

BREAD & PUPPET

STORIES OF STRUGGLE & FAITH FROM CENTRAL AMERICA



FOREWORD BY GRACE PALEY



INTRODUCTION BY PETER SCHUMANN

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Foreword by Grace Paley
Introduction by Peter Schumann
Compiled and Written by Susan Green
Photographs by Ron Levine and George Lange
Edited by Greg Guma
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Green Valley Film and Art, Inc.
Burlington, Vermont
1985

Dedicated to the people of Central America.

A nuestros lectores de habla española:

Les invitamos a "leer" nuestras fotos. El Teatro Bread and Puppet (Pan y Titeres) habla una lengua internacional de gesto, signo y ceremonia. La mayoría de las fotos en este libro se sacaron en la granja Bread and Puppet de Glover, Vermont, donde todos los años en agosto Peter Schumann, director de los titiriteros, y sus amigos presentan "Our Domestic Resurrection Circus" (Nuestro Circo de la Resurrección Doméstica). Este espectáculo, que dura todo el día, incluye piezas breves y extensas, presentadas en un anfiteatro al aire libre, en un pinar y en los campos undulantes de la granja. A la puesta del sol una gran procesión final culmina con una hoguera enorme, símbolo de la muerte y la resurrección.

En años pasados el espectáculo se ha enfocado en la Guerra de Vietnam, en San Francisco de Asís, en la "lucha contra el fin del mundo" y en otros temas. Las fotos de la procesión, los entremeses, las exposiciones y el oratorio de 1984 se dedican al Monsr. Oscar Romero y al pueblo de Centroamérica. Para dar apoyo al intercambio cultural iniciado en esa ocasión, Bread and Puppet se presentó en Nicaragua en enero de 1985. Un capítulo del presente libro documenta esa gira.

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FOREWORD

Feelings in the presence of The sight and sound of the Bread and Puppet Theater

ADMIRATION

Oh! The gorgeousness the solemn size the humorous disparities

HAPPINESS

Sheer happiness just plain happiness

RESTFULNESS

In some of the long slow pieces often of holy intention — the spirit — the body rests inside the event the work — with room and permission for absence. The gathering of knowledge at the “five senses entry to the soul” so with rest comes thought — time — room for thinking *during* the work not only after it.

ARTISTIC INSPIRATION

Why not speak the truth directly? Just speak out! Speak to! Why not?

POLITICAL INSPIRATION

Why not speak the truth directly? Just speak out! Speak up! Speak to! Why not?

CORROBORATION

Yes! That's just what's happening.

ENVY

Because the work is so useful the courage of its usefulness in a long period when usefulness was mocked
Envy as an artist for the beauty and usefulness of the huge puppet figures like legends out of history, the grey women of Vietnam the ridiculous evil Uncle Fatso the lovely oxen turning round and round in the dance of silent beasts the dance of the enormous washer-women and their consorts the great martyred figure of the Archbishop Romero bending again and again to the people of his country El Salvador the white deer on the hill under the red ball of the sun the white birds bravely carried that have flown before and after us on our demonstrations and have waited fluttering in the wind outside the jails of New York Vermont Washington

To have been useful As An Artist to the movements of our times to have spoken out as artists for the poor the oppressed and humiliated in Europe Africa Asia and at home and now in this last year to have turned

with imagination and power to the suffering and holy
resistance of the people of El Salvador Nicaragua Gua-
temala AND TO HAVE BEEN HEARD

AND FINALLY LOVE AND GRATITUDE

for Peter Schumann and Elka Schumann and that solid
core of puppeteers — also for those who came,
worked with Peter for a couple of years and then went
off to Maine California France Italy Germany Ninth
Street New York Brooklyn Gratitude for their gifts to
us of labor and beauty from the earliest unknown days
on Delancy Street when we were sometimes fewer
than they — to these wonderful summer circus days in
Vermont where we, their comrades and friends meet
one another in the thousands AND GRATITUDE also
for the opportunity generously given to be one of
them an ox a deer a stiltwalker a horse a main-
tenance man a washerwoman

And thanks

Peter for the

tens of thousands

of Loaves of Bread

and the music the song making music

the new tinkling banging ratcheting

water-sighing music

GRACE PALEY

INTRODUCTION

Puppetry and Politics

BY PETER SCHUMANN

Puppetry is a form of ecstasy, just as music is. It is caused by an overflow of muscle-power and brain-activity and by an urgent happiness that can't be held back, that has to manifest itself.

The most evident fact of our life is: we are surrounded by sky, wrapped in weather. Stones speak, hills laugh, worms sing. The great beauty of the universe makes us dizzy.

Puppetry is a simplification-device to make these incomprehensible riches accessible. Or, puppetry is a form-giving technique that makes it possible to respond to creation.

So why do we talk about Central America? Why don't we stick to the jolly practices of our trade?

BOXES

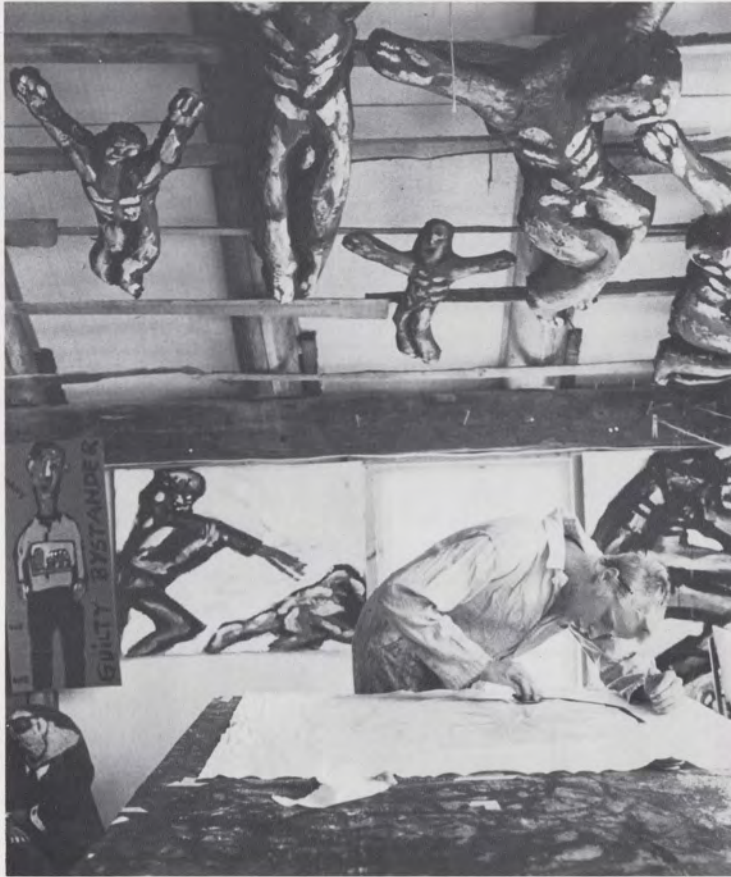
In the early days, when we couldn't stand the grandeur of our Great-great-great-grandmother Nature anymore, we built boxes with tiny little windows to live in. The

purpose of the boxes was to shut out a lot and just leave an understandable, controllable little bit. We used up whole thousand-year-long civilizations for the refinement of such boxes with windows, culminating in the invention of downtown Manhattan, where all windows face each other and all we see is our own selves mixed with a few square inches of dirty sky. Because of that sickening self-indulgent situation, we then progressed to our greatest achievement yet: a miniature box which easily fits into a corner of our living-room box and is equipped with a magical window which broadcasts the whole wide world painlessly into our hearts. We love it and hate it and call it affectionately the idiot box. And now the confusing universe and beloved chaos of the total world arrive at our senses so heavily processed and mangled by this box that we are left untouched. While our receptive organs shrink and wither, our yearning for the true ingredient grows.

Obviously the shamans-musicians-puppeteers have



greater tasks now than ever before; it's their job to communicate the suffering, muddled reality. If this is the holy job of puppetry, why do we talk about Central America? What is that good for?



The truth is, we don't know what good it does. Political theater tends to be slogan theater that bores the equally-minded and offends precisely those customers whose hearts it wants to win. Our Bread and Puppet shows are not above that; we fall into the same trap. But we try to voice our concerns anyway, with or without success, simply because we have to.

DOMESTIC RESURRECTION CIRCUSES

When we moved from New York City to Vermont in 1970, it became necessary to see and learn and listen in a new way, to invent animals and to understand how to move in a landscape in order to become part of it. We thought that we could produce a cyclic event that would be representative of life in general and of our distinct political environment in particular. We called this event Our Domestic Resurrection Circus and have performed it almost every year since then.

These presentations with tree-sized puppets and herds of wild and domesticated papier-mâché beasts depend entirely on good will: volunteers come from many towns in Vermont and from many states of the Union; some come from Canada, Eastern and Western Europe and Central America. Up to 200 women, men and children perform the Pageant. Scores of hard-working students, artists, farmers, professors, mothers, bicyclists, hardhats, grandfathers, typists and bakers do the daily chores of clay-kneading, armature-building, papier-mâché-molding, flag-printing and costume-sewing. Every summer,



hundreds of masks, figures and props are made, and the biggest puppets that get built are burned in a great bonfire which ends the Pageant.

Starting with the first Pageant a few formal devices were established for these events: 1) There is always a creation-piece, not the re-telling of any creation myth, but rather a thank-you show singing the praises of the world. 2) There is always a more or less specialized representation of the world through the treatment of some specific aspect of history, a historical personality or an overall political theme. 3) The final part of the cycle is always a resurrection-piece, presenting either a logical resurrection growing out of the context of the defeat and death of the preceding part of the show, or an unreasonable resurrection, a reminder of the possibility of resurrection.

POLITICAL ART

The arts are the privilege of the rich. Only wealthy individuals and wealthy societies afford them. Their functions are to fill out leisure time and to decorate dull spaces. That's the reality. But in spirit the arts are gods: they heal, revolutionize, fulfill, perfect. They can do all these things that we never dare to dream as possible, and

they are dead-serious about it: they pursue their high-minded visions with passion, love and intelligence. And they are always ready to break out of their damned confinement. Compared to the functions which are considered essential to society, they don't have a function. They are meant to do nothing, to affect nothing, even in the face of the most horrible violations of the sense, beauty and dignity of the world.

Right now our Western Civilization, which provides so well for us, not only violates in very real ways the sense, beauty and dignity of the world; while professing Christian ideals of neighborly love and compassion and while advocating human rights, it at the same time also teaches torture and exports torture to many parts of its sphere of influence, and openly assists the massacres of indigenous people in order to maintain its own disgusting wealth.

The arts are political, whether they like it or not.

If they stay in their own realm, preoccupied with their proper problems, the arts support the status quo, which in itself is highly political. Or they scream and kick and participate in our century's struggle for liberation in whatever haphazard way they can, probably at the expense of some of their sensitive craftsmanship, but definitely for their own souls' sake.



LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND ART

The Basic Connection

BY GREG GUMA

W*E sometimes give you a piece of bread along with a puppet show because our bread and theater belong together. We want you to understand that theater is not yet an established form, not the place for commerce you think it is, where you pay to get something. Theater is different. It is more like bread, more like a necessity..."*

— Peter Schumann

Bread and Puppet Theater reconnects the world of art with the natural world. This profound intention, expressed in plays and exhibits that are stark, haunting and unnerving, has been present since the group's earliest days in New York.

Here is art filled with spirit and strengthened by commitment. Here is theater that takes sides.

Repression and war, violence that destroys the harmony of nature — these are the killers that the theater of Bread and Puppet faces and defeats. And the vision, glimpsed in

celebrations and resurrections, is of a world that glows with love, and of never-ending organic cycles.

Peter Schumann and the many members of the group inspire other artists as well as their audiences with a theater that is as primal and as basic as the free bread that Schumann hands out at his Vermont farm each summer during the annual Domestic Resurrection Circus. This is not an escape into fantasy but a confrontation of disquieting reality, a translation of horror into myth.

Performances that directly address the crisis in Central America and the role of the theology of liberation are relatively recent. However, the relationship is a natural one. Two decades back, for example, Bread and Puppet took theater to the streets in productions about rent strikes, voter registration, the Vietnam War and many other social causes. At the same time, priests, nuns and laity across Latin America were also taking to the streets. Like Bread and Puppet, the Catholic Church was turning to basics.

"The world is given to all, and not only to the rich."

— I John 3:17

A revolutionary process was underway within Christianity by the early 1960s. Priests and women religious were becoming deeply engaged in the life-and-death struggles of poor and oppressed people; the evolving theology denounced injustice and led them to reflect on the implications of Jesus' teachings for society and politics. Liberation theology grappled directly with the necessity of change in unjust systems.

The Second Vatican Council, an historic world gathering of cardinals, archbishops and leaders of religious orders, spurred the church, body and soul, into Latin American ghettos, toward solidarity with the oppressed. The stage was set for a break with the "otherworldliness" of past religious practice.

"Changes are necessary," wrote Pope Paul VI in 1967, "basic reforms are indispensable: the layman should strive resolutely to permeate them with the spirit of the Gospel."

Pope Paul's 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Progress of Peoples), followed Vatican II as an anguished appeal on behalf of Third World peasants and workers. The pope was squarely attacking the notion that any person has an absolute right to private property. When some human beings are in need, he charged, excess property held by others is theft.

The message of the pope and other Catholics was dismissed in some conservative quarters as "Marxism warmed

up." Although an emerging dialogue between Christians and Marxists was certainly a factor in the changing perspective of the Church, such wholesale condemnations missed the point. Catholics were returning to the basics — the Gospel message.

The commitment to liberation became for many Catholics an authentic spiritual experience, grounded in concrete deeds. Christian communities — *comunidades Cristianas de base* — spread the theology throughout Central America. Reflecting on the Gospels, working together on self-help projects, many poor people started to awaken from the fatalism that had paralyzed them for so long. Now they could see that God offered — in this life on earth — redemption, liberation and deliverance from evil.

"I greatly fear that very soon the Bible will not be allowed in our country. Only the bindings will arrive, nothing else, because all the pages are subversive. And if Jesus Christ would cross the border, they would arrest him..."

— Rutilio Grande, Jesuit priest
assassinated in El Salvador, 1977

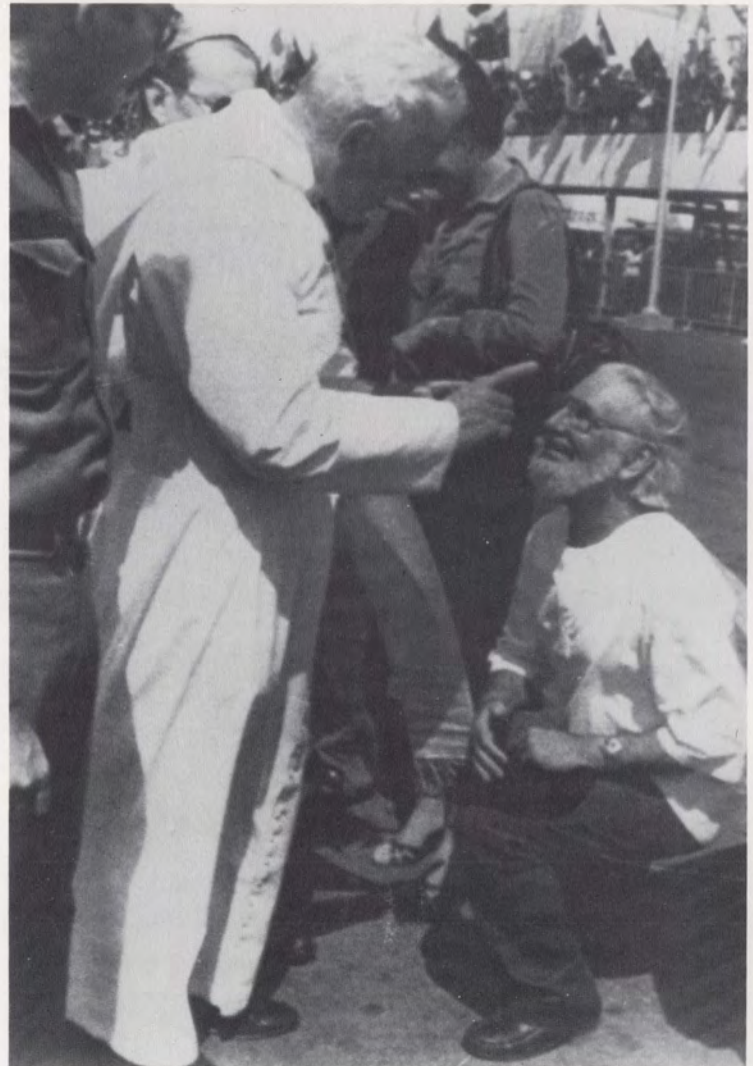
At the request of Pope Paul VI, Latin American bishops gathered at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968 to apply the approach charted by Vatican II and Paul VI to the pastoral realities of the region. Their conclusion was unequivocal: the injustices in Latin America were forms of "institutionalized sin," and the root of these sins was the "international

imperialism of money.” The bishops also prescribed a cure, drawing from the pastoral work already underway in some areas. They called for liberation, through education that raised consciousness and through the efforts of more pastoral teams and the formation of Base Christian Communities.

One priest attracted to the theology of liberation was a Nicaraguan poet and student of Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Father Ernesto Cardenal began his pastoral career by preaching Christian nonviolence and establishing a community on Solentiname, an archipelago of thirty-eight islands in Lake Nicaragua. Within a few years, however, he recognized that repressive structures would not be changed by peaceful means.

In 1972 an earthquake destroyed the center of Managua, and the massive theft of relief aid by the Somoza dictator-

When Pope John Paul II visited Nicaragua in 1983, he scolded Ernesto Cardenal, who had become Minister of Culture after the revolution. “You must straighten out your position with the Church,” the pope reportedly said, referring to restrictions on political activity by clergy.



ship exposed to more Nicaraguans the moral bankruptcy of the regime. Cardenal turned to resistance and Marxism.

In "Oracle Over Managua," a poem of the early 1970s, he began to create a synthesis of religious and political philosophy. He spoke of martyrs such as the young poet Leonel Rugama and of the new society that such sacrifices would one day create:

Revolution means to change reality.
Let us, Leonel Rugama, organize hopes.
Possibilities that can't be dreamed up by computers.
 To make real the Kingdom of God.
It is a law established by Nature
that no molecule can permanently retain
 more energy than the others —
The economy of the future will be to make life
more beautiful.
If we knew nothing of the metamorphosis of the insects!
A new society
 a new heaven and a new earth
also the production of free time
and with the development of production capacity
the development of the inner life
 a new man and a new son
that's why you died in the urban fighting
 a new man to dream new dreams.

For Cardenal and many other Christians the theology of liberation came to represent a "liberation" of theology

itself, a way to work through Church doctrine in order to move beyond it. In addition, it opened a process of conversion that "evangelized" the clergy through their experiences. As a method of liberation, it aided in analysis of the world, critical judgments in the light of faith, and committed action to change history.

"We are the vicars of the Good Shepherd who does not desert like a hired servant in time of danger, but remains with his flock, ready to give his life for theirs."

—Seventeen Catholic Bishops
from the Third World, 1967

Base Christian Communities, "radical" priests, women religious and laity have become a powerful force for social change in Latin America. But to the business interests and military regimes in many countries, the new evangelical vision of liberation theology is subversive. It challenges vested interests, it places the needs of the "pueblo de Dios" in the forefront. It calls for the empowerment of the poor, and that is labeled a threat to "national security."

The price of religious commitment is high. At least 850 priests, nuns and bishops have been arrested, tortured, expelled and murdered over the past ten years in Latin America, according to journalist Peggy Lernoux. Thousands more Catholic laity have been jailed or killed for living the Gospels.

Within the Church hierarchy, meanwhile, dialogue has

become argument. Pope John Paul II, more cautious than his recent predecessors about the political activities of clergy, has issued instructions and warnings to activist priests. In some places, conflict has erupted between conservative Church leaders and populists.

Nevertheless, the Church concern for justice and the rights of the poor continues to keep it in touch with basic realities. "It is not through opportunism nor thirst for novelty that the Church defends human rights," John Paul has written. "It is through a true evangelical commitment, which, as happened with Christ, is a commitment to the most needy."

"In the history of art, smiles are usually sarcastic. There isn't much in the way of smiling art. The stronger demonstrations of emotion are in suffering."

— Peter Schumann

While the theology of liberation blossomed in Third World communities during the Sixties and Seventies, Bread and Puppet created and shaped a liberatory theater that is filled with poignant pastoralism. The organic vision expanded once roots were put down in Vermont. Since then the Green Mountains have been fertile ground for the evolution of this theater, and in return Bread and Puppet has provided nourishment and mythic grace for the region's social movements.

In 1982, the union of Bread and Puppet and Vermont

became visible to the world when huge puppet figures, carried by more than one thousand people, led the historic June peace march in New York City. They were followed by thousands of Vermonters carrying signs celebrating the state's Town Meeting endorsements of a nuclear weapons freeze.

Bread and Puppet politics is as basic as its theatrical forms, a sense conveyed best perhaps by the solemn pageant performed annually at the Domestic Resurrection Circus. The story changes, but the theme is constant and universal. Violence annihilates the natural world, which can be resurrected through love. It is a matter of repression versus freedom. In 1984, these thoughts were conveyed through "The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Archbishop Romero."

In the weeks before the performance, puppets and props were built as newspaper headlines routinely announced the violence engulfing the region. More than usual, a sense of urgency propelled the work. The final presentation of the exhibits, sideshows, pageant and oratorio came just two and a half months before the 1984 U.S. presidential election. Nicaragua was under attack by CIA-backed counter-revolutionaries. It was a time of war in El Salvador, massive violence against indigenous peoples and a region-wide militarization bankrolled by the American government. The performers found inspiration for their scripts in news clippings, pamphlets, books and conversations with visitors who had first-hand knowledge.

The various shows were not to be simple dramatizations



of human tragedies. "People get enough of that on television," Schumann explained. "They are abstract performances with documentary narrations."

On August 11 and 12 more than 12,000 people came to northern Vermont to see Bread and Puppet's portrayals of the strength and suffering of the Central American people. Many came away shocked, sad and angry.

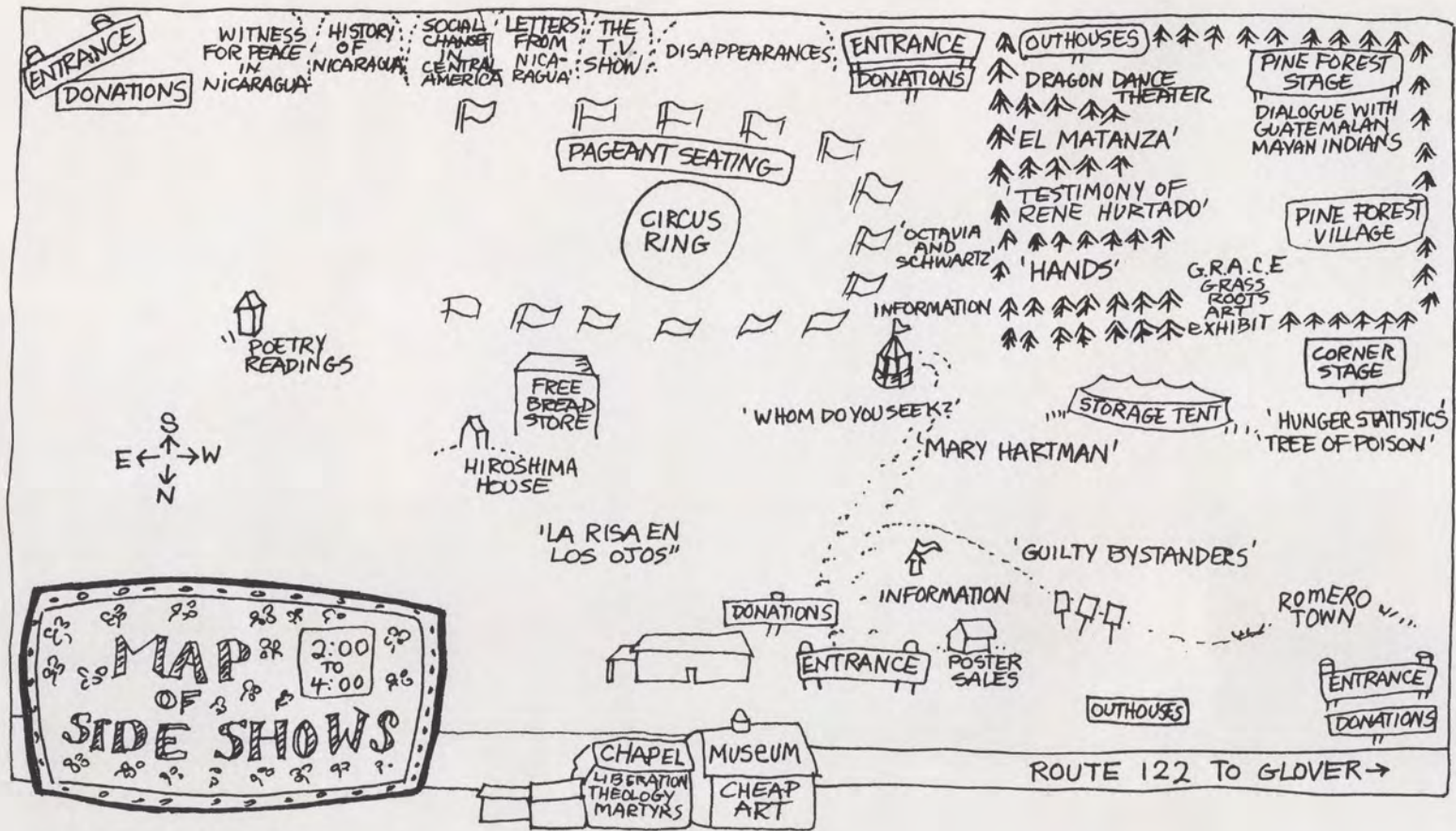
For some people the experience may even have led to a "conversion," a realization through art that they must act for change.

Just as the theology of liberation "evangelizes" both the poor and the clergy, Bread and Puppet's theater of liberation affects both audiences and performers. Many artists have come away from the Domestic Resurrection with new inspirations, many activists have found in the shows the seeds of renewal. In Glover, Vermont each year thousands of modern pilgrims receive free bread, and with it a sense of unconditional sharing. They see faith survive tragedies and experience resurrection.

Bread and Puppet mixes art and spirituality in a cauldron of suffering. Out of it comes vital, passionate expressions. Through these expressions of active love, women and men can defy death and "rise from the dead." Even the impossible can become basic, as basic as bread.







A spread of hilly farmland in northern Vermont is transformed for one mid-August weekend each year, as thousands of visitors converge on the Town of Glover (population 800), for the Bread and Puppet production, "Our Domestic Resurrection Circus." Troupe founder Peter Schumann bakes more than 600 loaves of sourdough rye bread for the occasion, handing out slices for free to all.

In the afternoon, from 2 to 4 p.m., people tour the sideshows, small productions repeated several times. They are presented simultaneously in the pine forest, on the perimeter of the amphitheater and on other stages. Then, at about 4:30, the entire audience sits on the grass to watch the Circus, a lively collection of mock-animal acts and mimed acrobatics. The huge amphitheater, which was once a gravel pit, is an appropriate

stage for the company's twenty-foot-tall puppets.

The amphitheater is transformed at 6 p.m. into a setting for the Pageant. The audience sits along one side of the space as puppeteers enter from all directions. As the drama builds, performers move along the ridge, run up and down the slopes, and march across the field. The sun sets and the Pageant draws to a close. Yet still later, in the pine forest, the Oratorio is performed on and around a torchlit stage.

Throughout the weekend the two-story Puppet Museum across the road from the open-air events is filled with visitors. In 1984, three additional exhibits were offered: the Guilty Bystanders and Romero Town, both outdoors; and Liberation Theology Martyrs, adjacent to the museum.

**BREAD AND PUPPET'S
DOMESTIC RESURRECTION CIRCUS**

**Pageant
Exhibits
Sideshow
Oratorio**





THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

JUST before sunset one hundred and fifty puppeteers circle beneath an enormous Godface and sing a traditional Sacred Harp melody. Once they finish and disperse the Angel Gabriel appears on stilts as the ominous strains of a violin establish the mood of this Annunciation.

A dark-skinned Josef and Maria, she riding a donkey, descend from a hillside toward the center of the grassy amphitheater. Josef then knocks at each door in a row of cardboard houses. The travelers are seeking shelter for the night.

At the first house he receives a brusque reply. "Who do you think you are? My soup is burning and you look weird."

"Good evening," he says at the next door. "My name is Josef and this is my wife Maria and she is pregnant.

"And we are from El Salvador."

"This is not a hotel," comes the sharp retort.

At another door Josef introduces their donkey, Ignatz. "He is three years old."

"I don't like donkeys," snaps the homeowner. "Goodbye."

At the fifth house Josef explains that they have their own sleeping bags. The irate answer: still no.

Finally, at a barn, a loud MOOO welcomes them.

Maria's baby is born. The sound of trumpets. A bright orange star hovers. A flock of sheep gathers. Glorious chiming of a gamelan ensemble. And then the arrival, in one puppet on stilts, of the Three Kings.

A chorus sings a Spanish lullaby. "Duerme, duerme, negrito; Que tu mama esta en el campo, negrito..."

Insistent drumming from the hill heralds the fast approach of a stark column of black-and-white shapes — the Death Squad. The Massacre of the Innocents begins. Crashing cymbals. Women shrieking. Babies ripped from their homes. Collapsing houses reveal grieving mother puppets that dance away slowly to the sound of a flute.

Down the hill come colorfully costumed, stuffed puppets that resemble scarecrows — the People of El Salvador. They push a large baby



carriage and make a joyful noise. From the carriage, a fully-grown young Oscar Romero emerges. Children run out of the crowd to pin signs on him:

HOPE...LOVE...COURAGE.

The young Romero climbs a ladder. He is surrounded by cheering Salvadoran masses. From their midst an enormous puppet rises, the bespectacled Archbishop Romero. His arms extend outward in benediction.

The Death Squad watches and waits.

The archbishop speaks to them. "Men of the army, National Guard, police... Brothers, you are part of our own people. You kill your campesino brothers and sisters. No soldier is obliged to obey an order against the law of God. In the name of this suffering people, I beg you, I ask you, I order you...stop the repression."

Each phrase further incites the Death Squad.

Shots. Romero falls. A Death Squad truck, filled with life-sized crucified figures, drives up. The Salvadorans surrender their scarecrow puppets for these somber forms.

A gigantic beast on wheels rolls over the field. The People retreat up the hill as they sing, again





and again, “The end o’er all...” But then the Beast, with the Death Squad leaning against it, bursts into flames.

And while it burns in the waning light, a large, blue boat glides down the hillside, accompanied by great white birds. They move past the burning Beast and off into the darkening hills, carrying a vision of the future, the resurrected Oscar Romero and the liberated People of El Salvador.

• • •

“Let my blood be a seed of freedom. As a Christian I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will arise in the Salvadoran people.”

— Oscar Romero, 1980

Oscar Romero took a cautious approach to the strife in El Salvador, at least initially after his appointment as archbishop in 1977, but was pushed along by the escalation of right-wing atrocities. Romero, from a family of modest means in the remote mountain town of Ciudad Barrios, came to understand that the poor were being oppressed for struggling against the system that kept them poor. Those who spoke out — moderate and leftist

politicians, social activists, even clergy — were condemned. In fact, one flyer circulated in the summer of 1977 specifically made the church a target. “Be a patriot. Kill a priest,” the text urged.

Romero attended numerous funerals for priests and Catholic laity, many of whom had been tortured to death. “These days,” he said, “I have to walk the roads gathering up dead friends, listening to widows and orphans and trying to spread hope.” At first he denounced the guerillas along with the death squads, but eventually Romero saw the difference. In 1978, he said, “When a dictatorship seriously violates human rights and attacks the common good of the nation, when it becomes unbearable and closes all channels of dialogue, of understanding, of rationality; when this happens, the church speaks of the legitimate right of insurrectional violence.”

The situation continued to deteriorate. What had once passed as a political center virtually dissolved. Romero spoke out more boldly, at one point directly accusing the ruling class of complicity: “...those who are really responsible for the violence in our country are the families of the oligarchy and...those who close off peaceful solutions to problems are idolizers of wealth.”

On March 23, 1980, during a sermon broadcast on the radio, Romero dared to plead that the ordinary soldier submit to a higher authority than the military. “It is time,” he said, “to recover your conscience and obey it rather than orders given in sin... In the name of God and in the name of this long-suffering people whose cries





rise ever more thunderously to heaven, I beg you, I ask you, I order you, in the name of God, stop the repression.”

The next day Romero celebrated mass in the chapel of a cancer hospital. As he prayed, “that we may give our body and our blood to suffering and pain, as Christ did,

not for himself, but to give ideas of justice and peace to our people,” he was shot through the heart. His killers — believed to be a death squad — were never caught.

“Let my death be for the liberation of my people,” Romero once said in response to threats. “And as a witness of hope in the future.”









GUILTY BYSTANDERS

GUILTY bystanders are stationed every six feet along the curving hillside path that leads to Romero Town. These wood and masonite constructions stare straight ahead and thereby avoid seeing the horrific stories painted on signs between them.

In my family, we began to suffer directly from the repression. My brother was the first. In September, 1980, they grabbed my brother from the house at five o'clock in the morning. They paraded him, tied him up in front of everyone and asked who he was. They tortured him in front of others in the village and they crucified him on a tree and finally strangled him to death. All of this was in front of the family...

I was there when the massacre began, in a section called La Union. There, they killed four hundred people inside the church, a big church,

and they didn't let anyone out. If they came out, they made them go back in...men, women, children, old people. They left them there and threw three grenades. But they didn't all die and so they shot them. Outside, in the marketplace, they killed even more. Those weren't counted; who knows how many? The soldiers had a plane and a helicopter and they landed on the road. There were about four hundred.

To the extent that you emphasize a military solution in El Salvador, you are going to be buttressing one of the most out-of-control, violent, bloodthirsty groups of men in the world. They have killed, at a minimum, five or six thousand kids, just on the mere suspicion that they were involved with the leftists.

— Robert E. White,
U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador
under President Carter



ROMERO TOWN

SIMPLE shacks made of branches, campesino figures of fabric and wood tending to chores, a bright blue cardboard bus bursting with puppet passengers. It is a Central American village — Romero Town — in a wooded corner of Vermont. Passing a memorial to El Salvadoran Archbishop Romero, the town's namesake, visitors find a puppet peasant woman seated in front of her house, her garden nearby. A sign describes the events that led a young Guatemalan woman to join the resistance movement.

I am Leonor Barrios. I am from Guatemala, a small country to the south of Mexico, forty-two thousand and forty-two square miles in size, with a population of about eight million. I was born in the capital, Guatemala City. My parents, who came from the western highlands, are of peasant origin. My father is a shoemaker by trade, my mother a housewife.

This was the situation in which we lived: my father had to search for work in many different

areas and to take whatever would enable him to provide us with food. Because of the lack of basic necessities, it was almost impossible to provide for our most pressing needs. From seven to eight years old, I had to help my mother in her daily household chores, such as carrying water, making tortillas, sweeping, washing dishes, and taking care of my little brothers.

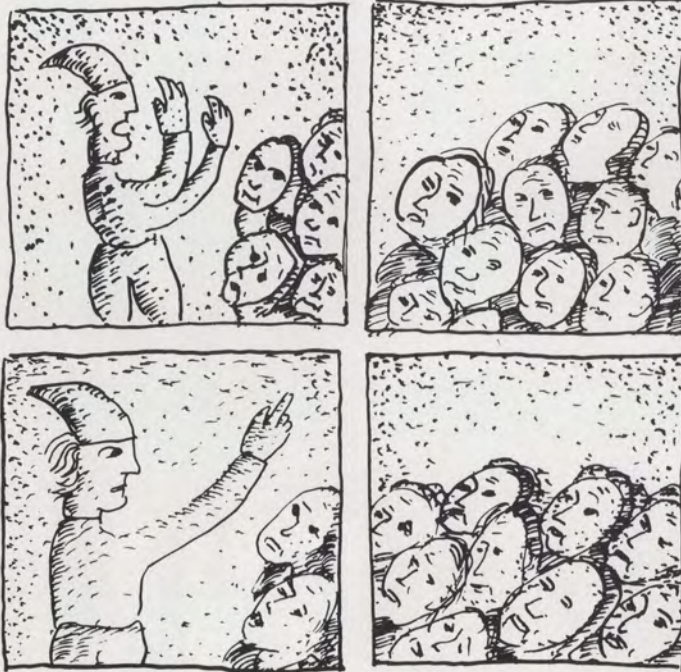
I entered the university in 1980. After the massacre at the Spanish Embassy, I began to participate in the activities which the students organized to protest this horrible crime. The massacre resulted in a total of thirty-nine people burned to death, of whom twenty-seven were companeros, workers, students and poor community activists. They had been trying by this protest to stop the massacres in Quiche, which the army was carrying out.

But the reply they got was to be burned alive. From this time on, we became wholeheartedly committed to the liberation struggle.



LIBERATION THEOLOGY MARTYRS

IN a renovated barn next to the Bread and Puppet Museum an assemblage of art ranges from postcard-sized pieces to others five feet by six. Along one wall are cringing and crucified figures; on the floor life-sized papier-maché sculptures of women in agony; and hanging



from the sloping ceiling a cardboard relief of peasants fleeing an armed man on horseback.

A sign with a quotation from Karl Marx expresses the mood: "Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opiate of the people."

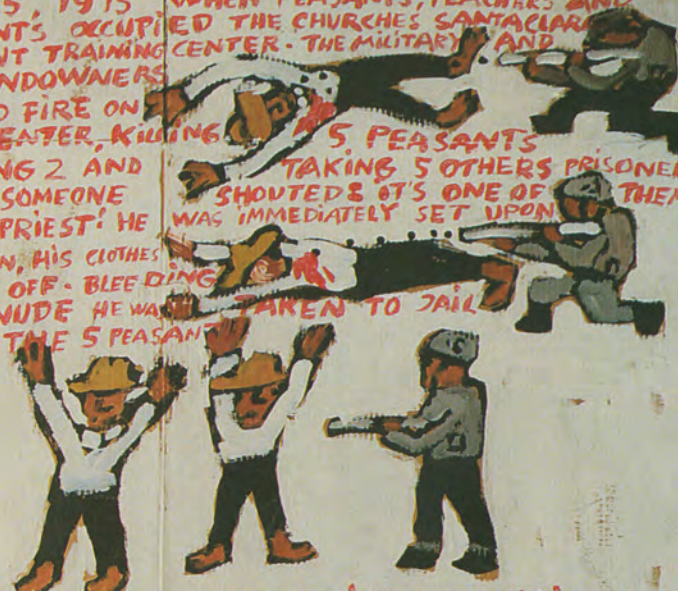
One wall is completely covered with cardboard paintings and small boxes containing three-dimensional scenes of persecution. They tell the stories of priests killed in Central America; among them Jerome Cypher, a Franciscan friar from Wisconsin tortured and mutilated in Honduras in 1975. In Olancho, a province generally considered the Honduran "wild west," security forces had gone on a murderous rampage at the behest of wealthy landlords. The object was to undermine the agrarian reform law passed the year before and to drive out clergy who were sympathetic to the plight of the peasants.



FATHER
JEROME
CYPHER
A 35 YEAR OLD
PRIEST FROM
MEDFORD,
WISCONSIN
A FRANCISCAN
PRIAR WHO
HAD BEEN
IN HONDURAS
ONLY 8 MONTHS
AND SPOKE
VERY LITTLE
SPANISH

CYPHER WAS IN TITIKALPA ON THE MORNING OF
JUNE 25, 1975 WHEN PEASANTS, TEACHERS AND
STUDENTS OCCUPIED THE CHURCHES, SANTIAGO
PEASANT TRAINING CENTER, THE MILITARY, AND
THE LANDOWNERS

OPENED FIRE ON THE CENTER, KILLING 5 PEASANTS
INJURING 2 AND TAKING 5 OTHERS PRISONER
WHEN SOMEONE SHOUTED IT'S ONE OF THEM
IT'S A PRIEST! HE WAS IMMEDIATELY SET UPON
BEATEN, HIS CLOTHES RIPPED OFF, BLEEDING
AND NUDE HE WAS TAKEN TO JAIL
WITH THE 5 PEASANTS



AT 10:30 THAT NIGHT THE BOUND PRISONERS
WERE THROWN INTO A RED PICKUP TRUCK AND
DRIVEN FOR 3 HOURS TO A RANCH IN
THE VALLEY OF LEPAVARE

THE 5 PEASANTS WERE GIVEN 2 CHOICES:
CASTRATION OR DEATH IN THE BREADOVEN,
ALL CHOSE THE OVEN. CYPHER, A PRIEST, NOT A
PEASANT WAS MARKED TO ENDURE FAR WORSE;
HE WAS WHIPPED AND AND CASTRATED
AND SHOT



LA MATANZA

(THE MASSACRE)

INDIANS herd donkeys past a wooden house. Large cardboard peasant figures sway to music from a flute. Pots are banged and fists are raised. A menacing figure violently hacks apart wood behind an open door, then walks out, a red cape draped over his shoulders. The peasants fall. This is General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez.

Ladies and gentlemen, modern history began in El Salvador with the first peasant and Indian uprising. January 22, 1932. The revolt was easily crushed, and General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez set out to ensure that there would not be another peasant protest.

In all, thirty thousand peasants and Indians were killed.

General Martinez said: "It is a greater crime to kill an ant than a man, for when a man dies, he is reincarnated, while an ant dies forever."



General Martinez ruled El Salvador until 1944. During his reign, all political organizations but his own were banned, as well as trade unions.



HISTORY OF NICARAGUA

A *N* angel and a devil spin a five-foot painted circle representing Nicaragua, tacking on small cardboard cutouts of martyrs, monsters and saints from the country's past. An announcer — part carnival barker and part Mad Hatter — declares the stark facts. When he announces that the victorious Sandinistas enter Managua in 1979, the angel jubilantly brushes the warring figures from the circle, lifts up a cardboard Sandino with wings, and plants him in the center.

1848. The California gold rush. Nicaragua is the major route for prospectors on their way to the gold fields. Travel across Nicaragua is under control of a transit company owned by one Cornelius Vanderbilt.

1855. William Walker and other American mercenaries arrive. He declares himself president and proposes the establishment of slavery. Walker is recognized as head of state by U.S. President Pierce.

1857. Walker is kicked out... He gets a ticker-tape parade welcome in New York.

1912. U.S. troops land in Nicaragua to arrest political unrest.

1925. U.S. Marines leave Nicaragua.

1926. American troops return.

1927. Sandino organizes guerilla troops to oppose American occupation.

1933. U.S. troops leave Nicaragua without defeating Sandino. The U.S.-trained National Guard takes over. Anastasio Somoza Garcia heads the national military organization.

1934. Sandino attends peace talks...and is assassinated.

1936. Somoza fixes the general election and declares himself president.

1956. Poet Rigoberto Lopez Peres assassinates Anastasio Somoza Garcia.

1967. Somoza's son, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, assumes the presidency.

1972. Earthquake. The American Red Cross sends international disaster relief and Somoza steals most of the money.

1978. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) seizes the National Palace.

1979. Somoza flees Managua. FSLN forces triumphantly enter the city.

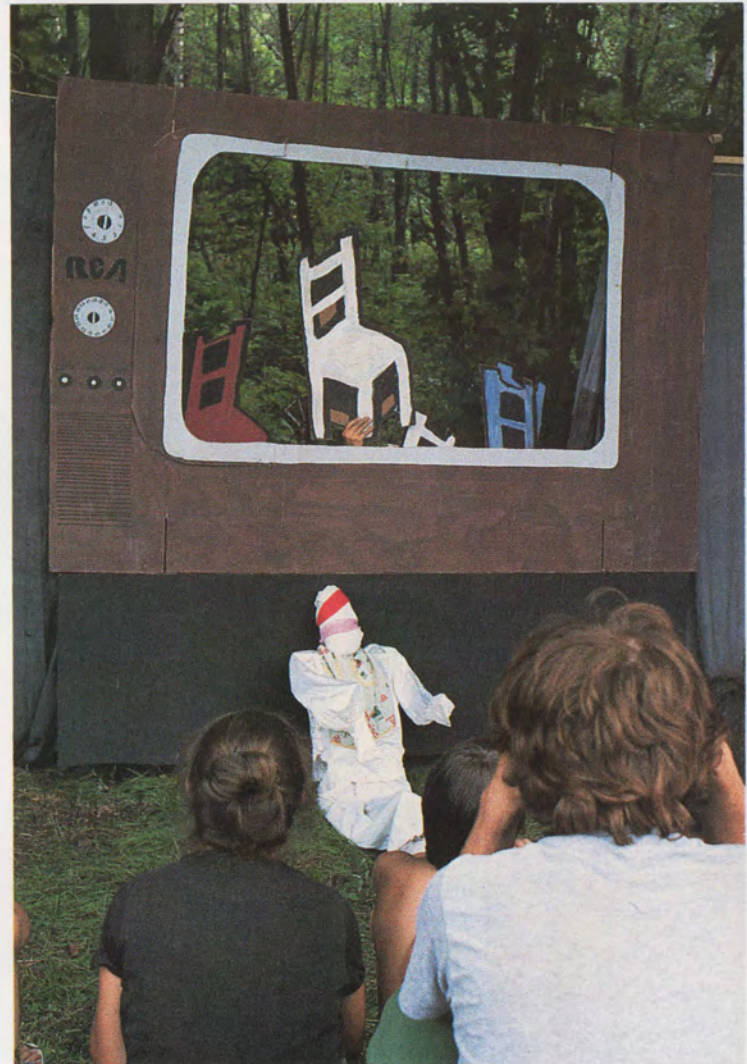


TV SHOW

NEWS about Central America issues from an oversized television set — life and death messages delivered in the impersonal style of electronic journalism. The green hues of the summer forest are a backdrop for ordinary and extraordinary images that fill the screen: a row of empty chairs, human faces, puppet angels.

Mildred Ford, mother of Maryknoll nun Ita Ford, spoke about her daughter's death in El Salvador: "Those terrible days of December, 1980, days of uncertainty, are still vivid in my memory. All we knew was that the four were missing... When we finally heard the news that the grave had been discovered, it was almost a relief to know that the four were in God's hands. There was nothing more anyone could do to them."

A U.S. Embassy officer in El Salvador said: "There are a lot of options that aren't playable. We could come in militarily and shape the place up. That's an option, but it's not playable because of public opinion. If it wasn't for public opinion, however, El Salvador would be an ideal laboratory for a full-scale military operation..."



TEDDY TIME

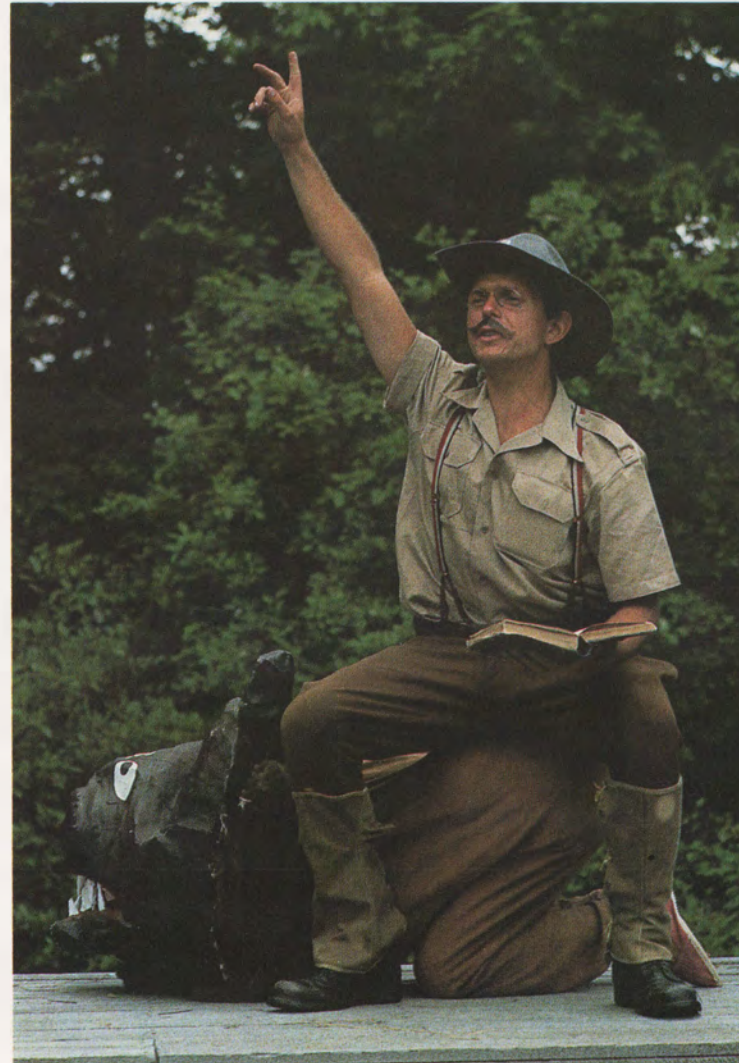
A *HREE-PART sideshow features a whimsical look at the typical American breakfast, a short skit on the numerous American invasions of Nicaragua and Teddy Roosevelt.*

ROOSEVELT

Charge! Follow me! Up San Juan Hill!

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Theodore Roosevelt and I've come here today to meet you and recite a few of my most famous quotations. I'd like to read a very important one now, the famous Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

To wit: "Chronic wrongdoing or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society may...ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and may force the United States, however reluctantly...to the exercise of international police power."



TESTIMONY OF RENE HURTADO

FOUR somber women chant the interrogation techniques used by Salvadoran security forces in a staccato monotone. Cardboard inquisitors with blood-red tongues hover over a seated suspect. Small puppets wash clothes, harvest corn, play instruments and dance during musical interludes.

FOUR WOMEN

You make friends with the prisoner... You offer him a soda and some food... You ask him about his wife and kids... In general, you will kill the prisoner, because there is an assumption that he should not live.

NARRATOR

Rene Hurtado is the pseudonym of a former member of the Salvadoran Treasury Police who now lives in a Minneapolis suburb. He said that the Treasury Police, a branch of El Salvador's security forces, would routinely kidnap, interro-

gate, torture and then kill political suspects.

According to Hurtado, U.S. personnel conducted an intelligence course for treasury officials that included training in methods of physical and psychological torture.





MARY HARTMAN

WHILE handpuppets and humans interact on a small stage, the narrator sings a story to a melody pumped out on a portable keyboard. It is the conversion of Mary Hartman, an American nun in Nicaragua who eventually embraced liberation theology. In an early scene, Sister Mary tries to patch up misery by applying bandaids to the Nicaraguan people. Later she undergoes a transformation.

After the earthquake, many, many people were dead or homeless. Aid poured in from all



over the world. One month later, trucks rolled into villages to sell the very same aid to the people.

After one church service, a group of men, women and children spontaneously formed and marched through the streets. Suddenly, they found themselves surrounded by lights, the National Guard and swinging sticks. In spite of beatings, they decided to continue their struggle.

Sister Mary Hartman said, "The earthquake not only opened up the earth, it opened up our minds."

Three Catholic nuns and a lay worker were killed in December, 1980 in El Salvador. The following May, women dressed as blood-covered nuns confronted Secretary of State Haig at a Syracuse University commencement speech. U.S. government complicity in such violence was leading to moral outrage.



WHOM DO YOU SEEK?

THREE women intermittently sing,
“Woman, why are you weeping?” and
arrange miniature scenes on the grass.
Each tableau — a graveyard of white crosses,
black-shrouded mourners, a picnic basket — is
accompanied by a sign displaying a biblical
passage or the reflections of Nicaraguan peasants.

Liberation is from sin. That is, from selfishness, from injustice, from misery, from ignorance, from everything that is oppressive. That liberation is in our wombs, it seems to me.

— Andrea of Solentiname,
discussing Luke 1:39-56

Then the women went quickly from the tomb, with fear and at the same time with much joy; and they ran to bring the news to the disciples.

— Matthew 28:1-10

Woman, why are thou weeping? Whom do you seek?

— John 20:15

They ran to bring the news to their friends. But that news wasn't just for them but so that the news could go afterward from mouth to mouth. After many centuries it has reached as far as us in Solentiname. And later it will be heard by people not yet born.

— Felix of Solentiname,
discussing Matthew 28:1-10

The news is not only about his resurrection but about ours.

— Olivia of Solentiname

That's why Olivia didn't wear mourning but wore a green dress when her daughter Olga was buried.

— Ernesto of Solentiname



TREE OF POISON

A MAN performs the pavan of Bach's Second Violin Sonata on the viola. The branches of a bare blue tree behind him are adorned with incongruous items — a loaf



of bread, a glass, a box of pasta. A community of hands extends from a painted cloth landscape. Rags placed on the tree blossom suddenly as a string is pulled. A narrator tells a Salvadoran folktale and draws its contemporary parallel. At the close of the show a chorus recites lines from Alexander Pushkin's poem, "Anchar."

NARRATOR

When a tree fails to bear fruit, the peasants hang rags from its branches to embarrass the tree in front of the other trees...

When the National Guard came, they hung the heads and limbs of the people they killed on the branches.

They poisoned the tree.

CHORUS

"...No birds fly there, nor does the tiger come; only the black whirlwind strikes the tree of death — and dashes away, already made lethal."

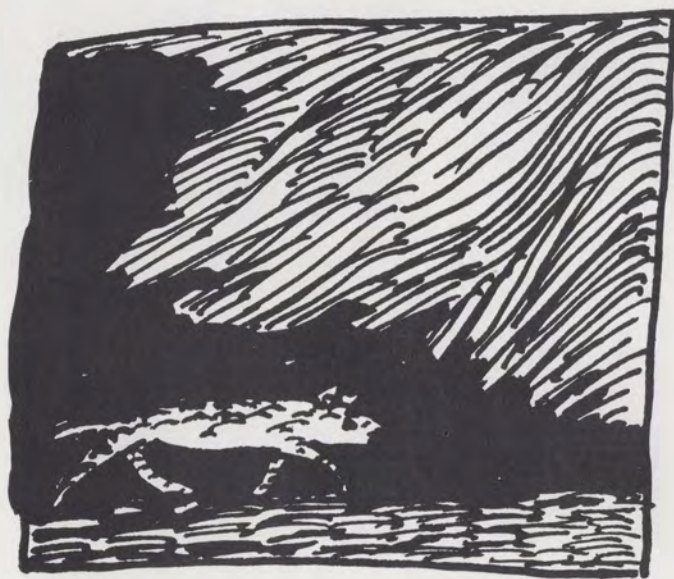


LA RISA EN LOS OJOS

(THE BALLS OF THE TIGER)

TWO young women dance, their faces coated with grey clay, their gestures expressing hopelessness. A peasant woman sits on a stool, shelling beans, stroking an imaginary dog, telling her tale. From behind the house soldiers shout slogans of hate.

I am Lupe. We are from Chaletenango, El Salvador. The people here like to sing and laugh



over nothing... The authorities cannot laugh. It is prohibited. Their mouths are made to denounce, interrogate and capture. Laughing is a weakness. They themselves say, "Laughter abounds among fools..."

The dog is my brother. The dog takes care of me nights when I am alone with the children, when there is nothing but darkness enveloping me. The fear of not waking up the next day; our reassurance is the dog snoring under the cart... Coffee-colored dog, with sparkling eyes. Pretty dog. Soft hair; head like a gourd... Who hit him in the ribs? The Guardsmen...

We are touching the balls of the tiger and the tiger does not forgive... When all is said and done, we are in water up to our necks but we will not drown. We have to organize ourselves, and for that reason, we become strong and cease to be afraid. And if we are frightened at being left alone, we go on. We go on.

We will not let the cruelties, atrocities and killings stop us. To comply would be like death itself. How can we ever give up when we are right?



DISAPPEARANCES

GIANT heads and tormented figures, made of cardboard, careen in slow motion across a small stage. Puppeteers explain, in dispassionate tones, the way security forces in Guatemala become death squads.

Q: Never in daylight?

A: No, only at night, at the quietest time of night.

Q: Do they always go out at night?

A: Yes.

Q: Always at night?



A: Yes, at night, even if it was raining, we went out.

Q: But what have you done in the little towns and countryside?

A: We went out in the back of a pickup truck. We went out in civilian clothes. They told us, "You are going to get orders. You are going out now." That's how we used to go out, to keep an eye on things.

We went out to get students... You go out and then you return and they tell you to get out of those clothes and get into police clothes. Then go out and look for whoever killed the person.

But how are we supposed to find them if it was us that did it in the first place?

Tombstones at a Washington, D.C. rally recount atrocities in Guatemala and El Salvador.



HANDS

FOUR puppet children are frozen in the act of sewing a Sandinista flag. Nearby, two women cook, sweep and shuck corn, simple chores made difficult since their



arms end abruptly at the wrists. Yet they cope and, indeed, enjoy life as they dance.

Several months ago an American writer travelled to a village in Nicaragua to inquire about a story. She had heard that, in 1978, school children were sewing a Sandinista flag in their classroom when a battalion of National Guard arrived in the village. Some went into the schoolhouse. When they saw what the children were doing, the guardsmen chopped off their hands.

The writer met a teenage girl without hands, fetching water at a well. The girl said simply, "It was worth the pain for what we have now."

Playing soldier in El Salvador.



LETTERS FROM NICARAGUA

TWO letters from Americans in Nicaragua, written more than a century apart, reflect differences in perspective, commitment and social conditions. The

readings by two narrators are accompanied by sometimes jarring or poignant music, while on a small stage cardboard figures and life-sized people portray daily life in rural Nicaragua.



1869

My Dear Niece,

Your welcome letter was duly received... I shot an alligator from my piazza. I suspect however that he was not killed... There are a great many wild parrots here...of a bright green color, and sometimes they fly about the town in flocks. I intend to get me a parrot and teach him to speak English... There is a large volcano in sight, which frequently sends up a cloud of smoke...

I was gone nearly a week and upon my return found there was a revolution in progress. Our

The Vermont contingent of Witness for Peace held a vigil on the streets of Jalapa in February, 1984.



post and all the principal places in this part of the state were taken by the revolutionary party. The old administration, I think, will be overthrown. However, I care little about it as it makes no difference to me which party is up...

Your Uncle,
Rufus Meade

1984

Dear Friends,

Jalapa is breathing again after four days of terror. Ocotol was attacked last week, the granaries and sawmill destroyed. Jalapa is usually a noisy place; people yell and call to each other on the streets. Even the birds and insects are loud. Friday, Jalapa was silent...

Ocotol is not far from here, a matter of two

or three hours over dirt roads. Yesterday at four o'clock in the morning, around five hundred contras attacked the city. They were repulsed by the local militia but not without casualties...

Having lived through the last few days, having found myself alive and a little astonished, the situation here is really serious. It's desperate. It's not a desperation in the hearts of the people here — they have a faith in an ultimate victory, even if none of them now live to see it. The thing everyone fears and which seems the most likely is bombardment by air...

The people here don't want to be raped, dismembered, decapitated. They don't want to be bombed. And neither, for that matter, do I.

All Love,
Rebecca

GUILTY BYSTANDER ORATORIO

***D**EEP in a pine forest, dark despite a full moon, puppeteers parade quietly downhill to the stage. Torches cast a soft glow as the performers shake trees to create rustling sounds. A procession of blue puppet horses sing. This is the first movement of the *Guilty Bystander Oratorio*.*

As newspapers are violently crumpled, masked performers — U.S. congressmen — enter through a stage door. They take off their beads. A chorus shouts statements about Central America into metal garbage cans that amplify the voices. This is the second movement.

The third movement is a symphony with strings, brass and percussion. Then the operator of a torture device — a cart with grating sound effects — binds Indian women into painful positions. Guilty bystanders in American dress shuffle across the stage. This is the final movement.

CHORUS

Early in the 1960s, during the Kennedy administration, agents for the U.S. government in El Salvador set up two official security organiza-

tions that killed thousands of peasants and suspected leftists over the next fifteen years. These organizations, guided by American operatives, developed into the paramilitary apparatus that came to be known as death squads...

NARRATOR

It is a grievous error to believe that the death squads operate independently of the security



forces. The simple truth is that the death squads are made up of members of the security forces...

CHORUS

From testimony before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, April 29, 1981...

LOUD CHORUS

The Atlacatl Battalion...
is an elite fighting unit...
the first to be trained by U.S. military advisors...
sent to El Salvador by President Reagan...
In December 1981, during a search and destroy operation...
with fortified helicopter gunships...

and heavy artillery...
in northern Morazon Province...

CHORUS ON HILLSIDE

...the Atlacatl Battalion killed nearly a thousand peasants. In the village of Mozote alone, four hundred eighty-two persons were killed; two hundred eighty were children.

SOFT CHORUS

In a speech on Central America...
on May 9, 1984, President Reagan said...
“We Americans...
should be proud of what we’re trying to do...
in Central America...

to support democracy, human rights and economic growth...
while preserving peace so close to home.”



CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Central American Artists Speak...

BY SUSAN GREEN

THREE American puppeteers visited Nicaragua in late winter, 1983 to make contact with theater groups. Through el Movimiento de Expresion Campesino Artistica y Teatral (EL MECATE), they extended an invitation for Nicaraguan performers to participate in the Domestic Resurrection Circus to be held in Vermont the following summer. As a result, two Nicaraguans, Porfirio Munoz and Lucas Amador, joined a ten-person Latin American presence in Glover. Munoz and Amador performed two sideshows; one was a comic folktale about a sleepwalker, the other concerned the children of Nicaragua.

Puppeteers also came from Chile, Costa Rica, Bolivia, El Salvador and Puerto Rico, and one man, Manuel, was an exiled Guatemalan Indian who represented his country. A poet and artist, he spoke forcefully about the struggle in Guatemala from a platform in the pine forest that was decorated with Indian weavings.

MANUEL

He must always wear a mask or a bandana over his face when appearing in public. His real name cannot be revealed. He is in the United States illegally and fears that, if sent back to Guatemala, he would be murdered.

Although reluctant even to provide the name of his home town, Manuel explains that it has twenty-three thousand inhabitants — 95 percent Indian, 86 percent illiterate. These are typical statistics for Guatemala, where half of all children die by age five. Nevertheless, the U.S. government currently provides about \$65 million in military aid a year.

Army troops came to Manuel's town in 1979, claiming they wanted to protect the people from subversives. But in 1980 soldiers began to commit murder, "which we never had before in our town." Fifty people were "disappeared." A death list was rumored to include Manuel and his brother.



Puppeteers from Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Puerto Rico on the porch of Bread and Puppet's Glover farm in August, 1984.

They left for Guatemala City, planning to hide in the capital until things returned to normal. The repression persisted. Informers were everywhere. His brother's house was burned.

"The Guatemalan government wants to do the same thing to my people that the United States did to the American Indians," says Manuel, referring to the unwritten policy of genocide in nineteenth-century America. "People there (in Guatemala) become guerillas because they have no other choice."

Manuel was advised to leave the country in 1981. His brother had a family and chose to stay. After reaching the U.S. a year later, he learned that his brother had been tortured and killed.

"I wanted to go back then. People said: 'Don't be crazy'."

He can't divulge the details of how he was smuggled into this country by the sanctuary movement, but after an initial hesitancy he did begin speaking out about the Guatemalan situation. "I was still afraid. Then I realized that if my brother was killed, I must do something in his name."

LUCAS

In 1974, fourteen-year-old Lucas Antonio Amador was in a Nicaraguan theater group doing light comedies. But a year later he joined a ten-person collective called Los Alpes, which began developing a more political repertoire. Working clandestinely with a Sandinista representa-



tive, the company learned “to use theater to shake people up.” After such daring performances, Los Alpes would hold meetings to discuss with the audiences how the plays related to everyday life.

As the revolution heated up in 1978, the group members joined the struggle; some became combatants, others did a variety of jobs with the Sandinistas. Lucas was assigned to smuggle messages from one band of guerilla fighters to another, a task he accomplished by hiding important papers in the heel of his shoe while making his way through the dangerous mountains.

“I am first a campesino,” Lucas vows. But he is also a promoter, returning to perform with Los Alpes whenever needed for a production. He says the company, with a repertoire of more than fifty comedies and forty other pieces, has acquired “more technique” since the revolution. Lucas’ stay in Glover was particularly significant since Los Alpes — a music, dance and drama ensemble — “has always been famous for its masks.” He found Bread and Puppet to be a group “with strong international solidarity, worried about the problems of Central America, instead of caring only about their own problems.” Peter Schumann’s energy impressed him — “He never gets tired, even if he is fifty years old.”

SANTIAGO

Santiago Porfirio Munoz Alvarez comes from Masaya, near the Pacific Coast. It is generally considered the birthplace of the Nicaraguan revolution. Munoz’ wife, Ana Emilia Galan Garcia, works in a corn-grinding cooperative, and they have eight children. He discovered theater in 1975, at the age of 35, and began acting with a cultural group to raise money for local projects.

At first, it was all for funds and fun, but in 1976 group members began studying with Sandinista teachers. As a result, the theatrical work evolved politically; so much so that in 1978 the National Guard burst in during a performance. The guardsmen took four actors to jail and tortured them. The sets were destroyed and the company’s costumes burned in the town square.

After the revolution, the new government asked Porfirio Munoz to become a promoter in his region. Representing EL MECATE, he currently organizes workshops and shows for music, dance and theater groups.

“What we do in theater is make people open their eyes,” he says. “Here, Bread and Puppet also works for the people, giving them information and enjoyment.”

...and the Puppeteers Tour Nicaragua

IT may have been a journey of small miracles. For three weeks in January, 1985, Bread and Puppet Theater toured Nicaragua for a hectic series of performances in city and countryside. Seventeen North American puppeteers were joined by about 25 Nicaraguan and a handful of Costa Rican theater people on an overcrowded bus.

Eager to visit Nicaragua, Bread and Puppet had paid its own airfare for the first time on a tour outside the United States. And for the host nation, it was a new experience to have a visiting theatrical group recruit Nicaraguans. (Two of them, Lucas Amador and Porfirio Munoz, were part of the Central American presence in Vermont at the Domestic Resurrection Circus the previous summer.)

Despite considerable difficulty in providing transportation and accommodations for such a huge company in a time of war and economic crisis, things went better than well.

They went magically.

The show was an updated version of the summer pageant, but a special sequence of grim Nicaraguan reality was added to the Salvadoran theme. The puppeteers chose a story from the FSLN daily newspaper, *Barricada*, about a

December massacre by the contras. En route to harvest coffee, twenty-two people, militia and civilians, had been shot, stripped of clothing and possessions, then burned alive.

"Central America is the moral issue of our time," said Abbie Hoffman, who had seen the Romero show in New York and was now in Managua for the January 10 inauguration of President Daniel Ortega. "And Bread and Puppet is people-to-people. That's the way these battles are won. We can't outspend 'em; we can't outshoot 'em. We can only outact 'em, outdance 'em and outsing 'em.

"We're all cultural workers, if you're working for peace and justice and human rights," he observed. "And Bread and Puppet are the ones with the biggest heads."

After a mere three days of rehearsals in the national circus tent, the puppeteers moved to the Gran Hotel, once elegant but now an earthquake ruin that serves as art museum and performance center. There, in an indoor courtyard, five shows were given on three consecutive weekend nights for large, enthusiastic crowds.

On Sunday morning, the narrow, dusty streets of Ciudad Sandino, one of Managua's poorest and most militant bar-

rios, became the route of a freewheeling parade. Peter Schumann and three costumed women puppeteers stilt-walked to the music of Bread and Puppet's Dixieland-cum-Glover band, playing "Hold That Tiger" and other stand-

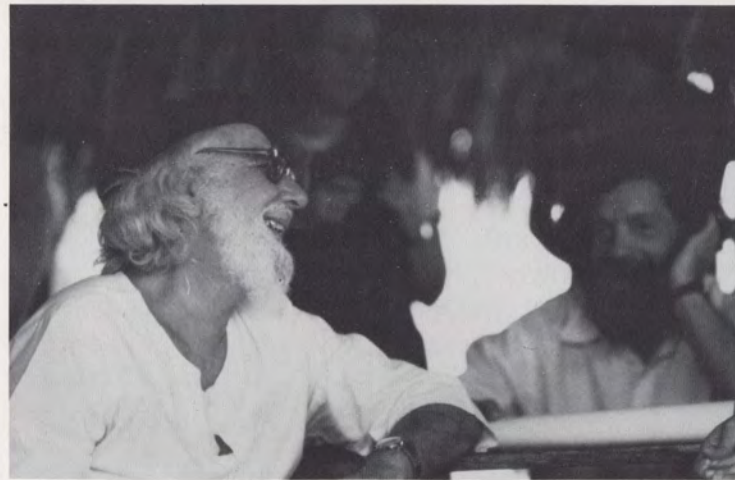


ards. Barefoot children ran alongside the procession; the joy and amazement were palpable.

"Are they real people?" some asked. "How did they grow so tall?"

The next day, the puppeteers had a warm encounter with Ernesto Cardenal, poet, priest and Minister of Culture, censured by the Vatican later that week for refusing to give up his government post. When Cardenal eventually saw the Romero production, he was charmed, calling it "very revolutionary art."

In rural Masatepe, the backdrop was a simple, gracious



Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaraguan Minister of Culture, chatted with Peter Schumann and other puppeteers during the January, 1985 tour.

white stucco church. When the giant Romero puppet was lifted for the first time, the church bell unexpectedly began to ring.

In the audience, two elderly campesino gentlemen debated the meaning of one of the show's more abstract scenes. "Arte," one concluded sagely. "Cultura internacionalista."

While the troupe was packing up, a local leader told Schumann, "We would like to give you everything, but since we have nothing, we give you our hearts."

Bread and Puppet was performing in the Vermont-like mountains of Boaco, when, just as the Romero puppet was raised, a rainbow arced across the western sky. It perfectly framed the production, growing brighter during the crucifixion and resurrection.

"Milagroso," a woman watching said. Miraculous.

And in Leon, this time in front of an ornate cathedral, the bells rang coincidentally as Romero was assassinated by the Death Squad. Afterward, a Salvadoran refugee in the audience said, "They got the point. They focused in on what really happened in my country."

A performance scheduled for Saturday along the northern border was cancelled. The town of Somotillo had suddenly become a combat zone. Instead, Schumann led a puppetry workshop in Managua.

"The first puppet show I did was all with shoes, forks, hammers and such," he recalled. "We animate normal household objects — chairs, tools. That's the fun of it, that



you don't think puppetry has to be this or that. You create it entirely yourself. You paint a picture with sculpture, with found objects, with garbage.

"There is no technique of how to make a poem, of how to make a piece of music, of how to make theater. You understand your social situation. Culturally, you have something to say to your neighbors, and then you have to invent a way to say it."

It was cold at night in the mountains of Matagalpa and the performers had to wrap themselves in parts of the production to keep warm. For three days, their bedroom was a bunkhouse. The covers for some were the costume of puppet Maria, the orange-and-white parachute worn by the Three Kings on stilts, the banner proclaiming the title of the show.

At the top of a steep, rutted road, the puppeteers found an isolated battalion of militia men and women. There to harvest coffee, they hadn't seen anyone from the outside world for two months. Their commander gathered everyone together after the show to offer the customary appreciation. But one thing he said startled the puppeteers.

"This has very special significance for us," he explained, "because 17 of the 22 people massacred by the contra raid you speak of in your show were from this unit."

Later, around a campfire, the militia shared a meal of rice, beans and tortillas with the performers. A Vermont puppeteer talked with Marcia, just turned 20, who had shared a house with one of the casualties of the December

massacre. Hearing of her loss, the North American said, "Esta dura." It's hard.

"Dura," repeated Marcia sadly. "Dura."

At another coffee plantation, the puppeteers were about to perform for an audience that included brigadistas from Argentina, Panama, Colombia and El Salvador. But as the band began, heavy rains came. The last show of the tour could not go on. Yet, after a thorough soaking, the musicians moved into a large shed and for a half-hour, campesinos, brigadistas, militia and puppeteers from several nations danced to such spirited classics as "When the Saints Go Marching In."

For the moment, they were all safe from the storm and the war outside.



BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER

Chronology

MAJOR PRODUCTIONS, TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

- 1963 Bread and Puppet Theater founded in New York City by Peter Schumann (born 1934 in Silesia; moved from Germany to U.S. in 1961).
- 1963-68 B&P resident in New York City in Delancy Street loft, then Old Astor Library (now New York Shakespeare Company), the Old Courthouse on 2nd St. and 2nd Ave.; creation the performance of street shows, anti-Vietnam War parades and pageants, voter-registration and rent-strike parades, children's shows based on Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving themes; short tours in vicinity of New York City.
Major productions: *The Christmas Story*, *The King Story Leaf Feeling the Moonlight*, *A Man Says Goodbye to His Mother*, *Fire*, *The Pied Piper of Harlem*, *Chicken Little*, *The Puppet Christ*, *Grey Lady Cantata #1*, *Eating and Drinking in the Year of Our Lord*.
- 1968 Two-month tour to France, Holland and England.
- 1969 Nine-month tour with company of over thirty to France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, England, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Holland. Critical acclaim at inter-

national theater festivals in Nancy, Belgrade and Rome.

Major productions: *Cry of the People for Meat*, *Theater of War*, *Grimms' Fairy Tales*.

- 1970-72 B&P branch in Coney Island, New York; workshops with local residents and free performances during the three summers.
Major productions: *The Difficult Life of Uncle Fatso*, *Lamentations*, *Mississippi*, *Tristan and Isolde*.
- 1970-74 B&P moves to Vermont and becomes theater-in-residence at Goddard College in Plainfield; workshops with students; performances in local schools and churches; parades in small towns; tours in New England, New York, Midwest, West Coast, southern states and eastern Canada.
Ten-week tour to Germany, France, Switzerland and Poland with *The Birdcatcher in Hell*, *Grey Lady Cantatas #2 and #3* and *The Christmas Story* (1971). Two-month tour to France, Italy and Switzerland with *That Simple Light May Rise Out of Complicated Darkness* (1973). Tour to southern states with *Stations of the Cross* (1974).
Other major productions: *Hallelujah, Laos*, *Grey Lady Cantatas #4 and #5*, *Harvey McLeod*, *The Revenge of the Law* and *Attica*.
Our Domestic Resurrection Circus, a free outdoor event



with sideshows, puppet circus, music, pageant and free sour-dough rye bread, presented in summers of 1970, '71 and '74 at Cate Farm, Plainfield, Vermont. Starting in 1975 through 1984 (except 1980) there has been a *Domestic Resurrection Circus* every summer in Glover, Vermont. Scores of volunteers help the core group of puppeteers build and perform the pieces. Every year a different theme is chosen as focus for sideshows and pageant: 1975—Homage to Ishi, 1976—Bicentennial, 1977—Masaniello, 1978—Oswald von Wolkenstein, 1979—Washerwomen, 1981—The Fight Against the End of the World, 1982—St. Francis, 1983—Domestic Insurrection, 1984—Central America and Liberation Theology.

- 1975 Workshop with *Grey Lady Cantata #6* in Paris; extensive workshop for parade and pageant; *Isbi, the Last of the Indians*, at University of California at Davis; five-week workshop-tour in Martinique and Germany; tour of Vermont and New England colleges.
- 1976 Three-month tour to North Africa and Eastern and Western Europe with company of twenty-eight with *Our Domestic Resurrection Spectacle*; two-month tour to Europe with *Travelling Circus*, *White Horse Butcher* and *Cbile*; two-week workshop in Florence, Italy; building papier-mâché exhibit of Masaccio's Brancacci Chapel.
- 1977 Workshop in Canada and tours in New England, University of North Carolina, and Italy, France and Spain with *White Horse Butcher* and *Joan of Arc*; New York City and New England tour with *The Ballad of Masaniello*.
- 1978 Three-month tour across U.S. with Word-of-Mouth Chorus and *Ave Maris Stella*; workshop in Adelaide, Australia; tour to Germany, Denmark and Holland where B&P receives Erasmus Award; tour to Venezuela; New York and New England tour with *Wolkenstein*; workshop-tour in Italy with *Masaniello*.





- 1979 Brooklyn Academy of Music with *Joan of Arc*; tours of Vermont, England and Holland, and northeast states with *Ab! or The First Washerwoman Cantata*; workshop in Bourges, France, and workshop-tours of East Coast (U.S.) and France with *The Washerwoman Nativity*.
- 1980 Brooklyn Academy of Music and Montreal; three-month tour to England, France and Italy with Word-of-Mouth Chorus and *Stations of the Cross*; six-week workshop in Villeurganne, France, creating Circus on theme of bread; workshop-tour of France and Yugoslavia with *Histoire du Pain*; another tour to France and Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City with *The Washerwoman Nativity*.
- 1981 Workshops in Vermont and Canada; Theater for the New City, New York City, with *Woyzeck*, *Goya* and *Venus Rising from the Water and Swords and Plowshares*; East Coast and Montreal tour with *The Story of One Who Set Out to Study Fear*; short tour to Cuba; tour to Germany with *Goya* and to Italy with *Woyzeck*.
- 1982 Theater for the New City, New York City, with *Fear and Thunderstorm of the Youngest Child*; tour to England; extensive street-show workshops, giant disarmament parade in New York City with one thousand-five hundred participants; East Coast tour with *Thunderstorm*; Vermont and New York City with *Diagonal Man*; workshop-performances in Judson Church, New York City, with *The Washerwoman Nativity*.
- 1983 Tour to France, Germany, Belgium and Iceland with *Thunderstorm*; five-week tour of New York State with PAND (Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament); two-week workshop in Caracas, Venezuela; East Coast fall tour with *The End Falls Before the Beginning*; street-theater, parades and *Insurrection Oratorio* in London; Chicago with *Diagonal Man* and Circus-workshop; workshop performances in Judson Church, New York City, with *The Washerwoman Nativity*.

- 1984 Five-week *Rites of Winter* workshop at Goddard College, Vermont, with parades, pageant, small shows and *Josephine, the Singer*; Judson Church, New York City, with *Insurrection Opera/Oratorio* and *Josephine*; tour to France, Germany, Austria and Poland and tour to northeast states with *Diagonal Man*; pageant-workshop in three cities in Colombia.

A "workshop" means that the company and/or director Schumann rehearses a production with a group of up to sixty volunteers. The resulting show, parade or pageant is then performed in public.

When not performing or conducting workshops, the members of the Bread and Puppet company are usually busy building and creating new shows, rehearsing, preparing new tours, maintaining the buildings, garden and grounds and vehicles of the Bread and Puppet Farm. The Bread and Puppet Theater also maintains a museum of masks and puppets in a two-story, one-hundred-foot-long barn in Glover, which is free to the public, open daily 10 to 5, May through October, and by appointment in winter (call 802-525-3031, or -6972). Graphics, paintings and puppet installations have been exhibited in the U.S. and Europe.

EXHIBITS

The Last Supper, puppet installation in Guggenheim Museum, New York City, 1972.

The Meadows Green, papier-mâché reliefs, in Vermont, 1974.

White Horse Butcher, papier-mâché reliefs, in Vermont, 1976-77.

Masaccio, painted papier-mâché reliefs in Florence, Paris, Geneva, Bourges, 1976-79.

Giant puppet installation in Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979; Workshop 112, New York City, 1977; Chandler Gallery, Randolph, Vermont, 1980.

The Sampul River Massacre, painted papier-mâché reliefs and paintings in Plainfield, Vermont, and Gallery 345, New York City, 1981.

Exclamation-mark-Paintings in Gallery 345, New York City, 1982.

Ex Voto, paintings and woodcuts, in Plainfield and Castleton College, Vermont, and Riverside Studios, London.

The Greater Troubles of the Human Race, puppet and painting installation at Art Institute, Chicago, and Puppet Loft, New York City, 1983.

Liberation Theology Martyrs, papier-mâché reliefs and sculpture and cardboard paintings, at Orange Arts Gallery, Bradford, Vermont, 1984.

Two giant puppets from B&P participated in the two-year travelling exhibit organized by the Puppeteers of America, "The Art of Puppetry in America," 1980-82.

AWARDS (a partial list)

Prix di Roma, Rome (1969); Obie Awards, Village Voice, New York City (1968 and 1978); New England Theater Conference Regional Citation (1976); Erasmus Award, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (1978); Puppeteers of America Award (1979); Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, Montpelier, Vermont (1981); the Villager Salutes, New York City (1982); trophies from Vermont towns for participation in summer parades, 1975-84. Théâtre des Nations (World Theater Organization) has in the past chosen Bread and Puppet Theater as United States representative at their international theater festivals in Belgrade, Paris, and Caracas.

DOMESTIC RESURRECTION PARTICIPANTS, 1984:

Peter and Elka Schumann, Trudi Cohen, John Bell, Michael Romanynshyn, Peter Hamburger, Linda Elbow, Cate Peck, Howie Cantor, Barbara Leber, Genevieve Yenillaz, Remi Paillard, Catherine Schaub, Remi and Jason and Gabrielle Bosseau, Jim Holbrook, Joe Johnson, Stephen Meese, Teresa Jaynes, Don Sunseri, Everett Kinsey, Debra Stoleroff, Barney Carlson, Karl Schwartz, Juan Fernando Cerdas, Jackie Smith, David Thorne, Jennifer Romaine, Jeanne Bassis, Jim Schley, Victoria Redel, Bill Ethier, John and Joanna Ceraso, Peggy Lane, Susan Bettmann, Sam Kerson, Madeleine and Toby and Genevieve and White Lord, Marianne Ross, Paul Zaloom, Jayne Israel, Tim Jennings, Patricia Basha, Bertold Francke, Alan Hark, Lee Viets, Milly and Jack Cohen, Lucas Antonio Amador, Porfirio Munoz Alvarez, Regina and Chip and



Amy Trolano, Ilona Kuphal, Linda and Emily and Toby Wells, Sandy Kepler, Sarah Kornfeld, Jody Moore, Paula Heredia, Barbara Luck, Brian Leonard, Joanne Schultz, Ron Kelley, Ralph Denzer, Amy Trompetter, Margo Lee Sherman, Martin and Till Osterland, Tom Howe, Mark Dannenhauer, Jane Urban, Poppy Gregory, Ellen Carter, Patricia Hernandez, Belinda Mello, Marie-Pierre Feringue, Constantine Limperis, Annie and John Romanyshyn, Geoffrey Navias, Eva Eckardt, Christiane Drapkin, Nancy Taplin, Cynthia and Jose Pareja, Mabel and Michael Dennison, Douglas Fowley, Ken East, Renard Thompson, Tim Lee, Jean Herbst, Russ and Torey and Aubrey and Suzy Remington, Robin Nollet, Elia Arce, Chris Foster, Jim Yurasek, Martin Steingesser, Ozzie Henchel, Mary Maher, Michael Gulick, Burt Porter, Joan and David and Megan and Katie Tucker, Tim and Bobbie and Jon and Anne Nisbet, Doug Bishop, Jude Brisker, Polly Jerome, Margaret Nicely, Chris Wells, Marc Estrin, John McCleod, Dara Freed, Ed Herbst, Beth Skinner, Olga, Martha Whitney, Rufus and Joan and Lauren and Eben and Rufus and Rose Chaffee, Heidi Broner, Steve and Caleb and Lia Myott, Dan Stevenson, Mary Curtin-Stevenson, Corwin and Ariel Leonard, Liana Romanyshyn Flores, Nick Page, Rebecca Sheppard, John and Michelle Provenzano, Jeani and Sierra and Raina Lowell, Holly Kruse, Brian Gluck, Ellen Braithwaite, Abigail Braithwaite, John LaBarbera, Manuel, Jeff and Jesse and Emily Thompson, Polly Walton, Merle Thompson, Megan Dwyer, Cathy Kane, Daniel and Ezra Caldwell, Lila and Rubin and Russell Bennett, Toby Block, Melissa Crandall, Tamara and Max and Maria Schumann, Erik and torin Porter, Ethan Azarian, Suzy Dennison, David Mendez.



NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Exhibits, Sideshows and Oratorio

ROMERO TOWN

Twenty-three Ixil Indians from Quiche, Guatemala, occupied the Spanish Embassy in the capital city in January, 1980, to protest military repression. They were joined by five labor and university leaders. The police, disregarding diplomatic immunity standards as well as pleas for restraint by the Spanish Ambassador, broke into the embassy to confront the protestors. Shots were heard, then there was an explosion. The police refused to allow the rescue of the protestors, who were engulfed in the ensuing fire.

For many Guatemalans the Spanish Embassy Massacre was a turning point — away from nonviolent action and toward armed struggle.

LA MATANZA

General Martinez seized power in a 1931 coup and defeated a popular insurrection a month later. The revolutionary leader, Farabundo Marti, after whom the present-day group of guerilla fighters (FMLN) in El Salvador is named, was killed during this period by a firing squad. A massacre of major proportions followed.

"So began the era of Martinez, a dark and sinister time that lasted for twelve years," wrote Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk in *El Salvador: The Face of Revolution*. Martinez was said to be the inspiration for Gabriel Garcia Marquez' novel, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Nicknamed El Brujo, "the Warlock," for his occult interests, Martinez held seances in the presidential palace and once broadcast on the radio that, "It is good for children to go barefoot. That way they can better receive the beneficial effluvia of the planet, the vibrations of the earth. Plants and animals don't use shoes." During a measles epidemic he forbade international health aid and modern medical treatment. Instead, he covered the street lights with colored cellophane in the belief that this would purify the air, thus curtailing the epidemic.

Commenting on the 1932 massacre, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations under Reagan, Jeane Kirkpatrick, has argued that, "To many Salvadorans, the violence of this repression seems less

important than the fact of restored order and the thirteen years of civil peace that ensued."

Today, one of the bloodiest of the clandestine death squads in the country is called the Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Brigade.

TESTIMONY OF RENE HURTADO

"First you put the prisoner in a small, completely dark room and you don't let him sleep," Rene Hurtado explained in the May, 1984 edition of *The Progressive*. "You place him, naked and handcuffed, on a bed frame. The room stinks horribly because of the urine and excrement of former prisoners, and you keep him there for a week without sleep so that his nerves will be shot when you start to torture him..."

"You learn to give electric shocks to the brain, shocks to the stomach. There are some very sophisticated methods for this kind of torture...one that looks like a radio, like a transformer. It's about fifteen centimeters across, with connecting wires. It says General Electric."

MARY HARTMAN

Mary Hartman came to Nicaragua in 1962. Initially working on the Atlantic Coast with Miskito Indians, she was profoundly disturbed by the poverty. "Eighty percent of the population had tuberculosis," she recalls. "I came to Nicaragua to evangelize, but I was evangelized by my experiences. Obviously, I'm not the same person I was at that time."

After transferring to Managua's Barrio Riguero in 1970, she realized more fully the corruption of the Somoza government. Then in 1972, twenty thousand Nicaraguans died in an earthquake which damaged most of the houses and commercial buildings in Managua. President Anastasio Somoza nevertheless personally profited from the demolition work while prohibiting substantial rebuilding of the city. He and others in the government lined their pockets with earthquake relief funds that poured into the country.

In Barrio Riguero, disgruntled residents staged a demonstration that ended in violence. Hartman and her fellow clergy members knew it would require great patience and work to resist repression, but they resolved to have "a Christian hope and determination." Liberation Theology was becoming an active force for change.

WHOM DO YOU SEEK?

Father Ernesto Cardenal and others founded the Christian community of Solentiname in 1966, naming it after the chain of islands in Lake Nicaragua on which it was located. In the 1970s, Cardenal and the youth of Solentiname joined the Sandinista Front (FSLN), some even taking part in the assault on a barracks. Somoza's National Guard destroyed the community, but after the revolution it was re-established and Cardenal became Nicaragua's minister of culture. Reflections such as Andrea's about liberation were part of pre-revolutionary dialogues that occurred on Solentiname, and were published, along with paintings, in *The Gospel in Art by the Peasants of Solentiname*.

TREE OF POISON

Salvadoran peasants have become increasingly acquainted with the "black whirlwind" of destruction since the election of President Duarte in 1984. The streams, and subsequently the food supplies, are being poisoned both from chemicals and bombs, according to Tracy Shear, national coordinator of New El Salvador Today (NEST), a material aid project benefitting local governments in El Salvador's rebel-held zones. She is one of a small number of outsiders who have visited these areas. The main documentation of the poisoning, she says, "has been the yellow and white powder seen dropping from planes, and the effect on the population — welts on people's skin, vomiting and other reactions to chemicals the body is rejecting.

"When I was there, health care workers were being trained to deal with a napalm burn, a white phosphorus burn. How do you stop it from burning? You have to pack it with sand. How do you keep the infection from developing? You need to use honey. That's one of the reasons NEST is funding projects for honey."

Air attacks and indiscriminate bombings by A-37 Dragonfly planes have escalated, causing disruption among the rural people. "We were panicked and starving," reported a man from Cabanas. "We'd get up at dawn, make a pot of beans and then get in the bomb shelter for the rest of the day." These attacks on civilians in conflict zones are part of a deliberate policy. Americas Watch, a human rights group, has concluded that, "The aim seems to be to force civilians to flee these zones, depriving the guerillas of a civilian population from which they can obtain food and other necessities."

LA RISA EN LOS OJOS

The show is based on a novel written in 1983 by Manlio Argueta, a poet and activist expelled four times from El Salvador. He is in exile in Costa Rica. His novel, *Un Dia en la Vida* (One Day of Life), is the story of the grandmother of the Guardado family. The National Guard interrogates her adolescent granddaughter, Adolfinia. Her son is killed. Her husband is taken by the police, and to protect the rest of her family she must deny knowing him.

Argueta's book has been banned by the Salvadoran government.

DISAPPEARANCES

How does a nation's history lead to death squads?

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency engineered the overthrow of the democratically elected president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, in 1954, and the military has held the country under its repressive rule ever since. An estimated twenty thousand people were killed or "disappeared" between 1966 and 1976, according to an Amnesty International report from which the sideshow text was adapted. Such facts prompted President Carter to substantially reduce military aid to Guatemala.

Between 1980 and 1982, the regime of General Romero Lucas Garcia "systematically destroyed the popular urban opposition through a campaign of terror which left thousands of politicians, university students and professors, trade union activists and others dead," reported the American Friends Service Committee. Yet under the Reagan administration much of the aid cut by Carter was indirectly restored.

When General Efraim Rios Montt came to power in a 1982 coup, the death toll rose to an estimated three hundred people a week. As part of the government's Beans and Bullets program, a scorched earth policy reminiscent of the Vietnam War encouraged the destruction of whole villages in attempts to rout guerillas. Up to one million refugees have fled the country.

Montt once said, "We declared a state of siege so we could kill legally." He was ousted in yet another coup, which installed General Mejia Victores as president in 1983. And the rate of kidnappings, massacres and disappearances increased again.

HANDS

Janet Melvin, the writer mentioned in this sideshow, has studied the effects of war and revolution on children in Nicaragua, especially child combatants. She reported in 1984 that, "Children under ten were trained to use lethal weapons in self-defense. Some had years of military experience before the Sandinista victory in 1979. There were bands of children organized to defend their families under attack.

Some children fabricated coke bottle bombs and ran messages from the resistance when they were five and six years old."

The defeat of Somoza did not end such participation. Many children, particularly those living near the embattled borders of the country, have been caught up in the counter-revolutionary violence. One young girl, her right arm torn off by explosives, covered herself in her own blood in hopes of being left for dead after an attack.

Nicaraguan children don't "play" war games. For too many, war is the reality of their lives.

LETTERS FROM NICARAGUA

Starting in 1981, more than \$19 million a year in American CIA funding was spent to finance, train and supply anti-Sandinista forces known as "contras". Many of them were former Somoza guardsmen operating out of Honduras. In the winter of 1982, murders, mutilations, kidnappings and crop destruction began in Jalapa, near the Honduran border. The next year almost one thousand people were killed or kidnapped.

North American clergy and laity who came to the Nicaragua frontier town in 1982 learned from local people that their presence may have helped to keep the contras in check. Once back in the U.S., they organized Witness for Peace; henceforth, teams of Americans from various religious backgrounds would take turns spending two weeks in Jalapa. As an expression of nonviolent action, the Witnesses hold prayer vigils near the border; just over the mountains are the Honduran camps of the anti-Sandinista forces. Rebecca, author of the 1984 letter, was part of a four-member, long-term Witness group orienting each new contingent about the area.

ORATORIO

Journalist Raymond Bonner gave first-hand accounts from villagers about the killing in Mozote in the *New York Times*. He had seen evidence of the carnage, as well as spent cartridges from M-16 rifles, "standard issue for the Atlacatl Battalion." The Reagan administration nevertheless disputed all such reports. At the time, the president was about to sign an executive order releasing \$55 million in Department of Defense funds and supplies for "emergency assistance" to El Salvador.

In a repeat performance two and a half years later, in August 1984, the Atlacatl Battalion began mortar fire on three villages in Chalatenango Province, driving peasants into the countryside. About three hundred people gathered on the steep banks of the Gualsinga River near the town of Santa Lucia. "On the morning of August 30," the *Times* reported, "troops of the Atlacatl Battalion moved in by helicop-

ter and began to cordon off the area, the villagers said." When they realized the army had surrounded them, the peasants scattered. Then the shooting began.

Many were shot, but others drowned after jumping into the rain-swollen, rapidly flowing river. Forty-nine people died that day, most of them women and children. Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte denied that the massacre ever took place.

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"...very revolutionary art." — Ernesto Cardenal

"This book is not a puppet show, but it has its own power as a brief and searing, loving history of Central America. In the foreword, Grace Paley gives Artistic Inspiration and Political Inspiration the same voice: "Why not speak the truth directly? Just speak out! Speak to! Why not?" This is the essence of Bread and Puppet's genius — that they have refused to separate beauty and feeling from conscience and action.

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— Lucy R. Lippard

"Central America is the moral issue of our time, and Bread and Puppet are people-to-people...We're all cultural workers if you're working for peace and justice and human rights. And Bread and Puppet are the ones with the biggest heads."

— Abbie Hoffman

"The most moving expression of solidarity with the people of Central America I have witnessed in the U.S. The passion, crucifixion and resurrection of our people reenacted in the green summer of Vermont, in front of thousands of blue eyes, crying..."

— Arnaldo Ramos, FMLN-FDR

"Poor people of Vietnam, poor people of Nicaragua! These **Stories of Struggle and Faith from Central America** should be read by Ronald Reagan."

— Lawrence Ferlinghetti

"Oh! The gorgeousness the solemn size the humorous disparities..."

— Grace Paley,
from the Foreword

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