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Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans. Expanded edition, with a new foreword by Elizabeth Burgos. David Stoll. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2008. 29+352pp.

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In 1998 David Stoll, professor of anthropology at Middlebury College, published *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, a polemical exposé about the veracity of the Nobel laureate's 1982 testimony, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. To give a few examples: Stoll alleges that her brother was not burned alive in a town plaza, but instead shot and dumped there; that Menchú was not illiterate but had received some schooling (apparently while working as a maid at a Catholic school); and that her father, Vicente Tum, was embroiled in a land dispute with his in-laws rather than large Ladino (mestizo) landholders. Stoll ultimately uses her as a proxy against two other targets: (1) Guatemalan guerillas, especially the EGP (Guerilla Army of the Poor), and (2) well-intentioned foreign academics who embraced Menchú as a postmodern heroine. Stoll's controversial accusations inspired a front page article in the *New York Times* (Stoll reports) four special editions in scholarly journals, an edited anthology, countless panels and articles in fields ranging from anthropology, Latin American studies and literature to human rights. Many debates later, Stoll published an expanded edition in 2008, which includes a foreword by Elizabeth Burgos [new spelling] ("How I Became Persona Non Grata") and his own afterword ("A Parallel Universe"). However, these additions contain little new information or analysis.

Burgos continues to deny the critical assistance of Guatemalan historian and revolutionary Arturo Taracena who, in 1999, broke his silence about his fundamental role in organizing, structuring, and editing her 1982 testimony. Affiliated with the EGP, Taracena graciously refused credit at the time so as to avoid politicizing the book. Burgos finished the final editing, secured a publisher and, unbeknownst to Menchú and others involved, kept the copyright in her own name and, apparently, most of the royalties. Once all this came out ten years later, rather than graciously acknowledging Taracena's contributions, Burgos derided him in the 2008 foreword for "managing the [EGP's] propaganda operation" for Menchú in Paris (xv) and continued to claim that she alone was inspired "to ask Rigoberta about daily life among her people" (ibid.). Yet, according to Taracena, she had never traveled to Guatemala, nor knew anything about Maya culture (Aceituno 1999).

Having apparently renounced her own revolutionary past which included a marriage to Che Guevara's 1967 associate in Bolivia, Régis Debray, Burgos continues to blame Menchú for an (unproven) lingering association with the EGP which Burgos, in turn, condemns as a puppet of the Cuban government. Yet, Stoll was careful not to label Menchú as an EGPaffiliate, but simply a member of organizations "openly committed to the EGP" (pg. 6). Nonetheless, Burgos postulates that until Menchú won the Nobel prize she "continued to play a central role in an exhausted [guerilla] movement, as a symbolic substitute for indigenous peasants who no longer supported a military strategy" (xii). However, according to Taracena and her own assertions, Menchú had little to no involvement in constructing the book, *I, Rigoberta Menchú,* which Stoll asserts helped the guerillas perpetuate a lost war.

While holding sole royalties for the book in multiple languages, Burgos continues to dispute the Casa de las Américas prize, complaining that it was revoked to Menchú's name rather than her own. Sidestepping their financial disputes, she attempts to rationalize her estrangement from Menchú as a consequence of her own denunciation of Fidel Castro in the early 1990s.

Having herself made considerable profit from the "canonization" of that book, Burgos, oddly joins Stoll in his now well-rehearsed critique of left-wing enthusiasm for *I, Rigoberta Menchú* pointing to its "fossilization" (1998:xvii). Skirting the question as to why she herself had not probed Menchú more thoroughly in the interview and fact-checked the text, Burgos claims, "David Stoll completed the task that I would have done myself—if I had handled this as an anthropological project rather than a political one" (xvii). Contradicting herself, she then reminisces that one of the reasons she had bonded with Menchú in the interviews was because they "both had been educated in Catholic boarding schools" (xi), yet published without question Menchú's testimony claiming that she was unschooled. Perhaps Stoll ought to have triangulated Burgos's foreword with the same vigor with which he pursued Menchú.

Both Stoll and Burgos ignore Menchú's own 1998 book, *Crossing Borders* (titled in Spanish "Rigoberta: La Nieta de los Mayas" [Granddaughter of the Mayas]) that describes her decade in exile, organizing within the United Nations and other fora on behalf of indigenous peoples and Guatemala. They also both continue to insinuate that Menchú won the Nobel Peace Prize on the basis of her 1982 testimony alone.

Convinced that the Maya have as little patience with left-wing politics as he does, Stoll instead devotes his afterword to a journalistic update on recent political events in Guatemala and Chiapas that underscores his view of indigenous people as malleable by conservative interests. Yet by prematurely concluding his analysis with the 1997 primaries, he conveniently ignores the fact that later that same year, large victories in rural, Maya areas swept the leftist-centrist, Álvaro Colom into the Guatemalan presidency. (It was Ladino city dwellers who overwhelmingly voted for the right-wing, retired general Otto Pérez Molina).

Though he grudgingly admits that in 1998 the UN-sponsored Commission on Historical Clarification published a definitive report showing that military and government forces committed 93 percent of atrocities in the civil war (with only 3 percent attributed to the guerillas, and the rest unknown), Stoll persists in disproportionately blaming the revolutionary left. He astoundingly argues that "the guerilla forces were so much smaller, per capita, the average guerrilla could have committed more abuses than the average soldier and [civil] patroller" (pg. 295).

In contrast to other scholarly publications that refer to her in a more humanized way as Menchú or Menchú Tum, both Burgos and Stoll persist in referring to her only by first name. In so doing they emphasize her fame as a cultural icon for whom no surname is needed and thus, oddly, undermine their own critique of "Rigoberta" as a symbol for all Maya peoples. Though Stoll denies pursuing a personal vendetta against Menchú, sarcasm nevertheless bleeds through his afterword with comments such as, "At too many key moments, she was out of the country collecting honorariums" (pg. 292). Stoll publishes secondhand notes from one of Menchú's campus talks which he mocks for bland rhetoric, leaving readers to wonder if he has ever heard her speak elsewhere in public.

If the reader might be hoping for Stoll to engage with a decade of rich criticism and commentary on his provocative book, s/he will be disappointed. Having already enjoyed his iconoclastic moment of academic fame, Stoll simply refers readers in a footnote to other edited volumes about the controversy. While his critics allowed Stoll to present his perspective, he does not reciprocate their intellectual generosity by including their voices in his expanded edition. Anyone wishing to understand the details and context of the Stoll-Menchú controversy would be better served by reading Schirmer (2003); Smith (1999); and Sanford (1999), as well as Arturo Arias's (2001) lively anthology that includes additional history about Menchú's trajectory after the Nobel; a collection of interviews and newspaper articles from the media blitz following Stoll's 1998 publication; thirteen academic chapters analyzing the controversy from a variety of disciplines; plus, a final chapter from Stoll himself that is more engaging than this afterword. These alternative sources move beyond the "he said/she said" quarrel among Menchú, Stoll, and Burgos and provide provocative reflections on the context and consequences of the controversy.

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