

LIBERTAD BAJO PALABRA: CENSORSHIP, SATIRE, AND THE PRESS IN MEXICO

Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies
University of California, San Diego

April 30 – May 2, 2014

If a free press and a free society go hand in hand, by most accounts for most of its recent history Mexico has had neither. During the twentieth century, as the story goes, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) famously developed a panoply of tactics to produce a docile press, balancing the carrots of lucrative government advertising and cash-stuffed envelopes slipped to journalists against the cudgels of censorship and the lurking threat of violence. Most commentators tend to think of the twentieth-century Mexican press as something of a journalistic eunuch, self-censoring and obediently toeing the party line. In recent years, almost endemic violence against journalists reporting on the drug trade has seemingly darkened the outlook for Mexico's press. Looking beyond the headlines of Mexico City's major papers, however, it has become increasingly clear that the relationship between the government, the press, and the public was and is far more complex than previously thought and that the challenges facing journalists today are being met with courage and innovation.

This conference brings together papers that will enrich our understanding of both the past and the present of Mexican journalism, from the experience of the PRI regime to the process of democratization and the contemporary specter of narcoviolence. Contributors will explore how the press has functioned as a more open space for critique than commonly believed, examining the codes, negotiations, and strategies that have enabled open expression, as well as offering new discussions of the nuanced mechanisms of official control and censorship. Bringing together academics and journalists from both sides of the border, this conference seeks to expand our understanding of what a free press has meant to Mexico during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Conference Agenda

April 30, 2014 | Institute of the Americas, Malamud Room at Weaver Center

5 – 6:30 p.m.

Keynote Address by Alfredo Corchado, Dallas Morning News
“A Reporter's Journey through Mexico's Drug War”

May 1, 2014 | UC San Diego, Villages West (building 2), Meeting Rooms on 2

9 – 10:45 a.m.

Panel I: The Press and the Public Sphere

Ana Maria Serna | Instituto Mora
“Infuría y Difamación”: Press Crimes and the Regulation of Language
in Mexico (1898-1940)



Ev Meade | University of San Diego

“The Plaza is for the Populacho, the Desert is for Deep Sea Fish: *La Nota Roja en México*”

Rafael Barajas | La Jornada

“The Modern Mediatic War”

Commentator: **Emily Edmonds-Poli** | University of San Diego

11 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Panel II: The PRI and the Press

Michael Lettieri | UC San Diego and Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies

“In the Service of the *Gremio*: Bus Industry Magazines, PRI Corporatism, and the Politics of Trade Publications”

Paul Gillingham | University of Pennsylvania

“How Much News Was Fit to Print? The Provincial Press and the PRI”

Renata Keller | Boston University

“Testing the Limits of Censorship: *Política* Magazine and Mexico’s ‘Perfect Dictatorship,’ 1960-1967”

Javier Garza | Journalist

“The Local Press: A Story of Survival”

Commentator: **Peter Smith**, UC San Diego

12:45 – 2 p.m.

Lunch Break

2 – 3:45 p.m.

Panel III: Perspectives on Censorship and Democratization

Jacinto Rodríguez | Journalist

“Prensa y Poder: Los Orígenes de la Diactadura Perfecta”

Vanessa Freije | Duke University and Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies

“An Exercise in Frustration: Unexpected Consequences of Censorship in Post-1968 Mexico City”

Benjamin Smith | University of Warwick

“Censorship, Bribery, and Public Relations in Golden Age Mexico”

Sam Quinones | Journalist

Commentator: **David Shirk**, University of San Diego and UC San Diego

4 – 4:15 p.m.

Introductory remarks, Javier Valdez Cárdenas (In Spanish)

4:15 – 6 p.m.

Roundtable on Contemporary Challenges

Vicente Calderón | Tijuana Press

Eileen Truax | National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Los Angeles

Discussant: **Froylán Enciso**, State University of New York at Stony Brook and Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies

6 p.m.

Reception

May 2, 2014 | Center for US-Mexican Studies, Institute of the Americas

8:30 a.m.

Working Session (closed door)

Speaker Bios

(Alphabetical order)



Rafael Barajas is a writer and cartoonist under the pseudonym of “El Físgón.” He received his B.A. in architecture from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in 1978 and began his master’s degree in urban sociology; however, since he left college in 1979, he has dedicated himself to the making of political cartoons. He has been publishing in *La Jornada* since 1984 and received the National Journalism Award in 1999. Barajas was a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation from 2003-2004. Due to his shyness his public talks are not frequent. His only serious job has been that of a humorist. He dislikes politicians, but spends every day drawing them.



Vicente Calderón has been a border journalist for almost 30 years. He currently edits *Tijuana Press*, a news blog and subdivision to tijuanaapress.com, which is an agency dedicated to the production of informative content for both sides of the border.

Calderón is founder of the first native online journal in Tijuana. His experience has allowed him to develop a trans-border vision about the recent press evolution in Mexico and the U.S. He has been a producer for international media chains such as CBS, ITN, RAI and most recently Al Jazeera America.



Alfredo Corchado, Mexico bureau chief for the *Dallas Morning News*, is a noted expert on immigration, drug violence and foreign policy between the United States and Mexico. He has reported on everything from the disappearance of women in Juarez to the exodus of Mexico’s middle class to the United States.

Over the years, Corchado has exposed government corruption and the reach of Mexican drug traffickers into U.S. communities. He has described the perils that journalists face and the disturbing result: an increasingly silent Mexican press.



Emily Edmonds-Poli is associate professor at the University of San Diego. Her research focuses on decentralization and democratization in Mexico and Latin America. Her article in *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, “Decentralization under the Fox Administration: Progress or Stagnation?,” examines and evaluates the trajectory of decentralization and local autonomy under the first non-PRI president.

Her book “Contemporary Mexican Politics” (co-authored with David Shirk) provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview and analysis of the Mexican political system. Edmonds-Poli’s current research examines the degree to which Mexican municipalities are able to attain and exercise their fiscal independence from the central government. She is also a former fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.



Froylán Enciso is a Sinaloa-born doctoral student at the Department of History with a degree in international relations from El Colegio de México (2002). He is currently a fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. His project traces the history of drug dealing in Sinaloa, the birthplace of one of the most violent and successful drug organizations in the Western Hemisphere.

Prior to his life as a graduate student, Enciso was a researcher for the *Los Angeles Times*, a consultant for the Network of Diplomatic Archives at the Ibero-American Summit and a research assistant for various academic institutions, publishing houses and media outlets.

Enciso has published more than 40 academic works, including books, articles and reviews, and more than 100 journalistic articles.



Vanessa Freije is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at Duke University, and a current fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. She received her B.A. in history from UC San Diego, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa. Her dissertation focuses on the political and intellectual history of the rise of muckraking journalism in Mexico City. Her work analyzes both the ways in which new journalistic styles shaped debates about Mexican political change and the role that leaks and scandals played in fomenting dissent within the ruling PRI.



Javier Garza was editorial director of *El Siglo de Torreón* from 2006 to 2013, during a wave of violence that put La Laguna region in the middle of the drug war. The coverage done by *El Siglo* was met by several attacks from criminal groups. Garza was responsible for designing security protocols for reporters and editors to handle threats and aggressions. Those safety measures have been taken as a model in other newsrooms in Mexico and other countries, and Garza currently serves as an adviser on Newsroom Safety at the World Association of Newspapers (WAN-IFRA).



Paul Gillingham is a lecturer in Latin American history at the University of Pennsylvania. He specializes in the history of 20th-century Mexico, and has published widely on themes including archaeology, demography, education, elections, popular protest and violence. His first book, “Cuauhtémoc’s Bones: Forging National Identity in Modern Mexico” (UNM, 2011), was awarded the CLAH Mexican history book prize; his second, co-edited with Ben Smith, is “Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968,” will be released by Duke University Press this month.



Renata Keller is an assistant professor of international relations in the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University. She received her Ph.D. in Latin American history from the University of Texas at Austin in 2012, and is currently completing a year on leave as a Kluge Fellow at the Library of Congress. Her book, “Mexico’s Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution,” is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.



Michael Lettieri is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego, where he is currently a scholar at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. He received a B.A. in history and spanish from Bowdoin College. Prior to beginning his Ph.D., he worked as a research fellow at the council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington and maintains an active interest in contemporary Latin American politics. His research focuses on the informal mechanisms of PRI rule using a case study of the public transportation industry. Through this, he examines the central role intermediaries and mid-level political actors played in sustaining the soft-authoritarian system.



Ana Maria Serna holds both a Ph.D. in Latin American history and a M.A. in Latin American studies from the University of Chicago. Her areas of focus include social history and themes related to the Mexican revolution and the petroleum history, foreigners in Mexico, and journalism.

Her most recent publications include: “Un análisis de los casos relativos a la libertad de imprenta: Los juicios de amparo de Filomeno Mata Rodríguez en 1901 y 1910,” (México, Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, 2013), and “La Justicia durante el Porfiriato y la Revolución 1898-1914: Casos que Motivan la Interposición del Amparo relacionados con

la libertad de Expresión y los Delitos de Difamación, calumnia e Injurias” (México, Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, 2010).



Everard “Ev” Meade is director of the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego. His research explores the history and theory of human rights, with a geographic focus on the Americas and a thematic focus on the relationships between violence, memory and the law.

He has two forthcoming books on the history of the death penalty and its abolition in Mexico. The first explores the declining practice of the death penalty during a century of civil war and foreign invasion that made the firing squad an implacable symbol of Mexico at home and abroad; the second examines attempts to reinstate the death penalty after its

elimination from the federal penal code in 1929, the spectacular murder cases that provoked them and the changing meanings of impunity from the age of global war to the age of international human rights.



Sam Quinones is a journalist and author of two books about Mexico, where he lived and worked for 10 years as a freelance writer. He is the recipient of a 1998 Alicia Patterson Fellowship and a 2008 Maria Moors Cabot award from Columbia University, given to recognize a career of excellence in covering Latin America. When his second book – “Antonio’s Gun and Delfino’s Dream: True Tales of Mexican Migration” – was released in 2007, the San Francisco Chronicle Book Review called him “the most original American writer on Mexico and the border out there.” Formerly of the Los Angeles Times, he lives in

Los Angeles and is at work on his third book, about the opiate epidemic and heroin traffickers from a small town in Nayarit, to be published in the winter by Bloomsbury Press.



Jacinto Rodríguez is a recognized journalist. He is currently the Mexican Center research associate at the University of Texas at Austin. Rodríguez is also the editorial assistant director for the *Emeequis* magazine. He is the author of various works and is a member of Collective Security Analysis with Democracy, AC (CASADE). His research areas include intellectuals, press and power, freedom of expression, student movements of 1968, intelligence apparatus and dirty war, and historical archives.



David Shirk, a current University of San Diego (USD) associate professor and former 10-year director of the Trans-Border Institute, is a visiting professor this year at the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) and is leading the Center's new Three Californias Initiative.

His teaching covers a wide range of subject areas, mainly concentrated in comparative politics, international political economy, Latin American studies and U.S.-Latin American relations, with a concentration in Mexico and border politics. He conducts research on Mexican politics, U.S.-Mexican relations and law enforcement and security along the U.S.-Mexican border. Shirk also directs the Justice in Mexico Project (justiceinmexico.org), which examines rule of law and security issues in Mexico.



Benjamin Smith is a historian of 19th- and 20th-century grassroots politics. He has done most of his research in the archives, villages, churches and markets of the predominantly indigenous state of Oaxaca. He is author of "Pistoleros and Popular Movements and The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico" and co-editor of "Dictablanda" with Paul Gillingham. He has recently made the reluctant and potentially rash decision to move beyond his patria chic and is now attempting to write up a history of the Mexican press.



Peter Smith is a distinguished professor of political science and Simon Bolivar Professor of Latin American Studies at UC San Diego. He specializes in comparative politics, Latin American politics and U.S.-Latin American relations. His major publications include "Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change" (1969), "Argentina and the Failure of Democracy: Conflict among Political Elites, 1904-1955" (1974), "Labyrinths of Power: Political Recruitment in Twentieth-Century Mexico" (1979), "Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations" (1996; 2nd edition, 2000) and "Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective" (2005). He is co-author of "Modern Latin America" (1984), now in its sixth edition (2004) and a selection of the History Book Club. He also served as director of UC San Diego's

Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies and director of Latin American Studies.



Eileen Truax is an awarded journalist with over 18 years experience in Mexico and the United States. She has served as Mexican Congress correspondent and has covered Mexican Politics, U.S.-Mexico relations and immigration issues. Born in Mexico City, Eileen moved to Los Angeles in 2004 and joined the La Opinión Spanish-language newspaper as an immigration and Mexican-communities reporter, a position that she held until 2011. In 2012 she was elected Spanish at-large officer for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, chapter Los Angeles (NAHJ-LA).

Eileen received a B.A. in social communication and a M.A. in communication and politics from Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico, and has been a fellowship recipient for the Scripps Howard Immigration Training Program in Washington, the Institute of Justice and Journalism Immigration in the Heartland Program in Oklahoma, Okla., and the Inter-American Development Bank Training for Latin-American journalists in Cartagena, Colombia.



Javier Valdez Cárdenas studied sociology at the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa. He was a television reporter on Culiacán's Channel 3 in the early 1990s. He won the Sinaloa Journalism Award for his work in the culture segment of the news. He joined the newspaper Noroeste and from 1998 was a correspondent of the national newspaper La Jornada. He is the founding reporter of the weekly Ríodoce, a publication that, without meaning to, has specialized in drug-trafficking coverage.

Furthermore, he is the author of the books "Miss Narco," edited by Aguilar of Santillana, which contains reports of women involved in the drug trade, and "Malayerba," published by Jus, which compiles articles published in Ríodoce and is prefaced by Carlos Monsivais. Currently, he is collaborating on the blog titled Nuestra Aparente Rendición, or Our Apparent Surrender, which is directed by Lolita Bosch. In November 2013 Valdez and the whole Ríodoce team won the PEN Club Award. In February of 2014 he published his new book "Con Una Granada en la Boca," with stories about the trauma of living in a violent country.