¿Quién Salvará El Salvador?
Who Will Save The Savior?

This spring, CISPES and other groups will be calling another series of demonstrations. They will be the nth, the most, demos on El Salvador in addition to the hundreds of rallies held throughout last year all over the U.S. Once again, as on May 3rd 1981, people will congregate from every part of the country, spend (collectively) millions of dollars, nights of sleep, march, long hours of bus shock, to participate in an event which, as last year's experience has taught us, will have at best a purely symbolic effect. Haven't we learned yet? Demonstrations in Washington will not stop the US build up and intervention in El Salvador.

It is certainly nice to get together with people all over the country, exchange news about what's happening back home, take some literature that will come in handy at seminars, teach-ins, etc. Most important, excuse the irony, it's nice to have the feeling you are doing something. But are we really? Take last year: thousands of people poured into Washington, millions of words and slogans were written, screamed and chanted, most often reaching ears already convinced -- and yet what did we gain except feeling good about ourselves, keeping alive the impression that we are doing something?

The state hawks clearly were not very impressed by our effort; their main response was to escalate the war. Meanwhile, in El Salvador twenty thousand people were butchered. In fact, one had the experience of a total schizophrenia. One day you march with your placard: "Imperialism won't pass", "La lucha continua", etc. Next, you read in the paper about the massacre of hundreds of Salvadoran refugees in Honduras, the mutilations and tortures, as if the war and our demonstrations each went their own way: Americans marching to Washington, Salvadorans dying, we march, they die, march and die. Even in the battle to prevent deportations we have failed to reach any success.

Is this simply because the US state and capital are "too strong" or is it the case that there is something wrong, badly insufficient, almost nonsensical, with our strategies and tactics? Why in fact should the State Department worry about all our marches on Washington on Saturdays and Sundays when nobody is there and we couldn't disturb the hair on one dead-bureaucrat's head? They are so confident in our ineffectuality they don't even send the police openly any longer (see May 3rd) to keep us in line. Indeed, they can only be happy that we channel our frustration and potential explosiveness in such innocent and innocuous ways -- we engage in "celebrations of solidarity", but not in occasions to discuss what this would mean in practice. They must be happy indeed that we spend our energies and our money-

As we all know, American intervention in El Salvador is not made of words and ideas but is a very material process, made of guns, rockets, bombs, jets, gunships, welders, assembly lines, trucks, ships, air freight haulers, CIA and mili
tary advisors and, possibly soon, even us as draftees. Why then demonstrate in Washington and not in the factories, ship yards, airports and recruitment stations where the helicopter gun ships are built, shipped, assembled, packed and manned? Why go to a dead city on Sunday and not on Monday talk to workers that are doing the producing, packing and shipping?

We learned from the 60's that it was not our words that troubled the Pentagon. If the anti-war movement had success in disrupting US involvement in Vietnam this is because we did much more than simply march on Washington to inform the country of our moral outrage. We burnt draft cards, occupied ROTC buildings, left the country for Europe or Canada instead of being inducted for Nam duty. We never took the "Winter Palace", but our actions were a continuous nuisance, a continuous material drain for Pentagon and Co. By forcing continuous breaks, preventing the wheel from grinding on, we were an inspiration to people all over the world.

Today the success and the impact of the European anti-war movement or even the US war mongers is based on the same process. For example, recently the movement has successfully blockaded attempts by the US to widen and lengthen an airfield in Germany in order to make it ready to receive the new missiles they are planning to base there in 1983. The movement was able to draw in people who saw in it a consistent act against the war planning. The direct connection between general nuclear death and daily death people around the airport were making the pollution, jet noise, shrink the place.

But why can't we do the same here? Why not investigate what are the material links, the bridges of repression between the US and El Salvador, where we can direct action, mass action and intervention? Why can't we fight where the helicopters are built and sold, how can we prevent it, how can we influence the workers who are doing it?

Can't we make the same confront the fact that they are participating in murder? Trouble their sleep? Put on these isolated "incent" towns where the weapons are built, say their prayers and show them to be American, that Hamr or refugees and prevent them from being forced and block the access that they attempt to take back. This is not marching in Washington on a Sunday afternoon, but it is what will help the Salvadoran people avoid American slaughter. By failing to practice these sorts of actions not only will our demands be ineffective and wasted (dissipating our energies for nothing), but we won't be able to avoid being incapable, by virtue of our passivity and lack of action, when faced with a slaughter.

We know that we are not along in feeling that we cannot repeat the same thing as last spring, and that current tactics lead us nowhere. The stakes are getting higher and higher. As Haig, Weinberger and Reagan have made it clear: this is a question of life and death, there is no return for anybody in this war. Not for the US state who is testing here its ability to control and exploit Latin America and further its ability to suppress any dissent at home: not for the Salvadoran people for whom the only alternative is either victory or genocide, and not for us, who if we accept Salvador will accept everything. We too are being tested in El Salvador. For the government knows that if we accept this, we are ready to accept even a nuclear war.

It is time then to move not just with our feet, in yet another sit-in, but move politically by finding the raw power of the apparatus of repression and transferring our activity directly on the source of the problem is in Tulsa, act in Tulsa, not in front of the UN. "Acting in Tulsa" means the following:

- Hold the union that are involved in the sale of ships and shipping arms to El Salvador, meetings.
- Talk to the women in these areas, show them the pictures, the facts, and not just on the campuses.
- Name the plants and shipping points with denomination, stickers, etc.
- Put obstacles in the way of production and transport.
- Make the connection between accepting death as a way to make a living, accepting to become a murderer in exchange for a wage, pay the rent with the blood of people who haven't done anything to you and accepting a job that you know will kill you and may even kill your children as well.
- Bring the attention of the media to the towns that are now living on the death of the Salvadoran people, bring Salvadorans to these places and talk to the workers, and ask them not to butcher their kids, etc.

This is by no means a complete list, but it is only down this path, which is no guarantee of victory, that a real possibility lies. Continuing the old path is a guarantee of defeat.