THE

MUSTARD SEED



Denver Justice & Peace Committee

Celebrating 28 years of peace and justice!

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International Justice Takes The Stand In Peru

By Angela Shugarts, Office Assistant/Regis University Work-Study Student, and Harriet Mullaney

DJPC 2008 Salon Series: International Justice Please join us every month to discuss, participate, and take action to bring justice to international countries in Latin America!

Mark your calendars!

DJPC members were confronted with the abuses of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's in November through guest speaker Gisela Ortiz Perea's riveting presentation on the 15-year struggle to bring justice in the case of her brother, Enrique Ortiz Perea, and eight others who were disappeared and murdered in July 1992. These efforts were rewarded in September 2007 when Chile agreed to extradite former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori back to Peru to face trial on charges of corruption and human rights crimes committed while he was president.

During Fujimori's rule in Peru from 1990-2000, he was responsible for heinous crimes against humanity. Numerous murders, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and kidnappings initiated by Fujimori and his Colina Group death squad occurred in Peru. After his election to a third term, allegations of misuse of the intelligence service were made against him. Stating that he was a victim of political persecution, Fujimori claimed most of the charges brought against him were either fabricated or committed by his personal advisor Vladimiro Montesinos. Facing a corruption scandal, Fujimori abandoned his presidency and fled to Japan where Japanese authorities recognized his claim to Japanese nationality. He submitted his resignation by fax, however, the Peruvian Congress rejected it and

discharged him on grounds of "moral incapacity." In 2001, Peru issued an international arrest warrant for Fujimori.

In 2005, Fujimori flew to Chile with the intention to launch a campaign for re-election. Upon landing in Chile, the Peruvian ex-patriot community demanded the Chilean government arrest Fujimori for extradition. Chile initially failed to agree because the terms of extradition treaties between Peru and Chile were complex, requiring certain technicalities, such as the insistence that the crimes with which Fujimori was charged also be crimes under Chilean law. Peruvian authorities first had to present sufficient evidence of Fujimori's alleged crimes to Chilean courts. On September 21, 2007, the Chilean Supreme Court decided in favor of extraditing the former president to face trial in Peru. (article continued on page 4)



Human rights activists protest in Lima September 2007 for swiftness in Fujimori's judiciary cases. Photo at www.aiusa.org.

Inside This Issue

Message from the DJPC Board Memberpage 2	Who Are the Cuban Five?page 6
Nobel Laureate Esquivel in Denverpage 3	Advocacy & Nonviolent Activism Updatepage 8
DJPC Salon Seriespage 5	CAMINOS Updatepage 10

MISSION STATEMENT

Denver Justice and Peace Committee is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America through education, solidarity projects and nonviolent activism.

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Thanks to all our supportive members and the volunteers who continue to help work on program development, fundraising, newsletter publication, and office assistance!

Message From the DJPC Board

The Denver Justice and Peace Committee is much more than just an organization I belong to or a board on which I serve. DJPC is a community of diverse, dedicated people with whom I share values and who challenge me to make a positive impact on my community and world. DJPC is a vehicle through which I am empowered to work joyfully with others to create peace in Latin America and engage in positive activism. I am connected to many national and local organizations. At the end of the year, however, DJPC received my largest donation, greater than to any other organization with which I am involved.

I believe it is my privilege to support grassroots, local organizations like DJPC. I get back much more than I give. While I strongly believe in the national organizations I support and am thankful for all they do, there is something special I feel when I give (both money and time) to DJPC. It is a connection that is real and personal and one that empowers me as a member of this community. The local component of DJPC creates direct avenues of access into the democratic process that I do not experience with national organizations. This local access provides me with a map and vision of what we can do together to see into and change the realities that exist in current policies and people's lives.

DJPC is locally based but grounded beyond through its international reach. "Reach" indicates communication from me and other DJPC members to areas where I alone could have little impact, i.e. a conduit. DJPC serves as a conduit to Political Participation, Know-how, Insight, Awareness, Empowerment, Community and Self-Actualization. I hope you will join me in continuing your pledge to support DJPC in time and money to the fullest potential of your ability. From personal experience, I can tell you that the payoff of giving to DJPC is multi-fold of what one gives.

In community, peace and solidarity,

Gabriela Flora

DJPC Board member



is proud to announce the presentation of an evening with

1980 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel



Photo from www.peacejam.org

Friday, February 29th

Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

Central Presbyterian Church, 1600 Sherman Street in Denver

All seating for the event will be general admission.

Tickets are **\$20** in advance and **\$25** at the door the night of the event, with all proceeds to benefit the PeaceJam Foundation.

Call (303) 455-2099 to order your tickets today!

DJPC is a co-sponsor of this event!

(International Justice Takes The Stand In Peru - Continued from page 1)

Two of Fujimori's most egregious crimes include the La Cantuta University and Barrios Altos massacres. Under his direction, the Colina Group, a specialized squad of 57 military and intelligence officers, murdered 15 men, women, and children in Barrios Altos, Lima on November 3, 1991, and nine students, among them Gisela's brother, and a lecturer from La Cantuta University on July 18, 1992.

In Barrios Altos, six to eight men violently entered a house, beat and forced 15 people to lie face down on the floor, and machine gunned them. A survivor, Alfonso Rodas Alvitres, described his experience and memories, "...It happened around 10:00pm...a group of six uniformed people entered abruptly...They started saying things like 'you are going to get it now'...they insulted us and ordered us to lay on the ground. One man stood up and said 'I'm the one who organized this' and they shot him. Then the massacre started..."

In the La Cantuta massacre, the Colina Group entered student dormitories in the middle of the night, abducted nine students and a professor and eventually killed all of them. The mother of one student, Raida Condor, recalled her fears with striking words, "They took the son I most loved, my first born...when I was convinced he was dead, I lost all fear..." Her testimony illustrates the horrifying effects of Fujimori's actions and explains the resolve family members have exhibited in their demands for justice.

Evidence provided by Peru's Truth Commission demonstrated that Fujimori embezzled millions of dollars in public funds and transferred them to special accounts in the National Intelligence Service (with the Spanish acronym, "SIN"). The funds were used for bribes, presidential campaigns, personal enrichment, phone tapping, and surveillance equipment used against civil society, journalists, and politicians. Other members of Fujimori's cabinet and various members of the armed forces are awaiting trial on similar charges.

Fujimori has been charged with first degree murder and forced disappearance along with additional charges for corruption and human rights violations. His tactics were systematic and deliberate. He utilized his power for personal gain and produced a climate of fear that still echoes today. Fujimori's trial—realized through the efforts of Gisela and other survivors and human rights activists in Peru and abroad—represents a major step in Peru's transition to justice.

Fujimori's trial began on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2007. While this is a great step towards establishing justice and ending impunity in Peru, it should come as no surprise that members of APRODEH, Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (Association for the Protection of Human Rights) received anonymous death threats in December 2007. The threats specifically targeted human rights lawyer Dr. Gloria Cano Legua, who has been working on legal cases for the victims and their families.

For more information about the human rights violations committed during the years of Alberto Fujimori's presidency of Peru, watch Amnesty International's video, *Justice Without Borders: The Campaign for Alberto Fujimori's Extradition*, featuring Gisela Ortiz Perea, at http://www.amnestyusa.org/justice/page.php?id=1011420. To lend your voice to the international call in support of the victims' legal team, visit http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/siteapps/advocacy/index.aspx?c=jhKPIXPCIoE&b=2590179&template=x.ascx&action=9699.

Special Note: DJPC member, Hayden Gore, is in Peru this month observing Fujimori's trial. He will talk about his observations at the March Salon on Thursday, March 28. Check the DJPC website for more information.

Don't miss out on any DJPC events!

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and important Latin America Action Alerts!

To sign up, send an e-mail to: djpc@denjustpeace.org Subject: Sign me up for the listserve!

Or check our website frequently for DJPC Event updates. www.denjustpeace.org

Salon Series: Winter-Spring 2008

By Harriet Mullaney

The well-attended January salon on 'International Justice (IJ)' kicked off what looks to be an excellent series. Initially, attendees shared their thoughts on IJ and, as the evening unfolded, it was fascinating to see how many of these ideas were touched upon by the experts. We viewed Amnesty International's video, *Justice Without Borders*, which presented the cases against Fujimori in Peru and Rios Montt in Guatemala and discussed cases in the International Criminal Court (ICC) regarding Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Hannah Garry of the University of Colorado Law School and David Akerson of the University of Denver's School of Law, both of whom worked for or with the ICC, offered their unique perspectives on its efficacy.

Otoniel De La Roca Mendoza, a Guatemalan exile living in Denver, will personalize our exploration IJ at the salon on February 21. In 1980, Otoniel joined the Rebel Armed Forces as a guerilla combatant. In 1988, he was captured by the Guatemalan Army, and was subsequently tortured and held in a clandestine prison. Otoniel was a key witness before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights (IACHR) in the case of "disappeared" guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca, the husband of American citizen Jennifer Harbury. Otoniel will address the current situation in Guatemala, the impact of recent elections and the status of cases being prosecuted on behalf of victims of the civil war genocide. (See separate notice for details.)

On March 27, Hayden Gore will share his impressions of the case against former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, currently on trial for his role in the assassinations at La Cantuta University and in Barrios Altos during his presidency. Hayden is in Peru this month to observe the trial so his analysis will be most timely.

On April 17, the salon will travel to *El Centro Su Teatro* where we will consider justice and what it means to be a human being through the eyes of poet, Pablo Neruda. On May 15, we will conclude the current series with a discussion of approaches to IJ and their effectiveness. DJPC appreciates the reception to the salon series—everyone's participation is what makes them so interesting and successful!

2008 DJPC SALON SERIES

INVITES YOU TO AN EVENING ON INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008 FROM 7:00-9:00 PM

DENVER JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMITTEE
COURTHOUSE SQUARE APARTMENTS
COMMUNITY ROOM
901 W. 14TH AVE.
DENVER

WITH SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER OTONIEL DE LA ROCA MENDOZA,

PLEASE RSVP BY WEDNESDAY, FEB 20TH BY E-MAILING: DJPC@DENJUSTPEACE.ORG
OR LEAVE A MESSAGE AT: 303-623-1463

!!!Don't forget to MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the NEXT SALON SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 27TH !!!

Free the Cuban Five!



¡No Puede Ser, Otra Guerra!

Miro las fotos de unos niños alegres En Iraq la mitad de su población son menores de 15. ¿Habrá guerra? ¡No puede ser!

Miro las fotos de soldados armados. ¿Así es su pueblo? En la región las tropes estadounidenses rebasan ya los 250 mil. ¿Habrá guerra? ¡No puede ser!

> Miro todas las fotos, leo toda la prensa. ¿Así es el mundo? Unos ricos más ricos, otros pobres más pobres. epidemias, catástrofes, conflictos . . .

> > Otra guerra ¡No puede ser! ¡No puede ser!

- Antonio Guerrero

Who are the Cuban Five?

From the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five

Their names are Ramón Labañino Salazar, Fernando González Llort, Rene González Sehwerert, Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, and Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez (see photo). Three of them were born in Cuba and two in the U.S. They are important, although relatively unknown, for their role in uncovering information about the role of Cuban exile groups in attacks on Cuban institutions.

Since 1959, Cuba has been subjected to threats, sanctions, invasions, sabotage, and violent attacks on its soil, resulting in 3,478 deaths and another 2,099 wounded. It has thus developed vigilance against foreign attacks.

In 1976, 73 people died when a bomb exploded aboard a commercial Cuban airliner, destroying the plane in mid-air. The masterminds behind the attack were two men of Cuban-origin, Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles, former CIA operatives who currently live in Miami.

In the early 90s, following the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba tried to establish a tourism industry. Soon after, right-wing exile groups in Miami started a violent campaign targeting tourist hotels and resorts, buses, airports and other facilities to discourage foreigners from visiting the island nation. In 1997, as part of that campaign, a bomb exploded in the lobby of Havana's Hotel Copacabana, killing Fabio DeCelmo, an Italian tourist. The Cuban authorities arrested Raul Ernesto Cruz Leon, a native of El Salvador who confessed to having been paid thousands of dollars by anti-Castro exile groups based in Miami to plant the bomb.

Due to the lack of response from the FBI to stop such attacks, Cuba sent the Cuban Five to Miami to gather information about similar acts being planned to derail them before they were carried out. The Five were able to establish evidence implicating specific Miami exile groups and individuals.

In 1998, President Fidel Castro sent a personal emissary, Colombian Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez, to deliver a hand-written note to President Bill Clinton, asking that the U.S. indict and prosecute those who committed crimes against Cuba. A month later, the U.S. sent an FBI team to Havana to discuss collaboration with Cuba on stopping acts of aggression emanating from Miami. At the meeting, Cuba handed over 64 files containing the results of its investigation into 31 different terrorist acts and plans against the island nation during the 90s. The Cuban government enclosed details of these operations, including photographs of the explosives used.

Cuba then waited for the FBI to take action, but instead, on September 12, 1998, it arrested the Cuban Five. After their arrest, the Five spent 17 months in solitary confinement cells. The 7 month trial took place in Miami. They were charged with 26 counts of violating the federal laws, 24 of which were relatively minor and technical offenses.

The Cuban Five were sentenced to maximum prison terms. Gerardo Hernandez received a double life sentence and Antonio Guerrero and Ramon Labañino, life sentences. Fernando Gonzalez and René Gonzalez received 19 and 15 years, respectively. <u>Antonio Guerrero is serving his life sentence in Florence, Colorado.</u> The case is currently being appealed in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

For more information visit www.freethefive.org or www.antiterroristas.cu

You can send a letter to Antonio Guerrero to show your support: Antonio Guerrero, Reg. # 58741-004, P.O. Box 7000, Florence, CO 81226.

ADVOCACY & NONVIOLENT ACTIVISM UPDATE

Colombia Update

Provided by the Latin America Working Group

Many of the changes in aid to Colombia that activists, including many from DJPC, contacted their members of Congress about in 2007 became law when the president signed the all-rolled-into-one spending bill on December 26.

While still very far from perfect, the law makes some positive changes in U.S. aid and policy towards Colombia. The bill:

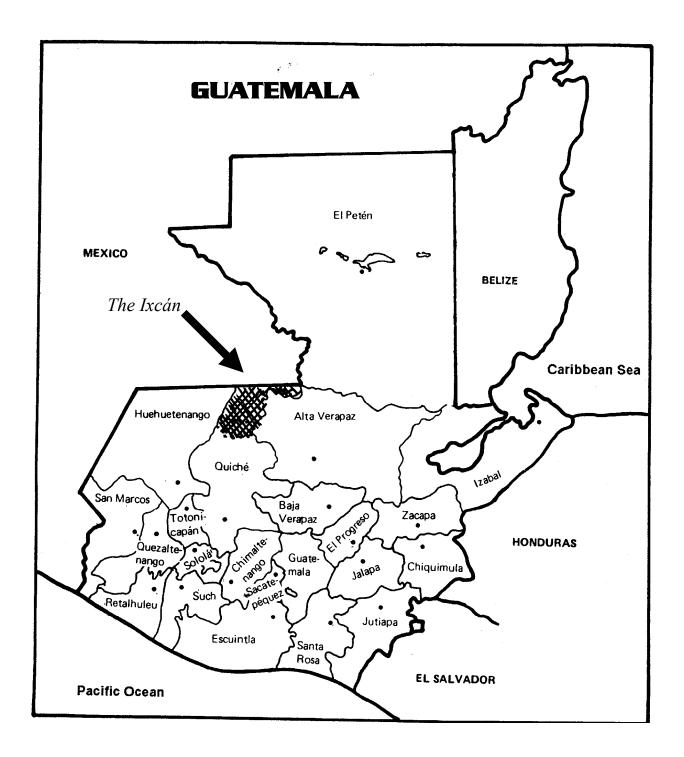
- cuts military and police aid in the foreign operations bill by \$141.5 million below what the President asked for, a 31% cut.
- increases economic and social aid by \$97.4 million, a 70% increase.
- includes aid to strengthen human rights and protect victims of violence, including funding for investigation and prosecution of human rights abuses; witness protection for victims; investigation of mass graves; funding for legal representation of victims; and contributions to the UN Human Rights office in Colombia.
- cuts aid for the inhumane and environmentally damaging aerial spraying program, and increases aid for alternative development programs.
- ties human rights conditions to 30%, not just 25%, of military aid in the foreign operations bill.
- includes \$15 million for development aid for Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities; includes in the human rights conditions that the Army must respect the rights and territories of Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities; and restricts investment in oil palm development if it causes people to be displaced or environmental damage.

What wasn't achieved? Among other things, funding in the less transparent and less accountable defense bill, which also includes funding for counternarcotics programs, was not affected. While human rights conditioning was improved, 70% of military aid remains outside these requirements, and funding for aerial spraying continues. But this legislation marks a real step forward, only made possible through the actions of those in support of peace and human rights in Colombia.

To see the complete text of legislation or to read the blog entry by Center for International Policy's Adam Isacson, visit <u>www.lawg.org</u>

DJPC Advocacy Actions taken since October 2007

- •Oct Asked Senators Salazar and Allard to sign Senate Resolution 178 condemning the brutal murders of women and young girls in Guatemala and expressing sympathy for their families. *To date neither Colorado Senator has co-signed this resolution*.
- •Oct Asked Colorado Representatives to support House Resolution 618, bringing attention to the plight of Afro-Colombian communities and calling on the Colombian government to combat racial discrimination and protect Afro-Colombians from human rights violations. (See previous page for more information.)
- •Nov Wrote to Senator Salazar, thanking him for supporting the DREAM Act, which would enable high school graduates to obtain legal permanent residency upon completion of either two years college or military service. Unfortunately, the DREAM Act did not pass in 2007. Look for it again in 2008.
- •Nov Wrote to the Colorado delegation, requesting that they vote against the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement citing the failures of NAFTA, which caused increased job insecurity, mass displacement of farmers, forced migration of populations, along with other concerns. *Unfortunately, all Colorado Democrats and Republicans voted in favor of this agreement.* Following the vote, we expressed our concern with these votes. We expect the Colombia and possibly the Panama Free Trade Agreements will come up for vote before the end of the Bush Administration. Keep a look out for ways to take action!
- •Nov Co-signed a letter delivered to Chipotle Mexican Grill by the Alliance for Fair Food, requesting that the company address human rights abuses of farm workers in the company's tomato supply chain and expressing disappointment that the company has thus far failed to take action to end degrading and inhuman conditions for these workers.
- •**Dec** Sent holiday cards to the Colorado delegation, reminding them that as they were enjoying the holidays, sadly there are more than one billion others around the world who cannot because of extreme poverty. Therefore, we urged them to co-sponsor the Jubilee Act which would expand eligibility for debt cancellation to 67 impoverished countries, provided they use the money to address extreme poverty.
- •Jan Endorsed an open letter to Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom Caballeros, demanding that the Government of Guatemala prosecute those who were intellectually and physically responsible for the massacre in the Spanish Embassy and the genocide in Guatemala, in accordance with national and international laws. The request also called for the government to ensure justice and respect for all the women and men who work in the construction of a tolerant, just and dignified new Guatemala.
- •Jan Sent a letter to Bechtel's CEO, Riley Bechtel, to express serious concern with the corporation's activities in Ecuador. The letter calls for Bechtel and its Ecuadorian subsidiary to address the demands and grievances of the residents of Guayaquil, including forgiveness of all residents' water debts and reconnection of water services for those whose access was cut due to an inability to pay, and to pay all fines and debts the corporation incurred during operations in Guayaquil.
- •Jan Asked the Colorado delegation to support the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA), groundbreaking legislation that will reduce violence against women and girls worldwide. This is important to women in Guatemala, where over 3,000 have been murdered in unresolved and largely uninvestigated *femicides*. (See *Mustard Seed* issues: May 2007, September 2006, January 2004)



The Ixcán region is in the northern third of the El Quiché department. A lowland jungle area, it is hot and humid with an extended rainy season of up to eight months. Approximately thirty-five years ago, land-starved Maya from the western highlands began carving out communities in what had been almost completely uninhabited jungle. Their success, in a large part due to the highly organized and cooperative nature of their communities, drew the attention of political and military leaders who feared the growing strength of people who had previously been struggling to survive. By the mid-1970s, political and military powers were attacking individual community leaders – such as catechists and teachers – and the Ixcán was one of the regions hardest hit during the scorched earth campaign of the early 1980s. Because of its location next to the border, many families fled into Mexico when their communities where attacked and burned. **Information provided by NISGUA (www.nisgua.org)**

Caminos Update -

By Phil Neff, CAMINOS Accompanier

The following is our first letter from Phil "Felipe" Neff, CAMINOS' eleventh human rights accompanier. CAMINOS and The Congregational Church of Needham, Massachusetts will co-sponsor Phil as he accompanies witnesses testifying against former military commanders charged with genocide. He will be accompanying in the Ixcán region in the area NISGUA refers to as "the jungle trek" As Phil describes below, there have been setbacks and delays in these important trials, and international accompaniment is one way to stand in solidarity with those who demand justice in Guatemala.

Queridos compañer@s:

Greetings from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala! I arrived here in mid-December and have been reviewing and improving my Spanish skills for the past few weeks. I will soon be heading to Guatemala City to begin training for my role as a human rights accompanier with NISGUA. I am extremely proud to represent the U.S. human rights community through my work here in Guatemala in the indigenous Mayan communities of Santa María Tzeja and Cuarto Pueblo in the Quiché. I am also excited to be able to introduce myself to the supporters of CAMINOS and the Denver Justice and Peace Committee, who make human rights accompaniment in Guatemala possible.

I was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest and until traveling to Guatemala I had been living in Seattle, Washington, where I studied creative writing and human rights at the University of Washington. It was through a UW study-abroad program that I first became involved in human rights issues in Guatemala. Like many others from the privileged North first facing the reality of life in a less-developed country—let alone a country that, like Guatemala, only recently emerged from a bloody 36-year conflict—I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of poverty, violence, and suffering which the majority of Guatemalans face every day. Yet amidst these horrors I found a powerful source of hope in the example of the courageous survivors and committed activists who risk their very lives to promote truth, justice, and human rights in their country. How could I ever repay them for the inspiration and education that they had given me? I believe human rights accompaniment is one small step in the lifelong mission of living up to their example.

Despite a few days of the usual stomach issues, my time so far in Guatemala has been very good-my Spanish is improving *poco a poco*, I have climbed the volcano Chicabal and been showered by ash from the neighboring volcano Santiagüito, and have visited the Mayan saint San Simón in San Andrés Xecúl. However, my work as an accompanier will begin under the shadow of some bad news. On December 17 the Constitutional Court of Guatemala ruled against the extradition of former military officials to stand trial in Spain for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. This is a blow against the movement for justice in Guatemala and a demonstration of continued impunity for those who have committed the worst crimes imaginable. Moreover, it is a violation of international law, which under the principle of *universal jurisdiction* allows for the prosecution of such crimes in the legal system of any country in the world.

However, the movement for justice in Guatemala will struggle onwards. Two legal cases against the same accused *genocidios* continue in the national courts--it is the courageous witnesses involved in these cases who I will be accompanying during my time in Guatemala. I hope that I will be able perform this unique work in a spirit of humility, openness, respect, and solidarity. I can't say that I am not apprehensive, but I also cannot wait to begin. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to communicating with you all during my time in Guatemala.

En solidaridad, Phíl "Felípe" Neff Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

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