

sponsor: Mayor Vellucci 11/21/89

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RESOLUTION ON THE MURDER OF JESUIT PRIESTS IN EL SALVADOR

WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council joins the Salvadoran people, the Jesuit community and all people of conscience in mourning the loss and deploring the torture and murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, on the campus of the University of Central America in El Salvador and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council has continuously endorsed strategies and programs for peace, dialogue and an end to government repression of people and their organizations in El Salvador, which was the work of those Jesuit priests and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council has particularly supported peace and understanding between the people of Cambridge and El Salvador through its sister city relationship with San Jose Las Flores and through the work of its Peace Commission, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That the City of Cambridge, with and through its communities of faith, declare Sunday, December 3, 1989 a "Day of Conscience and Action for Peace in El Salvador" on this ninth anniversary of the rape and murder of four churchwomen and during this period of mourning for the slain priests of El Salvador and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Cambridge City Council calls upon our elected Senators and Congressman to end all military aid to and intervention in El Salvador so the people of that country can bury their dead, heal their wounded and create the society of their choice.

✓/✓ (8)

400 protest past backing by Kerry of Salvador aid

Sen. John Kerry called yesterday's suspension of US military aid to El Salvador as about 400 people jammed his office to protest his past support of such aid.

After a memorial service for the priests and two civilians who were slain Thursday at the University of Central America in San Salvador, most of the mourners marched peacefully to Kerry's office to protest his vote last September for continued military aid to El Salvador.

The demonstrators — who chanted such slogans as, "Stop the bombing, stop the war, US out of El Salvador" and "Sen. Kerry, you can't hide, you helped to pay for genocide"



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / WENDY MALIN

Demonstrators against US aid to El Salvador jam the hallway in front of Sen. John Kerry's third-floor office in the Transportation Building at Park Plaza.

— made their way into Kerry's third-floor suite, where staff members promised them a chance to speak to the senator by telephone.

Kerry told the group last night in two conference calls that he supports cutting off military aid until activi-

ties of death squads cease. However, the senator backed off an earlier promise by staff members that he would propose a resolution to that effect over the weekend, saying he did not believe such a measure would get enough support to pass.

In Cambridge, El Salvador aid protested

CAMBRIDGE — Responding to the recent tortures and murders in El Salvador, elected officials, clergy and representatives of Salvadoran sister cities organizations gathered at City Hall yesterday to express their outrage and call for an end to military aid to El Salvador.

"We don't like our government supporting people who kill people," Mayor Alfred Vellucci told about 80 spectators attending a late-afternoon press conference.

Rev. David Hollenback, S.J., a professor at the Weston School of Theology, once worked with Rev. Ignacio Ellacuria, one of five Jesuit priests who were executed Thursday.

"These priests were killed because of their commitment to the suffering poor," Hollenback said. He said the priests had no illusions about the danger of their work when recent posters printed by the government announced: "Be a patriot. Kill a priest."

In earlier comments, Hollenback expressed concern that the American news media is portraying President Alfredo Cristiani as leader of a middle-of-the-road government trying to maintain order.

"This is a government of intimidation. It is sponsoring death," Hollenback said.

Cambridge, Belmont and Arlington each have a sister city in El Sal-

vador to which they have donated almost \$10,000 during the past several years. The cities — villages, actually — have been targets of government bombings because they allegedly harbored dissidents, representatives said.

The Belmont El Salvador Sister City Project, for instance, sends \$500 monthly to the village of El Higuera so villagers can purchase agricultural tools and day-care facilities and not have to flee to Honduras, said John Bell, the organization's president.

The Cambridge El Salvador Sister City Project announced an emergency funding drive for medical supplies for wounded civilians.

Senator John Kerry
Committee on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC 20510-6225

passed 11/15/89

Dear Senator Kerry:

The Democratic City Committee is very concerned about the situation in El Salvador. As you know, Cambridge has an active Sister City relationship with San Jose Las Flores in northern El Salvador and the Sister City Committee has reported regularly to us about the government's and military's constant kidnapping of citizens of that town, a bombing of the town square in August, denial of food and medicines sent by Cambridge and harassment of sister city delegations attempting to visit the village.

Today, the situation is even more difficult. The bombings of the offices of the Mothers and Relatives of the Murdered and Disappeared (CoMadres) and El Salvador's leading trade union which resulted in a dozen deaths are clear examples that the government cannot and will not seriously engage in peace negotiations or protect the rights of its citizens to organize and express their opinions. The bombings are clear evidence that the military and its death squads, which in fact hold power in El Salvador, are free to assassinate and terrorize popular organizations, their leaders and anyone they consider opponents of the current structure.

Many of us circulated petitions at the State Democratic Convention in June, 1989 calling on our Congressional delegation to work for an end to military aid to El Salvador and support for Massachusetts Sister Cities in that country. That resolution was adopted unanimously. We have been very discouraged by your recent vote in favor of an additional \$85 million in military aid and your opposition to any human rights conditions attached to that money. You stated in your letter to constituents that you would be willing to reconsider your action if the Salvadoran government and military continued its human rights abuses. What has happened to the people of San Jose Las Flores and to students, trade union leaders, mothers seeking their children and others should be proof enough how military aid is used.

We urge you to rescind your support of continued military aid to El Salvador on the Senate floor at this time. We also object to any overt or covert US intervention in the current situation in El Salvador. We respectfully ask that you communicate your current views to this committee at your earliest opportunity. This is very important to us.

Sincerely,

Peter Sturges, Chair

Alan Clark, Secretary
Cambridge Democratic City Committee

Passed by the Executive Committee of the Cambridge Democratic City Committee, November 15, 1989.

CARLISLE DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

32 Wildwood Drive
Carlisle, Mass. 01741

Senator John Kerry
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator:

Ten years of civil war in El Salvador has resulted in a military standoff and a steady degradation of living standard for the impoverished majority of Salvadorans, while the U.S. has supplied a half billion dollars a year in aid to the Salvadoran government.

Although there is a civil government in El Salvador, real power is held by the military and the assassination squads which it controls. As long as we prop them up, the military elite are not likely to permit the opposition to enter into elections under conditions allowing informed and free choice, as the opposition has twice proposed this year. Only if we withhold military aid will the military be forced to let the country choose between the Arena party and the opposition. This has been recognized by the Massachusetts State Democratic Party, which in its convention last year called for a complete cessation of military aid to El Salvador.

Members of the Carlisle Democratic Town Committee therefore urge you to work actively in Congress for a measure forbidding military aid to the government or army of El Salvador and to sponsor legislation which will have that result. We would remind you that Congressman Atkins has already taken that tack by cosponsoring the Kastenmeir resolution.

The request that you take this action was voted upon at the regular Committee meeting of October 10th and passed by a large majority. Your recent vote in favor of military aid to El Salvador without any conditions indicates that you oppose our position. We respectfully ask that you convey to this Committee your reasons for taking a position which appears to favor the continuance of the status quo in El Salvador.

Sincerely yours,

Eugene H. Sheftelman

Eugene H. Sheftelman, Secretary
Carlisle Democratic Town Committee
October 11, 1989

Copies to: ~~Editor, Boston Globe~~
Congressman Chester Atkins

Boston Globe Friday, Nov. 17 1989

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The Jesuit vision

The following is excerpted from a letter that Rev. Ignacio Ellacuria wrote to the Globe three years ago in response to a series on Central America by Edward R. F. Sheehan. Ellacuria and five other Jesuits were murdered yesterday in San Salvador.

...

Edward Sheehan recognizes that we - the Jesuits in El Salvador - have been deeply touched by the misery and injustice that afflict the majority of Salvadorans. He also recognizes that we are seriously committed to helping people free themselves from this affliction. But while Sheehan sympathizes with our attitude, he disagrees with our approach; it is, he says, "too utopian, too violent, too destructive."

His description that we are utopian comes closest to being accurate, although not if he wants to suggest that our definition of utopia is Castro's Cuba. It is true that we aren't politicians and that, in that sense, we are more utopian than pragmatic. We are people of the gospel, a gospel that proclaims the kingdom of God and that calls us to try to transform this earth into as close a likeness of that kingdom as possible.

Within such a perspective it is difficult to accept unbridled capitalism, because the evils it has produced in history outweigh the good. As the bishops of Latin America stated at their meeting in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979, "We see the continuing operation of economic systems that do not regard the human being as the center of society and that are not carrying out the profound changes needed to move toward a just society."

It would be easier to accept systems that better confronted the problems of the poor, and gave the poor the special place bestowed on them in a gospel vision. Such a vision emphasizes the common good; it calls for liberation, not just liberalization.

It is not, then, that liberation theology, or Salvadoran Jesuits, are promoting violence. On the contrary, violence is what we are trying to overcome. But let us not deceive ourselves about where all this violence began.

It started with what the church called institutionalized, legalized violence, whether in the form of economic exploitation, political domination, or abuse of military might.

And while all violence is bad, the church has tolerated, though not encouraged, a resistance that is proportionate to the violence of an unjust aggressor. This tolerance may not seem in strict conformity with the gospel, but it is classical Catholic moral doctrine.

In the case of El Salvador, the Jesuits here have condemned institutionalized and repressive violence, and we have done all that we could, including calling, even before the war began, for dialogue - to avoid and diminish revolutionary violence.

Finally, there is Sheehan's accusation that we have been so profoundly influenced by Marxism that we can simply be labeled as Marxists.

Marxism can help in social analysis and in promoting political commitment, and in these ways it has influenced some Jesuits in El Salvador. But it has not been the only influence, or even the main one, and for that reason it is unjust to call us Marxists.

It is obvious, for example, that in my writings and in those of Jon Sobrino and other Jesuits here, the role of Christian faith is predominant. It is also obvious that those writings drew on many other theories besides those of Marx.

But to call our position "too violent and too destructive" is to make an erroneous judgment, and more. We have endured a good deal during these recent years; one of us, Rev. Rutilio Grande, was murdered, and the rest of us received an ultimatum: Get out of the country or be killed. We decided to stay. Since then our home and our university have been bombed 14 times.

It doesn't take much - accusations like Sheehan's will suffice to bring on further threats, or worse, since charges like his legitimize all the worst impulses of the kind of people who have put up signs here saying, "Be a patriot - kill a priest." In circumstances like these, Sheehan's judgment of us is more than simply erroneous; it is, itself, "too violent and too destructive."

CENTRAL AMERICA

On the role of church in El Salvador

Perils of partisanship

By Harvey Cox

THE LAST TIME I SAW REV. Ignacio Martin-Baro, he was sipping coffee in my living room in Cambridge while admiring students plied him with questions. He had just given a guest lecture in one of my courses, passionately describing the tasks that lay ahead for Salvadorans - after the war - in repairing the damaged psyches of the many thousands of children who have already been orphaned, displaced and traumatized by the endless mayhem.

Now, Father Martin-Baro is dead, one of the six Roman Catholic priests tortured and murdered last week in a death-squad raid on the Jesuit residence in San Salvador.

But why would anyone want to murder this gentle, scholarly man, whose main concern was the psychological rehabilitation of children? Father Martin-Baro was hardly a "political priest." His careful field research focused on patterns of popular religious belief in Central America. But he knew that he and his Jesuit colleagues had been on the right-wing's hit list for over a decade. Why?

Ministering to the poor

For at least 20 years now, Christians in Latin America, prodded by rampant poverty,

PRIESTS, Page A22

Harvey Cox is a Baptist minister and professor of divinity at Harvard. He has written and taught about the church and its mission in Latin America.

Priests

Continued from Page A21

ty, disabling hunger and political repression, have been rediscovering a central impulse of the gospel: Jesus' unconditional love for the poor and his willingness to risk confrontation with the heartless elite of his day at whatever cost.

But by giving pastoral support and encouragement to the landless peasants and desperate slum-dwellers of El Salvador, Father Martin-Baro and his colleagues were not only following Jesus' example. They were also faithfully complying with the explicit policy of their church and of the Society of Jesus, of which they were members.

When Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council in 1962, he told the assembled bishops that he prayed they would be able to make the church "once again what Christ intended it to be, namely, a church of the poor." When the Catholic bishops of Latin America met a few years later to discuss what that council's mandate would mean for Latin America, they announced that, on their conflict-ridden continent, the whole church should apply the message of Jesus and make a "preferential option for the poor."

This meant that priests and nuns could no longer think of themselves as nonpartisan, or as neutral arbiters between the dispossessed and their privileged tormentors. Rather, along with all serious lay Christians, they were now called upon to devote their gifts and talents to the victims of unjust policies, and to strive to change the structures that perpetuated such evil.

Responding to this clear directive, the Jesuits announced that the promotion of human justice would no longer be merely ancillary but would be an integral element in the worldwide work of their order. Other Catholic groups moved whole schools, hospitals and parish services from handsome suburbs to forgotten shantytowns. It was to be a costly change. They often lost in the process the financial undergirding of their traditional affluent supporters. They also began to experience the arrests and crackdowns that the people among whom they were now living had known for years.

continued →

But then, as they made this jarring transition, these church leaders discovered something they had not expected. They found that by living among the marginated masses, their own faith was being renewed. They discovered that, instead of bringing the gospel to the castoffs and losers, they were meeting Christ in a fresh way, among the same kinds of people with whom he had lived and worked during his own earthly years. They also discovered that, despite continuing defeats and heartbreaks, the wounded people among whom they were working nourished a persistent faith in God's ultimate justice and that, even though the church had sometimes ignored or betrayed them, they also retained a stubborn confidence in its mission and its leaders. The church was often their last hope when all else had turned against them.

It was a curious reversal. As Father Martin-Baro himself once told me, "Instead

of the church making an option for the poor, we found that the poor had already made an option for the church, or - more accurately - for the gospel the church is supposed to teach and represent."

His message: 'No more guns'

Now my friend Father Martin-Baro, together with Rev. Ignacio Ellacuria, the dean of the Central American University, whose books I have used in my teaching - along with their priestly colleagues and hundreds more - are dead. They have joined the seemingly endless catalog of Christians whose lives have been poured out to give fleshly embodiment to that special divine love for the poor that also brought Jesus of Nazareth a visit from a death squad one dark day on a hill outside Jerusalem.

Is there anything we can do, we who sit helplessly and watch the grisly saga of El

Salvador unfold year after year on TV? As he stepped out of my front door on that last visit, I asked Father Martin-Baro this very question.

"Just keep trying," he said. "Keep trying to get your government to stop sending guns to the Salvadoran military. Those guns are aimed at us." With these words, Father Martin-Baro smiled and waved and stepped into the car that was waiting to take him to the airport. They are the last words I heard from his lips.

Now, the guns our government has supplied have spoken, and Father Martin-Baro has been silenced, at least in mortal terms. But his ugly death - he was found with his colleagues face down in a patio garden outside the Jesuit residence, a bullet my taxes bought in his head - makes his quiet plea more eloquent today than it has ever been:

"Keep trying. No more guns."



AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE PHOTO

The slaying of six Jesuit priests was not the only violence against the Catholic Church in El Salvador last week. At Simon Canas Central American University, this priest's office was burned, allegedly by right-wing death squads.

Harvey Cox, Globe 11/19/89

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Boston Sunday Globe

Founded 1872

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The Salvador subsidy

For 10 bloody years, the United States has paid for the bullets, guns and bombs that have fueled the civil war in El Salvador. The murder of the Jesuit priests and the deaths of scores of other innocents in the latest fighting are proof that US policy has failed. It is time for the military aid to end.

The US never had a legitimate interest in the outcome of the war. US aid began under President Carter to prevent the emergence of a left-wing government, an obsolete fear today. In El Salvador, a Marxist regime could not have been worse than the bumbling politicians who fronted for the army for the past 10 years.

In the early 1980s, US aid continued even as the death squads' slaughter was at its height. US officials were finally able to get the killers to let up, but only after 50,000 had died, the cities had been purged of a vibrant opposition, and the war had been confined to the countryside.

But now the war has returned to the cities, and with it the death squads. The Bush adminis-

tration's answer is to feign shock at the priests' murder and to speed up the shipments of arms already earmarked for the Salvadoran army.

Defenders of military aid say that it gives US officials the leverage to restrain the murderers in the army and the police. That view has been refuted by the deaths of the priests. A decade of threats and pleadings by US officials has resulted in the arrest of a handful of underlings. As long as the paymasters of the death squads remain at large, these killers will pose a threat to Salvadoran society.

Because of its deep involvement in the war, the US cannot wash its hands of the fate of El Salvador. A continuation of nonmilitary aid, which at \$297 million a year prevents economic collapse, would allow US policy makers to influence events there peacefully.

Eyewitnesses said the Jesuits' killers wore army uniforms and fired army-issue rifles, no doubt paid for with US aid. It is time the US stopped subsidizing murder.

Massacre in El Salvador

No message sent to Americans could be clearer than the savage murder of the Jesuit priests who headed El Salvador's Central American University. Salvador's right wing has set out to blow up the bridges, the human bridges, that could lead to peace.

The extremists who control the armed forces and block whatever moderate impulses may exist in President Alfredo Cristiani's government (and help themselves to US aid money) are now clearly bent on wiping out the intellectual leaders of the center and the left. The six victims were among the few in El Salvador capable of charting the way to a political settlement.

The Bush administration's policy of propping up the Salvadoran government and hoping for a military victory is in moral and political collapse. What happened yesterday at the Central American University rivals any recent outrage on the international stage.

Among the slain priests were Ignacio Ellacuría, the rector of the university; Segundo Montes, head of the human rights office; and Ignacio Martin-Baro, an eminent theologian. All but one of the priests were Spanish by birth, but they were Salvadoran in heart and soul.

For years, working under a rain of hate, they maintained the university as a sanctuary for scholarship. They not only nurtured "liberation theology" (a call for social consciousness and political action) but also did rigorous political analysis. Their intellect and courage made the university the top one in El Salvador and one of the best in the region.

Although the killers left no witnesses, few doubt who they are. The government radio, which is blacking out news of guerrilla battles, had broadcast calls Saturday for vigilante justice against church and political leaders. The hit men drove through the city in the middle of a curfew.

In its style, the massacre was typical of the death squads that are linked to the army, the po-

lice and the ultra-right-wing political factions. The murderers seldom tangle with guerrillas. They prefer to send 30 men with automatic weapons against priests in the middle of the night.

Nor is there doubt about why they did it. They have long fumed at the challenge to the status quo that they believe is stimulated by progressive priests.

The massacre was punishment for the offensive by the guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, which, whatever its tactical outcome, has established the FMLN as a force to be reckoned with — in war or in a peace settlement. More specifically, it was an effort to decapitate the peacemaking leadership. The killers communicated that intent with gruesome symbolism: they removed their victims' brains.

Americans cannot escape a share of responsibility. Similar outrages have been recurring for years. El Salvador would have had bloodshed even if the US were not propping up the government at \$1.5 million per day. But the refusal of the Reagan and Bush administrations to make a negotiated peace the object of US policy has prolonged the war.

When the FMLN guerrillas have offered a reasonable peace plan, President Bush has ignored it and Congress has played dumb. The right wing began terror attacks to quash the notion of *dialogo*. The rebels struck back last weekend and this week with a well-planned show of force.

As the priests are buried, Americans need to take a moment to consider the cost of their nation's misguided foreign policy. This tragedy must serve as a detonator, setting off a blast of opinion that will blow the administration and Congress out of their lethargy.

America is the sole backer of the government that makes these things happen. It is past time to tell El Salvador: No dialogue? No serious peace talks? Then, not a dollar more of aid.



City of Cambridge

15.

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 20, 1989

MAYOR VELLUCCI

- WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council joins the Salvadoran people, the Jesuit community and all people of conscience in mourning the loss and deploring the torture and murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, on the campus of the University of Central America in El Salvador; and
- WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council has continuously endorsed strategies and programs for peace, dialogue and an end to government repression of people and their organizations in El Salvador, which was the work of those Jesuit priests; and
- WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council has particularly supported peace and understanding between the people of Cambridge and El Salvador through its sister city relationship with San Jose Las Flores and through the work of its Peace Commission; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That the City of Cambridge, with and through its communities of faith, declare Sunday, December 3, 1989 a **"DAY OF CONSCIENCE AND ACTION FOR PEACE IN EL SALVADOR"** on this ninth anniversary of the rape and murder of four churchwomen and during this period of mourning for the slain priests of El Salvador; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Cambridge City Council calls upon our elected Senators and Congressman to end all military aid to and intervention in El Salvador so the people of that country can bury their dead, heal their wounded and create the society of their choice.

In City Council November 20, 1989.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

Order # 15 5-783

Mayor Vellicciore: declaring December 3,
1989 as "DAY OF CONSCIENCE AND ACTION
FOR PEACE IN EL SALVADOR".

In City Council,

November 20, 1989

*Order adopted
by 8 members*