

assistance, to justify Christian Democrat participation in the 3rd Junta; to strengthen the government's image. The agrarian reform was instituted on March 6th, and on March 7th military law was proclaimed.

3rd Junta

On March 10th, four days after the Agrarian Reform was begun, the progressive civilian members of the 2nd Junta resigned in protest of the violence perpetrated on the peasants by the military. The Christian Democrat Party split, with 2000 right wing members remaining with the government and the liberal wing joining the Revolutionary Democratic Front, a coalition of 150 organizations of workers, peasants, students, business people, professionals, church groups, etc.

By this time the power of the right-wing military was consolidated under Colonel Gutierrez and all pretense of liberal reform gone.

Archbishop Romero, who supported the revolutionary cause as just, was assassinated in his church in March.

With the election of President Reagan and the promise that human rights would no longer be a major concern, repression increased.

On Thanksgiving Day seven leaders of the FDR were dragged from a catholic school where they had met to plan a press conference by 25 agents in civilian dress while the school was surrounded by troops. They were tortured and killed. Shortly after, four American religious women were murdered.

4th Junta

In the aftermath the Junta was again reorganized. The one military man considered to be progressive, Colonel Majano, was pushed out. Duarte was named president and Gutierrez as vice-president and Commander in chief of the Armed Forces. Majaro said the

reorganization "symbolizes a process of moving to the right by certain civilian or military opportunists."

A Latin American diplomat said: "Mr. Duarte has made an expensive compromise to realize his dream of becoming President. If the President is not Commander in Chief, then is not in command."

The U.S. suspended military aid while investigating the murder of the American Nuns, but prior to leaving office, in spite of indications of government involvement, Jimmy Carter resumed aid.

Since his inaguration on January 20th, President Reagan has offered ever increasing military aid - this week sending additional military advisors and promising military aid.

"All the reforms we fought for have been lost. The great problem is on the right. Terrorist operate with impunity and the government does nothing to stop them. El Salvador's problems do not come from Cuba or El Salvador. The problem is that this country is caught in a process of self-destruction unleashed by those who use the banner of anti-communism to preserve and expand repression and injustice." Those are the words of Colonel Majaro, who led the 1979 coup, served in the Junta, narrowly escaped assassination in October, was arrested on February 21st, and is being held on unverified charges.

Representative Gerry E. Studds of Massachusetts has introduced a bill into the House of Representatives that would prohibit all military sales, training and assistance to the government of El Salvador. Congressmen Les Aucoin and Jim Weaver are among the thirty-seven co-sponsors of this bill.



Murder and torture are common.

A joint Senate Memorial calling for an end to economic and military aid to the government of El Salvador is going to be introduced to the Oregon Legislative Assembly. It is presently in the Trade and Economic Development Committee. Members are Senator Bullock, Jernstedt, Heard, Kitzhaber, Smith McCoy.

El Salvador

El Salvador is a small nation - 4.5 million people in an area smaller than Vermont - the poorest and most overpopulated in the Western Hemisphere.

Until the 19th century, the people of El Salvador lived on tribal lands or on large plantations farmed communally. After independence from Spain in 1812 and introduction in 1850, all of that changed. Because labor was needed for the coffee plantations, the Indians were forced off the land to become highly exploited workers.

As the economy became centered on coffee, the land and the economy came under the control of fourteen families - the Oligarchy.

The Massacre of 1931

The depression of 1931 brought a drop in coffee prices, higher unemployment, lower wages and common mistreatment of workers. In 1930, Agustin Farabundo Marti, organizer of the Central American Socialist Party, returned from Nicaragua where he had fought against U.S. Marine occupation, to consolidate the union movement. Demonstrations and strikes led to a mass uprising in 1932 which was destroyed with the murder of 30,000 peasants by the military.

The Oligarchy reasserted its economic control over the country and put the military in political control. In 1932, the military dictatorship that was to last for 50 years began.

After World War II, cotton production expanded, forcing peasants off their small plots of land and increasing hunger and malnutrition.

Alliance for Progress

Following the Cuban Revolution and its successful land reform, the United States launched the Alliance for Progress in Latin America. When even minimal land reforms in El Salvador were blocked by the Oligarchy, the U.S. decided to arm El Salvador as a guard against "communism".

The U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador wrote: "There was a time when the republic made great social progress, back in the early 1960s, but fearful of Castroism, we (the US) began to build up the security forces."

Urban growth was encouraged by the U.S. established Central American Common Market, but the social reforms that often accompany urbanization were absent. Unemployment and the numbers of landless

peasants increased; political and union organizing progressed.

The U.S. responded by funding the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), an anti-communist labor training agency of the AFL-CIO. Funding came from U.S. AID and the purpose was to seek minimal economic improvements and to direct peasants and workers away from organizing their won progressive organizations.

Elections of 1972

By 1972 the Christian Democratic Party had become strong enough to run Napoleon Duarte for president. In order to win they had to join in a united front with the Social Democrats and the outlawed Communist Party. Duarte won but the Army moved in and deprived him of the election and declared Colonel Arturo Molina president.

A number of moderate reforms were instigated and funded by the U.S. but none were successful. Reaction by the Oligarchy included repression of the Church and universities and assassination of peasants. Molino was replaced in 1977 by Carlos Humberto Romero, in another fraudulent election.

In 1977 the Carter Administration cut off military aid because of mass terrorism perpetrated by the military government. In 1979, in the face of a successful revolution in Nicaragua, the U.S. suggested that Romero resign. With absolute power, and no threat to his control, except the U.S., he stepped down.

The October Coupe

With U.S. support, a group of younger and more liberal army officers, led by Colonel Majano, staged a "palace coup." Although Romero was out, the Oligarchy and the military remained very much in control.

First Junta

The young officers hoped that a coalition of the liberal military and the "centrist" civilians could bring about reform. The U.S. insisted that the military named to the Junta be conservatives Colonel Jose Garcia and Colonel Jaime Gutierrez. The U.S. strategy was to resist any concrete reforms until its people were in control. Rather than work with the "centrists" to develop a new democratic government, the U.S. supported the military right-wing. The U.S. goal was to prevent another Nicaragua by re-directing the Oligarchy from the land

American's next war?



Government soldier stands guard near body of young man shot in the back.

and into modern urban capitalism; and using agrarian reform "Pacification" developed in Vietnam to take over the large plantations, turn them into military enclaves, and populate them with pro-government peasants. AIFLD was to be the clearing house to determine which peasants qualified.

On January 3rd, the progressive civilians in the Junta - including Enrique Alvarez (who became president of the FDR and was tortured and murdered in November 1980 by government troops) and Guillermo Ungo (currently president of the FDR) determined that they could institute reform over military opposition and resigned.

Second Junta

The second Junta contained Christian Democrats who joined the government in a last attempt to work through it for reforms. The U.S. distrusted their liberalism and preferred to support the right wing elements of the military. The U.S. instituted training in "clean counter-insurgency", instituted military aid, and trained 300 officers and technicians.

By this time the country was divided into two factions, the military-oligarchy and the popular-revolutionary forces. Brutality by the military increased; revolutionary organization continued.

The military was ready for a coupe on February 26th, but were warned by U.S. Ambassador James Cheek that it would be contrary to U.S. aims and would result in a loss of aid. AIFLD presence strengthened; repression of peasants increased.

The U.S. decided it was time to institute the agrarian reform - against the wishes of the Junta and the Oligarchy - but with the aid of the military. The benefits would be: to control the countryside by imposing a state of seige; to unify the army; to justify U.S. military

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