Ignacio Martin Baro, leader of a college under fire  

By David P. Hamilton  

Study  
Fisher Ignacio Martín Baro is currently the rector of the Catholic University of America (UCA) in San Salvador, a university affiliated with the Central American University of Veranas in Colombia, and holds a doctorate in social psychology from the University of Chicago. He is a noted social and political writer in his native El Salvador, having written three texts on social psychology and education in El Salvador.

Q: What led you into education?  
A: Well, I think it is an important field to improve the quality of the population, so I think it is a field which provides important opportunities to contribute to the shaping of the future of society and particularly to help those societies which have so many needs.

Q: Can you tell me something about the history of the UCA?  
A: Yes, it was born 20 years ago, in 1965. And in the beginning it was thought that it would be the first private university in El Salvador. In El Salvador at that time, only the universities connected to the state or with the state.

Q: A significant part of the history of the UCA was to be one socialistic-errone, and people thought that it would be good for the population of El Salvador to have an alternative.

Q: At the time there was optimism, industrial development, looking ahead, looking at the country from the point of view of the country, do you think that is more or less, to be a socialistic kind of country. So from those two perspectives, just having an alternative to the national university, and answer, to the national development, was a significant factor in the beginning.

Q: Now very soon, our university thought that was important was simply events of cultural development or technical development, but that the problems of the country had their origin in their social context. It is a socialistic kind of country. So from those two perspectives, just having an alternative to the national university, and answer, to the national development, was a significant factor in the beginning.

Q: A very simple-minded analysis of that is East-West confrontation, and we are "with the God," and so on. Well that can satisfy those with a lot of prejudices, but those that really want to understand things in El Salvador. I mean, that's my personal philosophy.

Q: How is your political sympathies. Some students do that, quite a few, maybe, but it is very dangerous to say "I . . .," particularly if you oppose the official viewpoint, or oppose Reagan's policies toward El Salvador.

Q: What is the purpose of your trip in the United States?  
A: Well, I have been invited by a group of concerned faculty people, just to meet with people interested in what's going on in El Salvador — people interested in finding out about the problems of El Salvador, not in terms of the same few, maybe, but it is very dangerous to say "I . . .," particularly if you oppose the official viewpoint, or oppose Reagan's policies toward El Salvador.

Q: Do you understand that we cannot get into all those problems of El Salvador. I mean, that's my personal philosophy.

Q: As a small, what can you do in terms of restrictions and a lot of difficulties.  
A: Well, in the sense that we can help to form a more critical person, we can help to form a person who is more critical. We can help to form people who are more critical. We can help to form people who are more critical.

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Q: What group of professors invited you?  
A: It was Faculty for Human Rights in El Salvador.

Q: Do you hope to get any kind of reaction from those that you speak to?  
A: Well, it's just a matter of effort, courage and faith, you know. It's just a matter of effort, courage and faith.

Q: In what sense do you mean by the use of language in El Salvador?  
A: Well, language is very strong in El Salvador, and it's very strong in El Salvador. It's very strong in El Salvador.

Q: How does all this political turmoil affect UCA?  
A: Well, for instance, we would never come into this if we didn't have the money to do so. And that's not good all the time, and that's not good all the time.

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Q: You started off teaching philosophy, and now you're vice-rector. That's nonsense, which is how people explain what we consider to be the strengths of your university.  
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