

Militant Catholics work to liberate Latin America

By CARL STIEREN

Catholic militants in Latin America have moved out of the churches and are organizing in the villages and urban slums to liberate their countries. Rafael Mandragon, a Mexican lay theologian, described this new social movement at a York Student Christian Movement meeting Monday.

The root network of this movement came out of a conference of church militants in Chile last year which produced a document urging participation with Marxists in a common front against exploitation:

"The structures of our society must be transformed down to their roots. Today more than ever before it is urgent to do this because those who benefit from the unjust order in which we are living are making use of every means to prevent the bringing about of such a

revolutionary transformation."

In working for social change, Mandragon said it is just as wrong for the church to use its theology and scriptures to justify socialist constructions as to justify the status quo. He stressed that Christian militants must develop their own theology of liberation out of their experiences in social action.

When asked whether the conference made any resolution on violence, Mandragon retorted: "That is a very Northern question. The theological reflection for Latin Americans develops because of their experiences as militants. So this problem has a completely different orientation. The question of violence is not 'let's solve this problem.' The problem of violence comes when your friend is killed by the police."

Asked about Canada's role and image in Latin America, Mandragon

said the common Mexican would not see a difference between the English Canadian and an American. Canada is the second or third largest foreign investor in Mexico.

"I really believe in the honesty of Canadians. But in spite of this good will, in economic terms they are the same as Americans. Economic exploitation is making the suffering

of our people," Mandragon said.

"Economic growth of the developed countries is paid for by the developing countries. If our children die before their third year, it is because of exploitation. Before long, you will see the exploitation that is being done to your people because of the corporations. In

Quebec this is apparent already," he continued.

Mandragon said Canadians could help in the economic liberation of Latin America by boycotting Brascan to protest its exploitation of Brazilians. Similar actions forced Alcan to cancel an order destined for Mozambique, where a liberation struggle is also going on.

CYSF votes no to debt repayment

The CYSF meeting last Monday would have made good copy for a Fun with Figures feature.

The fun started when finance commissioner Rodger Shute introduced a memorandum he had been saving since last November. The memo, from student liaison

officer John Becker, requested that the student federation pay off its outstanding debt to the university over the next two to three years.

Shute estimated the debt at roughly \$25,000, but confessed he hadn't brought the memo with him.

At this point, CYSF president John Theobald moved that the debt, whatever it was, be paid off over the next two years. He was upset when the motion was defeated.

"I think it's ludicrous," he said. "Some people think we shouldn't commit future councils to paying off the debt."

Business manager Doug Wise said this week he thought the debt was

"about \$27,000", but "hoped it was less." He was unaware that any motion to repay the debt had been proposed, let alone defeated. Remarking that CYSF "has known about the debt pretty well all along", he said he felt the balance could be paid off over the next two years without "curtailing operations or rendering CYSF impotent." CYSF has already paid off an \$11,000 debt this year. According to a carbon copy of Becker's memo the debt to the administration is exactly \$27,490. It includes such items as expenses from last year's winter carnival, 1971 office renovations, and past salaries for CYSF's secretary and business manager.

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