

# El Salvador: Crises Continues

El Salvador is your average Latin American country with a repressive regime, a tiny wealthy elite, a massive amount of poverty, and a close relationship with the United States. But recently El Salvador has stood out as having one of the more repressive governments in Central America.

To date the government and right wing forces are culpable for 80% of the more than 30,000 deaths since Oct, 1979. These government forces and rightwing death squads are known to work together. Evidence has been compiled from Church groups and human rights organizations that show that government forces commonly torture and mutilate their victims. Teachers and students have been killed in classrooms, children have been killed in front of their parents, people old and young have been decapitated or have been found dumped in the streets with a few limbs missing. Episodes such as these, and others even more gruesome, are still going on in El Salvador. It is not surprising that the U.N. has passed three resolutions in the past two years condemning

human rights violations in El Salvador.

On the other hand, the U.S. government continues to give the Salvadorean government more military aid and is presently training 1500 Salvadorean soldiers on U.S. soil. It is certain that such military aid helps increase the power of what former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, calls "one of the most out of control, violent, bloodthirsty groups of men in the world".

More military aid means more human rights violations— even against American religious in El Salvador. The slogan, "U.S. GUNS KILL U.S. NUNS", is to the point.

Despite mounting opposition at home, from at least 54 congressmen(3), and mounting isolation abroad, especially from France and Mexico, Reagan has just authorized another 55million in military aid for El Salvador. Even Canada, the closest ally of the U.S., has expressed reservation about U.S. military aid to El Salvador.

Downplaying the significance of human rights violations and, while ignoring the pleas of Church groups, human rights groups and the United Nations(5) the

U.S. has claimed military aid is needed to fight off the communist threat. The State Department claims that Cuba and the Soviet Union are the cause of social unrest in Latin America.

Most other sources, however, agree that social unrest in Latin America, and especially in El Salvador, is caused by a history of repression and socio-economic exploitation. With rampant poverty, military repression, complete lack of freedom and all non-violent means of reform crushed it is not difficult to see why people would revolt. How would anyone react to watching their children die of malnutrition, or watching their parents, friends or relatives being killed by their own government forces. One does not need a communist to see things are intolerable.

Nonetheless, as the war rages on and hundreds of innocents die each week, U.S. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, in his cold, firm temperament will once again reiterate that the U.S. will not tolerate another Cuba.

In the weeks to come I will try to keep the concerned student body aware of the Salvadorean crisis. But, no doubt, many of you have questions about the current situation. I would welcome your response, pro or con, to the above article. If you or your group are interested in organizing a presentation, discussion, or debate on El Salvador please let us know.

Larry Loveless, spokesperson for the P.E.I. El Salvador Information Group, Call 892-8726 or the Sun editor.



## Who's Bashing Who?

By Jim Revell

The recent first ministers conference in Ottawa was filled with the usual rhetoric and finger pointing at one another that has accompanied such events in the past. To me, however, it felt good to see the federal government respond to the criticism levied against it by the various provincial premiers over the last few months. The Prime Ministers closing communique stated clearly that the provinces also must share the burden of reviving an economy sick from excessive government spending and poorly thought-out fiscal policies. Trudeau, speaking in a manner not unlike the way a father does when scolding a child, reiterated the

federal governments desires to bring spending back under control and for increased visibility of federal programs.

The current economic problems of high unemployment, high interest rates, and high inflation were largely the result of increased expenditures in beneficial social aid programs and rising expectations on the part of consumers. The result of this move to the left has been a cumulative deficit in excess of 30 billion dollars, an amount so large in size that the cost of servicing it has become one of the larger government expenditures. While it is easy to be a critic of the harsh measures being imposed at present the alternatives facing finance minister MacEachern

are even less palatable. An abandoning of his tight money policy would see a dollar devalued even lower with the resulting repercussions being increased inflation and higher unemployment. We must all remember that you cannot resolve in a year what took society and governments fifteen years to accomplish. The federal Liberals have not withdrawn from the Established Programs Funding (E.P.F.). They remain committed to uniform levels of health care and the development of its youth by maintaining funding for post-secondary education.

Here on P.E.I. our new premier is faced with the inevitable task to reinstalling confidence in a government which is properly perceived

as a "do nothing government." Three years of "fed bashing" and no new directions in either the industrial sector or primary sectors have left Islanders disillusioned with their provincial government. The removal of the Island from the Pt. Lepreau nuclear plant to a coal fired operation in Dalhousie N.S. will bring us higher electricity costs and create more damage to the environment, through acid rain, than a hundred nuclear plants could.

Perhaps now that the constitutional accord has been signed the provincial government will concentrate its efforts towards developing an industrial base and the creation of new jobs.