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CRY OF THE PEOPLE - Penny Lernoux

United States Involvement in the Rise of Fascism, Torture, and Murder
and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America

"From the heart of Latin America, a cry rises to the heavens ever louder and more imperative. It is the cry of a people who suffer and who demand justice, freedom, and respect for the fundamental rights of man." - III General Conference of Latin-American Bishops, Puebla, Mexico, February 13, 1979. The central issue between the Latin American church and state is human rights. The other issue is the role of the U.S. military, CIA, and corporations in the rise of this totalitarianism. "...two-thirds of its 320 million people still live in a Dark Ages... The medieval torture chamber has been updated with sophisticated technology". Burning at the stake is used by some. Burning prisoners in a barbecue pit or grill is one of 17 common tortures in Uruguay. Prolonged beatings, electric shock, simulated drowning, the parrot perch, deprivation of food, water and rest are standard practices. Almost every type of organization and publication is abolished, or its news censored, its members tortured and killed. Anyone thought to have knowledge of any kind of opposition, anyone helping to teach or help the poor in any way, or seen with such persons, or get caught in a roundup of suspects, is liable to fiendish torture and murder. By 1978, all but Columbia, Venezuela and Guyana were under military dictatorship, with a reign of terror substituted for law. Since 1968, when the Church began to protest, over 850 priests, nuns and bishops have been arrested, tortured, murdered or expelled, and thousands of Catholic laity have been so treated. Nothing similar since the Russian Revolution. Three tables list the religious persecuted and their treatment. The only organization with influence in Latin America is the church.

14,000 refugees, from five countries, are in Argentina. The people's misery resulted from nearly five centuries of social and economic oppression. "Development" means foreign loans and investments, used partly to take over existing Latin-American industries, and eventually 99% of the loans to buy U.S. products at 30 to 40% above market prices. (Most of the loans can't be paid). "'The Americans are killing us' is a cry repeated throughout Latin America, ...Between 1950 and 1975 the United States trained 71,651 Latin-American military personnel, including 8 of the region's current dictators, and in addition supplied \$2.5 billion worth of armaments. Such collaboration is the lifeblood of the Doctrine of National Security." Nationalization of private industry, land reform, autarchic trade policies, acceptance of Soviet or Chinese aid, and anti-American or nonaligned foreign policy - even cultural changes - are called "communist," and a threat to American security. "In El Salvador 'the peasants live like serfs in Europe four hundred years ago' ... The most densely populated, most undernourished country in Central America" 90% of the peasants are landless, 50% illiterate, average monthly income \$12. 80% of the children are malnourished. Unemployment and underemployment total 45%. In Honduras, as in most Central America, a wealthy few own most of the land. In an area nearly the size of Pennsylvania, 23,000 peasant families starve, for lack of an acre to plant. "' Somoza may be a son-of-a-bitch, but he's our son-of-a-bitch.' - Franklin D. Roosevelt". The Anti-Communist League of Nicaragua (death squad) had a list of natives and foreigners whom it intended to eliminate. Only 2.2 million people live in an area the size of England and Wales combined, but 1800 large ranches occupy half the arable land, the Somoza family owning an area about the size of El Salvador, and the country's 26 largest companies. Brutal military campaigns pushed the peasants off good land into jungles.

Annual income of Honduran peasants \$30. Almost annual serious clashes with army and police, protest marches bringing on massacres. When a few march sympathizers and passers-by at a peasant training center were shot at, there were 5 dead, 2 wounded, and 5 taken prisoner. The prisoners were given a choice of castration or death in a bread oven. All chose the oven. Two priests were whipped and beaten. One was castrated and shot. The other had his "eyes gouged out, his fingernails, tongue, and teeth pulled out, his hands, feet and testicles slashed off." Their remains thrown into a well with the 5 roasted peasants, and intended sister-in-law of the latter priest, and a woman friend - live - and the well dynamited shut. When Nelson Rockefeller visited Latin America in 1969, hatred against Standard Oil resulted in riots and vandalism. He "urged more military and police aid for the" continent. "Most Latin Americans take for granted: that

U.S. foreign policy is run by corporate business. ...in most cases economic growth was achieved at the expense of the people. Between 1958 and 1970...the real wages of Brazilian workers declined by 64.5 percent." Senator Frank Church: "'The present foreign aid program has been turned into a grotesque money tree, sheltering the foreign investments of our biggest corporations and furnishing aid and comfort to repressive governments all over the world.'" A group from 25 major corporations recommended projects for the Alliance for Progress. Our State Department recognized "that the Alliance 'had had too much emphasis on social reform.'" AID orders, by 1969, made up a third of U.S. steel exports. \$2 billion a year in U.S. exports were financed by the program. AID helped to have Bolivia's investment code and royalties revised to encourage our investments, and supported our dumping of surplus grain, temporarily, to foil their efforts at self efficiency. We financed low-interest loans to U.S. firms, and Latin American arms purchases.

We hamstrung liberal President Allende, of Chile, in every way possible, and greatly aided his overthrow. Latin Americans are made to import a great many products which could be produced locally. U.S. drug prices inflated up to 1000%. Many fatal drugs sold. "Between 1965 and 1968, U.S. manufacturing subsidiaries in Latin America sent 52% of their net profits back to the United States; mining and petroleum subsidiaries sent 79 percent. And in both cases most of the original investment came from Latin-American sources. 40% of their manufactured exports are controlled by U.S. companies, and half their exports and a third of their imports are traded between U.S. subsidiaries and parent companies. "The guns and tanks bought with the hunger of the Brazilian people serve effectively to silence any protest against their deepening impoverishment. The difference in Brazil between minimum wages and top executive salaries is five hundred to one; in the United States it is sixty to one. ...'the economy is not supposed to produce for the people, but for foreign markets, for the military, and for a few privileged technocrats.'" Brazilian farmland is being progressively converted from the production of black beans - their staple diet - to ranches for meat export. To the elite goes every reward. The masses "exist merely to serve the state." Half of Brazil's workers earn less than the government's monthly minimum of \$70. Many firms lay off workers early in the year, to avoid paying inflation increases, and hire others at lower wages. Profits very high. Work hours twice that of 10 years ago, to buy the same - 240 hours per month, normal, and 110 hours overtime, in the construction industry.

"CLOCKWORK ORANGE - Torture, Murder, Repression, and Anti-Semitism in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. 'If you want peace, respect life.' - Pope Paul VI ..." "Don't hit me again! Please don't hit me again!" The middle-aged peasant woman was sobbing, half slumped on the floor of the primitive jungle jail. For days now, she had been forced to kneel on jagged bottle caps while the police beat her with clubs and stuck needles and pins into her breasts and under her fingernails. Her niece, just recovering from childbirth, had been similarly tortured after the police, having gang-raped her, burned down her small shack and the family's rice patch." Unable to find a man who had killed a notorious torturer and murderer, they tortured his sister and daughter-in-law. A Brazilian priest, accused of being a guerrilla and bank robber, was clubbed, kicked, given electric shock to his mouth, forced to run between lines of soldiers, who beat him until he fainted. Very few Brazilian political prisoners who have not suffered indescribable tortures. Many killed, many suicides, some left dumb, sterile or otherwise maimed. A Sao Paulo poll showed 7 in 10 afraid of being arrested. Some gratuitous. A man arrested at home, drunk, was beaten to death. "How many people have spent months and even years in prison, who one day will be released without even being tried."

The Argentine government "gave dozens of paramilitary and para-police organizations a free hand to torture, murder, and blackmail their victims". A CIA agent: "' If you think the Brazilian police's torture methods are bad, you should see what goes on in Argentine prisons.'" 40% of Mexico's manufactures are controlled by multinationals - three-fourths U.S. 85 families in one state own a quarter of the irrigated land. 126,000 are landless. Oaxaca contains 500,000 hungry Indians and another million landless peasants. Many U.S. churches have enormous investments in both domestic and foreign monopolies. (Only monopoly - robbery - can yield a net return, above insurance on a risk, to capital, an inanimate object. Nominally priced sites, from full ground rent assessments, would end most monopoly. Alternatives: starvation, electric shock, barbecue roasting.) "The epitome of evil.

On Reagan - Ignorant, lying, callous, irresponsible. (Hemisphere, world salvation: filibusters, boycotts of govt., monopolies, hired "economists")