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small state

NEWS, INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS ABOUT LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND URUGUAYAN CULTURE. COMMENTS WELCOME.

thursday, september 25, 2008

A Visit to Liceo Jubilar Juan Pablo II



Guest-blogger Joshua Frens-String, who last [blogged here](#) about Uruguayan Sen. José Mujica's surprise decision to endorse the repeal of the military amnesty, visited the Liceo Jubilar earlier this year, a Catholic school in a Montevideo slum. I was there, too, and afterward I [blogged](#) about the shock of seeing so much poverty in a country that practically invented the concept of a stable Latin American middle class, even distribution of wealth and an enduring social safety net. Frens-String, writing in the June 2008 [Fulbright newsletter](#), noticed other contradictions:

"Why Uruguay?" It's an all-too-familiar question posed to a US Fulbrighter in Uruguay. We hear it from those in our home country, who often have difficulty even locating the small Southern Cone nation on a map. And it is posed by Uruguayans themselves, who at times take an official historical narrative of a "moderate" nation to be necessarily equivalent to "homogeneity" and a "lack of creativity." However, beneath this official history quite frequently lie buried experiences and projects that reflect an alternative history of an ever-inspiring place. When encountered, new meanings are given to conventional picture Uruguay, juxtaposed to both the exceptionalism of Uruguay past--the "Switzerland of the Americas" or "Uruguay Feliz" of the late 1940s—and in contraposition to the bleakness of "grey" Uruguay, a nation without opportunities, more often discussed today.

Enter Liceo Jubilar Juan Pablo II, the first free private school in Uruguay, run by the Catholic Church and located in an impoverished community around the periphery of Montevideo. The school positions itself as a model



about [benjamin n. gedan](#)

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Benjamin Gedan, a former Fulbright research scholar in Uruguay, is a Master's candidate at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins. He has reported for The Boston Globe and The Providence Journal newspapers, writing about state politics, economic development and technology. He has also reported internationally, writing from Ghana, Mexico, Uruguay, Paraguay, Panama and Belize for publications including The New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle and The Miami Herald. He studied International Relations and Latin American politics at Tufts University. He has blogged from Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile.

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Unconvinced insecurity erodes support for democracy? Fujimori's popularity jumped to 81% from 53% after he closed congress in 1992. 2 days ago

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WSJ: "Chilean Upstart Roils Elections," Oct. 28: "Seven weeks before Chile's election, Marco Enríquez-Ominami, a 36-year-old congressman and film producer, is rocketing upward in the polls as head of a dissident group that

contradiction to the official Uruguayan narrative. Run by the Catholic Church--in a "secular" country--located in the heart of a poor, irregular shantytown settlement--amongst a "middle class" population--and most strikingly, paradigmatic of the social creativity of local direct action, too often said to be non-existent in "statist" Uruguay, Liceo Jubilar is a mirror that reflects the realities beyond the official understanding of Uruguay past and present.



Upon our visit to the liceo, Father Gonzalo Aemilius (see photo), the committed 28-year-old rector of the school (and Fulbright alumnus), tells of the tremendous impact the project has had on the community in which it is located, despite the challenges faced. The zone of nearly 35,000 inhabitants has one of the highest poverty rates in the country, at over 45%. Nearly 7,000 school-age children are counted among this estimated population, but no public secondary school yet exists, which leads to very high rates of desertion and the social and individual

problems that inevitably follow. The construction of Liceo Jubilar, initially funded by a Catholic foundation in the Netherlands, has made significant progress in ameliorating these problems, reaching nearly 3,000 adolescents of the neighborhood in less than 10 years of operation. Father Gonzalo explains that through this experience, children are given the first ingredient for being agents of change—hope.

This hope that the school embodies as an alternative social and educational project still faces challenges, as it remains largely outside the Uruguayan imaginary. In particular, as strong economic recovery overtakes much of the country following one of the worst economic crises in Uruguayan history at the beginning of the decade, endemic poverty and social exclusion in the periphery are slow to be recognized as part of the social reality.

Yet, those involved in the Liceo, and surely other local social development projects as well, remain determined. The alternative image of individuals and non-traditional institutions confronting--with creative persistence--those problems, too often glazed over by a uniform national narrative, are slowly coming into focus. The experiment of Liceo Jubilar Juan Pablo II as one such reflection, for example, is now being disseminated via agreements with the Catholic University, among other social organizations in Montevideo. It is through seeing such reflections that a different Uruguay appears, giving inspiration and new ideas, both professional and personal, to anyone who encounters them.

Why Uruguay? Take another look and ask me again.

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splintered from the governing Concertación coalition.... On the economic front, however, a victorious Mr. Enríquez-Ominami would be unlikely to meddle with the market-oriented policies that have made Chile the region's strongest economy."

BBC: "Uruguay coalition back in power," Oct. 28: "Preliminary results indicate that the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) coalition got 16 senators out of a total of 30 in the higher chamber of parliament. It also obtained 50 deputies of the 99 in the lower house."

bloggingsbyboz (Twitter): "In the NYT, both Otto Reich and Dan Fisk in favor of confirming Arturo Valenzuela as Asst SecState for WH."

AP: "Ecuador to Europe: Pay us not to drill in Amazon," Oct. 27: "Ecuador's president is in London this week to promote a unique proposal: pay his country \$3 billion not to drill for oil in a pristine Amazon reserve."

Washington Post: "Courting goodwill in Rio's mean streets," Oct. 27: "She said officers permanently deployed in the favelas would be better positioned to develop intelligence from residents about drug trafficking and to help government authorities determine where new state funds are needed to build homes and provide social programs."

Foreign Policy: "DeMint hints at releasing holds, sees movement in U.S. policy on Honduras," Oct. 20: "DeMint is singularly holding up Shannon's nomination to become ambassador to Brazil as well as the nomination of Arturo Valenzuela to take Shannon's post."

AP: "Rio death toll rises to 25 after bloody clashes," Oct. 20: "The death toll from bloody clashes in Rio de Janeiro is up to 25 after authorities found more bodies."

Ariel Dorfman (The Guardian): "What Obama can do for Latin America," Oct. 19: "And, of course, there are the real wars to win in Latin America. Against poverty and tyranny, against ecological depredation and the marginalisation of the indigenous peoples and their wisdom."

BBC: "Uruguay dirty war amnesty illegal," Oct. 20: "On Sunday, Uruguayan voters will decide whether the amnesty law should be overturned."

BBC: "Chile joint exercise angers Peru," Oct. 19: "The Chilean Air Force is hosting a major joint military exercise this week in the Atacama Desert."

FT: "Brazil sets 2% tax on capital inflows," Oct. 20: "Pressure has

grown in recent months for the government to take measures to counter the real's appreciation, especially from some business and trades union leaders, as the strength of the real has put a steady drain on the competitiveness of Brazilian exports."

Los Angeles Times (editorial): "End the Honduras standoff," Oct. 9: "Micheletti risks dragging the impoverished country into a prolonged period of instability and further economic decline if the constitutional crisis is not resolved before the vote."

Washington Post: "Honduran Leadership Finds Friends Among GOP Lawmakers," Oct. 9: "The isolated Honduran leadership has found one lifeline: Republicans on Capitol Hill.... In the past week, two GOP delegations have traveled to Honduras to meet with the de facto government, which is not recognized internationally. Those actions have complicated the strategy of the Obama administration, which has been seeking to impress a growing crop of leftist Latin American leaders with its pro-democracy credentials."

Economist: "Rio's expensive new rings," Oct. 8: "Apart from new stadiums and other sports facilities of all kinds, the plans call for new bridges and roads, and a doubling in the number of hotel rooms."

Economist: "The demise of the free lunch," Oct. 8: "The government is also organising thousands of public meetings across the island to discuss a wider ten-point plan that proposes an end to the monthly ration of free staples and a host of perks, such as free wedding cakes. Instead, the focus is on creating incentives to work harder by raising wages, and thus productivity."

NYT: "Dancing Into the Evening, Brazil Celebrates Arrival on World Stage," Oct. 3: "There is also a palpable dread that many Brazilians express privately that Rio will embarrass the country, that it will not be able to improve the choking traffic and that the city's urban blight and rampant drug-fueled violence will be laid bare for all the world to see."

NYT: "Still Fragile, Haiti Makes Sales Pitch," Oct. 4: "That Haiti needs the attention cannot be overstated. Unemployment hovers at around 70 percent, experts say, and over half of the population lives in extreme poverty."

NYT: "To Protect Galápagos, Ecuador Limits a Two-Legged Species," Oct. 4: "By limiting the population, officials hope to preserve the natural wonders that bolster one of

Ecuador's most profitable sectors: tourism. But the measures are feeding a backlash among unskilled migrants who say they are being punished while the country continues to enjoy the many millions of dollars tourists bring to Ecuador, one of South America's poorest nations."

NYT: "Nobody Likes Us? Who Cares?"

Oct. 3: "Major world powers attract envy and resentment."

NYT: "Revolutionary Anti-Semitism,"

Oct. 4: "The Honduras debate is not really about Honduras. It is about whether it is possible to stop the spread of chavismo and all it implies, including nuclear proliferation and terrorism in Latin America."

BBC: "Ireland's Brazilians pack their bags," Oct. 5: "About 18 months ago the Celtic Tiger lost its bounce. As a result, more than two-thirds of Gort's Brazilian population, which a couple of years ago was 1,500 strong, has left."

Financial Times: "FT interview

transcript: Marina Silva," Oct. 5:

"There is often a mistaken view put forward in these debates that it is easier to make reductions by reducing deforestation than by other mechanisms.... It presupposes changing the model of development for developing countries. In the same way that it is hard for rich countries to alter their energy systems from fossil fuels to renewable fuels, it is hard for developing countries to change their model of development."

Economist: "Laptops for all," Oct. 1:

"Nearly all of Uruguay's 380,000 primary-school pupils have now received a simple and cheap XO laptop, a model developed by One Laptop Per Child, an NGO based in Massachusetts."

Economist: "Correa and the golden

ponchos," Oct. 1: "Mr. Correa has long been distrusted by business groups and conservatives. But now he faces a new challenge from the left. A strike by teachers and students, whose leaders claim to be Maoists, is now in its third week. And indigenous groups, some linked to Pachakutik, this week launched what they called a 'national uprising,' complete with roadblocks."

Bloomberg: "Brazil's Lula Asks for Olympics to Change 'Imbalance,'"

Oct. 2: "'For the others it will be just one more Games, for us it will boost the self-esteem of Brazilians,' Lula said."

WSJ: "Labor Crisis in Argentina Fuels

Economic Worries," Sept. 30: "The labor unrest is a big headache for leftist President Cristina Kirchner at a time when Argentina's unemployment and poverty are rising because of the global

economic crisis. Official government statistics put unemployment at 8.8%, but private economists say it is closer to 11%. While official data put poverty at 13.9%, some economists say the true number easily surpasses 30%."

NYT: "Guillermo Endara, Who Helped Lead Panama From Noriega to Democracy, Dies at 73," Sept. 29: "At the request of the Americans, Mr. Endara was sworn in as president at a United States military base shortly after troops began to move in. He had to rely on a United States government fax machine to announce his installation to the world."

Two Weeks Notice: "Why Newt Gingrich shouldn't ever have foreign policy influence," Sept. 30: "GINGRICH: Because the sympathy for the left in this administration is unending, and the fact is Zelaya is the Castro, Chavez candidate to be the strong man of Honduras. The fact is in Nicaragua, Somoza's trying to change the constitution so he can be a lifetime leader like Chavez, and you're seeing the dictatorship of Latin America from the left, from people who are both anti-American and anti-rule of law."

The Latin Americanist: "Daily Headlines," Sept. 30: "A senior U.S. diplomat reportedly met with Cuban dissidents and government officials in a series of secret, breakthrough discussions."

NYT: "Ignoring a Law on Foreign Relations," Sept. 15: "The law at issue is a fairly narrow one, and presidents of both parties have long objected to such statutes as infringements on their power over foreign relations."

NYT: "China Spreads Aid in Africa, With a Catch," Sept. 21: "Now the scanners seem to illustrate something else: the aura of boosterism, secrecy and back-room deals that has clouded China's use of billions of dollars in foreign aid to court the developing world."

Montevideo Portal: "Hello!" Sept. 23: "Los latinoamericanos estamos acostumbrados a echarles las culpas de todos nuestros males al imperio de turno, que fueron los españoles, los portugueses, los ingleses, el imperio americano, y nunca asumimos con seriedad la responsabilidad que tenemos de nuestros propios males, porque no supimos, no pudimos u omitimos elaborar un proyecto político latinoamericano propio, nuestro, para que nuestra gente viviera mejor."

Montevideo Portal: "La gala del Luna," Sept. 24: "Yo me encontraba en Buenos Aires y quizás con una

cuota de ingenuidad pero sin ningún interés en intervenir en asuntos internos de Uruguay, asistí acompañado por mi hija argentina de 20 años. Ella tenía ganas de conocer a Mujica y yo particularmente de ver a Los Olimareños. Si la invitación me la hubiese formulado el Dr. Lacalle, hubiese asistido también. Era un acto en Buenos Aires, no en Uruguay."

BBC: " Food business taking off in Peru," Sept. 25: "The Peruvian Amazon is sparsely populated but a whole new world of flora and fauna. You can find caiman (a type of crocodile) on the menu here and an enormous freshwater fish, the paiche. Plantains, peccaries (a type of wild pig) and dozens of unusual fruits make up the cuisine."

NYT: "With Bush Gone, Chávez Smells No Sulfur," Sept. 24: "President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, reversing one of the more memorable lines in the annals of speeches at the United Nations General Assembly, declared Thursday that the smell of sulfur had deserted the green marble podium. 'It doesn't smell of sulfur here anymore, it's gone,' said a grinning Mr. Chávez.... 'It smells of something else — it's hope.'"

Economist: "His own worst enemy," Sept. 24: "Mr Uribe has much to gain from a robustly independent legal system—especially if he runs again. He will need to reassure the outside world that he is the democrat he claims to be."

Financial Times: "Colombia calls for investment rating," Sept. 24: "'I think that the capacity of the Colombian economy to resist the external shock is strong proof that this is a very strong economy. The ratings agencies have to take that into account,' Mr. Uribe said."

NYT: "U.S. World Cup Match May Move From Honduras," Sept. 23: "The situation has raised doubts about whether it will be safe for the American men's national soccer team to play its match in San Pedro Sula, Honduras's industrial center and second-largest city."

NYT: "Survey Shows Pull of the U.S. Is Still Strong Inside Mexico," Sept. 23: "One-third of Mexicans say they would move to this country if they could, and more than half of those would move even if they did not have legal immigration documents, according to a survey published Wednesday by the Pew Research Center."

NYT: "Mystery in Honduran Leader's Return," Sept. 23: "Roberto Micheletti, the de facto president, promised not to storm the Brazilian Embassy, where Mr. Zelaya, in his trademark white cowboy hat, and

dozens of friends and family members are now trapped. However, the government did cut off water, electricity and telephone service to the building."

Financial Times: "Honduras police break up pro-Zelaya rally," Sept. 22: "The circumstances of his return remain unclear, though Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan president, has said Mr. Zelaya entered Honduras 'by land, fording rivers, risking his life with only four comrades to accompany him.'"

EriSada: "In my (high) shoes," Sept. 21: "Así que díganme, a ustedes, ¿qué los hace sentirse como un millón de pesos?"

Washington Post: "As U.S. Closes Military Post, Ecuador Hails Restoration of 'Sovereignty'," Sept. 19: "The last 15 U.S. troops in Ecuador left the country's Manta air base Friday, officially closing the American military post in what Ecuador's government calls a recovery of sovereignty.... ad_icon U.S. plans to transfer the interdiction missions to bases leased in Colombia have sparked controversy across South America and saber rattling by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez."

NYT: "Good Will, but Few Foreign Policy Benefits for Obama," Sept. 19: "France, Britain, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Nigeria and other countries likewise saw double-digit increases, while smaller increases were registered in India, South Korea, Japan and China. But Arab countries saw more modest changes, and countries like Russia, Turkey, Poland and Pakistan were largely unmoved."

Washington Post: "In Castro Country, Giving a Concert for Peace," Sept. 21: "The free 'Peace without Borders' concert was criticized by hard-line Cuban exiles in Miami as a propaganda coup for the Castro brothers, and that it might have been."

Mary Anastasia O'Grady (WSJ): "Hillary's Honduras Obsession," Sept. 21: "The U.S. is trying to force Honduras to violate its own constitution and is also using its international political heft to try to interfere with the country's independent judiciary."

WSJ: "Argentina Moves to Rein In Media," Sept. 18: "the law is expected to curb the power of one of leftist President Cristina Kirchner's main political enemies, Argentina's largest media group, Grupo Clarín.... The bill would tighten limits on how many licenses a media company can own, prohibit companies from offering both open-air and cable TV in the same market, limit cable operators to a 35% national market share, and create a new

media regulatory body. Some of the changes would directly affect Clarín, which controls 46% of the Argentine cable market and offers both cable and open-air television in some markets."

Washington Post: "Day of the Gaucho Waning in Argentina," Sept. 10: "Instead of roaming freely and eating to their hearts' content, a growing number of Argentine cattle are spending a third of their lives in U.S.-style feedlots. There, crammed in muddy corrals, they are pumped with antibiotics and fed mounds of protein-rich grain, which fattens them up fast but hardly conjures up the romantic image of the Argentine cowboy, the iconic gaucho, lassoing cattle on the high plains."

Economist: "The strange chill in Chile," Sept. 17: "Under the Concertación, Chile has been the region's big success story, adding an increasingly robust democracy and welfare provision to the free-market economic policies bequeathed by Pinochet.... Yet despite all these achievements, the sense of malaise in Chile is as palpable as the snow blanketing the Andes. Businessmen worry that the economy is no longer the most dynamic in South America."

Economist: "The Bachelet model," Sept. 17: "Chileans have come to see her as empathetic, as a mother figure who is protecting them."

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recent publications from benjamin gedan

Reuters: "Brazil's risky role in Honduras crisis," Sept. 23: "President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's decision to grant Zelaya refuge at short notice at its embassy in Tegucigalpa has thrust Brazil to the center of the crisis, giving it a chance to take a high-profile role in efforts to end the stand-off. The risk, though, is that Brazil gets drawn into a messy power dispute in the Central American nation that is far outside its South American sphere of influence."

The Providence Journal: "Experts say unions hobbling Rhode Island's economy," June 10, 2009

The Providence Journal: "R.I. may lag nation in economic recovery," June 6, 2009

The Providence Journal: "Carcieri: Stimulus money hasn't helped R.I. economy," May 13, 2009

The Providence Journal: "In R.I., those with jobs are feeling pinch, too," May 9, 2009

The Providence Journal: "Boom turns to glut for Providence hotels," April 13

The Providence Journal: "No slam Dunk - Profits eluding refurbished Center," March 31, 2009

The Providence Journal: "State's small businesses falling fast," March 1, 2009

The Providence Journal: "Recession slows the flow - Water bills may rise as sewage treatment plants face declining revenue due to foreclosures, conservation and unpaid balances," Feb. 15, 2009

Center for American Progress: "Double

Standard, the people in Uruguay distrust our government but revel in our culture," Nov. 13, 2008

ABC News: "Gambling Magnet for the Rich or Money Pit?" Oct. 30, 2008

The New York Times: "Taking the Waters in Uruguay's Gaucho Corner," August 31, 2008

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 **Pipón**



Baby broccoli - Whole Foods labeled it "baby broccoli," but I'm pretty sure it was "Broccolini," a crunchy, skinny little hybrid that apparently must always be capitalized...

2 days ago

globalpost
