

THE WITNESS

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GUATEMALA

BELIZE

HONDURAS

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

PANAMA

NICARAGUA

Sturdie Downs

HONDURAS

James Lewis

COSTA RICA

Anna Grant Sibley

Letters

Invasion a fantasy

In his article on nonviolent civil disobedience (August WITNESS), Gene Sharp talks about what would happen if the Soviets invaded a Western Europe that was trained in "civilian-based defense." There would be "a massive and continuing defense struggle capable of maintaining the autonomy of the attacked societies, denying the Soviets their objectives, and undermining the morale of the Soviet troops. . .[etc.]"

What Sharp does not tell us is that the scenario of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe is a fantasy and always was. Recent documents published in the American Historical Review indicate that post-war U.S. policymakers never once really believed that the USSR intended to invade Western Europe. Having just lost 20 million people and having sustained a dreadful destruction of its own land and industry, the Soviets were not about to embark upon a mindless war. Nor is there any evidence that they see it at all in their interests to invade Western Europe today; nor do any policymakers or military leaders really believe that they so intend, as far as I know.

It is bad enough that the Reaganite propagandists conjure up such scenarios, but worse when people of Sharp's calibre do so, thereby playing into the cold warriors' hands and making their own task of teaching nonviolence that much more difficult. Instead of trying to show how nonviolence can be a weapon to defend people against threats conjured by the cold warriors, it might be more important — and more politically honest — to expose the threat for the fantasy that it is.

Michael Parenti
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sharp responds

Judgments concerning the presence or absence of aggressive intentions by Soviet leadership may vary. However, the political uses of Soviet military might in recent decades in Eastern European

countries have made many people suspicious of Soviet intentions elsewhere. This often convinces them that they require effective capacity to prevent and defend against any possible attack.

If that suspicion is justified, then civilian-based defense has the potential of providing a deterrence and defense capacity for Western Europe without risking self-destruction by war. If that suspicion is unjustified and Michael Parenti's view is correct, civilian-based defense (which lacks a military attack capacity) would enable the Soviet Union to reduce vastly its military preparedness in Europe and permit Eastern Europeans greater freedoms. This would help to demonstrate that the Soviet Union had no aggressive intentions. In either case, therefore, civilian-based defense can be helpful in reducing the danger of war.

In contrast, I see no chance, even in face of nuclear weapons, of European societies permanently abandoning military capacity without a substitute defense capacity.

Gene Sharp
Cambridge, Mass.

Copy to Congress

Thank you for your fine editorial and article in the September issue about the fast of Miguel D'Escoto, Nicaragua's foreign minister. I photocopied both and sent them to my Congressional representative — Les Aspin — along with a letter asking him to work for a new U.S. policy in Central America.

I pointed out that the Sandinistas are not all blood-thirsty "communists" and the contras are not "patriots equivalent to the founding fathers." I also noted that there is a rising tide of disgust in the American religious community regarding Reagan's policies in Central America.

Please continue to cover these events so that we can obtain a more accurate picture of what's really going on.

The Rev. John F. Crist
Janesville, Wisc.

Lauds editorials, poet

I just read your September issue with its beautiful editorial on Miguel D'Escoto and the Nicaraguan women. I'd been meaning to write earlier to thank you for the poignant editorials in THE WITNESS about the Plowshares groups and Martin Holladay. You may not have heard that Martin's sister Cathy was tragically killed recently as she pushed her children out of the way of a runaway car. Martin was released for two weeks, and he built her coffin. At this writing, their mother Jean is awaiting sentence for a Rhode Island Plowshares witness.

I'm also delighted that Mary Lou Suhor met Michelle Najlis, the Nicaraguan poet, during her fast with Miguel D'Escoto. I met this remarkable young Jewish woman last year while investigating the situation of Jews in Nicaragua. (See story this issue.)

Michelle's parents escaped to Nicaragua from France in 1936 and set up a business in textile trading. Unlike the older generation of Jews in her country, Michelle and a few of her Jewish friends became actively involved in Sandinista efforts to overthrow the Somoza regime. Forced to flee Nicaragua in the late '60s, she spent 10 years in Costa Rica working in support of the Sandinistas. She returned home in '79 when the new government took over. Today anti-Semitism in Nicaragua is a non-issue.

I would like to share with WITNESS readers an anecdote she told me about her grandmother. Her grandfather had been a French military hero, killed in World War I. With the assumption of power by the Vichy government (Hitler's French administration) her grandmother went alone to the office of the senior local magistrate, threw her husband's medals on the magistrate's desk, and said to him, "I exchange these, with honor, for the yellow star."

Jim Levinson
Winchendon Springs, Mass.

Strengthened spirits

I have just gotten to read the September edition of THE WITNESS. How good it was to read the article "Fasting with the Prime Minister."

I certainly want to commend THE WITNESS editor and others who made the effort to go to Nicaragua to be with Miguel D'Escoto in his fast. I am sure that it meant a great deal to him and strengthened his spirits. Keep up the good work through your pen!

John H. Sinclair
Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Bloomington, Minn.

Held by contras

We were in Nicaragua for the last 10 days of Miguel D'Escoto's fast and just missed Editor Mary Lou Suhor. We are so glad about your work at THE WITNESS.

Peter was on the San Juan River boat trip of Witness for Peace (WFP) people when they were abducted by Eden Pastora's ARDE contra group and taken into the hills and forests of Costa Rica. We were in Managua when WFP put out a call for press to accompany them and Peter signed on.

Pastora, upon hearing of the trip, announced that he would attack these "wolves in sheep's clothing." That drew the international spotlight as 14 journalists, including three TV crews, joined the 29 WFP people. The important thing, is not that the group was held for 29 hours, but that ARDE took them to headquarters over supply trails that revealed a part of the contra support base in Costa Rica from which they control the river border and launch attacks on Nicaragua.

During the abduction, the contras said they were members of ARDE. However, during the last hour, to cover up the truth about the border conflict, Pastora sent word with one of his top military leaders, "We are not the contras. We are simply Nicaraguans in exile, anti-Communists

who have opened up a war front against the Sandinista government." The day after the WFP group was released we saw a photo of this military man, Noel Boniche, with three others as the high command of ARDE, a photo taken by German reporters.

Thus the 29 WFP people plus the reporters have proof that Eden Pastora's contras are based in Costa Rica.

Betty Campbell
Peter Hinde
Tabor House
San Antonio, Tex.

'D'Escoto manipulative'

As one who works daily with Nicaraguan refugees, I was disgusted by your endorsement of Miguel D'Escoto's most recent effort at manipulation of the religious left in the United States and Europe. Those of us who have heard first-hand the reports of repression, systematic persecution of Christian workers, desecration of churches and acts of violence against priests and pastors by the Sandanista Youth, cannot take seriously that D'Escoto is either a man of peace or a "Moses" to the Nicaraguan people. He and the government he represents are seeking to bring every voice of opposition into conformity with the will of a political oligarchy which like the one it replaced lives well while the majority of its population suffers all kinds of deprivations and abuse. If D'Escoto is seriously opposed to injustice, let him decry those who have brutally taken advantage of the aspirations of the Nicaraguan people in order to build their own place of power and privilege in the world.

The Rev. Frederic D. Huntington
Miami, Fla.

(The Nicaraguan exile community in Miami understandably present a different view of their country from those who have traveled there recently. Their reports are also at odds with the reality expressed by Nicaraguan Bishop Sturdie

Downs — see p. 6. We know whom we have believed. — Ed.)

Out of church, Marxism

After subscribing for one year to see exactly where you and your associates are coming from, I thank blessed Jesus that he has led me out of the Episcopal Church and your Marxist mentality. How sad for *your* church! I pray you live long enough to reap what you have harvested — all in the name of Christ!

Fay S. Gordon
San Rafael, Calif.

Against Rambomania

I invite WITNESS readers to join me in doing whatever they can to keep our children from getting caught in Rambomania this Christmas. Do we really want our little ones carrying Rambo dolls as they are now cherishing Cabbage Patch kids?

Now big bucks are seen by Coleco Industries with little sense of responsibility for creating good role models for our kids. Coleco apparently plans a full line of accessories too, so tots will be able to outfit Rambo with machine guns, grenade launchers and plastic explosives.

I am trying to alert all the parents I can, to encourage teachers and others in leadership to create an awareness of the offense to our children by a "war machine" doll; and to inform the media and others of the need for better hero dolls.

Bert E. Van Soest
Somerville, N.J.

More to come

THE WITNESS has learned that the Rev. Zalmon Sherwood, who wrote, "On being a gay priest" (September) has been asked to resign from Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Southern Pines, N.C. A story will follow in December, as well as Letters to the Editor concerning AIDS and the other articles on homophobia in the September issue. — Ed.

Church of the 21st century

With international attention focused on the East-West summit talks, there is danger that the fundamental problem which polarizes humanity — the North-South phenomenon — will be downplayed.

While granting the validity of summit conferences — indeed, any dialogue and action to assure that the planet will not be blown up — THE WITNESS believes that to lose sight of the North-South contradiction would be disastrous.

Theologian Pablo Richard points out that the geographical terms are used symbolically: South refers especially to those poor nations, but also to all the oppressed of the earth (exploited races, classes, despised cultures, marginalized women and children, etc.). North designates the centers of power.

Nowhere is the North-South polarization more evident than in the articles centering around Nicaragua, Honduras

and Costa Rica in this issue.

Extending the North-South analysis globally, statistics show the problem writ large: Between 1900 and 2000, the world population will have grown from 1.6 billion to 6 billion. Third World countries — the South sector — account primarily for the growth. Four out of five human beings at the end of this century will be living in the Third World, in underdevelopment and poverty. In that world, 500 million suffer extreme hunger, and 50 million die each year. This, in a world that spends \$1 million per minute on arms.

Consequently, the Third World is literally doomed to death by the centers of power, so that the North-South pole might be characterized as a Life-Death problem.

For the Christian, “to opt for life” explains Richard, means not to accept the death of the poor. “The centers of power discover thousands of technical,

economic, ideological and theological reasons to justify or tolerate their death,” he says.

In the light of Richard’s analysis, Christian churches will be challenged to make an option in the present North-South alternative. They will either choose to be the church which is the spiritual force of the West, in defense of abstract dogmas, against the atheism of the socialist countries of the East, or to be the church which is the spiritual force of the poor, in defense of life, against the centers of death located in the rich countries of the North.

THE WITNESS believes with Richard that the 21st century will be the century of the Third World. Will the church opt for that world, or will it end up a museum-church of the West, without any ability to announce the Gospel of life to the majority of humanity who live and who will live in the Third World? ■

THE WITNESS

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Sturdie Downs:

'A Christian from Nicaragua'

I am filled with joy to know that the Episcopal Church Publishing Company has been witness to "the cause" in Nicaragua. It fills me with great emotion to be able to take part in this gathering honoring five people who have also committed themselves to the cause of social justice.

I would like to take a moment to say why I am speaking to you in Spanish. It doesn't mean I can't do it in English; it has to do with my identity. I am a Nicaraguan. I like being a Nicaraguan. And when I do it this way, I can do it Nicaraguan-style.

I'm not going to speak tonight about the thousands who have died in Nicaragua — you know about that. I wish to speak more about the origin of our problems. For me, the principal cause has to do with the economic interests that the United States has in the hemisphere in which we live. It's not a matter of an East-West confrontation. That's what's being said but that's not what it is. The struggle we have in America is a struggle that comes from within ourselves.

Possibly other people might try to take advantage of this struggle, but let's not mistake this for an East-West confrontation. It is a struggle of people who have been exploited for too many years by "the boss" — the one who has never liked to see people develop. And I do not speak as a partisan or a politician. I speak as a Christian from Nicaragua who lived under Somoza, and who saw all the changes. I'm in agreement with many things our government does, because the government is for the welfare of the people. And we're trying to become more equal, even when we're not allowed.

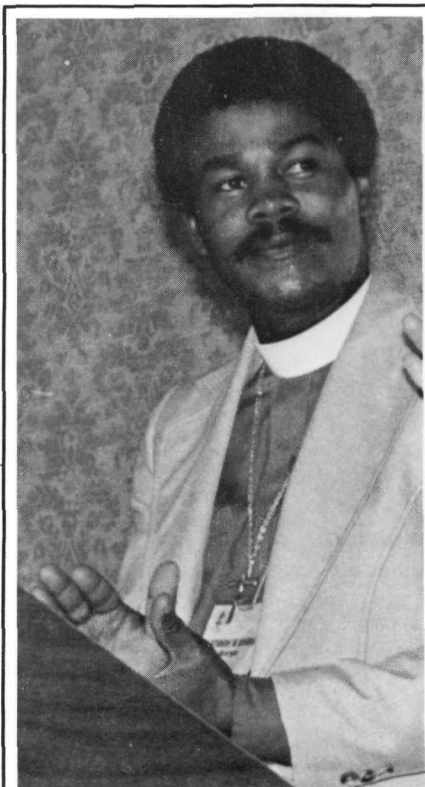
Therefore, I would like to focus not

only on the problems of Nicaragua, but on the problems of Latin America in general. The problems stem from economic interests. I will try to prove to you how these interests affect every level of life — not only in our country, but in all Latin America and Third World countries.

I'd like to point out that even though an embargo has only recently been placed on Nicaragua, we need to remember that historically, Nicaragua has suffered from what I would call a "passive boycott."

What do I mean by that? We are primarily an agrarian country, as are most Latin American countries. We must borrow money from the International Monetary Fund so that we can plant, and buy machinery. We then sell our products at a price to the buyer. The buyer then processes our resources and we buy them back again at a higher price than what we sold them for. This is not just, but this has been the history of Latin America and the Third World. In other words, the economic embargo is not new — it has existed passively for many years and is so subtle people are not aware of it.

But now there is a special embargo enacted against Nicaragua. Why? Because we have liberated ourselves. In South Africa, there's a very inhuman apartheid system that does not recognize even minimal rights for the majority of its people. It's an oppressive system. They call us Marxist-Leninists, but, thank God, we have rights in Nicaragua. The government's biggest problems are trying to provide the best possible health care for its people, as well as improving education, agrarian reform, and teaching the people to read and write. Illiteracy has dropped from 50% to 10%. All this is



From the podium, the Rt. Rev. Sturdie Downs, Bishop of Nicaragua, acknowledges applause by clapping "Nicaraguan style," at the ECPC dinner in Anaheim where he was guest speaker. His remarks at that time were translated by the Rev. Floyd "Butch" Naters-Gamarra and are condensed herewith.

seen as a threat. There's no boycott against South Africa, but there's one against Nicaragua, a country trying to improve its way of life.

Our problem, I say, is one of economic interests. We are the producers, we are the ones who sacrifice. The mighty one in

the north takes advantage of our products and the energy of our people. Our people receive no benefits. That is why there is revolution. When there is exploitation, misery, hunger, nakedness, illiteracy, and when people become aware — because we are Christian — we find our initiative in the Holy Gospel. This awareness helps us understand that we cannot separate daily life and the church. They go hand in hand because the Gospel is a Gospel that liberates. And if it is not, it is of no worth.

Inspired by our Christianity, aware of the constant exploitation of our people, we moved towards liberation. That in itself is a threat to the “big boss” because the “big boss” doesn’t want the people to be liberated. Listen well, my brothers and sisters, because I think you are committed Christians. Perhaps you have heard the voice of the coming liberation here in the United States, because there are oppressed people here too. Each day the oppressed become more aware, and that is why we Nicaraguans and others are persecuted.

I do not want to mention Cuba here, but Cuba is an example in itself. I know if I speak of Cuba and other revolutionary peoples many of you would consider me a Marxist-Leninist. But that is not the point. The point is to be committed to the people and to the Gospel. And what is that Gospel? What are the signs of that Kingdom? Is it not to feed the hungry and the poor, to seek the welfare of the people? To give them health? To educate them? To give land to the one who will work it and not to the one who wants it just to say, “I own it”? Even if the people might not have the title to the land so that they can pass it on to their children, they have the right to work the land, and while they work the land, no one is going to take it away from them. Is that communism? If that is communism, I would say then every committed Christian is a communist. That’s the situation in which we live in Nicaragua. And now, an em-

bargo has been placed on Nicaragua. How does that affect us, a poor nation of the Third World with very rich potential? We are not being allowed to develop that potential. In the past, we have been exploited to the maximum. And now, because the oppressed have been liberated, because we seek to give the people a better way of life — an economic embargo has been placed upon us, even though we have so little.

The United States was once our biggest market, but it has gradually cut us off. Now, to survive, we must seek new markets in the socialist countries. And who has shoved us in that direction? The United States, once our biggest buyer. Can you believe that by doing this to us, it thinks it will destroy the revolution? It

“If you only knew about the interventions by the United States, and how your country created a National Guard which kept our people down, and how the multinationals exploited us, you would be in the streets protesting.”

will not destroy us, but it does affect us. We need foreign exchange currency to improve education. We need it to buy machinery to continue the agrarian reforms. We need it to pay off the foreign debt we acquired by having to borrow so heavily.

So we must buy machinery from the United States, at the price it imposes, in order to produce things to make money to pay off our debt. But we can never pay off the capital; we can only pay part of the interest. Thus we are always in debt, and our money is worth less and less.

It becomes clearer and clearer that our problem stems from economic interests. Today, there is a great movement against paying the foreign debt all over Latin America, and those of us who have been

exploited all our lives clearly understand the reasons behind this movement. There are those who say the movement is initiated by Cuba. I would say we Christians should be ashamed, not because the initiative came from Cuba, but because those who aren’t Christians took the initiative and it should have been us who had the vision to anticipate this historic moment, because we have lived through the unjust situations responsible for the movement.

Furthermore, since America is heavily a consumer society, we also produce things we didn’t even need in Latin America.

Because of the propaganda of the consumer society, we fall into the trap of buying things we don’t need. There is a capitalist mechanism of consumerism that gets established, and ultimately spoils already exploited countries. And why is it done this way? I insist it is because of economic interests. If we cannot pay off even the interest on our debt, we can never become developed countries. We can never speak in the world forum as equals. Thus, always the slave driver maintains control. But when a country’s people become aware of the situation and seek liberation, then immediately the country is called “communist.”

What more should I say about our reality? I’ve said we’ve been trying to improve agrarian reform, health and education for our people. We did not have that privilege in the past.

In our “communist” country, all higher education is free. How many people could afford to go to the University of Nicaragua during the time of Somoza? In our country there was a capitalist orientation then; it cost a lot of money.

Now it costs 65 or 100 cordobas a month, which is almost free. High school in the United States, to a certain point, is free. But the university is not. How much does it cost? How many people in the United States can afford to aspire to a university education? We offer free edu-

cation because we are trying to improve the people's lives. If that is communism, then I'm a communist. And Christ is also a communist, because he was concerned about people, and we must be committed to His Gospel.

What, then am I saying? In sum, the conflict we face is not one between the East and the West. Neither will we have peace as long as aid is being given to the contras on our frontiers. That kind of aid bothers me, and I appeal to the consciences of all here — we must make sacrifices for the sake of justice. It is said that the United States is democratic. But most of the money that is used to oppress and kill people in Nicaragua and other countries comes from your taxes. How can you give life instead of death to these countries? I appeal to you as Christians to do all you can to make people aware that this aid that gives death instead of life to Nicaragua and other countries must be stopped.

The root of all this is economic interests. It's not whether Nicaragua is capitalist or communist. It is that we are seeking self-determination and that is perceived as a threat.

The only possible solution to this economic trap is to end the embargo and to get rid of the foreign debt. It's the only way. Otherwise we will continue to become more indebted, more impoverished, more miserable, more exploited, and there will be more reasons for revolution in Latin America and in every Third World country. It will also happen here, — I don't know when. It depends on what sort of consciousness people have about the oppressed in this country.

You have exploitation and poverty in the United States just as we have in the Third World.

What I have said has not been in the spirit of wanting to hurt anyone. But you have heard and seen many things in the media which have nothing to do with

reality. I have not gone into detail, and your government isn't going to tell you about it. If you knew about the interventions by the United States, and how your country created a National Guard which kept our people down, and how the multinationals exploited us, you would be out in the streets protesting.

Of course, we do have internal problems in Nicaragua. But they are up to us to solve. What I ask you to be concerned about is the problems that you impose on us. These are the problems we want removed. Meanwhile, what the Nicaraguan government is doing is for the welfare of the majority of our people. ■

Gee, we did it again!

THE WITNESS magazine was honored with three Polly Bond awards by the Episcopal Communicators at the group's dinner meeting during General Convention in Anaheim. Awards were presented in two categories — print media and electronic media — with the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, parent organization of the magazine, picking up an award in the latter.

THE WITNESS received an award for outstanding merit in editorial writing for "The Cost of Principle" by Mary Lou Suhor, (April '84) which described the plight of Maria Cueto, Steve Guerra and three other Hispanics who refused in conscience to testify before a Grand Jury. Cueto, former executive director of the Episcopal Church National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and Guerra, a member of the ECPC Board of Trustees, are currently serving three years in prison for "criminal contempt" of the Grand Jury, and are currently awaiting decision on an appeal which would free them on parole.

Honorable mention citations went to the magazine for feature writing "Coyote," by Renny Golden, (January '84) a story on the origins

of the sanctuary movement; and for commentary, "Minority Women and Feminist Spirituality," by the late Pauli Murray (February '84).

The awards bring to eight the total won by the magazine this year. THE WITNESS had previously been honored by the Associated Church Press with five awards: three firsts for feature writing, poetry, and most approved appearance, and honorable mentions for reader response (Letters to the Editor) and best in-depth coverage of an event.

ECPC picked up its second award this year for its first venture into the electronic media, "A Priest Indeed," a 30-minute docu-drama about the ordination of the first Episcopal women priests. In addition to the Polly Bond award, the film, now on a ½-inch VHS cassette, won a silver medal earlier from the International Film and Television Festival of New York.

The Episcopal Communicators competition is six years old. Its awards are named for one of the most gifted and beloved women in the field of Episcopal communications — Polly Bond, director of communications from the Diocese of Ohio — who died of cancer in 1979. ■

Ode to Reagan

by Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga

Pedro Casaldáliga, a member of the Roman Catholic Claretian Order, is Bishop of Sao Felix do Araguaia, Mato Grosso, Brazil. This poem appeared in El Nuevo Diario (Managua) Aug. 10. It was translated by James and Margaret Goff and Jose Arguello, and distributed by the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center, Managua, Nicaragua.

The poets, children and poor of the earth join me
in excommunicating you.

Hear us!

You have to think of the world in a human way.

Don't be a Nero.

You are not a screen monkey filming a picture;

You are the ruler of a great nation!

(I will tell your people to clean off for good
the shit that your cowboy boot has splattered
on their flag.

And I will tell them to realize when they vote
that they may be selling
their honor and a lot of blood).

You may have made the world drunk with Coca-Cola,
but there is still some lucid person to tell you, No!
The profit and power of your arms
are not worth any more
than the feverish cry
of one Black child.

There is no longer any place for empires.

Reagan, listen:

the sun
rises for all people
and the same God sends rain
on all the lives he has called to the fiesta.
No people is the greatest.

Make your backyard at your own house, respect us!

Rachel knows you, Herod,
and you will have to answer for her desolation.
The star of Sandino is stalking you in the mountains,
and in the volcano one single heart awakens;
as a sea of courage the young Nicaragua
will break your aggression apart.

The blood of our martyrs sustains our arms
and in our mouths becomes a song and a fountain:
You have never seen our mountains, Reagan,
nor have you heard in their birds

the voice of the voiceless.

You do not know about life,

nor do you understand about songs.

Don't come to us now with your hypocritical morals,
you killer who aborts

a whole people and their Revolution.

The lies that you try to give the world
(and the Pope) are the worst of drugs.

You exhibit Freedom (as an exclusive)
yet cut away at the steps of Liberation.

"The United States is powerful and great. . . ."

All Right! "In God we trust."

You can believe that you are the owners,

and that you have it all,

including god, your god

— the bloody idol of your dollars,

the mechanical Moloch —

But you lack the God of Jesus Christ,

the Humanity of God!

I swear by the blood of God's son,
which another empire killed,
and I swear by the blood of Latin America
— today pregnant with new auroras —
that you

will be the last

(grotesque)

emperor!

Nicaragua: A Jewish perspective

by F. James Levinson

There was no wine; there was no bread. There was only one candle. Yet it was the most memorable — and the most sacred Shabbat I've ever experienced. Twenty of us from the United States and an equal number of Nicaraguans stood together, hand in hand, on a dusty road in the town of Jalapa near the Honduras border — the site of severe and concentrated attacks by counter-revolutionaries or "contras" in the U.S. Government's covert war against Nicaragua.

We had only crackers from the local market and water, but we shared them among ourselves as I chanted the familiar strains of the Kiddish while the sound of gunfire resounded in the hills.

The candle we used was a multi-colored one, symbolic of the rainbow covenant, which I'd been given by friends in Boston. But there was no mother of the Jewish faith to light the candle. Instead, as the sun set over the hills, the candle was lit by a Nicaraguan mother standing with us, a woman named Rosa whose family had been killed by the contras. It struck me that there was something very right about it — that Rosa and her family are the unseen victims of this generation as my aunts, uncles and great-grandparents were the unseen victims of theirs.

In 1983 a group of Americans went to

this border area to protest U.S. administration efforts to "destabilize" the new Nicaraguan government and to stand as a force for peace in solidarity with the victims of the violence. The presence of Americans in the area had such a positive effect in discouraging contra attacks on the local population that a continuing rotating presence was initiated under the Witness for Peace program. I learned that a group from Massachusetts would be going to Nicaragua.

With the obvious risks clearly in mind (the struggle and soul searching I went through myself and with my family is a story in itself) my decision to go emerged from sources which have been central in my life. First I saw it as a clear extension of the work my wife Louise and I do with the poor and the homeless in Boston. Second, it emerged from almost 20 years of work in, or on, the problems of low income countries both as a State Department official and as a faculty member at M.I.T.

Third it stemmed from my Judaism. I have always found it important to do acts of conscience in a Jewish context. When I was arrested last year at a nuclear weapons facility it was for handing out the picture and message of Anne Frank. When I was imprisoned it was on Yom Kippur. When I did civil disobedience again last summer I was wearing the tallis of my grandfather. What finally made up my mind to go to Nicaragua was reading about the Congregation Emanuel B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee, which decided to offer sanctuary to a Central American refugee (*Reform Judaism*, Fall 1983) and the comment of the rabbi who compared the plight of these refugees to European Jews in the 1930's who sought a safe haven in vain.

Beyond this it has been painful for me to carry around the knowledge that most of the arms used by the former Somoza dictatorship against the people of Nicaragua, and much of the arms now used by the contras, were provided by the Government of Israel.

So it was that I became part of a 20-member interfaith group of very diverse people, but with common purpose, who went to Nicaragua. Most of our time in the country was spent working, meeting people, vigiling, and visiting schools, health facilities and agricultural projects in Jalapa, with some time in the capital city of Managua speaking with government and opposition leaders, newspaper editors, and representatives of minority groups. Overall there were two main issues I wished to explore in some depth: (1) the political orientation of the government, and (2) changes in the quality of life of the people in this poor land.

The first related to the charge from Washington that Nicaragua has become a Marxist-Leninist state and hence a threat to U.S. Security. I found this confusing, knowing beforehand that Nicaragua has a diversified public-private economic structure, not substantially different from Israel. In fact, the government-run sector, representing roughly 30% of the economy, is smaller than that in Mexico.

Some light was shed on the matter for me at the Santa Cruz potato cooperative near Jalapa. The cooperative is made up of some 50 families displaced from outlying areas by the contras. As I watched the adults sharing the work of the cooperative among themselves and saw cultivators carrying both spades and rifles, it suddenly struck me that this was nothing less than a border kibbutz. The sim-

F. James Levinson lives with his family and friends at Noonday Farm, which grows food for the homeless and elderly and provides hospitality for the needy in the Boston area. He is former Director of International Nutrition for the U.S. Agency for International Development and former director of the International Nutrition Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This article appeared earlier in *The Jewish Advocate*, Boston, and is reprinted with permission.

ilarities with border kibbutzim my wife Louise and I have visited in Israel were striking: the shared decision making, the child care, financial support according to need, most of all the sense of common purpose, commitment and new life — something worth living for and, if necessary, worth dying for.

Was this the Marxism that we so feared? We asked one member of the cooperative whether this was communism. His answer was the same, almost to the word, that I'd heard at Kibbutz Sasa near the Lebanese border three years ago, "If communism is living together and sharing with a common vision, then I guess we are." Somewhat earlier the U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua said much the same thing but with different vocabulary, "If democracy is participation, then there is a great deal of democracy in Nicaragua."

Once I made the kibbutz connection other connections fell into place: the young soldiers, some of them medical or philosophy students, interacting so humanely with village families; the continual singing; the encouragement of poetry and the arts; the deep, unspeakable sorrow at the death of a child — all memories I had taken with me from Israel.

The second issue of interest to me was changes in the quality of people's lives. Over the years I've had occasion to work in some 15 low income countries, mostly in Asia and Latin America. Perhaps my greatest frustrations in working with the governments in these countries related to their essential lack of commitment — disinterest — in meeting the basic needs of the poor. By contrast, I found that the present government in Nicaragua has been *doing* the things we used to advocate: broad-based food distribution, primary health care, literacy. We found the people are eating 30% more rice, corn, and beans than before the revolution in 1979. During the same five years illiteracy was reduced from 50 to 13%, and more than 40,000 families received land,

while infant deaths are now down by a third and the incidence of malaria has been cut in half.

At the same time it became apparent that the new government has made mistakes, some of them fairly serious. To their credit, officials usually were willing to speak of them openly. One problem has been press censorship, a policy the government justifies on the grounds of the military incursions. There have been signs of discrimination against those who oppose the revolution. There also have been a few signs of racism. And the government has made a whole series of mistakes relating to the Miskito Indian population.

Overall, however, I found myself essentially in agreement with one U.S.

"As I watched the adults sharing work and saw cultivators carrying both spades and rifles, it struck me that this was nothing less than a border kibbutz."

religious leader who said, "One doesn't have to endorse everything about the Nicaraguan government in order to find serious fault with the illegality and immorality of U.S. efforts to destroy it."

And it is the U.S. policy with which we finally are left. It's indeed hard to imagine that anything going on in this small country of 2.5 million people (roughly the population of Brooklyn) could justify what one U.S. intelligence source suggested will soon be "the most extensive covert operations mounted by the U.S. since the Vietnam war." But the human suffering inflicted by the contras, many of them former members of Somoza's dreaded national guard who have been trained in secret camps in Florida, California and Honduras, is all too evident: the killing of large numbers of innocent people, the burning of crops, the kidnapping of teachers and health workers.

There was every reason for us to expect hostility from the Nicaraguans we met. Almost every family had lost someone in the contra attacks. Some 50,000 Nicaraguans were killed in the war of liberation against the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. Yet in two weeks of visits with people from every strata of this diverse society, we never once encountered hostility or even resentment — nor indeed anyone who wasn't able to draw clear distinction between U.S. Government policy and individual Americans. On the contrary, there was welcome, warmth and a genuine sense of solidarity.

While we were in Jalapa there were no significant attacks on the population in that area. Whether it was actually the result of our presence we'll never know. But twice during the second week of our stay, there were rocket attacks from ships on the town of San Juan del Sur on the southern Pacific coast. So we decided as a group to travel together to this very area as a different kind of U.S. presence.

Shortly after arriving late the next day, we gathered together in the town plaza and before long were joined by most of the inhabitants of this little town under siege. Together, arm in arm, under the moonlit sky, we prayed and sang and were silent together.

And then, as the town slept, we went to the waterfront, and positioning ourselves between the people and the harbor, stood together through the night as a shield of love. Would that there had been such a shield of love when my uncles and aunts and great-grandparents were herded into the boxcars; would that there had been such a shield of love when they were taken to Auschwitz. Standing there it struck me that this was the most important single act I may have occasion to do in this lifetime. It was a shield of love which said very simply, "No, we cannot look the other way; we cannot remain silent." ■

How Honduras is 'getting fixed'

From my seat on the left-hand side of the airplane I could see the fields below. They were covered with banana trees, pineapple trees and sugar cane. I thought of my wife Judy as I caught my first glimpse of Honduras after having made the flight from Houston to San Pedro Sula. Every day she welcomes the morning by slicing a banana over a bowl of cereal.

San Pedro Sula, in the northwest corner of Honduras, is situated in one of the most fertile stretches of land in all of Central America. It was here that U.S. engineers of the United Fruit Company drained the swampland and cultivated their rich fruit crop for export to the States in the early part of the century. The remainder of the best lands of the Sula Valley were held by big cattlemen who lived in San Pedro Sula and the nearby village, El Progreso.

Honduras is the poorest country in all of Central America, with a land mass roughly the size of Tennessee and a population of about 4 million. Hondurans have a life expectancy of only 49 years and a phenomenally high infant mortality rate of 117 per 1,000 births. Better than 50% of the country's exports (bananas, coffee and beef primarily) find their way into the United States.

On the ground, after our group had passed through customs, we were loaded on board an old green and white school bus. It would be our transportation for the next three days as we traveled toward

Tegucigalpa on our way to El Salvador and Nicaragua.

After a quick meal at the hotel in downtown San Pedro Sula, we boarded the old bus to journey about 20 miles to El Progreso. It was there that we were to have our very first encounter — the first of many over the next 11 days — with people deeply involved in the Central American reality.

It was dark as we unloaded from the bus and walked across the playground of the local Roman Catholic school, a large, well-equipped school run by the Jesuits. The Jesuits have a long history in the area and over the past few years have become more radical as they have identified with the campesinos, the poor workers who plow the fields.

The priests who met us at the door escorted us to a classroom where, for the next two hours, they spoke and answered questions about Honduras. The big news out of El Progreso had to do with the Jesuit priest from a community just down the road, Father John Donald.

On my last morning in Ann Arbor, I had turned on TV and was greeted by a newscaster who reported that a U.S. Jesuit by the name of John Donald, had been arrested after Mass by Honduran soldiers and had disappeared. Little did I realize that I would soon be sitting in El Progreso listening to a brother priest and friend of Father Donald relate the full story of his arrest and his release, which had just taken place in the next parish.

The soldiers who arrested Father Donald charged him with crimes against the state, claiming that he had made bombs, transported arms and had been training peasants to fight against the government. After his arrest the 46-year-old priest was handcuffed, blindfolded

and flown in a helicopter from San Pedro Sula to Tegucigalpa. Threatened and locked in a cell, he was held for over 40 hours before being released and allowed to return to his parish.

Of particular interest was the fact that a U.S. Army jeep, driven by a U.S. soldier, was used to transport him at the time of his arrest. This was important news because U.S. military forces in Honduras are supposedly there strictly as advisors to the Honduran military. The question of why they were involved in the arrest of a U.S. citizen was one we were to ask later of our embassy officials who were unable to give us a decent answer. What we came to discover in El Progreso that first evening was that Father Donald was really arrested because he had openly denounced the slaughter of some 30 Indian peasants by two large landowners in the region. One of the priests briefing us said it clearly: "Father Donald embodied a love which acts. And when love acts, enemies are made. Particularly among the rich when you side with the poor."

Father Donald's parish has become even more valuable than banana land or grazing land. The land it encompasses is desired for the building of a super highway that will lead from the Gulf of Honduras on the northern coastland down into the central portion of the country. But highways for what? The transporting of bananas, pineapples, sugar cane and beef? Not really. These highways will provide a necessary link between the ports in the north where military supplies are unloaded and the numerous U.S. bases inside Honduras. The roads form part of a gigantic infrastructure being put in place for military action. Father Donald, speaking out against the exploitation of his people and the militarization of

The Rev. E. James Lewis is vicar of Church of the Incarnation, Ann Arbor and a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. He returned recently from a trip to Central America.

by James Lewis

Honduras had overstepped his bounds. It wasn't that he offended the major agricultural industries in the region but rather that he'd stepped on the toes of a relatively new entrepreneur in the area, the U.S. military.

Early the next morning the old green bus pulled up in front of the hotel. We'd cracked the radiator driving the rough roads into El Progreso. We would have to stop every 30 minutes for water in our drive over the mountains south to Palmarola.

Honduras, which now has a population like that of Wisconsin, is dotted with U.S. military facilities. There are air bases at San Pedro Sula, Trujillo, Aguacate, Jamestran, Cucuyagua, San Lorenzo and Puerto Lampira. But the "big daddy" of them all, the central facility, is the one we visited — Palmarola in the city of Comayagua.

At the gate we were met by a major in the U.S. army. He is dressed in green fatigues and combat boots. There are two raw looking scars on his left arm. His name is Johnson, and we quickly discover that he's originally from Oakland, Mich. Major Johnson boards the bus and directs our driver through the gate and down past the long string of hangars, barracks, supply huts, the hospital, ad-

ministrative offices and ammunition and fuel dumps. When the bus finally comes to a halt we are on the far side of the runway near the latrines. They are a welcome sight after our four-hour journey. We line up, amidst a field combat situation somewhat reminiscent of the movie set for M.A.S.H. Between us and the runway there are operational trailers and tents inhabited by army personnel. The uniformed men strain to catch a glimpse of the U.S. visitors. I can tell that they are particularly interested in the 11 women in our group.

Major Johnson is nervous as he begins to address us. Even though we come from the same country, he's not at all sure how friendly we are. He begins by telling us that the U.S. troops are there by invitation of the Honduran government. And basically our interest in the region is to "keep Communism from walking north." Honduras, he tells us, is also an ideal place for U.S. troops to get good training for any possible war that might have to be fought in the region. On top of that, we train Honduran soldiers how to fight, as well as Salvadoran military personnel who come into Honduras for war school. As a plane lands just behind him on the huge runway, Major Johnson tells us that because of U.S. presence "Honduras is getting

fixed." With an air of confidence he informs us that we are "saving Honduras."

What is happening in Honduras is that this very poor nation is being converted into a huge launching pad for possible military excursions into El Salvador and Nicaragua. One need only look at the specifics to get an overall picture of the pattern.

1) Over the past three years Honduras has hosted thousands of U.S. troops and National Guardsmen in military war games.

2) Actual direct military aid to Honduras has gone from \$4 million in 1981 to \$77 million in 1984. And that figure doesn't include all the Department of Defense funds appropriated for military exercises and the hidden military aid found in the \$168 million granted for economic aid to Honduras in 1984.

3) The military is rapidly building an infrastructure of roads throughout Honduras which link military bases and ports and open supply routes to the southern Honduran border where upwards of 15,000 contra troops, on Honduran soil, are being supplied militarily to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

4) U.S. air flights are flown daily from Palmarola and the other air bases, over Nicaragua and El Salvador. The flights



over Nicaragua are for intelligence purposes while the flights over El Salvador are made to spot rebel forces in order to notify the Salvadoran military so that they can use air strikes to bomb rebels (and destroy innocent civilians in surrounding villages).

5) With U.S. aid (CIA and Congressional) the contra forces are housed on Honduras soil. Fighting against Nicaragua, they are people without a home, using Honduran resources. They strike fear into most Hondurans because their military might is greater than that of the Honduran army.

To make a long story short, Honduras is an armed camp where war is being waged, particularly on the government of Nicaragua and the innocent civilians in El Salvador, with U.S. tax dollars and military presence. When asked if he thought we were getting involved in another Vietnam, Major Johnson commented, "This is not Vietnam. These people want us here. We're leaving good will. Americans do good. Roads are being fixed up. People are being fixed up. We have good relations with Hondurans. The way you can tell is that our boys haven't given these people any nicknames like they did in Vietnam." A minor correction. In the latrine I caught sight of some graffiti on the wall which said: *Hondos can have this place. Get me back home.*

On our drive out through the city of Comayagua there are the usual signs of U.S. military presence. Bars and bachelors abound. Later in Tegucigalpa we will discover that a whole system of "White slavery" has sprung up in this once conservative puritan city. On weekends busloads of women and young boys are carted into the area to provide sex for U.S. troops at Palmarola. Drugs are everywhere. Children are sold into prostitution by poor parents who need the U.S. dollars to survive. The major's words haunt me as we glide along the new highways south into Tegucigalpa.

He and the troops serving at Palmarola really believe they are in Honduras to fix the country up, to save it, to make it well.

The highway down into Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras, is precisely that — down. As we move across the mountains, the city comes into full view and the descent begins. As the old bus moves closer to our hotel in the center of the city, the hillside reveals cluster after cluster of shacks housing thousands of people. The poverty is beyond description. It is a poverty that claims the life of one child every 35 minutes.

After we've unloaded our bags, a few of us walk to the nearby market place in the city square. Inside a small shop I search for some U.S. newspapers. What I find is a stack of *Time* magazines, copies of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Miami Herald*, and a pile of *Soldier of Fortune* magazines.

Soldier of Fortune is a fitting symbol of the Honduran reality. Honduras is a militarized nation. If it was once owned and controlled by Standard Fruit and United Fruit, it is now occupied and manipulated by a new industry — the U.S. military establishment. It is the presence of U.S. military money in large sums and the presence of huge military forces from four places that has Honduran officials alarmed when it comes to the future peace and stability of this poor country.

At the present time, Honduras is housing not one but four different military forces from four separate countries. Each one of these poses a threat.

First, there is the Honduran military force. The U.S. is in Honduras, U.S. government officials say, to help the Honduran army fight the threat of Nicaraguan communism. In fact, the military aid will not solve the chief problems which are economic and social, rather than political. Honduras has no real conflict with neighboring Nicaragua. After dinner at the hotel, a Honduran govern-

ment official speaks candidly. Hondurans do not want to be a pawn in the East-West struggle for power. Economic help is needed — not military might.

The second military presence comes from neighboring El Salvador. Since U.S. law says that we can have no more than 55 military advisors in El Salvador to train the military forces of that country, the training takes place in militarized Honduras. Hundreds and hundreds of Salvadoran soldiers are sent to Honduras to be trained by the U.S. military there. That makes Hondurans extremely nervous.

Honduras and El Salvador have a long-standing border dispute which resulted in a war in 1969 and which is still not resolved. Hondurans are afraid that the Salvadorans being trained by U.S. advisors will eventually be used against Hondurans to resolve this dispute.

The third military force is the contra army — about 12,000 — who have set up camps in Honduras along the Nicaraguan border to the south. The contras are Nicaraguans financed by the United States to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. These forces are committing terrible acts of savagery against both Hondurans and Nicaraguans. They are a military force on Honduran soil, but out of Honduran control. The contras are at war with Nicaragua, a country that is not really an enemy of the Honduran people.

And finally there is the presence of U.S. troops, sometimes as many as 4,000, who are building the infrastructures for a future war and introducing countless numbers of guns and military supplies into a war on two fronts, in which the people of Honduras have no real interest. In a nutshell, Honduras is manipulated by U.S. military money. In desperate need of dollars to solve their economic problems they have little choice but to accept the military aid. Tragically, that aid creates a military monster with four

Continued on page 23

Short Takes

Challenge to churches

Don't count on them (young families with children) to provide the basis for church growth. Why? "Between 1970 and 1982 the number of husband-wife couples living together, with children under 18 years of age at home, *decreased* by more than a million. At the same time, the number of single-parent families *increased* by more than four million." In 1970, only 10.5% of the 25-29 year-olds had never married; by 1982, that figure reached 23.4% . . . If you want a new frontier, reach the single-parent families and the never-marrieds or divorced.

— Lyle Schaller in *Lutheran Standard*
Quoted in *Context*

Falwell re Reagan

If he tells me "you'll help me mostly by denouncing me publicly," I'll go around the country denouncing him. If he says it will help most to play a low-key role from a distance, I'll do that. If he wants me to wave a flag and run out front, I'll do that because I believe in Ronald Reagan.

— Jerry Falwell
Moral Majority Leader

Last shall be first

New York Cardinal John O'Connor attended the annual meeting of *Comunione e Liberazione*, a right-wing Italian group, in Rimini, Italy, Aug. 25 and was asked by a student whether he speaks often with Pope John Paul II.

"Sometimes, His Holiness has to wait because I'm on the line with President Reagan," O'Connor replied.

—*National Catholic Reporter*, 9/6/85

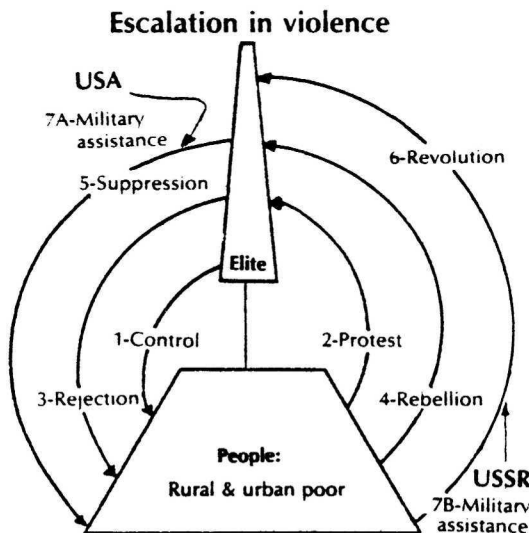
Sign of the times

The turmoil of revolution, if permitted to run its course, promptly finds its institutional channels. But if thwarted by intervention it will plague the United States for decades to come. Central America and the Caribbean will become the Banquo of the United States: an endemic drain on your human and material resources. The source of change in Latin America is not in Moscow or Havana: it is in history.

— Carlos Fuentes
Quoted in *Vanity Fair*

Central American sequence

The following chart was prepared by Philip Meyers and Robert Sparks to describe the sequence of events in Central America. It appeared in the Baltimore *Evening Sun* as part of a series in which Meyers called for reversal of U.S. policy and support for small entrepreneurs, which he called "People's Capitalism."



1. The elite maintain economic, political and military control over the people.
2. Protests arise from the poor about social injustice.
3. The elite reject protests, standing firm on their privileges.
4. Frustrated protesters rebel.
5. The elite suppress rebellion.
6. Rebellion escalates to revolution.
- 7A. The U.S. gives military assistance to the elite in suppression of the poor.
- 7B. The USSR gives military assistance to the poor.

— Friends Com. on National Legislation
FCNL Newsletter 7/85

Quote of note

I haven't always been a Christian. I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want a religion to make you really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity.

— C. S. Lewis
Quoted in *Bread*

Lawsuit to higher court

The Center for Constitutional Rights in New York has initiated a lawsuit on behalf of Congressman Ron Dellums, Myrna Cunningham (a Nicaraguan doctor raped and tortured by the Contras) and others to stop the undeclared war and atrocities directed against the people of Nicaragua.

In response, a federal judge issued an order to the U.S. Attorney General recently to investigate charges that president Reagan committed criminal acts by funding and directing the Contras in contravention of the U.S. Neutrality Act.

The Government is appealing that order and is claiming that the President may legally spend tax dollars to overthrow any government, even one with which we are not at war, and even if Congress has forbidden such an action. The Center is now fighting this doctrine in a higher court.

— Marilyn Clement
CCR Executive Director

12 corporations targeted

A coalition of 54 Protestant denominations, Roman Catholic orders and religious organizations recently announced that the group has targeted 12 major American corporations as key supporters of apartheid.

The church coalition, organized through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, cited the following corporations: Burroughs, Chevron, Citicorp, Control Data, Fluor, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, International Business Machines, Mobil, Newmont Mining, and Texaco. They were singled out for the size of their assets and sales in the country, and for some, the providing of products and services to the South African police and military. The churches called for the 12 corporations to cease supplying and servicing the South African government. To influence corporate policy, the church groups promised a new campaign of increased action and economic boycotts against the targeted corporations.

In a related matter, the New York City Employees' Retirement System — with assets of \$8.5 billion — joined the ranks of shareholders actively pressing companies about their business in South Africa, signalling a new age of shareholder activism.

The de-neutralizing of Costa Rica

by Anna Grant Sibley/U.S. Christian Prayer Group

In May of this year, a U.S. military transport plane touched down on the runway at an airport in Central America. What was unusual about this particular touchdown, in an area shaken daily by actual and threatened military maneuvers, is that it was at an airport in Costa Rica, a small country which had abolished its army "voluntarily and unilaterally" in 1949.

Costa Rica had pledged itself to achievements of another kind, declaring: "Other nations run the risk of having an army; we prefer the risk of not having an army." Jose Figueres, the farmer who became president and restored democratic institutionality to Costa Rica, put his country's dream this way: "Little Costa Rica wishes to offer, with her heart, now and always, her love for civility, democracy and institutional life."

In 1983, Costa Rica proclaimed the Act of Neutrality and current President Luis Alberto Monge reiterated at that time that Costa Rica would never have an army even though "peace in Costa Rica is in jeopardy because Central America is on the brink of war."

"You have witnessed my concern, constant efforts and firm determination to keep us from involvement in the armed conflicts, that, unfortunately, shed the blood of our Central American brothers,

whose heroic struggles in pursuit of social, economic and political freedom have been tragically intercepted by forces alien to their legitimate interests," he wrote in *The Neutrality of Costa Rica*.

Costa Rica's "heroic struggle" to maintain that neutrality received a serious setback on that May day when a U.S. C-130 carried green beret advisors to begin training units of the Costa Rican Civil Guard on a base 10 miles from the Nicaraguan border. Their arrival was explained by U.S. officials in Mayday terms: It was, of course, the response to an appeal for help from Costa Rica to improve its defensive capabilities against possible aggression from Nicaragua.

Today, U.S. military presence in Costa Rica is a fait accompli. Recently Oscar Vidal, chief of Costa Rica's Civil Guard, when asked why U.S. military advisors were in his country, responded, "Why not?"

In many ways, Vidal's response is a reflection of Costa Rica's increasing enslavement to alien interests and outside pressure. Not finding it possible to be ideologically neutral, Costa Rica, now prey to its own geography, is finding that it may also be impossible to maintain military neutrality, in view of U.S. hostility toward Nicaragua.

On June 10 of this year young people shouting, "We want an army" launched a violent attack on the Nicaraguan embassy in Costa Rica. They were part of a gathering of more than 200 mobilized by the Free Costa Rica Movement, a right-wing organization known to be preparing para-military forces to join the contra offensive operating from Costa Rica. Benjamin Piza, who became Costa Rica's

Minister of Public Security in what many considered a "mini-coup," responded at a snail's pace. His answer to urgent phone calls by Nicaraguan Ambassador Leonor Huper as she was showered by glass during the attack was, "Don't worry, everything is under control." Considering that Piza is a former founding member of the Free Costa Rica Movement, his reluctance to respond with more enthusiasm to the calls is understandable. The attack that day was an indication of the growing threat to the policy of neutrality.

Further, owners of both major businesses and the major newspapers in Costa Rica are not neutral. Following the line promoted by the Reagan administration, they are flagrantly anti-Sandinista and anti-neutrality. With almost total absence of an alternative point of view in the press, Costa Ricans find themselves beginning to accept without question the myth of an imminent Nicaraguan invasion and the military presence of the United States.

On legal grounds, the presence of U.S. military advisors in Costa Rica violates the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (Sec. 660A): "After July 1, 1975, none of the funds made available to carry out this Act shall be used to provide training or advice, or provide any financial support, for police, prisons, or other law enforcement forces for any foreign government or international intelligence or surveillance on behalf of any foreign government within the United States or abroad."

The legislation came about because of flagrant human rights abuses of foreign law enforcement agencies. The Reagan administration is seeking to disguise the

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illegal training of the Costa Rican Civil Guard by calling it "military training." Ironically, Costa Rica insists on calling it "police" training in order to camouflage the obvious militarization of its national guard. The Reagan administration is seeking to amend Section 660A by making it not apply "with respect to a country which has a long-standing democratic tradition, does not have standing armed forces, and does not engage in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights."

Costa Rica's violence against its neutral identity represents a capitulation not shared by all its people. The strongly worded protests in *Seminario Universidad*, produced by the University of Costa Rica, were disturbing enough to cause Curtin Winsor, recent U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, to suggest its possible connection with "communists," and to express a wish to "tear it into little pieces."

In 1983, in a major address President Monge had described what he felt was Costa Rica's role in Central America. He said, "Costa Rica is not an economic power, nor can it be one." (The country today has a \$4 billion national debt, representing the highest per capita debt in the world.)

He went on to say that Costa Rica was "not a political power, nor can it be one. Costa Rica is not a military power, nor does it want to be one. Costa Rica is a spiritual force, because its people practice a vital faith in the strength of common sense, determination and moral power."

On spiritual grounds, the hate that is being engendered against Nicaragua so that Costa Rica will accept U.S. priorities places Costa Rica's soul in jeopardy. The euphemisms and self-deceptions practiced by peoples, whether Costa Ricans or North Americans, under the sway of propaganda may lead to wanton

killing. Another recent coup, from the Reagan Administration's point of view, was the establishing of a Voice of America transmitter, within maximum security confines, on Costa Rican soil near the Nicaraguan border.

Compare recent military activity in Costa Rica with the words of President Monge in 1983: "We commit ourselves to make every possible effort to prevent our national territory . . . from being used in any way by the belligerents; to refrain from all hostility toward and support for the belligerents; not to allow the passage of troops, munitions or supplies through our territory . . . and to follow a policy of impartiality in order to strengthen the belligerents' trust in the maintenance of our neutrality."

The presence of U.S. advisors and the increased militarization of Costa Rica does violence to the professed vocation of the Costa Rican people as peacemakers. ■

Nicaragua

Area: 45,698 sq. mi. (size of Pennsylvania).
Population: 2,954,000.
Capital: Managua (615,000).

Economy

Chief export crops: Coffee, sugar, cotton, timber.
Chief customers: U.S. (26.1%); EEC (16.3%); Lat. Am. (11.2%).
Gross domestic product: \$2.4 billion.
Government expenditures: Not available.
Foreign debt: \$3.5 billion.
U.S. aid (1984): None.

Honduras

Area: 43,277 sq. mi. (size of Tennessee).
Population: 4,276,000.
Capital: Tegucigalpa (approx. 500,000).

Economy

Chief export crops: Bananas, coffee, timber.
Chief customers: U.S. (58.3%); EEC (18.3%); Lat. Am. (11.6%).
Gross domestic product: \$2.9 billion.
Government expenditures: \$221 million.
Foreign debt: \$1.43 billion.
U.S. aid (1984): Military: \$191.5 million (not including cost of maneuvers).
Economic: \$60.1 million.

Costa Rica

Area: 19,653 sq. mi. (size of New Hampshire and Vermont combined).
Population: 2,624,000.
Capital: San José (approx. 600,000).

Economy

Chief export crops: Coffee, bananas, beef, sugar.
Chief customers: U.S. (35.3%); Lat. Am. (34.9%); EEC (26.5%).
Gross domestic product: \$5.1 billion.
Government expenditures: \$1.218 billion.
Foreign debt: \$4.1 billion (public and private).
U.S. aid (1984): Military: \$140.1 million
Economic: \$52.0 million

Resource

Statistics from *Inside Central America* by Phillip Berryman. The essential facts, past and present, on El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica. Pantheon Books, New York, 1985. Paperback \$5.95.



Bombs and bombast

In a recent public speech, Secretary of State George P. Shultz vowed that the United States would take pre-emptive action to prevent terrorist strikes. "Those who are engaged in terrorism would be perhaps surprised if they knew how much we know about them and their activities," he advised his audience at the University of Hawaii's East-West Center.

Shultz went on to say that over a nine month period more than 60 planned terrorist actions had been "exposed, stopped or in one way dealt with before they took place all around the world. I believe that as time unfolds," he continued, "we will see there are things that can be done, and in fact we have done some things and we have seen some successes."

The Secretary's remarks, aimed at international, politically motivated terrorism, suggested that the anti-terrorist struggle had become the responsibility of all U.S. allies and that we and they must "fight back" against terrorists, their supporters and those who offer them protection.

All of this should have a comforting ring, particularly in light of the hijacking of a TWA flight to Beirut last June in which unsuspecting American tourists bore the brunt of the attack. But while Shultz and company keep a watchful and wary eye on partisan activity abroad, here at home one would hope for some of

that same pre-emptive initiative in dealing with the new wave of terrorism sweeping the Deep South and led by the Ku Klux Klan. At present it would seem that a somewhat lonely battle is being waged against it by lawyers and investigators of KLANWATCH, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

Efforts by the SPLC, since the late sixties, have been lonely and, at times, discouraging. Center offices have been burned and staff members, under constant death threats, require guards at home and at work. Their methods to document Klan and neo-Nazi group activity have been likened to those of the Weisenthal Center for the Study of the Holocaust by *Exodus* author Leon Uris. And the violent response of the Klan is perhaps one measure of how effective the Center's work has been.

Working with the Texas Attorney General, the Center obtained a 1982 court order banning the Klan's paramilitary army, the Texas Emergency Reserve. In December 1983, KLANWATCH lawyers obtained a similar court order halting the Invisible Empire's Klan Special Forces from conducting paramilitary activities in Alabama. Recently, a judge ordered the Carolina Knights of the KKK to stop harassing Blacks, to cease marching in Black neighborhoods and to no longer engage in paramilitary action in North Carolina —

all the result of a SPLC civil rights suit.

In addition, the Center maintains an investigative program into recurring lynchings and publishes the KLANWATCH "Intelligence Report" for law enforcement agencies and the public media.

Emboldened, however, by largely tacit acceptance of their operations on their traditional turf, Klan and neo-Nazi groups have spread their tentacles to quiet middle-class communities outside the South, to law enforcement departments and to the ranks of the military. With ready access to weapons and explosives, they loom as dangerous as any terrorist brigade operating in so-called trouble spots around the globe.

Leon Uris notes: "Fortunately there are ways to stop the KKK activities and to hold these people accountable for their deeds." Secretary Shultz observed: "Pre-emption, in principle, is something that makes complete sense." We couldn't agree more.

If, indeed, effective intelligence can be employed to ferret out the terrorist menace in political hot spots, as Shultz puts it, "all around the world," let's see State and Justice Department operatives get cracking to shore up the lonely efforts of the Southern Poverty Law Center and KLANWATCH here at home. For terrorists from Birmingham to Beirut, only the flags and the religious symbols differ. ■

New leadership sparks hope

by Mary Lou Suhor

One almost expected the liberals to break out into “Happy Days Are Here Again” as the Rt. Rev. Edmond Lee Browning, bedecked in a colorful lei from his Diocese of Hawaii, stepped up to accept the office of Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

His opening address at General Convention in Anaheim revealed that given his broad international experience, he is a Presiding Bishop who will, indeed, think globally while acting locally.

Bishop Browning provided more promise and hope in those brief minutes than social justice advocates had heard since, well, since the time of John Hines. Some examples, all direct quotes:

- I have always seen my ministry as one of enablement and empowerment . . . I will encourage the inclusive representation of multi-cultural expression of this church of ours — of women — of all minorities on this church’s commissions and committees.

- I have sent a telex to Bishop Tutu offering the full support of my office to his courageous ministry. I have extended my sincere hope that he might be present for my installation so that occasion might sacramentally express our love and our support for this man and his people.

- To our sisters and brothers in Central America and Panama, I state my firm support. On my first year’s international agenda I hope to make a visit to this region to affirm this support. I want you to know personally my commitment to you and to the self-determination of your dioceses and nations. As in South Africa and Namibia, I encourage us to see the root causes of suffering in Central America in its poverty and injustice, not in communism.

- I have also sent a telex to Bishop Watanabe, Primate of Japan, to affirm my personal interest in developing the ministry of this church in the Pacific Basin . . . to Archbishop Paul Reeves, Primate of New Zealand, I have sent greetings and support of his witness for a nuclear free Pacific.

- I believe the production, testing and deployment of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to be inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- We must take up the cause of producing a just budget for our nation as well as fair tax reform so that we do not add further to the already overburdened poor of our nation . . . The scandal of increasing hunger among the poor of our country is intolerable. Nowhere is this more evident than in our major cities . . . We must add with equal priority our concern for the plight of our rural areas.

- There is so much more in my heart that I want to share. But I may have already said more than you want to hear.

And at a press conference, the Presiding Bishop said that he would be proud to consecrate the first Episcopal woman bishop, and that he would be in touch with Lambeth about it. Such a consecration appears imminent over his term.

All in all, a remarkable performance for the PB candidate referred to as “everybody’s second choice.”

This sea change for the church was offset only by the election of the Very Rev. David Collins as President of the House of Deputies, the second highest post in the church. Collins is a priest-stockbroker. Now *that’s* an image of the Episcopal Church with which most folks are familiar.

Just how static things were over the

past 12 years was evident when someone in the Exhibit Hall asked the chap selling the book, *Episcopal Chicken*, if it was the record of the House of Bishops. For those still intrigued — it was a cookbook.

Curiously, convention’s end found both liberals and conservatives claiming victories. A Prayer Book Society news release said: “Traditional Episcopalians who have often seen themselves as outcasts within the church are encouraged by developments at the just completed General Convention. Three times before our cameras the new Presiding Bishop pledged that there will be no outcasts in the church. We can only presume he means us . . .”

Others, such as the poor, victims of racism and sexism, gays and lesbians, felt that the Prayer Book Society had no monopoly on the word, “outcasts.”

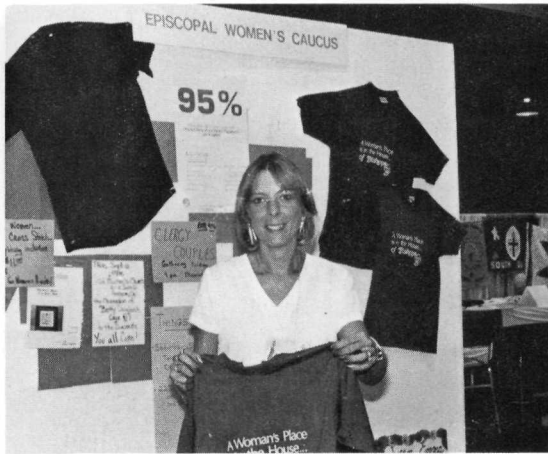
The election of some 200 women as deputies to this convention boosted considerably the spirits of those who met at Womanspace. Dr. Ruth Jenkins and Mary Eunice Oliver, two “foremothers” of the movement to get women seated in the House — an all male body for over 180 years — described the painful struggle.

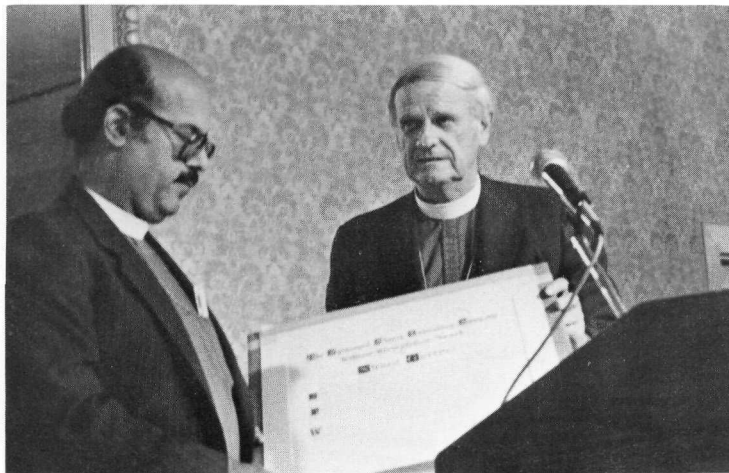
“Women served as errand girls in the 1922 convention,” Dr. Jenkins said. They didn’t even believe we were ‘laymen’ in those days. The arguments we heard in the churches were similar to the ones my mother heard while carrying placards for women’s suffrage.”

Oliver rejoiced at being on the threshold of a new era. “As we move past our 200th anniversary as a church, with 200 women deputies, to the election of a Presiding Bishop who enthusiastically supports full participation at all levels of



Clockwise, from top left: New Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, his wife Patti, and son Peter at press conference; Bishop Browning at breakfast with members of The Consultation: Canon Edward Rodman, Episcopal Urban Caucus; Mary Miller, Episcopal Peace Fellowship; Byron Rushing, EUC; Deborah Harmon Hines of Union of Black Episcopalians makes a point at The Consultation meet with the Rev. Kwasi Thornell, ECPC; Marge Christie, Episcopal Women's Caucus, and Bishop Coleman McGehee, ECPC looking on; the Rev. Barbara Harris, Consultation convenor, points out the meeting agenda to Annmarie Marvel, EUC; Carol Cole Flanagan holds a popular sale item at the EWC booth; and at THE WITNESS booth, left, promotion manager, and the Rev. Jane Van Zandt, volunteer, ready for business.





Clockwise, from top left: Bishop Tony Ramos accepts the String-fellow award on behalf of Steven Guerra, Grand Jury resister still in jail, from Bishop Coleman McGehee at the Episcopal Church Publishing Co. dinner; the Rev. Jean Dementi and Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, who shared the William Spofford award; Bishop Robert L. DeWitt receives the William Scarlett award from Bishop

Paul Moore, Bishops McGehee and Downs applauding; Michael Murray, who accepted the Vida Scudder award given posthumously to his aunt, Pauli Murray, is shown with his wife; from left, Gloria Brown of the ECPC Board, Sturdie and Eufemia Downs, and Carman Hunter, ECPC Board; Roberta Nobleman as the Rev. Jeannette Piccard in "Solo Flight" at Womanspace.

the church's life and work, expect miracles. This era is like the breakthrough at Pentecost when 12 terrified males were expanded by the Holy Spirit to 120 women and men fully empowered for service."

Certain resolutions passed at Anaheim must have had more conservative Episcopalians thinking that they were in the land of Looney Tunes. The strong role many thought might be exercised by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (played at convention by the Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom) fizzled out early as its representatives kept shooting themselves in the foot especially during testimony around Central America and international affairs.

With little effective resistance, resolutions such as those on abortion, AIDS, strong anti-racist stands, Japanese-American redress, sanctuary, dropping of the embargo on Nicaragua and ending contra aid, support of Bishop Tutu and divestment, support of Grand Jury resisters Maria Cueto, Steven Guerra et al — practically all of the issues backed by The Consultation and reported in recent issues of THE WITNESS magazine — were approved handily.

Even where skulduggery was afoot, as in the effort to move the 1988 Convention away from Detroit, the attempt failed. Said one commentator, "Some were afraid they might have to see a few poor people in Detroit instead of just talking about them." But Detroit it is for '88.

The telescoped convention, staged in eight days (New Orleans lasted 11 and prior conventions as long as two weeks) received mixed reactions from deputies, some feeling that they were operating inside a compressed accordion and others feeling the time span was just right in view of the significant budgetary savings.

East Coast deputations experienced disorientation the first days as their circadian systems adjusted to the cross country flight. The Rev. Ed Rodman explained to one: "No wonder you're con-

fused. The ocean's on the wrong side and the clocks are all three hours behind."

The new format left far less time for recreation, and various groups set lunches and dinners as best they could in a tightly packed schedule. The dinner sponsored by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company sold out the day before the event, and approximately 500 turned out to hear guest speaker Bishop Sturdie Downs of Nicaragua and honor five leaders in social justice struggles: The Rt. Rev. Robert L. DeWitt, the Rev. Jean Dementi, Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, Steven Guerra. The Rev. Pauli Murray was honored posthumously.

No one would deny that the tasks ahead are formidable as the Episcopal Church leadership shifts into a more liberal posture. Presiding Bishop Browning will need support as he tries to steer the church into the positions he set forth in his opening address. "It's a tough prospect," said one deputy. "We're enthusiastic and buoyed up here, but when we go home we're going to realize that nothing has changed there."

Aware that "the entire church does not share the vision or own the dream," The Consultation, a coalition of social justice groups which performed admirably at Convention, offered its immediate support to Bishop Browning at a breakfast meeting. On that occasion, the Rev. Barbara Harris, convenor of the group, analyzed the signs of the times this way:

"Prior to 1973 we had a willingness on the part of the Presiding Bishop to move forward on the social mission of the church. Unfortunately, at that time we did not have in place volunteer mechanisms by which this mission could be carried out beyond the staff of the Episcopal Church Center.

"Following 1973, as groups such as the Urban Bishops Coalition, the Episcopal Urban Caucus, Integrity and the Women's Caucus began to develop and the Union of Black Episcopalians became strengthened, we saw emerging a volun-

teer network. But we found ourselves in an adversarial position with 815 and an unwillingness or inability of the Presiding Bishop to continue the forward movement of social ministry.

"We find the church and ourselves in a most fortuitous position at this time with both a Presiding Bishop who has declared his agenda and his area of concern that coincide with the groups represented by The Consultation, and an able and willing cadre of people as represented by its constituency groups. We need to be attuned to how we can help each other and seek ways to be supportive of each other."

Thus does the Episcopal Church over the next 12 years set about weaving a new garment for humanity. This one will have a few seams to accommodate growth — but right now, it's looking good. ■

A promise to the sunflowers

The sunflowers droop
upon fragile stalks,
hanging their heads in sorrow,
grieving for the summer that is gone;
the wild geese, heading south,
honk their warning
of the frigid season just ahead,
signalling that, once again,
winter is fast coming.

We who cherish springtime
and annually count the long gray weeks
that, seemingly without end,
separate November from April;
who live for the robin's first call
and dream of the fragrance of lilacs,
must not slacken our efforts
for justice and peace
during the impending months
of cold and darkness.

As the scheduled
superpower summit approaches,
culmination of this year
of anniversaries and memorials,
the actions we take can insure
that this winter will not become
the Nuclear Winter,
and that the sunflowers will once again
be enabled to lift their golden faces
to a cloudless sky.

— Mary Jane Brewster

Continued from page 14

heads. And they find themselves aligned with the United States and the contra forces against a friendly nation, Nicaragua, and allied with a hostile nation, El Salvador, training soldiers that could eventually return to conquer the very land from which they've been trained. What everyone knows is being overlooked is the reality that the basic struggle is between north and south — the haves and the have nots. Hondurans know that guns and troops will never solve the problems of Honduras which are rooted in poverty and a history of colonialism. The only difference between Honduras 25 years ago and Honduras today is that the U.S. fruit companies, mining interests and timber industries have been replaced by the U.S. military interests.

Carlos Roberto Reina is a candidate for President of Honduras in the soon-to-be-held national election. We are fortunate to meet with him. He says many important things, but one in particular stands out. Reina says that Honduran reality is being defined by someone else's reality. The introduction of vast military arms by the U.S. into Honduras will only result in a suicidal direction. Honduras, he says, is being armed to kill hungry people. He reminds us that the U.S. is behind this. He reminds us that his country does not want to be a backyard of the U.S. or a beachhead of Russia. What it wants is not the presence of four armies but the presence of economic aid for food, housing, sewage systems and health and education needs.

In bed I remember what he's said and I recall a portion of the seventh chapter of Matthew: "Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish?" Will we, in like manner, hand Honduras rifles and grenades when they ask for plows and seeds — or bullets and tanks when they cry out for books and medicine? ■

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