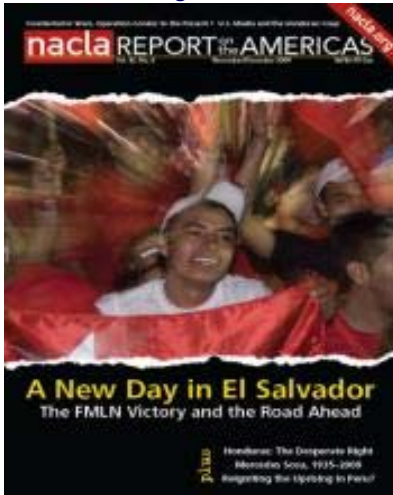


A New Day in El Salvador: The FMLN Victory and the Road Ahead



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

The March election of former journalist Mauricio Funes to the presidency of El Salvador marks a watershed moment for Central American democracy. If the new government enjoys some degree of success, it will ratify the decision of the Salvadoran left more than a decade ago to seek a negotiated solution to the civil war, and its more recent strategy of reaching out to the center left to form an electoral bloc. Failure, in turn, will greatly disappoint those who have long struggled for greater social justice in that troubled land of the Central American isthmus.

Taking Note

- [The Honduran Standoff: Desperation and Violence on the Right](#)

Greg Grandin

Updates

- [Peru: Hunt Oil Contract to Reignite Amazon Uprising?](#)

Bill Weinberg

After the indigenous uprising in Peru's Amazon region in June, it appears that an indigenous pledge to physically resist the operations of Dallas-based Hunt Oil on communal rainforest lands could reignite the uprising. In what is shaping up as an important test case, Hunt Oil is opening trails in preparation for seismic exploration within an indigenous reserve in Madre de Dios.

- [Counterterror Wars and Human Rights: From Operation Condor to the Present](#)

J. Patrice McSherry

While some U.S. critics may have assumed that U.S. torture began under the George W. Bush administration, many of the so-called enhanced interrogation techniques used in Guantánamo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and CIA "black sites" were common during Latin America's U.S.-sponsored "dirty wars."

Report

- [Social Movements, Political Parties, and Electoral Triumph in El Salvador](#)

Paul D. Almeida

In June, Funes assumed the presidency, representing the first peaceful transfer of power to a political party of the left in the Salvadoran republic's 188-year history. How did this happen? Funes's unprecedented victory is best understood as the result of an alliance between the FMLN and Salvadoran popular movements. This alliance was shaped in the context of two powerful forces unleashed in the post-Cold War era: democratization and neoliberalism.

- [Salvadoran Gangs: Brutal Legacies and a Desperate Hope](#)

Donna DeCesare (text and photographs)

El Salvador is facing astronomical levels of violent crime. Gangs are responsible for most of the bloodshed, and affected communities desperately hope Funes can finally turn the tide.

- [The Funes Government Faces an Economy on the Brink](#)

Rommel R. Rodríguez

Funes assumed office under a very difficult set of economic circumstances, with the global financial crisis having exacerbated long-standing problems. He is likely to try stimulating the agricultural and industrial sectors.

- [After the Victory, Sobering Realities](#)

LaDawn Haglund

- [Rethinking El Salvador's Transnational Families](#)

Leisy J. Abrego

Popular attitudes in El Salvador blame transnational families, in which one or both parents have migrated, for everything from economic woes to crime. Funes has an opportunity to improve these families' lives.

- [The Honduran Coup: The View From El Salvador](#)

Benjamín Cuéllar

The Honduran military coup d'état represents a major retrogression in democratization for Central America. Could what happened in Tegucigalpa also happen in San Salvador, if Funes "goes too far" with his reforms?

Reviews

- ['So That the World Can Know': Amazonians Take On Chevron](#)

Suzana Sawyer

Crude (2009), a documentary film by Joe Berlinger, 100 mins., distributed by First Run Features (crudethemovie.com)

- [Henry Ford's Tropical Folly](#)

Marcelo Ballvé

Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City by Greg Grandin (Metropolitan Books, 2009), 432 pp., \$27.50 paperback

- [New & Noteworthy](#)

That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution, by Lars Schoultz; From Rainforest to Cane Field in Cuba: An Environmental History Since 1492, by Reinaldo Funes Monzote, translated by Alex Martin; Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos, by Louis A. Pérez Jr.

Open Forum

- [Singing Truth to Power: Mercedes Sosa, 1935–2009](#)

T.M. Scruggs

MALA

- [U.S. Media Fail in Honduras Coup Reporting](#)

Robert Naiman

Since the June 28 military coup in Honduras, in which President Manuel Zelaya was deposed, U.S. news reporting has been marred by pro-coup bias, inaccuracies, and incomplete coverage. This was particularly evident in four ways: false claims that Zelaya had sought to extend his term in office; claims that a plurality of Hondurans supported the coup; imbalanced reporting of U.S. congressional opinion on the coup; and under-reporting of repression in Honduras under the coup government.