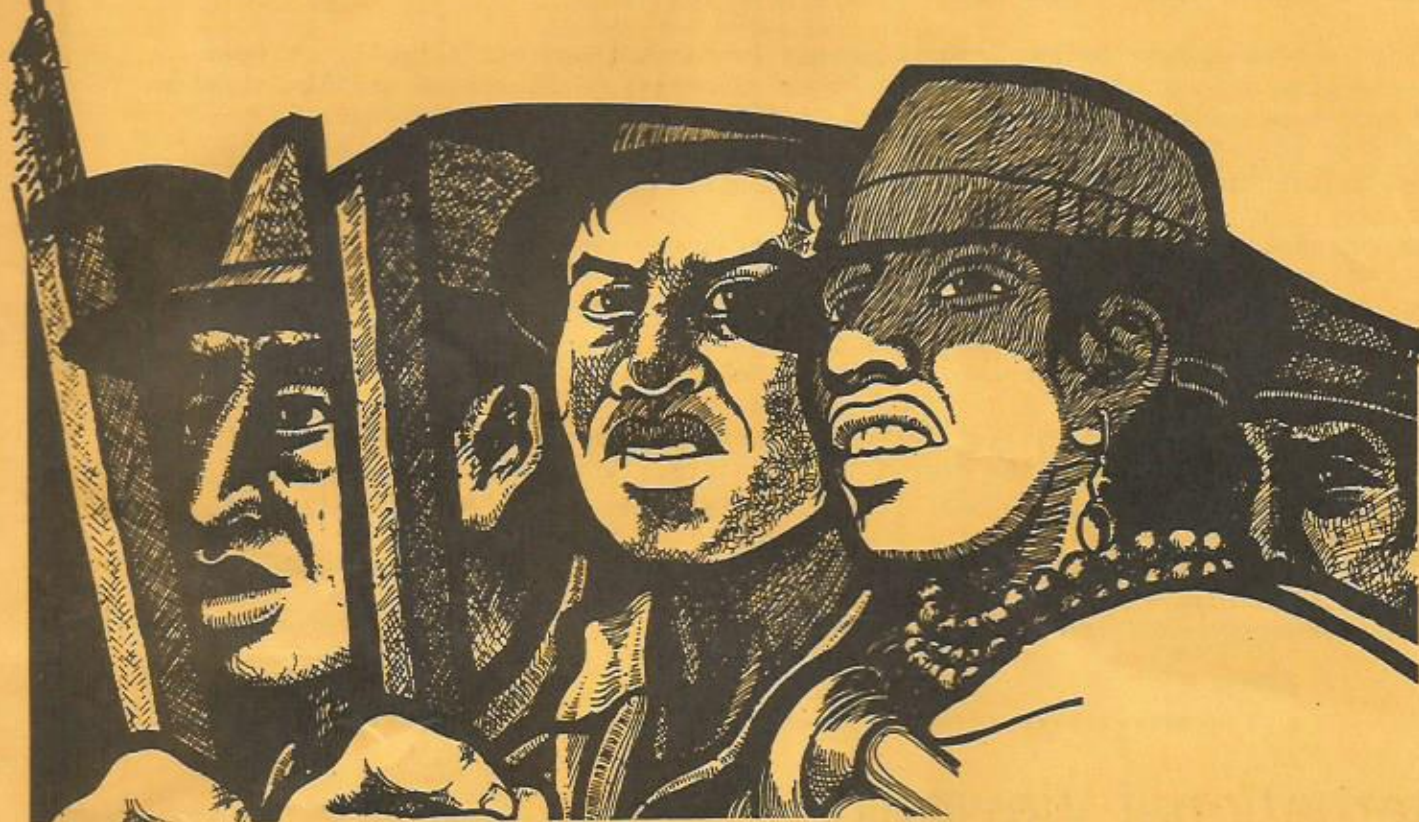


**Forward ever  
Backward never**



**Solidarity with the revolutions  
of Central America and the Caribbean**

**A Socialist Action pamphlet**

**30p**

FORWARD EVER.... BACKWARD NEVER !

THIS IS the banner of the people of the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada. Since 1979, the People's Revolutionary Government and the mass popular organisations in Grenada have made massive strides to create jobs, education, health care, housing and democracy for the people.

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Now the workers and peasants of El Salvador are set to create another Nicaragua another Grenada, another Cuba in their own country.

This is what Reagan fears. Reagan and his Pentagon thugs don't really believe that the tiny island of Grenada, or the poor countries of Nicaragua and El Salvador will send tanks and troops to invade the United States. What Reagan fears is the example of these people struggling to control their lives against the interests of United States big business and banks.

US imperialism will stop at nothing to crush these revolutions.

The labour movement world-wide should mobilise in solidarity with these revolutions. They are an inspiration to us all. They need defending against US aggression, backed by governments like Thatcher's in Britain.

Today, supporters of Socialist Action are active in promoting this solidarity. We are joined world-wide by the Fourth International, which stands on the traditions of international solidarity founded by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

In this pamphlet, we reprint articles from two international journals of the Fourth International— International Viewpoint, produced in Paris , and Intercontinental Press, produced in New York.

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# Washington's new escalation of the war in Central America

By Mary-Alice Waters

President Ronald Reagan went on television March 23 to propose another massive escalation of U.S. military spending. Central to his justification of this arms buildup was the allegation that Soviet military power is now directly challenging what he termed "our vital interests" in Central America and the Caribbean.

To buttress his presentation, Reagan provided visual aids. These included a seemingly ominous aerial photograph of the construction site of Grenada's new airport — which any tourist to that Caribbean island can visit, camera in hand.

A similar "intelligence" photograph revealed three helicopters at the Managua, Nicaragua, airport. They were donated by the Soviet Union to aid Nicaragua's literacy campaign. One was used to transport the pope during his recent visit.

Were the implications for working people throughout the Americas not so grave, the transparent fraud of the "threat" documented by Reagan would be laughable.

But the U.S. rulers are dead serious.

After months of careful preparation, a new escalation of U.S. military aggression against the workers and farmers of Central America and the Caribbean is now in progress.

## Revolution and counterrevolution

Four years ago the people of Nicaragua and Grenada threw out bloody, U.S.-backed dictatorships and established governments that

defend the interests of the workers and farmers, not the landlords and capitalists or their Washington allies. Since then, as *Intercontinental Press* has repeatedly explained, U.S. imperialism has followed a consistent counter-revolutionary policy, using the full array of weapons in its arsenal — political, economic, and military.

It has tried to prevent the extension of the revolutionary tide to El Salvador and Guatemala. It has sought to undermine and prepare for the eventual overthrow of the Nicaraguan and Grenadian governments. It has attempted to intimidate the people of Cuba into abandoning their uncompromising support for their brothers and sisters throughout the region fighting to determine their own destiny free from Yankee domination.

From the beginning, this has been the bipartisan policy of the entire U.S. ruling class. Reagan has continued and deepened the course initially charted by the Carter administration. If the U.S. government is today relying more heavily on the use of military force, it is only because Washington's political offensive has failed to isolate "the enemy," while its economic weapons have failed to corrupt or intimidate the vanguard forces leading the toiling masses.

Reagan portrays the struggle as one of "U.S. interests" combating "Soviet expansion" and "Cuban influence." But the attempt to portray the conflict as one between contending "big powers" is false.

The conflict is between classes.

It is the working class and its allies who are moving forward in Central America and the Caribbean today, struggling to take control of their own countries and create a new society meeting the needs of the overwhelming majority, not a tiny handful of the rich.

The socialist revolution is advancing in our hemisphere.

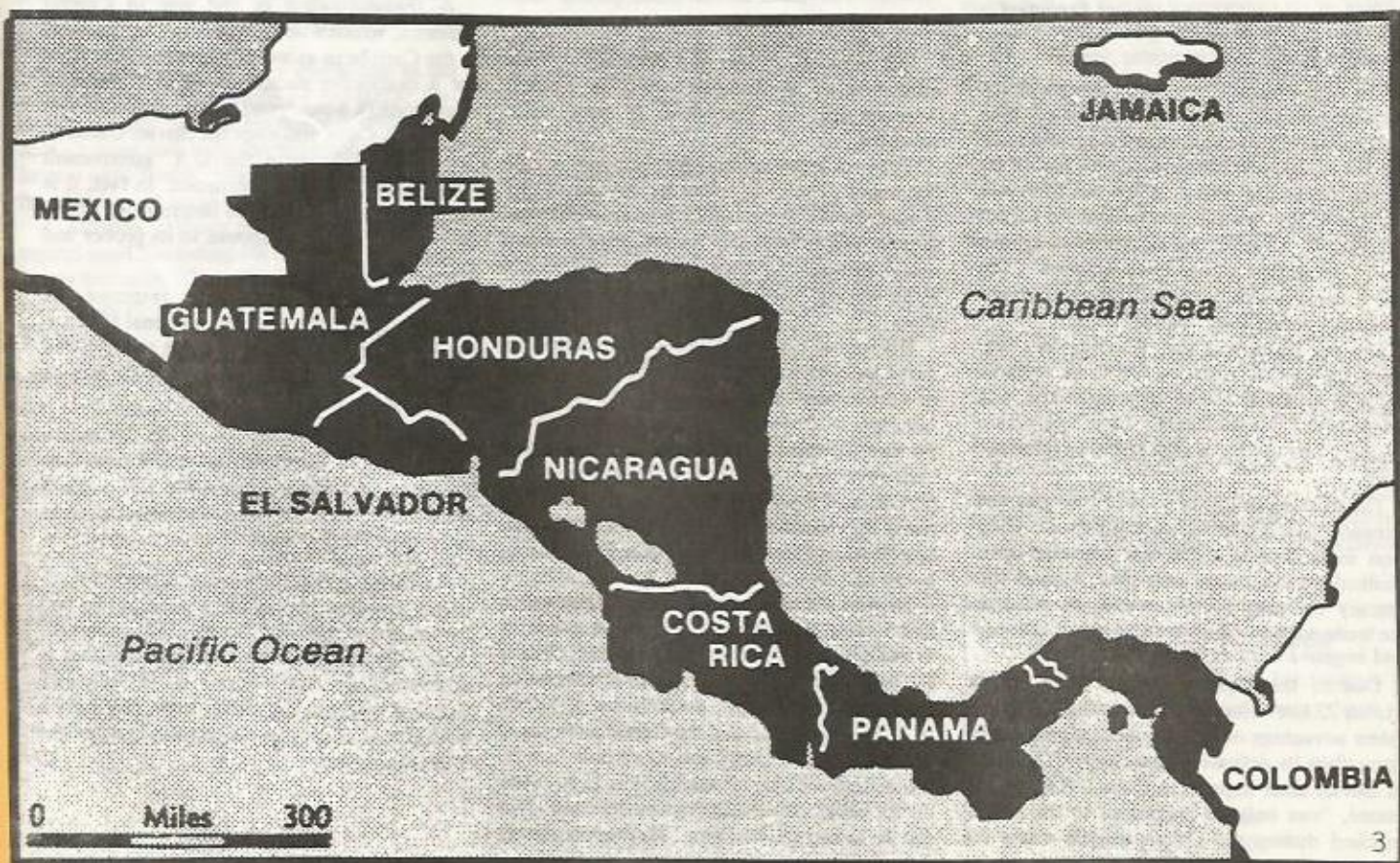
That is why Washington must increasingly resort to military power. It is attempting to halt, and eventually turn back, the march of history.

## Two major obstacles

Although today's sharpening military confrontation is inevitable, its pace and its outcome are not. Since 1979 Washington's freedom of action has been limited by two major obstacles.

One is the uncompromising commitment of the Cuban people to defend Nicaragua and Grenada against imperialist aggression, despite the consequences for Cuba.

The second is the political price the U.S. rulers would have to pay for any direct, large-scale military intervention in the region. Throughout Latin America a move by U.S. forces would be met by an upsurge of anti-imperialist action that would dwarf the outraged response one year ago to Britain's war on Argentina. The survival of Washington's junior partners in a good many countries would be seriously threatened.



In the United States itself, the growing organized opposition to Washington's military intervention in Central America, especially the deepgoing opposition within the working class, is a powerful deterrent. The U.S. ruling class, too, remembers what happened in the United States during the Vietnam War.

These factors, combined with the determination, courage, and leadership capacities of the revolutionary forces in Central America and the Caribbean, have so far limited the ability of the U.S. government to utilize its full military power for an all-out assault.

The U.S. rulers tirelessly work to throw off these political constraints by campaigning about an alleged "Soviet threat," about Moscow's so-called Cuban proxy, about the "terrorists" trying to shoot their way into power in El Salvador, about the "new tyrants" in Managua who are no better than Somoza, about the supposedly sinister implications of an airport to encourage tourist trade to the island of Grenada.

The U.S. propaganda offensive began within days of the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in the summer of 1979. Washington suddenly "discovered" an alleged Soviet combat brigade in Cuba.

This barrage reached a crescendo in fall 1981 when the Reagan administration charged that some 500 to 600 Cuban troops had infiltrated El Salvador — thus explaining the advances by the anti-imperialist forces there.

The U.S. ruling class at that time was seriously weighing the risks and benefits of direct military action, including against Cuba. But a full-scale military mobilization in Cuba, combined with a powerful international political offensive to expose U.S. intentions, convinced Washington that the risks were too high.

In spring 1982, military operations against Nicaragua and the Salvadoran liberation forces were again in advanced stages of preparation when Britain went to war against Argentina.

#### Malvinas War

The Argentine military junta, along with the Honduran regime, had been scheduled to play a central role in training, organizing, and leading the Somozaist National Guard forces invading Nicaragua today. When the Malvinas War broke out, Washington backed the British aggression. An explosion of sentiment against U.S. imperialism rocked Latin America. Cuba and Nicaragua were the most vigorous defenders of Argentina's anticolonial battle.

The net result was that Washington's war plans for Central America had to be revised. Political alliances had to be reorganized, and ideological justifications for aggression against Cuba and Nicaragua had to be reformulated.

The working people of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada gained another breathing space. They won more time to build new housing, open medical centers, create new jobs, expand the literacy campaign, build roads, consolidate the trade unions and other mass organizations, and improve their defenses.

One of the charges Reagan made in his March 23 television address was that Cuba has taken advantage of the respite to significantly strengthen its defensive capacities. "The level of Soviet arms exports to Cuba," Reagan asserted, "can only be compared to the levels reached during the Cuban missile crisis 20 years ago."



This, too, was presented as if it were a previously undisclosed and sinister fact, gleaned from U.S. intelligence operations.

But the Cubans have been broadcasting and explaining this to the world for the last three years, ever since they launched the Territorial Troop Militia on May 1, 1980, in response to Washington's intensified threats.

As Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro explained to a mass meeting in Havana last December, "preparations for defense are made not only to fight off an attack but also to prevent such an attack." Fidel added that "preserving peace will always be a victory. However, peace in the face of a treacherous enemy like imperialism is preserved when the enemy knows that any attack will cost him dearly."

#### Time is running out for imperialism

But today the danger of a qualitatively new escalation of Washington's war in Central America and the Caribbean is once again mounting.

Time is running out for imperialism in Nicaragua. The U.S. rulers are concerned that it may already be too late to overthrow the Sandinista people in arms. As the pope's recent tour once again demonstrated, the revolution's roots among Nicaragua's toiling people are deep.

His refusal to say a prayer for the youth murdered by counterrevolutionary bands was seen as a provocation and an affront to the dignity of hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans who see no contradiction between their religion and their revolution. Contrary to the hopes of imperialism, the pope's action helped clarify for many the reactionary role of the church hierarchy. It strengthened mass support for the revolution and its leadership.

Repeated statements by U.S. officials also make clear that there is increasing alarm in Washington over the advances in El Salvador by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Despite the millions of dollars of U.S. military aid and the frantic attempts to shore up both the army and its civilian facade, the regime is clearly cracking. The U.S. rulers do not believe the FMLN can be defeated without the intervention of non-Salvadoran military forces.

But how can that be engineered? How can it be politically justified both internationally and before a U.S. working class that is deeply suspicious and hostile to the Vietnamization of Central America?

The U.S. rulers need a broader war.

That is exactly the danger Nicaragua's Sandinista leaders point to: the invasion of Nicaragua by thousands of former Somoza National Guardsmen, armed to the teeth by Washington, may be used to provoke a war between Honduras and Nicaragua.

Already, in recent days, Honduran army units have, for the first time, crossed the border into Nicaragua. If a pretext for broadening the war is desired, the possibilities are numerous.

A regionalization of the war in Central America, which would include military actions in the Caribbean as well, would open the door for a qualitative escalation of U.S. military operations. It would pose the danger of a direct clash with Cuba and even the Soviet Union.

The tactical course the U.S. government will pursue is not predetermined. In fact, it is not yet decided. It will be determined, above all, by the political response to its probes and trial balloons.

That is why the timely response by Nicaragua, including the international forum at the United Nations that exposed and isolated the U.S. government (see page 189) was so important.

That is why the decision of the Grenadian government to broadcast its concern over an imminent attack (see page 190) will make it more difficult for the Reagan administration to implement such plans.

And that is why a broad and powerful response by those inside the United States and around the world who oppose U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean is decisive. Our vital interests lie in solidarity with our brothers and sisters there. We have a central role to play in staying the hand of the U.S. aggressors. □

# New stage in revolutionary war

U.S. congressman admits, 'Our side is not winning'

By Fred Murphy

The wounding of a U.S. military adviser in El Salvador February 2 underscored the growing tendency toward more direct intervention by Washington against the people of that country.

The admission by the U.S. embassy in San Salvador that the wounded GI was on an "operational" rather than a training mission bolstered earlier charges by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) that U.S. advisers are now directing government counterinsurgency drives in the field.

It also came as the Reagan administration announced plans to more than triple military aid to El Salvador — from \$26.3 million to \$86.3 million — in the current fiscal year. And, as the February 6 *Washington Post* reported, "senior administration officials also are pressing for an increase in U.S. military planners and trainers, particularly at the departmental and brigade levels."

U.S. intervention in El Salvador is being stepped up because a new stage has opened in the war against the dictatorship there. Since mid-October, the FMLN has conducted a sustained military offensive. In the course of this drive, the rebels have:

- Withstood repeated efforts by up to 6,000 government troops to dislodge them from towns and villages they have occupied in the northern halves of Chalatenango, Morazán, and La Unión provinces.

- Extended their military operations to the economically key province of Usulután. Between January 31 and February 2 they were able to seize and hold the province's second-largest city, Berlín, where they organized political rallies of up to 1,500 townspeople.

- Attacked military posts in the Salvadoran capital itself, including the main San Carlos infantry barracks. These blows point to a more active role by the urban masses in the military struggle.

- Gained control over lengthy portions of the country's major highways, thus cutting off the eastern half of the country to land transport.

- Captured large quantities of ammunition, military gear, and weapons, including heavy artillery pieces.

- Taken prisoner hundreds of soldiers and officers, a sure sign of growing demoralization inside the dictatorship's army. Up to 10 percent of these prisoners are reported to be joining the revolutionary units; the rest are released promptly to the International Red Cross.

### Civilian population bombed

The January 31 victory by 500 rebels at Ber-

lín in Usulután Province highlighted the fact that the U.S.-backed regime is losing the war and is growing desperate.

With a population of 35,000, Berlín is the largest city yet taken by the rebels. It lies in El Salvador's most important cotton-growing region. The regime's forces had been depleted there when thousands of troops were dispatched to Morazán for a futile attack on one of the FMLN's major strongholds.

As the rebel fighters advanced on Berlín from surrounding towns they had already taken, U.S.-supplied jets with U.S.-trained pilots launched rockets and bombs into the center of the city. Five square blocks were laid waste and dozens of civilians were killed — a scene reminiscent of the tyrant Somoza's tactics during his final days in Nicaragua.

The aim of the bombardment was to terrorize and disperse the civilian population of Berlín. Nonetheless, hundreds turned out to welcome the rebel columns and attend the FMLN's rallies. When the FMLN units withdrew in an orderly fashion February 2, they were accompanied by hundreds of the city's youth who had signed up to fight the dictatorship.

The rebel victories are straining further the already shaky regime in San Salvador. Rival factions in the Constituent Assembly have begun trading death threats and have launched armed attacks on each other's deputies and headquarters. Defense Minister Gen. José Guillermo García is under increasing fire for his failure to register gains against the FMLN.

### 'Certification is a farce'

The FMLN's victories have begun to be felt in Washington, the source of the Salvadoran dictatorship's funds, weaponry, and guidance.

After President Reagan officially certified that "the government of El Salvador has made progress" in curbing human-rights violations, State Department Latin America chief Thomas Enders faced sharp questioning from congressional committees.

"Certification is a farce," Senator Christopher Dodd told Enders February 2. "We've spent \$748 million there in three years, we're approaching one billion dollars, and what do we have to show for it?"

"It should be clear to anyone who reads the newspapers that our side is not winning this war," Rep. Michael Barnes told Enders at another hearing two days later. "Our current policy . . . makes a guerrilla victory almost inevitable."

Enders scarcely attempted to defend his own policy, and instead blamed his underlings in the Salvadoran high command.

"The army failed to react vigorously with

the right tactics in October and November," Enders told the Senate panel. "They . . . have left themselves open to attack in the central province of Usulután."

Pentagon aide Nestor Sanchez complained to the Senators that because of congressional criticism, the Salvadoran rulers were "confused, totally confused." Washington's credibility, Sanchez lamented, "is very, very low."

On February 4, 81 members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a bill to declare Reagan's certification "null and void" and suspend military aid to El Salvador.

The recriminations in Congress not only reflect the blows U.S. imperialism is taking in El Salvador. Equally important, they point up the rising sentiment among U.S. working people against further intervention in Central America. This is being fueled not only by exposures of the CIA's role in anti-Nicaraguan terror and the brutality of the Salvadoran regime, but also by the social crisis inside the United States and the beginnings of a labor fightback against the employers' attacks.

Working-class opposition to intervention has begun to make an impact even at the highest levels of the U.S. trade-union bureaucracy. Three top officers of AFL-CIO unions — Douglas Fraser of the Auto Workers, William Winpisinger of the Machinists, and Jack Sheinkman of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers — dispatched a letter to Sen. Charles Percy January 19 calling for "the termination of all military aid to El Salvador."

Sheinkman's signature was particularly noteworthy in that the bureaucracy of his union has long been among the staunchest defenders of a reactionary, proimperialist foreign policy line in the AFL-CIO.

The Reagan administration has its back to the wall in El Salvador. Preventing a rebel victory will require greatly stepped-up intervention, even including the use of U.S. GIs. But the political price the U.S. rulers would have to pay for such a step is rising rapidly. Meanwhile, as Congressman Barnes complained, "the administration has no policy except to keep the war going."

The revolutionary forces are determined to meet this challenge. "We did not start this war, it was forced on us by the oligarchy and the armed forces," Commander Fermán Cienfuegos said in late January.

Nonetheless, Cienfuegos went on, "the tide of war is quickly rising in our favor. Even the enormous amounts of North American armaments sent to El Salvador's elected dictators cannot contain us." □

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# FMLN defeats 'gringo battalion'

## Reagan rejects talks, pushes intervention

By Ernest Harsch

In one of the largest battles in El Salvador this year, guerrilla forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) inflicted a major defeat on the U.S.-trained Ramón Belloso Battalion — the "gringo battalion," as the rebel Radio Venceremos called it.

On March 30, FMLN fighters attacked government forces in San Isidro, a town 100 kilometers north of San Salvador. Seventeen paramilitary troops were killed in the fighting, and the rebels occupied the town.

Units of the Ramón Belloso Battalion were then sent from nearby Osicala to try to retake San Isidro. They failed. According to Radio Venceremos, at least 67 government troops were killed and 46 wounded.

The rebel radio called the battle "a great victory we have won over the dictatorship's best troops, trained in the United States."

Just a few days earlier, in an interview in the March 28 Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno*, FMLN leader Roberto Roca pointed to one of the key factors in the rebels' military gains. "The imperialist training, as technically sophisticated as it may be," he said, "cannot give the puppet army an essential element that is contributing to our victory: the fighting morale that is increasing among us day by day because of the justice of our struggle."

While the battle at San Isidro was one of the most spectacular displays of the FMLN's strength, it was not an isolated event. Since October, the liberation forces have been on a major offensive in various parts of the country. Enjoying widespread popular support, they have been able to expand their political and military influence significantly.

During the first three months of this year, the guerrillas inflicted 1,000 casualties among the dictatorship's forces, took 450 government troops prisoner, and captured 900 guns and 35 artillery pieces.

Lacking any real base of popular support, the dictatorship has continued to rely on military force and terror to rule the country. On March 23, the Human Rights Commission in San Salvador charged that another 32 persons had disappeared over the previous 15 days, including workers, professors, peasants, and students. It said that government security forces were implicated in at least a majority of the cases.

Behind this terror stands Washington. Commenting on the March 20 assassination of Human Rights Commission President Marianella García Villas, a commission communiqué declared that "the bullets that murder peace-loving people come from the arsenals of President Ronald Reagan."

The White House is seeking to increase military aid to the Salvadoran dictatorship to \$136 million — five times what has already been allocated for 1983. The number of U.S. military personnel that Washington acknowledges are in El Salvador has risen from 37 to 52. In addition, the March 20 *New York Times* reported, "There are many more covert intelligence operatives and technicians in the region than military advisers. . . . An exact total for intelligence personnel in El Salvador was not available, but officials estimated that the number exceeded 150."

But as Washington drives deeper into El Salvador to try to shore up the rickety dictatorship, it is facing increasing political opposition at home.

Congressman Michael Barnes, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, said in early March that he had been receiving mail from around the country. "Literally thousands of letters," he reported, "say they don't want to send any assistance [to El Salvador], and maybe five say send it."

The call of the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) for the opening of unconditional negotiations among all Salvadoran forces has also won broad support internationally, including within the United States.

The White House has categorically rejected the idea of such talks. Instead, it has attempted to deflect the impact of the FMLN-FDR diplomatic drive by proposing region-wide negotiations involving all the governments in Central America. Such talks would serve as a forum for Washington's propaganda campaign against Nicaragua and Cuba, which it has accused of interfering in El Salvador's affairs by supplying arms to the FMLN.

According to a report in the March 14 *Washington Post*, a broadcast over Radio Venceremos two days earlier defiantly reaffirmed the rebels' political ties with Cuba and Nicaragua.

"We are and will continue being friends of the people and governments of Cuba and Nicaragua, and it does not shame us," the broadcast said. "Completely to the contrary, we are proud to maintain relations with those people — bastions of the anti-imperialist struggle. The Reagan administration is not one to tell the FMLN who ought to be its friends and who its enemies."

Washington's accusations against Cuba and Nicaragua and its call for regional negotiations are an effort to provide some political cover for U.S. imperialism's growing intervention in the region. Part of this also involves attempting to provoke a war between Nicaragua and Honduras that could serve as a pretext for sending in U.S. combat troops.

The Reagan administration's backing for new elections in El Salvador is likewise an attempt to justify its increasing intervention, by giving the dictatorship a democratic face.

It also was a bid to try to sow divisions within the FMLN and FDR. According to a report in the March 15 *Washington Post*, "One purpose of the elections, stated privately by State Department officials, is to attempt to woo the moderate elements in the leftist political opposition away from their Marxist-Leninist allies."

This attempt has failed. Representatives of the various organizations within the FMLN and FDR have rejected participating in the electoral farce, since it would be impossible for their supporters to campaign freely while the regime's troops and death squads continue to have a free hand. "We would be slaughtered like sheep," one rebel spokesperson commented.

A broadcast over Radio Venceremos, quoting the official position of the FMLN-FDR, said that the elections would only "seek to cover up the genocide" and that their outcome "has already been arranged in Washington."

The FMLN-FDR proposed instead, as a solution to the war, "the total conquest of the four historic demands of the Salvadoran people: a new economic and social order, a new agrarian reform, a broadly based government, and the recovery of our sovereignty."

"That is what we have armed ourselves for, and that is what we are fighting for." □



## First World Forum of Salvador Solidarity Movement

MEXICO CITY--The first International Forum for Solidarity With the People of El Salvador opened here March 26 in the Variedades Cinema.

Some 2,500 people came to the inaugural rally, united in their solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution. They showed an enthusiasm that was to last throughout the discussions at the forum that began the next day, March 27.

Unity was the dominant theme and spirit of the conference. This was an extension of the achievement of the Salvadoran revolutionists themselves. The message from the leadership of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) made this point clear:

"Our struggle has left its mark. It has brought together different political currents. It has awakened the aspiration for liberty in other peoples. And above all, it has helped to unite many different forces around the need to confront the enemies of peace and democracy.

In this spirit, the opening session warmly applauded greetings from a broad range of forces and personalities. Among the messages most enthusiastically applauded were taped greetings from Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, as well as statements by the Vietnamese ambassador and the Cuban and Nicaraguan delegates, and from the solidarity committees in the United States.

There was also an enthusiastic response to greetings from a representative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Hugo Blanco, the Peruvian mass revolutionary leader and a leader of the Peruvian section of the Fourth International; and representatives of the Honduran and Guatemalan solidarity committees.

Much appreciated greetings also came from the Western European solidarity committees, groups of Latin American exiles in Mexico, and the organisations in the Mexican solidarity campaign.

A highpoint was the playing of the tape of a program broadcast over Radio Venece-remos, the *Iskra* of the Salvadoran revolution, in which the FMLN transmitter announced the holding of the forum to the Salvadoran people.

Over the two days of its sessions, the forum discussed four central questions: the drafting of an appeal for the formation of an anti-interventionist campaign; the formation and functioning of a world front of solidarity with El Salvador; a general plan of action; and a campaign on behalf of the Salvadoran refugees.

There were nearly two hundred contributions to the discussion, amending and improving the proposed documents. This



Presidium at Solidarity Forum

took place in an atmosphere of friendly attention, as is necessary in such a meeting.

The essential task was to forge an instrument for mobilising international solidarity at a crucial moment, when the Salvadoran people were facing the threat of imperialist intervention and the electoral force organised by Ronald Reagan and Napoleon Duarte. It was proper that differences should be subordinated to this central objective.

### A WORLDWIDE SOLIDARITY FRONT

The forum, therefore, decided to set up a worldwide solidarity front. This front will be a coordinating body for all the solidarity organisations that recognise the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front-Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR) as the genuine representatives of the Salvadoran people.

The front will embrace all the El Salvador Solidarity Committees, as well as the political, religious, workers, peasant, and student organisations; and movements that fight for peace, human rights, and national self-determination. It will include all institutions or personalities prepared to show their support.

This will be an anti-interventionist front, and will work in the most democratic way possible. Its principal aims will be to fight for the self-determination of the Salvadoran people and to end intervention in El Salvador by the US and its allies--Venezuela, Honduras, Argentina, Guatemala, Colombia, and the Zionist state of Israel.

At the same time, the front will seek to broaden solidarity with all the struggling peoples of Central America and the Caribbean and to support the fight of the Salvadoran people now against the dictatorship and help them accomplish the tasks of national reconstruction after the battle is won.

On the suggestion of the FMLN, Bill Zimmerman was elected chair of the permanent bureau of the front. Zimmerman is the chair of the Medical Aid for El Salvador campaign. His election had an important symbolic value, since he is a veteran of the US anti-Vietnam war movement.

Zimmerman's election, thus, highlighted the other aspect of the Vietnamisation of the Salvadoran revolution. For millions of young people today, the Salvadoran revolution is the source of inspiration and hope that Vietnam was for the youth of the 1960s and 1970s.

Among the other members of the permanent bureau are representatives of solidarity committees in Peru, Mexico, the US, France, West Germany, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico, as well as a number of independent personalities.

Organisations with an official diplomatic status are also represented, such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Organisation of Solidarity of the Asian and Latin American Peoples (OSPAAAL), and the World Federation of Trade Unions, headquartered in Prague.

Obviously, the forum's first decision was to distribute the appeal that was drawn up and adopted there and to launch a campaign to get as many signatures as possible

for it, especially in the workers movement. It also decided to build a campaign to get the truth out about El Salvador, particularly about the electoral farce staged on March 28.

The formation of the world front of solidarity involves new tasks for the existing solidarity committees. Far from simply dissolving into the front, they should become its most active and militant wing, leading the united mobilisations.

The most immediate task in implementing the plan of action is to develop a clear perspective for building an anti-interventionist movement. This is necessary to prepare a rapid response to imperialist intervention.

For example, at an informal meeting of the West European delegations, it was decided to aim for 100,000 signatures by June 1 for a statement of opposition to imperialist intervention and for recognising the FMLN-FDR as the legitimate representatives of the Salvadoran people. The target date coincides with the beginning of Reagan's visit to West Europe.

#### THE FORCES ACTIVELY INVOLVED

However, the solidarity movement is only beginning. The forces that took an active part in building the forum and in working out the plan of action for a worldwide solidarity campaign were a vanguard. They were the organisations that feel the strongest identification with the Salvadoran revolution and those most interested in building an international mass movement in support of it.

From the list of signatories, it can be seen that basically three currents were at the forum. The first and most important was the Cuban, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Central American revolutionists in general and those in other Latin American countries who identify with them.

The second main component was the solidarity activists from democratic and religious organisations. They were nearly always politically independent. On the other hand, there were a lot of former members of far-left groups among the delegations from the European committees.

The third component was the Fourth International, represented by delegates of sections and sympathising organisations from Latin America, West Europe, the US, and Australia, as well as from the international leadership.

This composition of the conference was not surprising. These are the three currents active in solidarity committees throughout the world.

What was more remarked on was the absence of the big traditional working class organisations. The parties of the Second

International did not even send a telegram, although a number of them, in particular the French SP, claim to sympathize with the Salvadoran struggle to one degree or another. One well-known French SP member was present, but he is attached to the French diplomatic establishment in Mexico, and in no way represented his party.

The Communist Parties were also notable by their absence. Only the Spanish and US CP were present, and both were totally inactive during the plenary sessions.

The delegate from the Soviet CP who participated in the opening rally could properly be described as an observer. The Soviet trade unions did send a telegram that arrived shortly before the end of the conference.

However, in substance both the CPs and SPs failed to take any part in the conference or in the launching of the campaigns.

It is not hard to understand the abstention of such forces. The forum had a radical, militant image. Those there understood and supported the diplomatic efforts of the FMLN-FDR, their search for every possible ally, their use of every political manoeuvre that might help.

But they also knew, and that in particular was why they were there, that the essential point is the demand for recognising the FMLN as the genuine representatives of the Salvadoran people. Along with this goes the need to build mass solidarity.

Such a struggle is not the sort of thing CPs and SPs like to get involved in. It is not the natural habitat of bureaucratic organisations. Nor is it a congenial environment for the Mexican government. As far as the Mexican regime was concerned, the sole purpose for the forum was to endorse the 'Peace Plan' offered by President Jose Lopez Portillo. Since the meeting turned out to be a different sort of thing, the Mexican press hardly mentioned it.

So, the forum organisers had to pay for ads denouncing the March 28 electoral farce. The greetings of the Fourth International were also publicised in that way.

The forces at the conference thus were considered to be 'ultra-leftist'. But that was nothing to be ashamed of. For example, the great revolutionary Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton wrote in his *Stories and Poems Against Salvadoran Revisionism*:

'In a country like ours,  
Where we are so crammed together,  
Where so much history is piled  
on top of us,  
Ultra-leftism that is not just  
words,  
That can become action,  
Will strike deeper and deeper roots  
In the hearts of the people,  
Which are to be found, on the  
far left of the chest'.



#### THE ROLE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Of the fifteen delegations from political organisations at the conference, ten were from the Fourth International. That reflects the activity of the Trotskyist movement in the Salvadoran solidarity movement. However, it also shows that our work is in an early stage.

A lot remains to be done to broaden unity in action in defense of the Salvadoran revolution and to draw the big traditional organisations into it, and they will be under more and more pressure to do something to defend the Salvadoran people.

The Fourth International participated in the solidarity forum for the same reasons that it has been active in the solidarity committees. We understand the importance, not just of the Salvadoran revolution in itself, but also of its effects on millions and millions of people.

The Salvadoran revolution is another example of a tremendous revolution in a tiny country that, while it in itself cannot dramatically change the world relationship of forces, can impell a rapid rise in consciousness internationally and educate a new generation of militants.

The trademark of the Salvadoran revolution is the unity of all revolutionary currents in the struggle. And that alone would be sufficient reason for us to throw ourselves entirely into building solidarity with it.

Moreover, rebuilding the tradition of international solidarity among the workers and oppressed is what the Fourth International has stood for since its inception, following in the footsteps of the revolutionary Third International and the original revolutionary Marxist movement.

This spirit was expressed by a Mexican delegate, who said: 'Today we feel like Salvadorans, just as yesterday we felt like Cubans, Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, or Dominicans.'

We also feel the obligation to empathize with the Polish workers fighting the repression of the bureaucracy. That is the way we understand solidarity. We want to help the Salvadoran revolution win, and bring the day closer when other such forms of international solidarity can be organised on behalf of other workers and oppressed peoples wherever they may be struggling.





# Organizing international solidarity

Interview with leader of World Front

The following interview with Andrés Fábregas, executive secretary of the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, was obtained in Mexico City following the demonstration of 20,000 people there called by the World Front on January 22. The interview was obtained in Spanish by Andrea González, correspondent for the U.S. socialist biweekly *Perspectiva Mundial*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

*Question. What is the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador?*

*Answer.* In order to explain what the World Front is, we need to refer back to some earlier developments that led up to its formation.

In 1980, when the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) was set up in El Salvador as the first body that unified all the mass organizations in struggle against the dictatorship, there was also a qualitative step forward in the solidarity movement. It was now possible to point to the CRM as a united vanguard of the Salvadoran people.

In mid-1981, an international gathering of solidarity committees was held in Mexico City. A great many committees from throughout the world sent representatives to this meeting. I think some 42 committees responded to the call.

Committees even came from as far away as Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and France, as well as the United States. Practically all the countries in Latin America sent delegations.

That First International Gathering of Committees in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador was a success. From that meeting came the idea of setting up a broader coordinating committee for international solidarity.

Moreover, the fact that the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) had been founded was very important. Later, the alliance between the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the FMLN also inspired solidarity throughout the world.

The first international gathering ratified the principles of solidarity work. These are: unity, unconditional solidarity, and recognition of the FMLN-FDR as not only the vanguard of the process, but also the sole legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people. These principles were widely publicized, and coordinated actions were held for the first time. All this brought together social and political elements that pointed toward something still more ambitious.

The composition of those who attended the first international gathering was quite important. There were the active solidarity forces, but there were also many political currents, a really broad spectrum. From that experience we became convinced that it was indeed possible to do solidarity work in a broad way, that

this principle should be encouraged and respected by the solidarity movement. This means that everyone belongs in the movement of solidarity so long as they accept these basic political principles: that the FMLN-FDR is the sole legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people, unconditional solidarity, and united solidarity.

By 1982 the situation had matured. The FMLN-FDR refined a plan that was broadly discussed with solidarity committees. The plan was to build a world front in solidarity with the Salvadoran people that could bring together the worldwide movement of the peoples with the Salvadoran people. This is quite important: the World Front is not a formation for doing diplomatic work, but rather the body that brings together the solidarity of the peoples at the international level.

The conclusion we came to was that specialized organizations of solidarity with the Salvadoran people were not the only ones that should be in this front, but rather that it should be as broad as possible. It should include all political forces that were willing to back unconditionally the struggle of the people of El Salvador. In that sense, this is an experience that is practically unheard of in solidarity movements with peoples in struggle.

At the end of March 1982, the assembly to launch the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador was held in Mexico. A great many political forces and organizations attended. It was really an impressive gathering.

There were all kinds of forces represented. Without fear of exaggerating, I would say that all the political forces active today on the international scene were represented there. From that assembly came the principles that govern the World Front that I spoke of earlier.

So what is the World Front?

It is a coordinating body for the solidarity movement at the international level. It is not the political leadership of the solidarity movement, because that is in the hands of the compañeros of the FMLN-FDR themselves. But it is a very important body for coordinating all solidarity work.

It is a body where all the political forces that are willing to lend solidarity to the people of El Salvador come together.

It is a body that fully respects the autonomy of each force that belongs to it. But at the same time, it is the expression of the fact that it is indeed possible for the solidarity movement to be united, that international coordination of this movement is possible.

To make such coordination effective, a team of people was set up with the responsibility to coordinate the work of the World Front. This team has two levels — first, the broad team formed by the Standing Bureau of the World Front. This is made up of 18 figures who have been very much involved in solidarity with the

Salvadoran people. The other level is the Executive Secretariat, which has the concrete task of ensuring that the decisions made by the World Front are respected and that the front's plans of action are carried out. It also sees that the news bulletin of the World Front comes out more or less regularly.

**Gains in solidarity movement**

*Q. What gains have been made by the international solidarity movement?*

*A.* The World Front is itself a gain for the solidarity movement.

If one looks at the composition of the World Front, one is surprised by the breadth of the forces that belong to it — forces that in other situations have never come to agreement. Forces that are even antagonistic come together in the World Front as an expression of the will of the peoples to oppose the imperialist system.

Religious figures come together in the World Front — not just Catholics but a broad range of religions. All kinds of political forces from all existing spectrums come together in the front (except for fascist forces and proimperialist forces, of course). Revolutionary forces of all kinds come together with democratic forces in the World Front. That is a big step forward.

Second, the existence of the World Front has made it possible to move forward in coordinating pressure on governments to get them to take a position against U.S. imperialist aggression.

Inside the United States, the World Front is becoming known. We are convinced that a broad range of forces in the United States will join the World Front and build it once they know what it is and what its aims are.

In Mexico, the World Front has been fundamental for revitalizing the solidarity movement. The Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, which is the most important such body in Mexico, together with the National Standing Forum in Solidarity With the Salvadoran Revolution, belong to the World Front. These organizations have been strengthened since the formation of the World Front.

Finally, a clear example of the potential of the World Front and of the progress it represents, is the level of coordination that was achieved in the January 22 demonstrations that just took place. There were marches and rallies in many places throughout the world.

It should be clear to the American people that the solidarity movement has great sympathy for their struggles. And that is another step forward, because it has educated our peoples on how to differentiate clearly the imperialist, criminal, and genocidal attitude of Reagan from the traditions of struggle of the American people. It has been made clear internationally that just as our own peoples are the victims of aggression, so too are the American people under attack.

## U.S. working people

*Q. How does the World Front see the solidarity offered by the people of the United States?*

A. At the international level, our peoples have understood that there is a tradition of struggle among the American people. In this sense the World Front values highly the solidarity of U.S. working people.

Why do we place such value on this solidarity? Because we know that they are the strategic force that can change the conditions of life of the American people. As the strategic force in U.S. society, the labor movement needs to be well informed about imperialist aggression against other peoples.

With all its social power, it is the U.S. labor movement that can hold back and halt once and for all the imperialist aggression. It is the strategic force in solidarity work. I would dare say that this is the case not only for the American people but also on a world scale. They are the strategic force. The American workers are the ones who have to understand that their strength, their intelligence, their sweat, their labor, must not be used to kill, to commit these tremendous genocidal attacks that the Salvadoran government commits with the arms provided by Reagan's government.

The U.S. labor movement, once it understands this — and we are certain that it will understand — will again rise up as it did against the war in Vietnam. We are certain that it will be the strategic force that, together with the struggle of the Salvadoran people, will stop intervention.

And if we add to this the world spectrum of solidarity, we think the prospects are very good.

The U.S. working class is quite complex — it comes from a variety of ethnic origins and is also made up of oppressed minorities. The working class cannot be reduced simply to the workers in the factories; it permeates the entire structure of U.S. society.

## Chicanos, Blacks, Indians

The specially oppressed groups are also strategic in solidarity work. We believe that the World Front has many possibilities for growth there as well — among groups of Chicanos, among Black groups, among the North American Indians who have been deprived of their land and cultural identity. This cannot be reduced simply to the Chicanos, the Indians, and the Latin Americans, but must extend to the whole range of oppressed groups, of the poor in the United States — that is where the vitality of the solidarity of the U.S. people comes from.

We are certain that those are the strategic sectors for solidarity work, and that the World Front must be built there as well. This powerful force for the transformation of American society should be included in solidarity work.

*Q. Could you say something about the campaign for the University of El Salvador?*

A. The National University of El Salvador is an institution that has been systematically at-

tacked by the dictatorship, not only in recent times, but during its entire history. And that is for one reason — the university has always been linked to the struggles of the people.

Today the university is closed down physically. The campaign has the aim of showing that although the university's facilities are closed, the university itself is alive. This big international campaign consists in enrolling people in the University of El Salvador. Those who enroll pay tuition in solidarity with it. This allows the university to stay alive.

The university authorities have also made agreements with many other universities. For example, there is an agreement with the Autonomous Metropolitan University of Mexico whereby Salvadoran students can take courses there as though they were studying at the University of El Salvador.

## Workers movement in El Salvador

*Q. Could you talk a little about the workers' movement in El Salvador?*

A. To keep this brief but at the same time not skip an essential reference point, I am going to mention only one fundamental date, 1932. In that year a popular insurrection by the workers and peasants took place in El Salvador. There was a horrible massacre. Around 30,000 persons died, repressed by a fierce dictatorship that was truly blind to history.

The blow was tremendous, but from that time on the Salvadoran people began to seek new forms of organization. Little by little, in the 1940s, the Salvadoran workers' movement began to reorganize. Trade-union activity was revitalized, until by the 1960s the workers' movement in El Salvador had fully recovered.

There now exists, for example, the Trade-Union Unity Committee (CUS), which brings together the entire workers' movement and which has had a fundamental role in supporting the struggle of the Salvadoran people. The CUS is one of the pillars of this struggle. There is also the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS), which is the union federation at the national level. It has also had an outstanding role. It is no accident that at this moment many of the leaders of FENASTRAS are in jail.

What is the crime of these jailed compañeros, according to the dictatorship? Above all, to have led the big national strikes in 1980 that served as a point of support for both the armed and democratic movements of El Salvador. These were extraordinary high points in the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

It is not true to say that the workers' movement is now in retreat. On the contrary, there is a revitalization of the workers' movement, which is being expressed in demands raised by the trade unions against the regime of President Alvaro Magaña, as well as in the repression with which the regime has responded, and also in the really massive participation of the workers' movement in all forms of popular struggle.

The fact that the FMLN can operate securely in San Salvador [the capital] is a demonstration of the support the workers' movement gives the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

I think that at this moment the workers' movement in El Salvador is playing a really strategic role, and I would even say that in a very short time, as the victory draws near, the workers' movement is going to be decisive. The workers' organizations have not been destroyed. The unions still exist, the coordinating bodies among the national unions still exist, and there is day-to-day political activity by the workers at the side of the Salvadoran people.

## Campaigns of World Front

*Q. What are the campaigns of the World Front?*

A. At present we have an ongoing campaign of mass mobilization. In this sense the World Front sees the plans in each country as part of its own solidarity work. As for mass mobilization, two essential dates were set for the world movement. One already took place, January 22. We are now working to put together another big mobilization for next October 10, which is the anniversary of the founding of the FMLN-FDR. Between these two dates a great many mass actions are going to be held as part of the World Front's programs, but these will not necessarily be coordinated at the international level, because it is difficult to get all countries to coincide.

There is also an ongoing press campaign. We have a bulletin that we are working to improve. This bulletin ought to reflect the broad potential for solidarity with the Salvadoran people. We are working to increase its circulation and to make it better known internationally.

Third, there are the financial campaigns, which have two aims: to support the work of the World Front; and to enable the World Front to aid the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

Together with all this the World Front has various meetings set for its coordinating committee to evaluate the work and suggest new ideas.

There will be a meeting of the Executive Secretariat of the World Front soon to discuss the problems of solidarity work and how to bring greater pressure on governments by the peoples to get them to express clearly — without hedging — their stance against imperialist aggression. We think that it is also possible to hold a meeting of the Standing Bureau around the middle of the year, as well as to see when to hold another assembly of the entire World Front.

That will depend greatly on the state of the struggle inside El Salvador, which is now quite favorable. The Salvadoran army is practically in retreat, the FMLN is advancing, the Salvadoran people are gaining a higher level of consciousness, and in that sense the World Front is also making gains, as the expression of the worldwide movement in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. □

# Unionists back struggle in El Salvador

*'International solidarity of workers really exists'*

[Salvadoran union leader Alejandro Molina Lara, an official of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) and general secretary of the Fishing Industry Union, toured the U.S. states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio last November and December. He addressed numerous union audiences.

[In Erie, Pennsylvania, he spoke to hundreds of unionists. The coordinator of his tour there was Al Hart, a worker in the Erie General Electric plant and an executive board member of United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 506.

[The following interview with Hart was conducted by Ginny Hildebrand, a correspondent for the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*. It appeared in the February 18 issue.]

*Question. How did Alejandro Molina Lara come to address the November meeting of UE Local 506?*

*Answer.* A few of us in the local helped set it up because we thought that the ideal way to get our members to understand the situation in El Salvador was for them to hear a unionist from that country. This turned out to be even truer than we thought.

*Q. Would you describe the reaction of your local members?*

*A.* Well, Alejandro gave a good general picture of the situation in his country. But what really struck the crowd was when he described the "free trade zones." That's where North American companies set up plants and pay no taxes and where unions have always been outlawed. There was an audible sound of dismay throughout the crowd when he told them that workers for these companies earn only \$2.50 per day. When he described the disappearances and jailings of union activists, it had a moving effect on the membership.

When Alejandro was done speaking, everyone was on their feet applauding. We took up a collection to cover the expenses of his trip and aid the work of his union federation, FENASTRAS. The guy who won the local drawing at that meeting donated most of his winnings.

Our local treasurer left the meeting when he heard that Alejandro had no winter coat. He came back a little later with a brand new parka that was to have been a gift for his father, who recently died. He gave the jacket to Alejandro.

One other thing Alejandro did was have an interview with Channel 35 TV. It was a short piece on the evening news but the anchorwo-

man did a beautiful job. The item before it was about layoffs at Bucyrus Erie, so she picked up on that and said, "While union members in Erie are fighting for their jobs, in El Salvador union members are fighting for their lives. Last night Alejandro Molina Lara spoke at United Electrical Workers Local 506. . . ."

*Q. Alejandro returned to Erie a few weeks later. You helped to organize that tour also, right?*

*A.* Yes. His first trip to Erie was organized so hastily that there was no time to set anything else up. Myself and some other union people and people I knew in the peace movement felt we could get him to meet with other constituencies and do more in the Erie media. The dates we were able to schedule him for turned out to coincide with the December Erie Central Labor Council meeting. So a talk before the council was set up.

Then members of the local CARD [Committee Against Registration and the Draft] and the nuclear freeze group planned a public meeting for Alejandro at Gannon College. A professor at Behrend College invited him to one of his classes. He also had interviews on two more TV stations.

*Q. What was the reaction to Alejandro at*

*the Central Labor Council meeting?*

*A.* You wouldn't believe it if you weren't there. Compared to his speech to UE 506 he just cut loose. He described why the working class in El Salvador had to turn to armed struggle. He explained how every other means for working people to deal with their problems — strikes, elections, etc. — had been blocked by the government, which is controlled by 14 wealthy families.

For example, he described how strikes are met with armed repression. So to prevent strikers from being killed they adopted the tactic of kidnapping the bosses and holding them in the plant with them.

He also described how elections were stolen. When candidates supported by workers were elected, the military voided the results.

To my surprise that line of argument was well received by the delegates. The whole place was on its feet. The officers had their pictures taken standing arm and arm with Alejandro. Delegates all along the aisles shook his hand. The hat was passed among the 50 people there and they donated \$100. The council donated another \$100 from its treasury. Also, they adopted a resolution calling for an end to all U.S. aid to El Salvador.

One council member got up and said some-



Molina Lara speaking at meeting in New York City February 11. Some 225 people turned out despite worst blizzard in 36 years. During a weeklong tour of the New York-Northern New Jersey area, Molina Lara spoke to members and officials of the United Electrical Workers Union, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, United Auto Workers, and to transit workers, hospital workers, government employees, and teachers.

thing like, "I grew up in the coal country and back in the '20s and '30s the state police used to come in on horseback and beat people down when they went on strike. And now these big cartels are doing the same thing around the world."

I wish we had a videotape of that meeting to send to Lane Kirkland [president of the AFL-CIO, the U.S. trade-union federation] to show him what unionists in Erie think of U.S. policy in El Salvador.

*Q. Why do you think unionists responded to Alejandro with such enthusiasm?*

A. From the most immediate, self-interest point of view, we realize that our jobs are being exported. Right here at General Electric the company is planning to close the foundry and some of that work is going to Brazil. The cheapest labor they can get is in countries where workers have no rights, where right-wing military dictatorships supported by the U.S. government create a business climate that is best for runaway shops. When people in my local read over the list Alejandro had of companies investing in El Salvador, they saw the connection.

Also, I saw that the reaction Alejandro got from the two union meetings was stronger than that at the campus meeting. There is a strong emotional identity, solidarity that workers here have with another worker living under extreme repression. Things that American union members would never tolerate here are being done in countries where our government has a lot of say, in our name, with our tax money.

To hear Alejandro describe how and why workers are fighting in El Salvador makes people understand, see, and feel that the working class is a class. It breaks down international boundaries. To hear him describe it you know that workers, no matter the country, are on the same side and bosses are on the other side. The thing that was so exciting to me about the Central Labor Council and UE 506 meetings was that you could see that international solidarity of workers really exists. Alejandro was really able to strengthen the class consciousness of the people he spoke to.

*Q. What do you think organized labor should be doing to oppose U.S. intervention?*

A. In January, my local sent a letter to our congressmen and senators telling them about Alejandro's talk to our local meeting. Then the letter said:

"U.S. military and economic aid is supporting this repression of human rights. U.S.-based multinational corporations that operate in El Salvador benefit from these policies that

allow them to exploit cheap labor. We as American workers are paying taxes that finance the repression of our brother and sister unionists, and that subsidize the export of our jobs.

"President Reagan's certification of human rights progress by the government of El Salvador is a lie which completely ignores the true conditions in El Salvador. We urge Congress to hold hearings and reject Reagan's certification.

"All U.S. military aid and intervention in El Salvador and Central America should be halted. We need money for jobs here at home, not more guns and more bloodshed in Central America."

I'd like to see the labor movement as a whole oppose Reagan's policies. I'd like to see us acting and demonstrating against U.S. policy in El Salvador, Nicaragua, etc. The way to turn labor in this direction is to let the rank and file hear workers from these countries explain what's going on and how U.S. policy is supporting the most antilabor forces in these countries.

We're American workers and it is the U.S. government that is the major force holding up the Salvadoran dictatorship and every other dictatorship in Latin America. We have a greater responsibility than workers in Germany or England because it is our government intervening. We have to oppose it and stop it. □



## The Importance of the Salvador Solidarity Movement

The growth of a world movement in solidarity with the people of El Salvador reflects more than the fears of a Vietnam-type war developing in Central America and the danger to world peace and human values that such a war would involve.

Those dangers are real enough, and in themselves, make mobilizing against the threat of imperialist intervention an urgent task of the workers movement, socialists, and defenders of human and democratic rights throughout the world.

Washington's response to the revolutionary upsurge in Central America has already been to escalate the nuclear arms race in an attempt to deter the Soviet Union from giving any support to the anti-imperialist fighters in Central America.

What the U.S. is doing to make its threats more credible, beef up its arsenal of nuclear missiles in Europe, will in fact objectively increase the danger of atomic war.

However, the movement in support of the Salvadoran people is not simply a re-edition of the anti-Vietnam war movement, any more than the course of the revolution has been the same in El Salvador as in Vietnam.

The movement in support of the people of El Salvador begins both broader and on a higher political level than the anti-Vietnam war movement. It also comes in the context of a deeper ideological crisis of capitalist society.

For example, it reflects the radicalization in the Catholic church that developed in the U.S. only toward the end of the anti-Vietnam war movement.

In fact, in the U.S., Catholic groups and members of Catholic religious orders were among the initiators of the movement in support of the Salvadoran people.

This development illustrates in a dramatic way the extent to which all idealism, humanism, and culture—even the most conservative in its roots—now comes into conflict with the struggle of a degenerate capitalist and imperialist system to prolong its unnatural life.

The rise of the Salvadoran revolution and the movement in solidarity with it also coincide with a worldwide economic crisis. And the effects of that on the consciousness of millions and millions of people, in particular youth and thoughtful trade-union activists, are interwoven with the growing mass sympathy for the Salvadoran people.

It is notable, for example, that there is more involvement of U.S. trade-union activists and trade unions in the Salvadoran movement than there was in the anti-Vietnam war movement. And there is every

reason to think that this can be broadened much further.

The Salvadoran revolution is a process that can appeal not only to the idealistic youth looking for an example of courageous resistance to the power of the capitalist rulers.

It can be popular with great masses of people, even in the advanced capitalist countries, with ordinary people, workers, and trade unionists. It is something that they can identify with, see as relevant to their own problems, as a positive example.

and there is a certain recognition of the need for respecting different opinions and for political discussion in order to achieve both breadth and unity.

Such understanding was undoubtedly a hard-won gain for the Salvadoran movement, and it may be difficult to sustain under the pressures of a growing war. But it does represent the development of a trend that could be seen already in the Nicaraguan revolution. It is a step toward renewing a very important aspect of the tradition of the Bolshevik party that led



FMLN-FDR controlled areas in El Salvador.

That is because the Salvadoran revolution marks a significant step toward the forms of mass mobilization that a socialist revolution will take in the advanced capitalist countries.

This fact also tends to make the Salvadoran revolution more popular in the neo-colonial countries, since it offers a greater hope for achieving the aspirations of the masses of people everywhere, even the poorest, for democracy and a humanistic system of government, as well as for the right of national self-determination. This is particularly important in the larger partially industrialized countries, such as Mexico and Brazil.

The Salvadoran revolution grew out of mass trade-union struggles and mass mobilizations for democratic rights. The revolutionary leadership has striven to organize the masses in the areas it controls and involve them in political decision-making and in the solving of the economic problems they face.

There is a strong element of pluralism in the Salvadoran revolutionary movement. Different tendencies exist and cooperate,

the first socialist revolution in one of the world's largest and most complex countries.

At a time when the international capitalist system has entered another deep crisis, when the living standards and aspirations of the workers and youth in the central capitalist countries as well are coming under attack, precisely the elements of a mass democratic revolutionary movement that can be seen in El Salvador take on a central importance. This means that the growth of a mass movement of solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution will be directly intertwined with the processes that are preparing the way for the emergence of broad revolutionary currents in the advanced capitalist countries themselves.

In this respect, despite the obstacles that exist to mutual understanding and link-up between the Salvadoran revolutionists and Solidarnosc in Poland, the two examples coincide very much in their effect and the effect they can have on the workers movement throughout the world.

Together they illuminate the way forward for all humanity.

# Solidarity with the People of Central America and the Caribbean

An imperialist war against the people of Central America and the Caribbean has begun!

Since the revolutionary overthrow of the hated dictatorships in Nicaragua and Grenada three years ago, led by the FSLN and the New Jewel Movement, the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean have been on the march. Each day they are deepening their struggle against the imperialist domination that has brought nothing but decades of misery and suffering.

Faced with the revolutionary advances throughout the region, the U.S. ruling class has no choice but to use its massive military power to protect its imperialist interests.

In *El Salvador* the people in arms, led by the FDR-FMLN, have continued to strengthen their political and military capacities and expand their international diplomatic offensive. Following the electoral farce of March 28, the new government of Alvarado Magana was put together by the Yankee embassy. The numbers of massacres and tortured has increased. Even the miserable "land reform" of Duarte has been annulled. The latest batch of officers and special troops trained in the U.S. have returned. The level of U.S. aid has increased to the point where today only three other countries in the world receive more aid than the dictatorship of El Salvador.

In *Guatemala* the newly formed unity of the revolutionary forces and the broadening popular base of anti-imperialist struggle amongst the Indian majority of the Guatemalan people, has been met by the coup of last March that brought to power the military junta headed by General Rios Montt. While the demagogic declarations about the necessity for (Christian love and) "civil peace" have multiplied, they have served only as a cover for the resumption of imperialist aid. With this support, General Montt is carrying out new and even more brutal massacres in the rural areas, especially against the Quiche Indian people, and stepping up his military offensive against the UNRG.

While the revolutionary forces of El Salvador and Guatemala are today fighting to overthrow bloody pro-imperialist dictatorships, the workers and peasants of *Nicaragua* and *Grenada* are mobilising to fight to the last drop of blood to defend their revolutionary governments and the social, economic, and political advances they have achieved over the last three years.

As the May Day celebration in Managua proclaimed: "We will defend the revolution, building Socialism." Faced with these new advances, imperialist aggression against Nicaragua has already reached a qualitatively new level. Daily battles are now being fought with imperialist-armed counterrevolutionary units operating out of bases on two fronts: Honduras and Costa Rica.

A counterrevolutionary government-in-exile is being put together, trying to establish itself on Nicaraguan territory, where it can "legitimately" call for open imperialist intervention.

Economic strangulation and sabotage, diplomatic isolation—all weapons are being used to try to weaken and divide the Nicaraguan people and bring down the first workers and peasants government in Central America which is moving to abolish capitalist exploitation and oppression in Nicaragua.

In *Grenada* a similar process is unfolding as the working people of that island nation deepen their economic and social gains.

Destabilisation efforts and other counterrevolutionary operations financed and directed by various imperialist interests have been accompanied by massive naval maneuvers in the Caribbean, carrying out simulated landings on Grenada. In fact, the last months have seen a total of four naval maneuvers involving all the principal imperialist powers of NATO. Their goal has been not only intimidation but a dress rehearsal for a blockade and landings wherever in the region imperialism decides to strike.

The problem for Washington is clear.

Behind El Salvador and Guatemala, Nicaragua and Grenada, stands *Cuba*.

Imperialism's military escalation is aimed at crushing the rise of revolutionary struggles throughout the region. Today it is the Salvadoran people who are suffering the harshest imperialist aggression in the region. But the ultimate objective must be the Cuban workers state, because imperialism knows that Cuba will support the struggles of the people of Central America and the Caribbean to the end. While the Cuban revolution lives, the current reactionary offensive cannot triumph.

The war which is today being waged by Anglo-American imperialism against Argentina is intimately tied to the imperialist offensive in Central America. It too is intended to intimidate the working people of Latin America and teach

them that they dare not assert the right to control their own lands, their own resources, their own destinies.

The Anglo-American imperialist aggression against Argentina and its consequences throughout Latin America has created difficulties for the war plans of the imperialists and their allies in the region. But the certainty of an ever larger and more direct Yankee intervention in Central America and the Caribbean has not changed.

U.S. imperialism will not renounce the use of a single weapon in its arsenal for blocking the extension of the socialist revolution in what it considers to be its own "backyard."

We are living through a decisive moment.

We must fight to prevent the imperialists war drive from achieving its objectives.

The revolutionaries of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Grenada, and Cuba have not retreated a single step. On the contrary each day their authority with the people and their capacity to take initiatives on all fronts increases. New revolutionary victories, new workers states are being born in Central America and the Caribbean.

United, fighting international solidarity with this forward march of the revolution will play a decisive role in the struggles that are coming. Our brothers and sisters on the front lines of battle in Central America and the Caribbean are fighting in the interests of working people the world over; our struggle is one!

The solidarity committees must be strengthened. The World Front for Solidarity with the Salvadoran People shows the road to follow for the coordination of solidarity work.

The mobilisation of the broadest forces in action against the escalating imperialist war moves in Central America and the Caribbean must be a central task.

The Fourth International commits its entire forces to continue and deepen this solidarity work. ■

**NO IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION!**

**INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN!**

*International Executive Committee of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL*  
May 1982.