

BETWEEN HISTORY AND TRANSCENDENCE: PADRE GUADALUPE CARNEY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AGRARIAN REFORM IN HONDURAS

*ENTRE A HISTÓRIA E A TRANSCENDÊNCIA:
PADRE GUADALUPE CARNEY E A LUTA PELA REFORMA
AGRÁRIA EM HONDURAS*

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EL PADRE GUADALUPE CARNEY Y LA LUCHA POR LA
REFORMA AGRÁRIA EN HONDURAS*

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Abstract: During the late Cold War in Central America, priest James Hanley Carney wrote a book that was at once his life story and a detailed chronicle of the *campesino* movement in Honduras. This essay examines and contextualizes the contents of Carney's autobiography while simultaneously reflecting upon the ideology encoded in the autobiographic genre. His autobiography and the letters that he wrote to his family, along with documents from the Honduran campesino and workers' movements, demonstrate that it was the poor of Honduras who converted Carney, and not he who converted them. His attempt to understand the *campesinos* with whom he lived and worked prompted him to question the historical and structural conditions of their poverty. This extended encounter led him to rethink his anticommunist faith and his Christian commitments. **Keywords:** Agrarian Reform; Honduras.

Resumo: Durante a Guerra Fria na América Central, o padre James Hanley Carney escreveu um livro que foi sua história de vida e uma crônica detalhada do movimento camponês em Honduras. Este ensaio analisa e contextualiza o conteúdo da autobiografia de Carney, e ao mesmo tempo reflete sobre a ideologia que é codificada no gênero autobiográfico. Sua autobiografia e as cartas que ele escreveu para sua família, juntamente com os documentos dos movimentos de trabalhadores são as fontes utilizadas. Sua tentativa de entender os camponeses hondurenhos com quem conviveu e trabalhou o levou a questionar as condições históricas e estruturais da pobreza naquele país durante o enfrentamento de Guerra Fria. Este encontro prolongado levou-o a repensar sua fé anticomunista e seus compromissos cristãos.

Palavras-chave: reforma agrária; Honduras.

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Resumen: Durante la guerra fría en Centroamérica, sacerdote James Hanley Carney escribió un libro que era a la vez su historia de vida y una crónica detallada del movimiento campesino en Honduras. Este ensayo analiza y contextualiza los contenidos de la autobiografía de Carney, mientras que al mismo tiempo reflexiona sobre la ideología codificada en el género autobiográfico. Su autobiografía y las cartas que le escribió a su familia, junto con documentos de movimientos de trabajadores, y el campesino hondureño demuestran que era los pobres de Honduras quienes convirtieron a Carney. Por lo tanto, sostengo que los campesinos repolitizaron a Carney. Su intento por comprender los campesinos con quienes vivía y trabajaba lo llevó a cuestionar las condiciones históricas y estructurales de la pobreza. Este encuentro extendido le llevó a repensar su fe anticomunista y su compromiso Cristiano.

Palabras-clave: Reforma Agraria; Honduras.

In a shack by himself in Sandinista Nicaragua, a gringo-turned-Honduran *campesino* wrote of his transformations of consciousness. With only a small box full of newspaper clippings and copies of some letters, James Hanley Carney wrote a book that was at once his life story and a detailed chronicle of the *campesino* movement in Honduras. No longer going by his given name, for over twenty years he was known simply as Padre Guadalupe. Or, as he used to tell people: “Sólo díganme Lupe”—“Just call me Lupe.” This man who eschewed hierarchical honorifics and who had changed his name, and thereby his identity, was now in his late fifties. He was also a man without a country.

While his days were spent ministering to families who had been attacked by the Contras hiding out just across the Nicaraguan border in Honduras, Carney wrote two books during candlelight vigils. And from those two books came many editions from publishers and sponsors with their own particular interests in releasing the text from the *ranchito* where it was produced and to disseminate it more widely. In addition to the 441 page version written in his first language, English, he also wrote a shorter version, 206 pages long, in Spanish for his Honduran *campesino* friends.

The Spanish version was not a translation—“an always possible but always imperfect compromise between two idioms”²— of the longer English text, but a summary of it, communicated more justly in the language of *campesinos*. This version was variously entitled: *Metamorphosis of a Revolutionary: Memories of a Priest in Honduras*; *Honduras: A Priest in the Struggle*; *Memories of a Priest in Honduras*; *This is the Church*; and, most recently, *Just Call Me Lupe: The Autobiography of Padre Guadalupe Carney, Priest of the*

² I would like to thank Jeffrey L. Gould, Anna L. Peterson, and David Díaz Arias for helpful comments on this paper.

Poor.³ Each title frames the book differently. In *Honduras: Un sacerdote en la lucha*, the (armed) struggle is legitimized by associating it with a priest⁴. In *Así es la Iglesia*, the popular church that Guadalupe describes is emphasized as a call to what the global Catholic Church should become. Each of these titles takes Carney's autobiography not simply as an interesting life story but as a *manifesto* of a new world being summoned forth. The titles that were variously assigned to the same content are each announcements of the new Honduras that the sponsors of the book wish to bring into being with the circulation of Carney's text.

Responding to historical shifts in Church teaching and lay practice—most prominently in the 1968 Bishops' conference in Medellín, the 1979 meeting in Puebla, and the role of popular religion in the Central American revolutions—scholars of popular religiosity have clarified the connections between narratives of sacrifice and politics⁵. In particular, Anna L. Peterson's work on martyrdom in El Salvador provides conceptual leverage for an examination of Carney's book, his life, and in historical memory, his afterlife. Employing the concept of martyrology, Peterson argues that the Salvadoran *iglesia popular* connected contemporary persecution to what Jesus suffered as he denounced injustice. Evil was thus "something that humans cause

³ Here is a complete list of the various non-English editions of Carney's autobiography: Carney, J. Guadalupe, *Metamorfosis de un revolucionario: memorias de un sacerdote en Honduras*, (Honduras: Dirección Nacional Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, 1983). J. Guadalupe Carney, *Honduras: Un Sacerdote en la Lucha* (México, D.E: Claves Latinoamericanas, 1985). J. Guadalupe Carney, *Memorias de un Sacerdote en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Ediciones CODEH, 1990). Padre J. Guadalupe Carney, *Así es la Iglesia* (Plymouth, MN: [s.n.], 1990). Carney, Guadalupe, *Honduras: Memoiren eines Priesters*, (Hamburg: Theorie-und-Praxis-Verl., 1994). Carney, J. Guadalupe, *Sólo díganme Lupe : autobiografía del Padre Guadalupe Carney, sacerdote de los pobres*, trans. Carías, Marcela (El Progreso, Honduras: Equipo de Reflexión, Investigación y Comunicación (ERIC); Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial Guaymurás, 2004).

⁴ Carney certainly was not the first Catholic priest to join a guerrilla group in Latin America. In Colombia, Jorge Camilo Torres Restrepo (1929-1966) joined the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) in 1965. In Nicaragua, Gaspar García Laviana was a Sacred Heart Missionary who, in 1978, was "killed in battle as a soldier in the struggle against Somoza" (Mulligan, p. 99).

⁵ Relevant studies of religion in Central America include: Phillip Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984) and *Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics, and Revolution in Central America* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994); Roger N. Lancaster, *Thanks to God and the Revolution: Popular Religion and Class Consciousness in the New Nicaragua* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Eds. Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde, *The Progressive Church in Latin America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989); Joseph E. Mulligan, *The Nicaraguan Church and the Revolution* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1991); Daniel Santiago, *The Harvest of Justice: The Church of El Salvador Ten Years after Romero* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); and Frederick C. Turner, *Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

and humans must resist.”⁶ In other words, popular Catholicism embeds a powerful impetus to action within a larger theological narrative that makes sense of lives cut short in the struggle for more just social relations. Notwithstanding the fact that Hondurans never experienced the kind of massive popular uprising and brutal repression that Salvadorans did, Peterson’s notion of martyrology helps to explain the meaning and purpose of Padre Guadalupe’s struggles and the uses his memory is put to today.

Like the broader historiography of Catholicism in Latin America, studies of Honduras also rest on a distinction between the lay and the clerical, the popular and the theological. This work goes in two directions: one explores popular religiosity while the other dissects the relationship between the Honduran state and Church as an institution⁷. Both groups recognize that it is crucial to elucidate the role of religion in Honduran cultural and political life.

In Honduras, Padre Guadalupe was a religious and political go-between⁸. He was neither a *campesino* nor a theologian, but a radical practitioner who sought to embody the poor and the liberatory message of a progressive Catholic reading of the Gospel. He mediated between the popular Christianity of *campesinos* in northern Honduras and the progressive

⁶ Anna L. Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador’s Civil War* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) p. 83. Peterson’s focus on the practices and beliefs of lay progressive Catholics in El Salvador complements a larger body of work on liberation theology. The core writings of liberation theology include: Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988); Ed. James B. Nickoloff, *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Essential Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Eds. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993). Key collections of important documents are: *Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America*. Issued at Lima by the Peruvian Bishops’ Commission for Social Action, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Maryknoll Publications, 1970); Ed. Edward Cleary, *Path from Puebla: Significant Documents of the Latin American Bishops since 1979*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1989). See also: Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, *De Medellín a Puebla* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1980); Luis Fernando Figari, *Reflexión sobre Medellín: un largo caminar* (Lima: VE, 1991); Alain Gheerbrant, *La Iglesia rebelde en América Latina* (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1970); Carlos Roberto Torres, *The Church, Society, and Hegemony: A Critical Sociology of Religion in Latin America*, trans. Richard A. Young (Westport: Praeger, 1992); and David Ryan “Option for the Poor: Liberation Theology and Anti-Americanization” in *Anti-Americanism in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Alan McPherson (New York: Berhahn Books, 2006).

⁷ See Leticia de Oyuela, *Honduras: Religiosidad popular: Raíz de la identidad* (Choluteca: Centro de Publicaciones, 1995); Juan Ramón Martínez, *Honduras, las fuerzas del desacuerdo: Un ensayo histórico sobre las relaciones entre la Iglesia y el estado (1525-1972)* (Tegucigalpa: Editorial Universitaria, 1998); and Marcos Carías *La Iglesia Católica en Honduras (1492-1975)* (Tegucigalpa: Editorial Guaymurás, 1991).

⁸ Alida C. Metcalf employs the concept of “go-betweens” in her discussion of colonial Brazil to suggest that “colonization is always mediated by third parties.” *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

theology and doctrines of intellectuals in Medellín, Lima, Puebla, and San Salvador. In this essay, rather than seek to disentangle the “popular” from the “progressive” in Guadalupe Carney’s work, I will argue that this distinction itself implies a hierarchy of belief and practice that is largely class-based and which can blind us to the truly progressive aspects of “traditional” lived religion.

Popular Catholicism was not merely a vehicle or conduit of *campesino* demands in Cold War Honduras, it was a mode of representation integral to *campesino* culture and consciousness. Making a conceptual linkage with implications for the present study, Jean and John Comaroff put hegemony and ideology on a continuum, defining the former to be a dominant worldview, naturalized in orthodoxy, operating silently and unseen, and the latter to be any visible struggle or effort to control the cultural terms through which the world is ordered. Building on this notion of a continuum between the unquestioningly accepted and the actively contested, they write: “Because the liminal space between the hegemonic and the ideological, consciousness and unconsciousness, is also an area in which new relations are forged between form and content, it is likely to be the source of the poetic imagination, the creative, the innovative.”⁹ Taking the Comaroffs’ notion of the liminal space between hegemony and ideology as the source of historical poetics requires a dual focus on the contents of ritual, songs, and narratives as well as on their form. This is precisely what Fredric Jameson and other literary critics have long pointed out: the form itself “is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right.”¹⁰ With these insights in mind, I analyze and contextualize the contents of Carney’s autobiography while simultaneously reflecting upon the ideology encoded in the autobiographic genre.

This essay opened with Carney’s status as a North American who sought to incarnate a Honduran *campesino*. Carney stated this repeatedly: “I think I sincerely love the poor, not only out of pity for what they are forced to suffer and out of rebellion against the system that forces them to be poor, but as lovable persons in themselves, as bits of God, of Christ.”¹¹ Becoming one with *campesinos* was a spiritual exercise, in the sense that Pierre Bourdieu speaks of a social scientific interview, as Carney obtained, “through *forgetfulness of self*, a true *transformation of the view* [he took] of others in the ordinary circumstances of life.”¹² But just as in the interview, the spiritual

⁹ Jean and John Comaroff, p. 30

¹⁰ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 141.

¹¹ Letter from Carney to his family and friends (1971), reprinted in *To Be a Revolutionary*, p. xvi.

¹² Pierre Bourdieu, “Understanding,” in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol 13, No. 2 (May 1996), p. 24.

love that Carney felt for Honduran *campesinos* did not erase the privileges of language, bicultural identity, and his social standing as a cleric. His autobiography underscores the power and privilege that he had even from a remote shack in rural Nicaragua, for, as John Beverley points out in his discussion of *testimonio* literature: “the very possibility of ‘writing one’s life’ implies that the narrator is no longer in a situation of marginality that his narrative describes, but has now attained the cultural status of an author.”¹³ Yet, Carney strategically drew upon his reserves of linguistic, cultural, social, and moral capital to further the cause of the *campesino* movement in Honduras.

Scholars of agrarian reform and *campesino* movements in Latin America have established the tight relationship between access to land, discursive struggles, and revolutionary consciousness.¹⁴ Jeffrey L. Gould’s historiographic intervention took Ernesto Laclau’s theoretical hypothesis that we cannot assign historical missions and meanings to specific classes and empirically grounded it in a local study. Gould demonstrated that *campesino* consciousness was not an *either/or*, but a *both/and*; for the *campesinos* of Chinandega appropriated and redeployed aspects of elite discourse to create a new language of protest and a new kind of social order.¹⁵ Scholars have also queried the relationship between political violence, memory, and peasant mobilizations.¹⁶ In the Honduran context, the *campesino* movement has

¹³ John Beverley, “Testimonio, Subalternity, and Narrative Authority,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 556.

¹⁴ The literature on agrarian reform and *campesino* movements in Latin America is vast. Relevant to the present study are: Cindy Forster, *The Time of Freedom: Campesino Workers in Guatemala’s October Revolution* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001); Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950-1973* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Steve Striffler, *In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Florencia E. Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailío and the Chilean State, 1906-2001* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Martin Diskin, “Distilled Conclusions: The Disappearance of the Agrarian Question in El Salvador,” in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (1996), pp. 111-126; Mitchell A. Seligson, “Agrarian Inequality and the Theory of Peasant Rebellion,” in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (1996), pp. 140-157; Jeffrey M. Paige, “Land Reform and Agrarian Revolution in El Salvador: Comment on Seligson and Diskin” in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (1996), pp. 127-139; William Roseberry, “Beyond the Agrarian Question in Latin America” in Fred Cooper et al, eds., *Confronting Historical Paradigms* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993) pp. 318-370.

¹⁵ Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 301.

¹⁶ Charles R. Hale, “CA Forum on Anthropology in Public: Consciousness, Violence, and the Politics of Memory in Guatemala” in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (Dec., 1997), pp. 817-838. Philippe Bourgois, “The power of violence in war and peace: Post-Cold War lessons

been analyzed primarily in terms of political economy, largely neglecting the symbolic and cultural realms.¹⁷ Despite major advances in our understanding of peasants in the agrarian reform process and as revolutionaries, the narrative power of progressive Catholicism has not been understood as central to *campesino* intentionality. My microstudy of Guadalupe Carney in Cold War Honduras builds on the insights of a generation of *campesino* studies but pushes further by highlighting the transnational flow of people, texts, rituals, technologies, and the narrative power of religion set against a materialist concern for the central institutions of power, including the military, the state, and multinational corporations.¹⁸ In this essay, I chart Carney's transformation from anticommunist to revolutionary priest by showing how he could not try to change the distribution of power in Honduras until he himself was radically changed, *converted*, by the *campesinos* and banana laborers with whom he lived and worked. It was the poor of Honduras who converted this *gringo* into ally in the struggle for political, cultural, and economic independence in late-Cold War Honduras.

By the 1970s, Carney's worked feverishly to destabilize exploitative socioeconomic relationships and hegemonic discourses, opening the way—in concerted action not only with many Hondurans, but also with other transnational activists and agents of development and revolution—for new

from El Salvador," in *Ethnography*, Vol. 2(1): pp. 5-34. Leigh Binford, "Violence in El Salvador: A 17 Rejoinder to Philippe Bourgois's 'The power of violence in war and peace: Post-Cold War lessons from El Salvador' (unpublished?).

¹⁷ The central studies of the Honduran *campesino* movement are: Lombraña, Martiniano. *Historia de las organizaciones campesinas de Honduras* (La Ceiba, [n.c.]1989); Mario Posas, *Breve historia de las organizaciones campesinas en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1987); Mario Posas, *Conflictos agrarios y organización campesina: sobre los orígenes de las primeras organizaciones campesinas en Honduras*, (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Editorial Universitaria, 1981); Mario Posas, *El movimiento campesino hondureño: una perspectiva general*. (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial Guaymuras, 1981). Ramón Salgado, *Guanchías, lucha campesina y cooperativismo agrario* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial Guaymuras, 1981); Víctor Meza, *Historia del movimiento obrero hondureño* (Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, 1991); Ramón Salgado, *El mercado de tierras en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, 1994); Noel García, *Estudio sobre organizaciones campesinas en Honduras* : documento (¿?); Robert Anthony, White, *Structural factors in rural development : the church and the peasant in Honduras* (¿?); Robert Anthony, White, "The adult education program of Acción Cultural Popular Hondureña : an evaluation of the rural development potential of the radio school movement in Honduras" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1972); Ulrike Pfeil, "Peasant Mobilization and Land Reform: A Theoretical Model and a Case Study (Honduras)" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1977); Ramon Ulises Salgado-Peña "Social and economic factors affecting rural cooperative profits in Honduras" (M.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 1985).

¹⁸ This sort of approach is argued for in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

possibilities of more liberating, more egalitarian relationships. The *campesinos* and workers in the banana plantations made Guadalupe Carney, and he made himself, into a gnashing, biting threat to the United States in its own backyard. That is why he was exiled and killed by the Honduran military with support from U.S. military advisors.

James Hanley Carney was born in 1924 in the Midwest of the United States to a traditional German-Catholic family. When he was twenty-one years old, Carney went through basic military training at Fort Benning, Georgia. (Little did he know that the ghosts of Fort Benning would later close the circle of his life in a place so far from that military school.) He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Around Marseilles, Carney recalls:

I first encountered people from the third world. It was in a camp of Arab refugees who had fled from the war in North Africa.... Their living like animals impressed me so much that there started to awaken in me something of a social consciousness. I first began to recognize the great injustice of the world, the great inequality of opportunity between the people of the poor countries, who are the majority in the world, and those of "civilized," developed countries.... It was this beginning in me of a preoccupation with my neighbor, with those who suffer, that moved me toward a search for God.¹⁹

Guarding German prisoners, Carney saw first-hand the fragile nature of Nazi domination, even as his military superiors saw, in his conversations with captured enemy soldiers, the fragility of their own:

My German prisoner friends.... admitted that Hitler was insane; that he had concentration camps for all his enemies and for all the Jews. These prisoners asked me if it were true that the German aviators had completely destroyed New York City. When I explained to them that it was a lie, and that the German armies, on the contrary, were in complete rout on the Russian front and had already been pushed out of France back into Germany, they admitted that the German people had been fools to believe and follow such a madman.

My sergeant caught me talking with the prisoners a couple of times.... The captain found out, and after two warnings he finally punished me with three days in jail.²⁰

After returning from the war, he went back to school and dated. He also worked in a Ford factory where he met some communists who were trying to get their fellow workers to see that they were being exploited, not only by capitalists but also by the United Auto Workers.

¹⁹ Carney, p. 43

²⁰ Carney, p. 44.

Meanwhile, in Honduras, the first organized *campesino* movements developed around the banana plantations of the North Coast. In 1920s, the Honduran Labor Federation (FSH) began organizing *Ligas Campesinas* in Cortés, Yoro, and Atlántida. The FSH affiliated *campesinos* with artisans and wage workers, stating: “The FSH is an organization integrating the working classes of the cities and the countryside, with the objective of struggling against the oppressive classes, national and foreign.”²¹

Systematically repressed by the government of Vicente Mejía Cordero (1929-1932) and completely dissolved under the authoritarian rule of Tiburcio Carías Andino (1933-1948), the Honduran *campesino* movement would not resurface from clandestinity until the mid-1950s²².

The massive 1954 banana workers’ strike marked a watershed in Honduran history and, within this key event, the main features of the decades to come were prefigured. In Tegucigalpa, Carlos Castillo Armas was backed by the CIA to recruit and train an armed group to overthrow the democratically-elected President of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, who had dared to implement an agrarian reform measure that would involve the purchase of previously sold but idle lands held by the United Fruit Company.²³ On the North Coast, after having paid the double wages stipulated by law for Holy Week and Sundays, the Tela Railroad Company said that it would only pay time and a half on Easter Sunday. On May 1, 1954 (International Workers’ Day), in a carnival-like atmosphere, the dock workers declared a three day strike that quickly spread throughout the country. Three weeks into the strike, the U.S. and Honduran governments signed a landmark bilateral military assistance agreement, laying the foundation for the national security state to come.²⁴ By the end of May 1954, U.S. military advisor M. C. Shattuck announced that the United States was training a Honduran combat battalion of 800 soldiers²⁵. Throughout the strike, workers and their leaders were imprisoned and repressed. Ramón Amaya Amador, the exiled Honduran novelist, cheered:

²¹ Cited in Mario Posas (1987), p. 7.

²² Thomas J. Dodd argues that Carías was a constructive caudillo, helping to solidify the nation-state after the chaotic post-independence years and to establish a functioning government. Thomas J. Dodd. Tiburcio Carías: Portrait of a Honduran Political Leader. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 2005).

²³ See Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. 2d ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 42-48.

²⁴ Matías Funes V., *Los deliberantes: El poder militar en Honduras*, 2nd ed. (Tegucigalpa: Editorial Guaymuras, 2000), pp. 155-171. Leticia Salomón, *Policías y militares en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, 1993), pp. 5-8.

²⁵ Marvin Barahona, p. 188.

You [working class comrades] are writing the history of the most transcendent events in contemporary Central American history.... You erupted from the banana night with thunder and lightning and you arrived at the imperialists' banquet table to punch the masters in the face with your virile protest! The Yankees are scared and the executioner shakes!²⁶

While Amaya Amador captured the anti-imperialist, nationalist tenor of the strike, he missed the elements of popular Catholicism that catalyzed workers. And although workers failed to win many of their demands, they did gain the right to unionize (which the AFL then sought to dominate through ORIT).²⁷ May 1954, the product of a forty year accumulation of violations of workers' dignity, is now part of the collective memory of Honduras, representing nearly seventy glorious days when over 25,000 workers, supported by the North Coast bourgeoisie²⁸ and urban professionals, reclaimed their humanity and began to forge an autonomous social, political, and national identity. Yet, during those very same days, Honduras served as the staging ground for the Guatemalan counterrevolution as Church and State, Embassy and Fruit Companies attempted to snuff out hints of communism in the reinvigorated Honduran labor movement.

Back in the United States, Jim Carney was preoccupied more with questions of the existence (or nonexistence) of God than with labor conditions and politics. He immersed himself in Thomas Aquinas and the *Maryknoll* missionary magazine. As Carney's religious calling became clearer, so too did his anticommunist feelings. Despite massive amounts of "Red Scare" propaganda from the FBI and Senator Joseph McCarthy, Carney remembers being impacted most by Catholic anticommunism.

I was very anticommunist, however, because of what I read in papal encyclicals and pronouncements of bishops and what I read in books by priests who had been in concentration camps in Russia or China.... For me it was like an adventure to have a friendship with my "dangerous" communist fellow workers. Since my principal interest in life more and more was the problem of God's existence, I wanted to read and listen to all the arguments against his existence.²⁹

²⁶ Ramón Amaya Amador, "Anexo: Mensaje de Amaya Amador a los huelguistas hondureños" in *El camino de Mayo es la Victoria* (El Progreso: Editorial Ramón Amaya Amador, 2004), p. 43.

²⁷ Marvin Barahona argues that the 1954 strike effectively brought about the collapse of what he calls the "Liberal Oligarchic State," ushering in the era of the "Development State." Marvin Barahona, *Honduras en el siglo XX: Una síntesis histórica* (Tegucigalpa: Editorial Guaymuras, 2005), p. 178.

²⁸ Darío A. Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 96.

²⁹ Carney, p. 62.

After much prayer and reflection, he decided to become a Jesuit priest and entered the Saint Stanislaus Seminary in 1948. After several stints at the Jesuit mission in Belize and a couple of trips to the Yoro mission in Honduras, and after more than a decade of rigorous theological and philosophical study, his dream of becoming a missionary in Honduras was fulfilled. He arrived in Yoro, Honduras in 1962.

After the 1954 strike, torrential rains and massive flooding swept across the North Coast banana plantations. The United Fruit Company began firing workers en masse, divesting itself of land and turning over production to “friendly” and “responsible” Honduran smallholders. From 1954 to 1963, the Tela Railroad Company fired approximately 18,000 workers, representing about sixty-nine percent of the workforce that it employed in 1954.³⁰ This great mass of landless workers became the nucleus of the new *campesino* movement, giving birth to the first and most militant peasant organization in Cold War Honduras: the Central Committee of *Campesino* Unification, founded in October 1961.

The North Coast that Carney was about to arrive in was a hotbed of anti-imperialist nationalism, which the U.S. embassy denounced as communism. With references to the Pan-American Conferences, in 1956, Honduras ratified Decree Law No. 206 which not only outlawed the Communist Party but, in the name of individual liberties, also made criminals of “those propagating or stimulating, orally or in writing or through any other means, doctrines tending to destroy the social order, public tranquility or the political and juridical organization of the Nation.”³¹ (It would be on these grounds that Padre Guadalupe’s Honduran citizenship was canceled twenty-three years later.) Its “Second Manifesto to the Honduran People,” a group calling itself The Patriotic Committee for the Defense of Popular Rights immediately responded to the new limits that the government put on political speech:

Decree Law 206 is a copy of the repressive laws of the United States in order to oppress Honduras more. Under the cynical pretext of defending the “democratic regime which rules in the Republic” as the decree says, it will defend an anti-democratic and reactionary regime imposed by machine guns against the popular will. It is a law against the Honduran people without distinction of class or political creed. It is a law against the democratic parties, the

³⁰ Mario Posas (1987), p. 10. André-Marcel d’Ans notes that the Tela Railroad Company employed 26,456 workers in 1953 and reduced its workforce to 17,332 in 1954 and was down to 15,847 in 1955. D’Ans suggests that the layoffs in the year prior to the strike were a primary cause for worker unrest (Honduras: Dificil emergencia de una nación, de un Estado, 4th ed., trans. Albert Depienne [Tegucigalpa: Renal Video Producción, 2005], p. 258).

³¹ Second Secretary of Embassy Norman E. Warner to State Department, 9 February 1956, 715.001/2-956.

liberty and democratic rights of the entire Honduran population. It is a law that demonstrates that the de facto government is an anti-national, anti-popular and pro-imperialistic government. It is a law against liberty of thought, of press and against liberty of worship and of conscience. The de facto government, a minority government, is a self-styled “democratic regime” and prohibits with this fascist law anything opposed to it. In other words: it prohibits the Honduran people’s struggle to obtain a better life.”³²

But what does this direct denunciation of the Honduran government, and its close association with the government of the United States, say to us about Padre Guadalupe?

Before Padre Guadalupe was Padre Guadalupe, he was anticommunist Jim Carney. While he was still in the seminary, the Honduran labor movement rose from the dead, on Easter Sunday no less. As evidenced in the 1954 strike and in the excerpted reply to Decree No. 206, workers, *campesinos*, and progressive Honduran intellectuals actively protested and critiqued unjust national policies. They fought for their rights in the streets and in text. It was not militant Hondurans who came to Carney’s position, but Carney who came to their position.

But in coming to their position, he added something of himself. His work with poor Hondurans who were organized and fighting for their rights gradually dislodged the anticommunist bogeymen from his head and heart. From his social position in the borderlands of identity, as a religious worker on the periphery of the U.S. Empire, Guadalupe Carney came to struggled to develop a critical social conscience and an effective praxis. This change in consciousness, we will see, was neither accidental nor due solely to circumstances of his being a North American priest in Honduras. Rather, Carney intentionally worked to identify with the poor and to model his own life on that of Jesus. This continual effort of empathy, coupled with committed action, helped him to move his own anticommunist sentiments into the realm of an ideology to be reflected upon and ultimately rejected. With his new understanding of the politics of poverty, he leveraged his outsider privileges to attack the ongoing crimes of state (and the sins of Church and society) that marginalized the Honduran *campesinos* that he sought to incarnate.

Carney became Guadalupe through chance and a trip to the Basilica in Mexico City. Discounting the “miraculous picture that Mary left on the *tilma* (rough cloak) of the Indian Juan Diego,” he discusses what he took to be the true miracle:

³² Second Secretary of Embassy Norman E. Warner to State Department, 12 March 1956, 715.001/3-1256.

But the irrefutable miracle is the historical fact that before the apparition of this image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the millions of Indians of Mexico and Central and South America refused to accept this new religion that was brought by the Spaniards who had conquered them, and then made them work as slaves. In Mexico most of the Aztecs went right on adoring the sun and the stars as gods and offering hundreds of young virgins in human sacrifice to their snake god.

When the Indians saw in the picture that the mother of Jesus Christ, who the missionaries said was the God-Savior of the world, who was an Indian like them, that she was crowned as the queen of the universe, that she was more important than the sun and the stars, which served as ornaments for her, and that she was squashing the snake god beneath her feet, they accepted that they ought to adore her son Jesus Christ as the only God. In the next twenty years after the enthroning picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe in a small new church in Mexico City, eight million Indians from all over Mexico, Central America, and South America asked for instruction in order to be baptized in the Catholic church.³³

Carney was evidently not a historian of colonial Mexico. But that does not matter. What does matter is that by his telling, a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe was the decisive factor in a massive conversion process that led Latin America out of human sacrifice and sun-worship and into Son-worship. For Carney, the Virgin of Guadalupe was not an example of strategic cultural appropriation, an instrument of conquest, or a mere “superstition” to be looked down upon. Instead, she was a miracle. The key, according to Carney, was that the Virgin looked like “them.” She was a poor indigenous woman. In early 1962, he told his superior that he wanted to be called *Padre Guadalupe*, “because I had a great devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe, whom the pope has proclaimed Patroness of the Americas.”³⁴ As he sought to embody the poor, Padre Guadalupe hoped to work similar miracles among the poor, benighted natives of Honduras³⁵. He began, like the Virgin of Guadalupe, by squashing perceived vestiges of snake gods beneath his feet.

In the early years of his work in Honduras, Guadalupe Carney could not quite understand the popular religiosity of his parishioners. Here, cited at length, is a letter that he wrote to his sister Virginia and her family about five years after he began working in Honduras. And, unlike his autobiogra-

³³ Carney (1983), p. 105.

³⁴ Carney (1983), p. 128.

³⁵ Also deserving analysis is Guadalupe’s rather abstract notion of “Indian” in Honduras. Again emulating a great agent of conversion, this time, the Jesuit Manuel de Jesús Subirana who worked in Honduras from 1856-1864 and apparently won land titles for twenty-one indigenous groups in northern Honduras, Carney worked with the indigenous to organize against the big landowners who were colonizing their best lands (Carney, 1985, pp. 280-284).

phy, which was written near the end of his life as a teleology of radicalization (from the anticommunist Carney in the Upper Midwest, the reformist Padre Guadalupe in Yoro, to the consummated revolutionary exiled in Nicaragua), Carney's letters reveal how he chose to represent himself to his family at particular points in his life journey:

Easter

March 26, 1967

Dear Virginia, Ken, and kids,

May Christ, our Savior, by the merits of His Passover from death to Life, lead us safely through our own Passover through suffering and death to the Life eternal! Yesterday, Good Fri., is the big day for the Latin Catholics. We go right through the actions of Jesus in processions using a life-sized image of Christ with movable arms, legs and head. Thurs. night we have the procession of silence for men only accompanying Christ tied up and led captive. About 1000 men went in this in perfect order at 11:00 pm. Then yesterday, Fri. am. We take Christ carrying His cross in the Via Crucis through the long streets of Progreso again with the Stations on about every other corner in the street on altars the people fix up. This ends at high noon in the church where they literally nail the image to the cross and there it stays till after the liturgy of Good Fri. At 4:00pm they take Christ down from the cross and in the biggest procession of the year we walk through the whole town to the little chapel we have past the cemetery to leave the body there till Easter morn. procession of the resurrected Christ bright and early at 5:30 am.

The whole town more or less get in these processions, and love them, and so we can't squelch them, even though I don't think much of them. It's just a big fiesta for most of the crowd. Maybe 10,000 people are in the burial procession.³⁶

This rich letter provides plenty of material for analysis. But the point I want to focus on is what I will call "the double edge of martyrology."

What Anna L. Peterson found most remarkable in her study of the Salvadoran *iglesia popular* is precisely what Carney wished he could squelch in 1967: the Holy Week dramatization of Christ's suffering.³⁷ This enactment of *via cruces*, the Stations of the Cross, in which "a life-sized image of Christ with movable arms, legs and head" is "carrying His cross" "through the long streets of Progreso" does nothing if not strengthen the identification of believers with the suffering Jesus. As a street theater of martyrdom, it provides a model for how one ought to live and die. It offers a framework

³⁶ Jim Guadalupe Carney, S.J. Letter to his sister, Virginia, on Easter celebrations in Honduras, 26 March 1967. The Carney Latin American Solidarity Archive. <http://liberalarts.udmercy.edu/clasa/C_26Mar67.pdf> (26 November 2006).

³⁷ See especially "Sacrifice, History, and Ritual" in Peterson (1997), pp. 72-92

of meaning for those who wish to connect sacred rituals with the secular injustices of everyday life. By Peterson's reckoning, the elaborate Salvadoran performances of *vía cruces*, as well as the Mass, provided "portrayals of Christ's suffering" that became "preparations and models for the deaths of contemporary martyrs."³⁸ Dramatized annually in the streets of El Progreso, this story of selfless sacrifice for humanity served to imbue the struggles and hardships of its participants with eschatological significance. Thus, prior to Carney and prior to liberation theology, popular Catholicism provided a framework of meaning that oriented workers and *campesinos* in their struggles for better wages, the right to unionize, and a parcel of land to cultivate.

If the leading edge of martyrology is a willingness to endure suffering for a larger purpose, its trailing edge is the pride and arrogance that can come with feeling that one is saving another. With only two priests for "65,000 ignorant, starving Catholics," it would be preposterous to think that the priests were the ones orchestrating and motivating the massive turnout in the Holy Week rituals and celebrations. Guadalupe does not even suggest that this is the case and instead aptly portrays *Progreseños* as the main protagonists. Recall his words: "The whole town more or less get in these processions, and love them, and so we can't squelch them, even though I don't think much of them." Guadalupe's discomfort with the Holy Week rituals of El Progreso stemmed from his desire, as a designated authority on matters of faith, to assert more control over a particular religious mode of symbolic production. But as it happened, his parishioners controlled these rituals, processions, liturgies, and fiestas. Guadalupe is here like the narrator in George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant." Both discovered that even as they were the presumed authority in a given social domain, it was really the native population they served that controlled them.³⁹

From his 1967 letter and from his autobiography penned in 1983, it is evident that during the early years of his work in Honduras, Carney was induced into thinking that his religiosity was superior to the "superstitious" practices of the Hondurans that he came to serve. Whether he uncritically accepted the pervasive discourses of American "exceptionalism," or assumed that by sixteen years of philosophical and theological training he had greater purchase on "true" Catholicism, or by a simple failure to understand the cultural logic of Honduran popular religious practices, the end result was that, on this score, he found himself working against the very same people who he sought to help in his social apostolate of agricultural coops and land reform. Thus, although Guadalupe (like many in the Catholic Church at that time) assumed a distinction between "rational" and popular Catho-

³⁸ Peterson (1997), p. 81

³⁹ George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," (1936). <<http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/887/>> 26 November 2006.

licism, between superstitious practices to be corrected and proper belief to be blessed and fortified, the distinction he made was unwittingly based on a hierarchy of knowledge that regarded one set of beliefs and practices as primitive and the other as enlightened. But through his deepening involvement with Honduran *campesinos*, he would come to reject this distinction between “rational” and “traditional” faith.

Throughout the 1970s, Guadalupe dedicated himself to attempting to “move” the meanings of Catholicism from gilded sanctuaries to dirt floors, *milpas*, agricultural cooperatives, and to more radically democratic political parties. Clarifying the particular relationship between thought and action that spurred his change in thinking, he reflected: “Sharing the *campesino*’s life and struggle for material betterment is what caused the leap forward in my metamorphosis into a revolutionary.”⁴⁰ In Carney’s praxis, spiritual well-being became inseparable from material equality and political participation. Since the wealthy largely controlled the main levers of power in Honduran and U.S. societies, they were seen as active agents reinforcing a capitalist-militarist system of inequalities. That system—and the unjust material and social relationships that it accelerated and reproduced—needed to be changed. Thus, for him, transformations of political economy and religious conversion were welded together by the concept of justice. This concept was simple, fundamental, and based less on political ideals than on the New Testament injunction: “Do unto others what you would have done unto you.” Working in Honduras allowed Carney to see that an inter-American economy that most people in the U.S. considered beneficial to all parties was, in reality, exploiting poor Hondurans. As Carney’s involvement with the *campesino* struggle deepened, he saw that the inequalities were neither God-given nor accidental but culturally and historically structured. After all, the landlessness of his friends could be traced to specific decisions made in the administrative offices of the Tela Railroad Company, in the big houses of wealthy landowners, in the President’s office, in the military and police headquarters, in the U.S. embassy in Tegucigalpa, or in Washington, D.C. Witnessing and participating in the struggle of his landless friends, Carney understood his moral obligation to denounce and change the economic and political systems that perpetuated and enforced exploitation and inequalities.

With respect to his autobiography, one of his primary tasks was to unmask the sinful transnational relationships that most U.S. citizens could not even recognize as moral evils. I use the word “sin” here, as Carney used it in his writings, to capture the notion of unjust social relations that are themselves between history and transcendence, in the sense that an unequal and exploitative economic relationship is of this world even as it violates

⁴⁰ Carney, p. 175.

the Christian injunction to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Carney’s task was to move hegemonic notions of international trade into the realm of the ideological, where they can be examined and transformed. In doing so, he simultaneously addressed at least two different audiences: U.S. bourgeois Catholics and Honduran *campesinos*. To raise critical awareness in both audiences, he wrote:

Honduras has great riches, but most of these riches leave Honduras to make the United States richer. It is easy to understand why we Honduran revolutionaries are very anti-imperialist. We are not against the people of the United States, but against the imperialism of the United States. The liberation of the oppressed Hondurans, which Christ came to announce and to put into practice, starts with liberation from the effects of this great sin of neocolonialism. Christians of the United States have the serious obligation to help get rid of this greatest of all U.S. sins.⁴¹

In a word, economic relations are moral relations.

The Gospel call to love others, which is at the putative core of Christian belief in Jesus’s life and death—God becoming human, entering history and dying out of his love for humanity—was Guadalupe’s guiding ethical principle. He measured all of his actions against the New Testament accounts of Jesus’s model of poverty, humility, and His direct confrontation with the injustice of the Roman Empire that ultimately cost Him his life, elevating Him in death to the status of “Savior.” Emphasizing historical continuity, from the persecuted Jesus to the persecuted *campesinos*, Carney wrote:

Imperialism means to have an empire, to have other countries under your control, as colonies, for the benefit and enrichment of your own country. England was imperialistic in the last century, Spain, in the sixteenth century. The Roman imperialists ruled supreme in the time of Christ, with Palestine and practically all the countries in the civilized world under their yoke.... Many Jews wanted to liberate themselves from this imperialism that despoiled them of their riches. There was a guerrilla movement of liberations, called the Zealots or the Canaanites (one of Christ’s twelve apostles was Simon the Zealot, a member of the guerrillas.) One of the principal bases of the Zealot guerrillas was in the mountains of Galilee, only five miles from Nazareth; that is why Jesus knew many of these people.... When Jesus was captured and finally brought before Pilate, the Roman ruler of all Palestine, the Jewish authorities accused him, saying that he was “stirring up the people, saying that we should not pay taxes to the Roman emperor, and he also alleges that he is the Christ, that is, a king” (Luke 23:2). They involved Jesus in the anti-imperialist politics

⁴¹ Carney, p. 186. Emphasis in original.

of his day in order to assure his death. Nowadays in Central America they would accuse Jesus of being a communist in order to assure his death at the hands of the government security forces (the secret police), the death squads, or counter insurgency military forces. But the financing, training, and “advisers” for the killing of Christ would, sad to say, most likely come from the United States for the sake of preserving its Central American colonies.⁴²

As Carney historicized Jesus’s death, he framed the *campesino* struggle for land in terms of a nationalist independence movement of transcendental significance.

As he pictured it, the economic and the religious, the political and the moral, were fundamentally intertwined. Carney’s emphasis on economic independence from U.S. neocolonialism and the landed Honduran elite illustrate his relentless attempt to put the economic and material back into religious concerns. Carney understood the difference between active and passive faith as one that worked to realize the Kingdom of God on earth while the other reinforced the status quo of hierarchies and injustice. In 1978, in an open letter addressed to North American progressive Christians, he wrote:

We have to help the Holy Spirit change the world, the social, economic structures of society. We have to change the whole capitalist, imperialist system of the U.S.... If these Christians get together in BCC [Base Christian Communities] in order to be saved themselves, without helping to change the basic structures of this unjust, sinful society, the BCC will be just another form of religion—“opium of the people.”⁴³

Here we see not only that Guadalupe Carney’s encounter with Honduran *campesinos* was one of mutual liberation but also his concern the Christian Base Communities might be domesticated and no longer as catalysts for radically enacting Jesus’s message of love. Poor *campesinos* showed Carney how his unquestioned anticommunist attitudes actually reinforced an exploitative economic system. They politicized him. Carney, in turn, knew the United States well and in his autobiography, he became a “representational machine” depicting his encounter with harsh realities in the fertile valleys of northern Honduras to a literate U.S. audience.⁴⁴ In addition, in his eighteen

⁴² Carney, J. Guadalupe, *Metamorfosis de un revolucionario: memorias de un sacerdote en Honduras*, (Honduras: Dirección Nacional Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, 1983)

⁴³ James Carney, S.J. “What are the most efficacious means for forming the Kingdom of God on Earth? Towards what are the priestly and the religious life evolving? How do you form Basic Christian Communities that are liberating communities?” October 1978. Carney Latin American Solidarity Archives, box A3, folder 4.

⁴⁴ Ricardo Salvatore, “The Enterprise of Knowledge: Representational Machines of Informal

years of struggle in Honduras, he lent his cultural capital—as an educated U.S. citizen and as a priest—to the struggle of mostly illiterate peasants. In the process, both Carney and many Honduran *campesinos* absorbed blows from the banana companies, large landholders (the Bográn and Zelaya families), the U.S. and Honduran militaries, and the press. As Carney worked to organize BCC's, facilitating discussions of local problems in light of Biblical teachings, a genuine dialogue of mutual liberation unfolded. The result of these encounters of solidarity that put history (lived injustices) in tension with transcendence (ideals of the Kingdom of God) was concerted action. This impetus to act was strong, for it was based not only on material necessity or moral imperatives, but on mystical religious knowledge and practice. So with each act of disciplinary violence carried out by the state, the *campesino* movement was strengthened: it was being persecuted just as Jesus had been.

Through his involvement with *campesinos*, his restless intellect, and his commitment to modeling his life on Jesus's, Guadalupe Carney accrued tremendous moral capital in Honduran social movements. The legitimacy that he enjoyed was the fruit of tireless work. One of his Jesuit companions, Padre Roberto Voss, told me that Carney was incredibly self-disciplined. He had a schedule for each day and he would stick to it. If his bedtime was nine o'clock and they were in the middle of a social gathering, he would walk out and go to bed. Guadalupe worked with *campesino* cooperatives throughout northern Honduras, giving him an intimate understanding of *campesino* life and the movement, which he supplemented with historical, theological, and political readings.

But rather than unpack the rest of his life and his death, I prefer to end this reflection enigmatically. Like Padre Guadalupe's life, this end is not an end, but another beginning. A *perhaps*. A gesture toward a future that, however bleak, remains open. I end, therefore, with the words of a peasant who, twenty-five years after the death of Padre Guadalupe, joined the rest of his community to reclaim land that the U.S. military had once used to train the *Contras* of Nicaragua. When I asked Donaldo Aguilar why they had decided to name their community "Colonia Guadalupe Carney," he responded:

Somos una comunidad integrada por niños, niñas, mujeres y hombres, pero al mismo tiempo somos un movimiento. Y como movimiento, el 14 de mayo, o más bien, en la madrugada del 15, del año 2000, entramos en esta tierra. El 15 de mayo es el día de San Isidro, y al principio ese era el nombre que le íbamos a poner a la comunidad; pero luego pensamos que sería mejor ponerle el nombre de un mártir que haya muerto

Empire" in *Close Encounters of Empire*, pp. 69-106. Carney, of course, was an anti-imperialist "representational machine."

en la lucha por adquirir tierra para los pobres, y principalmente para los campesinos sin tierra. A través de la historia tenemos muchos nombres, pero nos inclinamos por Guadalupe Carney, un sacerdote jesuita, que fue impulsor de la lucha por la tierra en nuestro país, y que se dedicó a predicar el evangelio en la sociedad. Eso fue en épocas de los ochentas; ese gran hombre luchó por liberar a muchos pobres, para que tuvieran tierra, y por eso lo mataron, lo desaparecieron. No sabemos dónde están sus restos, sólo Dios sabe dónde se encuentran. Fue un hombre que murió predicando con el evangelio, con el bastón en la mano y las sandalias puestas⁴⁵.

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⁴⁵ Donaldo Aguilar, oral history interview with the author, 2 December 2008.