

EL SALVADOR : U.S. on wrong side.

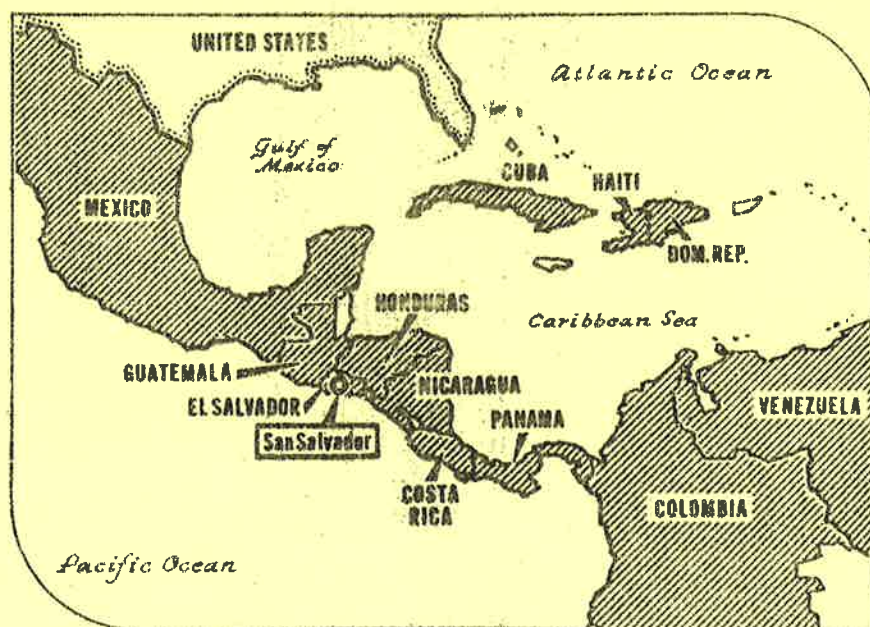
Imagine New York, Chicago, Phoenix, Los Angeles, your own city or town under a reign of terror in which right-wing assassination squads are free to cruise the streets nightly. Imagine that anyone standing for social reform is fair game to be kidnapped, tortured and brutally murdered. And all the while the government stands by, sanctions and participates in the terror.

Well that's exactly how life is right now for the people of El Salvador. In the past six months 1 out of every 1,000 persons in El Salvador has been killed, and particularly frightening is the way they've been killed. People are maimed, disemboweled, dismembered and tortured with a ferocity that is hard to believe.

The people of El Salvador are fighting to end an unjust system in which 2% of the population owns 60% of the land, a system which has given rise to the highest rate of malnutrition in Latin America, a system which survives only by means of fierce political repression. The junta currently governing El Salvador came to power last fall as the result of this struggle, pledging itself to carry out land reform, democratization, and an end to repression. Yet it has been unwilling to oppose the interests of the wealthy landowners. Its troops break up peasant land occupations, slaughtering entire villages. The National Guard smashes strikes and arrests working-class leaders. And the government gives support to the organized right-wing terror.

U.S. Involvement

What does this have to do with the U.S.? Plenty! The U.S. government has provided military support in the form of money, arms and training to the ruling forces of El Salvador for years. It sends anti-riot equipment and military advisors to help the Junta suppress the people, keeping open the possibility for further U.S. involvement and even military intervention in the future. Recently another \$5.7 million grant in military aid has been proposed and the congress is considering it.



The Carter Administration claims the Junta is a moderate government, dedicated to reform in the interest of the people. But were this true, the Junta would have no need to send the army against peasants and workers. The current situation in El Salvador can be resolved in only one of two ways: either the U.S. backed regime will achieve a bloody victory over the people, or the Salvadorean people's fight for a genuinely popular government will triumph.

Last February, Catholic church leader Oscar Romero, El Salvador's Archbishop, wrote President Carter in opposition to U.S. military aid that "...the contribution of your government, instead of favoring greater justice and peace in El Salvador, undoubtedly will sharpen repression." He went on to say, "...the security forces have repressed the people even more violently using deadly weapons." One month later the Archbishop was gunned down in his cathedral by right-wing assassins.

Support Salvadorean Independence

The people of El Salvador have the right to run their own country, free from outside interference. At this point the U.S. provides crucial support in keeping the Junta in power. Washington leaders know full well what is going on in El Salvador yet continue to stand behind the Junta. This cynical policy, which is totally opposed to the principles of national independence and self-determination, pits the U.S. people against the Salvadorean people. This policy only provides new cause for the justifiable hatred of the U.S. on the part of progressive forces around the world, at a time when the people of the world need to join together in the broadest possible opposition to superpower meddling.

One thing we know for sure. Like so many others before them, the Salvadorean people will not give up their fight for independence and an end to foreign domination. If we organize to support them now, the U.S. people can play a crucial role.

PROLETARIAN UNITY LEAGUE

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[labor donated]