

SALVANET

A Publication of Christians for Peace in El Salvador, CRISPAZ

U.S. to Establish Military Installation at Comalapa Airport

On March 12, five days after the FMLN victory in national and municipal elections, National Civilian Police director Mauricio Sandoval publicly requested the assistance of the United States military to fight illegal drug trafficking and organized crime in El Salvador. Weeks later, on March 31, the Salvadoran government signed an accord with the United States permitting U.S. military personnel and aircraft unrestricted access to the Comalapa Airport and other government installations for a period of ten years. The agreement, which was ratified on July 6 by a simple majority of the National Assembly, allows the U.S. to establish a monitoring station, known as a Forward Operating Location (FOL), at the Comalapa Airport for the purpose of combating narco-trafficking. U.S. officials prefer not to call this installation a base, even though it will be staffed by U.S. military personnel, but rather a "monitoring station" established through a "use agreement" with the host government.

Background

Since the withdrawal of U.S. personnel from the Panama Canal Zone in late 1999, the U.S. has sought to secure sites for future military and anti-narcotics operations in the region. The U.S. has already established similar monitoring stations in Aruba-

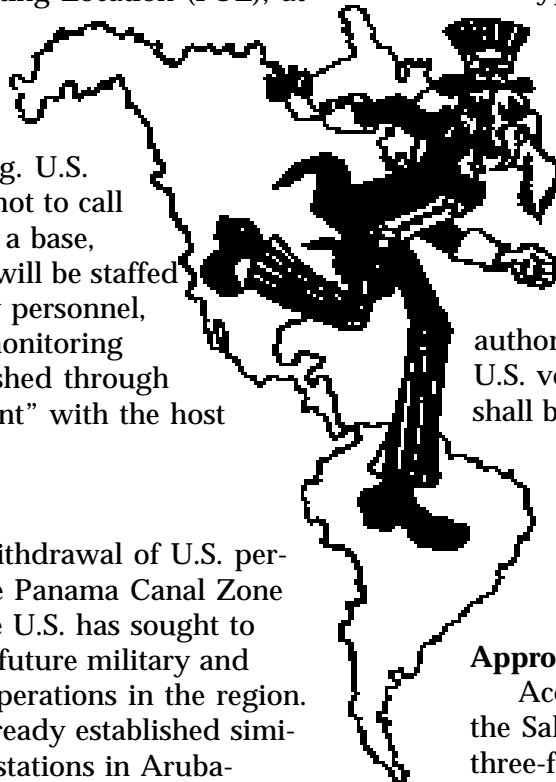
Curacao and Ecuador. Costa Rica, the original proposed site for a Central American monitoring station, rejected the proposal.

The FOL will be the regional launch site for a radar plane, which would span an extensive range to detect and track unregistered ships and aircraft in the region. The accord grants unrestricted access to the airport and other government installations to an unlimited number of U.S. military personnel, and permits the U.S. to build installations at the airport and other locations. Article XIV of the accord allows U.S. military personnel to wear their uniforms and carry weapons at these installations, without specifying the amount or types of permissible weap-

ons, aircraft or equipment. Article XV grants the U.S. exclusive access to and responsibility for certain designated installations, thus prohibiting access by Salvadoran civilian or military authorities. In addition, all U.S. vehicles and equipment shall be exempt from any inspection by Salvadoran authorities, and all U.S. personnel involved will be granted diplomatic immunity.

Approval of the Accord

According to Article 147 of the Salvadoran constitution, a three-fourths vote of the Na-



July / August
2000

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CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador, was founded in 1984. We are a faith-based organization dedicated to mutual accompaniment with the church of the poor and marginalized communities in El Salvador. In building bridges of solidarity between communities in El Salvador and those in our home countries, we strive together for peace, justice and human liberation.



CRISPAZ has five programs:

- † CRISPAZ Volunteer Program (CVP)
- † El Salvador Encounter Delegation Program (ESE)
- † Communication Information Network on El Salvador (CINES)
- † Summer Immersion Program (SIP)
- † Economics for People Program

SALVANET, a project of CRISPAZ, is published six times a year.

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tional Assembly is required to ratify treaties and other agreements that involve the use of Salvadoran territory. The U.S. Embassy and the Salvadoran government argue that it is an "agreement" rather than a "treaty" and that it does not compromise Salvadoran territorial sovereignty, and thus only requires a simple majority vote of the National Assembly. A simple majority allowed the National Assembly to ratify the current agreement without the support of the FMLN, whereas a qualified majority would have made ratification impossible without FMLN support.

The FMLN made it clear that it would not vote to ratify the current treaty, saying it compromises Salvadoran territorial sovereignty by giving unlimited, and in some cases exclusive, access to Salvadoran territory to U.S. military and civilian personnel. It also fails to respect or promote the National Civilian Police (PNC), which was established by the Peace Accords to deal with matters of public security. The FMLN maintains that the ratification of the agreement by

a simple majority of the National Assembly was unconstitutional and has threatened to challenge its legality in the Supreme Court of Justice.

Objections to Military Involvement

The U.S. government claims that the project will reduce crime, which is a growing problem in El Salvador, by reducing the amount of illegal drugs entering the country. However, the major threats to the Salvadoran population are violence and delinquency, not major drug trafficking. The drug trafficking that makes El Salvador a new and growing market for narcotics could be better fought with educational programs, employment for youth and training for the police, rather than spending millions of dollars on military aircraft, equipment and U.S. personnel. In fact, a 1994 study by the Rand Corporation showed that it is twenty-three times less costly to combat drugs at the point of demand through education, rehabilitation and prevention programs than to pursue current U.S. anti-

U.S. Military to Train PNC

The National Assembly has approved an agreement, entitled "Juventud Sana" (Healthy Youth), which would allow for joint training exercises between U.S. civilians and military personnel and the Salvadoran National Civilian Police. The agreement, which was approved on July 6 by a simple majority of 48 votes, is intended to train the PNC in the fight against drug trafficking.

Proponents of the agreement contend that the training exercises will prepare the PNC to efficiently detect and intercept illegal narcotics shipments, which they say will dramatically reduce the amount of illegal drugs entering the country. Opponents, on the other hand, say that it amounts to nothing less than a militarization of U.S. assistance to the National Civilian Police force, which was created by the Peace Accords to be a state institution, under civilian control and completely independent of the military, to deal

with matters of public security.

According to the agreement, U.S. military personnel may not participate in combat, arrests or other PNC operations, and in the case of armed confrontation they must retreat to a safe distance. U.S. personnel would be free to respond only in self-defense.

The training exercises, which will last nine days, will involve participation of up to twenty civilians and/or military personnel from the U.S. Department of Defense. The operations will also include the use of three U.S. helicopters as well as U.S. military patrol boats.

The exercises were set to begin as soon as the agreement was approved by the Assembly. The agreement will be in effect for the remainder of the year.

narcotics policy in Latin America.

While the U.S. government states that the purpose of the FOL is to detect and intercept illegal drug shipments, the Transnational Institute based in Holland (the country that administers the Dutch Antilles, including Aruba-Curacao) considers that the ultimate objective of the FOL is to support U.S. intervention in Colombia's counter-insurgency war. The Colombian newspaper *El Espectador*, citing a State Department source, also states that the FOL's in Ecuador and Aruba-Curacao are being used to monitor the activities of Colombian guerilla forces.

U.S. involvement in the Colombian quagmire has led many to believe that there are ulterior motives for U.S. military presence in the rest of the region. In El Salvador, some have gone as far as to speculate that the U.S. is preparing for the very real

possibility that the FMLN may win the presidency in 2004.

After the violence and atrocities of El Salvador's recent civil war, which was financed by the United States, the last thing the country needs is renewed U.S. military presence. Increased U.S. military involvement in the region serves to undermine multi-lateral efforts toward Central American demilitarization. What is needed instead is support and strengthening of local democratic institutions. Involvement by the U.S. military in combating drugs in Latin America (made possible through agreements whose constitutionality are, at the very least, questionable), undermines local civil, democratic institutions and is costly, morally reprehensible and counterproductive. ❖

Jay Gutzwiller, Miranda Buffam, Dean Brackley, S.J., and the Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS) contributed to this article

News Briefs...

National Assembly Presidency Goes to PCN - In an unprecedented political maneuver, the FMLN was denied the National Assembly presidency, a position traditionally granted to the majority party in the assembly. Through an agreement between ARENA and the PCN, **Ciro Cruz Zepeda** of the PCN was installed as assembly president. **Walter Araujo** of ARENA was named vice-president.

Changes within ARENA - As a result of ARENA's unfavorable showing at the polls in March, the party has undergone an organizational restructuring. Former President **Alfredo Cristiani** has stepped down as the head of COENA, ARENA's executive national council. **Walter Araujo**, a young National Assembly deputy, has taken over the party presidency, promising to "transform ARENA from a party into the primary political institution of the country" in which "all ARENA members participate in the decision-making process."

PNC to be "Purged" - Under increased scrutiny and criticism for corruption, President **Flores** has created a commission to purge the National Civilian Police (PNC) of agents it refers to as "undesirable elements". Two separate lists of agents suspected of improper behavior have been released. Several hundred PNC agents have already been purged, with more dismissals expected soon. The government has not questioned or criticized PNC director **Mauricio Sandoval** for the inability of his administration to address these problems.

Sources: Proceso, La Prensa Gráfica

Quotables...

*"It is a grave sin... that the National Assembly deputies have ignored the will of the people and elected **Ciro Cruz Zepeda** as president of the assembly. The work of this assembly, since its first plenary session... has been a spectacle that we have all witnessed and has personally caused me much sadness.... (T)he National Assembly deputies have contributed nothing to the democratic process of the country."* - **Gregorio Rosa Chavez**, auxiliary bishop of San Salvador

"I have no knowledge of any state structure of telephone espionage." - **President Francisco Flores**, referring to suspicions that have arisen in the wake of the government's investigation of France TELECOM for intercepting calls

"The President inflated his record and accomplishments. In such a calamitous situation for the country, he... spoke more about projects than results. It is easy to tip someone else's hat." - **Schafik Handal** (FMLN), in response to President Flores' report to the National Assembly on his first year in office

"We are sending a message to the international community that our country is not a refuge or sanctuary for criminals. We are going to take concrete steps to combat impunity." - **Rene Figueroa** (ARENA) on the ratification of a constitutional amendment allowing Salvadoran nationals to be extradited to other countries

Immersion, Communion, and Solidarity

by Miranda Buffam, coordinator of the CRISPAZ Summer Immersion Program (SIP), now in its second year

What is the purpose of an immersion program? It's hard enough to get anything done when you commit yourself to an entire year of presence in a community. So what could we possibly achieve in a few months? This is the question to address through the practice and reflection of the Summer Immersion Program.

The SIP is a link, an opportunity, a space and time to develop an in-depth encounter and *convivencia** with Salvadoran communities. In this sense it is an attempt to create relationships of equality and interchange. The interns share their lives, skills and ideas with the community they live in. The members of the community do the same, providing friendship as well as a process of *concientización* of the emergence and challenge of one's political, spiritual, social, historical, personal, economic, and cultural consciousness. Such intensive experiences of learning and living together can create an international solidarity based in humanism and relationship, rather than propaganda or paternalism.

The volunteers are placed where they can give some manner of concrete support for an existing effort or project within the communities. Lulu, Helen, and Brendan all have varied skills and interests which will be manifested in their work. This work, however, is only part of a larger process. The difficult task, the important task, the overwhelming and transformative task, is to accompany the community, sharing in their daily life and listening to local histories, denunciations, desires, and visions. In the long term, it is hoped that these understandings will give rise to creative acts of social and economic change, but the idea of immersion is to understand the problems of large scale structural inequality by getting to know them on a local, personal level. The task is to take in, to listen as a fellow human being. To follow in Romero's footsteps is not to speak for the voiceless from lofty positions of education or international perspective: it is to accept, as he did, that the true

prophetic voice of our times is the voice of the people, the voice of the poor.

This is an exciting time to be a part of the SIP because it is still very much in its birthing stage. There are many pitfalls on the road to solidarity, traps of despair, paternalism, and romanticism. We need to be courageous enough to face the shared pasts and conflicting realities that are brought up by experiences and relationships with Salvadoran communities, seeking the truths that arise, both dark and light. We need to be self-critical, but we also need to let go—to allow the grace of God to enter and transcend the centuries of violent imperialist history that maim our abilities to love one another and face one another as equals.

In our last reflection we made a list of what solidarity could, might, or should mean in this world of varied problems and propagandas, efforts and passions. To us, solidarity is humility, critical analysis, playing with children, history, pain, listening, sharing, singing, hope, communion, and much more. A few weeks before leaving El Salvador in 1998, I was riding in the back of Roberto's pickup, like so many times before, bumping and jouncing over the back roads from El Barrio at night. I looked around at the eight people, backlit by tumbling shadows and light, who had let me into their lives and their homes. It was in that moment I lost myself in communion, in the windblown silent co-presence of my *compañeros*. I was rushed by the night, movement, and mutual presence out of my usual awkwardness and into a state of delight and sadness for the delicacy and absoluteness, for the tender tangibility of these moments. It was an experience, raw and vulnerable and immortal, that scrubbed the stains off of compassion and opened an unthinking love flowering outward.

These are the moments, these are the communions, that construct a hesitant and deeply felt solidarity.

**convivencia*: living together; life-sharing

Getting to Know the SIP Staff and Volunteers

Miranda Buffam, the coordinator for the Summer Immersion Program, was born in Missouri, but her roving has taken her through such unlikely places as Krakow, San Francisco, Oaxaca, and Moravia, New York. Her first trip to El Salvador was, in spite of these habitual wanderings, so striking that she jumped (yes, jumped) at the chance to come back. She spent 5 months in El Salvador in 1998 working in a farming cooperative with the community's children; singing, listening, yearning, arguing, tortilla-making, praying, sweeping, nose-wiping, climbing and hoping her way into an incomplete but loving understanding of the cooperative's history and way of life. She then went back to Bard College in the altogether different universe of upstate New York to try to express some of what she'd learned in the form of a play (theological and theatrical) and some analytical essays. With that effort she managed to weasel herself a BA in anthropology and Latin American studies. After some more roving and a brief stint as a disgruntled day care teacher, she's returned down south. She's happy to be here, supporting and sharing in the interns' experiences of *convivencia* and accompaniment. After the program ends in August she's moving back north with her fella to work at, in her own words, "Lord knows what."

Brendan Goodwin is from Port Washington, Wisconsin and will be a senior marketing major at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He first came to El Salvador on a delegation to observe the elections in March 1999 while spending a semester in Nicaragua through Xavier's service learning program. He will be living in the rural community of Los Naranjos in the department of La Libertad, and will be accompanying the local agricultural cooperative. At Xavier, Brendan is involved in campus ministry and peace and justice programs. After graduating and spending a couple of years as a long term volunteer, he hopes to find a marketing position with a non-profit organization.

Helen Ruff is from Valparaiso, Indiana and is an incoming senior at Xavier University, where she is an English major and a founding member of VOS (Voices of Solidarity), a student organization dedicated to raising awareness about peace and justice issues. She came to El Salvador as an election observer in March 1999 while participating in Xavier University's service learning semester in Nicaragua. Helen will spend this summer living in the community of Santa Anita and accompanying the community's kindergarten teacher in her work. She will also spend time with the community's special needs children.

María de la Luz (Lulu) Santana is originally from Oxnard, CA, where her parents, three sisters and large extended family still live. She graduated from Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, CA in 1995 with a B.A. in political science, and from Santa Clara University in 1997 with an M.A. in catechetics. She has served as a campus minister at Santa Clara since 1997 and volunteers as a hospice chaplain in her spare time. Lulu visited El Salvador for the first time in July 1999 as part of a CRISPAZ delegation from Santa Clara University. That brief visit led her to return for a more extended experience. She will spend this summer living in the rural community of Milingo and accompanying the *Comité de la Defensa de la Mujer* (Women's Defense Committee) in Suchitoto.

Finding Our Song

By Lea Minniti

**Lea Minniti participated in a CRISPAZ delegation in May along with a professor and 13 other students from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. The following is a reflection she wrote shortly after returning from her El Salvador Encounter experience.*

I've been back for about a week and a half now, and since I've been back I have been spending a lot of time processing my trip. Many of you have asked, "How was it?" and I sometimes have difficulty answering that question. How do I put my experience into words? It is hard, but I would have to use adjectives like amazing, powerful, hopeful, heartbreaking, shocking, enlightening and inspiring.

The first few days were spent learning about the situation in El Salvador, the history, working conditions in the maquilas, the facts behind the Jesuit assassinations. We visited Romero's residence and the chapel where he was killed. He lived on the grounds of a hospice for the terminally ill, and a woman who was praying in the chapel suggested that we visit the patients. My friend Natalie and I met two women named Maria and sang all the songs we knew that had the name Maria in them.

El Salvador was involved in a civil war from 1980-1992 and the reality of the war continues to affect Salvadorans eight years after the signing of the Peace Accords. Our group of fourteen students from Xavier University stayed with families from a youth movement called Generation XXI, a movement started by youth who wanted an alternative to gangs. Gangs are prevalent in El Salvador because opportunities in education and employment are so few. I asked Marcos, the twenty-year-old who hosted my friend Zoe and me, if he remembered the war. He told me about a bomb that was set off very close to his house. His brother and father

both died during the war. When our group came together after the home stays I learned that Marcos' experience was not uncommon.

It is hard for me to understand how much this country was affected by the war in which entire towns were obliterated. Our group visited one such a town called Guarjila which was destroyed during the war. The people later returned, built the town back up and are continuing to work together planting coffee trees, trying to improve their educational system and rebuilding their village.

I cried with Edgardo, one of the founding members of the Generation XXI Youth Movement, as he told us his painful story. One day after work (he found work cleaning buses to support his family - he has six-month-old twin girls) he was waiting for a bus near where a police sting operation was taking place. Edgardo was arrested along with four other Salvadorans who happened to be at the scene at the time. He spent twelve days in jail and had to borrow 10,000 colones (over \$1000) to get out on bail. In the middle of telling us his story, he broke into tears and had to leave for a while. We could hear him on the other side of the building wailing and crying. I glanced at our group and saw solemn faces, shock and tears. Edgardo was extremely upset because, as he told us, "In El Salvador, once you are accused of a crime, whether you are guilty or innocent makes no difference." I felt so angry, hurt, upset, helpless and heartbroken. But throughout his story he talked about keeping faith in "Dios".

The entire situation made me so angry. I was reminded how stories can be twisted around and portrayed in a certain way by the media, and how this very same situation could occur anywhere, and does occur in the United States because of racism and classism.

I was inspired by Edgardo's hope and sense of humor. He ate dinner with us at the guest house and afterwards we laughed and joked around all night. At one point, I had just taken a drink of Crystal Light and we began laughing again, so much that I spit my drink all over him (accidentally, of course). He just wiped his face and said, "Well, well, well...", and then the laughing continued.

We met with an organization called the Olof Palme Foundation that works with street kids and kids who have to work in the markets to help their families. There we listened to the children's concerns. They want "less garbage on the floor, to play soccer, and to go to school." They want to feel safe and don't want their parents to "hit" them and make their "noses bleed". I was shocked to hear about the little girls who are raped or abused in the bathrooms of the market and the kids who are robbed when their parents rely on them to help out in the market. This is not the way children should live.

There were so many children. Fifty percent of the people in El Salvador are under the age of nineteen. The kids in Guarjila ran up to us and wanted to play. Walking to breakfast one

morning, the cutest little boy in the world came up to me, grabbed my hand and took me to the park. His name was Pedro. There I picked him up and swung him around. He would scream in delight because he was flying, then we would lay down on the ground and "be tired". Then he would jump up, grab my hand again, and we would repeat this over and over. I felt so at home there in the campo. It was easy to be real because the people themselves were real.

My trip to El Salvador was about seeing God alive in everyone and realizing that, as John Giuliano said, "Suffering for the sake of suffering is not God's suffering." Children dying of diarrhea, women dying in childbirth and communities living in garbage dumps are realities that are offensive to God and we must fight against that injustice.

Now I am reflecting on what my trip meant to me, pondering a possible double-major in Spanish as well as theology, and thinking about returning to work in Guarjila next summer. I keep thinking about a quote from one of Fr. Gene's homilies (at Xavier University): We live God's will by "finding our song and singing it." In El Salvador, so many people we met truly knew their songs and sang them everyday. I want to find my song - my path - and sing it. I don't know exactly what it is yet, but I know I am on the right track.✚

Mango Trees, Computers, and the Future of Popular Education

By Yon Hui Bell, a CRISPAZ volunteer who has spent the last two and a half years working in the area of popular education with the Committee for Reconstruction and Social Development in the Communities of Cuscatlán (CRC)

When we think about popular education in El Salvador, an image of people sitting under a mango tree learning how to read and write usually pops into our heads - groups of men, women and children in the guerrilla camps or in refugee camps, usually under a tree of some sort or in a makeshift shack, squatting on the ground or sitting on old, decrepit wooden benches, perhaps guided by someone who had herself only completed a few years of formal education.

When I arrived in the Suchitoto zone about three years ago and began working with the C.R.C. in repopulated communities, popular education as symbolized by the mango tree still existed, but not quite as romantically as a symbol often makes us believe. The first year I worked in adult literacy and yes, some of us worked in pretty ratty conditions with people who were pretty gung-ho about learning, but the truth is most of the people were tired of attending makeshift classes and getting no certified diploma. It was difficult to find people who were willing to facilitate classes because so many people gossiped about how incapable the facilitators were and how they didn't really know anymore than the students did and, besides, who had the time to be giving classes without earning even a few colones?! When I first came to Suchitoto, there were about five literacy programs working in the zone. This year, there is only one.

The following year I started participating more in the popular schools. In theory popular schools are an extension of the mango tree classes except they are aimed specifically at children. They try to provide a basic education to children in communities where the state does not. In theory they are community organized and operated and use a pedagogy that is participatory, socially conscious, and thus liberating. In practice much of the popular education that exists in this country is coordinated by NGOs with little real participation from the communities. The idea that anyone can

give classes has also been lost as all teachers must now be in the process of becoming certified, and funding for popular education is becoming more and more difficult to obtain. Another truth that we in the NGO world often do not want to recognize is that the government is providing more educational coverage. Though it is still inadequate, it is increasing, and in most cases, the people support Ministry of Education schools over popular schools. Right or wrong, they feel that the education is better and that the teachers are more professional. And regarding pedagogy, I have yet to see a direct correlation between popular teachers and a practice of popular education pedagogy.

So what is the future of popular education? We know where we've been because yes, we started under the mango trees and yes, we stuck it out through the peace accords and reconstruction, and there are thousands of children who are now in high school and in the university as proof of our power and commitment. We now have hundreds of teachers becoming certified, but now where do we go from here? What is our role in this new millennium?

El Comité de Pro-Rescate Cultural (Cultural Rescue Committee) was formed with these questions in mind. A small group of us who had already been

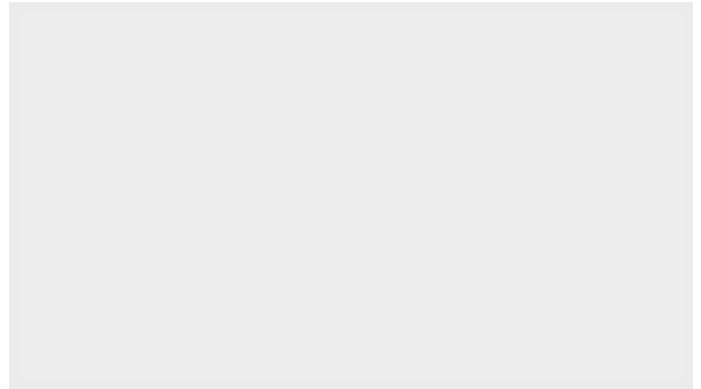


Yon Hui Bell with students in a popular school in La Mora

involved in educational work began to discuss how we could respond to our communities' present educational and social situation. One of the main ways, we decided, was to support the existing curriculum with written materials and information. The lack of adequate, up-to-date information in the zone is astounding. Many students never see the textbook they are studying because only the teacher has a copy. The teachers themselves often lack resources to better prepare lessons. Let us not forget the research, experiments and other critical thinking exercises that are never assigned because the resources just are not available. It is imperative that these kinds of assignments are given because they teach students two simple truths: knowledge does not come from just one source, and they themselves must actively seek knowledge in order to attain it. Simply put, we began to think about the quality of education the children of our communities are receiving and not just about the quantity of schools or teachers in the zone.

We also thought about all the youth and adults who had either never been incorporated into the education system or who had to drop out for one reason or another. We needed to offer them stimulus and productive, creative ways of occupying their time and mental energy, not only for their own well-being, but also to prevent increased delinquency and participation in gangs, which are a growing problem everywhere in El Salvador. Many of them are interested in continuing to educate themselves, in finding out more about the world and this thing called life, but when you're outside of the formal system, and especially if you're in the countryside, there are very few opportunities.

So we dreamt, we wrote, we solicited funds, we received donations (from individuals, not institutions, though the German Embassy did send us some tourist pamphlets), we worked, and on March 18, 2000 we opened the doors of the Biblioteca y Centro Cultural "Roque Dalton" (the Roque Dalton Library and Cultural Center), the first of its kind in the zone. We have textbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries, magazines, novels, classics, children's books, books about the war, the environment, women's issues, politics, community



students studying at the new library and cultural center

development, personal development, board games, puzzles, and a typewriter. We're hoping to get a computer soon because there is a lot of interest in learning basic computer skills. We would also like to offer classes in dance, theater, drawing - everything and anything that falls in the scope of holistic human development.

Students sitting under a mango tree. The truth of this symbol, the meaning behind it and popular education is not just about whether the school is run by the Ministry of Education or by popular teachers, but about how involved the student is in his or her education. Are you a seeker? Do you question? Do you realize that truth is multifaceted, that it is based on dialogue and not authority? Do you trust yourself as the center of your truth? Do you trust yourself to share and be "teacher" to someone else? Do you trust yourself to listen and be "student" to someone else? Do you seek knowledge and self-realization? More importantly, do you believe that knowledge and self-realization do not just come from the formal, institutional system, that they are not prepackaged meals consumed at certain points of our lives when we are told to? Are we revolutionaries always? Do you believe that you, that all of us, are teachers and learners all throughout our lives? If you do believe, then rest assured, popular education will never disappear. We'll just put a computer under that mango tree.❖

Solidarity in Neoliberal Times

Interview with Dom Pedro Casaldáliga

According to Brazilian Bishop dom Pedro Casaldáliga, we are living in a “macro” neoliberal empire which reinforces traditional social inequalities and domination by the long-established oligarchical elite. It amounts to a complete “macro-dictatorship” that has been imposed as the sole way of thinking by the “devil’s theologians” and their post-modern narcissism.

In an interview in March, at the time of the twentieth anniversary of Archbishop Romero’s martyrdom, dom Pedro tells us that the world has never been so full of poverty and inequality as it is today. “Never has so much of humanity been deprived of being human.” He speaks of millions of expendable, excluded men and women – the four fifths of the world’s population experiencing the effects of globalization but who will never participate in it or reap benefits from it. He speaks of non-societies based on the accumulation of wealth, unbridled consumerism and a murderous system of economic exclusion. He says that not only have social services and state-owned enterprises been privatized, values and feelings have been privatized as well. We are living in an era of total selfishness, a world of superfluity. Civil society has been dismantled and people prefer to be consumers rather than citizens.

Casaldáliga contends that John M. Keynes’ ironic advice is now being fulfilled: “at least for another hundred years we must continue to make believe that what is just is evil, and what is evil is just... Greed, usury and cautious foresight must be our gods for a little while longer...”. Dom Pedro says that the Catholic Church, his church, has never asked for forgiveness for having sanctified the principle of private property for so many centuries. He does not believe in the so-called “third way”. Faced with the professed blind faith in the free market and savage capitalism, he opts for a humane socialism, saying that reality has confirmed the goodness of the left.

Casaldáliga, born in Catalonia in 1928 and a Claretian with over half a century in the priesthood under his belt, has lived in Mato Grosso since 1968. He is said to be allergic to *ad limina* visits to Rome, but he has become and addicted traveler along the path of solidarity. Co-president of the International Christian Secretariat in Solidarity with Latin America, along with former bishop of Chiapas Samuel Ruiz, Casaldáliga believes (as does his Mexican counterpart) in the *word made history*: “The word that I believe is the word I say with my life.”

His is a strong word, one of denunciation. His voice is hoarse now as a result of the years and the harshness of his denunciations, but it still resonates, like the voice of the prophets. He proved this when he spoke to an overflowing audience in the UCA auditorium in March. The crowd listened attentively when he spoke of the need for another kind of globalization, or “worldization” as he calls it: the worldization of hope and solidarity, an alternative to the current, dominant system of economic globalization.

Who are you referring to when you talk about the “devil’s theologians”?

I am referring to the organic, neoliberal intellectuals, like Catholic theologian Michael Novak, who has repeatedly defended the multinational corporations to the point of calling them today’s “suffering servant”.

Why don’t you believe in the “third way”?

Because it always ends up as a social-democratic or Christian democratic movement. The third way is like a bat: it’s not a bird and it’s not a mouse. Faced with the power of an exclusive and unbalanced neoliberalism, I believe in a strong state, but not a totalitarian one. A state that acts in favor of the poor and that does not privatize the life of its

citizens. I believe in a moderating state that guarantees the basics: dignity, rights, opportunity. Now, even a university education is luxury.

Monsignor Luigi Betanzi has said that when European bishops speak of the poor they are called communists, but when Latin American bishops speak of the poor they are called Christians. But until recently bishops like you were also called communists.

The term "communist" isn't used so much anymore. Now they call us pests. They say that our ideas are based on impossible utopias, that we're promoting pauperism. But that is not the case. We are in favor of the poor, but we are very much against poverty.

You have said that the system of "total selfishness" has led to a structural crisis in solidarity. However, in the face of the inevitable process of globalization, you advocate another kind of globalization, or worldization.

Yes. We dream of another globalization, our worldization, that must be a prophetic alternative to the dominant system of neoliberal globalization. Like it or not, the world is becoming one. That is reality. Either we save ourselves together or we all go down together.

What is this other "worldization"?

It must be an attitude, a way of life; a virtue, comprised of awareness, simplicity, enthusiasm and solidarity. It must be based in daily reality, nurturing our roots and our memory. It must be a worldization based on equality – equality of individuals and of peoples, and an equality of dignity and of rights. Of course it must also be based on plurality. If we do not work for a "world where everyone fits", as the Zapatistas have called for, we will end up with a world in which no one fits.

Talk to me about solidarity.

Solidarity is the new name for human society.... Regina Ammicht Quinn points out that "a common, shared destiny requires solidarity". I realize that what I am calling for is a revolution of values and po-

sitions of need and of privilege. It requires taking the First World and the Third World and making one world, the human world. I am talking about an ethical and structural revolution. Not only a cultural, sociopolitical or economic revolution, but also a spiritual revolution. Positions of privilege, which by definition exclude and marginalize, prohibit solidarity. That is why I speak of solidarity as a virtue, the mixture of ethical indignation and liberating praxis.... The utopia we are hoping for is that an authentic revolution of values, relationships and structures makes true progress possible for everyone – the harmonious equality of all peoples. Our hope is called solidarity.

Proponents of neoliberalism tell us that we are at the "end of history".

In no way is this the end of history! Hope is only justified in those who march forward. We hope precisely because we despair. We hope against this murderous world that has been imposed on us.... Hope is of most use to those in despair. Consumerism, satiated by the McDonalds of the world, and a sense of defeatist conformity, which has taken the wind out of the sails of militancy, have no need for hope.... As Christians, we "hope against all hope". Hope is memory, utopia, action. We must globalize hope. We must make it so that the excluded, those who most need to hope – the "nobodies" of history, as Galeano calls them – can reasonably do so. That will be the miracle of the "hopeful, inspiring hope" that our martyr Ellacuría spoke of. Then solidarity will begin to make utopia a good, dignified and habitable place.✚



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SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS UPDATE

SOA Reforms "Basically Cosmetic"

Under intense pressure to close the SOA, the Pentagon proposed a set of reforms that would re-name the school (proposed names include Defense Institute for Hemispheric Security Cooperation and Institute for Professional Military Education Training) but offers no substantive changes. By a narrow margin, the House of Representatives voted to accept the proposal in June.

SOA critics call the changes cosmetic and contend it is business as usual for the SOA. Even SOA supporter Sen. Paul Coverdell of Georgia admits the proposed changes are "basically cosmetic", stating that the SOA "would still be able to continue its purpose." Congressman Joe Moakley (D-MA), an outspoken SOA critic, has said, "It is like putting a perfume factory on a garbage dump. It still smells."

For More Information

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<http://www.soaw.org/#act>

Volunteer with CRISPAZ in El Salvador!

The CRISPAZ Volunteer Program is currently accepting applications for long-term volunteers to live and work in El Salvador. The next start date for new volunteers is January 15, 2001. Application deadline is November 15, 2000.

Volunteer opportunities can be arranged in the areas of health care, youth, literacy, pastoral accompaniment, agriculture, women's organization, education, and many others. We are happy to work together with you to find a placement that fits. CRISPAZ also welcomes applications from individuals who have already arranged volunteer positions in El Salvador and are looking for a support community.

For application information and materials, please contact CRISPAZ:

(U.S.A.) crispaz@igc.org (ES) pazsal@netcomsa.com

Salvanet is available on the internet.

Check out our web site at:

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