

¿Quien Salvara El Salvador?

Who Will Save The Savior?

This spring, CISPES and other groups will be calling another series of demonstrations. They will be the n-th, the n+1st, 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?

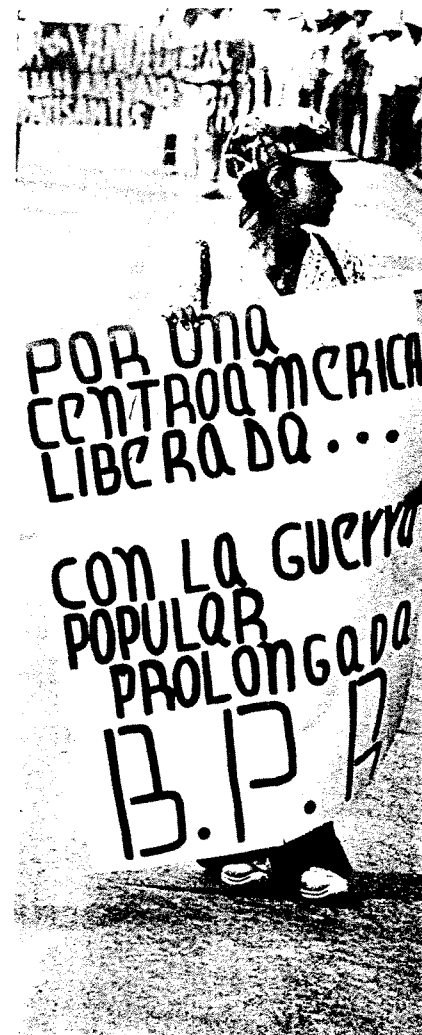
The state hawks clearly were not very impressed by our effort; their main response was to escalate the war. Meanwhile, in El Salvador twenty thousand people were butchered. In fact, one had the experience of a total schizophrenia. One day you march with your placard: "Imperialism won't pass", "La lucha continua", etc. Next, you read in the paper about the massacre of hundreds of Salvadorean refugees in Honduras, the mutilations and tortures, as if the war and our demonstrations each went their own way: Americans marching to Washington, Salvadoreans 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 non-serious, 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-

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--our precious and decreasing movement resources-- to hear repeated (many times) from a podium the same facts and ideas that got us going in the first place (plus the invariable Pete Seeger). What a perfect method of neutralization. They would, however, be very upset if instead of Washington we marched on week days in the shipyards and airports where the helicopters leave for El Salvador, or on the factories where they are built.



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? So 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 Viet Nam 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 of even the US war mongers is based on the same process. For example, recently the movement physically blocked 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 many people who saw in this a concrete act against the war planning and draw the connection between general nuclear death and the daily death people around the airport suffer from: the pollution, jet noise, shrinking space.

But why can't we do the same now? Why not investigate what are the material links, the bridges of repression between the US and El Salvador, where we can direct our actions and intervention? Why can't we find out where the helicopters are built and shipped, how we can prevent it, how we can involve the workers who are doing it? Can't we make everyone confront the fact that they are participating in murder? Trouble their sleep? Put on the map these isolated "innocent" towns where the weapons are built, say their names and show them to be American Auschwitz? Harbor refugees and prevent them from being deported and block the airlines that attempt to take them back. This is not marching in Washington on a Sunday afternoon, but it is what will help the Salvadorean people avoid an 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 accomplices, by virtue of our passivity and lack of action, when faced with a slaughter.

We know that we are not alone 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 Salvadorean people for whom the only alternative is either victory or genocide, and not for us, who



Members of the people's revolutionary militia

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 march, but move politically by finding the raw nerves of the apparatus of repression and transferring our activity directly on them. The problem is in Tulsa, act in Tulsa, not in front of the UN. "Acting in Tulsa" means the following:

- Find out the unions that are involved in shipping and shipping arms to El Salvador, - at 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 graffiti, stickers, etc..
- Put obstacles in the flow 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 Salvadorean people, bring Salvadoreans 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.