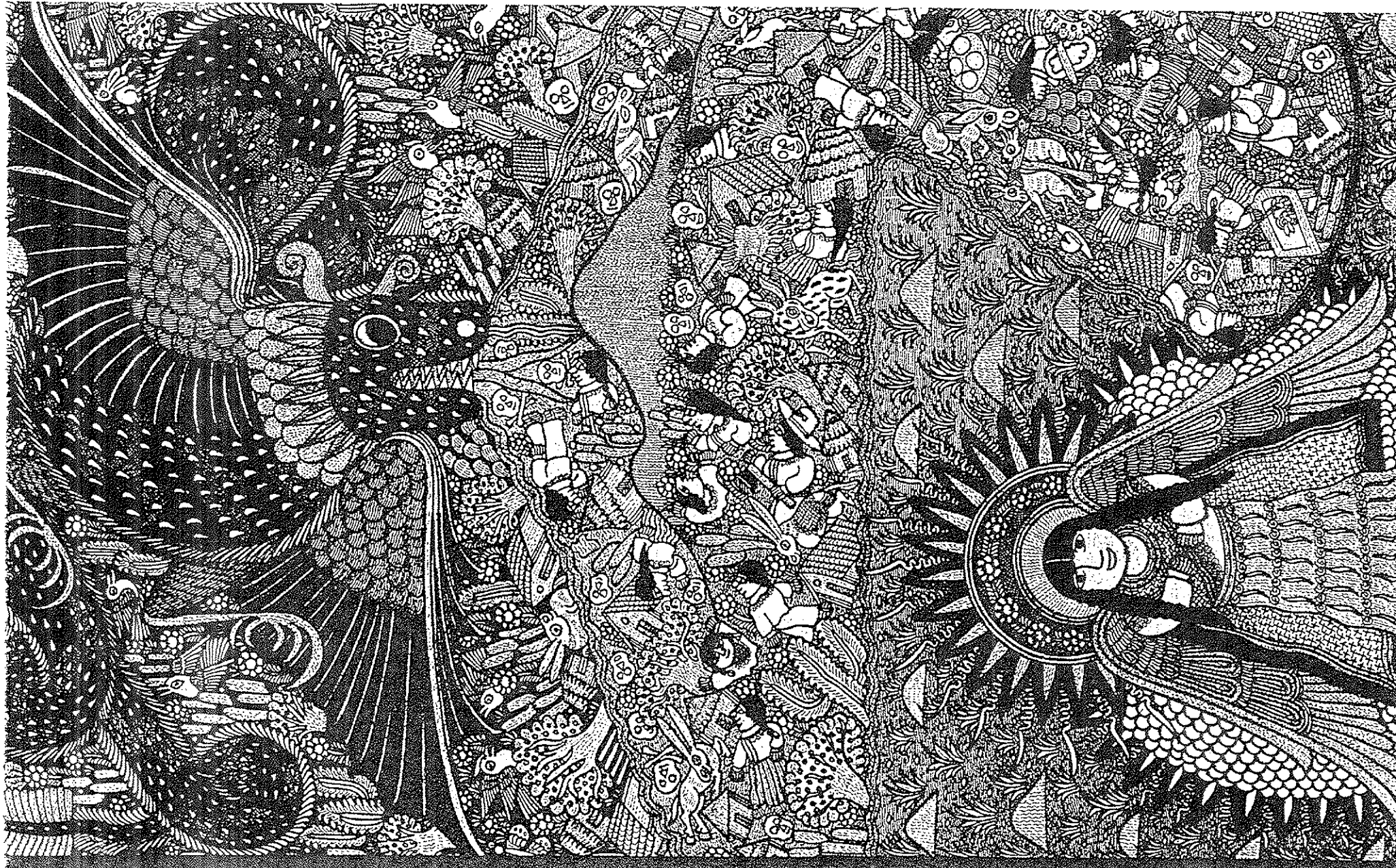
to open the individual to an authentic existence. The freedom to be oneself is perhaps the basic principle of all his work. "Men are born to be free. It's other men who make them prisoners afterwards," says the Devil in *Las manos de Dios*. Freedom for Solórzano is a complex concept, but he illustrates it through political, social, moral, and religious circumstances. A clear subtext in his three major plays is the role of women in the society. With three protagonists all named Beatriz, he invokes resonances of the eternal woman, of Dante, and of the stereotyping and oppression that women experience in their struggle to exercise their rights and responsibilities.

In his first play, *Doña Beatriz, la sin ventura* (1952), Solórzano charted a course related to his Guatemalan heritage by focusing on the hapless wife of the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado. Unable to adapt to her new environment and incapable of sharing her husband's dreams of glory, doña Beatriz takes refuge in her memories of Spain and the old traditions. The flood that sweeps her away ends her torment of dealing with the oppressive forces, both physical and psychological, that she is unable to control. Her struggle illustrates both the macrocosmic conflict of a changing world order and the microcosmic interaction of a woman and her interpersonal relations. In his second play, *El hechicero* (1954), Solórzano continued to explore issues of freedom, this time in the setting of the Middle Ages, through the proverbial search for a magic formula capable of buying release from slavery and oppression. In this case the heroine, also named Beatriz, honors her father's memory by helping to defeat the enemy, including her own mother.

Solórzano's major work is *Las manos de Dios* (1956), a complex play that exposes ignorance, intolerance, and oppression as practiced by church and society. With multiple

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