

## El Salvador; as many as one million could die

The powderkeg to set off all of Central America is El Salvador. According to most press reports, the country has already entered a state of near civil war as a result of confrontation between armed extremists of both the right and left—both equally influenced by the Society of Jesus. In 1932, the Salvadorean Army crushed a peasant revolt by massacring 30,000 peasants in a few short months, and remained in power thereafter. That massacre, which has shaped the political and social environment of the country ever since, is nothing compared to the no-win, meat-grinder war which is now evolving. More comparable would be the chaotic violence of the Thirty Years War in Europe in the 17th century.

A Jan. 18 report in the Mexican daily *Uno Mas Uno* stated that the “taking of factories, closing of businesses, exodus of citizens, persecutions and murders are the order of the day” now in El Salvador. Foreign embassies have begun to evacuate their personnel from the country and expect to close down shortly.

The Republicans, however, maintain a united front. Ronald Reagan is designated national candidate by acclamation ... Reagan wins the election.

But when Reagan is installed in Washington, Mexico and Ottawa determine that their most vital national interests are threatened and that any and all tactics are legitimate. The fertile imagination of the Mexican Ambassador to the UN, Muñoz Ledo, promotes initiatives by virtue of which the Third World countries escalate complications, recriminations and demands against the United States government, paramilitary Chicano commandos financed by Mexican oil-pesos sabotage electricity centers, paralyze the agricultural activity of the Southwest and organize waves of hospital strikes ... Once and for all they hope to create the new world economic order to benefit the world community.

For his part, Reagan's government is inclined to resort to force and Connally prepares a massive and indiscriminate response justified by Kissinger's speeches on the balance of power ... Mexico and Canada secretly assure the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the international campaign against the U.S. will cease as soon as Reagan abandons the presidency. ... Reagan commits suicide....

It is only a question of time before the highly unstable Christian Democratic junta collapses. An estimated 100,000 people marched against the government Jan. 22 in the capital city. Gunfire between the “left” marchers and “right” opposition resulted in some 20 deaths and 80 wounded. Almost 150 churches across the country were seized by left activists immediately before the demonstration, timed to commemorate the 1932 massacre, along with 26 radio stations from which broadcasts calling for support were made by the activists. At the same time, accusations have been made that army units in the north of the country have launched a “mop-up campaign” indiscriminately killing peasants.

Each round feeds the next. El Salvador's ruling oligarchy, a small group of families (usually called the “14 families”) who control the vast majority of the country's largely agricultural economic activity, have used the military and an extensive paramilitary organization called “Orden” to defend their entrenched interests. Orden is exemplary of the state of the country. Comprising a network of some 10,000 members located in key positions (police, communications, etc.) in virtually every small town of the country, almost any form of opposition is identified—and killed.

El Salvador has also been a “left” Jesuit experimental playground for a number of years. Beginning in the early 1970s, Jesuit priests began the form of organization that still is one of their most effective means of expanding their influence throughout Latin America: the recruiting of “delegates of the word”—lay ministers whose job is only partially theological. Jesuit priests enter a poor area, identify the actual or potential leaders in the small town or commune, and target them for recruitment into the Jesuit-structure of “communities of the base,” a sort of T-group formation set up to “raise the consciousness” of the community about its condition. Then while the Jesuit priest moves on to another area, the delegate of the word remains to carry on the work. In places like El Salvador where no form of organization has been tolerated for years, the Jesuits, using their “church” roles as cover, have frequently established sole control over backward peasant layers in different regions of the country.

The leadership of almost the entirety of the “left” guerrilla groups, as well as their legal “front” groups in El Salvador, were either directly formed by Jesuits, or evolved from the initial groups established by “delegates of the word” beginning in the 1970s. These are the guerrilla groups which stated at the end of 1979 that since they are unable to militarily defeat the Salvadorean military and paramilitary apparatus, their adopted strategy now is to destroy the economy as extensively as possible—seizing factories, burning crops.

Estimates are that in a civil war in El Salvador now, an estimated 500,000 to 1 million people will die.