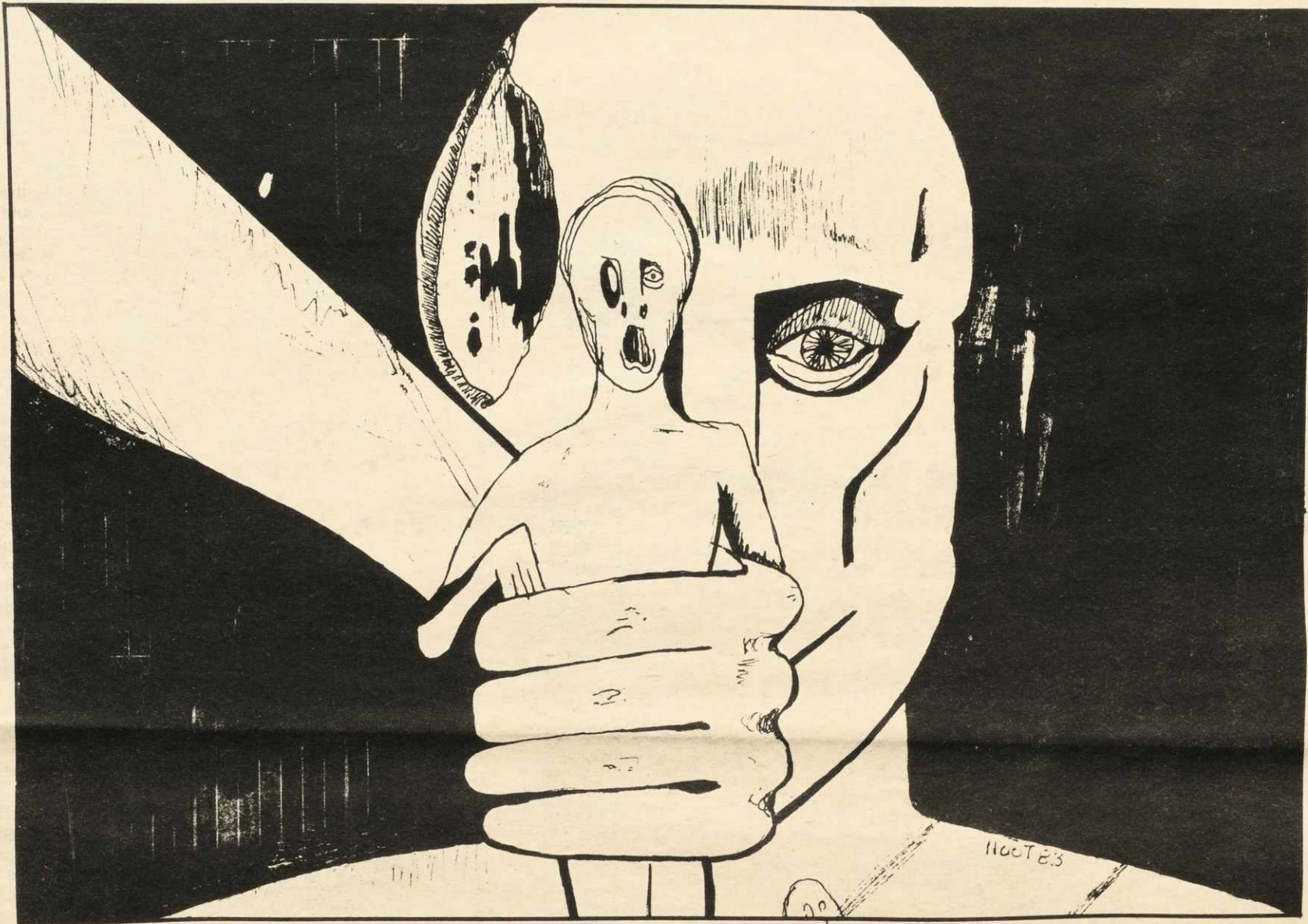


# An aspect of the Fourth Reich



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Article translated from Spanish by Dr. Joan Lupin.

What is torture?

In very general terms torture can be described as a violent and cohesive action an individual or group exercises over certain other people, submitting them to physical, biological or psychological rigors. The aim is to destroy their personalities, to annul both their decisive capacity and their free will, and therefore the control of their compartmental and subjective reactions.

The repertoire of torture in Latin America is incredibly varied. It ranges from interrogations facing a swinging high-intensity lightbulb to hanging the victim by his hands and feet as happened in Vietnam; from the practice of keeping women captives naked in front of other prisoners to their rape by trained dogs (a new technique employed by the CIA in combination with the Chilean Secret Service); from solitary confinement and systematic interruptions of sleep to the use of drugs to obtain information; from simple slaps on the face to beatings resulting in internal ruptures and bone fractures.

It's difficult to catalogue *ad infinitum* the different types of torture, but the objective is to point out what is pursued by these methods, which are completely alien to the basic principles of human society.

Throughout history, torture has been used to obtain information from a victim: the confession of something which the torturers believe the person to know, either about himself, somebody else, or about something interesting....

Torture is generally a good way of getting information, although it is not foolproof. In the past, the most incredible information imaginable was obtained by torture of the Inquisition: descriptions of the Devil, descriptions of being a flying witch, of the pleasure of sealing a pact with the Devil, and of drinking the blood of a new-born babe. In the same way neo-fascist governments of Latin America obtain all sorts of confessions about subversive plots, Moscow gold, contacts with Havana, guns, and hidden arms in cemeteries. In spite of this, there has been in both the time of Hitler and of the Inquisition, as well as in the present period of internal war now existing in Latin America, many

prisoners, men and women torture victims, who have not confessed to anything. Many of these die at the hands of their torturers.

How can a person possibly be led to accept such unbelievable things as seeing the Devil fly, or receiving gold from Moscow? It is precisely because torture drives individuals to such a state of mind that they willingly accept anything, if only to escape their torturers.

As for methods of torture based on psychological techniques, most of them produce pain, fear and anxiety. A conflict develops which may reach an enormous pitch of intensity. The person would love to escape and believes they will if they release the information demanded. They hope for a miracle, a paternal, maternal or magical figure who will take them away from it all. They have no idea how to behave, and feel insecure.

At this moment the Secret Services increases the fear, pain and anxiety to overcome the person's resistance.

During the interrogation the Secret Service tries to achieve a mental conflict of such intensity the prisoner will lose all sense of time and space, and also the abil-

ity to judge the situation clearly. To the prisoner, the only thing that counts is to escape the pain. This is the dangerous moment as the tortured prisoner may commit suicide.

The new methods of torture used in Latin America lead to a loss of critical capacity to the extent where the victim will say anything. This is the same state of mind in which victims of the Inquisition began to recognize witches. Victims of the Latin America Gestapo will accept any accusation and will talk of what they may or may not know. Some even agree to work for their intimidators. This stage is called 'personality breaking' (as with Jewish prisoners in Treblinka during World War II).

This mental state is brought about by a deterioration of the cerebral regulatory process of the bodily functions, i.e. cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, muscular, respiratorial, genito urinal, etc. Torture can produce any type of organic damage: hemorrhages, ruptured organs, broken bones, or vaginal or intestinal perforations.

Some people—even when tortured to death—have not given away information and, paradoxically,

have kept an air of defiance and non-cooperation to the torturers' demands up to the end. This attitude arouses respect in some torturers while in others it produces an exaltation of aggression which makes them increase the intensity of the torture. There are many first-hand witness accounts to illustrate this point. In addition, in cases where brutality destroys individual resistance, there are moments of rebellion which remain imprinted on the victim's mind, resulting in permanent mental scarring.

Torture is no myth. It is a problem that intensely affects almost the entire continent of Latin America. There the buds of fascism can be clearly seen; it is by cudgels and the blood of women and children that the neo-fascists try to impose a world where the first to open his mouth has his tongue or head cut off.

There is only one response to this situation, and that is to overthrow the regimes that maintain their power through inhuman practices. Since fascism in Latin America knows no bounds, to destroy it is a question of honour and dignity to all free and honest people on earth.