

Brazil

Disobedience challenges military

By JIM GERSBACH
Of the Emerald

While U.S. media highlight Polish unions' struggle against government repression, an even larger movement for social justice in Brazil goes almost unnoticed, Brazilian labor activist Maria Helena Moreira Alves said Thursday on campus.

After 17 years of military rule and the Western Hemisphere's largest dictatorship, Brazil is being shaken by massive acts of civil disobedience organized by community action groups opposed to the Figueiredo regime.

"We don't get the press Poland gets because we work for Ford," said Alves, who is closely involved with Brazil's leading metalworkers' union. "We've been doing it (actively fighting authoritarian rule) for three years — Poland's only been doing it for one."

As in Poland, dissatisfaction with governmental economic policies has led to popular demands for civil rights and economic reform. And in both countries, the Roman Catholic Church is siding with workers and peasants against the government, Alves said.

As public awareness of government repression has increased, middle-class Brazilians, who used to react to strikes with fear, have also joined with workers in opposing the military.

Collapse of Brazil's much-touted "economic miracle," which brought rapid industrial growth during the early 1970s, has further alienated Brazilians from the regime, Alves said. Prices are rising 113 percent a year, increasing middle class poverty, and plunging more than 30 million Brazilians into near-starvation.

Catholic lay groups and neighborhood associations have started challenging military control of the press, labor unions and the government itself, she said.

"We are changing a dictatorship slowly from the womb," Alves said.

So far the military largely has given in to demands for civil rights, ending press censorship, restoring the right of *habeas corpus* and promising free elections of state governors in 1982.

But the government has resisted public demands

that Brazilians be given a larger role in national development policy. Under that policy, American, Japanese and European investors enjoy substantial tax and financial advantages not offered Brazilians. Labor and wages also are controlled by the government, which prohibits strikes and sets salary levels.

This lenient policy has made Brazil a haven for multinationals, she said.

"Ford manufactures all its Pinto engines in Sao Paulo and ships them back here because they pay our guys only 50 cents an hour."

Official American interest in Brazil, however, extends beyond preserving its favorable investment climate. Since the 1964 overthrow of Brazil's mildly reformist democratic government, Brazil has "done the dirty work" for the United States by becoming a model of repression in Latin America, she said.

"What the military did became a model for what others in Latin America did. Brazil was the first such country with people disappearing," she said. Brazil continues doing the dirty work of the United States in Latin America, including aiding military takeovers in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and most recently Bolivia.

Brazil also has cooperated closely with the military regime in Argentina, she said, where over 16,000 people suspected of opposition to the government have "disappeared."

Although Brazil's government has officially ended repression, para-military death squads assassinate political opponents of the regime, she said. In Nova Iguaçu, a working class district of Rio de Janeiro, over 2,000 people have been kidnapped, tortured, and found shot to death, with the death squads' skull and cross bones emblem carved into their skin.

But Brazilian troops have so far refused to shoot on strikers and protestors.

"They would have to kill millions of Brazilians if they (the military) crack down now," Alves said. But hard-liners in the military could clamp down any time they wish, she stressed.

Alves' speech was part of the Human Rights in Crisis Conference held Thursday and today in the EMU.



Graphic by Rene Castro

El Salvador

FDR offers Salvadoran reforms

Dr. Ruben Zamora of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) roundly denounced El Salvador's government Thursday afternoon in the EMU Ballroom.

The FDR is an umbrella organization of political parties, trade unions, religious, student and peasant groups that oppose the Salvadoran government.

In a speech to a near-capacity crowd, Zamora said the current regime is "the most cruel, the most brutally repressive government in our whole history."

The picture conveyed to the American people of a moderate Salvadoran government struggling to implement reforms in the chaos of warring political factions is false, Zamora said.

"Everybody in El Salvador knows that the people who commit the social barbarities of assassination, of killing and torturing people in civilian clothes are the same people that, during the day, wear uniforms as policemen, as members of the security forces, as members of the army," he said.

Charging the recent Salvadoran agrarian reforms are "window dressing," Zamora said the vast majority of the arable land belongs to an elite oligarchy.

Zamora added the broad-based FDR coalition

provides the only "truly democratic alternative" to El Salvador's military-dominated government.

The FDR advocates a four-point reform program that includes the establishment of a democratic government, the nationalization of foreign commerce and financial institutions, the reconstruction of the armed forces to include both "freedom fighters" and democratic officers from the army, and the pursuit of a non-alignment foreign policy.

"We don't want to be under the umbrella of one superpower, neither under the umbrella of another superpower," he said. "We don't want to be the servant of one superpower, neither the servant of another superpower."

Zamora called "complete lies" recent allegations from the State Department that Salvadoran rebels were getting Soviet arms via Vietnam and Cuba.

"We have not asked for nor received arms from the socialist countries because we consider that if we do that we are furnishing the American government with the excuse, not the reason, the excuse for all-out intervention in El Salvador," he said. "We don't want that intervention."

Group asks U.S. aid be dropped

SALEM - A delegation from El Salvador appealed to Oregonians here Thursday to demand the federal government cease all aid to El Salvador.

The delegation asked the United States to "suspend arms sales and provisions, return military advisors to the U.S. and stop all economic aid to the military Christian-Democrat junta," the group's translator said. "This aid is used to violate the freedom and democracy of El Salvador."

Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, told the delegates he saw dire developments at the federal level.

"The statements in the last couple of days by the Reagan Administration through Alexander Haig have, in my opinion, been nothing more than warning to the American people that this nation is planning to become militarily involved in that country."

According to Kulongoski, such intervention would be counter to U.S. interest.

"Not only will it not bring the desired results in El Salvador, but I think it will perpetuate the image Third World nations have that we do not attempt to deal with them as equals, but enforce our will militarily."

When asked if Oregonians should submit to a draft designed to create an army to go to El Salvador, Kulongoski hesitated.

"As you know, I oppose the registration that was implemented by the Carter administration. However, I must tell you that I do believe there will be a draft this year. The question of whether one should serve goes to the very nature of the relationship an individual has with his government and the obligation that individual feels he's under."

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Censorship forces Chilean writers, artists into exile

By GLENN BOETTCHER
Of the Emerald

Censorship or "manipulation of the signs" can be fought through "self-censorship," Chilean writer Fernando Alegria told a full EMU Ballroom crowd Thursday.

Speaking during the 1981 Northwest Conference on

"Human Rights in Crisis: Latin America," Alegria said a repressive regime changes the meaning of signs in a country when it takes power.

"A green light no longer means go through," he said. Instead, a green light means the sign has not yet been given to go through.

But those opposing a

dictatorship can maintain maximum resistance but make their actions appear to meet the dictatorship's desires, Alegria said.

As an example, Alegria described a Chilean play in which the actors build a brick wall on a bare stage. When the wall is finished, an official tells them it must be removed to make way for a new road. The play ends with the builders christening the new wall and sharing a bottle of wine with the truck driver who will demolish the wall.

Alegria said audiences react to the play's symbolic references to repression and injustice with emphatic applause and shouts. And the Chilean government can't stop production of the play, now in its second year, because it doesn't refer to the government, he explained. "Dictatorships cannot do away with culture."

Alegria, a poet and novelist, said despite a "deeply rooted humanist tradition" in Latin America and Chile, Universities are being closed and intellectuals, teachers, painters, writers and musicians who "are afraid of their

own country" are choosing exile.

Latin American students who have formed committees, signed petitions and participated in hunger strikes to protest repression have disappeared, been expelled or been penalized with higher tuition, Alegria said.

More than 100 "first-rate"

Chileans are writing from exile, he estimated. And Alegria said those who leave Universities often are not replaced.

"Research is at a stand-still."

How long will it take a University that has closed for one or two years to regain its stature? Alegria asked.

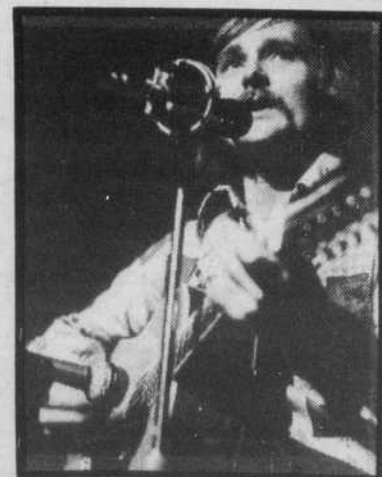
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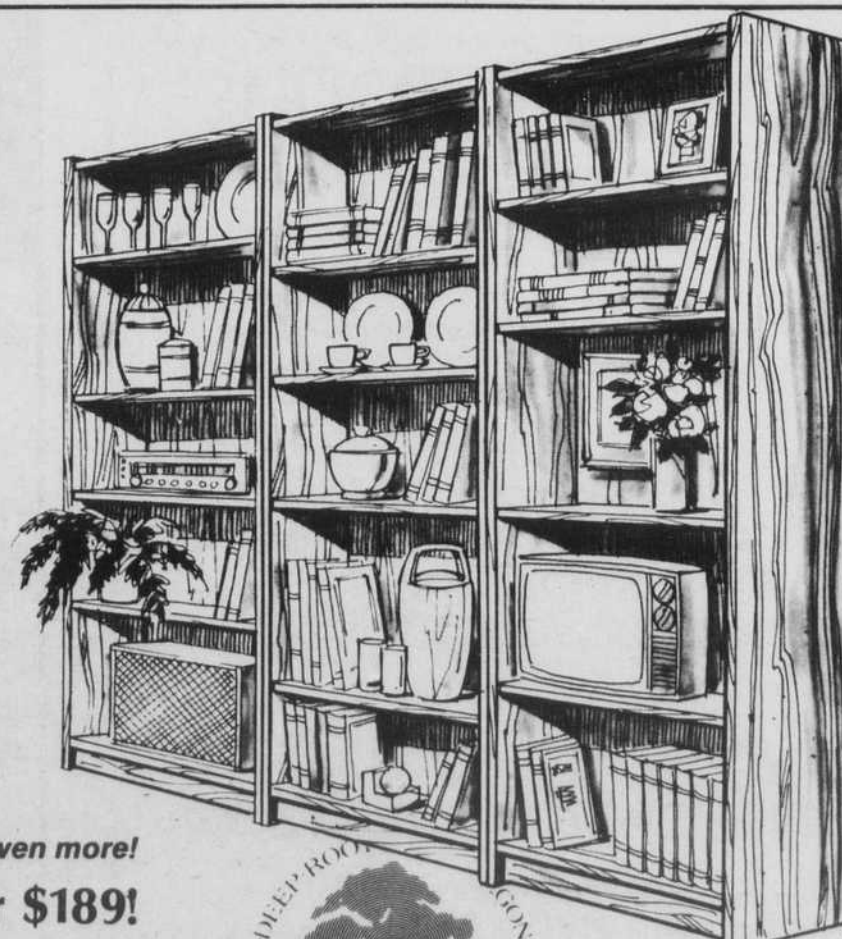
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