

The Silencing of Maya Women from Mamá Maquín to Rigoberta Menchú

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Introduction

A COOL BLUE RIVER CUTTING THROUGH GREEN PASTURES LOSES ITS COLORS. THE crispness of water rushing over white rocks is silenced. The fresh scent of damp earth is soured. The river is a weapon. A handmaiden to pain. It quenches no thirst. It denies air. Instead of green and blue, the mind's eye sees the struggle to breathe. The effort to lift a broken limb. The water hits the rocks like elbows, ankles, and knees. A face is lost as it grates across a boulder, a boulder smooth and slick only to the hand that slides over it, grasping. Nails ripping. Teeth breaking. The water cold, almost frozen. Moving. Rocks bloodied. Everything hurts. The body is thrown to shore. Crumpled. Empty.

The river carries away the evidence. Washes the pain off the rocks. Carries it down through the valley where women collect drinking water and children bathe. A child finds a tooth and tosses it to shore where it turns into sand. The tooth is lost, forgotten, a missing part of the landscape of the scarred face. Its absence, like the empty army camp, is a reminder of terror.

Terror is a place that occupies memory long after the base has closed. It is a filter, the lens through which we understand the past, interpret the present, and upon which we base our hopes for the future. To understand Guatemala's current transition from authoritarian rule and its efforts to construct a democratic society based on the rule of law, we must first try to comprehend how the majority rural Maya experienced state structures of terror and how they internalized these structures as part of their individual and collective identities. Violence was not merely an effect of state terror; it was one of myriad instruments the state used to assert its domination. In the early 1980s, violence against individuals and

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communities was selectively and massively enacted as an instrument of state terror throughout the country. Despite an internationally brokered peace process, violence has yet to become an artifact of the past. Rather, for victims and victimizers, the experience and survival of particular instrumentations of state violence have fused discrete experiences of physical and psychological violence, for both individuals and communities, within a continuum of survival.

Over time, the making and remaking of this continuum of survival creates what I call a living memory of terror, wherein the memory of surviving a past physical or psychological act of violence is as real and current as today's experience with an act of violence, or its threat. This living memory of terror can reinvoké the physical and psychological pain of past acts of violence in unexpected moments. A tree, for example, is not just a tree. A river, not just a river. At a given moment, a tree is a reminder of the baby whose head was smashed against a tree by a soldier. The tree, and the memory of the baby it invokes, awaken a chain of memories of terror, including witnessing the murder of a husband or brother who was tied to another tree and beaten to death—perhaps on the same day or perhaps years later.¹ Unfortunately, these are not exceptional stories of the horrors of war. They were common occurrences in Maya villages throughout *La Violencia*² and now form a part of individual and collective memory, the living memory of terror. This living memory of terror, internalized in individual and community identities, demarcates and defines contemporary life and culture for the majority rural Maya today.

The concept of a "living memory of terror" is used here to understand and contest the violence of the past, as well as the fear, borne of this violence, that thrives long after actual physical violence dissipates. I also explore testimony, official discourse, and truth in popular memory in relation to the still contested reconstruction of Guatemalan history. To these ends, I provide an overview of the silencing of Rigoberta Menchú and Mamá Maquín, as well as an analysis of testimonies of rural survivors of *La Violencia* and their continuing efforts to reconstruct their lives through the public assertion of memory and the reshaping of history.

To construct a democratic society that respects human rights and dignity, structural terror must end. State infrastructures of institutions and laws that, in the past, employed violence as an instrument of imbuing society with terror must be dismantled and rebuilt upon a foundation of democratic values and practices. No longer can violence be the primary recourse of the state. Yet, even these grand and significant gestures cannot guarantee a consolidation of peace and fledgling democratic structures, for long after state structures of violence are dismantled, a living memory of terror persists and is reinvoked (with each new act of violence or its threat) in individual, community, and national consciousness. This living memory is part of the psyche and identity of the individual, the community, and the nation and it greatly affects individual and community capacities to embrace and reproduce the democratic values and practices necessary to the consolidation of democratic institutions and laws at the local and national levels.

As Paul Ricoeur (1967) wisely noted, “to project our past, our future, our human milieu around ourselves is precisely to situate ourselves.” An awareness of the contemporary situated subjectivity of the majority rural Maya allows us to seek a broader understanding of the experience of surviving a seemingly endless chain of violent events; within this experience, we encounter the nuanced complexity and meaning of terror.

Though the reification of violence and terror is an ever-present slippery slope in analytic attempts to seek understanding (Taussig, 1987), schematic descriptions of the phenomenology of terror indicate that lucid analysis and contestation can be found in the words of survivors. Marguerite Feitlowitz (1998: 77–83) suggests that terror presents a cascade of “unthinkable options” in a world where torture and death are “castigations for thought,” so people try “to stop thinking.” Her research on torture in Argentina found that “language itself became a prison” (*Ibid.*: 107). The narratives of survivor testimony presented here reaffirm the external and internal prisons in which massacre survivors have lived. For survivors giving testimony, the very act of verbalizing the experience and meaning of survival is a contestation and reshaping of the world. Recounting their experiences is painful, but it is also a cathartic relief since the pain is always with them. It is with them both in their silence and when giving testimony: “acts that restore the voice become not only a denunciation of the pain, but almost a diminution of the pain, a partial reversal of the process of torture itself” (Scarry, 1985: 50). Moreover, this recounting of experience is particularly significant for rural Maya (and especially for Maya women), who are seldom, if ever, asked to reconstruct national history because they are seen as apart from history, not representative agents of it (Sanford, 1997: 12–13).

Rigoberta Menchú and the Reshaping of Guatemalan History

In “The Small Voice of History,” Ranajit Guha (1996: 11) asks, “but suppose there were a historiography that regarded ‘what women were saying’ as integral to its project, what kind of history would it write?” Guha offers that a rewriting attentive to women’s voices will (1) “challenge the univocity of state discourse” and (2) “put the question of agency and instrumentality back in the narrative.”³

This is exactly what happened with the 1983 publication of Rigoberta Menchú’s autobiography, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (published in English in 1984 as *I, Rigoberta Menchú — An Indian Woman in Guatemala*). By asserting the political consciousness, self-expression, and political action of Maya women, Menchú challenged official histories of Guatemala and romantic representations of Maya women. Each, in distinct ways, negated the dynamic and varied political responses of Maya women to Guatemalan state violence. Recorded and written in Paris by anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos Debray, *I, Rigoberta* chronicles the life of Rigoberta’s family and serves as a vehicle for the outsider (both non-Maya Guatemalans and the international

community) to understand the struggle of the Maya in Guatemala to defend their lands, communities, and culture in the face of ever-increasing state violence. Her book and multiple speaking engagements in Europe and the United States transformed Rigoberta’s standing in the world community as Maya, female, and *campesina*. Rigoberta came to represent the antithesis of stereotypes of Maya women as silent, traditional, static, lacking politics, and without agency. Indeed, *I, Rigoberta*, and later Rigoberta herself, demanded recognition of Maya women as more than pawns in political processes designed and led by others. Rigoberta obliged the world to recognize Maya women as agents of their own history, whose participation in political movements shaped those movements regardless of their initial catalyst. Tenacity, commitment, and determination brought Rigoberta recognition as an international advocate for the rights of the Maya — culminating with the Nobel Peace Prize.

Her book was published in 1983 at the height of state terror and an ongoing Guatemalan army “scorched earth” campaign against the Maya that had begun in 1981. Her autobiography and speaking engagements brought attention to the destruction of Maya villages and the brutal killings of the Maya, including members of her own family. Eighteen years after the publication of her book, the Commission for Historical Clarification defined the “scorched earth” campaign as genocidal acts committed against the Maya (CEH, 1999b). When published, Rigoberta’s book, more than any other publication, drew international attention to the plight of the Maya. In the midst of genocide in her country, she offered an alternative vision to the official version of a “war on communism.” In so doing, she became an active subject directly challenging state violence. Her autobiography and political action as a tireless speaker around the world reinserted the Maya, and Maya women in particular, into the historical narrative of Guatemala — firmly placing Maya women in that narrative as conscious subjects, not malleable manipulated instruments.

Although Rigoberta’s book and advocacy brought celebrity to her person and her cause, her efforts were not the first such attempts by Maya women to exercise political agency. Indeed, testimonies of Maya women, as well as archival and forensic research, repeatedly reveal Maya women as “agents rather than instruments” of political mobilization and contestation, which was “itself constituted by their participation” (Guha, 1996: 11).

On June 15, 1978, five years before the publication of *I, Rigoberta*, Amalia Eroncina Coy Pop publicly asserted her political consciousness, self-expression, and agency when she was crowned Indigenous Queen of San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz.⁴ Speaking to the crowd of mostly Q’eqchi’ and Poqonchi onlookers in Poqonchi, she referred to the Panzós massacre, which had occurred just two weeks earlier. Her statements were not without impact or retribution. A group of local ladinos, angered that she did not give her speech in Spanish and furious that she had spoken about the Panzós massacre, pressured the mayor of San Cristóbal and

the fair's beauty pageant committee to remove her title and crown. On June 21, 1978, one week after her speech, a new pageant was held and the committee chose a new indigenous queen — who gave her thanks in Spanish and did not mention the army massacre in Panzós. At the same time, the Guatemala City newspaper *El Gráfico* reported that the military base in Coban had dispatched army personnel to San Cristóbal to investigate “the content and meaning” of Coy Pop’s speech about Panzós. On June 26, 1978, less than one month after the Panzós massacre, Coy Pop traveled to Guatemala City to ask *El Gráfico* to “make public her energetic protest against the attitude of the group of ladinos who stripped her of her crown and also to publicly declare that no problems exist in her tranquil community.”⁵ This was, perhaps, as much a message to the army investigators as it was to the public-at-large. Testimony Number 30,478 was given to a REHMI investigator by someone who knew Amalia Pop. Her name is among the thousands listed in Chapter 2, “The Dead,” of Volume IV, “Victims of the Conflict.” She was killed in August 1983 in Coban — roughly the same time Rigoberta’s book was published.

Amalia Erondina Coy Pop is not alone — as a woman, a Maya, or a beauty queen — in being silenced by state violence. Women of all backgrounds have long been active in Guatemala’s struggle, and many of them have been brutally murdered. Rogelio Cruz, a former Miss Guatemala, was a member of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) in the 1960s. An architecture student from a middle-class family, she ran a clandestine hospital for the guerrillas in Guatemala City. She was murdered and her body was found hideously tortured and mutilated.⁶

Mamá Maquín and the Panzós Massacre

Although urban organizing in Guatemala has tended to push for political participation and an end to dictatorial rule, land issues have long been the catalyst to civil society organizing in rural Guatemala. While Rogelio Cruz was running a clandestine hospital for the guerrilla in the 1960s, Mamá Maquín was organizing her community in the Polochic Valley to demand land. By the late 1970s, Mamá Maquín and other Q’eqchi’ peasants in Panzós were mobilizing large groups of local Q’eqchi’ in land protests. On May 29, 1978, the Guatemalan army opened fire on several hundred Q’eqchi’ campesinos who had gathered in front of the municipal offices of Panzós to demand the return of their communal lands. Local *finca* owners had illegally seized the lands of several Panzós Q’eqchi’ communities and received official titles to those lands through INTA (Instituto Nacional de Transformación Agraria — National Institute of Agrarian Transformation, better known among the Maya for providing titles for historically Maya lands to ladino *finca* owners). Indeed, INTA’s vice president in 1978 was the brother of Guatemala’s president at the time, General Kjell Laugerud.

A few days before the massacre, local *finca* owners, the mayor, chief of police, and other municipal functionaries held a meeting in the town offices where it was

decided that they would request support from the military to defend their ill-gotten gains. One of the former functionaries recalls, “It was a very friendly meeting. We had lunch. We were even celebrating a birthday. Then, after lunch, we had the real talk — that we were going to call in the army.” During this discussion, the group sang a birthday song and shared a cake to celebrate the birthday of one of the functionaries. The meeting ended with the agreement that soldiers could stay in the municipal salon that faced the right side of the plaza in front of the municipal building. Thus, when protesters reached the town plaza, it was surrounded by a platoon of at least 60 soldiers. At the head of the protest was a 60-year-old grandmother, Adelina Caal Maquín, affectionately known throughout the community as Mamá Maquín.

Though there are conflicting versions of exactly how the massacre began, it is certain that Mamá Maquín was at the front of the demonstration. Her granddaughter María,⁷ who was then 12, remembers her grandmother telling the soldiers to put down their guns and allow her to speak with the mayor. María also remembers the sudden and loud crack of machine gun fire that separated Mamá Maquín’s skull from her head. Mamá Maquín fell dead in the plaza along with 34 other Q’eqchi’ men, women, and children.⁸ Mamá Maquín spoke Spanish and had long been organizing her community in their ongoing struggle for land rights throughout the fertile Polochic Valley, where Panzós is located. A 1981 guerrilla solidarity publication mentions Mamá Maquín as a “patriot” murdered by the military dictatorship (Guatemala News and Information Bureau, 1981: 8). By 1983, that publication includes her in another article about Guatemalan women martyrs and claims she “had joined the guerrillas in the 1960s” (*Ibid.*: 9). Among the more than 200 survivors and widows interviewed for the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation’s report on the Panzós massacre for the Commission for Historical Clarification, all remembered Mamá Maquín as a community leader and land rights advocate.

Whether Mamá Maquín joined the guerrilla in the 1960s is less the issue here than her tenacity in seizing whatever political spaces might be available for asserting land rights in the 1960s and 1970s. Elder leaders in Q’eqchi’, Achi, Ixil, Kanjobal, K’iche, and Q’aqchiquel communities (where I conducted fieldwork) commonly began the history of their communities within their lived experience of land struggles and confrontations with the state dating back to the near 14-year dictatorship of General Jorge Ubico, which ended in 1944. The connection between the stories of living Maya elders (both men and women) and Mamá Maquín is that her political consciousness, self-expression, and action are representative of lived Maya experiences beyond her individual story. Mamá Maquín’s leadership role was based on her political experience and reputation within her community as someone who, in the words of a Panzós widow, “always struggled for our rights to land.”

Though Mamá Maquín’s voice was silenced by the massacre, her struggle and legacy as a leader have been memorialized by Guatemalan refugee women in

Mexico, who founded a refugee women's rights organization and named it "Mamá Maquín." Echoing *I, Rigoberta*, a foundational document of Mamá Maquín states, "our history as refugee women is none other than the history of our country: a history of war, poverty, misery, pain, and human rights violations" (Billings, 1995: 14). "Mamá Maquín" was organized in 1990 by refugee women who were "frustrated by barriers to women's participation in decision-making regarding their return to Guatemala" and became the "only Guatemalan refugee organization which specifically united women across ethnic, language, and camp boundaries in southern Mexico" (*Ibid.*: 228). The organization became the space through which women could assert their needs and goals for themselves and their communities. At the first anniversary celebration of the founding of their organization, one leader said, "On this day, Adelina Caal Maquín — Mamá Maquín — is present. Mamá Maquín died one day defending her land. Here we are also women working to return to our land" (*Ibid.*: 236). As Deborah Billings notes in her research on refugee women in Mexico: "'Mamá Maquín' has provided a social and political space within which women have shared their stories, problems, and analyses with one another, thereby contributing to the process of developing collective identity and oppositional discourse" (*Ibid.*: 273).

La Violencia

In rural Mayan communities, such as in the departments of Chimaltenango, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Quiché, and Huehuetenango where I worked, *La Violencia* denotes the time in the life of their community when they suffered extreme violence at the hands of the state, and sometimes at the hands of the guerrilla. For urban Guatemalans, *La Violencia* generally refers to the discrete period of violence during the regimes of General Lucas García (1978–1982) and General Ríos Montt (March 1982 to August 1983). *La Violencia* thus designates the Guatemalan experience of selective state terror in rural and urban Guatemala and its transition to mass terror, culminating in the "scorched earth" campaign. Rural invocations of *La Violencia* might include the 1978 to 1982 period, or 1978 to 1985 (from the terror of the military regimes to the 1985 elections), 1978 to 1990 (from selective violence to the last bombings in the Ixil mountains in 1990), or even 1978 to 1996 (from selective violence through the disarming of the last civil patrols with the signing of the 1996 Peace Accords). For rural Maya survivors, whether victims and victimizers, *La Violencia* is more than a historical marker of a period of extreme state violence. It represents actual violent events (most Maya begin their testimony of *La Violencia* with the first act of violence in their community, which typically foretold the wave of extreme violence to come), as well as the effects of the violence, including their silencing through the near total closing of opportunities for social and political participation and the curtailing of whatever freedom of speech they may have had. Thus, the impossibility of contesting terror was an effect of *La Violencia* and is implicit in its definition and

usage. *La Violencia* is therefore also a point of demarcation between past violence and the contemporary and ongoing contestation of that violence.

When I first visited Guatemala in 1990, I was struck by the use of the term *La Situación*⁹ — the name people applied to *La Violencia* when they were living it. The shift in vocabulary reflects a change in space for social and political participation, an opening for freedom of speech, perhaps limited in its ambiguity. This expression denounces past violence, and can only be publicly named *La Violencia* once it has receded into the past. The ability to state *La Violencia* instead of *La Situación* represents a shift in power for the individual and community, making it possible to characterize the lived experience more explicitly than the name *La Situación* allows. *La Violencia* is perhaps a somewhat neutral term since it lacks direct reference to repression, terror, and state responsibility, but I believe its meaning has also shifted as Guatemalan society has come to terms with its violent past through various forms of truth-telling. Moreover, *La Violencia* embodies the *relationship* of the military state with its citizenry; renaming it from *La Situación* to *La Violencia* marks an alteration in the balance of power that defines the state-citizen relationship.

La Violencia is a sociopolitical phenomenon that is veiled and revealed in its history and naming. Like the terror of which it was comprised in the past, its memory is a contested terrain upon which the shifting tensions and allegiances of all sectors of Guatemalan society create, adapt, and lose control in their conflicting struggles for domination, liberation, and peace. Along with *La Violencia*, understood as a product of terror designed and carried out by the Guatemalan state against its citizens, we must contemplate resistance to terror (insurgent and democratic, urban and rural) and the role of elite economic sectors and international interests. This holistic framework recognizes the significant roles of Generals Lucas García and Ríos Montt in the design and production of state terror, and provides the opportunity to behold the myriad political spaces created by sectors of civil society under the most repressive of conditions. To understand *La Violencia*, it is useful to identify the roles and activities of the Guatemalan army, the insurgency, and democratic movements, as well as the interplay of these forces with the citizenry, particularly Maya communities, throughout *La Violencia*.

Representing Rigoberta

In *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, David Stoll (1999), an assistant professor of anthropology at Middlebury College, discounts lived experiences of state terror in general and Rigoberta's experiences in particular, by presenting conjecture and hearsay as fact to attack details of Rigoberta's testimony. The reason he gives for scrutinizing the Nobel Laureate, however, though somewhat buried in the work, is not to quibble about details, but to contest her entire representation of the guerrilla movement and *La Violencia* of the late 1970s and 1980s. Though Stoll, a former journalist and self-described

“debunker,”¹⁰ does obliquely acknowledge the army’s violence against Maya civilians in his book’s final chapters, his take on *La Violencia* is that the guerrillas bear the responsibility for the army’s atrocities. If Rigoberta’s representation of these events is accurate, he tells us, then his own previous work “was wrong about Ixil country.” If, however, his construction is correct, he expresses hope that it will “help the Latin American left and its foreign supporters escape from the captivity of Guevarismo” (1999: 12, 282).¹¹ Thus, Stoll’s work represents far more than his claims of an innocent graduate student’s inadvertent discovery of contradictory portrayals in Menchú’s story.

Equally important, however, is to establish the context of Stoll’s claims: after decades of neglect of the Guatemalan human rights record, a story discrediting an indigenous human rights activist received front-page coverage, with Stoll’s book the centerpiece, and *The New York Times* uncritically reproducing Stoll’s argument. The story was then picked up by major media, such as the *Washington Post* (Joanne Omang’s review of January 25, 1999: C-2), by CNN, *Newsweek*, and even *Der Spiegel*. Stoll’s attacks on Rigoberta Menchú were then acrimoniously trumpeted (using inflammatory terms such as political fabrication, a tissue of lies, one of the greatest hoaxes of the 20th century, and Marxist myth) by neoconservatives Scott Dalton (*Detroit News*, December 20, 1998), John Leo (*U.S. News & World Report*, January 25, 1999, and the *Seattle Times*), Dinesh D’Souza (in the *Weekly Standard*), David Horowitz (in *Heterodoxy*, Salon, and elsewhere on the web), and on the Leadership U web site of the Campus Crusade for Christ International.

In January 1999, following this media flurry, Stanford University’s Departments of Anthropological Sciences and Cultural and Social Anthropology received written commentaries and telephone messages denouncing the continued use of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. One anonymous letter writer referred to it as a “book of lies.” Thus, the neoconservative attack on multicultural curriculum was restructured around *I Rigoberta Menchú* and its inclusion on college reading lists. Shortly thereafter, this neoconservative position came to shape the academic debate when the “veracity” of Menchú’s story became its cornerstone in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 15, 1999). This debate on curriculum within the academy is part of a larger struggle within the United States over multiculturalism and affirmative action, and over who will authentically represent experience: those who lived it, or “objective,” privileged, well-funded North American researchers intent on maintaining ownership of the historical record. As the International Indian Treaty Council (1998) has observed, “anthropologists and archeologists have continually robbed our graves, perverted our intellectual property, and disturbed our sacred sites to promote ‘their’ version of history.” Despite extensive (and sympathetic) media coverage, dedication of an entire issue of *Latin American Perspectives* (November 1999) to his book, the publication of an edited volume on the subject (by Arturo Arias, forthcoming from the University

of Minnesota Press), multiple panels on the topic at various academic meetings, and research support from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Stoll sees himself as a censored victim in an academy lacking space for debate (see *Latin American Perspectives*, November 1999). Yet, when Menchú was attacked, doubt was cast not on David Stoll, but on the credibility of the works of Mike Davis and Edward Said — both vocal proponents of multicultural education.

Attempts to silence and marginalize critical voices through diversionary tactics were not limited to these national debates. The timing of the Rigoberta Menchú story (including Stoll’s book and the ensuing media flurry) diverted international attention from the content of state violence to its representation. Just as the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission was about to release its findings on human rights violations in Guatemala and the political violence committed by the Guatemalan military with the support and knowledge of the U.S. government, Stoll’s book blamed the victims for the violence visited upon them by the military — and garnered more media coverage than the CEH report. Stoll makes common cause with the neoconservatives in his effort to challenge the larger claim that the Guatemalan revolutionary and opposition movements had popular support among the Maya in that he argues that guerrilla movements, not just in Guatemala but throughout Latin America, preempted peaceful political and economic reform, and were therefore responsible for provoking army repression. This position counters the comprehensive findings of the CEH, which chronicle the army’s selective assassination and disappearance of civil society leaders, effectively eliminating peaceful resolution of political and economic conflict. Moreover, Stoll’s personal attacks serve to separate Menchú from the human rights agenda and have clear implications for her place in postwar Guatemala, including future presidential bids. Further, Stoll’s relentless 10-year research focus on Menchú serves to obscure unresolved questions of land distribution, malnutrition, genocide, and impunity for the authors and agents of state crimes — the larger truths at issue in Guatemala. How does Stoll’s agenda affect the retelling of this story?

Deconstructing Stoll’s Rewriting of *La Violencia*¹²

With these debates in mind, let us scrutinize David Stoll’s argument and evidence. One of the most egregious errors in Stoll’s *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999: 71–88) is his misrepresentation of the 1980 massacre at the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala as a self-immolation coordinated by student and indigenous leaders of the peasant protesters occupying the embassy. This fallacy was recently repeated by Ilan Stavans in the *Times Literary Supplement* in his review of Stoll’s book (April 23, 1999). The 1981 report by Spanish military investigators on the massacre and the recently published findings of the Commission for Historical Clarification conclude that the army carried out a premeditated firebombing of the embassy. Indeed, nearly all accounts of the

event charge the army with responsibility for this massacre, in which Vicente Menchú, Rigoberta's father, was killed, with only the army and Stoll depicting it otherwise. Beyond blaming Vicente Menchú and the other victims of the massacre for their own deaths, at different points in his narrative Stoll labels Menchú "a thief," "an illegitimate child," "not supplicatory," "bitter," and a "myth" (1999: 25, 32, 104). His narrative strategy appears to be to distract attention from the army's culpability for its atrocities — a difficult task since the lives of over 200,000 Guatemalans were ultimately claimed through selective assassinations and public acts like firebombing the Spanish Embassy and the massacre of 626 villages. Stoll also tries to make suspect any sympathy one might feel for the victims and survivors of what the Commission has characterized in legal terms as genocidal acts committed against the Maya. In the words of the Commission,

agents of the State of Guatemala...committed acts of genocide against groups of Mayan people.... All these acts were committed 'with intent to destroy in whole or in part.' [These] massacres...obeyed a higher, strategically planned policy, manifested in actions which had a logical and coherent sequence (CEH, 1999a: 40–41).

The Commission determined that "agents of the state" were responsible for "the arbitrary execution of those inside the Spanish Embassy" and that "the very highest levels of authority of the government of Guatemala are the intellectual authors of this extremely grave violation of human rights." Moreover, the Commission specifically noted that "the hypothesis that victims self-immolated has no foundation" (CEH, 1999b: 14).

While Stoll challenges the details of Rigoberta Menchú's testimonial epic and casts suspicion on the character of Rigoberta and Vicente Menchú, he is quite generous in his descriptions of generals who held the presidency and were in command of the Guatemalan army at the height of state terror. Despite extensive documentation of army abuses under the presidency of General Kjell Laugerud (1974–1978), for instance, including the May 29, 1978, Panzós massacre, Stoll (1999: 50) claims that under Laugerud "the army scaled back terror." Laugerud's successor, General Romeo Lucas García (1978–1982), in turn, ushered in the epoch that would come to be known as *La Violencia*. A secret Department of State Memorandum (No. 6366, dated October 5, 1981) acknowledged that Lucas García believed that "the policy of repression" was "working." According to the State Department official writing the memo, a "successful" policy of repression was one that led to the "extermination of the guerrillas, their supporters, and sympathizers." This is the same Lucas García that Stoll (1999: 51) describes as "doddering." During General Romeo Lucas García's regime, his brother Benedicto served as army chief of staff. Credited with the design of the scorched-earth campaign, Benedicto had received combat intelligence and high military command training at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas.¹³

Though Stoll (1999: 147) claims that General Efraín Ríos Montt, who became president following a 1982 military coup, was able to "rein in the death squads around the capital," all evidence is to the contrary. Under Ríos Montt (1982–1983), massacres remained a key tool of military policy; they intensified in rural Guatemala and urban repression became extreme. In May 1982, the army illegally detained and tortured 11 adolescents in Guatemala City; after two weeks of torture in a clandestine jail, eight survived (see Sanford, 1997: 1–5). During Ríos Montt's regime, along with teachers, students, labor organizers, health workers, priests, nuns, and catechists, even children were considered subversive.

Massacres were not a singular tactic of one military regime, a fact critical to understanding why massacres in Maya communities constitute genocide. Combined with the army's institutionalized massacres were the destruction of villages and their surrounding fields and the relentless hunt for survivors; army helicopters dropped bombs upon displaced civilians in the mountains and ground troops encircled and fired upon those fleeing aerial attacks. Throughout the regimes of Laugerud, Lucas García, and Ríos Montt, these tactics were enacted through a highly sophisticated national strategy under tight order of army command from Guatemala City and with military bases spanning the country, but concentrated in the predominantly indigenous highlands.

For massacre survivors who fled to the mountains and later surrendered and rebuilt their villages and lives under army control, surviving state terror has meant the militarization of daily life for up to 15 years. Even when the overt expressions of militarization are withdrawn, internalization of encounters with terror continues to shape relationships within families and communities, as well as community relationships with the nation-state. Survivor testimonies viewed in the context of the discourse and practice of the various phases of state terror can help us understand that while the torture victim's missing tooth may be interpreted as a sign of survival and the empty army base as a victory for peace, each also represents a living memory of terror that continues to influence daily life. Under these circumstances, discrepancies encountered in testimonies taken in the field should not be taken to indicate faulty memory, invention, or deception. Rather, these contradictions should "lead us through and beyond facts to their meaning" as experienced by survivors and witnesses (Portelli, 1991: 2; see also LaCapra, 1998; Langer, 1991).

Moreover, whatever contradictions the researcher in the field may come across, we now have access to a broad range of primary and secondary resources, including declassified CIA and State Department documents, municipal archival records, far-reaching investigations carried out by the Archbishop's Office and the CEH, and forensic reports from the exhumation of some 50 clandestine cemeteries. These documents offer factual and evidentiary corroboration of the context of the terror provided by the testimonies. A declassified CIA document from late February 1982 states that in mid-February 1982, the Guatemalan army had reinforced its existing forces and launched a:

sweep operation in the Ixil Triangle. The commanding officers of the units involved have been instructed to destroy all towns and villages which are cooperating with the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) [Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres] and eliminate all sources of resistance (CIA, 1982: 1).

The first point of the memo claims that civilians “who agree to collaborate with the army...will be well treated.” Yet, in point three, the CIA acknowledges that “a large number of guerrillas and collaborators have been killed” and comments,

When an army patrol meets resistance and takes fire from a town or village it is assumed that the entire town is hostile and it is subsequently destroyed.... An empty village is assumed to have been supporting the EGP, and it is destroyed.

Therefore, those who had heard of army massacres in neighboring villages and abandoned their villages to save their lives had their villages destroyed. The fourth point of the memo concludes that the army high command is “highly pleased with the initial results of the sweep operation and believes it will be successful.” Significantly, it clarifies that “the army has yet to encounter any guerrilla force in the area” and goes on to conclude that the army’s “successes to date appear to be limited to the destruction of several EGP-controlled towns” and “the killing of Indian collaborators and sympathizers.” Finally, it justifies the massacres of Ixil civilians and destruction of their villages: “The well-documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is pro-EGP has created a situation in which the army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike” (CIA, 1982: 2–3).

In January 1982, before the internal circulation of these CIA documents, at least 399 civilians were killed in army massacres and operations in 24 Maya communities in seven departments. In two reported massacres, the number of victims was unknown. This took place before the army began the “sweep operation” described in the CIA documents. In February, at least 327 civilian men, women, children, and elderly were killed in army massacres in 22 Maya communities. The number of victims in four of these massacres remains unknown.¹⁴ If anything, the CIA documents, despite their convoluted language and censored presentation, acknowledge Guatemalan army massacres of civilians. Further, these documents concur with the Guatemalan army that all Ixiles are pro-EGP. This concurrence between the CIA and the Guatemalan army that all Ixiles are pro-EGP represents the official conflation of political affiliation and ethnicity. Thus, the U.S. Embassy and its officers in Guatemala, the U.S. State Department, and the CIA justify the Guatemalan army’s destruction of the social, political, and material culture of the Maya in general and the Ixiles in particular.

While denying the reality of the state violence documented by the CIA earlier that year, a November 1982 internal U.S. State Department document analyzing international human rights organizations reflected the CIA’s February 1982 view that the Guatemalan army could be expected to “give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike” based on the idea that anyone who did not support the army must support the guerrilla. This now-infamous document claimed that respected international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International (AI) and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) had “successfully carried out a campaign of Communist-backed disinformation.” Significantly, the State Department concluded that human rights reports documenting Guatemalan army massacres of unarmed civilians were “a concerted disinformation campaign waged in the United States against the Guatemalan government by groups supporting the left-wing insurgency in Guatemala.”

The veracity of AI, WOLA, and other human rights reports can no longer be credibly contested; indeed, recent comprehensive investigations conducted by the Archbishop’s Office and the Commission now confirm that victims of the violence far exceed the commonly cited 440 villages burned off the map by the Guatemalan army, 1.5 million people displaced, 150,000 driven into refuge, and 100,000 to 150,000 killed or disappeared. In its report, the Commission concluded that 626 villages had been destroyed, more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared, 1.5 million were displaced by the violence, and over 150,000 driven to seek refuge in Mexico. Further, the Commission found the state responsible for 93% of the acts of violence and the guerrillas for three percent. All told, 83% of the victims were Maya and 17% were ladino (see Carmack, 1988; Falla, 1992; Manz, 1988; Smith, 1990; CEH, 1999a, 1999b).

Nonetheless, there are those who continue to conflate human rights workers with the guerrillas. One high-ranking officer told me that when he thought of human rights workers, he envisioned someone “wearing a Ché Guevara beret with a star and carrying a machine gun.” Unfortunately, this view is not limited to the Guatemalan military and their advisers. In his book on Rigoberta Menchú, as well as in an article on human rights activism, Stoll (1996) reflects the Guatemalan army’s rhetoric and practice of blurring the distinctions among guerrilla combatants, land-rights activists, religious workers, and anyone else challenging the military regime or the local non-Maya landholding elite and reducing them to a single category. The same kind of language and identification were used by the army to justify killing off all local leaders, including Mayan priests, literacy promoters, teachers, health workers, and land-rights activists such as Rigoberta’s father, Vicente Menchú. Like the 1982 State Department analysis of human rights organizations, Stoll (1999: 10–11; 1997: 187–188) groups solidarity activists with anti-intervention activists, human rights workers, and academics carrying out research. Within this political schema, anyone who disagrees with Stoll is treated as a supporter of the guerrilla. Interestingly, though Stoll constructs and deconstructs

Rigoberta Menchú, his own book about Rigoberta cannot withstand the same scrutiny. Significantly, where this Stanford-trained anthropologist's research falls apart, concrete primary documents are available.

For example, Stoll's (1999: 48) claims that there was no relationship between the U.S. government and the Guatemalan military regime in the 1960s. This is a curious summary of an era that saw a continuation and expansion of the counterinsurgency and intelligence training for Guatemalan military officers at the School of the Americas, which began as early as 1947. Also in the 1960s, meetings of Central American ministers of the interior (who have jurisdiction over police and internal intelligence) were organized and led by the U.S. State Department with assistance from the CIA, AID, the Customs Bureau, the Immigration Service, and the Justice Department. According to William Bowdler, who represented the State Department at the gatherings (Nairn, 1984), the meetings were "designed to develop ways of dealing with subversion."¹⁵ These meetings led to the parallel development of paramilitary organizations throughout Central America, with death squads known as the Mano Blanco (White Hand) in El Salvador and the Mano (Hand) in Guatemala. The extreme terror waged against civil society in Guatemala in the 1960s killed thousands of peasants and distinguished Guatemala as the first country in which the term "disappeared" came to be used to describe the political condition of being kidnapped by government death squads, tortured to death, and buried in a clandestine grave.

Finally, Stoll must be held accountable for the sources he chose to rely upon to contest Rigoberta's story. Although he does not generally refer to his key informants by name, he gave a list of them to journalist Larry Rohter for his report in the *New York Times* (December 5, 1998). One informant is Alfonso Rivera, whom Rohter introduces "as the clerk for the municipal government for 30 years [who] kept all official records." In the *Times* article, Rivera is critical of Rigoberta Menchú, and his criticism is presented as having special authority because of his responsibility in the local government of Uspantán. Not mentioned in Rohter's story or Stoll's book is that Rivera was removed from office and jailed in 1994 on charges of corruption and misuse of public funds. Neither mentions the collusive relationship that local functionaries had to maintain with the military not merely to keep their jobs, but to stay alive during *La Violencia*. This probably explains why former military commissioners in Uspantán identify Rivera as a trusted friend, while Uspantecos from surrounding villages are suspicious of his army ties and many town dwellers simply describe him as corrupt. It is ironic that Stoll undermines testimony as a resource for history when his own reconstructions of history lack credible sources.

Rural Maya Memories of *La Violencia*

The army's justification for violence in rural Maya communities rested upon claims that it was, in the words of former military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt,

"scorching communists" (Black, 1984: 11). In *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*, Stoll (1994: 95) argues (1) that guerrillas provoked army repression, and (2) that Ixil support for the guerrilla was the result of "dual violence," not a "function of preexisting grievances, of consciousness-raising, or ideological mobilization." Stoll assumes that *La Violencia* has only two sides: the guerrilla and the army. Through this binary lens, he concludes that Ixiles "are best understood as determined neutralists" (*Ibid.*: 132). In *La guerra en tierras mayas*, Yvon Le Bot (1995: 129), a polemical, anti-Marxist *indigenista*,¹⁶ maintains that Ixiles are "famous for being rebels" and that the Ixiles are "faithful to this tradition" of rebelliousness. Despite differing conceptions of the "neutral" or "rebellious" political "nature" of the Ixiles, Le Bot concurs with Stoll that it is the fault of the guerrilla that the army committed massacres in Maya communities throughout Guatemala. Specifically, Le Bot (1995: 292) blames the EGP's¹⁷ armed struggle for "provoking a blood bath."

In "Consciousness, Violence, and the Politics of Memory in Guatemala," anthropologist Charles Hale (1997: 817) suggests that the Maya perhaps "responded to the surge of armed violence with generalized defiance — fed up with army repression yet hesitant to cast their lot with the all-or-nothing logic of guerrilla struggle." His main point, however, is to rightly ask: "Is this image accurate? What *were* they thinking?"¹⁸

Esperanza,¹⁹ a Kanjobal woman, remembers why she joined the guerrilla:

The army arrived and kidnapped three teenage boys. They tortured them and they killed them right in the village. They cut out chunks of flesh and stabbed them many times. The army took two other boys with them. No one in the village had ever seen anything like this. The next day in the afternoon, five heavily armed soldiers returned to the village with these two boys. We almost didn't recognize them. They had peeled off the soles of their feet so they couldn't run. They could hardly walk. These two boys were unable to tolerate the torture of the army, so they started giving names of everyone they knew and they pointed out their houses. The soldiers left the village with these two boys. They took them to the outskirts of the village. They killed them. They cut off their heads and their arms and their legs. They tossed their body parts all over the place. They didn't even leave a whole body for us to mourn and bury. About 15 days later, the army returned again and captured two men. One of them was my cousin. They tortured them to death. They left the bodies in pieces. When we found them, we took the pieces back to the cemetery and buried them. Once again the fear began to take over.

Esperanza recalls:

I was very frightened. I was very afraid of the army. I began to think, "If

I am suffering here from fear and if I am going to fall into the hands of the army no matter what, and there we're all going to die. Then, what am I doing sitting here without a weapon? I would rather go once and for all with the guerrilla. If I am going to die, I want to die for something good. I want a weapon and if I die, I will die killing a soldier." That is when I accepted the idea of my own death. I decided to find the guerrilla in the mountains and join them. And that is what I did. I was 15 years old (Sanford, 1997: 21–30).

Survivors of the Acul massacre recall that army soldiers lined up the sons and nephews of the Ixil elders in front of the grave they had forced the elders to dig. The soldiers said to the elders, "this is what happens when you let your children help the subversives."²⁰ When social scientists like French sociologist Yvon Le Bot and U.S. anthropologist David Stoll blame the guerrilla for provoking army massacres, they are repeating the *official* discourse of the army. They are recovering and transforming the official history of the army, not the lived experiences of massacre survivors.

When army soldiers arrived at Mateo's village in Ixcán to round up adult men and shoot them in public spaces, they shouted at the peasants, "*Es la ley*" (It is the law). At the time, Mateo was a monolingual Mam speaker. Only after he learned Spanish did he discover that *la ley* did not mean the army's right to kill civilians. Here, as in other instances, the official discourse conflates the real and the imagined. When he learned Spanish, Mateo knew that the soldiers were lying in the sense that "law" does not mean the right of the army to kill civilians, yet were telling the truth in the sense that without the rule of law, guns become the law. Like the soldiers doing the killing and the officers planning and ordering it, there are social scientists who unwittingly participate in what George Orwell (1992: 36) called the "Ministry of Truth," where "all history is scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as necessary."

The recovery and transformation of official discourse negate the agency of the Maya in general, and monolingual Maya women in particular. Agency is one of the central themes of testimony. Despite the living memory of terror, despite fear and threats, massacre survivors come forward to talk, remember, and share. Through their testimonies, they express fear, sadness, shame, anger, hope, and resolve. They were lied to, shot at, bombed, threatened, beaten, and starved, but the survivors remember their experiences with human agency.

Truth, Reburial, and the Reshaping of History

On May 28, 1998, two decades after the Panzós massacre, I was privileged to accompany the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation in returning the victims' boxed skeletal remains to their wives, mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, and grandchildren. This concluded the investigation we had begun in July 1997 for

the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission to document the Guatemalan army massacre of Q'eqchi' Maya peasants in the plaza of Panzós.²¹

It was a long, hot ride to Panzós since the rains were unusually late, making the roads extremely dusty. The floating ash from a volcanic eruption and the expansive fires raging out of control in the nearby Petén cast a haze over the sky, obscuring the mountains of Coban and the lowland hills. Chunks of ash lightly gliding through the air left soot marks on the hands that grabbed them. Months without rain had transformed the road to Panzós into a path of white powder. Peasants walking along the road scurried out of the path of oncoming vehicles, but there was no escaping the ensuing cloud of white dust that covered everyone and everything, as if they had been dipped in flour.

As we rounded the bend past the cemetery, there was yelling, applause, and the honking of a hand-held horn. We were stopped in the middle of the road, surrounded by a cheering crowd. More than 400 people were waiting by the cemetery near the entrance to Panzós. As we got out of the truck, widows I had interviewed nine months earlier laughed, shouted, smiled, and cried. They embraced and kissed us.

Before we could take the bones to the municipal center for placement in coffins, the community wanted us to unload the cardboard boxes at the cemetery. Everyone wanted to help unload the trucks. Each woman wanted to carry a box. The elder women performed a Maya *costumbre* until the sky opened in a heavy downpour. We ran the half mile down the road to the church. The women ran with the boxes on their heads.

When we reached the church, the women had placed the 38 boxes at the altar, seemingly unbothered that they almost completely blocked the speakers from sight. While wringing the rain out of their skirts and shirts, almost everyone smiled—even those with tears running down their faces. There was a collective sense of victory. These monolingual Q'eqchi' women had successfully stood up to those who threatened them, to those who killed their husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers. Several Q'eqchi' men stood at the podium speaking in Q'eqchi'. The widows continued to talk among themselves in an oddly festive atmosphere. Smiling as they dried their faces, they seemed almost oblivious to the men speaking to them from the podium.

Just as I wondered whether any of the widows would speak, María, the granddaughter of Mamá Maquín, approached the podium. After nervously looking down at the podium, María lifted her head, peered across the crowd filling the church, and said, "I am not afraid. I am not ashamed. I am not embarrassed." The church fell silent except for her words and the slapping of water upon the roof and the ground outside. All the widows stopped talking and focused their attention on her; the scattered conversations in the church stopped. A bilingual health worker approached me: "This is important," she said, and began to translate María's words from Q'eqchi' to Spanish.

"I cannot tell lies because I saw what happened and so did a lot of other people. That is why there are so many widows and orphans here," she affirmed in a quiet voice; the widows in the pews looked at one another, nodding in agreement.

The widows began to rock their whole bodies in agreement with María's words; her cadence became rhythmic, near hypnotic. "I thank god for giving me life. Our mothers and fathers did everything possible to try to make a better life for us. The blood that ran in the streets ran for god, too."

She paused briefly to gather her thoughts, to gain her composure. In this moment, everyone in the church looked toward the altar, waiting in a hush for her to continue. "We are very poor," she said.

Because of our ignorance, they took advantage of us. They did not think we have the same god. They paid no attention to the harm they caused us as they stole our lands. To them, we were nothing more than animals. That day in the plaza, I realized this. They chased after me, they tried to kill me.

With the words "tried to kill me," she began to shake and then to cry. Her bare hands repeatedly wiped the tears from her cheeks before she spoke again. The widows continued to rock, with many now crying. They reached out to one another. María spoke louder and with greater force through her tears, but she was no longer shaking. She said, "I had to throw myself in the river. I lost my shoes. The current carried me down. I hit myself on rocks. When I finally got out of the river, I was covered in mud and full of thorns." María shook her head at the implausibility of the truth and said, "But this happened to everyone. The army and the *finqueros* did this. But we are still alive." Looking at one another, the widows nodded in agreement and repeated her words, "We are still alive."

With the audibly irregular breathing of sorrow, she said,

They thought that they would always be able to treat us like animals, that we would never know how to defend ourselves. But, we also have rights. We have rights from the same laws that they have rights. We have the same rights. I decided to speak tonight because I was in the plaza the day of the massacre. Today I am giving my testimony in public. We have to tell everything that happened to us in the past so that we won't have fear in the future.

The widows, listening attentively, continue to nod in agreement to the rhythm of her words. María is no longer crying. Standing before her community at the altar of the church, she took a deep breath and declared in a loud voice that filled the church, "I am still in pain. I have such sorrow. I lost my mother, my father, my grandmother and I was only 12. The people who did this to us, they live here with their families in tranquillity. That is why I say tonight, *I am not afraid.*"

Tranquillity seems to replace the pained look on her face. She almost smiles and says calmly, "Before, there was fear. But not now. That is why I speak clearly of the pain I have suffered." Her words pass over the crowd as a wave of satisfaction, almost a happiness.

"We are here to receive the remains of our loved ones and I thank the *forenses*." All the widows make eye contact with each of us and smile. "We are in total agreement that the truth be known. We don't want to suffer like in the past. If we can talk about the past and all the bad things that happened, then we can say, never again." The entire crowd seems to vibrate in agreement. With the entire crowd mesmerized and waiting for María's words, she concludes, "I love god, life, and law. A man has no right to break the law of god. Man is not god. Only god can take life. We speak because we are not afraid. We speak from the heart."

In *Book of the Embraces*, Eduardo Galeano notes that the root of *recordar*, to remember, is from the Latin *re-cordis*, which means "to pass back through the heart." The public remembering of María Maquín, this passing back through the heart before her community, is the very essence of the discourse and practice of human agency, of political consciousness, self-representation, and action. Her story is not the story of dead people, though the dead are present. These stories from Panzós, Acul, Ixcán, and Huehuetenango are stories of the living — those who survived and have much to share when given the opportunity to speak. Mamá Maquín was silenced in the Panzós massacre, but her memory grew far beyond the confines of Panzós. María Maquín broke the silencing of the Panzós survivors with her public testimony in 1998, as Rigoberta Menchú broke the silencing of the Maya with her testimony in 1983.

Feliciana, a monolingual Ixil speaker, once said to me through a translator, "*No sé si tiene valor mis palabras, pero quiero contarle mi historia.*" (I don't know if my words have value, but I want to tell you my story.) I believe the words of Esperanza, Mateo, Feliciana, María, and other survivors have great value. I am not alone in this belief. In his work on history, memory, and the Holocaust, Dominick LaCapra (1998: 11) affirms that "testimony is a crucial source for history" and that it is "more than a source" because it "poses special challenges" and "raises the issue of the way in which the historian...becomes a secondary witness...and must work out an acceptable subject position to the witness and his or her testimony."

When anthropologists, sociologists, and historians fail to consider the Maya as actors in their own history, they commit a discursive silencing of human agency. They compound the terror of *La Violencia* by not taking into account the voices of the survivors — in effect, they silence them. Thus, however unwittingly, they compound the political, social, cultural, physical, and material violence with discursive violence.²²

Twenty years after the Panzós massacre, I sat with María as the massacre victims were buried and remembered in a Maya religious ceremony. We shared a bag of water in the heat. Her eight-year-old son picked up a pamphlet about the

Panzós massacre. She smiled proudly, almost mischievously, and nodded at him with approval. Just as she was her grandmother's faith in a better future, her son is hers. Easily and quickly, he read the words of Mario Benedetti:

Cantamos porque los sobrevivientes y nuestros muertos quieren que cantemos.

NOTES

1. Based on testimonies from massacre survivors in Acul, Tzalbal, and other villages in the Ixil area, as well as from Xococ, Cubulco, Río Negro, and Plan de Sanchez, Baja Verapaz.
2. *La Violencia* (the violence) generally refers to extreme political repression and state violence between 1978 and 1984.
3. Guha was referring to the women who participated in India's Telangana movement (1946–1951).
4. For more on the history of the *reinas indígenas*, see Gonzalez-Ponciano (1998).
5. *El Gráfico* (July 26, 1978: 7).
6. *Guatemala!* Guatemala News and Information Bureau, Oakland (March/April 1983, Volume 4, Issue 2: 9).
7. At her request, and because María Maquín has become a public figure quoted in Guatemalan and international newspapers due to her outspoken efforts to lead and organize the Panzós community for public recognition of the 1978 massacre, María Maquín's real name is used here.
8. Author's interview, September 1997.
9. David Stoll (1994) and Linda Green (1999) also note the use of *La Situación* and *La Violencia*.
10. Public statement at the 1998 Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago.
11. I presented this analysis in *Latin American Perspectives* (Vol. 26, No. 6, November 1999: 38–46), which Leigh Binford reiterated in "Empowered Speech: Social Fields and the Limits of Testimony" at the Latin American Studies Association, Miami (March 2000).
12. "Deconstructing Stoll's Rewriting of *La Violencia*" is drawn from Sanford (1999).
13. See School of the Americas yearly lists, 1947–1991, of Guatemalan military officers trained at SOA, released by the U.S. Department of State.
14. Numbers of massacre victims are based on Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (1998); Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation Forensic Reports on Exhumations 1994–1999; and reports filed with Defensoría Maya and the Consejo de Comunidades Etnias Runujel Junam (Council of Ethnic Communities: We Are All Equal — CERJ) through September 1997. See also Davis and Hodson (1982), Amnesty International (1982, 1987), and Americas Watch (1982, 1983, 1984).
15. Nairn's analysis of the U.S. role in developing paramilitary organizations throughout Central America is further confirmed by the following declassified CIA and State Department documents: United States Embassy in Guatemala Memoranda to the Secretary of State on September 15, 1962; March 13, 1963; and January 23, 1964. See also Memorandum of the Special Group, September 25, 1963; telegram from U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to the State Department, January 5, 1966; Public Safety Division USAID/Guatemala, "Operational Rescue of Terrorist Kidnapping and Guatemala Police Activity to Counter, December 1965" (CIA Memoranda dated March and April 1966). All declassified documents cited in this article are now available from the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C.
16. *Indigenista* refers to scholars who have self-identified with and support so-called Fourth World Struggles.
17. Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres — Guerrilla Army of the Poor.

18. Emphasis in the original.
19. All names used in this article are pseudonyms except for those of public figures. Any other exceptions are noted.
20. Acul Testimony No. 7 (December 10, 1997).
21. At the request of the FAFG, I developed a research methodology and led the investigation for the historical reconstruction of massacres in Panzós, Alta Verapaz, and Acul and Nebaj, El Quiché. The methodology was replicated in two additional investigations for the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) in Chel, Chajul, El Quiché, and Belen, Sacatepéquez. In May and June 1998, I wrote the historical reconstruction of the massacres in Panzós and Acul, and supervised the writing of the reconstructions for Chel and Belen for presentation to the CEH.
22. Carlota MacAllister has noted this in the very methodology of interviewing, where anthropologists (or others seeking to investigate) unwittingly replicate Maya experience with the army by seeking interviews. "*Nos hacían muchas preguntas*" (They asked us many questions) was a common K'iche response to MacAllister's inquiries about army actions in Maya communities.

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