

# Two Faces of Reagan

By Larry Loveless

Even though some have argued that the most outstanding feature of the present American Foreign Policy is its non-existence and, while others have argued that Reagan's foreign policy simply represents the Easter Sunday of McCarthyism, I would maintain the outstanding feature of American Foreign Policy today is its blatant hypocrisy.

The administration's two faces are most clearly seen with its stand on Poland and El Salvador. While Reagan boldly speaks out for workers rights and freedoms in Poland, he authorizes repressing workers' rights and freedoms in El Salvador (to live, let alone organize) by granting massive military aid to a government whose military forces are massacring its own people.

But to make the point even stronger, Reagan has actually claimed, in contradiction to well documented fact, that the Salvadorean government "has made a concerted, significant and good faith effort to deal with complex political, social, and human rights problems it is confronting and that progress is being made" (The Washington Post, Feb. 7, 1982). The timely recent massacres by government troops fly directly in the face of Reagan's statements. In the Mozote region, "the villagers have compiled a list of names, ages, and villages of 733 peasants, mostly children, women, and old people, who they say were murdered by government soldiers." (Manchester Guardian, Feb. 7, 1982. See copy of report of massacre in this week's issue of the SUN.)

American Foreign Policy is not only clearly hypocritical but is also ineffective. Despite

increased American military involvement the Salvadorean opposition has become stronger. Similarly, such U.S. military support has also served to further demoralize and internationally isolate the US and Salvadorean governments. Even the American Press is becoming significantly critical of the Reagan/Haig hard line policy toward El Salvador.

Moreover, such developments seem a frightening parallel to Vietnam. The US disagree, however, saying they feel a victory for the US is more possible in El Salvador than it was in Vietnam. This may be true. It should take less of an effort to pacify Salvadorean peasants than it took to pacify Vietnamese peasants: after all El Salvador is a smaller country and would require less intensive bombing of civilian villages. However, the parallels between Vietnam and El Salvador is not so much in terms of ultimate

victory as it is in terms of both the escalation of US military involvement with a corrupt regime and the growing isolation and demoralization of American foreign policy.

It was just as hypocritical of former president Johnson to claim in one breath that the US was fighting for democracy in Vietnam and in another, to claim that sometimes you have to wipe out a village to save it as it is for Reagan to support workers in Poland and to support the murderers of workers in El Salvador.

But for one who searches for consistency in Reagan's policies, at least consistency between domestic and foreign policies, it can be found. It is consistent to support apartheid in South Africa and to support tax exemptions for schools which practice racial discrimination. Reagan has done both.

## Only in Canada You Say ?

The foreign affairs representative, Dennis Donaldson, of the Catholic Interests of Belfast known as Sinn Fein, arrived at the Toronto airport on Wednesday, January 27. To counter claims of legitimacy and confidence that his political and religious nemesis, Ian Paisley, was preaching, Donaldson was invited to speak in Canada at a number of public meetings organized by trade unions, church groups, Irish associations etc. However, his intent to provide Canadians with an alternate understanding of Irish politics was firmly rejected by Canadian Immigration Authorities. No sooner had Donaldson left the plane, than he was swept off to a police detention centre in the Toronto area. This was a procedure radically different from the norm where questionable immigration cases are taken to a hotel room at the Toronto terminal. If this humiliating and degrading Canadian surprise was not enough, Donaldson was then ordered to wear a prison uniform, but honorably refused because of the political imp-

lications this kind of action would have had in Ireland especially in light of the well publicized prison protest there. As a result of his refusal to be identified as a common criminal, Dennis Donaldson was stripped and placed in solitary confinement.

Reason given by Canadian Immigration authorities in support of their unusual action was that in 1971 Donaldson had been imprisoned for the possession of explosives in Ireland, a crime, which in Canadian terms, would have equalled a prison term of 10 years. (Canadian immigration authorities prohibit any immigrant trying to enter Canada with a criminal record which is interpreted by Canadian laws as exceeding 10 years.)

But just as the Canadian Immigration Authorities unjustly treated Donaldson after his arrival in Toronto, the Northern Ireland court system, which has its origin in the British legal system convicted him without trial because of his refusal to recognize

the authority of that legal system. (If a Pole or Russian was invited to speak in Canada and had been a political prisoner, charged with treason, etc., there would have been no trouble from immigration.)

But Donaldson's case is not the only example of Northern Ireland's unfair legal system. In fact, that particular judicial system convicts 80% of those charged with political offenses in Northern Ireland - more than twice the conviction rate in Canada and normal British courts. With such a high percentage of conviction, it is easily understood why this has been condemned by Amnesty International, European Court of Human Rights, and the Portuguese government.

But Dennis, fortunately, unlike most of those

charged and convicted of political acts in Northern Ireland was granted special status as a political prisoner, thus enabling him to live in facilities where prisoners are under the command of their own elected officers, not prison authorities.

But with final regards to all that happened to Dennis Donaldson, in Canada, he left voluntarily on Feb 3 in order to avoid the very real possibility of violating deportation demands, which would have meant being sent back to British Authorities. Also, with the surfacing of this embarrassment, Canada appears to be bending to the wishes of the British government to hush up the true conditions which exist in Ireland and the brutality of the British rule.

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