



If one wonders if the U.S. press corps has learned anything in the decade since the Iraq War – i.e. the need to ask tough question and show honest skepticism – it would appear from the early coverage of the election of Pope Francis I that U.S. journalists haven't changed at all, even at "liberal" outlets like MSNBC.

The first question that a real reporter should ask about an Argentine cleric who lived through the years of grotesque repression, known as the "dirty war," is what did this person do, did he stand up to the murderers and torturers or did he go with the flow. If the likes of Chris Matthews and other commentators on MSNBC had done a simple Google search, they would have found out enough about Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio to slow their bubbling enthusiasm.

Bergoglio, now the new Pope Francis I, has been identified publicly as an ally of Argentine's repressive leaders during the "dirty war" when some 30,000 people were "disappeared" or killed, many stripped naked, chained together, flown out over the River Plate or the Atlantic Ocean and pushed sausage-like out of planes to drown.

The "disappeared" included women who were pregnant at the time of their arrest. In some bizarre nod to Catholic theology, they were kept alive only long enough to give birth before they were murdered and their babies were farmed out to military families, including to people directly involved in the murder of the babies' mothers.

Instead of happy talk about how Bergoglio seems so humble and how he seems so sympathetic to the poor, there might have been a question or two about what he did to stop the brutal repression of poor people and activists who represented the interests of the poor, including "liberation theology" priests and nuns, during the "dirty war."

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