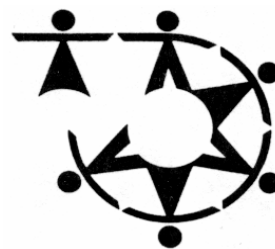


THE

MUSTARD SEED



Denver Justice & Peace Committee

Celebrating 26 years of peace and justice!

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Commemorating the Life & Death of Archbishop Oscar Romero

By Alexandra Burke, Events Intern



DJPC in conjunction with Regis University's Romero House held a solidarity walk and dinner celebration to commemorate the life and death of Archbishop Oscar Romero on March 27th. The walk was held in silence with

visualize Oscar Romero as they work to bring peace and justice to this troubled world."

DJPC board member Jeremy Lee stated, "The Romero commemoration was a much needed experience for me. Often, it is hard to take time to really reflect on historical events of such amplitude and think of the implications of those past events on contemporary issues today. In this case, Romero's assassination, although a tragic event in many ways, has been the fuel for many to keep standing up for what is right. We must not compromise our ideals in the face of adversity but we must always stand for what is right and just. Taking the time to walk with friends and strangers of all ages to focus on this and honor Father Romero was a wonderful experience."

Brendan McCrann of Romero House shared these thoughts with us, "My experience of this year's Oscar Romero Solidarity Walk, commemorating the life of Romero 26 years after his death, was marked by connection. Our walk from Regis University to Romero House connected students with the greater community. Our reflection connected Romero's message to current struggles to address immigration and foreign economic policy. The experience allowed us to grow in our own solidarity with one another while reflecting on the solidarity of Romero's life."

DJPC would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our hosts at Romero House and to all those who participated in this year's commemoration.

reflections read on Romero's life and purpose, the current immigration debate, and the impact of free trade on El Salvador and Central America. The two and a half mile walk began at Regis University's Student Center and ended at the Romero House. Dinner featuring Central American cuisine prepared by the students and an informative and enlightening period of fellowship and exchange capped the evening.

CAMINOS member Tommy Timm reflected on the experience, "Making the solemn walk through the Highlands neighborhood offered me the opportunity to think about the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero, his tragic assassination and the symbol of hope he was to the poor of El Salvador and to those who work for justice all over world. It was wonderful to walk in solidarity with people of so many different ages who

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Justice and Peace Committee is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America through education, solidarity projects and nonviolent activism.

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Thanks to everyone who continues to help out in the office, with program development, fundraising, newsletter publication, mailings and website. We couldn't do it without you!

Message From the Board

By Jeremy Lee

After having spent two magnificent years in the high Andes of Ecuador as Peace Corps volunteers, my wife and I came home to family and friends full of plans for the future. Our plans included more education, buying a home, getting a dog, and more. Amongst these plans, another thing that was extremely important to me was to maintain the deep connections with our friends in Ecuador and find avenues to be an active participant in social change in Latin America. For the latter, I am lucky to say that I found DJPC.

In an on-line search to find organizations with missions rooted in social justice in Latin America, I came across the DJPC website. I called immediately, set up a meeting with Kareen Erbe, and in no time started volunteering. That was in early 2004. Since then, I have extremely enjoyed the work I have been able to contribute. Through it, I have filled an inner need to be an activist for a place and people I so deeply care about. As a bonus, I have had the good fortune of getting to know the people actively involved in DJPC and I absolutely cherish the friendships I have made. To share a passion and work together toward making the world a better place is nothing short of noble, and many of those DJPC members (you know who you are) that put all their heart and mind into it have truly inspired me. I urge you to keep doing so

Only a few months ago, I entered my new role with DJPC as a board member. The opportunity has given me pause to reflect on the DJPC mission, and how I can use my skills and talents to help achieve the mission. Currently, as a result of the U.S. focus on the war on terrorism, public attention has been diverted from Latin America, and an unacceptable level of resources flow to fight the war in Iraq. Without question, Latin America is neglected by the current administration. U.S. policy toward Latin America continues to push free trade agreements and is draped in an agenda of anti-cocaine and anti-terrorism, while the poor people of Latin America continue to be adversely affected, and high national poverty rates of 45-65% are sustained.

DJPC believes that by pursuing its mission of promoting human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America through education, solidarity projects and nonviolent activism that change can and will take place. Given the evidence, it is clear to me that DJPC is directing its efforts toward work that must be done. DJPC must be a voice for the people of Latin America. It must raise awareness and create concern among our population that will eventually lead to action aimed at changing U.S. policy.

I am proud to be on the board of an organization that does this work and I only hope that my contribution, even in the smallest way, will somehow positively impact the lives of our brothers and sisters in Latin America. So you see, my reflection cleared things up for me. Now, I hope all of you reading this will also make time to reflect. Please know that to keep doing this work, DJPC needs your support.

In Remembrance of Ruth Bull

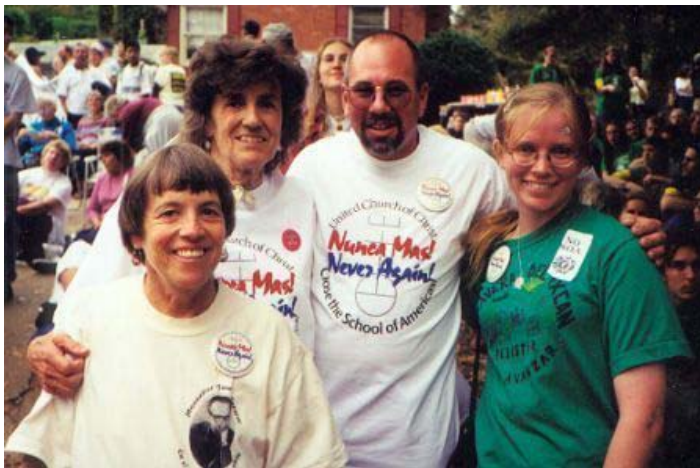
By Kathryn Rodriguez

Longtime DJPC member and ardent supporter Ruth Bull died April 11th after several years of declining health.

Ruth, a retired social worker, was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. For nearly 20 years, she worked zealously for human rights issues in Central America. One of my first memories of Ruth was her calling for volunteers to re-elect David Skaggs to the U.S. House so there would be a chance to defeat support for the Contras in Nicaragua. Then it was on to the handing out flyers to urge stores not purchase Folger's coffee until they included beans from El Salvador in their blend.

Ruth was a DJPC board member for many years and a tireless volunteer in the office. She was also a generous supporter of DJPC, helping to keep the organization afloat during some rough times. In 2000, Ruth was awarded the John Proctor Award for all her dedicated service to the organization. Ruth was also active in the Washington Park UCC's Guatemala group which has a relationship with a Mayan women's group in Guatemala where she traveled several times. She was a role model for putting her faith and values into action. She will be greatly missed in DJPC circles.

I was touched by the request from Ruth's children that memorial gifts be made to DJPC in their mother's name. That, in itself, is a fitting tribute to Ruth.



Ruth Bull (second from left) with friends and long time DJPC supporters Kathryn Rodriguez, Ralph Larson and former CAMINOS accompanier Ali Durban at the SOA Watch Protest at Ft. Benning, Georgia in 1999.

DJPC: A Community Treasure

By Ruth Bull

The following is a reprint of the article authored by Ruth for the November 2000 issue of *The Mustard Seed*.

As I prepare to go for the third time to protest at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (S.O.A.) in Georgia, I reflect on some of the more effective protests I've experienced. What type of protests are more likely to win broad support, or to educate the public by actually demonstrating the principles of the organizations and the people involved? At the gates of Ft. Benning, the protest emphasis is placed on a dignified and non hostile, non provocative presence.

Over the years, this consistency has led to increasingly broad participation and support for the effort to close the S.O.A. The conviction of participants can't be missed in the stories told of by the victims of "well trained" School graduates.

The Denver Justice and Peace Committee has historically relied on a non-denominational core of church affiliated people who resonate with non-violent principles. It is what keeps me loyal to DJPC. I count on this organization to filter out the more questionable, or less timely activities that may be counterproductive in the long haul, such as those that may encourage property damage and name calling.

Our job in the public arena, is to bring light to issues of social injustice. We seek to inform people and effect policy. Hostile approaches, in my experience, do not win converts. A dignified presentation of facts may...although maybe not without a little old fashioned civil disobedience and non cooperation.

As protests against the policies of the World Bank and the WTO become more virulent and the debate more coded and deceptive, I thank God for the vigilance of DJPC. As with efforts to close the School of the America's, I will count on DJPC to help us stay on the most effective path. I regard it to be a community treasure.



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Not All of Latin America Has Made a Left-hand Turn

By Harriet Mullaney

The spate of election results in South America appears to predicate a turn to the left for the region. That is not necessarily true for Central America, however, as the recent elections in El Salvador bore out. On Sunday, March 12, the 52.5% of Salvadorans who voted favored candidates from the right in municipal and legislative elections.

On a percentage basis, approximately 75% of the country's 262 municipalities elected right-leaning parties, although control of the country's largest cities remained in the hands of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN), the major leftist party. The closest municipal race occurred in San Salvador where Violeta Menjivar (FMLN) won by 59 votes. For seats in the Legislative Assembly, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) edged out the FMLN 34-32. However, the real winners may have been the National Coalition Party (PCN) and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) winning 10 and 6 seats, respectively, because they will be in the position of being able to broker their votes to give either of the larger parties the majority needed to pass legislation. Both of these parties are aligned with the right and have had past affiliations with the military.

I participated in these elections as an international observer through El Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS) as I had for the presidential elections in 2004. The localization of these elections made for some differences. In 2004, intimidation and fear mongering were palpable throughout the country—much of this provoked by U.S. officials and members of Congress who threatened the transmission of *remesas* (financial remittances) and the visa status of documented Salvadorans should Schafik Handal, the FMLN candidate, have won. In this election, remittances were not an issue, President Tony Saca (ARENA) had just negotiated an extension of Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for Salvadorans in the U.S., and the Central America Free Trade Act (CAFTA) had been implemented by El Salvador on March 1.

Two years ago, rumors of vote buying by ARENA were rampant although we never saw it directly. This year, similar stories persisted but were less numerous. However, votes can be garnered more subtly through means of free lunches, t-shirts, rides, etc. I was an observer in the municipality of Ilobasco in the Department of Cabañas, the poorest of El Salvador's 14 departments. ARENA members proudly showed us their lunch brigade where 15,000 lunches were being prepared for distribution on voting day! A nice lunch and a free ride into town are worth a lot when you have next to nothing as is true for so many of the *campesinos*.

In the last election, there was considerable violence in the months leading up to the vote. This year, I believe this was minimized although San Salvador saw violent street demonstrations while waiting for the announcement of the winner in its municipal race. It was not until 2 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, March 16, that Dr. Menjivar was declared the victor.

El Salvador has a detailed Electoral Code which is disregarded by those in power when it proves to be inconvenient. A few major transgressions that occurred this year are note-worthy:

- ◆ Prior to the elections, the minority parties did not have access to the National Registry of Citizens, which hampered the get-out-the-vote efforts of all but the ARENA party.
- ◆ Both ARENA and PCN appeared to employ the practice of *traslado de votos*, wherein people "change" their residency with only the verification of a party member required in order to affect the outcome of a local election other than where they actually live.
- ◆ The continuation of PCN and PDC: Under Salvadoran law, a party loses its legal status if it fails to get 3% of the national vote. Both PCN and PDC failed to achieve 3% of the vote in 2004, but were reinstated in a legislative decree passed by ARENA, PCN and PDC!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Nicole VanVeen, Legislative intern

IMMIGRATION

Perhaps the hottest topic brewing in the country right now is immigration. It is not just contained within the Congress as the debates have spilled over into public protests and mass demonstrations. President Bush is pushing strongly for a guest worker program, which has divided Congress and members of his own party, among others.

There are a multitude of bills before Congress surrounding immigration. H.R. 4437, promoted by Rep. Sensenbrenner, was passed in the House of Representatives in December. This bill requires the mandatory detention of all undocumented aliens and makes illegal presence in the country a felony, among other stipulations, but it does not address President Bush's guest worker program. At the time of this writing, there were two key bills in debate before the Senate. The first bill (S. 1033) comes from Senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy (co-sponsored by Senator Ken Salazar and others) and would allow unauthorized aliens in the country before 2004 to continue working legally if they pay a fine and back taxes as well as pass a background check. It would also create a guest worker program. The second Senate bill (S. 2454) comes from Majority Leader Bill Frist. Most notably Senator Frist's bill creates penalties for those employing unauthorized aliens, increases the number of visas, and applies criminal penalties to any person who entered the country through illegal means. It does not address a guest worker program.

You can influence the debate and the outcome of this legislation by contacting your Senators to tell them how you feel about such immigration bills. You can stay current on these and other bills by visiting thomas.loc.gov. You can also find more information about immigration by visiting www.afsc.org.

Free Trade Agreements

On December 7, 2005, Peru and the United States struck a free trade deal after several attempts to negotiate the Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) with Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador failed. (Bolivia participated in the negotiations as an observer). Predictably, AFTA is modeled after its two contentious predecessor free trade agreements, NAFTA and CAFTA.

Given growing opposition to multi-lateral trade agreements, the U.S. has been employing a strategy of engaging in bi-lateral agreements. In reaching this deal, there was concern that the U.S. would use the agreement to create the fear that Peru would receive preferential access to U.S. markets. This tactic would then encourage other Andean nations to sign onto the agreement as well, so as not to lose this access. This fear seemed to be well founded as the U.S. struck its next free trade agreement with Colombia on February 27th.

The White House has declared its intent to put the agreement with Peru before Congress, but has not yet done so. There is some indication that a vote could take place as early as this spring. Currently the agreements with Peru and Colombia remain separate, but they could potentially be joined together and submitted to Congress.

There is still time to contact Colorado legislators and ask them not to support these free trade deals. Please contact them today! **For contact information and updates on other issues, please visit: www.denjustpeace.org/legislativeadv.html**

For more information on the Advocacy & Nonviolent Activism Committee and to get involved, please contact Kara Martinez (kara@denjustpeace.org).

Challenges to Revitalizing Trade: The Gap between Trade Principles and Practice *By Catherine Raveczky*

While the hemispheric trade talks on the Free Trade Act of the Americas (FTAA) are stalled, making regional agreements such as CAFTA (Central America), NAFTA (North America) and AFTA (Andean) more important for the Bush Administration, global trade efforts are seeing similar obstacles. The FTAA's failure to reach agreement in areas of agricultural subsidies and U.S. protectionist practices mirrors the contentious round of trade liberalization that began in the late 1990s in the World Trade Organization (WTO). At the heart of trade disputes are agricultural subsidies, protectionist barriers and rules governing intellectual property rights.

Free trade agreements bind developing countries to policies which eliminate subsidies to vulnerable sectors of their economy such as agriculture. In contrast, developed countries continue to subsidize their agro-industries by nearly \$257 billion a year. The U.S. is a stellar example: Guilty of violating rules it expects countries like Mexico to follow, the U.S. provides subsidies large enough that its cotton farmers are able to export cotton at between 35% - 47% of the cost of production. Even though the WTO has ruled American subsidies to be illegal, Oxfam found these supports actually have increased since 2001. In addition, reluctant to anger its pharmaceutical industry, the U.S. (following WTO rules that grant a 20-year patent on new drugs) has refused to allow developing countries to produce cheap, generic copies of patented drugs for life threatening illnesses. It is policies such as these that have stalled global trade talks and galvanized poor countries to pressure for reform of WTO regulations.

Ministerial trade meetings in Seattle in 1999, Doha in 2001, Cancun in 2003 and Hong Kong in 2005 have proven that the ability to secure a comprehensive trade deal with the nearly 150 countries participating in the WTO is falling flat. The greatest challenges come from the lack of political will in powerful countries such as the

European Union (E.U.) and the U.S. to playing by their own rules. These countries want less powerful countries to follow free trade rules (e.g. opening up their markets to imported goods, and significantly reducing subsidies to their farmers), yet want to protect some of their own industries through tariffs, (e.g. lumber), and continue subsidies for their large agro industries. The Doha Round trade talks, which followed the debacle in Seattle, was an attempt to address contentious issues such as agriculture. Poor countries were promised a development round in the Doha talks, which was supposed to lead developed countries to make a concerted effort to cut subsidies and change rules governing intellectual property rights.

Disillusionment with the E.U. and the U.S.'s unwillingness to play by their own rules caused a break down in the Cancun talks, leading developed countries to walk out. Protesting what is seen as a double standard, Oxfam reports that poor countries are challenging the "gap between the free trade principles espoused by rich counties and their actual protectionist practices." Last December's ministerial in Hong Kong was an attempt to resuscitate global trade talks.

The December 2005, meetings in Hong Kong were also inconclusive as protectionist sentiment is high in both the U.S. and the E.U. Although the G6 (the U.S., E.U., Japan, Australia, India and Brazil) met last month hoping to break the stalemate on trade liberalization, the E.U. and the U.S. are still refusing to make any meaningful reform to their system of export subsidies and farm payments. The World Bank estimates that, under the current trade model, "70% of gains from free trade will go to rich countries and they will get 25 times as much per head as poor countries." As the gap widens between free trade principles and practice, so too does the gap widen between those who benefit from these policies and those who are marginalized. If global trade talks are to be taken seriously, integrity and a genuine effort to address the needs of the world's poor must also be a part of these agreements.





GSTV Update

By Daniel Lopez, GSTV Coordinator

The Global Solutions to Violence program is sprouting wings!! After three years of providing almost 200 workshops to over 4,000 Denver-area high school students—while supporting teachers in their ongoing efforts to bring topics of global importance into their classrooms—we are now exploring ways to expand and solidify our impact. Starting in fall 2006, GSTV will no longer operate exclusively under the DJPC umbrella. Like a mother bird who wants to see its offspring fly free, we are gently being nudged “out of the nest.” Admittedly, any change produces anxiety, but also a certain amount of excitement about the wonderful possibilities that lie ahead. This will test GSTV’s long-term momentum and sustainability, but if our past is any indication, we are definitely up for the challenge!!

A collaboration with Amnesty International’s ACTIVATE program is currently being pursued. For those not familiar with this initiative of one of the world’s largest human rights organizations, ACTIVATE is a program that provides training and materials for college students who are interested in using human rights education as a means of empowerment and activism within local high schools. The program began in 1997 as a way for Amnesty to work with urban high school students to discuss and analyze human rights issues on local, national and international levels. The program currently operates in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Youngstown, Ohio. Expansion efforts are currently underway in Detroit, Milwaukee, Manketo, Minnesota, Los Angeles...and now Denver!!

A 1997 survey conducted for Human Rights USA indicated that 92% of people in this country had never heard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a telling statistic, especially considering that this historic document was created in the aftermath of one of the 20th century’s defining events: the Holocaust. We want our leaders of tomorrow to have a sense of civic responsibility in order to make positive social change, but it appears that we often do not give them the tools required, including an understanding of human rights and the effects of globalization. GSTV has provided a local response to this challenge—and our partnership with ACTIVATE will enhance our ability to continue this valuable work in Colorado’s classrooms.

ACTIVATE and GSTV were both designed to have the greatest possible impact in an overburdened, under-funded public educational system. Indeed, the benefits of such programs are many: university student educators receive twice as much hands-on teaching experience as the average education student; high school teachers receive additional resources; and their students are able to interact and learn from positive role models.

The objectives of the ACTIVATE program are very much in line with GSTV’s. These include:

- Providing high school students with a supplemental education in human rights;
- Supporting the emergence of civic-minded student leaders;
- Providing a hands-on opportunity for future teachers to develop educator skills;
- Increasing knowledge of human rights among students, teachers and the community;
- Fostering partnerships between area universities, high schools, and the community.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, *“Universal rights begin in small places, close to home – they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school he attends...Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.”* With this as a guiding principle, we hope to successfully blend GSTV with ACTIVATE in order to influence the educational experiences of students and teachers alike in diverse communities around Colorado. ¡Sí, se puede!

If you would like to learn more about GSTV and/or ACTIVATE, or get personally involved in making this worthwhile endeavor become a reality, please contact Daniel Lopez (Daniel@denjustpeace.org).

CAMINOS Update

By Sarah Sloane

Nearly ten years old, CAMINOS continues to sponsor human rights companions who “walk with” witnesses of genocide, murder, and other atrocities so that their perpetrators might be brought to justice. Specifically, CAMINOS supports Ixil and K’iche Mayan populations who survived the brutal “scorched earth” policies and atrocities through our sponsorship of trained observers such as our next companion, Jordan Buckley. Through the efforts of observers like Jordan, CAMINOS contributes to ending government and military impunity.

Jordan will be going to the Guatemalan Highlands in July to live with a Mayan community for six months. Jordan, a recent graduate of University of Texas, has an impressive resume of activist work: he helped organize a student alliance with migrant farm workers in Florida; worked to protect endangered species in the Blue Mountains; collected and distributed books for Texas prisoners; drew political cartoons and wrote a weekly column for *The Daily Texan*; organized successful boycotts of Austin Taco Bell and Sodexo-Marrriott; and has mounted successful recycling campaigns just about everywhere he has lived. We will support Jordan throughout his experience and have every confidence that he will make a wonderful contribution.

CAMINOS also supports PROMESA, a partnership among CAMINOS, the St. Michael’s Guatemala Project in Tucson, and the CPR (Communities of Population in Resistance) in Guatemala. PROMESA’s primary objective is to improve health care in the community of Tesorito, Suchitepequez, a community of 136 indigenous Mayan families resettled in 1998. Their health needs range from anemia to AIDS, with the majority of cases related to childbirth emergencies, diarrhea, skin infections and abscesses, parasites, and malaria. (Three new cases of malaria are diagnosed every month.) Malnutrition is also a serious concern. We help with transportation for sick people who cannot be treated locally; for health workers’ training; and for medicine and low-tech medical supplies. We have raised an additional \$600 this year to help counter the effects of Hurricane Stan on local crops, livestock, and people. St. Michael’s Guatemala Project in Tucson is planning a series of summer delegation visits to rural Mayan communities. For more information, or to join one of these delegations, contact Project Coordinator Ila Abernathy, ilaa@mindspring.com



Finally, we are in the first stages of planning a DJPC winter delegation to Tesorito in January/February of 2007 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Peace Accords, as well as the tenth anniversary of the founding of CAMINOS. Interested parties should contact Jane Covode or Kathryn Rodriguez, Trip Coordinators (jcovode@central.com or klrodriguez@comcast.net).

We look forward to renewing our connections with Tesorito as well as renewing our commitment to “walk with” the people of these small Mayan communities in rural Guatemala.

Health Team leader Pedro (center) with patients holding Project medicines, clinic, Caba, Ixil Area, CPR-Sierra. Photo by Sarah Roberts, R.N., 2005.

For a more detailed account of CAMINOS’ work and the current situation in Guatemala, please visit www.denjustpeace.org/solidarityproj.html

Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam & the Pentagon Papers

Reviewed by Richard Kruch

Written by Daniel Ellsberg

Published by Penguin Books`

Daniel Ellsberg left two deep foot prints in the annals of American political and cultural history, making his memoirs more pertinent today than ever. Finding himself in the unique position of monitoring all top secret information relevant to Viet Nam in the 1960's only served to validate Ellsberg's growing conviction that his country was politically and morally wrong to be at war in Southeast Asia. With both feet in the circle of war and peace, activists committed to stopping the war demonstrated to Ellsberg how one could "cast your whole vote." It was not enough to just vote for a politician who pledged to end a bad war. In order to affect the full capacity of his own vote, Daniel Ellsberg felt compelled to release the top secret "Pentagon Papers".

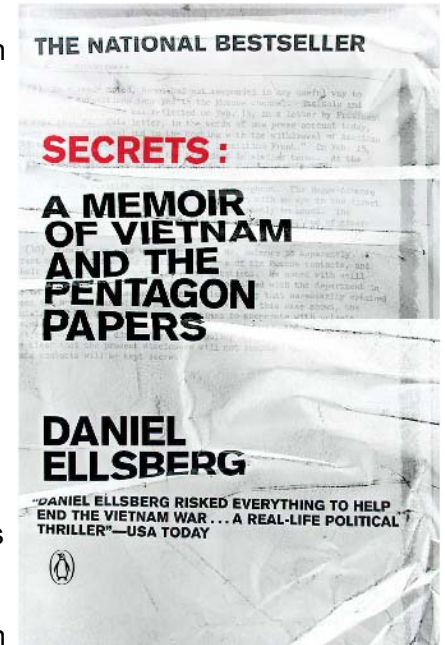
Howard Zinn writes of the book, *SECRETS: A MEMOIR OF VIETNAM AND THE PENTAGON PAPERS*, "Daniel Ellsberg has waited 30 years to tell his story. It was worth the wait." I came upon this 2003 publication and was immediately attracted to it while at the same time fighting back a wave of reluctance to open again what for was for me an old and ugly wound. Zinn is right.

Ellsberg had been in the privileged position of knowing in the most certain of terms what was really going on, who was telling the truth and who was lying. Reading this journal, the old activist in me became absorbed and then stunned by the realization that former President Lyndon Johnson made the decision not to be "the first American president to lose a war." Johnson gave the order to find "intelligence" to support his decision to go to war, even though the preponderance of secret information pointed in the opposite direction. Later, Richard Nixon would choose to follow suit. The parallels to the Iraq war and the current president are unavoidable.

If there was a part of me naïve enough to hope that a change of party is what is needed to rectify the preemptive "Bush Doctrine" and move away from war in order to focus on the true issues of consequence in these troubled times, after reading *SECRETS*, all illusions are deflated. It is not possible to read about the courageous effort of Senator Gravel of Alaska on the evening of June 30th, 1971, calling a special committee meeting in order to read the "Pentagon Papers" into the

Congressional Record, without the support of a single Republican or Democratic senator, and miss the parallel to Senator Feingold of Wisconsin and his failure to garner one vote in favor of the effort to censure President Bush for his unlawful order to wire tap American citizens.

The challenge we face as Americans will not be met without a commitment to become well informed. It was Ellsberg's reading of the historical context of the Viet Nam struggle for independence throughout the 1940's and 50's that brought him to know the rightness of what he then "had to do." *SECRETS* takes us a long way down the path to exposing the method and intent of today's military madness as well as the very fabric of the right and wrong reasons to make war. Ellsberg takes us to the roots of our current paradox, but still more insight is needed to fully appreciate the gravity of our current situation. Please let me recommend one more resource to compliment this search for understanding.



(Continued on next page)

(Secrets, Continued from page 10)

Steven Kinzer, like Daniel Ellsberg, has been a champion of truth in revealing the reality of attempts by the U.S. at empire building. Kinzer's writings are profoundly relevant to these discussions. His newest book, *OVERTHROW: AMERICA'S CENTURY OF REGIME CHANGE FROM HAWAII TO IRAQ* (2006), reviews more than a dozen U.S. military incursions into sovereign nations, exposing patterns of exploitation and abuse of power that typify recent attempts to secure hegemony in Central Asia and the Middle East. Kinzer's 2004 publication, *ALL THE SHAH'S MEN: AN AMERICAN COUP AND THE ROOTS OF MIDDLE EAST TERROR*, is a beautifully written, historically provocative account of the CIA's overthrow of Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, in 1953. It truly is a "must read." Kinzer's initial effort, *BITTER FRUIT: THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN COUP IN GUATEMALA* (1982, rev. 2005), tells the story of the CIA's move from Iran to Guatemala to overthrow the democratically elected Arbenz government a year later in 1954, giving rise to 36 years of civil war. I cannot recommend these readings highly enough. If there is interest to explore this history further, please contact DJPC to express your concern.



(Left Turn, Continued from page 5)

Perhaps the most controversial matter centered on the role played by President Saca, also the head of ARENA. Saca plainly stated that his work schedule as a public functionary was from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (The report I read did not specify Monday through Friday, but one might assume this.) At the end of his work day, he felt that he could work on behalf of his party, even though this activity by a President is a direct violation of the Electoral Code. And so, Tony Saca's face appeared on numerous billboards with campaign-like slogans, and his voice was heard by many voters (and election observers who just happened to answer the phone!) when taped messages were auto-dialed to registered voters (on the National Registry cited above). He accompanied candidates and told the crowds that "a vote for ARENA is a vote for Tony Saca".



Ballot boxes on Election Day in El Salvador.

More troubling was Saca's announcement that the military would be called out to watch the elections, another violation of the Electoral Code as providing electoral security is the specific responsibility of the Civilian National Police. As it was, the military were present in many municipalities but without incident. In Ilobasco, we saw members of the military in the voting center the night before the election, and before the polls opened and after they closed on election day. In a country whose memory of civil war is still so fresh, the very sight of the military induces fear.

The elections must be considered in the context of El Salvador's political, economic and social realities. Terms like "the gap between the rich and the poor" and "economic polarization" have long been standard descriptors of the economic condition. I was struck on this visit by the very common usage of "exclusionary economy" and "structural unemployment" to describe the increased severity of the economic breach. The privatization of public services conditioned under the Structural Adjustment Programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in recent years have placed a terrible toll on the majority of Salvadorans. For example, electricity rates have increased 350% and telephone, 1300%, according to Dr. Raúl Moreno, professor of economics at the University of El Salvador. The implementation of CAFTA beckons the privatization of water, something which is being adamantly contested. In fact, "privatization" has become such a contentious word that it is being phased out in favor of "concessioning".

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(Left Turn., Continued from page 11)

The ARENA government masks the truth of the Salvadoran economy. The gross national product has hovered at 2% for years and is falling. Economists generally say that 5% growth over a sustained number of years is required to break the chains of poverty. In a nation where the richest 20% control 58.3% of the national income, while the poorest 20% control only 2.4%, it will be a long time before change can occur if the course is not redirected. Migration is the country's economic safety valve. Seven hundred people are estimated to leave El Salvador *daily*. It is ironic that those who have been excluded from meaningful participation in the economy end up being its salvation. Salvadoran emigrants, the majority of whom are in the U.S., last year sent back close to \$3 billion in *remesas*, making these payments the #1 generator of income. (El Salvador adopted the dollar as its currency in 2001, a move that disproportionately benefited the richest.) Over the last few years, there has been a significant increase in violent crime despite punitive measures taken by the government. On average, ten homicides occur each day. According to the United Nations Development Program, in 2003 the financial cost of this level of violence was \$1.7 billion or 11.5% of the gross domestic product, almost twice what was allocated for education and health combined.

Lastly, the "militarization" of the Civilian National Police (apparent at first glance of its officers) and the preponderance of former military in private security companies are of major concern. With the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, the military was reduced from 60,000 to 15,000. While by now many have passed away, it is commonly known that most of the remaining 45,000 form the core of the growing private security industry. As crime statistics and increased gang presence indicate, El Salvador is still not a safe place.

In the end, what did I make of these elections? As in 2004, the process was marred by blatant infractions of the rules by ARENA. Their stranglehold on power seems almost impenetrable, although they will have to form coalitions with PCN and PDC in order to pass legislation in the Assembly. The FMLN's future is more uncertain. The loss of the presidency two years ago after stellar results in the municipal and legislative elections the year before was difficult. The unexpected death of Shafik Handal on January 24 served to invigorate the party faithful in advance of these elections but ultimately made clear the leadership void. The FMLN has to decide if it will retain its "radical" course or modify (or appear to modify) it. Either way, it is challenged to communicate clearly and effectively its platform in order to regain ground. The presidential, legislative and municipal elections in 2009 will be critical in charting the course of national policy into the next decade. May the voice of the people be heard.

To learn more about the election observation experience, visit: <http://eselections.blogspot.com>, and to read CIS' election report, see: www.cis-elsalvador.org.



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