

81-7,192

U.S. vs. Human Rights In the Third World



NOAM CHOMSKY & EDWARD S. HERMAN

THE UNITED STATES VERSUS HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE THIRD WORLD

**BY NOAM CHOMSKY
AND EDWARD S. HERMAN**

The Vietnam war has been digested by the U.S. political system with hardly a trace. Essentially the same people manage national affairs, and possess virtually exclusive access to the mass media; the critics of the war have lapsed, or been forced, into silence; and the media have not allowed the vast accumulation of sordid details about our Vietnam involvement to disturb the myth of U.S. benevolence and concerned pursuit of democracy abroad. This myth has remained unruffled even in the face of the accelerating "Brazilianization" of the Third World over the past decade, very often under active U.S. sponsorship, with frequent displacement of democratic governments and extensive and growing resort to repression, including physical torture, imprisonment, death squads, and mysterious "disappearances," all within the U.S. sphere of influence. In this context, the state which has sponsored and supported the Somoza family, the Shah, Marcos, Park, Pinochet, Suharto,

This is an abridged and adapted version of the Introduction to a forthcoming volume entitled *The Pentagon-CIA Archipelago*. An earlier edition of this work was published but then suppressed by the Warner Communications system in 1973. Noam Chomsky teaches at MIT and Edward S. Herman at the University of Pennsylvania.

and the Brazilian generals can announce a campaign for human rights throughout the world and be taken with the utmost seriousness.

Brainwashing Under Freedom

This all represents a testimonial to the greatly underrated capacities of what we may call "brainwashing under freedom." The ability of the system—that is to say, the important power factions in the system and their intellectual and media spokesmen—to reconstruct and shape the perspectives of history and the interpretation of current events in accordance with its own interests is truly impressive. The background against which human rights issues have arisen in the period since 1945 includes an unparalleled, world-wide economic expansion by the United States, its establishment of a global military presence with 3,375 foreign military bases "virtually surrounding both the Soviet Union and Communist China,"^{1*} and interventions in the affairs of other states that are unmatched in number, scale, and global reach. In the face of these developments, the myth has been successfully established in the public mind, and in liberal circles in Western Europe, that the United States is merely "containing" other "expansionist" powers! During the early phases of the Vietnam War, by a blatant misrepresentation of Lin Piao's call for "peoples' war"—suppressing his reiterated statement of the need "to adhere to a policy of self-reliance . . . on the strength of the masses in one's own country"—and by a general propaganda barrage, the *Chinese* were established by the mass media as "expansionist," while the United States, engaged in the wholesale destruction of a distant small country on the border of China, with bases around China, and supporting Chiang on Taiwan, was responding to China's aggressiveness, preventing dominoes from falling, protecting freedom, etc. Never was the United States portrayed in the mass media or mainstream academic scholarship as engaged in the positive pursuit of its own economic-imperial interests at the expense of any people standing in its way; nor were its exploits described as subversion or outright aggression.

* Notes will be found at the end of the article.

The hypocrisy and sheer silliness of much political commentary in this regard are truly remarkable. To cite only one example, William V. Shannon, liberal commentator for the *New York Times* and President Carter's ambassador-designate to the Republic of Ireland, laments the failures of American policy in these terms (September 28, 1974):

For a quarter century, the United States has been trying to do good, encourage political liberty, and promote social justice in the Third World. But in Latin America where we have traditionally been a friend and protector and in Asia where we have made the most painful sacrifices of our young men and our wealth, our relationships have mostly proved to be a recurring source of sorrow, waste, and tragedy.

Even in Chile, he explains, our "benevolence, intelligence and hard work have proved not to be enough," as we intervened "with the best of motives." We are trapped in "ironic paradoxes" as we seek to "advance our moral ideals" throughout the world.

All of this may be regarded as commonplace. In any society, apologists will seek to portray external ventures in a favorable light. Nevertheless, despite massive evidence to the contrary, liberal and social democratic opinion in the United States and Western Europe continues to regard this country as an "exception," a country in which ideas flow freely and without discrimination and where the truth tends eventually to prevail (*vide* Vietnam and Watergate). The myth is reinforced by material success and power, which have helped generate a high degree of self-righteousness. And it is promulgated by a huge propaganda apparatus that tends to dominate the domestic and international flow of "information." Power has also meant innumerable links and dependency relations with elites throughout the world, and thus strong psychological and interest pressures influencing them to perceive issues from the viewpoint of the U.S. leadership. The British Labor government's consistent support of the U.S. assault on Vietnam, with only the mildest admonitions and occasional foot-dragging, represents the typical governmental and leadership response outside the Communist world. (The Swedish government's open and sharp criticism was virtually unique in the "Free World," despite an

unprovoked aggression of extraordinary savagery.) U.S. beneficence and good intentions are presumptions abroad that sustain self-righteousness and self-deception at home.

Such self-deception can reach quite extraordinary heights. Suppose that Fidel Castro had organized or participated in at least eight assassination attempts against the various presidents of the United States since 1959. It is safe to conclude that the *New York Times*, CBS News, and the mass media in general would have portrayed him as an international gangster and assassin, who must be excluded from the community of civilized nations. But when it is revealed that the United States has made or participated in that many attempts on Castro's life,² it's just "one of those things that governments do." The press will hardly suggest on the basis of such information that the world's "nations have to evaluate the U.S. potentiality as a responsible world citizen," to paraphrase a recent *Christian Science Monitor* editorial that had the gall to assert that the United States, after the record of the past 30 years, is entitled to stand in judgment over Vietnam for its alleged violations of human rights!

Suppose further that Fidel Castro had arranged for his agents in the United States to disperse various disease carriers in agricultural regions in an attempt to poison and destroy livestock and crops. Can one imagine the hysteria of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Times* on the depths to which barbarian evil can sink under communism? The United States actually did carry out such an act against Cuba, reported in the press in early 1977 as a minor news item on the back pages—500,000 pigs had to be destroyed in Cuba as a result of a deliberately spread viral disease. And according to a recent statement of a Canadian adviser to the Cuban government, as early as 1962 he was paid \$5,000 by a Defense Intelligence Agency representative to infect Cuban poultry with a viral disease.³ Editorial outrage over these claims has been modest, to say the least.

President Carter has kindly offered to move toward normalizing relations with Cuba if it will refrain from "participating in violence across the oceans, [and] will recommit [sic] the former relationship that existed in Cuba toward human rights. . . ." Eight admitted attempts on Castro's life, a sponsored inva-

sion, innumerable acts of sabotage—but Carter can talk about Cuban external violence *and not be challenged or ridiculed by anyone whose voice can be heard*. Carter's reference to the state of civil rights in Cuba under the Batista dictatorship also elicited neither criticism nor satire. Where such hypocrisy and distortion can pass without comment, it is evident that the mass media are maintaining a system of thought control that can establish and nourish the Big Lie as effectively as any system of state censorship.

Retail Violence as "Terror"—Wholesale Violence as Maintaining "Order" and "Stability"

The use of the words "terror" and "terrorism" as semantic tools of power is worthy of special note. In their dictionary meaning, these words refer to "intimidation" by the "systematic use of violence" as a means of both "governing" and opposing existing governments. Yet all through the Vietnam War these words were restricted to the use of violence in resistance to what General Lansdale called the "fascistic state" imposed by American force. The essence of U.S. policy in South Vietnam, and elsewhere in Indochina, was intimidation by virtually unrestrained violence against the peasant populations. Nevertheless, this was not terror or terrorism, invidious words reserved for the relatively small and much more selective use of force by the NLF, from the time when the former Viet Minh was authorized to use violence in self-defense against official U.S.-backed terrorism in the late 1950s.

The same Orwellian usage was standard on the home front. Students, war protesters, Black Panthers, and assorted other dissidents were effectively branded as violent and terroristic by a government that dropped four million tons of bombs over a nine-year period on a small peasant country with no means of defense. Beatings of demonstrators, infiltration of dissident organizations, extensive use of agent provocateur tactics, even FBI complicity in political assassination were not designated by any such terms.

In mass media jargon today, Argentine guerrillas attacking a police station are terrorists, while the police and military who kill guerrillas are maintaining order—even when they use

or connive with "death squads" who abduct and murder union leaders, scientists, political activists, priests, and the wives and children of people objectionable to the regime. Both official and Amnesty International sources estimate over 1,300 killings in Argentina in 1976 alone, carried out mainly by police and parapolice death squads. By contrast, the State Department's Office for Combatting Terrorism estimates a world-wide total of 292 deaths caused by "terrorism" from 1973 through 1976.⁴ The daily Argentine abductions and murders, largely ignored in the United States, are sometimes reported as simple three-liners on the back pages in the language of the handouts of the officials implementing the terror, or written up by Juan de Onis in the *New York Times* very even-handedly—the extremists of the left and right are engaged in disturbing mutual violence, in which the right seems to have the edge in the killing competition, with General Videla in the "middle," sincerely trying to contain the deterioration but frustrated by unexplained forces.⁵

Similarly, "normal" police intimidation, killing, and torture in such countries as Brazil are barely newsworthy in the United States. The Brazilian death squads, also recruited from among the police, came into existence in 1964 and have thrived ever since. They even own property and operate a newspaper, *O Gringo*. And they are responsible for murders running into the thousands. The *Jornal do Brasil* of April 20, 1970, reports:

In Guanabara and in the state of Rio alone, the number of deaths attributed to the Death Squad is more than 1,000, that is, almost 400 a year. The victims show signs of unnecessary cruelty. For example, between January 11 and July 1, 1969, 40 bodies were found in the waters of the Macacu River, buried in the mud near the bridge between Maje and Itaborai. All of the bodies, in an advanced state of decomposition, still showed the marks of handcuffs and burns caused by cigarettes and multiple bruising; some of them were still handcuffed. According to the findings of the autopsy, it was noted that many had been tortured, shot, and then drowned.

In the review *Veja* of March 3, 1971, the director of the periodical states that out of 123 homicides attributed to the death squad in Sao Paulo between November 1968 and June 1970, only five had been investigated by the magistrate. It is

evident that these killings are carried out under the authority and protection of the state. They are very numerous, sadistic, and display a Nazi-like social pathology that should be highly newsworthy and deserving of editorial attention. But the Brazilian junta is U.S.-sponsored, very friendly to U.S. business—if not to its own dissenters and poor—and regarded with positive enthusiasm by our bankers and businessmen. Wholesale violence by fascist client states is not “terror.”

Neo-colonialism and the Washington Connection

Since the Second World War there has been a steady deterioration of political and social conditions in Latin America and generally throughout Third World areas that are within the “Free World” (mainly U.S.) orbit. Liberal ideologists treat this as fortuitous and independent of U.S. choice and power, claiming that as a democracy we support democratic institutions abroad, while any contrary trends are based on exogenous forces over which the United States has no control. In the process it is necessary to suppress and belittle the long-standing relations between the U.S. political-military elite and the military juntas and comprador elements in states like Brazil, the economic advantages of Third World fascism to U.S. economic interests, and the evidence of positive U.S. political and economic support for brutal dictatorships and frequent hostility to *reformism* as well as radicalism in the Third World.

The real relationships, as opposed to the ideological claptrap of the Max Lerner, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., et al., is shown on the accompanying table, which relates U.S. economic and military aid (and that of U.S.-dominated international lending agencies) to various political and human rights and economic factors. The table focuses on a series of strategic changes, whose dates are shown in column 1, for ten U.S. client countries. Columns 2-4 describe the effect of these events on the political environment and human rights, with positive signs (+) indicating an increased use of torture and larger numbers of political prisoners—i.e., a deterioration of human rights—and negative signs (–), the reverse. Column 5 shows the effect of these events on the “climate of investment”: 5a shows + if laws or regulations were subsequently changed to reduce taxes

on foreign companies or make it easier for them to repatriate profits, and 5b shows + if labor conditions were improved from the standpoint of foreign investors by means of government controls over wages or the weakening or destruction of independent labor organizations. Columns 6-10 show percentage changes in aid and credits from the United States and international organizations for the two or three years after the political change as compared with the comparable period prior to the event.⁶ For example, under Brazil, 1964 is a strategic date as noted in column 1. We can see that human rights deteriorated, investment climate improved, and overall aid and credits by the U.S. and multinational lending organizations went up 112 percent in the three years following the coup as compared to the three years preceding the coup.

There are a number of problems associated with this table.⁷ Trends in torture and numbers of political prisoners are not easy to establish, and in a few instances the evidence is quite tentative. Aid figures can also be misleading, as other factors may temporarily distort a real relationship: e.g., the decline in aid to South Korea after the Park coup of 1972 was greatly influenced by the withdrawal of South Korean mercenaries from South Vietnam and the resultant decline in U.S. payments for these hired soldiers. The reduction in military aid to Chile after the fascist coup of 1973 is also misleading, since the high rate of military aid under Allende reflected U.S. support for the right-wing military in the interests of counter-revolution—economic aid to the civil society declined precipitously under Allende. The collapse of international organization aid to Chile during the Allende period, and its rapid recovery under fascism, provides strong evidence for the dominance of U.S. economic and political interests in the decision-making processes of the international agencies.⁸

For all its limitations this table bears out in graphic form a set of relationships that should be obvious to any student of recent Third World history. For most of the sample countries, U.S.-controlled aid has been positively related to investment climate and inversely related to the maintenance of a democratic order and human rights. Only in the case of South Korea and Thailand is the pattern reversed. The South Korean exception

Relationship Between U.S. Aid, Investment Climate,

Country	Strategic Political Dates ¹	Positive (+) or Negative (-) Effects on Democracy ¹	Decrease (-) or Increase (+) in Use of Torture or Death Squads ¹	Decrease (-) or Increase (+) in No. of Political Prisoners ¹	Improvement in Investment Climate: tax laws eased
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5a)
Brazil	1964	-	+	+	+
Chile	1973	-	+	+	+
Dominican Republic	1965	-	+	NA*	+
Guatemala	1954	-	+	NA	+
Indonesia	1965	-	+	+	+
Iran	1953	-	+	+	+
Philippines	1972	-	+	+	+
South Korea	1972	-	+	+	+
Thailand	1973	+	-	NA	-
Uruguay	1973	-	+	+	+

*NA: not available.

Sources: 1. Information on torture and political prisoners mostly from the *Amnesty International Report on Torture*, 1975 and *The Amnesty International Report*, 1975-76, 1976. Supplemented with data from newspaper articles, journals, and books on the specific countries. Data on investment climate largely from articles, journals, and books on the specific countries.

we have explained above. The row for Thailand shows a sharp reduction of U.S. economic and military aid following the moves toward democratic government in October 1973, slightly more than offset by U.S. and international organization credits. But the bulk of the credits consisted of a large World Bank loan made in 1974 while control by the Thai elite was still pretty much intact. In 1975 World Bank loans fell to zero for the first time in a decade. It should also be noted that there was a large influx of U.S. military aid into Thailand in 1976 (not shown on the table), which no doubt facilitated the counter-revolutionary coup of October 1976.

The pattern revealed is clear, persistent, rational, and ugly. Human rights have tended to stand in the way of the satisfactory pursuit of U.S. economic interests—and they have, accordingly, been brushed aside, systematically. U.S. economic

and Human Rights in 10 U.S. Client States

Improvement in Investment Climate: labor repressed (5b)	Economic Aid (% change) ² (6)	Military Aid (% change) ² (7)	(6) + (7) (% change) ² (8)	U.S. and Multi- national Credits (% change) ² (9)	Total (8) + (9) (% change) ² (10)
+	+ 14	-40	- 7	+ 180	+ 112
+	+558	- 8	+259	+1,079	+ 770
+	+ 57	+10	+ 52	+ 305	+ 133
+	NA	NA	NA	NA	+5,300
NA	- 81	-79	- 81	+ 653	+ 62
+	NA	-	-	-	+ 900
+	+204	+67	+143	+ 171	+ 161
+	- 52	-56	- 55	+ 183	- 9
-	- 63	-64	- 64	+ 218	+ 5
+	- 11	+ 9	- 2	+ 32	+ 21

2. Data on aid taken from *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations*, A.I.D., 1972 and 1976 editions, for years 1962-1975. Data previous to 1962 taken from *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Bicentennial Edition, Dept. of Commerce, 1975.

interests in the Third World have dictated a policy of containing revolution, preserving an open door for U.S. investment, and assuring favorable conditions of investment. Reformist efforts to improve the lot of the poor and oppressed, including the encouragement of independent trade unions, are not conducive to a favorable climate of investment. Reformism means "instability" and strikes; whereas in Brazil, as *Business Week* reports (December 13, 1976): "Fiat may still find Brazil a good place to put its money; the military government is stable, and labor peace prevails." Democracy itself is also not conducive to a favorable climate. As noted by Edward A. Jesser, Jr., chairman of the United Jersey Banks, in a speech to the American Bankers Association: "Quick and tough decisions can be made in a relatively short time in a country such as Brazil compared to the difficulty there is in reaching agreement

on what actions to take in a democracy.”⁹ So much for democracy.

The perspective of the business community was illuminated in a recent ten-page Special Report by *Business Week* (August 9, 1976) on “Reversal of Policy: Latin America Opens The Door To Foreign Investment Again.” The editors are positively ecstatic about these new developments. The report is studded with such terms as “pragmatic,” “realistic,” “stability,” “tough,” and “confidence.” The words “democracy” and “torture” do not appear in the Special Report, nor is there any discussion of trends in income distribution or the allocation of budgetary resources to arms, business subsidies, and education and medical research. The word “repression” appears once, in the following context:

A unifying theme of Latin military governments is that they stand—or claim to stand—for social and economic progress, not just law and order. Faced with a choice, however, they are likely to postpone social improvement as a goal secondary to economic consolidation [sic: whatever this means] and political stability, imposed with varying degrees of repression.

A unifying theme is that the juntas “claim to stand” for social progress, but they may not get around to it in our time.

These muddled apologetics exhaust *Business Week’s* analysis of welfare, income distribution, and political trends in Latin America. *Business Week* is even quite pleased with Chile, “whose economy had been reduced to a shambles” by Allende—no mention of the CIA-ITT contribution. Fascist achievements “have been obscured by a deep recession and by the harsh austerity measures”—industrial output fell marginally under Allende, whereas the index went from 113 to 78 under the junta. Apologetics can hardly be more crass and incompetent. The important point, though, is that a magazine that represents “enlightened” U.S. business interests displays such unqualified enthusiasm for Third World fascism, based clearly on its favorable impact on U.S. business. Any adverse effects on the majority of the population are completely irrelevant.

There is also a convergence of economic and military-strategic interests in support of Third World fascism, as the military juntas in charge usually have a client relationship to

the U.S. military establishment, are cooperative on U.S. bases, and specialize in the cleaning up of any subversives and protestors who challenge the satellite relationship. The military-strategic interest may have some small degree of autonomy of its own, but the size, role, and global spread of the U.S. military establishment cannot be explained with any degree of plausibility except as derivative from a global economic interest which is well understood by the strategists of "containment." Thus both economic and strategic interests have produced a natural alliance with military juntas and elite remnants of the old colonial order. These elements have had to rely on force to preserve power, and they have also had a strong propensity to feather their own nests by means of both graft and simple exploitation of the underlying population, in collusion with their foreign sponsor.

There is a close relationship between the terror employed in Brazil, Chile, and other client fascisms and their economic policies. Special tax privileges to foreign business and dependence on foreign investment for economic growth are not easy to achieve under a democratic order in this era of Third World nationalism. Neither is control over wages and the banning of strikes and other actions that disturb a "favorable investment climate." A persistent characteristic of neo-colonialism is the preservation of labor as a cheap commodity. In the Philippines, real wages have declined sharply for both rural and urban workers, and in "an era of rising commodity prices, labor remains the cheap component. . . . Manila remains one of the few capitals of the world where a taxi ride from the airport to the center of the city costs less than a dollar with tip."¹⁰ This cheap labor is not a result of the operation of a "free market." In the Philippines, as in Brazil and Chile, the forces of supply and demand are not allowed to work without constraint—wages have been controlled by government fiat, and such controls have been used to keep profits up and Brazilian and Chilean goods "competitive."

It is hardly any wonder, then, that the Brazilian "economic miracle" has made the rich richer and a large proportion of the poorer members of the population *absolutely* as well as relatively poorer. The relative share of the richest 5 per-

cent increased from 29 percent in 1960 to 38 percent in 1970; the real income of the lowest 40 percent of income-receiving units fell absolutely during the same decade. *Business Week* reported (April 28, 1975) that the real wages of the lowest 80 percent of the Brazilian population "have been steadily dropping since 1964—the year the generals took over—despite a tripling of the gross national product to \$80 billion. In 1971, 65 percent of Brazil's economically active population subsisted on a monthly income of \$60 or less; only 1 percent earned \$350 per month and over, but many of these earned \$5,000 a month or more. In entire provinces of Brazil the average income is under 10 percent of that of other provinces.

Just as in Thieu's South Vietnam, so in Brazil very high quality medical service is available in the larger cities for the upper 5 percent of income-receiving units, but negligible medical resources are available in the countryside. Vastly more resources are applied to the police than to medical research and facilities, although "Northeast Brazil, whose 35 million residents form the greatest concentration of poverty in Latin America, is a virtual human laboratory of third world ailments."¹¹ The Ministry of Health's share of the national budget fell from 4.29 percent in 1966 to 0.99 percent in 1974. Clearly the new Brazil, so pleasing to *Business Week* and the U.S. business community, is not exactly a welfare state. The large majority of the population is a means, not an end—in the same class as pack animals, only more dangerous, needing doses of terror to maintain "stability." Terror keeps the neo-colonial elites in power and the investment skies sunny. The victims are numerous, but can be disregarded because of their remoteness and passivity. If necessary we can blame them for their own laziness and excessive production of offspring.

The Dominican Republic: U.S. Model for Third World Development

In his *Stages of Economic Growth*, Walt W. Rostow describes a development process for Third World countries that come into our orbit: they become gradually like *us*, with advanced industrial technologies and democratic institutions. The Dominican Republic offers an earthy illustration of the reality

of development processes under U.S. auspices. It is an especially apt and relevant case for this reason: with and after the invasion of 1965 the United States reasserted effective control over that small country and has since thoroughly dominated its politics and economics. Given the absence of any threatening counterforces, we can say that in the Dominican Republic, as nowhere else in the Third World, the flow of events must have been in conformity with the desires of the U.S. foreign policy leadership.

It will be recalled that the United States invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 to prevent the displacement of the relatively benign fascist regime of Donald Reid Cabral by the Constitutionals of Juan Bosch, who had been overthrown by a military coup in 1963 without eliciting any U.S. intervention to save *him* and his brief experiment in democratic government. The rationalizations by Lyndon Johnson and his spokesmen, alleging an imminent threat of communism, have been convincingly shown by Theodore Draper and others to be a hypocritical cover for a positive preference for fascism over a less reliable and less controllable democratic reformist government.¹² The invasion of 1965 re-established a firm U.S. grip on the island. As Bosch put it in June 1975, "This country is not pro-American, it is American, it is United States property."¹³ What then have been the main characteristics of the Dominican model of Third World development, as seen in a country under close U.S. surveillance and control?

The first characteristic is extensive and systematic terror. In the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Brazil, three client fascisms that came into being with explicit U.S. connivance, by a strange coincidence paramilitary death squads quickly made their appearance and went on rampages against political dissenters, petty criminals, and sometimes purely arbitrary victims. Amnesty International reported on the Dominican Republic: "In 1970 it was alleged that there was one death or 'disappearance' every 34 hours." In July 1971 Norman Gall claimed that in the post-1965 era political murder in the Dominican Republic exceeded that of any comparable period under Trujillo. Gall noted further that "The Santo Domingo newspaper *El Nacional* last December 30 filled a page and a half

of newsprint with the details of 186 political murders and thirty disappearances during 1970. The Dominican terror resembles the current wave of political killings in Guatemala . . . in that the paramilitary death squads are organized by the armed forces and police, which in both cases over the years have been given heavy U.S. material and advisory support." Gall went on to note that the essential function of political terror in the Dominican Republic has been to control the slum population, "which was the main force that defeated the Dominican military in the 1965 revolution."¹⁴

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on September 9, 1971, that "The conservative Catholic Church hierarchy has condemned the 'institutionalization' of terror." The *Journal* also claimed that the opinion was widespread in the Dominican Republic that the United States was behind the paramilitary death squads. Whether or not this specific allegation was true, the *Journal* reported that "the Embassy has done nothing publicly to dissociate itself from the terror. The United States continues to provide substantial aid, training, equipment and arms, to the Dominican police and army."

Since 1971 the rate of killing has slackened, but political assassinations continue on a steady basis. On March 7, 1975, Orlando Martinez, a journalist and critic of the regime, was gunned down near his home. The incarceration and torture of political prisoners also continues to play its role in maintaining stability. So does the steady outflow of dissidents who survive the death squads and tire of the struggle against a foreign-dominated police state.

In its March 1977 Human Rights Report to Congress, the State Department blandly observes that "The Dominican Republic does not have a tradition of political democracy." The report passes in silence from the era of Trujillo, who "left a legacy of brutality and contempt for human rights" when he was deposed in 1961, to "the present constitution of 1966," under which "the Dominican Republic is a representative democracy." Not a word about the American invasion of 1965 and its aftermath. While there were human rights violations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the report concedes, nevertheless, "Observance of the right to life, liberty, and security of the

person is generally respected in the Dominican Republic, except for persons suspected of engaging in violence or seeking the violent overthrow of the government. In such cases the legal rights of individuals apprehended are not always observed." Otherwise, too, things are looking up: "A broad spectrum of political parties and groups are allowed to hold meetings, assemblies, and demonstrations." The report fails to discuss *how* "broad" a spectrum of parties and opinions is tolerated, or what happens to those whose human rights are not observed. Nor does it describe the U.S. role under Trujillo, Bosch, Cabral, and in the post-1965 era of continued regrettable violations of human rights.

A second characteristic of the Dominican Republic model is widespread venality. Alan Riding writes in the *New York Times* (June 6, 1975) that "the blatant corruption of military and civilian sectors of the government is spreading bitterness among the urban masses, whose wages have been held down despite high inflation rates since 1966." The military and police in this client state are large and well taken care of. Alan Riding reports that one method whereby Balaguer retains control is "by openly allowing senior officers to enrich themselves. With official salaries of \$700 a month, for example, most of the country's 37 generals live in huge modern houses, drive limousines, and own cattle ranches."

A recent 8-K report to the Securities and Exchange Commission by Philip Morris shows: (1) a \$16,000 payment to a Dominican tax official for a favorable tax ruling; (2) the payment of \$120,000 to various Dominican legislators for passage of a law that would give Philip Morris a privileged position in the Virginia tobacco line; and (3) monthly payments of \$1,000 by Philip Morris to Juan Balaguer himself. The president of a presumably independent state taking payoffs from a private foreign business firm would seem rather sensational, but this passed virtually unnoticed in the United States. U.S. firms get business done not only by payoffs but by putting important people on their payrolls and by building both personal and financial ties to the ruling elite. Thus the brother of the important Director of Tourism is a vice-president of Gulf & Western's sugar-producing subsidiary in the Dominican Republic.

A potential competitor to Gulf & Western's large seaside resort at La Romana, M. Wayne Fuller, has run into a steady series of obstacles from the Tourism Office in importing supplies and obtaining tax concessions supposedly available to foreign enterprises. In April 1975, a government decree was signed expropriating Fuller's beach land property—for use as a public park—helped along possibly by the fact that the president of another G & W subsidiary was an adviser to the Dominican Republic Park Commission. This decree was rescinded when Fuller mobilized *his* forces, including various army officers and Balaguer himself.¹⁵ In brief, foreign interests are exceedingly powerful as they curry and buy favor and mobilize their elite cadres, with whom they jointly dominate and loot this small dependency.

A third characteristic of the Dominican model has been a radical sweetening of conditions for foreign business and a strong reliance on foreign investment for national development. As in Greece under the Colonels' regime of 1967-1973, great stress has been placed on tourism and investments related to tourism (foreign hotels, airport development). An Investment Incentives Law of 1968 removed any restrictions on foreign ownership, extended generous tax and duty exemptions to new investments, and guaranteed capital and profit repatriation. U.S. companies have swarmed into agriculture, food processing, mining, banking, and hotel and resort complexes. Gulf & Western is the largest landowner and employer in the country, with over 10 percent of all the arable land, mainly in sugar, and with a large resort complex. The conglomerate also serves as private manager of a large tax-free zone adjacent to G & W's Cajules golf course. One of the many Dominican Republic ads in the *New York Times*—funded in good part by "contributions" from foreign companies in the country—notes that companies settling within the G & W free zone "are given special duty free import and export privileges. They are granted a 10-year tax-free status."

A fourth characteristic of the Dominican model, closely related to the preceding, is effective government pacification of the labor force, a crucial requirement for an appropriate "climate of investment." As noted above, the systematic police ter-

ror since 1965 has returned the large urban proletariat and sub-proletariat to the desired state of passivity, and the countryside has been more easily kept in line by periodic violence and threats. The Dominican Republic advertisement section in the *New York Times* of January 28, 1973, has a heading entitled "Industrialists Dream of Chances Like These," featuring the *low*, low wage rates, running between 25 and 50 cents an hour. The ad stresses the role of the *law* in fixing hours and wages and allowing the free import of foreign technicians. There is no mention of any trade unions, but employers will properly read between the lines that unions have been broken and pacified (with the assistance of George Meany and the AFL-CIO). Of special interest is the regular use of government troops and police to break up independent unions. The agricultural union *Sindicato Unido*, which operated the G & W fields, was broken by police action in 1966 and 1967, and a number of its leaders, including the union lawyer Guido Gil were arrested and killed by the forces of law and order. Another major foreign enterprise, Falconbridge Nickel, also successfully broke a union with army and police assistance in 1970. A *Wall Street Journal* report of September 9, 1971, states that "When a union attempted to organize construction workers at a foreign-owned ferronickel mill project last year, Mr. Balaguer sent in the army to help straighten things out. While the soldiers kept order, the contractors fired 32 allegedly leftist leaders. . . . The strike was broken in eight days." On the matter of labor unions, the State Department Human Rights Report has the following "information": "Labor unions are permitted to function and numerous labor unions exist, including some associated with opposition parties, but under some government controls." That is all.

In containing unions and rendering them docile the Dominican elite has had the steadfast support of the AFL-CIO, which has long cooperated closely with the CIA and international business firms in this unsavory operation. Its arm, CONATRAL, actually helped destroy the pro-labor Bosch regime in 1963 and has steadily supported its totalitarian and anti-labor successors. Presumably their blind hatred of communism and radicalism in general has led Meany and his close followers

to sell out systematically the interests of labor in the Dominican Republic and in other U.S. satellites. Meany and some other labor bosses actually have a more direct interest in the pacification of labor in the Dominican Republic. Meany, his number two man Lane Kirkland, Alexander Barkan, director of COPE, the AFL-CIO political arm, and Edward J. Carlough, president of the sheet metal workers, are all stockholders in the 15,000 acre Punta Cana resort and plantation in the Dominican Republic. In order to clear the ground for this enterprise designed for the Beautiful People, a large number of squatters were evicted by the army.¹⁶

A fifth characteristic of the Dominican model, following naturally from the preceding, is the sharp deterioration in the well-being of the bulk of the population. In serving the interests of a traditional and expatriate elite, the Dominican Republic has been turned into a tourist and industrial paradise, with a "25-cent-minimum wage rate and hard-working peaceful labor" [sic: translated, no threat of strikes from any independent unions], and with four tax-free zones "filled with manufacturers of brushes, brassieres, batteries, electronic devices, wigs, undergarments, components, and consumer goods."¹⁷ The effect of the 1965 counter-revolution and installation of the Dominican model on income distribution and welfare is summarized by the *Wall Street Journal* (September 9, 1971) as follows:

The middle and upper classes are better off, as are the lower classes lucky enough to have jobs. But work is scarce; the poor are poorer and more numerous. "Per capita income is about the same as before 1965, but it's less equitably distributed," a foreign economic expert says. He estimates per-capita income at \$240—three times that of Haiti but half that of Cuba. . . . Most of the 370 young women who work at La Romana earn 30 cents to 40 cents an hour, whereas wages in Puerto Rico have soared in recent years; factory workers there averaged \$1.73 an hour last year. . . . Malnutrition is widespread. Says George B. Mathues, director of CARE in the Dominican Republic: "You see kids with swollen bellies all over the country, even here in Santo Domingo." Food production is hampered by semi-feudal land tenure. At last count, less than 1 percent of the farmers owned 47.5 percent of the land, while 82 percent farmed fewer than 10 acres. . . . Land reform has moved with glacial speed. . . . Most Dominican children don't go beyond the third grade; only one in five reaches the sixth grade.

These effects, and the cultural degradation of the Dominican Republic, are obviously beside the point. "Stability" has been brought to the country, and from the perspective of U.S. investment opportunities, the Dominican Republic deserves the glowing description of a U.S. Embassy report describing it as a "little Brazil" and "one of the brightest spots in Latin America."

The New Human Rights Movement— Only Victims East of the Elbe Need Apply

As even this brief review indicates, in the post-Second World War era the "Washington connection" has been strongly correlated with the proliferation of regimes of terror and oppression. The linkage arises out of the significant positive relationship between client fascism and a "favorable investment climate" and the long-standing predominance of investment criteria over human rights considerations. Under "conservative" administrations, the United States supports client fascism aggressively and with little bother for the public relations aspects of human rights issues. Under "liberal" auspices, the United States supports fascism, but then sometimes urges its leaders to give it a more human face. The basic supportive relationship persists without marked real differences in either case.

Despite this linkage, the people who brought us tiger cages, Provincial Interrogation Centers, saturation bombings as a device to "urbanize" South Vietnam, death squads, and military juntas, and their spokesmen and apologists in the mass media and academia, are once again deeply concerned with human rights—but almost exclusively in the Soviet Union and the countries friendly to it. Anthony Lewis explains this apparent bias as a consequence of the fact that "The afflicted individuals are enough like us so that we identify with them—and because their stories are often such nightmares of cruelty." The likeness hypothesis may have an element of truth; the endless suffering of peasants and slum dwellers rarely elicits from the privileged more than an occasional clucking of tongues or a remark on the cruelty of fate. But the hypothesis is still difficult to sustain. Chiang Kai-shek was not very much "like us," but we had

little trouble "identifying with him," or so the actions of our democratic government would indicate. The numerous murdered and tortured intellectuals of Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile include many who are much more "like" American writers than Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, but their brutalized bodies rarely make it to the *Times* or the *Post*. As for "nightmares of cruelty," there is an endless supply that could be culled from just Indonesia and East Timor if anyone with dependable access to the media were interested. People are dying today throughout Indochina from the starvation, disease, and unexploded ordnance that are one small part of the legacy of the American war, but the new advocates of human rights seem to have little concern. There is not a whisper of protest in the press when the president states that we owe the people of Vietnam no debt and have no responsibility to rebuild what we have destroyed because "the destruction was mutual," no less. And even those segments of the press that turned against the war in its later stages, by the time rational imperialists had come to realize that the game was not worth the candle, are scandalized at the idea that anyone should speak of "reparations" for what the United States has done to Indochina. Nor do they protest when the United States goes so far as to deny aid under the Food for Peace program even to countries that trade with Vietnam. Their new moralism is imperial politics, with a vengeance.

Another explanation plus defense of the heavy focus on civil rights east of the Elbe is the difficulty and danger of criticizing friendly powers. No problems arise when we condemn a hostile state, but matters are different when we make disapproving noises about allies and clients. We "destabilize" Allende's democratic Chile, not Pinochet's fascist Chile; on the contrary, the latter merits our humanitarian support. This "explanation" contains a germ of truth, but it is still fundamentally misleading. It ignores the question of how these little tyrannies came into being in the first place, and why so many clients of our choice are venal and torture prone. It slides by the fact that we have a positive interest in client fascism—and that terror plays a role both in preserving the rule of our favored elites and in facilitating the policies that delight Gulf & Western. This supportive role to friendly terror, and the fact that "de-

stabilization" is frequently applied to nonterror regimes in favor of terror-to-come, again reveals the utter hypocrisy of the new East-of-the-Elbe Civil Rights Movement. Just how seriously is one to take the protestations of George Meany and Henry Jackson, powerful and vocal spokesmen for Soviet civil rights, who either ignore or actively support terror throughout the U.S. sphere of influence? What concerns these civil libertarians-at-a-distance is not human rights, but the benefits they perceive in a breakdown of detente, an accelerated arms race, and the renewal of an aggressive cold war posture. All of this may indeed result in increased repression in the state socialist societies that are the declared enemy, but that is hardly likely to bother the Meanys and the Jacksons, as their record of support for terror and oppression within the sphere of American power indicates.

The linkage between American power and severe human rights violations is systematic, not accidental. The American defeat in Indochina, though of great significance, led to no institutional changes within the United States. Even the doctrinal system, bruised when the murderous violence of the American aggression could no longer be suppressed, has quickly been restored, with the aid of the ideological institutions: the mass media, the academic professions, the schools, the journals of opinion. It is sheer romanticism to expect, under these circumstances, that a sudden concern for human rights might significantly influence the foreign policy of the United States. To some extent this new concern may reflect genuine beliefs on the part of individuals who have absorbed the more humane elements of Western ideology. But the underlying forces that have given precedence to "investment climate" for many decades still determine the broad sweep of policy. Genuine moralists in power find "business confidence" sagging when they push too far in humanistic directions,¹⁸ even verbally. Whatever their real aims, their discretion is sharply limited.

Thus far, in fact, the Carter human rights campaign—mainly one of words rather than deeds, in any case—has been relatively strong on Soviet violations of civil rights and weak or nonexistent on human rights in U.S. client states. Carter has written to Sakharov and received Bukovsky in person, but he has not communicated with Mrs. Allende. His campaign has

had an impact on Soviet attitudes, but not those pertaining to human rights; rather, it has added to Soviet suspicions of U.S. interest in controlling the arms race. Carter's mobilization of power in Congress has not been sufficient to prevent the conservative House from voting against aid to Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, and several other exclusively left-oriented states, while preserving it intact for client fascism. Thus, whatever Carter's real intentions, his human rights movement thus far has worked out in practice to exacerbate cold war tensions and affect minimally human rights in areas under United States influence.

But while the new moralism is not likely to have a large impact on human rights, it may well be effective as an instrument of propaganda. After the horrors of Indochina, some dramatic initiatives were needed to reconstruct the image of American benevolence that has proven so useful a device to achieve conformism and obedience in this highly indoctrinated society. These results obtained, the United States will be able to return to the "activist" foreign policy that is essential for preserving the global interests of American capitalism.

Still, in spite of these facts, there may be some marginal gains to human rights from the new propaganda offensive. The expressed concern for human rights may offer opportunities for people who are genuinely interested in the issue. They can exploit the new rhetoric, and should, to try to alleviate the suffering and oppression of the victims of terroristic states, and may even be able to enlist some support from political forces in the United States, when this is not unduly expensive—which is perhaps more than one could hope during the past three decades. But it is hardly reasonable to expect that the recent discovery of human rights violations will offset the systematic factors that impel the United States to impose and support client fascism, factors based on powerful and compelling economic interests that have in no way been diminished by recent developments, domestic or international.

NOTES

1. *Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad*. Report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 21, 1970, p. 3.

2. *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, Interim Report of Select Senate Committee on Intelligence Activities, November 20, 1975, pp. 71-109.
3. Drew Fethersten and John Cummings, "Canadian Says US Paid Him \$5,000 to Infect Cuban Poultry," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1977, p. A 18; this report states that "The major details of the Canadian's story have been confirmed by sources within and outside the American intelligence community." The pig-killing episode is described in *Newsday*, January 9, 1977.
4. "Terror—Argentine Style," *Matchbox*, Winter 1977, p. 1; Jeffrey A. Tannenbaum, "The Terrorists: For World's Alienated, Violence Often Reaps Political Recognition," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 1977, p. 1.
5. See "Rightist Terror Stirs Argentina," August 29, 1976, and "Argentina's Terror: Army Is Ahead," January 2, 1977.
6. Three-year comparisons were used except where data were unavailable or other political events intervened to require a two-year horizon.
7. Some of these problems are not discussed here for lack of space. One is the overall trend factor—if aid is going up in general, avoidance of bias may require deflating to the trend line. Such an adjustment does not alter the findings presented here.
8. The origination, funding, and staffing of these institutions provide even more definitive evidence of U.S. dominance. See Teresa Hayter, *Aid As Imperialism* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971); Michael Tanzer, *The Political Economy of International Oil and the Underdeveloped Countries* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), chapter 8.
9. *American Banker*, November 28, 1975, p. 13.
10. Henry Kamm, "Philippine Democracy, an American Legacy, Has Crumbled," *New York Times*, March 1, 1977, p. 2.
11. Marvine Howe, "Brazil's Inflation Said to Halve Real Income of Poor in Decade," *New York Times*, December 14, 1974.
12. Theodore Draper, "The Dominican Crisis: A Case Study in American Policy," *Commentary*, December 1965; Jerome Slater, *The United States and the Dominican Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
13. Alan Riding, "Balaguer and His Firm Ally, the U.S., Are Targets of Dominican Unrest," *New York Times*, June 6, 1975.
14. Norman Gall, "Santo Domingo: The Politics of Terror," *New York Review of Books*, July 22, 1971.
15. Stanley Penn, "Angry Investor Thinks Gulf & Western Is Trying to Block His Dominican Resort," *Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 1976.
16. Jonathan Kwitny, "Strange Bedfellows From Labor, Business Own Dominican Resort," *Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 1973.
17. *Wall Street Journal*, January 25, 1974, p. 9.
18. See Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State," *Socialist Revolution*, May-June 1977, pp. 6-28.

Subscriptions to *Monthly Review* are \$11 per year (\$9 for students), from *Monthly Review*, 62 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011.

Reprinted with permission, from *Monthly Review*, July-August 1977.

Published by
New England Free Press
60 Union Square
Somerville, Mass. 02143

Write for free catalogue of
radical literature.

