The Committee on U.S./Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) is a Cornell University-based group which works in Ithaca and the surrounding area to promote greater understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. We are particularly concerned with the role of the United States in influencing the social, political and economic conditions of the region.

With this issue of the Newsletter, we are trying a new format, and we would welcome your comments and suggestions. The CUSLAR Newsletter provides CUSLAR members and other concerned individuals with the opportunity to present information and analysis on topics relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean. The positions of the authors do not necessarily reflect the positions of CUSLAR as an organization. If you are interested in writing an article for the Newsletter please call the CUSLAR office. We also welcome letters to the editors.

The CUSLAR office is in G-29 Anabel Taylor Hall at Cornell (255-7293). The office is open to the community on weekdays. Weekly meetings are held on Mondays at 5pm in Anabel Taylor.

An Interview with Brazilian Economist, Paul Singer

The well-known Brazilian economist Paul Singer came to Ithaca last spring to participate in a two-day workshop organized by the Department of Planning at Cornell University. Paul Singer is a professor at the Pontificia Universidade Católica (PUC) of São Paulo and a member of the prestigious CEBRAP, an independent progressive research institute for economic problems. He has published numerous academic books as well as some didactic ones for laymen. He is a member of the Partido do Trabalhador (PT), the Worker's Party, which is counted among the "esquerda explícita", the "outspoken left".
THE ECONOMY

What do you think Brazil’s government is going to do about the economy?
I imagine that they will give the highest priority to containing inflation, which is very high and may get out of control. But I don’t know the way they will try to do it. They have two alternatives: to try again to control wages and prices - not by freezing them but by making some sort of social agreement and coordinating income policy; or they could freeze prices as they are at this moment and dampen down demand, through recession.

How will Brazil handle the debt crisis?
Since Brazil stopped paying interest to its creditors, time is working for Brazil, in the sense that the banks must find some way to meet the financial needs of Brazil, about $4 billion in "fresh" money. This is in fact the amount which Brazil is unable to pay on its interest due in 1987. So this really isn’t money that will come to Brazil, it means that the bankers will in fact pay themselves for lending to Brazil. The real problem is with the conditions the banks will try to attach to these loans. Brazil is not going to accept any conditions from the IMF - at least that is what the government has said. So Brazil isn’t getting any "fresh" money and it has stopped paying the interest on its debt. If the crisis isn’t solved very soon, so much the better for Brazil, from this point of view.

In fact, Brazil is demanding political negotiations and this is important. Brazil wants to set a limit on the net transfer of value in all forms - interest on private debt and public debt, profit remittance, royalty payments, etc. It should not be more than 2.5% of Brazil’s National Product, which is not a very small amount. It would still be about 2/3 of what Brazil has been remitting.

Until now no government of the creditor countries has been willing to enter negotiations because they contend that the debt owed the private banks is a private matter between the banks and Brazil. This is a particularly thorny problem which needs to be overcome.

Is there any likelihood of the debtor countries presenting a common front to the banks? Or will the banks succeed in playing off one country against another?
Well, they have succeeded until this moment. I think it will be essential for Brazil and the other debtor countries to unite and present unified demands. It is important also to at least partially win over public opinion in the U.S. and Europe. It is one thing for a country not to behave "properly". It is quite another if most Latin American and African countries stop paying and demand negotiations. Not just one country repudiating its debt, but a long term political agreement is needed. Most developing countries agree about this - but never in step. When Argentina was trying to do what Brazil is doing now, Brazil was paying. Now Brazil is in a moratorium but Argentina is under IMF conditions. The debtor countries have not been able to coordinate concrete political actions.
What would be the political consequences if the Sarney government were to accept some of the IMF’s conditions?

I would say internationally, nothing. This is the normal thing to do. But domestically, it would mean direct elections for President very soon. This is a transitory regime, and the duration of his term has not been decided; it depends on the Constitutional Assembly and the majority has a very strong opinion on this issue - and Sarney does, too. This would mean that he has not kept his promise on a very important issue. It would be very probable that we would have direct elections next year, but it could even be moved up to this year, as soon as the new constitution is finished.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION

Who does the government represent and who benefits from it?

Well, the government is formed by two parties, the Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) and the Liberal Front Party (PFL). The PMDB alone got more than half the popular vote and elected 24 out of 25 governors in the last election, so it is the majority party. Also, President Jose Sarney is a member of the PMDB. This party represents the greatest part of the industrial bourgeoisie, but besides that, it represents many other groups too, the petty bourgeoisie and even a certain wing of the labor movement. PFL is the remnant of the official party which supported the military regime, and it got a very severe beating in the last election electing just one governor. Before that they had half of the governorships. They lost seats in the Parliament also. The PFL is now the second party in size and represents entrepreneurs, capitalists, and some peasants.

I would say that the government policy is mostly directed at stabilizing the economy and encouraging growth in the capitalist sectors. To do this you have to orient yourself to the wishes and needs of the capitalist class. If you want their cooperation, you can't go against their interests. So although the last election produced changes, the class that benefits the most from the government's policies is still the capital class.

Perhaps you would like to talk a little about your party, the Workers’ Party?

The Workers’ Party, the PT, is quite new, as are all Brazilian parties. It was founded in 1980 and is a coalition mainly of trade unions, the more radical unions, rural workers unions, and the so-called "minorities", which are really majorities - women, blacks, and so on. The PT is a fairly large party considering the number of party militants, but in 1982, in the first election, it got about 4.5% of the vote. In the 1986 elections it increased its share to 8% of the national vote, and it increased its representation in Parliament from 8 to 18.

It's true the PT is still a small party but there are not many parties in Brazil and it is the fourth largest in size after the PMDB, PFL, PDT which is the labor party belonging to Brizola, the former governor of Rio de Janeiro, and then comes PT. It is the largest of the small parties or the smallest of the large parties, depending on how you look at it. The PT also elected two mayors, in important cities. One is Diadema, a large working class suburb of Sao Paulo with about 400,000 inhabitants. The other is Fortaleza, the capital of the state of Ceara, and the second largest city in the Northeast, with a population of 2 1/2 million.

What do you predict for the opposition parties in the future?
They have all been growing, particularly PT, and that should continue because of the economic situation. The government can’t keep the economy growing and at the same time control inflation. And if the government does try to control inflation by resorting to a recession, then many who voted for the PMDB in the last election will switch to the PT or the PDT. A recession would hurt workers most of all, and so the labor support that PMDB has would go to PT or PDT.

THE MILITARY

Do you think the military might step in if the economy gets much worse? They haven’t been discredited the way the military was in Argentina?

The situation is, in this respect, different from that of Argentina. The military has not been discredited. Brazil had no Malvinas war. Also the cases of torture and political assassinations by the military were on a much smaller scale than in Argentina, and these abuses did not involve the whole army but were more a matter of individual cases. So there is no demoralization of the army, as in Argentina. But there is a very general longing for democracy and civil government in Brazil. Therefore, it is improbable that the military will try to come to power again in the near future.

The army stepped back from power voluntarily. Of course there were lots of pressures on them, but not enough pressure to force them from power against their will. They decided by themselves that it would be better for them to go back to their professional duties. Still, the military has an enormous influence on the government. They have veto power on some issues. The have five ministers in the cabinet - the ministers of the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Chief of the General Staff, of course, and then the head of the National Information Service, the secret police, is also a general and a cabinet member. They are out of power and not out of power. I think this is the best situation for them and I think that they regard it that way. They have no ambition to take full responsibility for governing again. They don’t have to take blame for the government’s problems and yet they exert much more power than the armed forces usually exert in bourgeois democratic regimes.

Do you see the military being strongly opposed to the left parties, for instance PT, coming to power in the future? How would they react?

Yes they are, but the problem is that PT will not come to national government very soon. One important fact is the relatively
rapid turnover of high military officials, an important political measure taken in the 1960's. No general can remain in the active force for more than 12 years. So in the next 8 years a whole new generation of generals will come in, and they will likely be much less prejudiced against trade unions and leftists than the present generation is. So it is very difficult to foresee. If PT had won the last election, there would be a total impasse with the military. But PT is growing and gradually getting government experience, and the military may get accustomed to PT.

**MAJOR POPULAR MOVEMENTS**

*What do you see as the major popular movements in Brazil?*

If you consider the trade union movement as a popular movement, then it already plays an important role. CUT is at this moment more important than PT, because it speaks for about 12 million organized workers and it can draw in the other more moderate trade union confederation, CGT, in common action. Both confederations have worked together most of the time. In fact, there was a general strike in December of last year, large strikes by banking employees, and a seamen's strike which paralyzed the Brazilian commercial fleet for 3 weeks. All these strikes had unions from both confederations involved, so in united action they are very important. They will be even more important in the future, because they are still gaining experience - labor federations weren't allowed before 1983. Now they are helping individual unions with funds, legal advice, and so on.

*What about Christian Base Communities - how important are they?*

They are important as a mass movement. I don't know how many people are involved, but it is several million at any rate. It is very difficult to assess what are doing because they don't do it directly. They inspire people. So, just before I came the U.S. there was an enormous mass movement of squatter settlements or "invasions" in my city, São Paulo. 25,000 families simultaneously seized land in the poorest area of the city. This was very probably the outcome of the base communities, but the communities don't do it as such. They organize landless families, and then the landless families can act together, to seize land for instance. The same is true of the fight for agrarian reform. So the base communities are really very important as an inspiration.

*How is the judiciary going to cope with these "invasions"? Are they going to send in the police?*

Yes. The judiciary in Brazil, which has been quite progressive in political matters, is not so in economic matters. They have always mandated that the land go back to the legal owners, both in urban and rural situations. This is an enormous obstacle and many of the 25,000 families have now been expelled. One worker was killed by the police in the skirmishes which resulted from the land seizures and there is a public opinion revolt now against the police and the judiciary. The right wing of course is saying that this is anarchy and so there is a big debate.
What are the prospects for agrarian reform?

Well, it is a similar case. We have a ministry of agrarian reform now and they have targets for distributing land which are absolutely impossible to meet. Why? First, because they do not have the money or adequate technical means to decide which areas are below the minimal level of productivity specified by law as one criterion for expropriation. But even those areas which have already been found to be below this minimum level and which were to be expropriated by law cannot be, because the judiciary has blocked the expropriations, about 80% of them. So they are already well below their target and the judiciary will block much of their future attempts. So the whole process is at a standstill.

How does the agrarian reform law work? Are landowners reimbursed for their land?

I don't know just how the system is supposed to work, but the government can either pay cash for the land or pay in the securities of the agrarian debt, a federal security which is guaranteed by monetary adjustment to keep its value despite inflation and carries a normal interest rate of 6%. But landowners who do not want to "sell" their land to the government just go to the judiciary.

The government had limited the agrarian reform in a political concession so it would only expropriate unused or underused land. That means - for instance, the Minister of Agrarian Reform might send inspectors to an area where there is a land conflict. The inspectors find that the land is almost empty, perhaps 20 head of cattle on land that could feed 20 families. So they say, "we'll expropriate." The bureaucratic process takes at least six months. The land has to be surveyed, land titles researched, etc. During this 6 month or longer period, the land owner puts lots of cattle on this land. It's very easy to do. So now instead of 20 head of cattle there's 2000. The landowner goes to the judiciary and says, "I am using this land. There's been a terrible mistake." The judge says, "We have to investigate." That takes more time. And that's how it goes. Recently there was a scarcity of meat and the cattle growers alleged that the scarcity was due to the agrarian reform; they needed the cattle because of the agrarian reform laws.
PERU/Strikes. In late April Peru’s 10,000 oil workers began an indefinite strike. The stoppage has the support of oil installations’ maintenance workers who have decided to work to rule (not more than eight hours a day) because the government has not paid bonus money due to them. Some 3,600 Enatruperu (transport) workers were threatening a strike if their demands were not met; employees at the office of public registration have been on strike since the end of March.

GUATEMALA/Strike. Leaders of 250,000 civil servants who have been on strike since 27 April have threatened to take to the streets if President Vinicio Cerezo orders the army in to run banks and offices. The strikers are demanding a US$40 a month rise on their US$98 salary in line with last year’s 40% inflation rate.

NICARAGUA/NEW MEASURES. The government says it will reduce state control over the market in a bid to raise production and combat the country’s flourishing black market. Domestic trade minister Ramon Cabrales announced that in June workers would be able to negotiate wages and working conditions directly with their employers; that farmers would be allowed to sell perishable goods on the free market; and that independent supermarkets would be opened on 19 May.

URUGUAY/LABOUR UNREST. Following the success of its May Day rally (100,000 people), the PIT-CNT labour confederation announced a mass demonstration outside congress on 12 May to protest government economic policies. On a separate front, the PIT-CNT has gathered the signatures of 100,000 people in favour of a plebiscite on the amnesty for military officers (WR-87-07). Organisers of the campaign say they already have 350,000 of the 550,000 signatures required.

COLUMBIA/Strike. The leftist Union Patriótica (UP) and the local oil workers union called a 48-hour civic strike in Barrancabermeja on 5 May to protest the murder of Sandra Rodon, a 14-year-old killed by assassins because she was the only witness who could identify the killer of eight UP leaders murdered on 22 April. Demonstrators were beaten by police, says UP senator Hernando Hurtado, and were met with anti-protest tanks and police firing tear-gas.
Interviews with Salvadoreans on the Situation in El Salvador Today

On February 8, 1986, a convention of workers, peasants and representatives of human rights organizations met to discuss ways of working together for some substantial change in El Salvador resulting in the formation of a new labor coalition - the UNTS (National Unity of Salvadorean Workers). At the UNTS founding convention a series of resolutions were passed calling for the dismantling of the Duarte governments newly imposed 'economic measures', a resumption of dialogue between the government and the FMLN-FDR, and an end to the U.S. domination of El Salvador's military, economic and political policies.

El Salvador: Growing Militancy of the Salvadorean Workers Movement

Interview with Salvadorean Union Leader, Hector Bernabe Recinos

"Space for moving politically in El Salvador is closing in and the use of repression against workers has increased. This will lead the labor movement to once again evaluate the possibilities of armed struggle," states Hector Bernabe Recinos. The mention of his name creates headaches for the Christian Democratic government of Jose Napoleon Duarte. Now 40, Bernabe Recinos has been a union leader for 14 years. He was in prison from 1980 to 1984, and was freed as a result of pressure from the international solidarity movement. He is a member of FENESTRAS (The National Federation of Salvadorean Workers) a trade union federation formed in 1980, subject to constant threat. 345 members were killed by Salvadorean military forces between 1980-83. He is also a member of the National Confederation of Salvadorean Workers (UNTS).

This group is a very important one because in addition to including unions that once supported the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) who joined after seeing that the government reneged on its promises of social and economic reforms as well as the process of dialogue to end the war. Among those is Ramon Aristides Mendoza, president of the Popular Democratic Union (UPD) which has been widely credited with electing Jose Napolehn Duarte as president in 1984.

What plans does the workers' movement in El Salvador have given the prospect of continued war?

We see it as a serious problem that the government refuses to respond to the demand for dialogue, given that since 1981 the war has continued to deepen both quantitatively and qualitatively. The government places an absurd condition on the FMLN: the laying down of arms. It's obvious that the guerrillas are not going to lay down their weapons. There are two armies in El Salvador, and neither one can demand the other's surrender.

The escalation of the war is making the demand for peace by the people more forceful. But dialogue won't just walk in the door. It's a mistake to think that today if they hold a dialogue, tomorrow there will
be peace. This demand for peace forces the people to organize themselves on other levels in order to pressure for dialogue, similar to the way in which the people opted for other types of organization after the electoral route had been rejected for so many years.

If the government leaves the workers with no other choice, they will have to resort to violent methods. Violence is all the government gives to the workers. As the workers have increased their levels of organization, the government has responded with greater repression. In this sense, it is a question of self-defense for the workers. In El Salvador, there is an established tradition of armed defense by the masses. Faced with a rise in repression and with the closing off of political channels, it is likely that the workers' militias will reappear in the urban areas.

The government accuses the UNTS of being terrorist, the same thing that they call the FMLN. Given this, what are the possibilities for growth of the labor movement?

The economic crisis in El Salvador is very serious, and it hits the workers directly. With the worsening of the crisis, poverty is greater, and the demands made on the government are greater still. The workers' movement has been growing in quantity and quality and its unification efforts are shown in the UNTS. The process of deepening workers consciousness has been moving forward because the policies adopted by the government haven't resulted in anything positive for the people.

The government has always tried to destroy the workers' movement's unified bodies and always labels them as part of the FMLN. In this way, they hope to swing international opinion in their favor and to justify repression.

Our policy is to establish alliances around common goals with other organizations and to strengthen unity. We strive for unity in action in defense of a platform with the UPD which, because of the need to maintain its autonomy, left the UNTS. We have a great deal in common with the ranks of the UNOC (a union close to the Christian Democrats). The determining factor is that the economic crisis is felt equally by all workers.

A second interview on the current political climate in El Salvador begins on page 15.
What does the future portend in terms of the economy?

With the earthquake, the crisis has deepened. Economically, we are at 1961 levels, or in other words, we’ve gone backwards 26 years. The country now spends more foreign exchange than it is able to earn. The US is providing $300 million a year in weapons and the cost of the war is approximately $2 million a day. Capital flight last year was approximately $5 billion. All this underlines the need to find a solution to the conflict. This solution must be sought with the participation of the FDR-FMLN. All sectors of Salvadoran society should participate in the search for national consensus.

Besides the government and the FMLN as the two contenders in the war, a "Third Force" is being spoken of. (The Third Force refers to a middle group that is not politically aligned with either the FDR/FMLN or the military.) Could this represent a viable political alternative?

The third force is not a political option, but it is important for the broadening of alliances, for pushing forward platforms of joint action, and for the enrichment of national political life. But since it has no military capability, the third force cannot be an alternative in the conflict. In El Salvador, the situation is polarized between the Armed Forces and the US on one side, and the FMLN-FDR on the other.

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**Editor’s note:**

Recently the UNTS has led protests in response to government policies. The army has responded to increases in organizing with threats of repression of those parties involved. Over the past two months attacks against these groups have taken place much more frequently. There have been minor incidents during protests and mobilizations provoked by the security forces themselves who are reported to circulate in plain clothes among protestors and end skirmishes by firing shots into the air to cause fear and panic.

More recently the attacks have taken a more serious nature as human rights advocates have been directly targeted. On May 15th, a member of CRIPDES (Christian Committee for the Displaced of El Salvador) was run over and killed by a government-type vehicle with darkened windows after leaving a letter at the Legislative Assembly calling for amnesty of all political prisoners. Less than two weeks later, on May 28, a bomb exploded in the offices of COMADRES (Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, Disappeared and Assassinated in El Salvador), seriously wounding two of its members (15 and 45 years of age) and causing massive destruction.

Just three days later, the UNTS held a demonstration outside of Mariona Prison in support of political prisoners who were on a hunger strike inside, where members of the First Infantry shot out at the crowd, seriously wounding Julio Portillo, a leader of ANDES (the National Association of Salvadoran Educators) and the UNTS.
The Testimony of Carmen Gloria Quintana

Translated by the ICCHRLA (The Canadian based, Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America)

On March 4, 1987 in Geneva’s Palais des Nations, more than 250 delegation members and observers attending the 43rd Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) grew silent as they listened to the eloquent testimony of a young Chilean woman. Many ambassadors were moved to tears as Carmen Gloria Quintana recounted the horrifying story of the suffering inflicted on her by the military forces of her country and the continuing obstruction of justice by the Chilean authorities. She told them she was testifying not only for herself and Rodrigo Rojas de Negri, the young man who died from injuries sustained in the same incident, but also for the many other victims of the institutionalized repression enforced and maintained by the Chilean military regime.

My name is Carmen Gloria Quintana...My personal testimony is also the collective testimony of thousands of children, youth and students who have suffered, in their own flesh during these thirteen years, the cruelty of an unconstitutional regime which came to power during a bloody military coup.

I am a 19-year-old Chilean university student. Eight months ago, I was savagely beaten and burned alive by Chilean soldiers. I survived and I am here today to tell what happened and to denounce before this commission the continued human rights violations in my country.

On July 2, 1986, I was participating in a national strike called by the National Civil Assembly. That day Rodrigo Rojas de Negri was also present, a 19-year-old man, photographer, resident of the United States, son of an exiled Chilean woman, who had returned to his country to find his roots. I mention him in modest homage to his life which he lost in his homeland.

As we were walking toward a demonstration in our neighbourhood, a patrol of heavily armed soldiers in combat gear and with their faces painted black followed us in a civilian truck. They detained Rodrigo and me. We were insulted with obscenities, physically searched and brutally beaten. Two other vehicles with soldiers and two persons in civilian dress arrived on the scene, bringing the number of assailants to thirty people. One of them carried a can of gasoline. Rodrigo was already semi-conscious on the ground, bleeding profusely from the brutal kicks, punches and blows from the butt-end of the rifle.

They continued beating me. The leader of the patrol began to douse us with gasoline, from head to foot, despite my pleas that they stop because it was entering my mouth. The soldiers just laughed at us. As I was wiping my mouth with my hand, they threw something between us which exploded and we began to burn like human torches. As I began to jump and roll on the ground to put out the flames, a soldier hit me in the mouth with the butt of his rifle and I lost several teeth. Witnesses to the act said later the soldiers left us in flames for several minutes.

Almost unconscious, I remember we were wrapped in blankets and thrown into a vehicle as if we were sacks. Afterwards, we were thrown into a ditch 23 kilometers away, in the countryside. I woke up to feel
myself being shaken by a man who was totally disfigured, with his face burned black, his lips ashen and his nose bleeding. It was Rodrigo. We climbed out of the ditch like zombies, with our arms and legs outstretched, and we began to walk with great difficulty to find help.

Several cars, upon seeing us, swerved away frightened until one man assisted us and called the police. They took approximately two hours to take us to a public hospital. There, we were diagnosed as having deep second and third degree burns over 62 per cent of our bodies.

Veronica de Negri, Rodrigo’s mother, whose name appears on the list of people who cannot return to Chile, was only allowed to return temporarily on July 5th. The following day, her son Rodrigo died as a result of the injuries from the burning and severe beating, as well as the denial of adequate medical treatment. During his funeral, the police used tear gas bombs and water cannons to repress the mourners—including the ambassador of the United States.

During the following weeks, the armed forces, including its Commander-in-Chief General Pinochet, denied categorically any participation by the military in the act, despite the abundant proof to the contrary.

Since then, the case has been obstructed by the authorities. Eight months after the act, only one officer, Lieutenant Pedro Fernandez Dittus, has been charged with negligence and he was recently released conditionally by the military court after paying US$25.00 bail. How is so much injustice and partiality possible?

I denounce before this commission, Mr. Chairman, the fact that the witnesses have been repressed and subjected to severe impediments; some have been arrested, others kidnapped or threatened with death, others were kept prisoners in incommunicado detention, making it necessary for our lawyers to present writs of protection on behalf of twelve of them. Our lawyers, as well, have received death threats and are still victims of a strong campaign of intimidation, including an attempted kidnapping.

Our case is similar, in its ultimate meaning, to the many others which occur daily in my country, affecting the life, security or the physical and moral integrity of persons.

The presence of heavily armed military patrols is not unusual. During these recent years, the poor neighborhoods of Santiago and the provinces have been constantly subjected to massive raids and military occupations as if a virtual war had been unleashed against the civilian population.

That we were set on fire in a public street before witnesses exemplifies the level
of impunity enjoyed by torturers and the agents of this regime who have been responsible for so many cases of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of the population during 1986.

Leaving us abandoned in the countryside and in the same area where three persons were found with their throats slashed in March 1985 was more than negligence as has been declared in the courts—it is a morbid effort to terrorize the population by setting an example.

The threatening of the witnesses and lawyers is the same phenomenon which occurs on a much broader scale to defenders of human rights and those persons who exercise their professions ethically.

The lack of adequate medical treatment and the risk to my personal security made it necessary for me to leave Chile. Canada opened its doors to me and my family and the assistance and support I have received in Canada symbolizes the ongoing help which all the democratic peoples and governments in the world have offered to the thousands of exiles and refugees from Chile who are scattered throughout the world.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize my thoughts and my pain before this highly qualified Commission stating, Mr.Chairman, distinguished ambassadors, that my case is not an isolated one.

First: I must be considered as the survivor of a serious attack on the right of life as are many of those in Chile who remain in anonymity and who deserve your attention as well;

Second: The general and institutionalized framework of violations of human rights that are to be observed in Chile have their roots in an antidemocratic political constitution and the perpetuation of a military regime which makes them possible;

Third: My case demonstrates the serious defects of the judiciary, particularly in its lack of independence which must be corrected in order to guarantee the protection of individuals;

Fourth: My case shows, unfortunately, that the human rights situation in Chile is very serious and must continue to be the subject of special attention from the international community as it has been since 1974.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, in order that the death of Rodrigo Rojas and my suffering shall not have been in vain, I have the humble hope that my testimony will serve so that this Commission, in faithfulness to its mandate, will declare clearly and unequivocally its condemnation of the violations of human rights in the land of Pablo Neruda. It was Neruda himself, this poet of Chile and of the world who wrote:

"In this critical moment, with fluttering eyes of the pangs of death, we know that we shall see the definitive light even through half-closed eyes."

This definitive light is the hope of a new day of liberty, peace and justice for the Chilean people.
El Salvador: National Dialogue Must Include All Sectors
Interview with Ignacio Ellacuria, Rector of the Central American University, a Jesuit school in San Salvador

Could you comment on the causes of the conflict in Central America, especially with regard to El Salvador?

No one disputes the fact that the growth of poverty in the region is enormous. By the end of the 70’s Central America had seen 20 years of constant growth. Between 1950 and 1978 there was an average annual increase in the Gross Domestic Product of over 5.3%. This means that by the end of the 70’s the per capita GDP was almost 50% more than in 1950. However, in El Salvador, as in other countries in the area, this growth is not distributed equitably. On the contrary, it makes the oligarchical and big capital sectors stronger and leads to greater impoverishment of the lower classes.

If the problem of poverty cannot be overcome at a time of greater economic development, the question must be asked why. Not only were the social conflicts of the time not resolved, but in fact the level of discontent grew to such proportions that this same period saw the arrival on the scene of the people’s organizations and armed violence.

Simply in order to return to the levels of the 70’s—which in themselves were quite intolerable, with a lack of housing, health care, jobs, etc.—it would be necessary to invest at least $20 billion in the region between now and 1990. This is obviously not going to happen. Added to this is the problem of the foreign debt. The situation not only was catastrophic, but is and will continue to be catastrophic.

In El Salvador, the war makes the situation worse still by destroying the economic infrastructure of the country. Militarization directly takes 40% of the national budget. When the war began there were about 500 officers in the Army; today there are 3000. The army had between 10 and 15 thousand men; today it has 50 thousand or more.

What have been the effects of the reforms promised by Duarte on the crisis?

I believe that the agrarian reform has had a great deal of importance socially. Land tenure is creating a different social and political conscience. However, economically, agrarian reform has been a failure due to the war and to the lack of trained people, and for reasons intrinsically economic, since those who benefited from the reform started out with an enormous debt which they cannot pay. From the point of view of productivity, and from that of the population that was affected—some 500,000 people—the agrarian reform has not been a success at all.

Has it weakened the oligarchy?

In my opinion no. The lands have not been expropriated, but rather have been purchased, even if the prices paid have been somewhat low. In any case, the oligarchy was already channelling its capital into other areas and has not been severely affected. If the United States wasn’t there to assure Duarte’s stability, the oligarchy would still be in a position to ally itself with the army. It isn’t because of the reforms'
that the oligarchy has lost power.

What role does U.S. economic aid play in El Salvador?

US economic aid is essentially counter-insurgency aid. If there were no war, the United States would not be giving significant economic assistance. What Washington seeks in El Salvador is the military defeat of the FMLN. They foresee a long term war, which according to the US plan, extends for at least another four or five years.

Based on this strategy, a certain democratization of the country is being sought. This is reflected in various things—in the respect given to the civil apparatus of the government which is bringing forward new elections, and in a certain level of respect for the union movement. Also there has been some loosening up of the restrictions on information and opinion, and a slight improvement in the human rights situation. Nevertheless, there are still some thousand political prisoners, and the disappearances and the torture continue.

What takes priority is the military solution. This is fundamental, basic, and all the rest, for the most part, is secondary, to lend the whole thing an image of democracy so that the American Congress would approve a gigantic aid package. So most likely, the war will continue, even though the majority of the people see it as an evil that should not be prolonged. The possibility of dialogue is made very difficult.

In El Salvador, what support is there on the one hand for the FMLN and on the other for Duarte?

The popularity of the FMLN-FDR has had its highs and lows. In January 1980, the FMLN had 200,000 armed men ready to take state power. Between 1980 and 1982, there were 30,000 murders during a terrible regime of terror. That's when the FMLN started to move away from the cities and into the mountains. This, together with the displacement of some 500,000 people inside the country and another 500,000 refugees who left the country, caused the popularity of the FMLN in real, measurable terms, to diminish. In 1984, popular support for the FMLN reached possibly its lowest point, a situation compounded by the "forced recruitment" campaign that the FMLN was carrying out at the time. Today, however, the FMLN does not do this and in fact it is the army which relies on forced recruitment. In 1985-86, the FMLN began again to deepen its support and its popularity is clearly on the rise.

Why does Duarte oppose holding the dialogue meeting in San Salvador as has been proposed? I'm certain that if the
dialogue is held in the capital, easily 100,000 people would mobilize in the streets. If with only strictly workers’ demands the UNTS gets 50,000 people into the streets certainly the FMLN can do more.

The process is being turned around. Despite the enormous difficulties the FMLN has in making its positions known because of its clandestine nature, its popularity is increasing, and I believe that if the FMLN were able to work openly, with adequate means of communication, its popularity would be augmented noticeably. No one can question their immense ability to organize and mobilize the masses. But I feel that the FMLN’s positions are too idealistic and radical, and I believe this frightens a large sector of the population. The FMLN lacks pragmatism and doesn’t accept the fact that a part of the population does not want to assume heroic, “all or nothing” positions.

Duarte no longer has the power to bring masses of people together around an issue. But he can hold his party together. He has held back the devaluation of the colon (El Salvador’s currency) that the IMF had demanded of him. He is keeping down the costs of water, electricity, and buses, because he knows that with rising costs, discontent grows. He knows how to maneuver in a populist way. He’s better as a presidential candidate than as a president. But Duarte’s party has strength. They speak of 70 to 80,000 members, and as a political organization, it operates throughout the country. The Christian Democrats can attract a lot of votes; but the important thing is how they capitalize on this, if it’s through an alliance with the right or with the left.

What do the Jesuits in Central America feel about the positions being adopted by the Vatican?

### Cost in $ of War in El Salvador

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Total Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$62.2</td>
<td>$6.7</td>
<td>$68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>$78.5</td>
<td>$35.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>$122.1</td>
<td>$62.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>$321.8</td>
<td>$228.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>$306.3</td>
<td>$125.4</td>
<td>$431.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>$355.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988 (proposed)</td>
<td>$319.3</td>
<td>$111.9</td>
<td>$441.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total U.S. Economic and Military Aid to El Salvador 1980-1988: 2 Billion 655 Million Dollars

Does not include Supplemental Aid, Police Training, earthquake relief, or regional economic aid which, if approved, will total more than $300 million.

(Source: Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development)

We are critical, but also obedient and reasonable. In El Salvador, the points of confrontation are those which have to do with Liberation Theology. But, for example, we received the Ratzinger document and we criticized it in some respects and said it was positive in others. Above all, we insisted that it does not reflect the situation of Liberation Theology as it exists in El Salvador.

In concrete terms, one cannot speak of confrontation with the Vatican nor even with Archbishop Rivera y Damas. This is not to say that he doesn’t see some of our positions as too radical, but there is a dialogue, reasoning; he lets us know of things which displease him. In general, the “Church of the Poor” in El Salvador has no intention of breaking with the Church in Rome, even though on some specific positions there are disagreements.

*Interviews reprinted from* Pensamiento Propio.
EL SALVADOR/US immigration. Salvadoreans have started returning home from the US, where a new immigration law has taken effect. The Central American University in San Salvador estimates that 1m Salvadoreans—25% of the total population—are in the US where they send back US$1.3bn in money and goods a year—equal to 35% of GDP. The returnees will add to the country's economic problems, chief of which is 33% unemployment.

BOLIVIA/Strike. The executive committee of the confederation of workers (COB) (headed by Juan Lechin) has gone on hunger strike, a move which threatens the continuation of talks between the government and miners who have been on strike since mid-April for better wages and against the dissolution of the state mining corporation, Comibol.

PANAMA/Strike. Social service employees in mid-May ended a strike after 18 days when the government increased wages. But the workers' federation cautioned that the government still has to keep an earlier promise of passing a law providing job stability for civil servants.

BY SELVA NEBBA An important victory for democratic rights was won March 31, when a U.S. District court in

NEWS BRIEFS

Massachusetts ruled the 1983 denial of a visa to HORTENSIA Bussi de Allende to be "improper." This decision was in response to a lawsuit filed by the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (NECLC). "This litigation is of historic significance, because this is the first time that a court has decided that the denial of a visa on ideological grounds is unlawful," Edward Copeland, an attorney for the NECLC, told the (Militant). Hortensia Allende is a member of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), an honorary president of the World Peace Council (WPC), and a member of the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid. She is the widow of Salvador Allende, the president of Chile assassinated in 1973 during the military coup that brought Gen. Augusto Pinochet to power.

Custar is now offering Spanish classes for all those who wish to participate. They will be offered three days a week during the summer, and new classes will start in the fall. They will begin the 2nd week in September. Two days a week from 6-7:30.
What's Behind the Contra Scandal

A year ago the Christic Institute, a public law research organization, filed a civil lawsuit in Miami Federal Court charging that the contra leadership and their private supporters planned the assassination of an American ambassador to provoke a U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

The lawsuit, which stems from a terrorist bombing in 1984, also alleges that the contras organized a complex operation to smuggle cocaine to several cities in the United States. The case, however, centers on the covert operations of a "secret team" of retired government officials and anti-communist extremists who organize political assassinations and terrorist attacks on a global scale.

According to the Institute's sources, the secret team's covert activities in Central America date back to the final stage of the Sandinista revolution. When the Carter Administration suspended military aid to the crumbling Government of Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza, the team arranged for the shipment of weapons and offered to create a search-and-destroy apparatus to eliminate rebel leaders. After Somoza's defeat in 1979, the team helped scattered elements of the dictator's National Guard organized the first contra units.

The conflict between the secret team's private war in Central America and official policy ended when President Reagan took office in 1981 and ordered the CIA to assume control of the team's private operation in Central America. In 1985, however, the press discovered that the CIA was illegally mining nicaraguan harbors and distributing a training manual advising the contras to assassinate civilians. Reacting to the scandals, Congress voted later that year to prohibit further military aid to the contras, direct or indirect.

According to the Institute's sources, the Administration decided to evade the new law by "privatizing" the contra aid program, handing the operation back to the secret team.

The team faced two immediate needs: military advisers to train the guerrillas and a source of money to replace the lost CIA funds. The conspirators turned to defendant Tom Posey, founder of a mercenary organization known a Civilian Material Assistance, to recruit Vietnam veterans willing to serve in Central America as "soldiers of fortune," and decided to finance the supply effort with cocaine sales in the United States. A public fundraising campaign, headed by Maj. Gen. John Singlaub, provided a plausible cover for the operation's money sources.

According to the Institute's sources, the cocaine supply pipeline was a complex operation involving leading Colombian gangsters, American businessmen and Cuban-American terrorists. The cocaine was supplied by Pablo Escobar and Jorge Ochoa, two leading figures in Colombia's drug underworld. They are both defendants in the lawsuit. The shipments were flown to a secret airstrip on an 8,000-acre ranch located in Costa Rica near the Nicaraguan border. The ranch, owned by defendant John Hull, served as the base from which the secret team planned to establish control over existing contra forces in Costa Rica. Airplanes used for cocaine shipments also ferried arms from Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador to the landing strip on Hull's ranch.
Ben Linder: Killed By Contras

On April 28, 1987, Benjamin Linder, a U.S. citizen, became another victim of the CIA-backed contras attacking Nicaragua. Linder, who was working on a rural electrification project, was ambushed, injured in the legs, and then shot in the head at very close range -- despite initial reports that he had been caught in crossfire. During Congressional testimony, U.S. Congressman Connie Mack (R-Fla.) accused Linder's parents of attempting to use their grief to "politicize the situation" and further stated to Elisabeth and David Linder that, "I do not want to be tough on you, but I feel you asked for it." Mr. Mack also stated that Benjamin Linder knew that the area he worked in was dangerous, implying that Ben Linder also asked for it.

Mack's statements are exceptional only in their blatant cruelty; his opinions are shared by other U.S. government officials and media spokespeople. In contrast, CUSLAR organized a Speak Out on May 16, in memory of Ben Linder and in reaffirmation of our commitment and right to work and travel in Nicaragua. Friends of Ben Linder, people who have lived, worked and visited Nicaragua, and concerned citizens spoke out in a gathering on the Commons in downtown Ithaca. Speakers told of their shame concerning what the U.S. -- the most powerful country in the world -- was doing to Nicaragua, an impoverished nation. Several people shared their observations of the poverty and the courage of the Nicaraguan people, emphasizing that Nicaraguans are "not just statistics." One speaker said returning to Nicaragua would be joyous, but also painful, for she would learn who had been killed during her absence. People who knew Linder spoke of his love of clowning and his joy in making others happy. A few quotes from participants in the Speak Out are offered here:

Other people said Ben Linder was an American hero, and I think he was an American hero, precisely because he was an ordinary person with an extraordinary sense of commitment.

The only meaning I can get from Ben Linders's death -- the way to prevent it from being another senseless murder -- is that it moves us to reaffirm our commitment to struggle for life by speaking out at home, and by building bridges with the people of Nicaragua.

His first love was clowning, and the second was engineering. He loved the San Francisco Mime Troupe and the Pickle Family Circus.

Ben Linder is a hero and a martyr; no more so and no less so than the thousands of Nicaraguans who have been killed.

What would Ben Linder want those of us who care to do now? Linder's beliefs about the Nicaraguan struggle and the importance of speaking and acting against U.S. aggression were clear. Friends of Ben Linder shared with CUSLAR a letter he had written to them from Nicaragua during Christmas, 1983—a portion of the letter is presented here:
The end of November and beginning of December were tense times. There was the feeling of an impending invasion. With the invasion of Grenada, the possibilities of the invasion of Nicaragua became more apparent. I think many of us thought that the days of outright invasion of a sovereign state had passed. How quick we forgot Nicaragua in 1912, 1925, 1927; Korea in 1952, Guatemala in 1954, Lebanon in 1958, Vietnam in 1965, and countless other coups such as Chile in 1973. And now it is 1983 and the pattern of lies and death continue. It was in this threatened atmosphere that we were living. The reaction was of strength. In most neighborhoods and work areas air raid shelters were built. These are an "L" shaped ditch about 10 feet to the legs, 1 yard wide and 2 yards deep. These then are covered with logs, plastic and dirt. Not the most comfortable way to spend time, but they say they do the job.

In the States we talk about the feeling of helplessness about war. Here there is a feeling of continuing on with the struggle. This is a very deep true feeling; everyone from the barefoot big woman with the torn dress digging a shelter for her kids, to the students going off for a month or two volunteering to pick coffee, to the 74-year old man who takes his turn on the revolutionary vigilance block watch, to the mother who goes off with the militia to fight in the mountains. And here I am in the midst of all this. And I feel good.
Ernesto Cardenal, poet and minister of culture of Nicaragua, recently received an award from the University of Valencia, Spain.

THE PARROTS

My friend Michel is a commanding officer in Somoto, cut by the border with Honduras and he told me about finding a shipment of female parrots that were going to be smuggled to the United States so they'd learn to speak English.

There were 186 parrots, and 47 had already died in their cages. And he took them back to the place from where they'd been taken, and when the truck was getting close to a place called The Plains near the mountains where those parrots came from (the mountains looked immense behind those plains) the parrots began to get excited and beat their wings and press themselves against the walls of their cages.

And when the cages were opened they all flew like arrows in the same direction to their mountains.

That's just what the Revolution did with us, I think:

It brought us back to the Homeland from which we'd been uprooted. Comrades in fatigues green as parrots gave the parrots their green mountains.

But there were 47 that died.

Ernesto Cardenal
Jonathan Cohen, translator.

RECENT EVENTS

One of the results of the survey which we conducted in order to bring the CUSLAR newsletter more in line with the desires of its readers was the decision to include a short section in each issue discussing the specific activities of CUSLAR, focusing on one or two which seem to us to be especially important.

Among the other activities which we have organized in the past several weeks was a talk by journalist Alexander Cockburn, in which he discussed the role of the media with regard to US policy toward Central America. We also sponsored a talk by the Chilean author Ariel Dorfman on the media's distorted reporting of events in Chile.

A visit by Father José Alas -- a Salvadoran priest now working with Christian Base Communities in Nicaragua -- was especially fruitful. He spoke both at Cornell and downtown in a local church, and reached many people. He discussed "Development in Times of War" and also gave "A Personal Perspective on Liberation Theology", which highlighted his work in El Salvador under Archbishop Oscar Romero (assassinated in 1980) and his current work in Nicaragua. In a future newsletter we hope to include an interview with Father Alas regarding the situation in El Salvador and discussing the Christian Base Communities.
THE FILIBUSTERS

There were scoundrels, thieves, gamblers, gunsmackers,
there were also honest men and gentlemen and brave men.
Fellows enlisting out of necessity and illusions:
Some fellow out of work one morning would be on a pier
and an agent of Walker would come up with a free passage
to Nicaragua.
—Toward where there was no passage back.
Or they came for 160 acres of land in Central America
(to sell it) and 25 bucks a month,
and they fought for nothing a month, and six square feet of
earth.
Or they'd come in search of glory; a name
forever written down in the pages of History.
And their names were forgotten,
in barracks with boards taken out to make their coffins
and the drunken sergeant, pigs, crap;
or in those hospitals consisting of mango, coconut and almond
groves
where they suffered from delirium with howler monkeys and magpies
all around
getting chills from the wind off the Lake.
And the luckiest ones were those who died in battles
or in ambushes at night along strange roads like a dream,
or by accidents or sudden death.
And always loaded with more filibusters
and more filibusters
bound for San Juan del Sur
and for San Juan del Norte,
the "Transit Company" would come
like Charon's boat.
Vanderbilt and Morgan knew where we were going
(almost all died)
and down in Nicaragua they stole money from the dead.

Ernesto Cardenal
Jonathan Cohen,
Translator.

Throughout the year, two groups on campus -- the Cornell College Republicans and the Cornell Review -- have repeatedly made statements of support for the contras, allegations against the Sandinistas, and criticisms of CUSLAR for its support of the Nicaraguan Government. One of their big activities was sponsoring a speech by two representatives of the contras. The debate moved from the issue of U.S. policy in Central America to the issue of free speech. In the interests of taking a closer look at the issues involved, CUSLAR proposed to debate the two above-mentioned groups on the question of whether the U.S. should support the contras. The public debate was limited to the pages of the Cornell Daily Sun, though, as representatives from neither the College Republicans nor the Review showed up for the debate, claiming that two months was insufficient time to prepare for an event around this topic -- a topic on which they had repeatedly given their views in the past. In a future issue we will include excerpts from the CUSLAR presentation for the proposed debate.
CUSLAR Summer Activities

CUSLAR, Friends of Nicaragua and others will be holding educational activities on the Commons on July 18th, and a celebration party that evening. Call the CUSLAR office for details.

We are planning to invite members of Ben Linder's family to speak in Ithaca on his life and work.

During the summer months, CUSLAR members will be spending time for internal study on several topics. Among them are:

* The Christic Institute legal case against the Conragate "secret team"
* Increasing militarization of the C. A. region and Low Intensity Warfare
* The process of 'Democratization' in the Southern Cone
* The Latin American Debt Crisis
* The Macarren-Walter Act and its implications for Solidarity work, particularly Margaret Randall's case

Readings will be handed out two weeks in advance. If anyone is interested in pursuing these issues further, please call the CUSLAR office 255-7293 for more information.

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