

EL SALVADOR FACT SHEET

o El Salvador, Central America's smallest country, is also its most densely populated. 5.5 million people live in an area the size of the state of Massachusetts. A tiny handful of families, supported by the Salvadorean army and the United States government, historically have controlled all the country's wealth through their ownership of the land, the banks, and industry.

o The control of El Salvador's economy by 10% of the population has left the rest of the country on the verge of starvation. 70% of children under 5 are malnourished. 63 out of 1,000 children die before reaching one year of age. In rural areas, unemployment and underemployment approach an annual rate of 60%. Per capita calorie consumption is the lowest in Latin America.

o In October of 1979, a group of military officers and civilians overthrew the government of General Carlos H. Romero in a bloodless coup. A military/civilian junta was formed, strongly backed by the U.S. government. The junta promised reforms which in March it began to carry out. But from the first day, it continued the murder, torture, and repression of all who opposed it.

o Its policy of "reform with repression" was supplemented by death squads paid for by the wealthy families. Jointly, the military and the death squads have been responsible for the death of over 1,000 persons since January of this year.

o Opposing the junta and its oligarchic supporters is the Revolutionary Democratic Front, composed of mass popular organizations, reformist political parties, trade unions, associations of professionals and small businessmen, student organizations, farmworkers' movements, and the country's two universities. The Front supports a program for the establishment of a Democratic Revolutionary Government, which will take control of the nation's wealth from the hands of the tiny oligarchic elite which has run

El Salvador and use it to benefit the majority of the people. It will disband the seven police forces which have terrorized the populace for 50 years. It will undertake a massive literary campaign to eliminate the 45% illiteracy rate. It will carry out extensive public health programs to end the generations of diseases and early death. It will take its place in the family of nations, independent of foreign manipulation, exercising its right to self-determination. The Front and its program enjoy the overwhelming support of the Salvadorean people.

o Fearing the example of the Nicaraguan people, the U.S. government has begun to pump massive amounts of military and foreign aid into El Salvador. It has sent 36 advisors to work with what it claims is El Salvador's undertrained army---an army, most of whose officers have been trained in U.S. facilities. It proposes to send \$5.7 million dollars in additional military aid to support the tottering military/civilian junta. Most dangerously, its policies suggest the possibility of direct intervention to support an unpopular and murderous government whose reforms are bought with the blood of innocent workers, farmers, students, and church.

o We have all heard of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, El Salvador's outspoken champion of human rights and social justice. Archbishop Romero, shortly before his death, had asked President Carter not to send arms aid to the junta. The day before his death, Romero called on the soldiers of the junta to disobey the orders of their commanders and stop the killing of their brothers and sisters. He asked, in the name of God, that they stop the repression. That is why he was murdered.

o Romero joins thousands of Salvadoreans who have given their lives for social justice, human rights, and self-determination. Let us remember his words, for they are words of the Salvadorean people:

STOP THE REPRESSION

NO U.S. INTERVENTION
IN EL SALVADOR

THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION
FOR THE
SALVADOREAN PEOPLE

New York, April 30, 1980

(This fact sheet prepared for the Memorial Mass for Salvadorean Archbishop Romero held in Seattle on Mar. 31, 1980.)

El Salvador

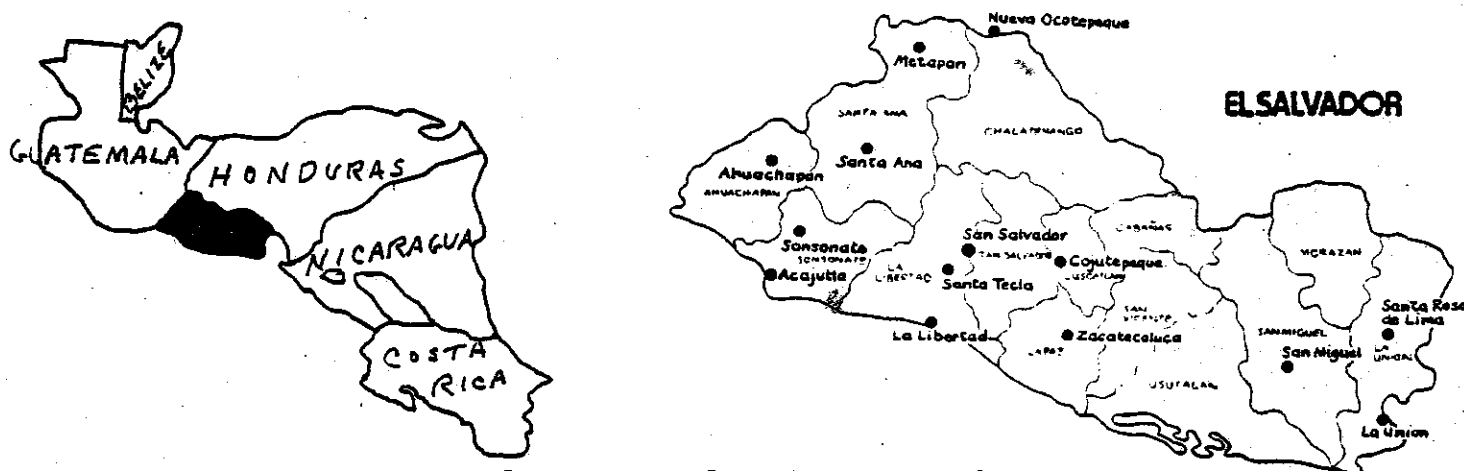
Brief General Description: El Salvador is the smallest Latin American country, about the size of Massachusetts (8,260 square miles). It is the most densely populated country in Latin America with 4 1/2 million people. The population doubles every 20 years.

Hunger and Malnutrition: According to United Nations' statistics (1976), El Salvador has the lowest per capita caloric intake of any country in Latin America. **ALMOST 75% OF SALVADORAN CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 SUFFER FROM MALNUTRITION.**

Land Exploitation: At the root of this misery is an extremely inequitable distribution of land. **60% OF THE LAND IS IN THE HANDS OF 2% OF THE PEOPLE.** Sixty percent of the Salvadoran people are peasant farmers. In the last two years alone the number of landless peasants has doubled.

Unemployment: The International Labor Office (ILO) cites El Salvador as having the highest rate of unemployment in the continent - 50%. **90% OF THE SALVADORAN PEOPLE EARN LESS THAN \$100 A YEAR.**

Social Misery: In El Salvador, **ILLITERACY IS 50%**, equal to Nicaragua. In other areas such as **HEALTH** - 67% of the peasant women give birth without medical attention; **HOUSING** - 33% of the families live in one-room shacks, 63% lack water.



48 Years of Military Rule

Military Rule: El Salvador has been under continuous military rule since 1932 - 48 years in all - which is longer than any other country in Latin America. Right-wing paramilitary groups terrorize the populace. Amnesty International estimates that one group alone - ORDEN, founded in 1968 by General Jose Alberto Medrano - has more than 100,000 members and has always enjoyed full government support.

Human Rights Violations by Security Forces in 1979:

DISAPPEARED - 93	(54 peasants, 17 workers, 2 teachers, 18 students, 2 professionals)
DETAINED - 468	(198 peasants, 101 workers, 21 teachers, 86 students, 4 priests, 3 professionals, 55 unidentified)
ASSASSINATED - 749	(219 peasants, 100 workers, 33 teachers, 76 students, 3 priests, 11 professionals, 307 unidentified)

(Source: Secretariat of Social Communications, Archdiocese, San Salvador)

