



Unit 5 Human Rights Crime Wave in the Southern Cone

Introduction

*For three years, 1975 through 1977, the countries in what is known as the Southern Cone of South America underwent a human-rights crime wave of a magnitude not seen before or since in the region. Military regimes in place for more than a decade in Brazil and Paraguay were joined by like-minded military rulers who overthrew civilian regimes in Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Bolivia in the 1970s. Political police--described even by sympathetic US military observers as "Gestapo-like"--rounded up countless thousands of people who were suspected of affiliation with radical leftist movements. Concentration camps and secret detention centers proliferated. The military carried out a political extermination campaign that resulted in the mass murders of more than 10,000 people in Argentina and more than 3,000 in Chile. A new word, "disappearance," was added to the vocabulary of international human-rights law. It referred to the process of secret arrest, torture and interrogation of suspects, followed by execution and secret disposal of bodies--often in makeshift crematoriums, in mass graves, or at sea, where drugged prisoners were dumped out of helicopters. Similar tactics involving lesser numbers of murders--in the hundreds--were used in Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. Perhaps the most closely guarded secret was a system of international cooperation among the dictatorships, known as Operation Condor. ~ John Dinges, Columbia University. *The Condor Years* <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/chile/operation-condor.htm>*

In *Unit 5 Human Rights Crime Wave in the Southern Cone*, students will examine primary source documents and secondary sources that corroborate U.S. complicity in Operation Condor and the human rights crime wave in the Southern Cone.

Essential Questions for Lessons I-IV

- How can we use primary source documents to learn about the past?
- What is the process of uncovering secret truths?
- What causes human beings to terrorize other human beings?

- What motivates one country to support human rights atrocities in another country? How is our fear of terrorists in the 21st century different from fear of subversives in the 20th century?

Objectives

Students will:

- analyze a political cartoon about Operation Condor.
- listen to the *Democracy Now!* Interview with John Dinges, author of *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents*.
- write a reaction to the Dinges interview.
- read and analyze declassified documents from the National Security Archives.
- research and present information on U.S. -Latin America policies and international support of repressive regimes.

Lesson I Political Cartoon Study: Carlos Latuff and Operation Condor

- A. Materials
 - a. Political cartoon, *Operation Condor* by Carlos Latuff
 - b. Cartoonists' Persuasive Techniques
- B. Activity Sheets
 - a. Unit 5 Lesson 1 Political Cartoon Study: Carlos Latuff and Operation Condor
- C. Suggested Readings
 - a. "Good Morning Buenos Aires: The Dirty War part 1 The USA, Operation Condor and Argentina's Dirty War." Web (internet news magazine).
<http://www.goodmorningba.com/2010/11/special-report-part-1-the-united-states-operation-condor-and-argentina's-dirty-war/>. Provides background information on the conflict regarding The Falkland Islands, CONADEP, and Operation Condor.
- D. Assessments
 - a. Activity sheet responses
 - b. Discussion
 - c. Quotation analysis
- E. Extension Activities
 - a. Listen to "El Condor Pasa". Video (5:21) <https://youtu.be/Z1E0nEe8RxM>. This version has a slide show featuring the condor and Andean scenes.
 - b. Watch *Missing*, the story of Charles Horman, a young American journalist who was abducted by Chilean General Pinochet's troops. Oscar-winning film starring Sissy Spacek and Jack Lemmon.

Instructions for Lesson I Political Cartoon Study: Carlos Latuff and Operation Condor

Step 1

Coordinate a study of the political cartoon, *Operation Condor*, by Carlos Latuff. After students examine the cartoon and complete *Unit 5 Activity Sheet I Political Cartoon Study: Carlos Latuff*, discuss the purpose of political cartoons and their impact on society.

Step 2

Present students with an overview of Operation Condor in preparation for a study of declassified documents.
(See above introductory quotation by John Dinges)

Lesson II Red Light/Green Light: Interview with John Dinges

- A. Materials
 - a. "Operation Condor Trial Tackles Coordinated Campaign By Latin American Dictatorships To Kill Leftists." *Democracy Now!* 7 Mar 2013
http://www.democracynow.org/2013/3/7/operation_condor_trial_tackles_coordinated_campaign
(downloadable script available)
- B. Activity Sheets
 - a. Unit 5 Lesson II Red Light/Green Light: Interview with John Dinges
- C. Suggested Readings
 - a. Dinges, John. *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents*. The New Press. 2004
 - b. John Dinges. <http://www.johndinges.com>
- D. Assessments
 - a. Activity sheets
 - b. Discussion
 - c. Quotation analysis
- E. Extension Activities
 - a. Listen to musician Rubén Blades defend "Tiburón", a controversial song against U.S. intervention in Latin America.
 - b. Listen to protest music of the following artists:
 - i. The Beatles, "Let it Be"
 - ii. Bruce Cockburn, "If I had a Rocket Launcher" and "Call it Democracy"
 - iii. John Lennon, "Give Peace a Chance" and "Imagine"
 - iv. Bruce Springsteen, "Sólo le pido a Dios"
 - v. Sting, "They Dance Alone"
 - vi. U2, "Bullet the Blue Sky" and "Mothers of the Disappeared"

Instructions for Lesson II Red Light/Green Light

Step 1

Assign homework: *Unit 5 Assignment Sheet Lesson II Red Light/ Green Light* and video "Operation Condor Trial Tackles Coordinated Campaign By Latin American Dictatorships To Kill Leftists."

Preface the video by explaining that hosts Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez interview John Dinges, author of "The Condor Years: How Pinochet and his Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents," about the pan Latin American coordinated effort to eliminate political dissidents during the 1970's and 1980's.

Step 2

Review student comments in class and prepare to read declassified documents related to Operation Condor in Lesson III.

Lesson III Operation Condor: Declassified Document Analysis

A. Materials

- a. "OPERATION CONDOR: National Security Archive Presents Trove of *Declassified Documentation in Historic Trial in Argentina.*" *National Security Archive: Electronic Briefing Book No. 514* Posted - May 6, 2015 <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB514/>

B. Activity Sheets

- a. Unit 5 Lesson III Operation Condor: Declassified Document Analysis
 - i. National Security Archives: Operation Condor overview
 - ii. National Security Archives: Declassified Documents Analysis

C. Suggested Readings

- a. McSherry, J. Patrice. "Operation Condor: Clandestine Inter-American System." *Social Justice*, Winter 1999 v26 i4 p144. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~idcmt/terror.pdf>
- b. The National Security Archive <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB514/>

D. Assessments

- a. Activity sheets
- b. Discussions
- c. Group performance
- d. Personal political cartoon

E. Extension Activities

- a. Discuss Argentine reaction to U.S intervention in Latin America
 - i. "Argentine demonstrators say US out of Latin America". Video (:47) <https://youtu.be/mONKvDNaXNc>. "In Buenos Aires, demonstrators set up camp outside the US embassy to protest against the sanctions on Venezuela. They also called for an end to Obama's interference in Latin America." *teleSUR*
 - ii. Manoel Giffoni. "Argentine protesters condemn US executive order against Venezuela." *Press TV*. 11 Apr 2015. <http://www.presstv.com/Video/2015/04/11/405678/Argentine-protesters-condemn-US-executive-order-against-Venezuela>

Instructions for Lesson III Reading Declassified Documents: Operation Condor

Step 1

Read the May 6, 2015 post, *Evidence Presented by Archive Southern Cone Project Director Carlos Osorio Documents given to Court Reveal Condor Precedents; Secret Summary of Inaugural Condor Meeting Introduced into Court for First Time National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 514.*

Assign *Unit 5 Activity Sheet IIIA Reading Declassified Documents: Operation Condor*
<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB514/>

Step 2

Discuss responses to Activity Sheet III A.

Direct students to Activity Sheet III B and to select one of the five declassified documents for closer study of Operation Condor. Students should be assigned to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the results of the document study. Students should share their ideas with the whole class.

Lesson Extension

Students read McSherry, J. Patrice. "Operation Condor: Clandestine Inter-American System." *Social Justice*, Winter 1999 v26 i4 p144. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~idcmt/terror.pdf>. Students create their own political cartoon about Operation Condor, the Cold War or the Dirty War based on information gleaned from the above reading.

Lesson IV Sympathetic Supporters

- A. Materials
 - a. School library
 - b. Internet
- B. Activity Sheets
 - a. Unit 5 Lesson IV Sympathetic Supporters
- C. Suggested Readings
 - a. Miller Center, University of Virginia. American President Presidential Speech Archive <http://www.millercenter.org/president/speeches>
 - b. U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>
- D. Assessments
 - a. Activity sheets
 - b. Discussions
 - c. Group work
 - d. Research
- E. Extension Activities
 - a. Listen to "Buscando América" (Looking for America) by Rubén Blades & Seis de Solar
 - b. Listen to "Latinoamérica" by Calle 13 Video (5:41) <https://youtu.be/DkFJE8ZdeG8>

Instructions for Lesson IV Sympathetic Supporters

Step 1

Discuss upheavals in Central America during the 1970's and 1980's. How did Argentina influence events in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador? What were the U.S. policies towards Latin American and upheavals in the latter part of the 20th century?

Step 2

1. Divide the class into pairs or small groups to research Argentina's influence on Central American upheavals.

Students will investigate Argentina's military and counterinsurgency assistance to combat left-wing subversion in Central America. Was "Operation Charly" a real strategy or propaganda? What was Argentina's role in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala from 1977-1986?

2. After discussing the results of the above activity, direct students to research U.S. Presidential policies towards Latin America.

Students will review policies under the following presidents:

- Richard Nixon

- Gerald Ford
- Jimmy Carter
- Ronald Regan
- George H.W. Bush
- Bill Clinton
- George W. Bush
- Barack Obama

How does each administration react to human rights issues and upheavals? What events or beliefs influenced foreign policy in Latin America? What is the legacy of these policies?

Step 3

Share information about Argentina's impact on counter insurgency in Central America and U.S. presidential policies in Latin America.