3 Human Rights and Civic Foreign Policy, 1973-1980

While development was the main foreign policy issue regarding Latin America in the 1960s, questions of human rights[122] became the focus of attention in major parts of the religious communities of both Americas since 1973. The peculiarity of the human rights interest of church circles in the 1970s is not so much their renewed concern and formulation of a theological position on human rights but their public appearance and pressure. Religious organizations and denominations moved as visible foreign policy players into the public sphere and became active participants in public policy debates on Latin America in Washington. Political scientist Lowell Livezey reaches the conclusion that "nothing has been more important than the increasing role of the US religious community" in the NGO human rights movement since the Vietnam War.[123] By the end of the decade, the human rights movement had not only "an extremely sophisticated understanding of the decision-making process" in regards to foreign policy.[124] It was also relatively successful in influencing Congress' human rights policy.[125]

This chapter analyzes the politics and policies of a "coalition" of religious interest groups regarding U.S. foreign policy and human rights in Latin America between 1973 and 1980. It will look into the theological, political, and social context, which spurred civic foreign policy in the United States on behalf of human rights in Latin America. The institutional history of those religious interest groups that were created during the era will be outlined. The background history of those faith-based lobbying groups is important because it sheds light on the reasons and functioning of civic foreign policy toward Latin America. The groups' activities will be placed into the changing context of

[122] Here, human rights is defined broadly according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 that includes the set of so-called civil and political rights, and another set concerned with economic, social, and cultural rights. Among others, the rights include such principles as the right to life, liberty, and security of person, the right to freedom of conscience, religion, opinion, association, and assembly, to freedom from arbitrary arrest, to a fair and impartial trial, to a secure society and an adequate standard of living. The declaration also affirms the rights of every person to own property, to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, to work under favorable conditions, receive equal pay for equal work, and join labor unions at will, to participate in government and in the social life of the community. In the context of this study, the security of the person and his/her freedom from arbitrary arrest and torture were the most urgent rights discussed and claimed. Furthermore, the religious human rights network focused on freedom of opinion and religion and referred to certain social (adequate standard of living) and participatory rights.

[123] Livezey, "US Religious Organizations," 14. In *Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America*, Lars Schoultz stresses the central role of the religious groups within the U.S. human rights movement. See pp. 74ff., especially p. 86.

[124] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 105.

[125] See ibid., 105-108; Philip L. Ray and J. Sherrod Taylor, "The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Implementing Human Rights in Latin America," in *Georgia Journal of International and*

the U.S. government's human rights policy toward Latin America during the 1970s. Goals and means of the religious groups' activities will be explored in detail by taking a look at events in Central America, in particular in El Salvador in the late 1970s.

3.1 The Social and Political Context

3.1.1 The Theological Context

A notable theological interest in human rights on the side of the Christian community is of fairly recent origin.[126] Regarding the historical and often fierce opposition of the Roman Catholic Church against the democratic-republican revolutions of the 18th century and the principles of political liberalism, David Hollenbach, a scholar of Catholic teaching and theology, calls the recent development within contemporary Roman Catholicism "remarkable" and "astonishing."[127] The Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s and the Conference of Latin American Catholic Bishops in Medellín, Colombia in 1968 are generally seen as the initiating events for the Catholic Church's concern about human rights. Other scholars, however, have pointed out the historical engagement of groups within the Church for human rights in the Americas, reaching as far back as the 16th century.[128] At times, the Church authority also called for a greater respect of human rights. Usually, these calls emphasized the Catholic Church's social doctrine, which (partially) reflects today's so-called social and economic human rights. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII for example issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in which he demanded an end to the exploitation of industrial workers.[129]

Like the Catholic Church, Protestant groups that comprise the World Council of Churches traditionally have had reservations against the secular law of human rights. Due to their own struggle from religious oppression, Protestantism's relationship to

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Comparative Law 7:477 (Summer 1977): 477-506, 498f.; David Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 127-153.

[126] For further discussion, see David Tracy, "Religion and Human Rights in the Public Realm," *Daedalus* 112:4 (1983): 237-254; Jürgen Moltmann, "Christlicher Glaube und Menschenrechte," in Eckehart Lorenz (ed.), *"...erkämpft das Menschenrecht." Wie christlich sind die Menschenrechte?* (Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1981), 15-35; David Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights: American Catholic Social Ethics in a Pluralist Context* (NY: Crossroad, 1988).

[127] Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights*, 87. See also Hans Maier who calls the Second Vatican Council's statement on religious freedom "ein epochemachendes Ereignis in der Geschichte der Kirche" (an epoch-making event in the history of the Church): Hans Maier, *Wie universal sind die Menschenrechte?* (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 65.

[128] Margaret Crahan emphasizes the Dominican and Franciscan friars' denouncement of the exploitation of Native Americans in the 16th century. Crahan, "Catholicism," 262-277.

[129] Dries, *Missionary Movement*, 28; Crahan, "Catholicism," 262.

human rights differs from the Catholic one. In the United States and Great Britain, Protestant churches contributed to the emergence of the rule of law and the institutionalization of the ideas of political liberalism.[130] Yet, the Protestants' drive for global mission demonstrates the other side of the historical coin. The Protestants' theoretical and practical historical record also varies greatly according to the community. The so-called peace churches, like the Quakers and the Mennonites, are for example known for their struggle against slavery in the United States.[131] The post-World War II years marked a turning point. The member churches of the World Council of Churches participated in the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations in 1948 and of the Covenants for Political and Civil and Social and Economic Rights of 1966.[132]

Similar to secular human rights groups, the Protestant and Catholic churches in the United States began to support human rights more emphatically in the 1960s, at least rhetorically. The NCC's statements on human rights between 1963 and 1974 reflected these theoretical shifts most resolutely. The first resolution on human rights by the NCC was pronounced on 6 December 1963.[133] It embraces the Universal Declaration of Human Rights supporting civil and political as well as social, economic, and cultural human rights.[134] The Roman Catholic Church interprets human rights as a manifestation of the traditional natural law doctrine. It maintains that "precisely because [the human being] is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable, so they cannot in any way be surrendered."[135] The Church's major addresses and documents that refer to human rights - *Gaudium et Spes, Pacem in Terris*, and *Populorem Progressio* - were all drafted in the 1960s. According to its natural law basis for rights, all rights requisite to the inherent dignity of persons are equally required. After Vatican II, the Church emphasized the interrelation of the civil and political rights on the one hand and

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[130] Heiner Bielefeldt, *Philosophie der Menschenrechte: Grundlagen eines weltweiten Freiheitsethos* (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 1998),189.

[131] The Catholic bishops in the United States did not take any position regarding slavery. Pope Gregory XVI, however, condemned the slave trade in 1839.

[132] Moltmann, "Christlicher Glaube,", 15.

[133] National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, "Human Rights," 6 December 1963.

[134] See National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, "Human Rights," 6 December 1963.

[135] *Pacem In Terris* (1963): Encyclical Letter Of Pope John XXIII On Establishing Universal Peace In Truth, Justice, Charity And Liberty on: http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/john.xxiii/j23pacem.txt (3 October 2000).

social and economic rights on the other hand.[136] The U.S. Catholic Church went along the lines of the Vatican. Both, the U.S. Catholic Church and the NCC have called for public support of U.S. ratification of the UN covenants on social and economic as well as civil and political rights.[137]

The fundamental difference of a Christian perception of human rights in comparison to secular declarations is the question of authority. According to the Christian teaching, every human being is made in the image of God; all rights are endowed by God. According to the NCC,

> Christians…[are] in deep concern for the dignity of man, and in profound respect for the unalienable rights with which he has been endowed by his Creator, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness….All men are God's creatures and have personal worth to him. All men, and Christians in a particular way, are responsible to God, to love him and serve him; to obey God as the Lord of the conscience; to regard other persons as their neighbors whom they should esteem and love as themselves.[138]

Furthermore, the commitment to social and economic rights distinguishes the mainline Protestant and Catholic denominations from "secular" human rights organizations such as Amnesty International or the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights.[139]

Within the respective church organizations, there was no consensus over how to achieve social and economic rights as well as universal justice. While at variance regarding the means, Margaret Crahan holds that there was an overall consensus in the Catholic Church "concerning the necessity of substantial change to accomplish its goal of peace, justice, and human rights."[140] The mainline Protestants were also struggling over the right application of their commitment to human rights. The NCC carried out public advocacy for human rights as well as social service programs that met subsistence rights such as food or shelter. Despite the NCC's affirmation of a right to food in 1976, its relief and refugee agency, Church World Service (CWS), did not explicitly link its humanitarian program of "human needs" with human rights. Yet, the very idea of humanitarian assistance such as refugee work and relief, disclose certain priorities of

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[136] Ibid. See also David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition* (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1979), 141.

[137] *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 3:9 (1978), 21.

[138] National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, "Human Rights," 6 December 1963. For the Catholic Church's assessment see *Pacem In Terris* (1963): Encyclical Letter Of Pope John XXIII On Establishing Universal Peace In Truth, Justice, Charity And Liberty on: http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/john.xxiii/j23pacem.txt (3 October 2000).

[139] Livezey, "US Religious Organizations," 70.

[140] Crahan, "Catholicism," 264.

religious organizations and their assessment "about what violations are most crucial and what victims are most worthy."[141]

If the change in the religious groups' human rights philosophy had basically taken place in the 1960s, what then was new about the religious community's interest in human rights in the 1970s? The new social involvement in the field of foreign policy regenerated theological principles of human rights. Human rights were not only promoted by cautious declarations but also by civic action. Human rights politics were altered.

3.1.2 The Latin American Context: The 1973 Coup in Chile

In September 1973, the Chilean military under the leadership of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte overthrew the democratically elected Socialist President Salvador Allende. The U.S. Christian community responded, at first slowly but with growing vigor to U.S. policy toward Chile. Three weeks after the coup in Chile, members of the U.S. religious community urged U.S. Congress to take action on behalf of human rights in Chile. Various main U.S. religious institutions officially and explicitly denounced human rights violations in Latin America. Five months after the coup the U.S. Catholic bishops issued a statement of "solidarity with the Church in Chile."[142] The NCC, the largest Christian ecumenical organization, published its concern about the human rights situation in Chile briefly after the coup and again in October 1974.[143] In a letter to Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees of the Judiciary Committee, the NCC stated that "[w]e…are concerned about the human rights of persons in Chile who, due to the recent overthrow of the Allende government, find themselves in extremely precarious conditions in that nation."[144] It called upon the U.S. government "to suspend further military assistance and economic aid to the

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[141] Livezey, "US Religious Organizations," 16.

[142] "Human Rights Violations in Chile," A Statement Issued by the Administrative Board of the United States Catholic Conference, 14 February 1974: in Hugh Nolan (ed.), *Pastoral Letters of the US Catholic Bishops* Vol. 3 (Washington DC: NCCB, 1984), 453. Apart from its resolution on the 25th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the statement was the first public position of the U.S. Catholic Church regarding the violations of human rights in other countries. The main criticism is not directed toward the military government of Chile but toward the policy of the U.S. government: "We are ...concerned that in the face of these violations our government is escalating its financial aid to the Chilean junta."

[143] "The Violation of Human Rights in Chile and the USSR," Resolution of the NCC, 14 October 1973; "Human Rights and United States Foreign Aid," Resolution of the NCC, 13 October 1974.

[144] Letter by the NCC to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, 27 September 1973, in: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugees and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 28 September 1973, 61.

governments of Brazil, Chile..."[145] According to the NCC, U.S. foreign policy was on a collision course with "the democratic ideals professed by ours and the recipient governments."[146] The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), one of the major Quaker organizations in the United States, proposed an action plan on behalf of political refugees and human rights in Chile to Senator Kennedy. It asked Congress to pressure the State Department to assist and grant asylum to refugees, to communicate its dismay to the Chilean government, to vote against military aid and to oppose the expansion of economic aid. [147]

Some of the most violent human rights violations by the new Chilean government had occurred in the period immediately following the coup. Transnational ties of church groups in Chile had helped to transmit details of the post-coup situation. The new junta took immediate control of the media, an action that made alternative channels of information dissemination and international communication indispensable.[148] Religious groups took distinctive "church" initiatives in Chile to monitor the human rights situation and assist certain individuals.[149] As seen above, U.S. groups also became active in their own country, especially on Capitol Hill. From September 1973 until well into the 1980s, U.S. Catholic and Protestant denominations and church groups lobbied Congress "to use its influence strongly" and put governmental pressure on Chile.[150]

Events in post-coup Chile spurred the interest of the small but growing religious human rights groups in the United States.[151] The Chilean case helped to turn the lose group of USCC-, NCC-, and church-linked individuals concerned with the political and social situation in Latin America into a larger, more institutionalized and professional

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[145] "Human Rights and United States Foreign Aid," Resolution of the NCC, 13 October 1974.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Letter by AFSC to Senator Kennedy, 5 October 1973, in: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugees and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 28 September 1973, 62.

[148] Regarding "el control absoluto de los medios de comunicación", see Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación, *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación* (Santiago, Chile, February 1991), 444f., 610f.

[149] The World Council of Churches (WCC) dispatched two representatives to Chile in 1973 to report on developments. The WCC also co-financed and co-founded COPACHI, the ecumenical-based human rights organization. NCC to Sen. Kennedy, U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugees and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 28 Sept. 1973, 61; Edward Cleary, *The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 3.

[150] NCC, AFSC in: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugees and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 28 Sept. 1973, 61, 62.

[151] Personal interview with William Wipfler, West Seneca, NY, 28 March 1999 and with Thomas Quigley, Washington, D.C., 8 March 2000.

network.[152] It was the first major case of gross human rights violations in the 1970s in Latin America. The cooperation of the United States with the Chilean government under President Pinochet also fueled the discontent of the U.S. groups.

The clear response of members of the Chilean religious community to the violation of the civil rights in Chile contributed to a sharper lobbying of U.S. groups. The main type of human rights violations during the Pinochet era (1973-1990) touched the personal security of individuals such as arbitrary imprisonment, the "disappearing" of people, the searching and seizing of property, the lack of legal assistance, threats, torture, and killings.[153] The greatest wave of repression happened right after the coup. Members of the Socialist and Communist parties, workers, and poorer sectors of the society were the main targets.[154] Relatively few members of the church, however, suffered.[155] Approximately 70 priests with ties to the Christians for Socialism movement had to emigrate. Two were detained, tortured and killed, another one disappeared in this early stage of the Pinochet regime. In the first two years after the coup, 380 priests and nuns, 318 of them foreigners, were exiled from Chile during the military dictatorship and some 50 employees or associates of the church-related *Comité de Cooperación para la Paz en Chile* (COPACHI) were detained.[156]

The Chilean human rights movement of the 1970s and 1980s was launched by measures of the Catholic Church and various Protestant communities. The foundation of COPACHI on 6 October 1973 is generally seen as the origin of the movement.[157] In the 1960s and 1970s the Catholic Church in Chile had become one of the more progressive voices in the struggle for social justice and human rights in Latin America. The radicalization of some priests and religious during the 1960s began to affect the position of the church hierarchy in the 1970s.[158] It was the decline in open democratic debate and

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[152] "Networks are forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange." NGOs, social movements, churches, trade unions, parts of governmental institutions, INGOs, and intellectuals are the major participants in so-called advocacy networks like the international human rights network. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 8f.

[153] Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconcíliacion, *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconcíliacion* (Santiago, Chile, February, 1991).

[154] Ibid., 885, 887.

[155] Ibid., 887 and Klaiber, *The Church*, 50. According to the Comisión, three people were killed because of their religious affiliation between 1973 and 1990.

[156] Cleary, *Struggle*, 129. Half of the priests working in Chile in the 1960s were foreign-born.

[157] Cleary, *Struggle*,3; Mark Ensalaco, *Chile Under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 59ff.

[158] The human rights position of the Chilean Catholic Church is partly rooted in its struggle for social justice that became more visible by the early 1960s. The Chilean Episcopate was one of the first in Latin America to propose the shift from an approach based on the charity model to one centering on issues of justice. In the beginning, a tiny minority of priests and religious laypeople demonstrated and promoted the fight for social justice, and even protested against their own church's power and wealth when taking

the new repression of the military government, however, that triggered the new human rights advocacy of parts of the episcopate. In the first weeks after the coup the majority of the religious leaders in Chile discounted human rights violations. The voice of the Roman Catholic archbishop of Santiago, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, was one of the few who criticized the deteriorating human rights situation. Slowly, others in the Catholic Church conversed.[159] Cardinal Silva's program of peace and reconciliation laid the groundwork for the Catholic Church's later work and fight for human rights. The episcopal statement "Reconciliation in Chile" from April 1974 symbolized the growing rift between the Catholic Church and the military government.[160] Because of the protection by the official Catholic Church, a human rights movement was able to emerge in Chile.[161]

COPACHI was a joint effort by Catholic, Methodist, Lutherans, Pentecostal and Orthodox churches, and the Rabbinical College of Chile. Founded only a month after the overthrow of the Allende government in 1973, it served as the first address for human rights victims seeking legal or medical assistance.[162] During its first year of existence the military government did not directly attack COPACHI. Instead, it faced defamatory campaigns, and the detention, torture and threats of employees. Responding to pressure from Pinochet claiming that Marxists instrumentalized the Committee, Silva dissolved the institution in November 1975.[163] Only a few weeks later in January 1976, however,

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over the Cathedral of Santiago in August 1968. Many of the Church's conservative, however, left the country when Allende was elected president in 1970. Inspired by the victory of the socialist Salvador Allende in the presidential elections of 1970, the Group of Eighty was founded under Jesuit leadership in April 1971. It became the progressive priests' group Christians for Socialism in 1972. The bishops' prohibited clergy and religious to join the movement in April 1973 indicating the still existing rifts within the church. The struggle within the Chilean Church resembles the experience of the rest of the Latin American Church. See Klaiber, *The Church*, 46.

[159] Ensalaco, *Chile*, 59. Cardinal Silva had opposed some of Allende's political initiatives.

[160] A minority of the episcopal conference's members disagreed with the statement.

[161] José Zalaquett, COPACHI's principal defense attorney, explains his reasons for joining COPACHI in 1973 to members of the U.S. Congress in 1976: "In the action of defense of…prisoners I had to travel far from the country and I needed some protection. I requested the protection of the church…" Zalaquett was expelled from Chile in 1976 after meeting with a delegation of U.S. Congressmen in Chile. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Chile: The Status of Human Rights and Its Relationship to U.S. Economic Assistance Programs,* 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 5 May 1976, 65. Regarding the Catholic Church's important role in providing protection for the opposition see also Alexandra B. de Brito, *Human Rights and Democratization in Latin America: Uruguay and Chile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 114, 117; Cleary, *Struggle*, 3.

[162] Between 1973 and December 1975, COPACHI provided 40,000 people with legal assistance and 70,000 people medical aid.

[163] COPACHI had hosted members of the leftist MIR who had fled persecution by the Chilean military. They sought refuge at COPACHI. After initial reluctance, the priests decided to grant them refuge. COPACHI's defense attorney Zalaquett was also arrested in November 1975, held *incomunicado* for 18 days, and finally released from prison on 30 January 1976, to be expelled from the country only a few months later. See U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on

the church opened the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* and continued its "watchdog" role within the Chilean society. By establishing the Vicaría, the Catholic Church further institutionalized its work for the cause of human rights. In comparison to the Committee, the Vicaría functioned independently from the Chilean Episcopal Conference. Thus, it was able to work free from internal criticism and efforts by the clergy to change its overall cause.[164] The Protestant churches that had been part of COPACHI had mostly been involved in refugee assistance, especially the resettlement of foreign and Chilean refugees. The head of the Lutheran Church in Chile, Helmut Frenz, had also founded an organization called Foundation for Social Help of the Christian Churches (FASIC) in April 1975. While the Vicaría focused on legal defense and the collection of information on human rights violations, FASIC assisted with psychological help for human rights victims and their families.[165]

The Vicaría was significant and influential in two ways. Domestically, it was "the only institutional space in which Chileans could find refuge from the regime and have their rights protected."[166] In the era of limited space for civic action, the Cardinal made places of democratic and civic activity and concerns possible by creating COPACHI or the Vicaría de la Solidariad. For its defense of human rights and its provision of a forum in which people with different political backgrounds could meet, the Vicaría was exceptional in Chilean society. Religious groups like Maryknoll started to realize the group's potential factor in distributing the seeds of human rights:

> The Church has a clear role given the vacuum of representation or participation by various sectors of the population. It is principally a Christian role in defense of the fundamental rights of man. In this context, once again insisting on the fact that it is not the desire of the Church, the Church offers a certain social mobility to groups and sectors of society of varied composition and thus becomes the most important political actor in the Chilean reality, with an effective negotiating power with the Government.[167]

International Organizations, *Chile: The Status of Human Rights and Its Relationship to U.S. Economic Assistance Programs*, 94th Cong., 2nd Sess., 5 May 1976, 57.

[164] Klaiber, *The Church*, 52-53.

[165] Comisión, *Informe*, 609; Ensalaco, *Chile*, 62. Concentrating on refugees, its work had to operate more silently in order to protect the refugees' safety. The Protestant community was very diverse and split over its position to the Pinochet regime. Because of the growing detachment between the Catholic community and Pinochet, the dictator began to side with the more conservative evangelical Protestant community.

[166] Klaiber, *The Church*, 55.

[167] "Chilean Reality – 1977," in: MFBA, Justice and Peace, Box 7: Crsp./Rpts: 1973-1985/Chile-El Salvador-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Peru-Venezuela, Folder 1.

With the Church as one of its major forces, the human rights movement "became the motor driving the opposition's call for democracy."[168]

With its 150-200 people team that organized conferences, seminars, published books, and pamphlets in order to teach the public about human rights, the Vicaría also became "the voice of Chile before the outside world."[169] In Chile's era of "closed society" under Pinochet, the Catholic church's hierarchy and Christian groups were one of the valve's of popular discontent and probably the most important transnational channel for information and communication. The Vicaría cooperated with the United Nations Coordinator for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Red Cross. Amnesty International, Americas Watch, or the International League for Human Rights used its publications as sources of information, providing members of U.S. Congress with information.[170] Furthermore, members of COPACHI or the Vicaría who had been expelled gave testimony about their work and experiences before Congress and church groups.[171]

The investigation of detainee's cases belonged to the more visible operation of the Vicaría that brought most of the cases to court. For its constant support and record keeping of individual human rights cases, the organization received financial aid from a wide range of religious organizations from abroad.[172] National church organizations such as the U.S. Catholic Conference, the NCC, or West German Catholic organizations mobilized resources and issued public statements about the Chilean situation. Between

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[168] De Brito, *Human Rights*, 114.Commemorating the institution's 16th anniversary in 1991, Chilean president Patricio Aylwin also expresses its democratic importance: ...The Church in the Vicariate of Solidarity organized meetings, seminars, round tables, and discussions which served to gather together those of us who opposed the regime. Through these activities we could discuss our common plans and engender a climate of solidarity among Chileans of different ideological positions, all united by a common desire to reestablish democracy and free association in our country." Patricio Alwyn, quoted in Klaiber, *The Church*, 56. Eventually, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was inaugurated by the new Chilean President in 1990, based its investigation partly on the archive of the Vicaría and other human rights organizations that had emerged after 1975. See Ensalaco, *Chile*, 196; de Brito, *Human Rights*, 115.

[169] The Vicaría gathered and documented cases of human rights violations. Its semi-monthly bulletin Solidaridad and a monthly on habeas corpus cases were important sources of information for human rights organizations operating outside of Chile. Ensalaco, *Chile*, 61f; Klaiber, *The Church*, 55.

[170] Ensalaco, *Chile*, 61f., 67f.; Cleary, *Struggle*, 5; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 23 July 1974; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements and on Inter-American Affairs, *Human Rights in Chile*, 93rd Cong., 2nd sess., 19 November 1974. Following reports are included in the hearings: The Report of the activities of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS, the Resolution on Violations of Human Rights in Chile by Subcommission of the Human Rights Commission, UN, Report of the mission to Chile of the International Commission of Jurists, April 1974, the report from Amnesty International. Senator Kennedy states: "Since last September, this subcommittee had maintained close contact with international organizations attempting to assist in the movement of refugees and the protection of human rights in Chile." (1)

[171] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Chile: The Status of Human Rights and Its Relationship to U.S. Economic Assistance Programs*, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 5 May 1976.

1973 and 1979, U.S. Catholic groups sent $34 million to church-sponsored programs, their West German counterparts $25 million, and Protestant churches $10 million through the WCC.[173] In the mid-1970s, Chile's active human rights church groups were clearly in the center of concern for international church groups.[174]

Human rights activities also covered humanitarian services to Chilean victims of right-wing human rights violations. The Chilean coup of 1973 created 12,000 political refugees in the months immediately afterwards.[175] By 1979, 30,000 Chilean refugees had been resettled by international agencies.[176] Due to ubiquitous Cold War arguments in U.S. foreign and refugee policy, the admission of refugees from right-wing, anticommunist regimes to the United States was very low.[177] The great majority of refugees from the South American military regimes of the 1970s found asylum in other Latin American countries or in Europe.[178] In early 1974, only 19 Chileans received asylum in the United States. In 1975 and again in late 1977, the U.S. attorney general authorized the admission of 400 and 200 Chilean refugees. Most of these political prisoners arrived between 1976 and 1977.[179] In the spring of 1978, the attorney general implemented a new program for 500 political refugees from South America.[180] The Hemispheric 500 Parole Program was especially designed for Chileans and Argentines held under arbitrary detention for political reasons by the Argentine military government.[181]

Since the coup, the Catholic Church, Protestants, and religious organizations tied to the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service[182] had stressed the necessity for assistance and asylum for real and potential victims of human rights

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[172] Klaiber, *The Church*, 55.

[173] Cleary, *Struggle*, 130.

[174] In 1977, for example, approximately 60 percent of WCC's overall emergency budget requests for Latin America concerned the Vicaría and FASIC. See WCC, Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, Regional Requests, Human Rights Emergency Needs in 1977 for Latin America, in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 29, Folder: CWS-Reports.

[175] Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 111.

[176] Marita Eastmond, *The Dilemmas of Exile: Chilean Refugees in the U.S.A.* (Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1997), 7.

[177] While the United States accepted eight Chileans per one million inhabitants, the Netherlands accepted 102, Sweden 305 and Canada 307. *Latin America Update* (CWS) (Spring 1980); Eastmond, *Dilemmas*, 7.

[178] During the 1970s, U.S. refugee law was formulated according to the Cold War framework. See chapter 5.2 for more information.

[179] Eastmond, *Dilemmas*, 43-48.

[180] *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 3:7-8 (1978), 2.

[181] *Argentina Outreach* (June/July 1978), 7. By 1980, only 30 political prisoners from Argentina arrived in the United States because of the Argentine government's reluctance of releasing them.

[182] See chapter 4.3.3 for further information on the Council.

violations or foreign refugees in Chile.[183] In 1974, all 19 refugees from Chile that were admitted to the United States were resettled by CWS.[184] In comparison to more prominent refugee resettlement programs in the 1970s like the Indochinese case, no U.S. federal assistance was provided for the Chilean refugees. The responsibility rested solely upon private voluntary agencies.[185] The main supporters of refugee resettlement from Chile, the churches and church organizations, stepped in as voluntary sponsors.[186] The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Church World Service, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and the U.S. Catholic Conference provided most of the assistance.[187]

The traditional agencies cooperate with local church communities in order to secure the arrival and settlement in the United States. In the case of Chile, religious local sponsors and programs emerged in Seattle, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay Area - all areas that became principle advocates for the plight of Central American civil war refugees in the 1980s. A Catholic priest of the San Francisco Bay Area endorsed and backed the admission and sponsorship of a group of 100 people of the 400 refugees plus their families in his parish. Another 100 people were resettled in Northern California as well.[188]

The U.S. public interest and advocacy for Chilean refugees, however, was low.[189] Most religious groups did not have previous experience with victims of right-wing oppression, which caused tension and misunderstandings on several occasions.[190] According to historian Bruce Nichols, the efforts of CWS, AFSC, and others for the resettlement of Chilean refugees were profound but they "flew in the face of official U.S. government policy," especially in the first years after the coup when aid was most

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[183] USCC, AFSC, and CWS in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, *International Protection of Human Rights: The Work of International Organizations and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1 August, 13, 19, 20, 27 September 1973, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18, 24, 25 October, 1 November, 7 December 1973; in a letter to Joshua Eilberg, Chairman of House's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law, in April 1975 ACVAFS stressed that Chilean refugees in Argentina "must immigrate to avoid continuing being objects of increasing incidents of violence and terror." Gaynor Jacobson, Vice President of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies, to Joshua Eilberg, 17 April 1975, in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 77, Folder: Chilean Refugees, US Congress.

[184] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to investigate Problems connected with Refugees and Escapees, *Refugees and Humanitarian Problems in Chile*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 2 October 1975, 6.

[185] *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 3:7-8 (1978), 2.

[186] Eastmond, *Dilemmas*, 46.

[187] *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 3:7-8 (1978), 2.

[188] Eastmond, *Dilemmas*, 46.

[189] *Latin America Update* (CWS) (Spring 1980).

needed.[191] The admission in later years, however, can be interpreted as a partial success for the persistence of religious groups.[192]

Various authors have examined the Chilean and international NGOs' influential role in promoting human rights and democracy in Chile.[193] The Chilean situation and the defense of human rights by its few religious human rights groups were indeed instrumental in inspiring the international religious and human rights community. In the case of the United States, the Chilean developments boosted a religious human rights movement that had been en route.

Members of U.S. Congress also started to take a particular interest.[194] The coup in Chile occurred exactly at a time when the United States was absorbed in domestic quarrels about its Vietnam policy and the Watergate affair. Besides Cuba and a brief interest in the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic, congressional concern with Latin America had traditionally been small.[195] The violent coup and the brutality of the Pinochet regime in one of Latin America's most stable democratic countries, however, alarmed some strong-minded legislators. The discovery of U.S. covert actions against the Allende government and ongoing U.S. complicity in Chilean affairs further appalled these lawmakers and citizens alike. From 1973 to 1976, the House and the Senate held seven hearings regarding the human rights and refugees situation in Chile alone.[196]

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[190] See the story of Chilean refugees in the United States in Eastmond, *Dilemmas. Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 3:7-8 (1978), 2. For a general history of U.S. religious refugee assistance, see Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*.

[191] Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 111.

[192] Ibid.

[193] For the Chilean case, see de Brito, *Human Rights*, 112-118. See Brian Smith, "Churches and Human Rights in Latin America: Recent Trends on the Subcontinent," in Daniel Levine (ed.), *Churches and Politics in Latin America* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 155-193. For other Latin American cases, see: Lisa L. Martin and Kathryn Sikkink, "U.S. Policy and Human Rights in Argentina and Guatemala, 1973-80," in Peter B. Evans at al. (eds.), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley. CA: University of California Press, 1993); Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, chapter 3; Alison Brysk, "From Above and Below: Social Movements, the International System, and Human Rights in Argentina," *Comparative Political Studies* 26:3 (October 1993): 259-285.

[194] Regarding initiatives by members of Congress, see Cynthia Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the President, and Central America, 1976-1993* (University Park, PN: University of Pennsylvania Press, [2]1993).

[195] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 374.

[196] The first set of human rights hearings by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements (led by Congressman Donald Fraser) were held between August and December 1973 and included 15 hearings. The initial set of human rights hearings did not include Chile as a special topic. The coup occurred in the midst of them. The Subcommittee's interest continued into the 94th Congress. 40 hearings regarding human rights and U.S. foreign policy were held between 1975 and 1976, which included nine Latin American countries. It should be noted that a congressional subcommittee exercises no jurisdiction over U.S. policy.

These hearings were one way for Chilean human rights advocates, human rights victims, exiles, and escapees to channel and disseminate information to other political actors.[197] Other "channels of information" were exiled or returning U.S. citizens. U.S. missionaries who left Chile in the course of the events during 1973 and 1975 toured organizations in the United States or gave testimony in Congress. Giving testimony in Congress, U.S. missionaries described their own and their churches situation and gave their assessments of the political conditions.[198] One of them, Joseph Eldridge, became the head of the Washington Office on Latin America.

According to two authorities in the field of foreign policy and interest groups politics, WOLA acquired an exceptional role as a broker in foreign affairs with Congress[199] and became "Washington's most respected Latin America-oriented human rights interest group."[200] At this point, let us take a closer look at the new religious foreign policy actors in the United States and their supporting institutions and affiliates.

3.1.3 The Religious Human Rights Network in the United States

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) was founded in April 1974. Its founding date fell into the period of the revelation of the Watergate scandal. The same month that WOLA was founded, President Nixon responded to public pressure and gave the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee edited transcripts of his taped conversations relating to the Watergate break-in.[201] Furthermore, in September 1974 - two months after the resignation of President Nixon - the U.S. public was confronted with the news that

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[197] Some who had been human rights defenders in Chile started to work for yet other human rights organizations while they were in exile. José Zalaquett, one of the cofounders of COPACHI, was forced into exile in 1976 and became a member of the board of directors of Amnesty International USA and later, the chair of Amnesty International's International Executive Committee from 1979 to 1982. In 1990, he was also named to the Presidential Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Chile. The Lutheran Bishop Helmut Frenz, co-founder of COPACHI and FASIC, was not allowed to return to Chile after a visit abroad in 1975 and began to work for Amnesty International in Germany.

[198] Two U.S. priests who had to leave Chile in 1975 gave testimony before Congress. Father Daniel Panchot who had been working in Chile for 14 years was detained and expelled from that country in 1975. He had also worked for COPACHI. Father Panchot gave also testimony at Maryknoll, November 1975. After being accused of harboring and giving medical aid to political fugitives, Rev. Philip Devlin took asylum in the residence of the Papal Representative to Chile in 1975. U.S. Congress, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Human Rights in Chile*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 9 December 1975 and Costello, *Mission*, 201.

[199] Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington*, 86-87.

[200] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 78.

[201] President Nixon's action failed to halt the steady erosion of confidence in his administration. Nixon was the first U.S. President to resign from office in August 1974.

the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been engaged in covert action against the Chilean government under Allende.[202]

The U.S. policy toward Vietnam had already "undermined citizen support for foreign policy in general."[203] But, as a consequence, it had also contributed to the emergence of additional and more critical foreign policy actors in Washington.[204] The Watergate scandal and the revelations of the CIA's covert actions against the Allende government damaged the majority's confidence in the federal government and disillusioned the public. Still, the events also contributed to a revitalization of moral concerns and civic participation. Citizens were longing for "good government" - one that was just and close to the citizen. Attempts to change U.S. foreign policy and participate in international politics reflected these feelings. Accordingly, the U.S. (religious) human rights movement focused on the abuse of human rights in Latin American states allied with the United States.

The foundation of an organization such as WOLA represents these attempts. WOLA's first director, Diane La Voy, stressed that WOLA had been set up to provide both, U.S. Congress as well as the State Department with reliable information.[205] One of the driving forces behind the creation of WOLA was the belief that "the US public has the right and duty to participate in the formulation of US foreign policy."[206] According to its statement of purpose, WOLA seeks to promote justice, especially respect for human rights in Latin America, and envisions governments that "allow maximum participation of people."[207] Because of "the U.S. contribution to much of the situation in Latin America," WOLA believes that U.S. citizens share responsibility for the character of U.S. influence in Latin America.[208] WOLA wanted to work with the existing political institutions. La Voy captured the spirit of the time when explaining that WOLA wanted to speak "to Congress on behalf of American values."[209] The Latin America adviser of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Thomas Quigley, hinted at a similar tendency of the U.S.

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[202] The congressional investigation of the CIA's role is documented in: U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973*, 94th Cong., 1st sess. 1975.

[203] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 370.

[204] See chapter 3.3.

[205] Virginia M. Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America: Charting a New Path in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (WOLA, [1990]), 3.

[206] WOLA By-Laws in: MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 3: Washington Justice and Peace Office, 1974-85, Folder: *Washington Office, Csp. 1977-81*.

[207] WOLA-By-Laws in ibid.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America*, 3.

administration to separate U.S. basic values from foreign policy interests. He maintained that, "we talk about [values] internally, but do not apply [them]."[210]

The coup in Chile accelerated the rise of the human rights network focusing on Latin America. As seen in chapter two, roots of the "network" were already in existence. "Chile" and the increasing level of governmental human rights violations in other South American countries intensified advocacy projects.[211] WOLA, for example, was the creation of church representatives who had started to meet on a regular basis since the late 1960s.[212] They had built the ad hoc Latin American Strategy Committee (LASC) "to explore the relationship between United States foreign policy and political repression in Latin America."[213] While the members of this Committee were or had been officially tied to an existing church organization, they had sought independent ways of action. Some of LASC's founders like William Wipfler of the NCC, Thomas Quigley of the USCC, Philip Wheaton of EPICA, or Brady Tyson, the later aide to President Carter's UN ambassador Andrew Young, became some of the religious community's most prominent human rights activists in the 1970s. WOLA grew out of LASC.[214]

Whether in Chile or the United States, religious organizations were aware of the importance of their visibility and accessibility in the center of national politics in the 1970s. In Chile, the Vicaría was located in the capital's most prominent and frequented *Plaza de Armas,* next to the national Cathedral. Through the popular site and the proximity to the church, the organization gained protection and attention. In the United States, a growing number of religious interest groups established offices in Washington, D.C. The newly found advocacy organizations of the 1970s concerned about Latin America, human rights, and U.S. foreign policy opened their offices in Washington. EPICA and LASC were the pioneers of the first religious-based Latin American

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[210] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, *International Protection of Human Rights: The Work of International Organizations and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1 August, 13, 19, 20, 27 September 1973, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18, 24, 25 October, 1 November, 7 December 1973, 210.

[211] Personal interview with Wipfler, 28 March 1999, and with Quigley, 8 March 2000.

[212] Until 1979, WOLA was entirely funded by religious sources. In the 1990s, only one-fifth of the general budget came from church sources. See Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America*.

[213] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 77.

[214] LASC became WOLA's Board of Directors. Diane La Voy, the first director of WOLA, had participated in LASC from 1971 to 1974 as representative for the Friends' Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Another member of LASC from the United Methodist Church, Joyce Hill, asked one of her returning missionaries Joseph Eldridge to become La Voy's successor. Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America*, 4, 10.

advocacy groups in Washington. WOLA, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy and its Human Rights Working Group followed in 1974 and 1976. [215]

WOLA or the Coalition and its Human Rights Working Group were not interest groups promoting religious beliefs per se. For WOLA and the Coalition, the religious community was one of its major bases and constituencies. The great majority of its staff had a religious background. In its first year of existence, Protestants groups such as the United Presbyterian Church, the United Methodist Church, CWS, and the Disciples of Christ funded WOLA. Soon, other Protestant and Catholic groups became sponsors. Among them were the American Baptists, the United Church of Christ, the Lutheran Church of America, the Episcopalian Church, Church of the Brethren, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Maryknoll, the USCC, the NCC, and the Priests of the Holy Cross. Some of the early members of WOLA worked as full-time volunteers. From 1974 until 1986, the United Methodist Church provided the salary for WOLA's director Joseph Eldridge.

The Catholic missionary society Maryknoll was WOLA's largest funding agency in the 1970s.[216] According to its objective, Maryknoll is a fund-raising and not a funding agency. Maryknoll's large contribution is, therefore, a good example of the religious group's new understanding in promoting foreign policy issues. Maryknoll's direct ties with Latin America contributed to Maryknoll's endorsement. Maryknoll's director of the Justice and Peace Office, Tom Marti, stated in 1977 "WOLA…is an organization which we fully endorse."[217] By 1980, Maryknoll's Washington representative is convinced that "[n]o other church-sponsored group in the USA has done more in the field of human rights than WOLA."[218]

While labor unions and secular peace groups also belonged to the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, approximately half of its members were church-affiliated and included those groups that would become the major religious advocacy groups on behalf of implementing human rights standards in U.S. foreign policy like the

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[215] *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 2:1 (1977), 14.

[216] Letter and financial report from WOLA to Maryknoll (1978), also see communication between Tom Marti, director of Maryknoll's Fathers' Office for Justice and Peace and Raymond Hill, Maryknoll's Superior General in 1977: MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 3: Washington Justice and Peace Office, 1974-85, Folder: Washington Office, Csp. 1977-81.

[217] Tom Marti to Superior General Raymond Hill, 28 January 1977, in: MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 3: Washington Justice and Peace Office, 1974-85, Folder: Washington Office, Csp. 1977-81.

[218] William Killacky to Jack Halbert, Vicar General, 14 April 1980, in: MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 3: Washington Justice and Peace Office, 1974-85, Folder: Washington Office, Csp. 1977-81. Maryknoll had lowered its funds to WOLA in 1979 and 1980. According to Killacky, the reasons for this were not lesser confidence in WOLA's work but the attempt "to get other churches to jump in…"

AFSC, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the Friends Committee of National Legislation (FCNL), the Office of Social Ministries of the U.S. Jesuit Conference, the nuns' lobby Network, and groups of liberal Protestant denominations.[219] Others were not members of the Coalition but contributed financially.[220] During the most important years of human rights activism in Congress between 1975 and 1978, the building of the United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., next-door to the U.S. Supreme Court and across the street from the Capitol, served as the home and meeting ground a large number of religious interest groups.[221]

While a majority of the church headquarters and their institutions were scattered throughout the United States, these older institutions reformed their approach to government. They also started to create liaison offices in Washington.[222] In 1950, approximately 16 religious organizations were represented in Washington, D.C., whereas in 1990, there were about 100 offices of religious interest groups and churches located in the national capital.[223] In 1980, 53 offices in Washington were principally sponsored by Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations, not counting most of the evangelical denominations.[224]

This development clearly indicates the general pattern of interest group lobbying in the United States during the last three decades. Groups wanted to enjoy greater access to government, to establish contacts with like-minded representatives, to facilitate communication between the interest groups themselves, and to receive prompt information about legislative activity.[225] Whether the Maryknoll society, CWS,[226] or

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[219] Usually, one ore more offices of one denomination was a member, e.g. the Washington Office of the Church of the Brethren, the Office for Church and Society of the United Church of Christ, or the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. For a membership list of the Coalition in *Human Rights Internet Newsletter* 2:3 (1977), 10-12.

[220] E.g. Maryknoll, see MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 1: Misc. Csp., 1977-85, Folder: Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy 1978-1985.

[221] It housed the social concern offices of various Protestant denominations, WOLA, and the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy.

[222] Several big religious organizations, however, were stationed in Washington for a long time. The Catholic Church has its headquarters in Washington since the founding of the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC) in 1923 and the USCC in 1966. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is a Quaker lobbying group and was founded in Washington in 1943.

[223] Fowler and Hertzke, *Religion and Politics*, 54.

[224] Paul Kittlans, "The Churches' Policy Advocacy," *Church and Society* 71 (September/October 1980): 24-30.

[225] The literature on U.S. religious interest groups has been growing in recent years. See Fowler and Hertzke, *Religion and Politics*; Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington*. Hofrenning, *In Washington But Not Of It.*

[226] CWS and Lutheran World Relief opened a joint office in Washington, D.C., in 1974. Ronald Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (New York: Friendship Press, 1996), 64.

World Relief, most religious groups were represented in Washington by the end of the 1970s.

Existing or new D.C.-offices focused on advocacy work in the capital due to U.S. influence on international affairs, especially Latin America. As a traditional missionary society working abroad, Maryknoll was not represented in the U.S. capital before the mid-1970s. The Fathers' Office for Justice and Peace was established in October 1974 and later accompanied by a Washington office, attesting the society's desire to speak out for issues of their concern in the United States. Maryknoll sought to stimulate a concern for world poverty, social justice, and peace at the national decision-making level.[227] CWS and Lutheran World Relief opened a joint office in Washington to focus on advocacy work because "U.S. policies can affect the lives of people overseas positively or negatively."[228]

The human rights offices or departments within the public policy agencies of the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches and their staff members played a crucial role in the emerging network.[229] The U.S. Catholic Church had established an International Justice and Peace Office in the aftermath of Vatican II in 1967. Under the leadership of Father Brian Hehir, who became head of the office in 1973, the USCC pushed for a U.S. foreign policy taking a stand for human rights and social justice in Latin America.[230] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the office's Latin America adviser, Thomas Quigley, interacted with the growing U.S. religious human rights network. In addition, the Church supported the creation of an additional "international justice and peace" NGO in 1971, which was linked to the Society of Jesus, the Center of Concern.[231]

In 1977, the NCC established an office explicitly designed to foster human rights internationally. The human rights office presented the new direction of liberal Protestantism in the United States. Its first director was William Wipfler who had headed the Latin American office of the NCC. The work of the NCC in the United States was also appreciated in Latin America's human rights community. When the NCC's human rights office was created in 1977, Chile's *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* welcomed the news

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[227] MFBA, Office for Justice and Peace, Box 3: Washington Justice and Peace Office, 1974-1985, Folder: Washington Office, Operational Plans 1974-1985.

[228] "Confronting Other Roots of Poverty" (LWR Annual Report 1977).

[229] Their participation in human rights and Latin America questions was noticed on the Hill as well as in the religious NGO community. See Senator Harold E. Hughes to William Wipfler, NCC, 18 March 1974, by ourtesy of William Wipfler. Livezey, "US Religious Organizations," 21; Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America*; Pagnucco, "The Transnational Strategies," 129f.; Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 86.

[230] Formicola, *The Catholic Church*, 124.

[231] See for further information: http://www.coc.org/coc

considering Wipfler "un gran defensor de nuestros países" (a great defender of our countries). The Vicaría sought to collaborate with the new office "en todos aquellos asuntos e intereses que creas necesarios, y que estén dentro de nuestras posibilidades" (in all those issues and interests that you think necessary and that are in the range of our possibilities).[232]

It needs to be emphasized that the U.S. religious human rights network was neither a homogeneous community that shared precisely the same goals nor did the affiliation of one organization mean that all members of that organization agreed on issues regarding human rights in Latin America. The foundation of new religious-based human rights groups and educational associations symbolized not only new foreign policy platforms but also a new fragmentation of the diverse U.S. religious community. Fragmentation existed between denominations but also within a single one. Robert Wuthnow has characterized the history of U.S. religions in the 1970s and 1980s as a growing polarization between denominations. The civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, counterculture, and growing educational standards influenced the rising liberal outlook of the main denominations. At the same time, a growing community of evangelical and fundamentalist churches and organizations moved toward more conservative principles.[233] Apart from a growing gap between liberal churches and conservative ones, another trend marked the religious development in the 1970s and 1980s: the forging of coalitions across denominational lines.[234] While the fragmentation produced disunity in opinion within one denomination, it fostered and improved cooperation among like-minded groups of other denominations.

Despite the traditional hierarchy within the Catholic Church, the existence of various Catholic orders, lobbying groups, specific actions groups, and individuals demonstrate pluralism within the Catholic Church. The variety of positions regarding U.S. foreign policy and human rights also existed among the Catholic bishops and within the orders as well. According to a report by the Maryknoll order in October 1973, the U.S. Catholic Church's response to the situation in Chile was "almost nonexistent."[235] It

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[232] Javier Luis Egaña Baraona, Vicaría de la Solidaridad, to Eugene Stockwell, NCC, 7 June 1977, by courtesy of William Wipfler.

[233] Wuthnow, *The Restructuring*, 172.

[234] James D. Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America - Making Sense of the Battles over the Family, Art, Education, Law, and Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 98; Wuthnow, *The Restructuring*, 221.

[235] "Chile: Immediate Actions," 12 October 1973, in: MFBA, Justice and Peace, Box 7: Crsp./Rpts: 1973-1985/Chile-El Salvador-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Peru-Venezuela, Folder 1.

even regarded a statement by the USCC's Justice and Peace division as "very weak after much bureaucratic shuffling."[236] Yet, at the beginning of the 1970s Maryknoll's members were not unanimous in regards to Chile. Maryknoll's Secretary General William McIntire notes in 1976 that

> [w]e had some Maryknollers working in Chile then (and now) who were very radicalized, completely opposed to Pinochet and his group. But I have to be honest and say that other Maryknollers in Chile were in favor of the coup, thinking that it had saved Chile from communism and than the number of deaths and excesses by the Pinochet junta were moderate and even necessary to saven Chile from a bloody civil war.[237]

While the mainline Protestant community is home to many voices, so was its umbrella organization, the NCC, regarding its international endeavors in the late 1960s and 1970s. Personnel changes within the NCC and its relief agency, CWS, contributed to the fostering of new development policies. Within the NCC as well as within CWS, executive positions responsible for relief and refugee issues were taken over by former missionaries who had lived in Latin America. In 1973, a United Methodist who had served in Latin America, Eugene Stockwell, became the associate general secretary of the NCC and, at the same time, director of the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) that included CWS at the time. In 1975, another United Methodist minister who had been a missionary in Bolivia, Paul McCleary, succeeded James MacCracken as head of CWS in 1974, after internal struggles regarding the direction of relief policies.[238] James MacCracken resigned because, according to MacCracken, his "theological understanding of Christian mission [was] at major variance" with his superior Eugene Stockwell.[239] The two factions were divided on the balance of long-term initiatives and emergency relief. While the "mission faction" sought a policy of self-determination and wanted to stress the political and socio-economic aspects of poverty and migration, the "service faction" (MacCracken) wanted to continue the traditional "neutral" approach of humanitarian assistance.[240]

While concerned individuals of the religious community promoted a specific human rights network, their respective organizations slowly embarked for a new institutional commitment in public policy debates on Latin America and human rights in

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[236] Ibid.

[237] Quoted in Costello, *Mission*, 202.

[238] Stenning, *Church World Service*, 68.

[239] Letter from James MacCracken to Eugene Stockwell, 17 June 1974 in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 9, Folder: Executive Committee Memoranda 1974.

[240] Religious News Service, 19 June 1974, in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 9, Folder: Executive Committee Memoranda 1974. See also Doris Jean Knight, *CWS: The Power of the Humanitarian Ideal* (MA thesis, Creighton University, 1984), 125f.

the 1970s. Most of these representative bodies were not single-issue groups but concentrated on a vast area of development and relief issues. Their presence in Washington, D.C. became critical for coalition building. The political scientist Mark Falcoff for example remarks that the social justice and peace offices of the Roman Catholic and mainstream Protestant churches have been "the most significant addition to this wider public" in the field of foreign policy in the aftermath of the Vietnam war.[241]

3.1.4 The Legislative Context

Religious interest groups did not initiate the first set of human rights hearings in Congress. In 1973, their network was still too loose to stage impressive lobbying campaigns. The topic of human rights violations in Latin America, however, had caught the attention of staffers in the USCC, the NCC, or the FCNL[242] before it became an agenda of the official foreign-policy making process.[243] While the religious groups did not start the public debate, their increasing concern in the 1970s contributed to the growing public discourse in the United States. Religious institutions moved from

[241] Falcoff, "The Apple of Discord," 367.

[242] On a more small-scale basis, refugee and res ettlement agencies have paid attention to issues of refugee rights in Latin America earlier than the mid-1970s. In 1971, the U.S. Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) had helped 213 Jewish refugees to leave Chile during the presidency of Salvador Allende.

[243] The Brazilian case was the tiny network's first public appearance. The Latin America offices of the USCC and NCC received testimonies and affidavits from victims. In the case of Brazil, the two offices filed this evidence at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an institution of the Organization of American States (OAS) and issued public statements denouncing "systematic terror and torture" in Brazil. The statement of the International Affairs Committee of the USCC, issued on the first anniversary of the death of a Catholic priest in Brazil, on 26 May 1970, denounced the imprisonment, beating, and deportation of students, priests, nuns and others whose only "crime being an active concern for social justice and the liberation of men." Both departments' statements urged international governmental organizations like the United Nations or the OAS as well as the U.S. government to act. The USCC's International Affairs Committee asked for the cessation of private and public U.S. assistance to Brazil, whereas the NCC's Latin America Department additionally called for congressional hearings "on the effects of U.S. Government policy in Brazil." The church groups' activism did not go unnoticed, albeit responses were slow. After two years, the Inter-American Commission acknowledged the validity of the ecumenical campaign and recommended that the Brazilian government should carry out an investigation. The Brazilian government did not cooperate with the Commission, but in 1972, the Commission nevertheless concluded, "'serious cases of torture, abuse, and maltreatment have occurred'" in Brazil. Congressional hearings regarding the Brazilian human rights situation did not take place before 1973. In 1974, a hearing focusing exclusively on "Torture and Oppression in Brazil" followed. According to one scholar, the Catholic Church's substantial influence on the media in the early 1970s regarding issues of human rights indirectly influenced congressional activities. (Formicola, *The Catholic Church*, 148f.) While such a conclusion remains disputable, we can say with certainty, that the new activism on behalf of human rights and U.S. foreign policy in the U.S. Congress acknowledged the religious NGOs' work and sought their support and advise. See U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, *International Protection of Human Rights: The Work of International Organizations and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., 1 August, 13, 19, 20, 27 September 1973, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18, 24, 25 October, 1 November, 7 December 1973, 187, 671-673. "Latin America Calls: A Commitment by Every Catholic" 9:5 (May 1972).

theoretical support to open, issue-oriented advocacy. Precisely because religious groups are not human rights groups per se, they perform diverse functions in social and political life. Traditionally, their refugee programs provide concrete humanitarian services to victims of human rights violations. The creation of new groups, however, was the institutional indication of the new practical orientation. With the new groups and the growing support of the church leaders came also new forms of human rights politics. Religious interest groups co-shaped congressional legislation on human rights in regards to U.S. foreign policy.

It is common wisdom that the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War undermined the Cold War consensus that had characterized U.S. foreign policy since at least 1947. In the late 1960s and during the 1970s, members of the foreign policy elite as well as an increasingly alert foreign policy public challenged the consensus' main principles, i.e. the East-West struggle as the pivot in international relations and the subordination of foreign policy goals to the containment of communism. Chapter two revealed that parts of the religious community belonged to the growing foreign policy public dissatisfied with the traditional foreign policy approach. On the governmental level, criticism was chiefly pronounced in Congress.[244]

A growing faction in the U.S. Congress headed toward a policy reorientation grounded on moral, not realist principles. The human rights-oriented approach that entered the U.S. policy debates in the late 1960s was not only advocated by the so-called liberal-internationalists who emphasized North-South issues such as development and mutual cooperation and who opposed U.S. military and covert foreign intervention.[245] In the post-Vietnam era of the 1970s, it was also used as a tool regarding U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. The most prominent case is the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 that tied trade options for the Soviet Union to Soviet liberalization of restrictions on Jewish emigration.[246] Senator Jacob Javits from New York for example

[244] The strongest sign of renewed congressional assertiveness on foreign policy issues after Vietnam was the War Powers Act of 1973. Enacted over President Nixon's veto, it constraints the executive's power in foreign policy. It provides that the President must consult with Congress before sending troops into hostilities and submit a report within 48 hours after the troops are sent out (in absence of a declaration of war). Unless Congress approves so, troops have to be removed within 60, or in special circumstances, 90 days thereafter. Regarding human rights initiatives toward Central America by Congress see Arnson, *Crossroads*.

[245] See Falcoff, "The Apple of Discord," 363f.

[246] The Soviet Union was offered the 'most favored nation' status. In 1966, Jewish groups had already lobbied for the religious freedom of Soviet Jews. See Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 108.

sustained that the amendment would give the détente policy between the United States and the Soviet Union "'a sound, moral basis.'"[247]

At the time, less prominent but nevertheless significant regarding the domestic foreign policy context and its impact on international relations, were the congressional hearings on human rights and U.S. foreign policy. By 1976/77, Congress had authorized laws that linked U.S. foreign assistance to the human rights situation in other countries. A series of legislation manifested that the United States would not grant economic assistance, supply military weapons, or support multilateral development loans if a country engages in gross violation of internationally recognized human rights.[248] In addition, new human rights mechanisms in the U.S. administration were supposed to increase these concerns.[249] At the time, these initiatives were unprecedented in national and international legislation.

The *Weltanschauung* of human rights advocates in Congress and in the NGO community reflected liberal foreign policy principles. David Forsythe explains that "[w]orking for human rights has …become synonymous with working for a 'progressive' foreign policy in which individuals are at the center of policy."[250] Those members of Congress dedicated to human rights in international relations were a tiny minority. But they forged a pragmatic coalition of liberal internationalists and isolationists who approved the new body of human rights legislation.[251] The new political reform climate that was particularly felt after the congressional elections in November 1974 "created a receptivity in Washington for a group such as WOLA."[252] In the process of evaluating information and formulating policies on human rights, the religious human rights network became crucial for the human rights work of Congress.[253]

WOLA and Tom Quigley from the USCC helped the team of Congressman Donald Fraser, chairman of the House subcommittee on international organizations, to

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[247] Quoted in Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 109.

[248] The most important human rights laws are: International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976, Section 502B, 22 USC 2151, PL 94-329, 94th Cong., H.R. 13680, 30 June 1976, 96 Stat. 729 and International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975, Section 116, 22 USC 2151, PL 94-161, 94th Cong., H.R. 9005, 20 December 1975, 89 Stat. 849. For a closer analysis of the legislation's history see David Forsythe, *The Internationalization of Human Rights* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991); David Forsythe, *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy: Congress Reconsidered* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1988); Schoultz, *Human Rights*.

[249] The Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State was established in 1976. The State Department also has to issue annual reports on the status of human rights in other countries.

[250] Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, 129.

[251] Regarding the "strange" congressional coalition, see Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 196.

[252] Bouvier, *The Washington Office on Latin America*, 5.

[253] See Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, 127-153.

locate witnesses and they gave advise on the drafting of legislation. According to John Salzberg, a human rights specialist who was hired by Congressman Fraser and later worked for the Carter administration, "the Church witnesses helped the image of the Committee, adding that the public perception of the Catholics was 'good', that they provided reliable information, and that they were not vulnerable to the potential criticism of the other witnesses."[254]

Visits of human rights victims on Capitol Hill sponsored and organized by the religious human rights community were of notable worth. Stories of torture and brutality touched certain members of Congress emotionally and influenced their questioning of military assistance to repressive countries in Latin America.[255] The religious interest groups provided liberal or sympathetic Congresspersons with the necessary data, primary sources, and insight on human rights abuses in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Nicaragua. In fact, this data was "instrumental in linking U.S. foreign policy to the repression of human rights by Latin American governments."[256]

It remains difficult to measure the influence of this kind of information on the actual decision-making in Congress but the efforts of the religious human rights community were not ineffective.[257] Members of Congress were requesting information of human rights groups.[258] James Aboureszk, a liberal Senator from New York, sought the advise of Maryknoll missionaries on Capitol Hill. In a letter to Raymond Hill, Superior General of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in 1975, he emphasized that the missionaries' presence in Washington, D.C., was vital due to their experience, sensitivity, and information on issues regarding U.S. foreign policy toward the Third World. He found them helpful for those in Congress who were concerned about a just foreign policy and need first-hand information. He also encouraged missionaries to sensitize those members of Congress that do not share same concern.[259]

Individuals from the religious human rights community also helped to draft human rights legislation. In November 1975, Congress had passed the so-called Harkin

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[254] According to an interview with John Salzberg in ibid., 127.

[255] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 106f.

[256] Ibid., 107.

[257] See ibid.; Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, 153.

[258] Leaders of the church institutions recognized their staff's connections in Washington's political scene. As early as 1972, Eugene Smith, head of the World Council of Churches' New York office, noticed Wipfler's close connection with influential members of Congress such as Senator Frank Church, Chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on Latin America in the early 1970s, or with high-ranking staff of the Nixon Administration's State Department. Eugene L. Smith to Edwin Espy, President of NCC, 6 October 1972, by courtesy of William Wipfler.

[259] James Abourezk to Raymond Hill, 22 July 1975, in: MMA-MFB, Justice and Peace Office, Box 2: Misc. Csp.: 1974-84, U.S. Congress, President 1949-84, Folder: U.S. Congress, Csp. 1971-80.

Amendment, Section 116, to the foreign assistance law, and, by now, a cornerstone of U.S. human rights policy. It prohibited development assistance to "any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights…unless such assistance will directly benefit the needy…".[260] Joe Eldridge, the executive director of WOLA, and Edward Snyder, the executive director of the Friends' Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), drafted the original version of the Harkin Amendment.[261]

3.1.5 The Carter Administration

Although the major pieces of U.S. human rights policy - the principle of economic and military foreign aid reduction for human rights violations - were ratified before President Carter came into office, human rights received a pre-eminent status in the official U.S. foreign policy only after Jimmy Carter became President in 1977.[262] In contrast to the *Realpolitik* of his predecessors, President Carter gave the question of human rights earnest attention, most notably in U.S. relations with certain Latin American countries. He also signed the American Convention on Human Rights, supported the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, signed the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and supported their congressional approval. Furthermore, Congress enacted a new refugee law during his presidency in 1980. It was a measure that President Carter fully endorsed.[263] The new law brought U.S. legislation in compliance with the UN refugee definition. It broadened refugee rights by freeing U.S. refugee law from its anticommunist bias.

While Jimmy Carter's human rights policy differed from the foreign policy approach of his predecessors, human rights did not become the guiding principle of his foreign policy. They did not replace national security as the fundamental guideline of U.S. foreign policy, yet they became an important component in those instances where

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[260] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 196.

[261] Ibid.; Bouvier, *Washington Office on Latin America*.

[262] On the human rights policy of the Carter Administration, see Hauke Hartmann, *Die Menschenrechtspolitik der USA, 1977-1981* (Freie Universität Berlin: diss., forthcoming); Donald Kommers and G.D. Loescher (eds.), *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979); Schoultz, *Human Rights*; Pflüger, *Die Menschenrechtspolitik der USA.*

[263] Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 111.

the U.S. national security, according to the policymakers, was not threatened.[264] According to political scientist David Forsythe, President Carter's human rights policy only worked in those areas where ideological interests did not compete with economic interests.[265] Others call attention to the imbalance between President Carter's rhetorical emphasis on human rights (for domestic politics reasons) and its shortcomings in applied policies.[266]

However big the imbalance between rhetoric and practice in Carter's human rights policy, the advent of the Carter administration opened up new channels for advocates of a human rights-oriented foreign policy toward Latin America. President Carter staffed the State Department with several former civil rights activists and a member of the religious human rights network. The most known human rights advocate of the Carter Administration is Patricia Derian who headed the newly established Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Mark Schneider, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, had not only been a former Peace Corps volunteer to El Salvador but had also served as Senator Edward Kennedy's assistant working primarily on issues relating to human rights in Chile.[267] There were a few other newly appointed members of the State Department whom a reporter of the Washington Post at the time labeled "the most unlikely diplomats ever to hit the road on behalf of the U.S. government."[268] They included Sam Brown, a leader of the 1960s antiwar movement, Brady Tyson, a former Methodist missionary to Brazil, Stoney Cooks, and Sally Shelton. They all represented the Carter administration's attempt to bring ideas forged in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the past decade, into the formulation of U.S. policy toward the countries of the Third World.

Sam Brown became head of ACTION, the umbrella organization for federal volunteer groups including the Peace Corps. Brady Tyson was the political adviser of UN ambassador Andrew Young. Tyson had been expelled by the Brazilian military regime when he was a missionary there. In the administration, he made headlines when he apologized for alleged U.S. attempts to "destabilize" the government Salvador

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[264] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 4.

[265] Forsythe, *The Internationalization of Human Rights*, 127f. Regarding the failure of President Carter to communicate a coherent human rights policy, see also Lars Schoultz, *National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[266] David Carleton and Michael Stohl, "The Foreign Policy of Human Rights: Rhetorics and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan," *Human Rights Quarterly* 7:2 (1985): 205-229, 216f. See also Roberta Cohen, "Human Rights Decision-Making in the Executive Branch: Some Proposals for Coordinated Strategy" in Kommers and Loescher, *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy*, 216-246.

[267] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 126.

Allende in the early 1970s at a UN meeting in early 1977. His remarks were quickly repudiated by the administration.[269] Stoney Cooks, Andrew Young's chief aide, was also a veteran of the civil-rights movement, who had gone to the South as a volunteer in 1965. He became a key operative of Young and other leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Sally Shelton, who had been an aide to Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.), working on Latin American and foreign trade affairs, was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs after she was first asked to become Ambassador to El Salvador.[270] Being former civil rights and antiwar activists, ex-Peace Corps volunteers, or former missionaries, these "staffers" in the Carter administration and the religious human rights activists shared a similar history and a "personal commitment" to the question of human rights.[271]

The executive branch is generally not as open and accessible to interest groups politics as the legislative branch.[272] This was also true for advocacy work on behalf of human rights in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. Congress remained the more important governmental lobbying target.[273] But in comparison to the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan administrations, the Carter team included a sympathetic audience for the human rights community.[274] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the access to the executive for the religious lobbying attempts on behalf of human rights issues in Latin America was never as open as from 1977 to 1980. Assistant Secretary for Human Rights Patricia Derian became a symbol for the U.S. religious human rights network's fairly good relationship to the executive branch during Carter's presidency. Religious activists automatically refer

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[268] John Goshko, "Young's Team: Former Rebels Are Now U.S. Diplomats," *The Washington Post*, 13 August 1977, A16.

[269] Tyson said about his job: "'I'm here because I want to be of service to Andy Young in any way that I can. I believe there's nothing more important than human rights and I think that Andy Young who learned all about how to fight for human rights in the U.S. civil-rights struggle, is the man who can test transfer those lessons to the struggle for human rights in other countries.'" *The Washington Post*, 13 August 1977, A16. See also Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 116 regarding the Tyson-incident.

[270] Increasing terrorism in El Salvador seemed to have caused the State Department's second thoughts about the wisdom of sending a young woman. See *The Washington Post*, 13 August 1977, A16. Regarding her appointment as ambassador to El Salvador, see also Devine, *El Salvador*, 56.

[271] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 90. Several cases can be pointed out that confirm the ties and the religious group's input. Brady Tyson for example called the UN mission of the United Methodist Church to request a Methodist booklet on human rights when preparing for Carter's speech at the UN General Assembly in October 1977. Tyson's church links do not demonstrate nor suggest influence on President Carter's foreign policy experts and their human rights philosophy. But it laid open channels of communication. See Robert McClean, "Standing Up for Human Rights" on: http://www.umc-gbcs.org/csadec1.htm (7 August 2000).

[272] See introduction of this study.

[273] Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, chapter 4.

[274] Personal interview with Wipfler, 28 March 1999, 19 February 2000, and with Quigley, 8 March 2000; Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, chapter 4; Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 96.

to Derian when asked about the Carter presidency.[275] Representatives of religious human rights groups as well as leaders of the traditional relief organizations appreciated "the fresh air" Derian brought into the relationship between NGOs and the State Department.[276] They point out frequent communication and a serious appreciation of Derian and her staff for the information religious or secular human rights NGOs were providing.

When Derian directly challenged Argentina's junta member Admiral Emilio Massera about tortures in the country's (now infamous) Navy Mechanical School in 1977, she had received and used the information by local Argentine human rights organizations and others that had been channeled through the mainline Protestant human rights office.[277] Regarding the U.S. domestic scene, Assistant Secretary Derian points out the complaints of "non-governmental human rights groups, church representatives and the Hill concerning Nicaragua" regarding the Carter administration's stand on the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza in a note to the Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1979. She noted that "[t]heir public perception is devastating for obvious reasons."[278] Still, there was disagreement in the State Department about the approach of the human rights faction. Frank Devine, President Carter's Ambassador to El Salvador from 1977 to 1980, questioned the appointment of human rights activists from a diplomatic point of view. In his memoirs about his experiences in El Salvador, Ambassador Devine writes that

> [t]he appointment of human rights activists to high positions in the United States Government provided privileged insight into all aspects of our relations and better equipped them to push the human rights campaign. These activists utilized a hard-hitting, and effective, approach, employing means which more rule-conscious government workers protested against.[279]

The Carter administration's stand on human rights was most assertive regarding Latin American countries. President Carter's administration repeatedly raised the issue of

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[275] Personal interview with Wipfler, 28 March 1999, 19 February 2000, and with Tom Quigley, 8 March 2000; see also Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 103.

[276] John McCarthy, USCC, in a meeting of the Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs Officers of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service with the State Department's Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, Washington, D.C., 10 April 1978, in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 80, Folder: Migration and Refugee Affairs Committee/Minutes/1978.

[277] An Argentine NGO had contacted the human rights office of the NCC in order to channel information to outside sources. The Methodist Church provided the financial assistance so that a person in the United States could work on the issue. A list with names of disappeared was then handed over to Derian on her way to Argentina. Personal interview with Wipfler, 19 February 2000; see also Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 105.

[278] Department of State Secret Briefing Memorandum from Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of Human Rights to Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State, 12 July 1979, in: National Security Archive (NSA), *Nicaragua: The Making of United States Policy, 1978-1990*, doc. # 00920.

[279] Devine, *El Salvador*, 45.

foreign aid termination, but it was particularly implemented in regards to Latin America, especially Central America.[280] In 1977, the State Department published its annual human rights reports on countries receiving military assistance emphasizing certain human rights violations in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, and Uruguay.[281] Subsequently, these countries rejected U.S. assistance complaining about unreasonable interference in domestic affairs. During Carter's term all or certain bi- and multilateral security assistance was terminated in the case of Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay due to human rights violations.[282] Between 1977 and 1979, economic assistance to the three Central American countries El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua was stopped, reduced, or redirected (in order to avoid governmental channels).

Why did Latin America, and especially Central America move into the center of President Carter's human rights policy? The U.S. government's attention and concern about the domestic affairs of its Central American neighbors in the late 1970s contrasts sharply to the inattention of earlier decades during the Cold War. The United States and Central America have been intertwined since at least the late 19th century.[283] As a target of U.S. interests and interference, much of Central America's political and economic development has been determined by U.S. goals. The history of U.S. relations with Central America comprises many examples of the bigger power's drive to extract resources, extirpate "alien" ideologies, implant a political philosophy, or dictate its economic rules. Overall, there is no single answer in trying to locate the motive for U.S. involvement in the internal affairs of its Southern neighbors. Scholars of inter-American relations have made out a range of explanations from security (to keep out rivals and to maintain stability), economic (access to investment or trade), political/ideological (to promote democracy, to prevent Communism or foreign ideologies), to psychological (an impulse to dominate, a fear of insecurity, misperceptions).[284]

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[280] Yet, Central America became the "primary foci" of his human rights policy. See Schoultz, *National Security*, 40. For a profound analysis of Carter's policy toward Central America, see Hartmann, *Die Menschenrechtspolitik der USA.*

[281] Congress had already halted military aid to Uruguay. See Schoultz, *National Security*, 40, footnote 16.

[282] Ibid., 215.

[283] LaFeber's *Inevitable Revolutions* provides a detailed history of this relationship under U.S. dominance by stressing U.S. economic and military interests.

[284] Lars Schoultz stresses the continuity of motivation in Washington's policy: "What is consistent over two centuries in Washington's policies toward Latin America is not the behavior of the United States, but the motivation." See Schoultz, *Beneath*, xv. A very brief summary of the policy toward Latin America throughout the last 200 years can be found in: Detlev Junker, "Gottes eigener Hinterhof: Die US-

Most scholars seem to agree that the dominant motive during the Cold War was U.S. security.[285] It has been suggested that the concern about security mobilized various different policies of control. At times, the United States sought direct military control and at other times, it was more interested in maintaining stability to ensure and promote U.S. interests, be they realistic or idealistic.[286] Military interventions such as the intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and in Grenada in 1983 or such U.S. supported coup d'etats as the overthrow of the leftist Jacobo Arbenz' government in Guatemala in 1954 demonstrate short-term attempts to halt and revert radical social reform projects. Socio-economic policies that challenged the status quo were inspected through Cold War lenses.

For the Carter administration, human rights were the foreign policy agenda to overcome "spreading pessimism" at home and "to restore America's political appeal to the Third World."[287] Furthermore, human rights appealed to Carter's fundamental religious beliefs and his aspiration to restore U.S. values.[288] The desires to revitalize the moral and democratic appeal of U.S. policies corresponded with a corrosion of human rights in Central American countries where the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua seemed, and indeed were, particularly repressive after the mid-1970s. El Salvador and Guatemala called additional attention to themselves in early 1977 when they declared to reject U.S. military aid because of the human rights initiatives by the United States. It needs to be stressed, however, that President Carter only pushed for human rights in those Latin American countries once assured that there was no major threat to stability, and therefore, to U.S. national security.[289] This assessment is significant to understand policy shifts during the Carter administration.

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lateinamerikanischen Beziehungen," in ibid. et al. (eds.), *Lateinamerika am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München: Beck, 1994), 49-74. See further LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*; Robert Pastor, *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Peter Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S. -Latin American Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Krakau, "Die Lateinamerika-Politik;" John A. Booth and Thomas Walker, *Understanding Central America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, ^{3}1999).

[285] See Pastor, *Whirlpool*; Schoultz, *National Security*; Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*. During the 1960s through 1980s, U.S. economic interest in terms of investments was rather small in Central America. See Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, 155. A healthy business climate and a stabile market economy, however, belong to the general economic interests of U.S. governments.

[286] Most direct forms of control took place before the beginning of the Cold War. The Platt Amendment from 1901 that granted the United States the right to intervene in Cuba is one example. From 1912 until 1933, the United States also maintained an occupation force in Nicaragua. The Panama Canal is another example of direct U.S. control in the region. The waterway was U.S. built and until 1999 U.S. owned. U.S. troops secured and protected the canal.

[287] John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A Re-evaluation* (New York: St. Martin's, ^{2}1995), 111.

[288] Ibid., 118.

[289] See Schoultz, *National Security*, 39; Arnson, *Crossroads*, 24f.

Considering the growing human rights movement concerned about Latin America in Washington, Lars Schoultz reasons that policymakers in the administration might have also given human rights issues more room in policies regarding Central America in order to concentrate on other crisis regions.[290] In order to study the governmental concern for human rights in Central America one has to include all of the above-mentioned reasons and probably others. A number of them can be traced back to the involvement of the religious human rights network. This is not to say that the human rights network originated the idea of a U.S. concern in human rights in 1973 and thereafter. Yet, the human rights groups had "defined the background" for action and they had raised the issue to the level of "big politics."[291]

In the following two subchapters, I will explore the role of religious groups in U.S.-Salvadoran relations and their attempts to influence U.S. foreign policy in the late 1970s. In the case of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, religious persecution was more severe than in South American countries. Especially in El Salvador, the Catholic Church became one of the main targets of repressive state policies. These developments affected and mobilized an increasingly more professional religious human rights network in the United States. Their attentiveness was the result of a transnational history, which will be illustrated in the next pages.

3.2 Religious Persecution in El Salvador

When the first group of Chilean refugees arrived in the San Francisco Bay area in late 1976, U.S. missionaries and religious groups sent out initial warnings regarding the deteriorating human rights conditions in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. As seen in the last two subchapters, the "professionalization" of the religious groups' advocacy work and the growing interest in human rights issues of the U.S. government facilitated the activities of church-linked groups in the United States. By 1977, the religious human rights network was already more alert and responding more promptly to events abroad. The U.S. Catholic Church and various Catholic missionary orders reacted quickly to alert U.S. policymakers about human rights violations in Central America. While the

[290] Schoultz, *National Security*, 39. In order to explain the human rights focus on Central America some also call attention to the Peace Corps experience of Assistant Secretary Patricia Derian's aide Mark Schneider in El Salvador, making him observe Central American issues more thoroughly.

[291] Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, 140, 145.

commitment to human rights as a basis for U.S. policy toward Central America spurred the interest of only a handful of members of Congress from 1976 to 1979, the religious human rights community made concrete experiences at the grassroots level that sharpened its agenda. In the eyes of the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Frank Devine (1977-1980), "the size and power of the human rights lobby" made an enormous contribution to "the all-pervasive influence" of human rights as a factor in U.S. foreign policy.[292] "By 1977," he says, "all of these [groups] had begun to focus on El Salvador."[293] Concern was also high regarding the situation in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The reasons for the growing concern lie in the political and social developments of the three Central American countries of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala during the 1970s. The U.S. groups reacted particularly to the growing persecution of "the Catholic Church" in Nicaragua and El Salvador and shortly afterwards in Guatemala. The persecution by repressive state forces was the result of the growing Catholic (as well as some Protestant groups') social activity as a response to the political and socio-economic situation. El Salvador and Nicaragua might have experienced political developments with opposing governmental ideologies from mid-1979 until 1990. Yet, the social and political context was quite similar before the Sandinistas overthrew the longtime dictator Anastasio Somoza in a popular revolt in Nicaragua in 1979.

Although the number of religious victims is relatively small in comparison to the thousands of people who were killed in the three Central American civil wars, the murders of religious personnel had a profound impact on the religious community in Central America, and particularly in El Salvador. This impact also reached religious groups in the United States through transnational channels of communication. Between 1971 and 1990, forty priests and nuns, as well as one archbishop, were killed in Central America. Half of the murders took place in El Salvador, the great majority between 1977 and 1980.[173] Further, many additional religious workers were persecuted, expelled, or tortured. Several U.S. missionaries were among the murdered and expelled victims.

The historical context will be reviewed briefly in order to shed light on the roots of this conflict and its dimension. The relationship between religion and "politics" in Central America will be analyzed in depth. This provides a context for U.S. religious groups' role and helps to explain the reactions and foreign policy suggestions of the

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[292] Devine, *El Salvador*, 45.

[293] Ibid.

[173] Anna Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador's Civil War* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 63.

(Central American and) U.S. religious communities between 1977 and 1980 that will be discussed at the end of the chapter. As I look into the background of the Central American conflicts, I will focus on events in El Salvador. Developments there were representative of conditions in Central America.[294] All three conflicts carried common themes due to their similar socio-economic and political development during most of the 19th and 20th centuries. While describing the unfolding of the violent conflict in El Salvador and religion's involvement in it, I will point out similarities and, where necessary, the differences and particularities between the three countries.

3.2.1 The Social and Political Context

During the 1970s, a growing number of social groups in El Salvador and Nicaragua spoke out against their countries' social inequities and the concentration of power and property in the hands of a tiny class of oligarchic families. Throughout Central American history, a large economic division between the rural poor and a wealthy ruling class characterized the social structure. With their new demands and criticism, these new societal forces challenged the status quo of their societies. In El Salvador, diverse social groups mobilized poor citizens. In coordinated opposition, they confronted the traditional military government and economic elites. The official army, the police, the National Guard, and paramilitary right-wing death squads responded to the so-called popular protest with violence and repression. Armed leftist rebel groups became involved in the conflict as additional social actors. By 1979, the conflict had accelerated into a popular rebellion in Nicaragua. In El Salvador, the situation was on the verge of a civil war in late 1979. In Guatemala, tension between new social forces and the government culminated in a violent clash after 1980. This exacerbated and prolonged an already existing civil war that lasted until 1996. The origins of the outbreak of violent conflict in these three countries are similar, though heterogeneous. Scholars have interpreted them differently.[295]

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[294] Geographically, Central America includes Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Belize, Costa Rica, and Panama. The histories of Belize and Panama, however, distinguish them from the other five countries. Culturally speaking, the state of Chiapas of Mexico is often also referred to as Central American. This study only refers to the three Central American countries that were engaged in a major social conflict during the 1970s and 1980s.

[295] Interpretations of the history of Central America and the main causes for the conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s can be found in: James Dunkerly, *Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Modern Central America* (London: Verso, 1988); LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*; Edelberto Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance: The Struggle for Democracy in Central America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989). Jean Carrière and Stefan Karlen offer a brief overview of scholarly approaches in "Zentralamerika,"

One of the most remarkable developments of the 1970s was the above described mobilization and uprising of a wide diversity of citizens against existing power structures in Central America. This becomes even more apparent when compared with the history of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, which had been marked by the exclusion of the majority of the population in the economic and political realm. The demand for political and economic change unleashed social movements and revolutionary guerrilla groups. What were the main factors behind the growing popular and peasant mobilization?

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Central American economies experienced an economic boom due to industrialization and modernization. Productivity increased and exports diversified, while the traditional agricultural sector modernized. The economy shifted away from agriculture toward manufacturing and the service sector. Overall, economic activity more than doubled between 1960 and 1980.[296] Economic growth, however, did not benefit the majority of the population. Instead, an increasing number of citizens found themselves marginalized. The expanding commercial agricultural sector and a concentration of landownership thrust aside the subsistence economy of peasants and drove them off their land, thereby causing a rapid migration of labor to the urban areas. Industrialization produced more goods but did not offer sufficient employment opportunities.[297] At the same time, the educational standard of the citizens improved while the population almost doubled.[298]

Scholars have pointed out that the reasons for the social protest of the 1970s and 1980s were not so much poverty as such, considering the long history of poverty for most Salvadorans. These specialists conclude, "[b]ecoming impoverished" is the more accurate term for social conditions of the majority of citizens in the 1970s.[299] Economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s was distributed very unevenly. In the history of El Salvador power had been monopolized by an agro-industrial oligarchy, the military and semi-democratic governing parties. In 1980, for example, the wealthiest 20 percent of the Salvadoran population possessed two-third of the national income, while the poorest 20

Walter Bernecker et al. (eds.), *Handbuch der Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, Vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), 365-481. Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America* presents common and distinct themes in Central American history.

[296] Booth and Walker, *Understanding*, 29.

[297] Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance*, 5f.; Frederick S. Weaver, *Inside the Volcano: The History and Political Economy of Central America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 192.

[298] Booth and Walker, *Understanding*, 29.

[299] Ibid., 11ff.; compare Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance*, 5f.

percent owned only two percent.[300] Until 1979, corrupt military or authoritarian governments had always protected the socio-economic status quo of the ruling class.

Apart from the general economic trends, specific political incidents fueled the discontent of many Central American citizens. Historian Edelberto Torres-Rivas notes, "poverty led to discontent." But he acknowledges the fact that "desperation does not always acquire the conscious forms of organized political protest that appeared in the region."[301] In El Salvador, evident electoral fraud by the leading party in government, the Party of National Conciliation, in 1972 and again in 1977 became turning points in popular opposition to the military regime.[302] Demonstrations, strikes, and protests against the political and economic developments were met with arrests, shootings, and killings.

Overall, the period from 1972 until 1980 showed a pattern of growing social mobilization after hopes for reform had been crushed. Citizen demands were answered with a greater form of repression than previously experienced. Between 1977 and 1980, El Salvador entered a decisive pre-civil war period that culminated in the murder by right-wing extremist forces of the popular Archbishop Oscar Romero while celebrating mass in March 1980.[303] During this period, armed rebel groups became more visible forces of the socio-economic struggle. One of the main conflicts, however, emerged between the Catholic Church and the state. While the Church was not united in its position on the conflict, Archbishop Romero and his followers in the Church supported and justified the demands of the new social groups.

While united in their criticism of the existing status quo, the protesting groups had different agendas and sought diverse forms of participation. The parallel existence of popular political organizations and guerrilla groups were the most obvious manifestation of this kind of pluralism. The Catholic Church was another social force demanding change. Some parts of the Church in El Salvador were extreme cases of the post-conciliar Catholic Church's affirmation of its desire to be present in the political sphere.

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[300] Carrière, "Wirtschaft," 406. Carrière uses the term "Volkseinkommen" which I translated with "national income."

[301] Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance*, 7.

[302] In Nicaragua and to a lesser extent in Guatemala, devastating earthquakes in 1972 and 1976 became the crisis events that mobilized and accelerated existing discontent.

[303] At the time, Romero's killers were not immediately identified. The investigation was controversial. The judge who investigated the case fled El Salvador after attempts to assassinate him failed. Most people assumed the government or one of the closely allied death-squads to be responsible. El Salvador's Truth Commission confirmed that the former National Guard intelligence officer and founder of the extreme right-wing and anti-communist Nationalist Republican Alliance Party (ARENA) Roberto D'Aubuisson gave the order to kill the Archbishop. In the report, the rightist political leader D'Aubuisson, is described as the mastermind of the assassination squads that operated from its intelligence unit, the S-2, armed and funded in party by rightist civilians. See Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad 1992-1993, *De la locura a la esperanza: La guerra de 12 años en El Salvador* (San Salvador: Arcoiris, ^{2}1993), 180.

Priests, nuns, and pastoral workers were in the midst of the social rebellion. The following paragraphs will shed some light on the Catholic Church's role in the mobilization of new social groups, or as Torres-Rivas put it, in the acquisition of a conscious form of "organized political protest."[304]

3.2.2 The Catholic Church and Civil Society in El Salvador

The formation of groups of previously unorganized citizens was one result of the growing social inequity.[305] Between 1972 and 1979, El Salvador experienced a period of "explosive popular mobilization" including student groups, labor and peasant unions.[306] The first armed revolutionary groups advocating some form of socialism (and only some groups sought a Soviet-style communism) in this period of protest appeared in 1970 and 1971. In the decade that followed, three others emerged.[307] The severe repression of the years between 1977 and 1981 galvanized the opposition groups' desire to seek a common agenda and to "strengthen the opposition's bargaining power vis-à-vis the government."[308]

Having become public protagonists of social change and defenders of human rights, church people played a key role in this period of civic uprising.[309] Just as the socio-economic development demonstrated similar patterns in the three Central American countries, so did developments in the Catholic Church. While the religious leaders of the Church responded differently and, at times, in opposition with one another, to the conditions in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, reactions at the grassroots level or among priests, nuns, and pastoral agents were similar. Especially in El Salvador,

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[304] Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance*, 7.

[305] A history of the popular movements and explanations of their emergence in Central America can be found in Daniel Camacho and Rafael Menjívar (eds.), *Los movimientos populares en América Latina* (Mexico City: Siglo ventiuno, 1989), 83-124 and in Susan Eckstein (ed.), *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).

[306] In 1980, the various peasant unions, grassroots and popular groups joined forces with former Christian Democratic leaders who had been in the government to become the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR). See chapter 4.1.

[307] The guerrilla groups were the Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL), the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), the Party of Revolutionary Central American Workers (PRTC), the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL), and the National Resistance (RN). Despite ideological and structural differences, the five guerrilla armies formed an alliance in November/December of 1980 called the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN).

[308] Anna Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador's Civil War* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 32.

[309] The most extensive and detailed history of religious groups' involvement in the social uprising of Central America is Phillip Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions* (New York: Maryknoll, 1984). Berryman, a U.S. citizen, worked as a priest in Panama

active church members fermented heightened awareness of the political situation and stimulated citizens' protests. We have seen in chapter two that the Catholic Church promoted one of the most extensive mobilizing activities in the hemisphere in the 1960s. The impact of the new social teachings of Medellín and their implementation was particularly notable in Central America.[310] An analysis of the events in El Salvador will make this interplay between religion and politics more concrete.

El Salvador, the smallest but most overpopulated country of Central America, experienced one of Latin America's bloodiest civil wars, accompanied by severe human rights violations.[311] In comparison to the high numbers of other victims of state repression in the period between 1977 and 1992, the murder of 25 church people seems relatively limited – if one wants to apply comparative measures to morally incomparable cases of murder.[312] Considering the traditional alliance between the Catholic Church and the political and economic elites throughout most of Latin American history, including Salvadoran history, the murders of religious leaders by governmental or government-linked forces symbolized a remarkable shift. It should also be noted that the majority of the church-related killings occurred before the beginning of the civil war in 1980.[313] Between January 1981 and November 1989, when six Jesuit professors of the *Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA) were slain by Salvadoran soldiers, no priest or nun was murdered, although many Christian lay activists were killed and religious workers harassed during these years.[314]

The first half of the year 1977 was a watershed in the relationship between religion and politics in El Salvador. According to one observer, the intensity of the confrontation between Church and state in 1977 seems "astounding" despite later

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between 1965 and 1973 and as the Central American representative of the American Friends Service Committee in Guatemala in the late 1970s.

[310] Booth and Walker, *Understanding*, 151; Berryman, *Religious Roots*.

[311] See the UN sponsored investigation report about human rights violations by the El Salvadoran Truth Commission: Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad 1992-1993, *De la locura a la esperanza*, 57f. See also chapter 4.1.

[312] The victims were Archbishop Oscar Romero, 22 foreign and Salvadoran Catholic priests and nuns, one seminary student, and one Lutheran minister. In addition, many lay workers were killed. See Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 2.

[313] Teresa Whitfield, *Paying the Price: Ignacio Ellacuría and the Murdered Jesuits of El Salvador* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 119. Between 1977 and 1980 eleven priests were murdered.

[314] Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 63-66. Leading progressive religious voices were in exile or took more moderate stances and progressive orders such as Maryknoll had left the country after members had been killed.

developments leading into civil war.[315] During this first half of 1977, two priests were murdered and many others were arrested, tortured, and expelled. Among the first religious clergy members expelled were three U.S. priests. The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) was one of the first social groups singled out as a killing target by the White Warriors Union, one of the right-wing death squads, in June 1977.

In February 1977, the Party of National Conciliation, under the leadership of General Carlos Humberto Romero and with the backing of the existing military government, announced its victory in the presidential elections despite obvious election fraud and mass (non-violent) demonstrations. After a government attack on demonstrators, which killed at least eight people, the new government declared a state of siege and suspended constitutional rights such as freedom of movement and speech and the right to assembly.[316] Two high-ranking government officials were killed by guerrillas.[317] In retaliation to the guerrilla killings, the right-wing terrorist group White Warriors Union murdered two Catholic priests, Rutilio Grande and Alfonso Navarro. Then, in June 1977, the group threatened to kill all Jesuits living in El Salvador.[318] While the political developments moved expeditiously, the Catholic Church experienced a makeover. Between the election and the declaration of a state of siege in February 1977, Oscar Romero became the archbishop of El Salvador. Romero's appointment was to become a significant element in the struggle of "the Church" against state repression. The intensity of the confrontation can only be understood in the context of the Catholic activities in El Salvador.

After a period of harmony and cooperation between the Catholic Church, other religious groups, the Salvadoran government, and the U.S. government regarding "development" in order to combat poverty in Latin America, the Catholic Church in Latin America moved into a new phase of pastoral work in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[319] After Medellín, small-scale grassroots projects emphasizing a "transformation of consciousness" in order to empower the poor and powerless were added to the Catholic Church's outreach to "the people." Progressive orders like the Maryknoll and Jesuit societies embraced and implemented the new teachings more emphatically than

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[315] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 117.

[316] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 9, 17 March 1977, 2.

[317] In January 1977, Roberto Poma, head of the government tourist agency was kidnapped and later found dead. In May 1977, foreign minister Mauricio Borgonovo was killed by the FPL.

[318] See Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 117ff.

[319] See chapter 2.2 regarding the motivation, goals and diffe rent programs.

others. By the mid-1970s, the Maryknoll sisters sought the "integral development of man" rather than the involvement in purely economic development projects.[320] Appearing before the U.S. Congress, a Jesuit priest explained his order's work as one of serving the people in order to "bring about democratic modifications of social structures."[321] His words demonstrate the thin – if existing – borderline between a religious and political activity on questions that touch the common good and social justice.

Support from the Catholic Church hierarchy varied in most areas of the region. Those in favor of implementing principles of liberation theology did receive official church backing in 1979 when the Latin American episcopate reaffirmed the "preferential option for the poor" as its theological guideline.[322] In regards to the relationship between religion and politics, the bishops pronounced the Church's general rejection of partisan engagement. However, they did embrace the quest for the common good as being part of the Church's outreach into the civic sphere. According to the final declaration of the Latin American bishops' meeting in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979, part of Christianity's mission is the evangelization of "the whole human life, including the political dimension."[323] It was stressed that values promoted by the Church should inspire "la política."[324] This, however, should be done via evangelization rather than direct political action. While these programs were carried out on different levels and with diverse emphases among the different Latin American countries, it has been pointed out that they were highly effective in spurring citizen participation and citizens' demands for social and political change in El Salvador.[325]

Since the early 1970s, Christian base communities (CEBs) had developed gradually before more severe forms of repression took place after 1977. Because of the long-serving Archbishop Luis Chávez y González' openness toward reform projects

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[320] "Regional Report of the Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region-Prepared for the 10th General Assembly of the Maryknoll Sisters 1974," in: MSA, H3.4, Middle American Region: Box 1, Folder: Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region-Background, Reports, Handbook 1974-1980.

[321] Father James Richard, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 9.

[322] CELAM, Puebla, Final Document, chapter 1 (*Opción preferencial por los pobres*), part 4, no. 1134, in: http://www.celam.org (12 February 2001).

[323] CELAM, Puebla, Final Document, chapter 2 (*Que es evangelizar?)*, part 5, no. 515. See also no. 521-524, in: http://www.celam.org (12 February 2001).

[324] CELAM, Puebla, Final Document, chapter 2 (*Que es evangelizar?)*, part 5, no. 522, in: http://www.celam.org (12 February 2001).

[325] Peterson, *Martyrdom*; Berryman, *Religious Roots*; Levine, *Popular Voices*, 48ff. Regarding the different experiences of progressive Catholicism in Latin America, see Levine, *Popular Voices* and Eckstein, *Power and Popular Protest*,

(agricultural cooperatives, self-help projects) and the declarations of Medellín, the formation of CEBs was pursued quite vigorously in El Salvador.[326] Divisions in the Salvadoran episcopate during the 1970s, however, reveal that the Church was far from unified regarding the implementation of progressive ideas of Catholicism.[327] As in other Latin American societies, CEBs were principally small bible discussion groups in rural areas with spiritual functions. But their participatory element contributed to political mobilization in El Salvador, such as the formation of peasant and neighborhood associations. The questioning of institutional structures (as encouraged in CEBs) triggered demands for greater democracy. Likewise, leadership training and organizational skills as well as CEBs' role in forging a collective identity or a sense of belonging provided foundations for political organizing and forms of solidarity.[328]

Although reluctant and cautious in their approaches to the political problems of their countries, the bishops in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have each at some point condemned the worst human rights violations during the late 1970s.[329] According to Philipp Berryman, the Nicaraguan bishops were the most "insistent and clearest in their teaching."[330] He asserts that "in Guatemala and El Salvador the bishops may have been more reluctant to denounce the groups in power, since to do so would [have] objectively aid[ed] the only alternative, the leftist opposition."[331]

In El Salvador, the Catholic Church did not only move into the political sphere through individual priests and newly established religious NGOs or CEBs, but also through open criticism of the political regime by the national Church authority. The Salvadoran episcopate was divided on questions regarding social criticism and the Church's relationship to the emerging social groups. Still, the Church did provide open

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[326] Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 49f. Chávez was El Salvador's archbishop from 1939 until 1977.

[327] Berryman, *Religious Rebellion*, 134.

[328] There were other forms of new church action. For example, peasant training centers (*centros de formación campesina*) tried to reach out to peasants outside of San Salvador. So-called *cursillos* were the main programs of these centers, aimed at disseminating ideas of "progressive Catholicism. Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 52, 57.

[329] Guatemalan Episcopal Conference, "United in Hope" (July 1976); Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, statement from January 8th, 1977; various statements by Oscar Romero, archbishop of El Salvador between 1977 and 1980, see Gregorio Rosa Chávez, *Unentwegter Kampf um Frieden und Demokratie: Der Beitrag der Kirche in Zentralamerika* (Bonn: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 1995).

[330] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 343.

[331] Ibid. Before the Sandinistas took power in late 1979, a middle-class anti-Somoza group existed in Nicaragua who shared views with the bishops and therefore, contributed to their anti-Somoza position. Cardinal Casariego of Guatemala took a very conservative position and had close relations with government and military forces. In the aftermath of the 1976 earthquake, the Guatemalan bishops published a serious analysis of the social and political conditions of the country and spoke up against the government's and military oppression.

spaces for participation in times of repression, as well as limited forms of representative democracy.

Archbishop Oscar Romero's growing "passionate defense of the people's right to organize" between 1977 and 1980 seemed to legitimize activities at the grassroots level.[332] The originally conservative bishop avoided taking a partisan position but attempted to give "a voice to those without a voice."[333] The majority of priests, sisters, and lay people embraced Romero's stand.[334] Most were sympathetic to the popular uprisings and defended the people's decision to participate in them but refrained from taking part themselves.[335] A tiny number of Protestant groups were also linked to the social protests in Central America. The Baptist Assembly, Lutheran and Episcopalian churches for example participated in the movements or aided victims of human rights abuses in El Salvador.[336]

Scholars have discovered a correlation between areas of pastoral work and political opposition throughout Central America.[337] Diocesan priests took the lead in starting CEBs in El Salvador. It was the Salvadoran Jesuit Rutilio Grande, however, who initiated the Christian base communities in the town of Aguiláres, which became a

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[332] See Romero's third pastoral letter "Iglesia y organizaciones políticas populares," in: Jon Sobrino et al. (eds.), *La voz de los sin voz: La palabra viva de Monseñor Romero* (San Salvador: UCA editores, 1980), 93-121

[333] Archbishop Romero maintained that his homilies tried to reflect the voice of the people and the voice of those that have no voice: "Estas homilías quieren ser la voz de este pueblo. Quieren ser la voz de los que no tienen voz." (29 July 1979) in Sobrino, *La voz de los sin voz*, 453.

[334] Berryman states that the majority of priests and nun, including those that did not work with CEBs were on the side of Archbishop Romero. Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 137. A confidential report by the U.S. Department of State from 1977 also noted the "relative broad unity behind Romero." See "The Catholic Church and Human Rights in Latin America," Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 25 October 1977, in: NSA, *El Salvador: 1977-1984*, doc. # 00041. In 1974, the Maryknoll sisters for example still criticized the lack of a "creative or forceful leadership among the archbishop [Chávez] and 6 bishops who form the hierarchical Church." But in the late 1970s, they embraced Romero's standpoints and emphasize the need to follow his call. See "Regional Report of the Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region - Prepared for the 10th General Assembly of the Maryknoll Sisters 1974," in: MSA, H3.4, Middle America Region: Box 1, Folder: Panama-Nicaragua-ES Region- Report for Personnel Department 1976; Letters by Sisters from El Salvador, in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 3, Folder: Sister Ministry in El Salvador-History/Background/Csp. Articles 1969-1993.

[335] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 333.

[336] Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 34f. For example, only two ordained pastors served in the Salvadoran Lutheran Church (today Salvadoran Lutheran Synod with a membership of 12,000 - an eightfold increase since 1977) until 1982, since one was murdered and two others left the country during the civil war. See http://www.elca.org (7 November 2000). In Nicaragua, Protestants also started to form an alliance promoting long-term development programs and aiding victims of natural disasters during Somoza's regime. A small number of Baptists became outright opponents of Somoza's rule. See Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 60f., 67.

[337] See e.g. Tommie Sue Montgomery, "Liberation and Revolution: Christianity as a Subversive Activity in Central America," in Martin Diskin (ed.), *Trouble in Our Backyard* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 75-99.

symbol for progressive church activity at the grassroots level.[338] With a team of fellow Jesuits, Grande started his pastoral work in September 1972 in a community of 30,000 people. According to the philosophy of CEBs, the priests listened and talked to the people, seeking to understand their lives, religious beliefs and difficulties. Over the course of four years, discussion groups emerged, delegates of the Word (lay preachers) were chosen, and community programs initiated. Eventually, Grande's activities enraged landowners because his team's pastoral work encouraged peasants to self-organize.[339] One author notes that the rapid process of organizing among committed delegates of the Word actually "took the Jesuits by surprise."[340] As a priest, Grande had refrained from becoming an active participant in political organizing. When the newly established Christian Federation of Peasants of El Salvador (FECCAS) asked him to celebrate a special mass for their organization, he favored a "peasant Christmas" in the church with a clear separation from the political demonstration afterwards. During the sermon, he argued that "'[w]e cannot get married to political groups of any sort but we cannot remain indifferent to the politics of the common good of the vast majority, the people…'"[341] The priest became one of the first victims of the politicized situation in 1977 when he was shot a month after the February election.

3.2.3 U.S. Missionaries and Religious Groups

Orders like the Society of Jesus, the Maryknollers, and the Franciscans belonged to the active and progressive Catholic orders working with the CEBs and training centers. In the mid-1970s, three-fourth of the members of religious orders were foreign-born.[342] The number of U.S. Catholic missionaries in Central America had risen from 112 in 1942 to 433 in 1960 to a peak of 936 in 1968, falling back to 702 in 1977.[343] The Jesuits, counting approximately 50 priests in El Salvador (no U.S. priests at the time but many Spaniards) were the most influential regarding the dissemination of the new social emphasis of the Catholic Church.[344] Facing the increase of assaults on the Catholic

[338] Grande's CEB is also one of the best documented.

[339] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 114; Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 61; Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, 62f.

[340] Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, 63.

[341] Quoted in Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 114. For more information on Grande and the Jesuits' position on their relationship to popular groups, see Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, 65.

[342] Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 54.

[343] *Mission Handbook 1991-1992* (Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Mission Association, 1992), 46. For 1942 data, see Dries, *Missionary Movement*, 304, footnote 2 who uses data from the Catholic Students Mission Crusade, *A Missionary Index of Catholic Americans* (Cincinnati, Crusade Castle, 1942).

[344] Peterson, *Martyrdom*, 55.

Church in El Salvador, the orders' transnational networks became increasingly active in the international political realm. The Maryknoll and Jesuit orders were among the first groups that called the deteriorating human rights situation in 1977 to the attention of Congressman Fraser.[345]

The increased involvement of U.S. religious interest groups in El Salvador dated back to the Catholic and U.S. governmental development programs of the 1960s. At the time, a majority of the U.S. religious and humanitarian organizations operating in El Salvador[346] were missionary societies. The Maryknoll Fathers started their work in El Salvador in 1960. Maryknoll Sisters joined their colleagues in El Salvador in 1969. Other Catholic societies were U.S. Franciscan priests (Province of the Immaculate Conception), the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and the Benedictine Fathers. Protestant missionary societies had arrived a century before. The oldest was the American Baptist Home Mission, which had been involved in educational work since 1820. Another was the Central American Mission, started in 1896.

Missionary societies and Catholic orders were not the only U.S. groups involved in the social affairs of El Salvador. Eight religious and secular relief agencies financially and logistically contributed to U.S. development projects in the 1960s.[347] Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the relief arm of the U.S. Catholic Church, ran the largest development and humanitarian program. CRS undertook projects according to the development principles of the Catholic Church and the U.S. government beginning in 1961. In cooperation with the U.S. and Salvadoran government, it distributed food, assisted in agricultural cooperatives and credit unions, and provided medical care.[348]

The Maryknoll and Benedictine Fathers operated their own educational and social projects but cooperated with, or were assisted by, Catholic Relief Services.[349] With five priests, Maryknoll was the largest group, in terms of personnel, in El Salvador. It was also the only group at the time including a "leadership training project for civic and

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[345] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 9, 17 March 1977, 56f.

[346] Referring to those voluntary agencies and missionary groups listed in the Technical Assistance Information Clearinghouse (TAICH) that specializes on programs abroad.

[347] The religious relief agencies were Catholic Relief Services, CWS, and the Christian Children's Fund. The U.S. Episcopal Church and World Vision entered the scene in the 1970s. The list of the operating organizations for the 1960s and early 1970s is in *U.S. Non-Profit Organizations: Voluntary Agencies, Missions and Foundations participating in Technical Assistance Abroad: A Directory 1964* (New York: TAICH, 1964), 527-529 and *U.S. Non-Profit Organizations in Development Assistance Abroad: 1971* (New York: TAICH, 1971), 842-845.

[348] *U.S. Non-Profit Organizations 1964*, 527f.

[349] Ibid., 527-529.

social responsibility."[350] By comparison, the Maryknollers ran a considerably larger missionary program in Guatemala (due to perceived needs of combating communism and Protestantism in that country during the 1950s and 1960s) with 85 missionaries by 1964.[351]

The 1970s marked the beginning of closer cooperation between U.S. and local NGOs and grassroots groups abroad, as well as a distancing from top-down, government-led development programs.[352] Closer contact with local NGOs was still marginal in the 1970s but it grew in depth and size, partly due to the parallel growth of Central American NGOs. This development, however, was only true for a small segment of the nongovernmental relief and development sector.[353]

Like some of their Catholic colleagues, non-missionary relief organizations linked to the mainline Protestant churches reformed their programs during the 1970s and 1980s. Damaging earthquakes in Nicaragua in 1972 and in Guatemala in 1976 brought the region to closer international public attention. Besides an immediate stream of economic aid - which in the case of Nicaragua almost entirely flowed into the pockets of dictator Anastasio Somoza - an increasing number of relief NGOs from the North started operations in Central America.[354] Some of them moved into long-term rural development activities with local peasant groups.[355]

The activities of U.S. religious NGOs were manifold and depended on the religious groups' philosophies and policies as well as on their budgets. Among the U.S. Catholic and mainline Protestant relief groups, CRS, CWS, and Lutheran World Relief are the largest operations, in terms of budget. According to Bruce Nichols, CRS is the largest relief agency in the world, or at least it was at the time of his writing in 1988.[356] Small NGOs that represent the liberal and "peace" wing of U.S. Protestantism like the

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[350] Ibid., 529.

[351] Ibid., 534f.

[352] The political scientist Carrie Meyer argues that sharply declining U.S. bilateral aid after 1968 "resulted in declines in government services for the poor and gaps for indigenous NGOs to fill." See Carrie Meyer, *The Economics and Politics of NGOs in Latin America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 29.

[353] For a general assessment of this development see John Clark, *Democratizing Development: The Role of Voluntary Organizations* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian, 1991) and Peter J. Burnell, *Charity, Politics and the Third World* (New York: Harvester, 1991). For a concrete assessment of the nongovernmental work in Central America see Laura MacDonald, "Globalizing Civil Society: Interpreting International NGOs in Central America," *Millenium* 23:2 (1994): 267-285; Laura MacDonald, *Supporting Civil Society: The Political Impact of NGO Assistance to Central America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

[354] Meyer, *Economics and Politics*, 44. Regarding Somoza's private enrichment from relief money see also Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 119.

[355] Meyer, *Economics and Politics*, 44.

[356] Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 115.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) tend to operate programs with very few federal subsidies (one to four percent) or are independent from government contract-services overseas.[357] CRS was the recipient of the largest federal subsidy, receiving approximately 75 percent of its total income between 1975 and 1983 from the U.S. government. At the other extreme in the Catholic community was Maryknoll, getting no U.S. government funds in those years.[358] The mainline Protestant CWS received between 14 and 44 percent from the government, and the Lutheran World Relief around 25 percent or less in the same period.[359]

All of the above mentioned groups were engaged in development assistance programs in one or more Central American countries in the mid-1970s, albeit with different emphases.[360] The UUSC for example, a small interdenominational organization that seeks to "promote human rights and social justice worldwide",[361] operated on a small-scale basis in El Salvador. In 1973, it helped the Salvadoran clergy to publish *Justicia y Paz*, a newsletter offering self-help and literacy skills for the poor.[362] Church World Service, the relief and refugee agency of the NCC, exemplified shifting priorities

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[357] *U.S. Nonprofit Organizations in Development Assistance Abroad: 1983* (New York: TAICH, 1983), 38, 291, 395. The USCC does not receive any money from the federal government. Approximately one percent of the MCC's budget and 4.7 percent of the AFSC's budget in 1983 was government funded. Nichols' *Uneasy Alliance* sheds light on the complex relationship between the U.S. government and religious NGOs in the field of international relief and refugee work.

[358] "A Giver's Guide," *The Other Side* 19:3 (March 1983), 8-29. Maryknoll decided in 1980 to engage the Center for Concern in a study about the relationship between the U.S. government and religious NGOs in the field of foreign aid. The study's background was a debate about Maryknoll's participation in CODEL, an ecumenical organization of private voluntary organizations in development work. Some Maryknoll members had questioned Maryknoll's participation because of CODEL's acceptance of U.S. government funds: *Religious Private Voluntary Organizations and the Question of Government Funding: Preliminary Report* (Washington, DC: Center of Concern, June 1980), in: Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs (CCEIA), Series VIII – Church State Project, Box: 757, Folder: Funding Government grants and contracts with PVOs.

[359] See Nichols, *Uneasy Alliance*, 211. Data for 1983 in: *U.S. Nonprofit Organizations in Development Assistance Abroad: 1983*. In the same time period the federal subsidy for some evangelical relief agencies such as World Relief increased by approximately 40 percent.

[360] See listings of U.S. non-profit organizations operating in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 141, Folders: Country File/El Salavdor/1976; Country File Guatemala; Nicaragua.

[361] UUSC was founded in 1940. The UUSC is the social service agency of the community of Unitarian Universalists. The Unitarians and Universalists merged in 1961 to become the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is a small religious association of 138,110 members in 1984 (191,317 in 1991). The Unitarian Universalists are "Christian." They do not necessarily belong to the mainline Protestant denominations, but are categorized with the liberal family of American Christians. Because of their progressive-liberal positions, they are often grouped with the peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites) within Protestantism.

[362] http://www.uusc.org (10 October 2000). See also "Regional Report of the Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region, prepared for the 10th General Assembly of the Maryknoll Sisters 1974," in: MSA, H3.4, Middle American Region: Box 1, Folder: Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region: Background, Reports, Handbook 1974-1980.

within the mainline Protestants' international work with respect to Central America.[363] Traditionally, CWS had been conducting its international relief work as a foreign organization through its own service and material-aid programs. During the 1970s, immediate temporary and humanitarian responses to natural disasters were slowly expanded and reformed. By 1976, the CWS program reached into all Central American countries cooperating with new movements within the Protestant community.

After a severe earthquake had destroyed much of Managua in Nicaragua in 1972, CWS started to coordinate its work with local churches through the help of a missionary from the Lutheran Church of America, thereby, setting the pattern of the future programs of CWS in Latin America.[364] In the case of Nicaragua, the Protestant Nicaraguan Gustavo Parajon formed the Evangelical Committee for Aid (CEPAD) to the victims of the above-mentioned earthquake. CEPAD became a future partner of CWS. Apart from the necessary immediate food and material provisions, some long-term policies for the same victims were undertaken.[365]

The new approach to disaster relief work matured during the 1970s. When a very severe earthquake left one million people homeless in Guatemala in 1976, long-term initiatives were already a part of the rebuilding program. Becoming aware of the long-term effect of such disasters on poor communities, "the building of secure, livable housing" became a priority of the three-year program of CWS in Guatemala where a majority of the one million earthquake victims were still homeless after the initial aid was used up. According to a semi-official history of the CWS: "The CWS role was to provide the funds and some materials to help...The people of the communities were themselves central to the rebuilding process, with each family contributing either cash or labor in the construction of their own homes."[366] The Maryknollers had started a similar poor citizen housing project in Nicaragua following the 1972 earthquake there, with the high goal of building a "model community" that would "open a new international dialogue among the poor of two countries."[367] Engaging community organizers from the Chilean National Institute for Community Action and Research, Father d'Escoto

[363] See e.g. Doris Jean Knight, *CWS: The Power of the Humanitarian Ideal* (Creighton University, MA thesis, 1984).

[364] Situation Bulletin: Regional Report/Program: Central American Region, by Paul McCleary to CWS Committee, 23 November 1976, in: ACVAFS, 655, Box 29, Folder: *CWS-Reports*. See also Stenning, *CWS*, 58.

[365] Stenning, *CWS*, 59. This semi-official history of CWS calls Parajon the "prime mover and motivator" for the local relief organization through which CWS operated and started its long-term aid program.

[366] Ibid., 60. By the end of the three years, 20.000 Guatemalans had new homes.

[367] "Starting a new diplomacy," *Maryknoll* 67:8 (August 1973), 62-63.

envisaged "a new kind of diplomacy on the grass roots level" to give poor people a voice in international dealings.[368]

U.S. Catholic missionaries in Latin America became the strongest promoters of social change-oriented church programs, albeit with varying degrees of involvement. Reviewing the assigned posts of the Maryknoll Sisters in El Salvador, the changing approach of the missionary endeavor in the 1970s becomes clear. While the first sisters who served from 1969 to 1973 were directed to do "direct evangelization," sisters arriving in the later part of the 1970s engaged in health education, CEBs, leadership work among peasants, youth and pastoral work.[369] The earlier missions already tried to adopt the small community approach of the Christian base groups. Sisters Teresa Lilly and Pat Murray explained the idea behind the early mission in El Salvador that included the formation of adult groups and the promotion of women:

> It was felt that such a goal could not be realized through any kind of apostolate to the masses. If the people were to come to know and experience the love and concern of God for each one of them, then they would have to experience this through interaction with others in a community on a person-to-person level.[370]

Maryknoll priest and U.S. citizen Bernard Survil who was expelled from El Salvador in 1977 described his daily pastoral work as such:

> …our group leaders meet in my living room every Thursday: two nuns, a street peddler, a store clerk, a construction worker or two, a housewife or two, a gas station attendant, a day laborer often without work, my landlady. We pray, we sing, we study, we plan, we evaluate, we laugh, and we read Revelation to maintain hope.[371]

By the mid-1970s, missionaries believed their work was taking hold. In interviews and letters, they discussed the fruits of their labor.[372] Assessing his work in El Salvador, Maryknoll priest Bernard Survil found that "liberation theology on the parish level is in

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[368] Ibid.

[369] See list of serving sisters in: MSA, H3.4, Middle America Region: Box 1, Folder: Maryknoll Sisters who served in El Salvador, 1969-1980. See also report by Sister Madeline Dorsey about missions in El Salvador, June 1976-May 1981 (no date), in: MSA H3.4, Guatemala: Box 5, Folder: Sister Ministry in ES - History/Background/Csp. Articles 1969-1993.

[370] "Maryknoll Sisters History - Colonia, Santa Lucia, Ilopongo, San Salvador, 1969-1974" by Sisters Teresa Lilly and Pat Murray, 15 December 1973, in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 5, Folder: Sister Ministry in ES - History/Background/Csp. Articles 1969-1993.

[371] Quoted in Costello, *Mission*, 207.

[372] Maryknoll priest William Price who lived in Guatemala from 1956 to 1974 when he was expelled was convinced that his and that of other missionaries' pastoral work had an effect on Indians' "coming of age." See Interview with William Price, April 1974, in: MFBA, Justice and Peace Office, Box 7: Csp./Rpts.: 1973-1985/Chile-El Salvador-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Peru-Venezuela, Folder 2.

the making…"[373] Sister Estelle Coupe believes that the Maryknoll ministries contribute to a "steady process of conscientization"…[374] In 1978, she wrote about the Sisters' work:

> Our own Maryknoll Sisters - together with other Church groups - have concentrated their efforts on programs of 'human development' and recognition of human rights. Our preoccupation has been to bring the people to a realization of their rights as human beings and as citizens of a developing country, so that they would, of their own volition, seek the means for freeing themselves of the oppression under which more than half of the citizens have been born and raised.[375]

In a case study about the work of U.S. Capuchin and Agnesian missions in Central America, Angelyn Dries ascertained similar developments in mission thinking. Women missionaries shifted from teaching in formal schools to pastoral and catechetical work and male missionaries started to work with Christian base communities. Missions also moved to rural areas and emphasized lay and team ministries.[376] By the late 1970s, the Maryknoll Fathers' mission philosophy stressed the community rather than the sacraments as well as closer cooperation with non-Christians. The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers connected their international work, i.e. mission, with community work.[377] Mission was still faith-based but embraced aspects touching the social and civic well-being of citizens.

Different Approaches

Foreign missionaries did not agree on the goals of their work. In order to accentuate the distribution and approaches of U.S. missionary work in Central America during the 1970s, Guatemala serves as a better example than El Salvador. A vast diversity of U.S. religious groups and missionary societies was operating in Guatemala. Among them were liberal-progressive groups such as the AFSC or the Maryknollers, the liberal Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the conservative Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the fundamentalist evangelical Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).[378] The two largest U.S. religious groups in Guatemala, the Maryknoll society and the Summer

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[373] Quoted in Costello, *Mission*, 207.

[374] Letter by Estelle Coupe to Elizabeth Roach, 1 December 1978, in: MSA, H3.4, Nicaragua: Box 1, Folder: Sister Estelle Coupe's Letters/Reports from Nicaragua, 1944-1978.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Dries, *Missionary Movement*, 221f.

[377] *Maryknoll* 73:6 (June 1979).

[378] Due to a strong anti-communist agenda of the Vatican and the United States and the Guatemalan archbishop's own crusade against communist forces in the 1950s, many U.S. missionary groups, North American and West German religious funding organizations concentrated on Guatemala. For further analysis of the history see Rodolfo Cardenal, "Radical Conservatism and the Challenge of the Gospel in Guatemala," in Keogh, *Church and Politics,* 205-224. A list of the groups operating in

Institute of Linguistics,[379] could not have been further apart in their project outlooks.[380] Despite their diverging objectives in the 1970s and 1980s, the two societies shared a similar historical background. Both had started their programs at mid-century in the wake of the Cold War, believing that "atheistic communism" was "the chief threat to the peace and welfare of the world today," ignoring "morality and the basic social liberties essential if the peoples of the earth are to live as free men in a free world."[381] It was during the 1950s and 1960s when the U.S. government often utilized missionaries of the Maryknoll or Jesuit orders, with or without their knowledge in order to obtain information (often through CIA agents).[382] While Maryknoll had moved away from its anti-communist tones of earlier decades, SIL held on to this viewpoint during most of the Cold War.[383]

After the mid-1970s, the activities of fundamentalist religious organizations and churches such as SIL and the Central American Mission also diversified. They never endorsed liberation theology or an overt religious engagement for social reform and justice. In the beginning, fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches worked through long-established missionary programs, but expanded their missions to include disaster relief, seminaries, ethnic federations, confraternities, and other church activities.[384] While mainline Protestant mission work started to decline, the evangelical and Pentecostal churches focused on traditional mission work, i.e. gaining converts and establishing new local churches.

U.S. evangelical Protestant missions in Latin America have caused much controversy. With Catholic missions emphasizing social justice and mainline Protestants' changing mission theme, Latin Americans perceived evangelical missionaries as the new "forces of U.S. imperialism" due to their traditional mission approach and their – apart

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Guatemala is in *U.S. Non-Profit Organizations in Development Assistance Abroad* (New York: TAICH, 1971), 845-858.

[379] Size according to personnel working abroad.

[380] More on the history of the SIL can be found in David Stoll, *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, 1982) and David Stoll, "The Controversies over the Summer Institute of Linguistics," in *The Church and Society in Latin America: Selected Papers from the conference at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 29-30 April 1982* (New Orleans: Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane University, 1984), 343-359.

[381] Letter from Raymond Lane, Superior General of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) to President Harry Truman, 12 October 1949, in: MFBA, Justice and Peace Office, Box 2: Misc. Csp.: 1974-1984/U.S. Congress; President: 1949-1984, Folder: U.S. President/State Department Csp., 1949-1950.

[382] Cardenal, "Radical Conservatism," 212f.

[383] Stoll, "The Controversies," 344.

[384] Levine and Stoll, "Bridging the Gap," 71f.

from the Catholic Church – unrivaled "influence among indigenous people."[385] In the 1970s and 1980s, one can say, U.S. evangelical Protestant missionaries on the one side and Catholic and mainline Protestants on the other, were accusing each other of exploiting the native population. Both sides believed to have the right solution in ensuring justice or morality.

The scholars Donna and Edward Brett have identified four groups of U.S. missionaries working in Central America, each favoring a different approach: the conformists, the non-conformists, the benevolent group, and those beyond categorization.[386] They identified the conformist faction as those who feared communist undertones in the demands of the poor or marginalized sectors of society. Accordingly, the non-conformists were those who believed in changing the social structures for achieving a just society. Brett and Brett argue that the benevolent wing favored changes for the poor but attempted to take a non-political stand. Finally, there were those missionaries who were trapped in the political schism of the Cold War.[387]

It is likely that most U.S. missionaries favored the "benevolent" approach toward the social situation they encountered. Maryknoll priest William Woods who died in a plane crash in 1976, is one example of this group. Refraining from criticizing social structures and from endorsing liberation theology, he sought to improve the socio-economic situation for the Guatemalan Indians, in his mission envisioning a U.S. American lifestyle for them.[388] In order to help the impoverished people in his parish, he started various cooperatives. In a letter to the Guatemalan president, he emphasized his "love" for Guatemala and its peasants: "I repeat, my only interest is to help make the peasants better Christians, better Guatemalans, and thus help them produce more for themselves and for their country."[389] His chief project, however, brought him in conflict with governmental and business interests. In the 1960s, he had started to resettle Indians from a mountain region to Ixcán, a jungle region where the possibilities to make a living were better. He had collected money privately and tried to obtain land titles registered in the name of the cooperatives in an effort to prevent plantation owners or corporations

[385] Stoll, "The Controversies," 345.

[386] Donna Brett and Edward Brett, *Murdered in Central America: The Stories of Eleven U.S. Missionaries* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 12f.

[387] Some individuals of the latter group were viewed with suspicion by governmental as well as rebellious forces. Brett and Brett describe the case of the ecumenical missionary Frank Holdenried who was killed in April 1983 in Guatemala. Holdenried feared Soviet infiltration in Guatemala but believed that current U.S. policy only fostered the growth of Marxist-Leninist thought. He envisioned a humane U.S. foreign policy, one not driven by ideological interests of the Cold War, and he favored fair trade and U.S. business involvement in Latin America. Brett and Brett, *Murdered*, 159ff.

[388] Brett and Brett, *Murdered*, 71f.; *Maryknoll* 76:7 (July 1982).

from easily buying out land from individual peasants. By 1978, the land had increased 15-fold from its 1965 value and oil companies showed an interest in investing in the area. Between 1976 and 1978, the region was the target of selective repression and the focus of paramilitary and guerrilla activity. Father Woods' plane crashed after he had taken off without clearance in an attempt to assist survivors of another plane crash close to his mission project. The government had prohibited the use of his plane for other than strictly priestly duties in 1976. In letters home, he had complained about surveillance.[390] It was never revealed whether the government ordered Father Wood's assasination. Most missionaries, religious workers, and Indians from Wood's project believed that government forces shot down the plane.[391]

Among those who supported changing structures in order to achieve their vision of a just society, there were different opinions about the means to get there. While most Maryknollers and Jesuits believed in the fruits of liberation theology, they abstained from direct, full-scale political involvement. Very few foreign missionaries and religious workers wanted to risk revolution by affiliating with guerrilla groups. In chapter two we have observed one Maryknoll group embarking on such a route in the late 1960s. There were others.

After having spent two decades in Honduras, the U.S. Jesuit missionary James Carney found the Jesuit teaching in the United States "alienating, theoretical, apolitical."[392] By 1973, he adhered to a form of Christian Marxism. After being expelled from Honduras in November 1979, he joined the revolutionary guerrillas. While attempting to return to Honduras from Nicaragua in 1983, military forces, i.e. the Honduran army and U.S. supported Nicaraguan contra rebels, dismantled his tiny guerrilla group. However, the exact circumstances of his death remain a mystery.[393] Father Carney had come to the conclusion that legal and civil channels were useless for the changes he envisioned for Central American societies.[394] Father Ernesto Barrera and Sister Silvia Arriola were El Salvador's better-known cases of native religious active as combatants of guerrilla groups.[395] Barrera was murdered in combat in 1978. Sister Arriola had begun her work as a traditional sister but had become gradually more

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[389] Quoted in Brett and Brett, *Murdered*, 84.
[390] Ibid., 82f.
[391] Ibid., 87f.
[392] James G. Carney, *To Be a Revolutionary: An Autobiography* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 109.
[393] Brett and Brett, *Murdered*, 64.
[394] Ibid., 63.
[395] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 135, 338.

involved in base community work. After a period of working more closely with guerrillas, she joined them in late 1980. In January 1981, she was killed in the army's counterattack against the "final offensive" launched by the FMLN.[396] Observers stress that Sister Arriola would have never supported armed struggle in the mid-1970s. Along with many other members of the civil opposition, her hopes for a peaceful reform and change in the Salvadoran society had been shattered in 1980.[397] While very few of the clergy actually took up arms, some had other forms of contact with guerrilla groups (doing pastoral or humanitarian work).[398]

Jesuits of the *Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA) and other progressive faith-based forces attempted to find a non-violent method of addressing El Salvador's problems. Their general opposition to existing structures, however, made the Jesuits targets of the military's counterinsurgency campaign against leading intellectuals. Only some of the more radical members at UCA had contacts with the guerrilla forces.[399] The security forces and their paramilitary allies did not distinguish between the work of political-military groups and the implementation of the theology of liberation on the grassroots level. The more active clergy members were singled out "because they were viewed as…the intellectual authors of the alienation of the peasantry from their loyalty to the regime."[400] In general, however, religious workers did not promote specific models of peasant organizations but emphasized the study and reflection of social conditions. In some cases, the foundation of a leftist organization was the consequence. For many religious workers, this development was "beyond that envisaged."[401]

Personal Experiences

By 1976/1977, U.S. religious NGOs in Central America emphasized the political and economic reasons of the unrest. In statements, letters, and reports, Maryknollers named the critical issues for El Salvador: an oppressive government that had come to power through fraud, increasing population, a lack of jobs, lack of land for poor people, scarcity of food, and illiteracy. The pronounced theological and missionary objectives shed light on the new pastoral and humanitarian work and its role in societies under

[396] Berryman, *Stubborn Hope*, 67f.
[397] See chapter 4.1.
[398] Berryman, *Religious Roots*, 338.
[399] Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, 141.
[400] Hugh Byrne's, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 30.
[401] Ibid., 31.

repressive governments. They cannot, however, explain the growing emotional attachment and commitment to the work and the people involved. First-hand experiences of the deteriorating political conditions and growing violence against colleagues or the people with whom they were working contributed strongly to the growing embrace of liberation principles. In late 1977, after experiencing violence and death in their own ranks, the Maryknoll Fathers and Sisters in Central America stressed that they had the same goals.[402] Recalling violence in El Salvador and Nicaragua, Maryknoll Sister Cecilia Ruggiero was aware of the interdependence of religious and secular life: "Some say that the Church used to concern itself with Eternal Life and now it seems to be more concerned with Earthly Life. Some do not yet realize that Eternal Life is closely bound up with Earthly Life...."[403]

Letters and reports to relatives and colleagues in the United States carried the Maryknollers' observation of the devastating conditions in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. They also revealed the constant increase of death and violence between 1976 and 1980. They particularly emphasized the violation of the human rights of innocent people, i.e. non-guerrilleros. In late 1976, a sister in Nicaragua noted, "many innocent people are taken to prison, tortured to get information out of them, when they are not even connected to the movement [guerrillas]. Many of our catechists, delegates of the Word have been imprisoned simply because they are part of the Bible reflection groups in their valleys. Any meeting is looked on with suspicion."[404] In December 1977, Sister Cecilia Ruggiero wrote about her work in Guatemala as being "at a good pace." She stressed, however, that "[t]his is not so with many other missions in El Salvador and in Nicaragua where priests are molested and threatened, some killed; pastoral courses suspected and suspended; catechists kidnapped, jailed or killed…The Church is constantly becoming more aware of the need to participate in solving world problems that affect our poor and voiceless people."[405] An update of the situation in Guatemala in 1978, however, already revealed and described the growing human rights abuses by the army ("the ultimate arbiter of power") in that country.[406]

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[402] Guatemala Update, March 1978, in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 1, Folder: Guatemala Statistics/Job Descriptions 1961-1980.

[403] Ibid.

[404] Letter, Christmas 1976, in: MSA, H3.4, Nicaragua: Box 1, Folder: Letters from Sisters about their ministries in Nicaragua 1976-1994.

[405] Letter from Sister Cecilia Ruggiero, Guatemala (December 1977), in: MSA, H3.4, Middle American Region: Box 1, Folder: Mexico-Guatemala Region Meetings, Resumes, Structures, Evangelization, Reports 1973-1979.

[406] Guatemala Update, March 1978, in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 1, Folder: Guatemala Statistics/Job Descriptions 1961-1980. Between 1966 and 1986 150,000 people were killed in Guatemala.

Stanley Rother, who served more than two decades as a diocesan priest from Oklahoma City in Guatemala, observed quietness in his mission in 1969. A decade later in 1979, he talked about "kidnappings that never get in the papers" and "bodies…[that] show signs of torture…"[407] Like Father William Woods, Father Rother had avoided overt "political" pronouncements and denied one of the militant peasant organizations to use parish facilities. But by working with Indians, he was perceived as acting politically and on the side of insurgent forces in the eyes of the government, military and paramilitary forces.[408] He became a target of their battle against communist and other suspicious forces. Letters to his archbishop and his family in the United States showed increasing signs of concern about the political situation and the church-state relationship in Guatemala by 1980. In September 1980, Father Rother wrote to Archbishop Charles Salatka: "The Country here is in rebellion and the government is taking it out on the Church."[409] He felt that "we are in real danger."[410] He was consequently murdered in July 1981. Missionaries' letters from El Salvador described deaths, church burnings, cases of kidnappings and other instances of violence. Sister Madeline Dorsey who served as a missionary in El Salvador between June 1976 and May 1981 when she and the remaining Maryknollers left El Salvador, later recalled that "the undeclared war was working havoc among catechists."[411]

Personal experience should not be underestimated when reviewing the motivations and roots of civic foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s. The constant horror of violence shook emotions. Concern about the growing death rate was strong and fed vocal advocacy in the United States. This emotional intensity probably accounts for the relatively big "advocacy" campaign of a small number of people. Upon hearing about the murder of her U.S. colleague Stanley Rother in a nearby town in Guatemala, Sister Bernice Kita tried to describe her reaction to a friend: "There comes a time when you run out of tears. You catch yourself staring blankly out of the window, shaking your head, as if that futile gesture could negate the escalating horror."[412]

State-sponsored violence reached an unknown magnitude under the dictatorships of Lucas García and Rios Montt (1978-1983).

[407] Stanley Rother, *The Shepherd Cannot Run: Letters of Stanley Rother, Missionary and Martyr* (Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 1984), 10.

[408] Brett and Brett, *Murdered*, 107; Berryman, *Stubborn Hope*, 113.

[409] Rother, *The Shepherd Cannot Run*, 29.

[410] Ibid., 31.

[411] Report by Sister Madeline Dorsey (no date), in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 5, Folder: Sister Ministry in ES - History/Background/Csp. Articles 1969-1993.

[412] Sister Bernice Kita to Gerry McGinn, 7 August 1981, in: Bernice Kita, *What Prize Awaits Us: Letters from Guatemala* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1998 [1988])

The murder of Archbishop Romero intensified the emotional attachment. After his assassination, Maryknoll Sisters in El Salvador started to speak of "genocide" and "institutionalized violence" promoted by the government. They saw "authentic Christian principles and basic human integrity" at stake.[413] The personal experience did not only touch U.S. missionaries present in Central America.[414] A group of representatives of U.S. religious NGOs happened to be in El Salvador at the time of Romero's death. They had come at the invitation of the archbishop to investigate the country's conditions.[415] During the Archbishop's last Sunday mass, Romero introduced the members of the ecumenical delegation individually to the assembly.[416] William Wipfler, the director of the NCC's human rights office remembers the occasion especially vividly (and as a critical moment in his life) because he was the last person to receive communion from the Archbishop before his death a day later. Wipfler described his feelings in a testimony in commemoration of Romero's death in March 1999:

> Because I'm not a Roman Catholic and didn't want to be presumptuous, I hadn't presented myself at the altar when our delegation's two Catholic brethren went to receive. Apparently Monseñor took notice. I had my eyes closed as I made my spiritual communion, when I heard his voice. In a deeply moving act, as he returned to the altar, he had come to me and asked me if I wished to receive communion. It was his response to a profound need that I felt at that very instant. What an exemplary and genuine ecumenical embrace. That moment will remain with me always as one of the richest spiritual treasures of my life. Monseñor moved directly from me to the altar for the ablutions. The next day, the Monday of his martyrdom, Oscar Romero, our Lord's faithful priest, was sacrificed as he lifted the chalice during the offertory. I, an Episcopal priest and a foreigner, was the last person to receive the Blessed Sacrament from his hands.[417]

In comparison to earlier decades of U.S. missionary and religious work in Central America, the number of missionaries, religious workers, coordinators, and various projects was relatively high in 1977 and 1978. Sociologist Christian Smith stressed that "[t]he period of time when the greatest number of North American missionaries were serving in Central America was precisely the years before and after the Nicaraguan revolution, the Salvadoran insurrection and civil war, and the bloody Guatemalan counterinsurgency campaign."[418] Personal experience, however, did not automatically

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[413] Report by Maryknoll Sisters in El Salvador, 29 March 1980, in: MSA, H3.4, Guatemala: Box 5, Folder: Sister Ministry in El Salvador-History/Background/Csp. Articles 1969-1993.

[414] In fact, Archbishop Romero has become a martyr, almost a saint for Salvadorans, the Catholic Church and other Christians. See e.g. Whitfield, *Paying the Price*; Peterson, *Martyrdom*.

[415] William L. Wipfler, "Remembrances of a vivid ecumenical gesture," commemoration of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero (24 March 1999) at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, New York.

[416] The members of the delegation were Father Alan McCoy, a Franciscan and the President of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men, Thomas Quigley of the Latin America Department of the USCC, Elizabeth Nute, Vice-President of the Society of Quakers, Ronald Young, International Affairs Director of the American Friends Service Committee, and William Wipfler.

[417] Wipfler, "Remembrances of a vivid ecumenical gesture."

[418] Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 141.

translate into an increasing interest in influencing U.S. foreign policy or raising critical awareness about social and political conditions in Central America. A minority of the 2,234 serving U.S. missionaries in Central America seems to have pushed for changing the focus of foreign missionary work and of U.S. foreign policy. In 1979, only 686 of the overall number of U.S. missionaries were Catholic.[419] In El Salvador, there were 30 Catholic missionaries in 1978. The majority belonged to the Franciscan (10) and the Maryknoll orders (9). Until the mid-1980s, their number was declining due to the civil war situation and deaths among missionaries. By 1991/92, there were 49 U.S. Catholic missionaries.[420] With the withdrawal of mainline Protestant denominations from missionary work, almost 90 percent of U.S. Christian missionaries overseas were Protestants belonging to evangelical or fundamentalist churches by the 1980s.[421] In 1986, 43 Protestant missionaries were working in El Salvador. In 1989, the number had increased to 95. The great majority of them belonged to evangelical and Pentecostal denominations.[422]

As mentioned above, evangelical and fundamentalist Protestant groups pursued more traditional work aimed at religious conversion and humanitarian relief. In El Salvador, they were very successful. There, local churches with an evangelical or Pentecostal orientation and ties to U.S. groups rose in only four years from 1,433 in 1986 to 5,589 in 1989.[423] Similarly, the number of evangelical Protestant Salvadorans skyrocketed. While 2.45 percent of El Salvador's population was identified as evangelical Protestant in the 1970s, the number had grown to 12.8 percent in 1985.[424] With regard to foreign policy questions, fundamentalist and evangelical missionaries favored conservative, anti-communist policy positions. Two authorities in the field maintain that this wing of the Central American religious community advocated "a volatile mix of evangelization with nationalism and anticommunism, often directly

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[419] *Mission Handbook 1991-1992*, 34, 46. See *Mission Handbook 1978* (Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Mission Council, 1978), 21; *Mission Handbook 1984-1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Mission Association, 1985), 30.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Levine and Stoll, "Bridging the Gap," 71.

[422] *Mission Handbook North American Protestant Ministries Overseas* (Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center, 1986), 382f; *Mission Handbook USA/Canada Protestant Ministries Overseas* (Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center, 1989), 324f.

[423] See *Mission Handbook North American Protestant Ministries Overseas* (1986), 382f; *Mission Handbook USA/Canada Protestant Ministries Overseas* (1989), 324f. The churches affiliated with the Assembly of God Foreign Mission e.g. increased from 780 in 1986 to 4,187 in 1989, the ones affiliated with the United Pentecostal Church International from the beginning of their mission work in 1975 with no church to 487 in 1989.

[424] Berryman, *Stubborn Hope*, 147.

linked to right-wing regimes and to the objectives and instruments of U.S. foreign policy."[425]

Among the liberal group of missionaries and religious activists the common experiences of violence and loss fostered transnational communication and action. Overall, one can conclude that the missionary experience, the confrontation with the socio-economic and later deteriorating human rights conditions, and the matured relationship with local religious groups and churches strengthened religious NGOs "concerned" involvement in El Salvador. It also translated into civic and educational activities at home in the United States, which is the topic of the following chapter.

3.3 The Response of the U.S. Religious Community

3.3.1 The Interaction of the Religious and Political Sphere

Two Maryknoll priests were expelled from Guatemala in 1974. In comparison to their colleagues who were expelled in early 1968, the two priests had not been engaged in "guerrilla" activities but concentrated on the new pastoral guidelines of the Church and their order. In 1974, the Vice-President of Guatemala referred immediately to the earlier "Melville incident." According to one of the expelled priests, Joseph Towle, "there is a big feeling among all Guatemalans – in the Capital…the people with money – is that Maryknoll is well mixed up in politics."[426]

Similarly, the Salvadoran government saw the clergies' and missionaries' social activities as a political threat. As described above, a growing number of religious people were targets of assaults by paramilitary forces and the government. The government limited church activity in various ways that also affected U.S. missionaries and activities by other religious NGOs. In 1974 and following years, the government tried to put a stop to the Catholic publication *Justicia y Paz* that was also sponsored by the North American UUSC.[427] Three U.S. priests were expelled from El Salvador and refused re-entry in

[425] Levine and Stoll, "Bridging the Gap," 71. They differentiate between Latin American evangelicals and U.S. evangelical missionaries. While emphasizing that U.S. missionaries are influential in financing and coordinating activities, they distinguish between the U.S. religious right's anticommunist agenda and Latin American evangelicals' "little interest in becoming anticommunist cannon fodder." (85)

[426] Interview with Joseph Towle, 4 April 1974, in: MFBA, Justice and Peace Office, Box 7: Csp./Rpts.: 1973-1985/Chile-El Salvador-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Peru-Venezuela, Folder 2.

[427] Despite the publication's critical and progressive tone, most Salvadoran bishops including the moderate and conservative voices opposed the government's measure. "Regional Report of the Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region, prepared for the 10th General Assembly of the Maryknoll Sisters 1974,"

early 1977 for "mingling with local factional politics"[428] during the 1977 presidential election.[429]

The question regarding missionaries' use of political means in order to reach the desired ends has been debated in Catholic church circles, especially in relationship to conditions in Latin America, since the 1960s.[430] Part of the debate centers on the entanglement of foreign missionaries in the internal affairs of other countries. Depending on the viewpoint of the observer, definitions vary fundamentally and are stretched, if necessary.[431] Still, missionaries' political involvement is just one aspect of the broader question touching the relationship between religion and politics.

The political involvement by religious groups or the employment of politics by religion is an ever-present issue of debate and confrontation, in church circles and in U.S. society in general (and, of course, in other countries).[432] Within the religious community conservative and leftist to liberal opinions[433] are struggling over the question of abstaining and engaging in "secular" politics. Regarding international issues in the 1970s and 1980s, conservatives tended to regard open defense of one part of the society (e.g. the poor) as too partisan and called for pure humanitarian approaches and spiritual mission. Liberals interpreted the defense of marginalized sectors of a society as an obligatory fulfillment of the "Church's essential and inescapable mission, that of

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in: MSA, H3.4, Middle American Region: Box 1, Folder: Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region: Background, Reports, Handbook 1974-1980; Statement of John J. McAward, UUSC in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador,* 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 63.

[428] Costello, *Mission*, 207.

[429] The documents of the hearings in Congress include a list of all the priests assaulted in the early year of 1977: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador,* 95th Cong., 1st. sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 82. The expellees were two Maryknoll priests, Lawrence McCulloch and Bernard Survil, and Benedictine John Murphy.

[430] For further analysis of this topic, see Costello, *Mission*.

[431] Chapter 2.2 discloses different viewpoints of members of the Catholic Church regarding one incident in 1967 in Guatemala.

[432] There are numerous studies on the relationship of religion and politics in the United States. Two recent and good starting points are: Fowler, *Religion and Politics* and Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1992).

[433] Here, the distinction between liberals and conservatives within the religious community refers to their position on foreign policy and international affairs (touching international socio-economic issues). It does not define theological orientations. Some studies, however, have pointed out the correlation between religious orientations and political attitudes. According to these studies, liberal and conservative concepts of God and God's presence in the world translate into opposite political positions. While conservatives emphasize faith in fixed authority over the free play of intellect, they are more likely than religious liberals to stress obedience than skepticism or dissent. A similar analysis can be made in regards to the question of 'sin.' Conservatives stress 'personal' sin and spiritual rewards over 'social' sin and the dignity of earthly existence. Accordingly, structural barriers to justice are rarely questioned. For a discussion of this topic see Wald, *Religions and Politics*, 100-107.

evangelization" which involves "'the duty of proclaiming the liberation of millions of human beings…'"[434]

In the late 1970s, the U.S. Catholic Bishop's Conference and left-leaning sectors in the Church like the Maryknoll and Jesuit orders seemed to agree on Pope Paul's VI position that "evangelization" consists of an "interplay of the Gospel and man's concrete life, both personal and social."[435] Accordingly, Maryknoll Sister Uhlen, working in Nicaragua, stated that the Church cannot only "announce the good news" "in the midst of this" (harassment and torture of priests and catechists) but needed "to denounce that what hinders man from becoming a fully developed person."[436] In respect to the Jesuits' work in El Salvador in the late 1970s, the U.S. Jesuit priest James Richard explained that, "they walked a careful middle line."[437] While defending the "legal right of the Salvadoran citizen to organize," they did not identify with any political party.[438] As much as conservatives reproach the partisanship with leftist groups, liberals and left-wing radicals denounce conservatives' alliance with powerful elites or "the bourgeois."[439] According to the left or liberal wing, not siding with the oppressed is equated with accepting the "status quo," in itself a political position. In 1981, Maryknoll Sisters' Superior General Melinda Roper's observation regarding religion and politics in El Salvador indicated this argument:

> The Archbishop began to suspect that if one is overly concerned with the political implications of living the Gospel, there is great danger of rationalizing and compromising our Christian faith. He began to see that sharing the life and burdens of the poor, in the name of Jesus, cannot be a politically neutral act...those who controlled and owned basic resources of El Salvador, also controlled the governmental and political structures....alliance between the economic and political structures was geared toward the security and protection of the few and necessitated the oppression and repression of the majority...[440]

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[434] Statement by Archbishop Joseph Bernadin, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 6 July 1977, regarding the persecution of the Catholic Church in El Salvador, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador,* 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 69.

[435] Bernadin quoted from Pope Paul's VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in: ibid. According to this interpretation, working with the poor was not considered a "political means" but "the old idea of preaching the gospel, and preaching it from the side of the poor." See Costello, *Mission*, 202.

[436] Sister Uhlen, Report from Nicaragua [December 1976], in: MSA, H3.4, Nicaragua: Box 1, Folder: Sister Joan Uhlen/Reports about Nicaragua 1974-1994.

[437] James Richard in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador,* 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 9f.

[438] Ibid.

[439] U.S. missionary James Carney defined Catholic teaching in the United States as a "bourgeois theology." Carney, *To be a Revolutionary*, 109.

[440] Talk at Creighton University (First Anniversary of Romero) in: MSA, Melinda Roper Talks, Box S 1.5, Folder: M. Roper Talks (1981) - F2.

Whether the activities of church and religious people can or should be defined as "political" in the sense of partisan politics is not the question of this study. Such an analysis would be the topic of a separate investigation asking a different set of questions. Furthermore, from a historical point of view, the role and contribution of religion to U.S. political culture cannot be disputed. Despite the strict constitutional separation of church and state, religion and politics have been intertwined in U.S. history. Religion contributed to the development of national political ideals and helped to define the context of American political culture. [441]

In recent U.S. history, religion has entered the wider public realm by employing various political means. On the one hand, religious NGOs issue public policy statements. And, as Kenneth Wald notes, these have become much more common among all denominations in recent years.[442] On the other hand, religious activities such as social welfare programs, disaster relief, day-care, soup kitchens, family consulting, housing projects, faith-based discussion groups also reach out into the civic sphere.[443] Looking at U.S. history since the 1960s, churches or "religion" have more frequently employed techniques offered by the political process.[444] They have not only become active when their own "spiritual mission" was endangered but on behalf of a whole range of social and moral matters.[445] As became apparent in this chapter, these activities are not limited to the domestic environment. Religious NGOs and U.S. missionaries also stretched to the civic sphere of another country by interacting on different levels with the Salvadoran society and connecting spiritual and social affairs.[446] In the context of the Salvadoran-U.S. relationship, "religion" and politics interacted transnationally.

This kind of interaction had important consequences and implications for civic foreign policy toward El Salvador. It actually triggered new forms of engagement that

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[441] See Knud Krakau, *Missionsbewußtsein und Völkerrechtsdoktrin in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Frankfurt a.M.: Metzner, 1967), chapter 1; A. James Reichley, *Religion In American Public Life* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1985); Bellah, "Civil Religion."

[442] Wald, *Religion and Politics*, 99.

[443] Fowler et al. define these activities as social involvement, see *Religion and Politics*, 33.

[444] Various authors discuss the issue of "politicized religion" since the 1960s: Hertzke, "The Role of Religious Lobbies," 123-136; Reichley, *Religion*, chapter 6; Wuthnow, *The Restructuring*, 112ff.

[445] Wald, *Religion and Politics*, 171.

[446] A number of sociologists and political scientists have interpreted this phenomenon – the increasing interaction of two or more non-state actors from different societies – the global civil society or globalization of civil society. Theories, however, stress different themes and comprise various visions. A good starting point is Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society," *Millenium* 21:3 (1992): 389-420. Laura MacDonald analysed the theme for the Central American context in "Globalizing Civil Society." Reinhart Köâler and Henning Melber take a specific look

were increasingly directed toward the United States. While many missionaries, including the more progressive ones, had doubts about the employment of political means in their host country, they did not reject options offered by the political system of their own country, the United States.[447] Facing allegations of mingling in foreign political affairs, missionaries realized the potentials of their own national origins. As U.S. citizens, they wanted to use alternative channels of influencing the local conditions through U.S. foreign policy. A Maryknoll Sister believed that her mission demanded of her to speak up. Congressional lobbying seemed a good alternative to pressure the U.S. government to pressure for human rights standards:

> This may sound very 'political' to some. What does all this have to do with my life as a missionary? I believe it has very much to do with my life in mission - we come here to share the Gospel of Christ, to teach and to be taught what this gospel is...we cannot keep silent in the face of such suffering as we see the people of this country undergoing...I ask you to pray for these people, and to use your influence in Congress to urge that financial aid be withheld until there is evidence that human rights are being respected.[448]

Analyzing the U.S. religious groups' interests and activities, it is often difficult to draw clear-cut lines between the U.S. church community and its Salvadoran counterpart especially in regards to the Catholic Church. The previous chapters have elucidated the international entwining of religious groups. The religious ties forged "transnational solidarity."[449] The Catholic community of El Salvador did not view the U.S. Catholic missionaries' activities as unreasonable foreign entanglement. The foreign colleagues were rather viewed as members of the Catholic Church's border-crossing universality that legitimizes "foreigners'" action. In March 1977, the expelled and remaining foreign missionaries in El Salvador received backing from the Salvadoran Episcopal Conference. In a pastoral letter, the bishops denounced the growing repression of peasants and those who accompany them "in their legitimate awakening of consciousness" such as the "worthy foreign priests" who were expelled without explanation. The bishops saw the human rights of Salvadorans in jeopardy as well as the human rights of the "foreign priests who have identified with our people for the good of the country."[450] They

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at the implications of a global civil society in the context of North-South relations: *Chancen Internationaler Zivilgesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993).

[447] Political means that had been used in Latin American host countries ranged from participation in local guerrilla activities to covert cooperation with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. For a discussion of these issues, see Costello, *Mission*, 192-205.

[448] Letter by a Maryknoll Sister, Christmas 1977, in: MSA, H 3.4, Nicaragua Box 1, Folder: Letters from Sisters about their ministries in Nicaragua 1976-1994.

[449] Term used by Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Introduction: Religion, States, and Transnational Civil Society" in: Rudolph and Piscatori, *Transnational Religion*, 2.

[450] "Salvadoran Pastoral Letter: The Situation Today," 5 March 1977, in: *Latin American Bishops Discuss Human Rights* (Washington, DC: USCC, 1981), 55-61, 56.

affirmed the Catholic Church's position since Vatican II that the struggle for peace, human development, justice, and the defense of the basic rights of man "is not politics, rather it is working for the common good."[451]

Missionaries saw their work as pastoral activities corresponding to that of their local colleagues. Responding to the Salvadoran government's reproach of political entanglement in foreign affairs, one U.S. Benedictine missionary identified and justified his action as "civic actions," not as political ones. Father John K. Murphy said in regard to his expulsion from El Salvador: "What I did, as many priests did, was to remind them of their civic obligation to go to the polls and vote for whomever their consciences dictated."[452] In Nicaragua, U.S. Capuchin missionaries had sent a letter to President Somoza on 13 June 1976 in which they called for attention to human rights violations against poor people in two rural regions of Nicaragua and presented a detailed account of tortures taking place. In the letter, they stressed: "[W]e recognize the existence of danger, both from Communism as well as from a growing militarism. Our position is not political but rather evangelical and pastoral."[453]

For those groups and missionaries who shared the theological commitments of the Latin American Catholic Church, the experiences of the political developments contributed to an identification with the local churches and to the feeling of being "co-members of the People of God."[454] In 1974, Maryknoll Sisters discussed the problems of being a "North American" in Latin America: "It was pointed out that some people question our presence in Latin America. It was felt that we should see ourselves not as North Americans but as members of, servants of, the local Church, asking ourselves how and why we are in Latin America, not if we belong here."[455] Father Panchot, a Holy Cross priest who was arrested and expelled from Chile in 1975, felt that he was "part of

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[451] Ibid., 59.

[452] Quoted in Costello, *Mission*, 207.

[453] The missionaries sent a copy of the letter to U.S. Congressman Fraser and to the U.S. administration to bring the "matter to the attention of American people." During late 1974 and 1977, the Nicaragua's National Guard murdered several thousand, mostly innocent, people suspected to be subversives or sympathizers of the revolutionary left. Among the victims were many lay catechists and members of CEBs. For documentation of the Capuchins' letters to President Somoza and Congressman Fraser, see U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy*, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 8, 9 June 1976, 214, 240.

[454] McGlone, *Sharing Faith*, 157.

[455] "Regional Report of the Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region, prepared for the 10th General Assembly of the Maryknoll Sisters 1974," in: MSA, H3.4, Middle American Region: Box 1, Folder: Panama-Nicaragua-El Salvador Region: Background, Reports, Handbook 1974-1980.

that church."[456] By identifying with the local church, Panchot and others tried to anticipate potential criticism that views their work as influence from abroad.

Whether identification with the local church was imagined or real, the perception of religious activists of being part of a greater transnational religious community is important. It stimulated the common cause.[457] In a slightly plastic tone, McGlone attempts to capture the potential significance of missionary experiences for the international community:

> As the missionaries enter into the life of the people who receive them, they become bridges of international relations, not of the sort that are negotiated in the U.N. assembly or bartered in the meetings of the International Monetary Fund, but rather of the type that are built in living rooms, on park benches, and in parish halls…the common relationship they have together as human beings in community as people of faith who stand as equals before God.[458]

Transnational and personal religious ties influenced positions of religious institutions in the United States. In the case of El Salvador, the U.S. Catholic Church declared its "fraternal solidarity" with the "brother bishops of El Salvador," the clergy and religious, and "especially the members of the Society of Jesus" in July 1977.[459] Other religious institutions in the United States such as the NCC joined.[460] Bryan Hehir, the director of the office for international affairs of the USCC, explained the process of local church dialogue and the role of the missionaries in regards to civic foreign policy initiatives in the United States:

> ...U.S. missionaries working in Latin America become identified with the local church there without losing their relationship to the church in the United States. The reverse mission to the home church emphasizes...the need to address those dimensions of foreign policy and private practice...that adversely affect the people the missionaries serve...[461]

The religious identity, however, is only one factor in explaining the transnational activities. The religious identity by itself did not trigger activities in the public realm. The diversity of opinion in the Catholic Church (worldwide, in El Salvador or in the United States) for example demonstrated that the common religion did not necessarily

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[456] Quoted in Costello, *Mission*, 201.

[457] Recent scholarship on NGO activity in the international sphere regards "religious formations and movements" to be part of a "transnational civil society." According to these analyses, religious associations provide structure and meaning to human relations, create communities, and facilitate collective action in world politics. See Rudolph, "Introduction" in: Rudolph and Piscatori, *Transnational Religion*, 1-24.

[458] McGlone, *Sharing Faith*, 195.

[459] Archbishop Joseph Bernadin, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 6 July 1977, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 70.

[460] Statement of Thomas J. Liggett, President of Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, after a visit to El Salvador on behalf of WCC and NCC, in: ibid., 67.

account for shared opinions and common practices. Sharing certain ideas, norms, and expectations in regards to society and the behavior of states/governments constituted the base for action.[462] The belief in the defense of "human rights" and in the possibility of "social justice" strengthened the common ground of the religious activists.

U.S. Father Panchot who was expelled from Chile in 1975 stated: "… the principles upon which this country was founded almost 200 years ago pretend to respect not just one group or another. They say we will respect the human rights of all people and of each person. We have to be willing to be conscious and consequent with our expressive principles."[463] Other religious groups from the United States such as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) for example became active because of their interest in "leadership training and empowerment" programs abroad and their desire to combat repression and allow for participatory democracy. The Salvadoran Catholic priest José Inocencio Alas who is said to be the initiator of the first Christian base community in El Salvador and who found refuge in the United States after repeated attacks and threats against his life in 1977, expressed a common attitude among the progressive religious activists.[464] His words combine the religious background with the idea of humane transnational politics: "Beyond the frontiers of any single country is the good of each and every person. Where there is one human who suffers, there ought we all to be."[465]

3.3.2 Lobbying for Human Rights

In previous chapters we have seen various facets of U.S. nongovernmental engagement in El Salvador. They included spiritual, assistance, and democratization projects of religious actors. In the following, the study will disclose the respective U.S. groups' norms and values (regarding the issues involved) and then examine their vision for U.S. foreign policy. The groups' vision for U.S. foreign policy derived from religious norms as well as perceptions of U.S. power. When these norms and values were not just

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[461] Bryan Hehir, "View From the Church," *Foreign Policy* 43 (Summer 1981), 83-88, 85f.

[462] The political scientists Keck and Sikkink stress "principled ideas" and "values" as the central motivating force for activists and NGOs in the field of human rights, the environment, and women's rights. See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, chapter 1.

[463] See U.S. Congress, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Human Rights in Chile*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 9 December 1975, 26f.

[464] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 7.

[465] Ibid.

disregarded but also directly assaulted through physical attacks against people's lives, U.S. missionaries and religious interest groups co-launched the foreign policy discourse regarding Central America on Capitol Hill.

The religious groups' lobbying efforts rested on their vision of a "good society." Religious groups fighting for human rights and justice in El Salvador embedded their arguments and activities in Christian principles. According to their understanding, the right to religious freedom justified the work for the human rights of the poor and those that cannot participate in El Salvador's political life. So, in a way, the very persecution of religious individuals and groups in El Salvador between 1977 and 1980 that violated the right to religious freedom accelerated the same groups' advocacy for human rights.

In a letter to Congressman Fraser, the Maryknoll and Jesuit orders along with representatives of the U.S. Catholic Mission Council and the USCC pronounced their concern about political freedom and the treatment of priests to the U.S. government in March 1977. They particularly criticized the violation of the "right of people to freely elect their own leaders" and "right of self-defense" concerning the expulsion of missionaries. Apart from declaring "solidarity with all our brothers and sisters in El Salvador", they stressed their position against "sin, hunger and injustice" by quoting from the New Testament: "to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let broken victims go free…"[466] After the attacks on the personal freedom and safety against all Jesuits or other priests in 1977, they refined their language. As obvious victims of human rights violations, religious workers could aim at other aspects of human rights important to them. Repeatedly, involved groups pointed out their vision of "evangelization through liberation" that focused on social and economic roots of the conflict in El Salvador as well as participatory elements of democracy that they believed necessary for improving the economic and political life.

Liberation theology had helped many to question social problems and their causes. "Institutionalized violence" had become one of the key words to describe the socio-economic situation in Latin America and its underlying political system.[467]

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[466] Letter by Raymond Hill, Superior General of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, James Connor, President of the U.S. Jesuit Conference, Anthony Bellagamba, Executive Secretary of the U.S. Catholic Mission Council, Betty Ann Maheu, Secretary General of the Maryknoll Sisters, and Bryan Hehir, Director of the Office of International Justice and Peace of the USCC, to Congressman Fraser, 15 March 1977, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 9, 17 March 1977, 57.

[467] The Latin American Bishops referred to "institutionalized violence" in document No. 2 of the Medellín declaration. The Salvadoran bishops applied this keyword when explaining the deteriorating human rights situation in El Salvador in 1977: "Y esa situación se la calificado como situación de

Growing repression and the experience of the most basic human rights violations, however, changed the public role of religious groups and workers in El Salvador. It also transformed their language and viewpoints. They started to link their social criticism with ongoing attacks on the safety of the person. The framework of human rights allowed for combining violations of personal and civil liberties with structural and ideological causes. In December 1977, an account of a Maryknoll Sister in Nicaragua demonstrated in how far missionaries linked the increasing violation of people's civil and political human rights with socio-economic issues and U.S. foreign policy:

> The past year for the people here has been one of repression of human rights, imprisonment of many people for long periods of time without trial, torture, raping of women prisoners. These are added to the difficulties of the people to earn a decent living...In the midst of all this, it is difficult to see how the U.S. has given millions of dollars in aid to this country, which would be fine if the benefits of it really got to the people who need it...Managua remains a ghost town...Yet luxurious shopping centers are being built all around city. In the midst of all this one has to ask: are human rights being respected?

The best example for the Catholic Church's increasing affirmation of the socio-economic as well as civil-political aspects of human rights was the issue of agrarian reform. One of El Salvador's most urgent socio-economic problems in the 1970s was land distribution.[468] Increased concentration of land in the hands of a tiny minority and a growing number of landless peasants coupled with an annual birthrate of three percent intensified the social inequity. In fear of a peasant uprising, the Salvadoran government had announced agrarian reforms in the 1960s, supported by the U.S. Alliance for Progress. Opposition by the Salvadoran agricultural elite slowed down the reforms that eventually stagnated. New proposals for land reforms were made between 1972 and 1977, spurring hopes among the rising number of peasant organizations.[469] The new military government under General Romero, however, spurned any suggestion for land reforms.

The Catholic Church and the Jesuit order had supported and participated in the agrarian reform plans of the 1960s and 1970s. Father Alas, a priest of the diocese of San Salvador, had founded a school of agriculture as well as a CEB to teach and study the

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'injusticia colectiva' y de 'violencia institucionalizada.'" Statement of the Salvadoran Episcopal Conference, 5 March 1977, in: *Los Obispos Latinoamericanos entre Medellín y Puebla: Documentos Episcopales 1968-1978* (San Salvador: UCA editores, 1978), 212.

[468] During the 1960s, the overall number of farms grew, but land under cultivation shrank by eight percent. The number of subsistence farmers dropped notably while the number of newly landless peasants increased. Approximately seven percent of the land ownership belonged to small or medium-sized holdings. See Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, 102f; Weaver, *Inside the Volcano*, 163.

reform in the late 1960s. Jesuits and others supported agrarian reform projects because they considered "it good for everybody, and the same goes for any project whatever means liberty for our people, which means enjoyment of human and civil rights."[470] Father Alas stressed that the Bible was the priests' point of departure according to which the "goods of creation belong to all people." Unequal distribution of goods or land was, therefore, against "divine law."[471]

After 1970, the personal rights and safety of Father Alas had been violated several times.[472] Peasants of his CEB had demonstrated for their rights when wealthy landowners sought to redistribute and sell agricultural parcels for 300 to 700 percent increase over the original price. Eventually, the peasants won a little victory when the Salvadoran National Assembly passed a law in 1970, arguing that landowners could not sell the parcels for more than 100 percent increase.[473] In the aftermath of the episode, Father Alas was kidnapped. Alas argued that his work was politically dangerous in El Salvador because it helped peasants "articulate in their minds and in their actions the concept of human rights."[474]

The U.S. Catholic Church supported this analysis.[475] It defended the action of the progressive Catholic wing in El Salvador, declaring it was the Church's duty to announce the "liberation" of all people.[476] Knitting his order's position into a political framework, a Jesuit from the United States who had lived in El Salvador from mid-1976 to mid-1977 explained the work of the Jesuits as one serving the people in order to foster democracy

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[469] Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, 105. For further information on the agrarian aspect of the Salvadoran civil war, see Charles D. Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988).

[470] Testimony of Father Alas in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 9

[471] Ibid.

[472] In 1970, he was arrested, forced to drink pure alcohol mixed with drugs and left abandoned and stripped in a mountain area. Between 1971 and 1977, several threats against his life were made, and he was twice captured by the national police and by the National Guard.

[473] Montgomery, "Liberation and Revolution," 85.

[474] Alas in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 8.

[475] On behalf of U.S. Catholic Church Archbishop Bernadin argued that the Salvadoran-Honduran War of 1969 was caused by "landlessness, high unemployment, and the failure of national plans to redress these great inequities." Bernadin in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 69. Landless Salvadoran peasants had occupied unused land in Honduras in 1969 due to very little unoccupied land in El Salvador.

[476] "The tiny minority of rich and powerful, zealous guardians of a sterile and unjust status quo, have not hesitated to employ every means at their disposal to obstruct the preaching of the gospel." Ibid., 70.

in an open fashion and "through the legally constituted and recognized institutions…"[477] According to these interpretations, the violation of socio-economic rights, i.e. the misdistribution of land, and the violation of certain political rights, i.e. the lack of the participation and representation of the poor, together with the concept of the national security state contributed to the violations of the integrity of the person.

The events in El Salvador in 1977 and beyond exemplify a condition in transnational relations that political scientists Keck and Sikkink have characterized as transnational advocacy networks able to unleash a "boomerang pattern of influence."[478] In a situation in which a government blocks participatory democracy and violates or refuses to recognize individual rights, individuals and domestic groups in that country have limited possibilities to participate in politics and express their opinions. According to Keck and Sikkink, such a situation can trigger transnational activity when these domestic groups decide "to bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside."[479] If their campaigns and activities are successful, nongovernmental groups and individual activists "are an important part of an explanation for changes in world politics."[480]

Keck and Sikkink's boomerang metaphor principally attempts to explain changes of the behavior of the state that violates human rights. In the context of this study, their theoretical framework helps to capture the activities of U.S. religious groups. It illuminates the functioning of nongovernmental international relations, especially in times of severe repression. Salvadoran and U.S. groups and individuals alike saw potentials in lobbying the U.S. government.

While information about the worsening of the human rights situation and the persecution of church people was channeled from groups in El Salvador to groups in the United States, a small cluster of denominations, orders, and religious NGOs intensified activities in the United States on behalf of the conditions in El Salvador. In 1976, the Subcommittee on International Relations of U.S. Congress held its first hearings focusing on the deteriorating human rights situation in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. The small faith-based network distributed information about the hearings and contributed to the discussion with detailed analyses and documentation.[481] While a

[477] Father James Richard in: ibid., 9.
[478] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 12ff.
[479] Ibid., 12.
[480] Ibid., 2.
[481] See e.g. the first set of hearings on human rights in Central America: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations,

handful of legislators were open and hoping to "prompt the Department of State to review its policy of uncritical support,"[482] the religious network faced opposition from Congressmen with strong and friendly ties to one of the region's most notorious dictators. Representative John Murphy of New York pointed out in the 1976 hearings to having good personal relations with Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza since their common schooldays and their time at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He stressed that he had "learned in detail of the alleged purpose of the hearings from a document widely distributed by a group that calls itself the 'Washington Office on Latin America.'"[483] Representative Murphy was distressed about WOLA's lobbying efforts on behalf of the hearings and WOLA's "totally biased, anti-U.S. – and …anti-Nicaraguan Government leanings."[484]

As witnesses, individuals and societal groups from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua reported about attempts to lobby the respective governments in the region on behalf of human rights. Sensing the fruitlessness of these undertakings, additional lobbying activities were directed toward the United States. Different groups of the Salvadoran society sought U.S. religious groups as allies in their struggle for the social and political rights of Salvadoran citizens. They viewed U.S. missionaries and religious groups as helpful channels of information or channels for communicating their viewpoints to the U.S. government in an environment in which it was difficult to present viewpoints and information opposite to those of the Salvadoran government.[485] On various occasions, Central American priests who had testified before U.S. Congress were subject to reprisals after returning to their home country.[486] The Organization of Christian Democrats of America, an international group with headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela, and the National Opposition Union, a coalition of Salvadoran political parties, worked

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Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 8, 9 June 1976.

[482] Congressman Fraser, in ibid., ix.

[483] John Murphy in ibid., 2f. As a cadet at West Point, Somoza was assigned to Murphy's company in 1944-1945. See also Arnson, *Crossroads*, 23f.

[484] Ibid., 3.

[485] Testifying before the Fraser Committee, Napoleon Duarte says: "At this moment I want to say that in my country they will start a terrible propaganda against us because we are here. Yet we are sure that by being here, and by saying what we have said, we are helping our people." U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st. sess., 17 March 1977, 67.

[486] This was the case for Nicaraguan Father Fernando Cardenal in 1976, see correspondence between Cardenal and Congressman Fraser, 28 September 1976, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy*, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 8, 9 June 1976.

through WOLA to present evidence regarding electoral fraud in the Salvadoran presidential elections of February 1977. The documentation of electoral fraud was submitted by WOLA before the U.S. House Subcommittee on International Organization shortly after the election.[487] WOLA considered the fraudulent election practices as violations of basic human rights that should remind the United States not to condone such principles.

In contrast to their government's critical stand on unacceptable involvement of a foreign government in the domestic affairs of El Salvador, two leading representatives of Salvadoran political opposition groups who testified as witnesses in the congressional hearings welcomed the human rights concern of Congress and President Carter.[488] Antonio Morales Ehrlich argued, "the influence or moral pressure that other countries may exert to help implement these articles [i.e. UN Declaration of Human Rights] cannot be taken as intervention."[489] Another witness was Jose Napoleon Duarte,[490] El Salvador's elected President from 1984 to 1988 and the United States' political ally during most years of the Salvadoran civil war. He believed that the United States has a "historical responsibility to Latin America." He explained the pointlessness of a principle such as non-intervention in the case of U.S. relations with Latin America. Underscoring the powerful position of the United States in regards to Central America, Duarte spelled out that "the United States cannot assume that it does not intervene, because even at this moment if the United States decides not to intervene at all, it will mean that it sustains the structure presently existing in Latin America; it will mean the continuing existence of all the dictators imposed on the people."[491] Both politicians confirmed "the great impact" that the U.S. government's stand on human rights had on people in Latin America. A U.S. Jesuit priest argued correspondingly: "I…have been surprised at the importance that these hearings have had in El Salvador. I do not mean to denigrate the hearings, but

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[487] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st. sess., 9, 17 March 1977, 19-29,

[488] See Devine, *Embassy under Attack*, 45 regarding the Salvadoran government's reaction.

[489] Antonio Morales Ehrlich, vice presidential candidate of the United National Opposition in the 1977 elections, in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 17 March 1977, 62.

[490] Duarte was president of the Christian Democratic Organization of America at the time.

[491] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 17 March 1977, 61.

hearing from my fellow Jesuits in El Salvador, I have been literally amazed at the power that these hearings have had in that country."[492]

Visions for U.S. Foreign Policy

According to theories of transnational nongovernmental advocacy politics, the goal of human rights activists is to change the behavior of states.[493] Not being able to directly influence the Salvadoran government, the United States seemed a logical target. Their government's role in Central America stimulated lobbying and advocacy activities by U.S. groups considerably. According to them, the traditionally dominant role was also a good means for exercising significant influence on conditions in El Salvador regarding questions of human rights and social justice. Ironically, the foreign policy ventures of another branch of the U.S. government facilitated the transnational human rights activities. While supporting the human rights and justice campaigns of foreign colleagues, U.S. activists introduced their vision for U.S. foreign policy.

U.S. groups wanted the United States to express clear diplomatic signs of concern and criticism to put pressure on the Salvadoran government. All involved groups agreed on the termination of U.S. military aid to El Salvador in 1977 and years thereafter. The Latin America expert of the USCC, Tom Quigley, explained the concerned religious communities' rejection of military aid to Congress. He believed that continued military assistance did not have a legitimate base considering the "deterioration of the democratic process in Latin America," especially in years with the ascendance of powerful military regimes.[494] He stressed that there was little evidence that the democratization efforts of the U.S. military had succeeded, but that instead the United States had the image of "purveyor of arms."[495] He argued that the United States was not the "ultimate cause" of

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[492] Father James Richard in: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 28.

[493] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 2.

[494] Quigley in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 25.

[495] Since World War II, most Latin American countries had received military assistance from the United States, including military training and education. The general idea of military aid was "to assist governments to defend themselves against threats to the national security of the United States." (Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 217.) Since the early 1960s, other principles such as civic action programs, civilian authority over military personnel were added. Furthermore, military assistance was also justified in order to gain and maintain influence with Latin American military leaders. Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 220f.

the existing human rights problems. Yet, he explained that it was "at least the…instrumental cause."[496]

Facing unfavorable human rights report and the human rights hearings in the U.S. Congress, the Salvadoran government had itself rejected certain type of U.S. military aid in 1977.[497] The religious human rights network, therefore, lacked a decisive lobbying mechanism to push for the cause of human rights in El Salvador through U.S. policy in the years between 1977 and 1979. Yet, the network called for a total cut of military aid. Jesuit Father James Richard pressed for further cuts. The priest hoped that Congress would deny another item assistance - $600,000 for military training – as a symbolic gesture. He argued, "[i]f this were denied because of the motivation of human rights, it will have a certain bite to it, and the message will come home to the El Salvadoran Government that the U.S. Government really does mean business."[498] Considering the fact that Latin Americans have "heard a lot of high-flown words by the United States" before, the priest maintained that the halt of such a small military assistance package would be necessary action behind rhetoric.[499]

Regarding the life-threatening situation of the Jesuits in June and July of 1977, urgent measures were needed. At the end of June, briefly after the threat had been announced, the U.S. Jesuit Conference called upon the U.S. public to protest such "climate of violence."[500] On 8 July 1977, a group of leading Catholic and Protestant church people[501] met with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. They demanded U.S. government action in the form of a formal protest to the government of El Salvador.[502] U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance indeed presented a personal expression of concern over the threat against the Jesuits to the Salvadoran government after the meeting with the U.S. churchmen.[503] Moreover, the congressional hearing about religious persecution

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[496] Quigley in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 25.

[497] See chapter 3.1.5.

[498] James Richard in: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Organizations, *Religious Persecution in El Salvador*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 21, 29 July 1977, 22.

[499] Ibid.

[500] Press release of Jesuit Conference from 11 July 1977, in: ibid., 72f.

[501] The meeting had been requested by the Presidents of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Churches as well as the President of the U.S. Jesuit Conference. See Press release of Jesuit Conference from 11 July 1977, in: ibid., 72f.

[502] Ibid.

[503] "Salvador Looks to PR to Mend Human Rights Rift With U.S.," *The Washington Post*, 23 July 1977, A7.

in El Salvador took place a day after the deadline for systematic execution of all Jesuits living in El Salvador of the White Warrior Union expired.

The immediate threat was halted when the Salvadoran government announced to investigate human rights violations regardless of political ideology and religious creed.[504] President Romero issued the denouncement of left-wing and right-wing terrorism three days before the end of the deadline and the beginning of the U.S. hearings on religious persecution in El Salvador.[505] The state of siege that had been declared after the presidential elections in February was also not re-imposed in July 1977. During the summer of 1977, there was even a slight improvement in the general climate of repression, i.e. demonstrations in cities were not being violently stopped, probably due to the sudden attention from the United States.[506]

The State Department found Romero's initiatives encouraging. On 20 July 1977, it congratulated Romero's government for its attempts to calm the situation.[507] Accordingly, the U.S. government shifted away from means of political pressure imposed earlier in 1977. Then, it had held up a $90,4 million Inter-American Development Bank loan to build a large dam. The loan was approved in November 1977.[508] The approval was given despite strong objections from staffers of Patricia Derian's State Department bureau who believed the changes to be merely cosmetic. Only a few months later, the Romero government announced a Public Order Law imposing severe restrictions on personal liberty.[509] The Catholic Church and other liberal religious groups also condemned the loan approval due to continuous severe repression.[510]

President Carter's human rights policy toward Central America was tied to U.S. security interests and the changing political context in Central America. After 1978 President Carter's policy toward El Salvador and Nicaragua was caught in rising fears of growing instability and leftist revolutions in Central America. Once the Sandinistas had successfully defeated the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in July 1979, President Carter's policy toward El Salvador were framed according to fears that El Salvador would

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[504] "33 Jesuits Defying Terrorists' Death Threat in El Salvador," *The Washington Post*, 21 July 1977, A15.

[505] "Salvador," *The Washington Post*, 23 July 1977, A7. It has been suggested that the congressional hearings in Washington, which began a day after the ultimatum terminated, might have been the reason. Michael McClintock, *The American Connection: State Terror and Popular Resistance in El Salvador* (London: Zed, 1985), 186.

[506] McClintock, *The American Connection*, 186, 191.

[507] "33 Jesuits," *The Washington Post*, 21 July 1977, A15.

[508] "Church Demands Change in El Salvador," *The Washington Post*, 5 August 1978, A12.

[509] Ibid.; McClintock, *The American Connection*, 191.

[510] "Church Persecuted By El Salvador, Rep. Drinan Says," *The Washington Post*, 20 January 1978, C6; "U.S. Human Rights Policy: Has It Worked?" *Latin America Update* (January 1979), 7.

experience a similar revolution.[511] The Carter administration believed the explosive nature of the situation to be indigenous, yet it started to fear it could be exploited by the Soviet Union. The Romero government, however, rejected agrarian reform models and other ideas to fight against poverty desired by the U.S. government.[512] Accordingly, President Carter and his team found themselves in a gridlock between its previous denouncements of human rights abuses in El Salvador and support of a repressive regime in order to fight a leftist victory. It was fortunate for the U.S. administration when a reform junta, willing to install an agrarian reform, ousted Romero in October 1979.[513]

Voices from the churches and other religious groups grew more critical with U.S. foreign policy after 1978. In January 1979, WOLA defined the State Department's policy as "ineffective." While WOLA supported U.S. economic aid in 1977, its position was the reverse two years later. In 1979, WOLA presented extensive information about the interdependence of the Salvadoran government's repressive machinery and the failure of economic development programs. According to WOLA, U.S. economic assistance programs indirectly supported a corrupt system that failed to decrease poverty.[514] WOLA defined Salvadoran President Romero's plan for social reforms to be a farce ("no political will or financial support"). It advised President Carter to keep a clear distance from the military regime, and from a person, who was "a fraudulently elected president" and could, therefore not represent El Salvador as its first representative.[515]

A group such as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) without a direct missionary connection in the region but with a high interest in social justice and human rights, started to send representatives on fact-finding missions in 1977.[516] Collecting information, disseminating this information, and organizing yet more overseas tours combined lobbying with publicity campaigns. In January 1978, the UUSC also sponsored the first congressional fact-finding mission to El Salvador organized by a

[511] See chapter four for further discussion.
[512] Schoultz, *National Security*, 42.
[513] Ibid.; Devine, *Embassy Under Attack*, 138-143.
[514] "U.S. Human Rights Policy: Has It Worked?" *Latin America Update* (January 1979), 8.
[515] Ibid., 9.
[516] In spring 1977 UUSC's Richard Scobie, executive director, and John McAward, international programs director, made a fact-finding tour to El Salvador and published their findings with the hearings of the House International Relations Committee. See http://www.uusc.org (October 2000).

religious-based agency.[517] The Congressman of the delegation was Father Robert Drinan, representative from Massachusetts and Jesuit priest.[518]

According to U.S. Ambassador Frank Devine, Father Drinan's visit was much noticed "throughout El Salvador."[519] While concelebrating mass with Archbishop Romero, a sign, which was, according to Devine, "guaranteed to antagonize the Government and all conservative forces throughout the nation," Father Drinan also met President Romero. In the conversation, the U.S. Congressman insisted on information about persecuted, killed, and disappeared people.[520] Ambassador Devine was later told that the Salvadoran President was "deeply offended by Father Drinan's manner."[521] Accordingly, Salvadoran officials "expressed bewilderment over how a member of Congress could insert himself, in that manner, into the official relations between nations."[522]

The tour by Congressman Drinan was the beginning of congressional delegations sent to Central America. In 1978, it was still the exception than the rule. The two hearings on El Salvador in 1977 were outstanding in their emphasis on El Salvador. Yet, only a handful of members of Congress were interested in Salvadoran affairs before 1980.[523] Only Congressmen Drinan, Kennedy, and Harkin visited El Salvador in the 1970s.[524] Despite his political leverage in Washington in the 1980s, only Congressmen Kennedy and Harkin met with Napoleon Duarte, the later President of El Salvador, in the late 1970s. Through the lack of security concerns in 1977, human rights hearings on El Salvador were possible and gave groups an unusual opportunity to present their agenda. The high persecution of religious people made El Salvador an even more interesting case study. Father Drinan for example emphasized the religious aspect of persecution, rather than the struggle for social justice: "The persecution of the church may be less visible today ... But the war of the government against the rural poor is in effect a war against religion because most of the leadership in the struggle of the peasants against collective injustices comes from the 225 priests in El Salvador."[525] Congress as a whole only started

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[517] Ibid. Between 1978 and 1992, UUSC organized 20 Congressional fact-finding missions to El Salvador.

[518] "Church Persecuted By El Salvador, Rep. Drinan Says" *The Washington Post*, 20 January 1978, C6. Father Drinan served as a Congressman from 1971 until 1981 when he did not run for reelection.

[519] Devine, *Embassy Under Attack*, 53.

[520] Ibid., 50-52.

[521] Ibid., 53.

[522] Ibid.

[523] Arnson, *Congress*, 23f.

[524] Ibid., 29.

[525] "Church Persecuted By El Salvador," *The Washington Post*, 20 January 1978, C6.

to have an interest in El Salvador when the insurgency threat became more apparent in 1980 and beyond.[526]

3.4 Conclusion

The birthplace of the human rights policies of U.S. religious groups lies as much in Latin America as in the United States. During the 1970s, religion and politics in the United States and Latin America became intertwined with long-term effects for international relations. In Chile and El Salvador, the Catholic Church moved into the political sphere through individual priests, newly established religious NGOs, and through open criticism against the political regime by the national Church authority. But politics also moved into the Church. Ideas of grassroots participation and egalitarian notions of power within the church had become prominent through liberation theology and the Christian base communities. Pastoral agents' and missionaries' experiences of "living with the people," CEBs, and the hierarchies' defense of social change or human rights in countries like Chile and El Salvador came under increasing attack in the 1970s.

The history of the Catholic Church or a group within the Church in Chile, El Salvador, and the United States between 1973 and 1980 manifests one of its important public functions. As much as it can serve as a legitimizing voice for the existing political order, it is able to challenge existing structures and politics. Although the historian Jeffrey Klaiber refers to the Church's role in colonial times, his insight is valid for the late 20th century as well: "...(B)y not recognizing political power as an absolute end in itself, and certainly not above itself, the church in fact constituted a potentially dangerous civil corporation out of the state's control."[527]

The coup in Chile in 1973 activated a small network of individuals and groups in the United States that took a special interest in Latin American affairs. Parts of the U.S. religious community started to call upon their government to refrain from supporting "immoral" regimes. The words of NCC's human rights director William Wipfler in 1979, reflected the new U.S. religious human rights network's awareness of holding its own government accountable to the high moral grounds of human rights: "Are we as willing, however, where unpopular regimes escalate repression in order to retain power, to

[526] Ibid., 24.
[527] Klaiber, *The Church*, 4.

demand equal accountability from the governments of nations - our nations - that provide material, logistical or moral support to such regimes?"[528]

In the 1970s, U.S. religious interest groups were partially successful in bringing their human rights concerns regarding Latin America before Congress. Among scholars of U.S. foreign policy, the likelihood of interest groups' impact on the official foreign policy of the United States has been questioned, denied, and also affirmed. Especially in the case of interest groups that fight for moral rather than clear-cut economic issues, influence seems difficult to pinpoint. According to interest group theory, raw material such as money or votes (constituency) helps the lobbying process substantially.[529] In the late 1970s, the religious human rights lobby concerning El Salvador was lacking both. Yet, while the causal explanation between groups' lobbying efforts and legislative results or administrative decisions is scientifically difficult to make, a "secondary role" of interest groups' lobbying is easier to establish. The secondary role comprises "indirect" activities such as "raising an issue" or "providing information."[530]

In regards to Central America, human rights concerns became very specific. U.S. religious groups and individuals had personal knowledge and insight into the situation, which they made known in the U.S. Congress and within their communities. In the case of El Salvador, missionaries and human rights workers of religious groups called for a halt to the persecution of individual people, to fraudulent elections, and to concrete limitations of the freedom of expression. They raised and supported the issue of agrarian reform and citizen participation as prerequisites for peaceful change in a country characterized by social and political inequity. The churches' transnational interaction with Central America's societies had given the problems abroad faces and names. Slowly in 1978 and 1979, church groups started reverse mission programs to reach out to their U.S. constituency.[531]

In the United States, the concern of reform-minded missionaries and Christian groups did not fall on deaf ears. Decision-makers valued as well as condemned transnational power of information. Referring to the Catholic Church alone, the State Department emphasized its "most accurate accounting of human rights violations in the

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[528] William Wipfler, "Violation of Human Rights," in Annemarie Jacomy-Millette et al. (eds.), *Église et Système Mondial: La position des églises vis-à-vis des grands Problèmes Internationaux/The Church and World System: The Position of the Churches in International Affairs* (Québec, Xie Congrès des relations Internationales du Québec, 1979), 13-18, 17.

[529] Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, 153

[530] Ibid., 145.

state" because of the Church's "vast intelligence network."[532] A U.S. State Department report from 1977 also noted the "high credibility" of the Church among foreign observers.[533] By the late 1970s and early 1980s, members of Congress and their staff drew on a wide number of sources for information regarding conditions of human rights abroad, including religious groups.[534] Referring to human rights groups, a staffer of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said in 1981,"these guys have learned how power works…Their power is information."[535] He further explained that, "[w]e know most of them have a liberal-left policy line, and they push that out. But they do make good people available to us for subcommittee hearings, and subcommittees serve the purpose of putting the information before the public."[536]

Due to the rejection of U.S. aid by Salvadoran military government, interest groups in the United States, however, had only few additional means to pressure for change in U.S. policy and, subsequently, in El Salvador. It was also more difficult to establish facts about the false distribution of economic assistance. In the long run, conditions in El Salvador worsened. In 1980, the situation in El Salvador shifted from civil conflict to open civil war. Religious workers of the Catholic Church and other religious groups who had become acquainted with the political situation in Central America between in the 1970s interpreted events at the grassroots level as an evolutionary, albeit rapidly moving, development, not as a sudden confrontation between the state and revolutionary forces. The liberal and progressive religious community did not seem to fear the Sandinista's revolution and subsequent reforms in Nicaragua, or a communist takeover in El Salvador. Some missionaries and religious workers connected to Maryknoll, the Jesuits, and the liberal Protestant groups welcomed the Sandinistas' social reforms as an example to ensure the struggle against poverty and political oppression.

The policy of the Carter administration and Congress, however, slowly shifted into the opposite direction of the objectives desired by Archbishop Romero and other

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[531] Letter from Tom Marti, Maryknoll, to John McAward, UUSC, 7 February 1979, in: MFBA, Justice and Peace Office, Box 7: Csp./Rpts.: 1973-1985/Chile-El Salvador-Guatemala-Nicaragua-Peru-Venezuela, Folder 2.

[532] Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "The Catholic Church and Human Rights in Latin America", Confidential Report No. 869, 25 October 1977, in: NSA, *El Salvador: 1977-1984*, doc. # 00041.

[533] Ibid.

[534] Schoultz, *Human Rights*, 96; "Groups Trying To Sway Latin America Policy," *New York Times*, 18 November 1981, A24.

[535] "Groups Trying To Sway Latin America Policy," *New York Times*, 18 November 1981, A24.

reformers. President Carter opted for "the preservation of order" in 1979 and 1980. While it seems that the Carter administration was willing to steer a more ambitious human rights course toward El Salvador in 1977 and 1978, domestic and regional constraints produced traditional fears of national security and revealed the secondary role of human rights for the United States' foreign policy goals. The beginning of military assistance to El Salvador in 1980 was tender in comparison to requests of later years. Nevertheless, the starting point for the discourse of the 1980s between the majority of U.S. policymakers in Congress and in the administrations on the one hand and the involved religious community on the other was at odds. In the following chapters, I will examine features of civic foreign policy against the background of these changing political conditions.

[536] Ibid.