

Rev

outcome

9219901

004-CP-90

2 MT

NEW YORK LABOR COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN

EL SALVADOR

c/o LOCAL 111 IBT, 111 BROADWAY, SUITE 800, NY, NY 10006

- Margarita Aguilar, President
Local 3882 USA-AFT
- Sydney Bykofsky, President
United Hebrew Trades
- Arthur Cheliotas, President
Local 1180 CWA
- Enio Carrion, President
Local 140 UFWA
- Frank Condell, President
Public Employees Federation
- Eric Dubro, President
National Writers' Union
- Mark Dudak, President
Local 8-149 OCAW
- Françoise Felix, President
Local 1-3 FLA-FJC UFCW
- Moe Foner, Executive Secretary Emeritus
National Hospital Union
- Everley Gans, Sub-Regional Director
Region 9-A UAW
- John Glasel, President
Local 802 AFM
- Lou Gordon, Business Manager
Local 107 UPIU
- Janet Freedman, M.D., Executive Director
Committee of Interns & Residents
- Stanley Hill, Executive Director
D.C. 37 AFSCME
- John Hudson, Vice-President
ACTWU
Headwear Joint Board
- Frank Kane, President
Communications Trade Division IBT
- David Livingston, President
District 65 UAW
- Mark Meyers, President
Local 259 UAW
- William Nuchow, Secretary-Treasurer
Local 840 IBT
- John Pierce, Vice-President
District 1 CWA
- Simon Porro, President
Local 1930 AFSCME
- Paul Piroman, Business Manager
Local 15 NABET
- Paula Rivera, President
Local 1199 RWDSU
- John Riordan, President
Local 3369 AFGE
- Thye Roberts, President
District Council 1707 AFSCME
- Tommaso, Vice-President
Stoneworkers Union RWDSU
- John Unger, President
Local 1150 CWA

PETITION BEFORE THE U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
ON LABOR RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

NEW YORK LABOR COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT
OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

MAY 1990

As trade union leaders who have monitored the labor rights situation in El Salvador with concern, we herein submit to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) a petition documenting labor rights violations in El Salvador pursuant to Section 502 (b) (8) of the Trade Act. This is to request a formal public review of the labor rights situation in El Salvador.

Coordinator: Alan Howard
D.C. 37, AFSCME

f. Barbara Briggs

INCIDENT BASED VIOLATION OF LABOR RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

The ASTTEL Case

Repression of the
Salvadoran Telecommunications Workers Association

NOTE:

Case 7
* ANTEL is a state-owned telecommunications monopoly controlled by the ARENA party and the Salvadoran military. ANTEL President Saul Suster is a close friend and associate of President Alfredo Cristiani.

* As a leading public sector union in an economy dominated by the state, what happens to ASTTEL will significantly impact upon the scope of labor rights accorded to all the unions in El Salvador.

* The Government of El Salvador bears a special responsibility to afford internationally recognized labor rights to public employees such as ASTTEL members.

Labor Rights Violations Against ASTTEL: Summary

*violence
6 deaths
dissol
threat
1 tort*
The ASTTEL union had sufficient strength to force ANTEL management to sign a contract with the union on September 30, 1985. One month later ANTEL's military management unleashed a violent repression aimed at dismantling ASTTEL. Six members of ASTTEL were assassinated and another member disappeared in 1987-1988. The worksites are militarized. ASTTEL leaders have been the target of numerous incidents of abduction/torture and they have received frequent death threats. The contract has been thrown out and wages and benefits cut. One hundred thirty-seven ASTTEL members have been fired and at least one hundred forty-seven punitively transferred in an attempt to break ASTTEL's union locals.

Chronology of the Repression Against ASTTEL
May 26, 1989 - May 8 1990

May 26, 1989

Jose Basilio Chavez Pena, International Affairs officer of ASTTEL, is captured by members of the First Infantry Brigade and turned over to the Treasury Police who detain him for three days of interrogation. During that time he is stripped naked, handcuffed, blindfolded, kept standing and denied sleep, food and water. During interrogation, Chavez is threatened with death if he does not give testimony linking the ASTTEL union to the guerrilla insurgency. He refuses and is beaten. Chavez is questioned extensively about a recent tour he made to Europe in his capacity as International Affairs Secretary of his union to meet with labor, government and religious leaders. His interrogators possess a great deal of knowledge about his tour and question him concerning the content of specific meetings.

On May 29th, Jose Chavez is released for lack of evidence. On the Treasury Police release document the stated reason for his detention is "for investigation by members of this body [the Treasury Police], on the 26th of May, 1989, for belonging to the union of ANTEL (ASTTEL)." (emphasis ours)

*International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association." (p 22)

Included in this is the guarantee of normal judicial process, that the detainee be informed of charges against him, access to counsel and prompt trial. (p. 26)*

June 12

Jose Tomas Mazariego, ASTTEL Executive Council officer, is abducted by heavily armed men in civilian clothing who refuse to identify themselves. Jose Mazariego is beaten, stripped naked, blindfolded and interrogated. No security force admits to holding Mazariego and he is feared "disappeared". Mazariego is questioned about his union activities, and asked to provide a list of ASTTEL leaders and their addresses. His

*All international labor rights criteria are taken from the International Labor Organization (ILO) publication, "Freedom of Association, A Digest of Decisions and Principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO, Third Edition."

Jai 10
threat 1
beat 1

POA

diss 1
beat 1
threat 1

interrogators question him concerning his trip to the United States. (His abduction occurred an hour after leaving the U.S. Embassy where he received a visa to enter the U.S. He planned to travel to the U.S. the next morning for a series of meetings with labor, religious and congressional leaders.) Mazariego is threatened with death if he does not declare ASTTEL to be a guerrilla front group. When he refuses he is beaten, a capucha (lime filled bag that causes asphyxiation) is tied over his head (four times), and acid is poured on his legs causing burns.

threat ①
beat ①

tort ①

After a massive international protest over his disappearance, the Treasury Police admit to holding Jose Mazariego and he is released on June 15 for lack of evidence. According to a Treasury Police document, Jose Mazariego was "detained in an investigation for suspicion of being a delinquent/terrorist and for being a member of the ASTTEL union." (Emphasis ours. See attached document)

Note: This was the third time that Jose Mazariego had been abducted and detained. In September 1988 Mazariego was detained by the National Police. In April 1989 he was abducted by a death squad and released after heavy international protest.

~~abducted~~

Jail ①

kill ①

***International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment**

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association."
(p 22)

Right to Integrity of the Person

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

The ILO states that murder or disappearance of trade union leaders constitutes a serious obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights; such acts require measures to be taken by the authorities. (p. 20)

June 1989

ANTEL management fires five ASTTEL members, including company security guards who have refused to confiscate and destroy union literature.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against
Union Activities**

The ILO notes that "no person should be prejudiced in his employment by reason of his trade union membership or legitimate trade union activities," (p. 101) Acts of discrimination include retaliatory firings and punitive transfers.

June to present


In direct contradiction to International Labor Organization (ILO) standards for public workers, the Salvadoran Telecommunications Workers Association (ASTTEL) has not been permitted by the government to legalize itself as a union, but only as an association. This strips ASTTEL's collective bargaining of any legal status.

However, due to the organized strength of its members, ASTTEL has functioned as a union and carried out collective bargaining.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right of Public Employees to Form a Union**

"The denial of the right of workers in the public sector to set up trade unions, where this right is enjoyed by workers in the private sector, with the result that their 'associations' do not enjoy the same advantages and privileges as 'trade unions', involves discrimination as regards government-employed workers and their organizations." (page 45)

June to present

 In contradiction to the Salvadoran Labor Code, ANTEL management violates the stipulated eight hour work day by forcing ANTEL service and security employees to work up to 72-hour shifts -without overtime pay. Nor does ANTEL management comply with Labor Code regulations for vacation pay, night shift differentials or 100 percent severance pay for illegal firings.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right of Public Employees to Form a Union (as above)**

June to present

ANTEL worksites San Miguelito, Central Central, Central Roma and ANTEL Government Center are all militarized.

First Infantry Brigade troops are stationed within the San Miguelito plant where they have broken up attempts to hold union meetings and confiscate and destroy ASTTEL union

literature.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Freedom from Interference in Union Activity**

The ILO proscribes the use of force or intimidation to curtail union meetings, work actions or strikes. (p. 83)

June to present

The fact that six ASTTEL members were assassinated and one member disappeared in 1987-1988 without a single thorough investigation resulting in prosecution has created an atmosphere of constant fear for union workers at the ANTEL facilities.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

The ILO states that murder or disappearance of trade union leaders constitutes a serious obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights; such acts require measures to be taken by the authorities. (p. 20)

July 6

Silverio Arturo Perez, a new ANTEL employee and ASTTEL supporter is captured by armed men in civilian clothing firing shots. Silverio is held by the Salvadoran military for three days and threatened not to inform ASTTEL of his capture because, "those bastards will run all over the place whining to their international friends."

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment**

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association." (p 22)

July 24

ANTEL management fires ten ASTTEL activists, telling them to denounce ASTTEL or be fired. They refuse.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against Union Activities (as above)**

class ①
threat ①

August 17

Ricardo Lazo, ASTTEL Secretary of Organization, is abducted from his home in a predawn raid by National Guard troops and held for two days of interrogation. He is blindfolded, handcuffed and denied food. National Guard interrogators beat him on the chest and back and threaten to kill him. Lazo is questioned about ASTTEL Secretary of International Relations, Jose Chavez' tour of Europe, specifically which countries were visited, who gave monetary support, what was the nature of the relations ASTTEL has established and with whom. Lazo is told to "confess" that ASTTEL is a front organization of the FMLN. He is also asked to provide the names, titles, duties and addresses of ASTTEL Executive Council members.

Ricardo Lazo was informed verbally that he had been captured for being a leader of ASTTEL. Lazo was released without having seen a judge after two days of detention. No formal charges were brought against him.

Since his release, Lazo has received several death threats over the phone directed against him and his wife, telling them to leave the country or die.

***International Labor Rights Violations:**

Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment
(as above)

Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)

November 12, 1989

The Salvadoran government imposes a state of siege suspending civil liberties including freedom of association and speech. ASTTEL and other unions cannot hold meetings or distribute union literature. (In April the state of siege is lifted after five months.)

International Labor Rights Violation:

Right to Hold Public Meetings and Demonstrations

The ILO states that "public authorities should refrain from any interference which would restrict...the right to organize public meetings...[which] constitutes an important aspect of trade union rights." (p.33-35)

November 13-14

Colonel Francisco Elena Fuentes and a CORPREFA (Armed Forces Press Bureau) spokesperson publicly accuse ASTTEL leaders Centeno and Mazariego over government-controlled radio and television of participation in the FMLN offensive and "commanding armed men in Zacamil and Mejicanos." (On these

kill
ass ②
threat ①
beat ①
treat ①

threat ②
Fam

Threat (b)
Death (b)
Threat (2)

same days threats were broadcast over government-controlled radio and television against the Jesuit priests who on November 16 were slain by military troops.)

ASTTEL Leaders are forced into hiding having to flee their homes due to threats and military surveillance. To date several ASTTEL leaders cannot sleep in their own homes and must sleep in a different location each night.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

November 16

Hours after the army massacre of the Jesuit priests, neighbors witness 50 First Infantry Brigade troops along with elements of the National Police and Treasury Police break into and ransack the ASTTEL union office. The office is destroyed and all office equipment is stolen. All ASTTEL's files including union membership lists are also taken. ASTTEL is left with nothing.

No reason has been given for the raid, nor to date have any of the confiscated files or equipment been returned to ASTTEL. ASTTEL has asked publicly -What did the military discover? Was there anything found to incriminate the union? and notes, "If anything was found, charge us."

Threat (1)

On the morning of November 16, one hundred military troops machine gun and occupy the home of ASTTEL leader Humberto Centeno in the town of Cojutepeque. The military holds Centeno's fifteen year old daughter at gunpoint for four hours demanding that she reveal the whereabouts of her father. Centeno's family is forced to flee and the military occupies his home for two weeks.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

November 16 - 20

Threat (1)
Threat (50)

The Air Force bombs and strafes working class neighborhoods in an attempt to break the FMLN offensive. In the San Salvador area the homes of fifty ASTTEL members are destroyed or damaged.

November 18

Threat ①
death ②

ASTTEL member Rodolfo Villegas Campo's home in the town of Soyapango is destroyed in the bombing. His teenaged son and daughter are killed.

November 20

Jail ①
beat ②
Threat ②

ASTTEL officer Ricardo Ortiz Perez is captured by ANTEL company security guards and turned over to the National Police who hold him for eight days. (At the time of his capture he is responding to a telegram from ANTEL manager Guillermo Ernesto Vela telling him to report to the Central Roma worksite.) The National Police tell him that he was captured for being a member of ASTTEL. Perez is asked what terrorist group ASTTEL belongs to and who are their leaders. When Perez denies these links he is kicked in the body and punched repeatedly in the face. His interrogators put a sign on his chest saying he will be executed for being a member of the FPL guerrilla group. Perez never went before a judge, nor were legal charges filed against him.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment**

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association."
(p 22)

Included in this is the guarantee of normal judicial process, that the detainee be informed of charges against him, access to counsel and prompt trial. (p. 26)

November 21

Threat ①

Attempting to attend a scheduled meeting between ASTTEL and ANTEL management, Fidel Angel Serpas, ASTTEL Secretary of Culture, narrowly escapes an attempted capture by the First Infantry Brigade as he is approaching ANTEL headquarters.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment**

November 25, 1989

Jail ②
Threat ②

Fernando Cartagena Duenas, a founding member of ASTTEL and key union activist, is captured by National Guard troops at his home at 11 p.m. One of his sons is also taken. During interrogation, Cartagena Duenas is questioned about ASTTEL activities. His interrogators press him to declare that ASTTEL told him to participate in militant street demonstrations. He is physically and psychologically tortured.

tort ②

Duenas went before a judge and was imprisoned for subversive associations. He spent three months in prison before being released on February 19 by order of a military judge who found no evidence to justify his detention. (see attached document.)

Threat ① ANTEL management fired Duenas on December 1, while he was in prison, for "abandonment of work." Prior to his capture, Duenas' immediate superior at ANTEL threatened many times to fire him for distributing ASTTEL bulletins in the workplaces.

***International Labor Rights Violations:**
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against Union Activities

The ILO notes that "no person should be prejudiced in his employment by reason of his trade union membership or legitimate trade union activities," (p. 101) Acts of discrimination include retaliatory firings and punitive transfers.

November - December

Although the ASTTEL union pressured for and won a 500 colon wage increase at the end of November and an end-of-year bonus equivalent to one month's salary, ANTEL management distributes these wage increases in an arbitrary fashion and has denied them to ASTTEL leaders and certain activists.

***International Labor Rights Violation:**
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against Union Activities (as above)

December 4

Threat ① ASTTEL leaders attempt a visit to the ANTEL Central Roma worksite in San Salvador to hold a meeting with workers. Within minutes they are forced to flee as soldiers arrive.

***International Labor Rights Violation:**
Right to Hold Public Meetings and Demonstrations

The ILO states that "public authorities should refrain from any interference which would restrict...the right to organize public meetings...[which] constitutes an important aspect of trade union rights." (p.33-35)

December 11 - 30

In order to avoid capture, ASTTEL leaders adopt the tactic of distributing union literature on the buses that transport ANTEL workers to the worksites.

Threat ②
National Police twice attempt to capture ASTTEL leader Jose Mazariego.

***International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

Right to Publish and Distribute Literature

The ILO states that workers should be free to express their opinions in their publications, at meetings and in the general course of their union activities. (p. 38)

December

Threat ①
Armed bodyguards of ANTEL manager (Chief of External Plants) Miguel Angel Barela threaten workers, "Don't get involved with ASTTEL. Anyone who does we are going to persecute and kill."

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

Last week in December

Air Force drops thousands of flyers over San Salvador with photo of ASTTEL leader Humberto Centeno accusing him of being a member of the FMLN. (See attached document.)

**International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

January 6, 1990

Six ASTTEL activists are fired.

ANTEL has hired ex-military people as replacement workers. These new employees declare openly to ANTEL workers at the worksites that they intend to assassinate members of the ASTTEL Executive Council as well as ASTTEL key activists. Among those recently hired, at least three -Marcial Sanchez, Rogelio Martinez Arias and Ramon Gonzalez- are being used to spy on ASTTEL's activities. These men report ASTTEL's activities, bulletins, meetings and rank-and-file involvement to ANTEL management.

***International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against
Union Activities (as above)**

Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)

January 8, 1990

ASTTEL leaders attempt to meet with workers at Civil Works plant, but after ten minutes they are forced to flee as troops move in.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Freedom from Interference in Union Activity**

The ILO proscribes the use of force or intimidation to curtail union meetings, work actions or strikes. (p. 83)

January to Present

There are constant telephone threats to ASTTEL's union office.

ASTTEL union leaders continue to be followed. A red car belonging to the National Police, licence plate number P71644 is often used to monitor ASTTEL's office and the movements of ASTTEL leaders.

The military has tapped the phones in ASTTEL's office as well as the phones the ASTTEL leaders use at work (beginning on their return to work March 14, 1990). The telephone workers are aware of this tapping because the monitoring takes place from inside the phone company, from monitoring rooms at the ANTEL Central Central and at ANTEL Government Center. (Phone communications of the international press are also monitored.)

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

January 16

ASTTEL holds first meeting with management since October 1989. ASTTEL leaders Centeno, Mazariego and Berrios, still receiving death threats, cannot attend.

February 13

ASTTEL Secretary of Organization Ricardo Lazo is captured for the second time in six months, this time by the National Police. They accuse Lazo of being a terrorist criminal. He is interrogated about ASTTEL and tortured psychologically with death threats. He is released on February 14 without going

before a judge. No formal charges are filed against him.

Threat
Lazo continues to receive death threats both by phone and anonymous notes. This began after his first capture.

① *International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association."
(p 22)

Included in this is the guarantee of normal judicial process, that the detainee be informed of charges against him, access to counsel and prompt trial. (p. 26)

Right to Integrity of the Person

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

Note:

All of the arrests of ASTTEL leaders fit into the general pattern of detention by Salvadoran security forces in which over 80 percent of those arrested are eventually released without ever having charges filed against them in court. Such statistics which come from the Salvadoran Government's own Human Rights Commission funded by the U.S., make it evident that the vast majority of arrests are not based on evidence but rather function as a mechanism to promote fear of union and other organizing efforts.

February 14, 15, 16

Threat
National Police come to ASTTEL/FEASIES office and threaten to ransack it. They also claim they have arrest warrants for ASTTEL leaders Centeno and Mazariego.

*International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)

February 26

ASTTEL and FEASIES hold a press conference to publicly announce the official opening of their new union office. For several days the area is heavily militarized.

-threat *①*

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

March 3

ASTTEL union office (publicly reopened on February 26) is closed as detectives of the National Police mount a military operation around the building. - threat ①

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Freedom from Interference in Union Activity (as above)**

March 12

Jai ①
ASTTEL member Rafael Ernesto Delgado, a driver from the Central Central worksite, is held incommunicado by the Customs Police for eight days after being told by ANTEL manager Isaac Rivera to present himself at the Customs office.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment (as above)**

March 14

ANTEL management ends the two and a half year illegal lockout of ASTTEL leaders who had been barred at gunpoint from entry to any ANTEL worksite. Through negotiations, ASTTEL leaders win the right to return to their jobs and the freedom to enter all worksites.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Publish and Distribute Literature**

The ILO states that workers should be free to express their opinions in their publications, at meetings and in the general course of their union activities. (p. 38)

Workers' representatives for the proper exercise of their functions must have the right of access to the workplace. (p.33, emphasis added.)

March 26

Thirty ANTEL workers are fired, the majority long-time union activists. The fired unionists are forced to sign "resignation agreements" on blank sheets of paper. Management threatened that if they did not sign they would be imprisoned. All of the fired workers were long-time employees with between eight and thirty years at ANTEL.

Threat ①

The company refuses to rehire the fired workers or to release records stating the reasons for the firings to ASTTEL union representatives.

Since June of 1989, 62 ASTTEL unionists have been fired.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against
Union Activities**

The ILO notes that "no person should be prejudiced in his employment by reason of his trade union membership or legitimate trade union activities," (p. 101) Acts of discrimination include retaliatory firings and punitive transfers.

May 3

ANTEL management Communique No. 456 outlaws union meetings or activities during working hours at ANTEL worksites. ANTEL management communiques have warned ANTEL workers against any political involvement.

Mid-level ANTEL managers consistently threaten that there will be reprisals against any workers who involve themselves with the ANTEL union. ANTEL Chief of Transport Jose Isaac Rivera, Chief of the Civil Works Department, Francisco Bolanos and the Chief of the Telegram Department, Santos Gaspar Romero, have all publicly stated to the workers that they will not rest until ASTTEL is destroyed.

Union organizing is barred at all ANTEL worksites as is the distribution of union literature at any company facility. (This is also confirmed by the AFL-CIO Quarterly Report, El Salvador Workers Rights, page 13, October 30, 1989.)

Note:

On March 14, ASTTEL leaders won the right to enter all worksites as well as the right to distribute union literature. However, open union organizing remains seriously hampered by threats and firings.

***International Labor Rights Violations:
The Right to Political Action**

"A general prohibition on trade unions from engaging in any political activities would not only be incompatible with the principles of freedom of association, but also unrealistic in practice." (p. 71)

Right to Freedom from Interference in Union Activity (as above)

May 7-8, 1990

ANTEL management punitively transfers ASTTEL members Rafael Quintanilla Perez, Ernesto Chavarria, Roberto Pineda and Tito Agustin Campos from the Transport Department at the Central Roma worksite.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Protection from Discrimination or Retaliation Against
Union Activities (as above)**

The Case of San Cayetano El Rosario

Repression Against the San Cayetano Land Reform Cooperative

NOTE:

- * The San Cayetano El Rosario agricultural cooperative located in the Department Ahuachapan was established in March 1980. In July 1982 the cooperative received provisional title to 128 manzanas of land and in July of 1985 San Cayetano received full title to the land under Decree 207 of the Agrarian Reform.
- * The former land owner, Señora Maria Clementina Pineda, at times with the assistance of the military, has made repeated efforts to retake the land. She has made threats against coop members and accused them of being subversives.
- * San Cayetano El Rosario is affiliated with the FEDECOOPADES cooperative federation.

Partial Chronology of the Repression against San Cayetano
December 1989 - March 1990

December 4, 1989

Two hundred soldiers from the Seventh Military Detachment in Ahuachapan ransack the San Cayetano Cooperative office and members homes searching for arms. They find nothing.

Jail
(circled)

December 5

San Cayetano El Rosario Cooperative members Juan Antonio Vasquez (23 years old and his brother Julio Cesar Vasquez (18 years old) are abducted from their homes by uniformed soldiers from the Seventh Military Detachment. Family members witness the abductions.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

The ILO states that murder or disappearance of trade union leaders constitutes a serious obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights; such acts require measures to be taken by the authorities. (p. 20) (Emphases added)

Miss (4)

December 29

Four San Cayetano Cooperative leaders disappear. Gerardo Antonio Saldaña, President, 23 years old, Juan Saldaña, Secretary, 25 years old, Leonardo Perez Nuñez, Treasurer, 23 years old, Jose Eladio Saldaña Salazar, member, 33 years old, are abducted by armed men in civilian clothing after soldiers stopped the truck in which they were driving. The whereabouts of these four cooperativists remains unknown. There are at least eight witnesses to these abductions.

***International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association." (p 22)

Included in this is the guarantee of normal judicial process, that the detainee be informed of charges against him, access to counsel and prompt trial. (p. 26, emphases added)

February 12

Witnesses at Canton la Magueyes, Ahuachapan see a bus pass containing uniformed soldiers along with the abducted San Cayetano Cooperative president and treasurer, Gerardo Antonio Saldaña Salazar and Leonardo Perez Nuñez. Among the witnesses is Carmen, the wife of Gerardo Antonio Saldaña Salazar.

At an afternoon meeting with cooperative members, Colonel Staben, head of the Seventh Military Detachment, denies that soldiers under his command abducted San Cayetano members and demands that members of the cooperative stop making this accusation.

9 9
8
February 16

FEDECOOPADES cooperative federation, in a paid advertisement regarding the disappearances, calls upon Colonel Staben to release the San Cayetano cooperativists.

February 23

Colonel Staben meets with family members of the disappeared cooperative members. In the morning he meets privately with the wife of Gerardo Antonio Saldaña Salazar. When other family members arrive, it appears that under pressure she has changed her story and is no longer sure that the men she saw on the bus on February 12 were her husband and Leonard Perez Nuñez. Previously she had been positive, noting that the bus was only 20 meters away.

February 26

A press conference being held at the FEDECOOPADES union headquarters in San Salvador with family members of the disappeared cooperativists is surrounded and broken up by the Salvadoran military.

Threat
①
***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Hold Public Meetings and Demonstrations**

The ILO states that "public authorities should refrain from any interference which would restrict...the right to organize public meetings...[which] constitutes an important aspect of trade union rights." (p.33-35)

March 12

Colonel Staben, a Lieutenant from the National Guard and an unidentified North American come to the San Cayetano Cooperative to obtain signed declarations from family members and witnesses to the abductions that the Seventh Military Detachment was not responsible for the disappearances. Many sign.

disc (6)
March 1990

Without the backing of the families, the FEDECOOPADES cooperative federation is unable to continue to press for an investigation into the cases of these six disappeared cooperative members.

May 1990

To date there has been no serious investigation into the San Cayetano disappearances.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

The ILO states that murder or disappearance of trade union leaders constitutes a serious obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights; such acts require measures to be taken by the authorities. (p. 20, emphasis added.)

NOTE:

Prior to December 1989, 37 families lived on the San Cayetano El Rosario Cooperative. As a result of these disappearances and intimidation, only 12 families remain.

The SICAFE Case

Repression against the SICAFE Coffee Processing Industry Union

NOTE:

Case 1
* SICAFE is a large private sector union representing approximately 20,000 workers in the plants that clean and process coffee for export.

* In the last ten years, twelve of SICAFE's twenty-four organized locals have become inactive, having failed to elect local executive boards due to the heavy repression against the union. Two of these locals were lost within the last year.

Partial Chronology of the Repression Against SICAFE

December 5 - May 1990

December 5, 1989

Threat 1
Mario Alberto Alvarez, General Secretary of the Santa Ana SICAFE local, is on his way home riding a bicycle when a man dressed in civilian clothes stops him and at gunpoint demands to see his documents. After looking at his photo I.D., he shoots Alvarez several times.

Alvarez survived and has fled the country.

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

The ILO states that murder or disappearance of trade union leaders constitutes a serious obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights; such acts require measures to be taken by the authorities. (p. 20)

January 4, 5, 18, 21

Death squads associated with the Second Infantry Brigade capture, interrogate and torture four SICAFE leaders in Santa Ana.

On January 4 and 5, respectively, Jorge Alberto Sosa, local leader, and Jose Adan Chacon, Secretary of Organization of the SICAFE local in Santa Ana are abducted by heavily armed men dressed in civilian clothing. On January 18, Porfirio Vigil Segovia, Second Secretary of Conflicts of the Santa Ana local is asked for his identification and then abducted by unidentified men.

All three men are taken to a death squad safe house near the Second Infantry Brigade where they are interrogated and tortured. They are severely beaten, their heads banged against the floor. For six days they are hung -three days by the wrists, three days by the ankles. Electric shock is applied to their back, chest and testicles. They are denied food and given only sips of water (nine days for Sosa and Chacon). Rubber hoods (capuchas) containing a liquid that burns their eyes and foreheads are placed over their heads and left for hours. They are pressured to declare that they are part of the FMLN and to give the names and addresses of other SICAFE union leaders.

Jose Adan Chacon reports that after being accused of being a member of the ERP guerrilla group, he is repeatedly asked for the names and addresses of SICAFE's leaders and beaten and shocked when he does not produce them. After nine days of continuous torture and interrogation, he is transferred to the Second Infantry Brigade, where he is held for six days. For the first two days he is kept blindfolded. He is interrogated on the first and fifth days. His interrogators threaten him to "stop working for the union" and to dedicate himself to raising his family. In the Second Brigade he signs an extrajudicial confession of involvement with the FMLN "because I was afraid I would be tortured again if I did not." He is then taken to the Treasury Police where he and other SICAFE members are beaten and their heads banged together. They are

threat ①
threatened that if they continue to work for the union they will be picked up again and told, "Don't think that we will leave you alone." On January 20, Chacon is transferred to Santa Ana Prison. On February 16 he is released for lack of evidence. In May he is still suffering from intense head aches, chest pain and sight problems as a result of his torture.

Sosa and Vigil Segovia are also moved to the Second Brigade, then to the Treasury Police, and finally to Santa Ana Prison before being released in February.

141 d10
130000
100-100
Benigno Domingo Quinteros, SICAFE leader of the La Mica local in Santa Ana, captured on January 21, is similarly held and tortured, first in a death squad safe house, then in the Second Brigade and the Treasury Police, before being transferred to Mariona prison. He is released on April 25.

*International Labor Rights Violations:

Right to Protection Against Arbitrary Arrest and Punishment

"The arrest -even if only briefly- of trade union leaders and trade unionists for exercising legitimate trade union activities constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association."
(p 22)

Included in this is the guarantee of normal judicial process, that the detainee be informed of charges against him, access to counsel and prompt trial. (p. 26)

Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)

February/March 1990

Plant management and the military threaten SICAFE local leaderships and activists in four coffee processing plants.

threat ①
case ①
In the CAFECO plant in Quezaltepeque, La Libertad an army lieutenant from the Quezaltepeque garrison comes to the workplace and takes the names of all members of the CAFECO local Executive Board. He orders them to give their union titles and accuses them of participating in marches and burning buses in San Salvador, which they deny.

case ①
At the Rio Claro plant, also in Quezaltepeque, lieutenant Juan Carlos Villacorta of the San Juan Opico artillery garrison comes to the plant and takes the names of the SICAFE local executive board members. Management throws out the contract and threatens the union leaders with capture.

Union leaders and activists at the Curacao plant in La Libertad and the Nahuizalco plant in Chalchuapa, Santa Ana have been threatened with capture and disappearance by local military.

Case 1
Threat 1

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person**

"Trade union rights can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against trade unionists; it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected." (p. 19)

January to present

Captured SICAFE leaders under torture disclose the names and home addresses of other union leaders. Rolando Perez Castro, First Secretary of Conflicts, Luis Ramirez, Third Secretary of Conflicts and Rafael Ortiz, Press and Publicity Secretary of the SICAFE National Executive Board; Roberto Alvarez, General Secretary, Manuel Perez, Secretary of Culture and Publicity and Pedro Jimenez Iglesias, Secretary of Finances of the Santa Ana INCAFE local; Rafael Ortiz, General Secretary of the La Mica local, and Nomberto Moran, General Secretary of the Santa Ana Departmental Executive Board are constantly under surveillance and followed.

Threat 7

At least ten SICAFE leaders, including two national leaders flee the country in February and March because of threat of capture.

Threat 10

***International Labor Rights Violation:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

May 24, 1990

Because of the threat of abduction, SICAFE still has not returned to their central union office in San Salvador and the local office in Santa Ana, which remain under constant surveillance. The National leadership works from a small rented room in San Salvador where union rank-and-file do not go because of the risk.

Threat 11

**International Labor Rights Violations:
Right to Integrity of the Person (as above)**

Right to Freedom from Interference in Union Activity

The ILO proscribes the use of force or intimidation to curtail union meetings, work actions or strikes. (p. 83)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Jose Basilio Chavez release document from Treasury Police
2. Jose Mazariego release document from Treasury Police
3. English translation of Jose Mazariego release document
4. Copies of flyers dropped from airplanes December 1989
accusing labor leaders of membership in FMLN
5. Judicial order ordering release from prison of Fernando
Cartagena Duenas for lack of evidence.

**TREASURY POLICE
SECURITY, MORALE AND WORK**

IN THE CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE TREASURY POLICE, SAN SALVADOR, AT FIFTEEN HOURS THIRTY MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JUNE OF 1989.

Present is Mr. VICTOR ZENON GOMEZ, twenty-eight years old, from San Salvador, residing at 87 Ave South, block 2, Number 226 of the Escalon neighborhood of this capital city, who identifies himself with his identification card, with no number, given at the Governmental Commission of Human Rights of El Salvador, who was summoned to receive the prisoner JOSE TOMAS MAZARIEGO MEDINA, detained in an investigation for suspicion of being a delinquent/terrorist and being a member of the "ASTTEL" syndicate.

Having complied with our standard procedures, sufficient merit for consignment was not found therefore at this same hour and date he is freed and given over to Mr. VICTOR ZENON GOMEZ, delegate of the Governmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador; the detained states in the presence of who receives him, that during his presence at this Headquarters, he was not the object of threats, or physical or moral mistreatment, that he was investigated within the bounds of the law, being of good health and receiving those belongings that were taken when he entered this institution, in evidence of which he signs this document along with the above named in the presence of the witness, Ms. ELSA ARMIDA PINEDA CAMPOS, 22 years of age, bearer of Personal Identification Card number 1-3-071850, given at Mejicanos, the 29th of November of 1984, residing at Unbanization Chavez Galcano, Pol. K number 5, of Ayutuxtepeque.

Name of the Prisoner
JOSE TOMAS MAZARIEGO MEDINA

Name of who receives
VICTOR ZENON GOMEZ, Delegate of
the Governmental Human Rights
Commission

ELSA ARMIDA PINEDA CAMPOS

PUEBLO SALVADOREÑO
UNTS
 LLEVO A LA MUERTE A
 SUS MIEMBROS AL SER
 ORGANIZACION DE
 FACHADA AL SERVICIO
 DEL FMLN Y DEL
 PARTIDO COMUNISTA



JULIO CÉSAR CORTILLO REYES
 DIRIGENTE DE LA UNTS
 MIEMBRO DEL FMLN

¡ TODOS A REPUDIAR A LOS ENEMIGOS DE NUESTRA PATRIA !

UNTS BASE POLITICO MILITAR DEL FMLN



MARCO TULLIO LIMA
 DIRIGENTE DE LA UNTS
 MIEMBRO DEL FMLN



HUMBERTO CERVENO
 DIRIGENTE DE LA UNTS
 MIEMBRO DEL FMLN



GUILLERMO ESTAY
 DIRIGENTE DE LA UNTS
 MIEMBRO DEL FMLN

TRAICIONARON LOS IDEALES DE LOS TRABAJADORES SALVADOREÑOS.

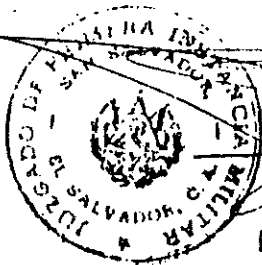
San Salvador, 19 de Febrero de 1990.-

OF. Nº 367.-

SEÑOR
DIRECTOR DE LA PENITENCIARIA
OCCIDENTAL DE SANTA ANA,
DEPARTAMENTO DE SANTA ANA.-

Atentamente ruego a Usted, poner inmediatamente en Libertad al reo FERNANDO CARTAGENA DUEÑAS, quién fue remitido a esa Penitenciaría por imputarsele el delito de ASOCIACIONES SUBVERSIVAS. Dicha libertad se da en virtud de no existir antecedentes ni indicios suficientes para decretar su detención.-

DIOS, UNION Y LIBERTAD.-



[Handwritten signature]
DR. JORGE ALBERTO CARRANZA AMAYA.-
JUEZ DE PRIMERA INSTANCIA MILITAR .-



[Handwritten signature]
DR. JAIME ANTONIO MARTINEZ ORELLANA.-
SECRETARIO.-

What You Can Do . . .

☑ Contact: Honorable Bernard Aronson
Assistant Secretary of State
for Inter-American Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

☑ Demand: Investigation into the bombing
of the union office and the disappearance
of the farm cooperativists.

(Send enclosed postcard)

Points To Make To The State Dept.

- ✓ To date no Salvadoran military officer has ever been convicted of a human rights violation, despite 40,000 civilian deaths human rights monitors attribute to the military and death squads linked to them. To keep it that way, 82 members of the Salvadoran military recently petitioned the ARENA dominated National Assembly for an amnesty/pardon for all military accused of human rights abuses and common crimes.
- ✓ The Bush Administration continues to pour money at the Salvadoran military faster than they can spend it, leaving \$139 million backed up in the aid pipeline.
- ✓ The ICFTU has called for "political and economic sanctions against El Salvador until the respect of human rights in this country is guaranteed."
- ✓ On December 16, 1989 Americas Watch reported that: "Members of the opposition parties, labor unions and popular organizations have systematically been driven underground or into exile by threats, arrests and ransacked offices." The government assault was "pervasive and meticulous." Eight union offices were ransacked in November.

"For over a decade, we have urged the Government of El Salvador to end its death squads and human rights' abuses, but nothing ever happens. Peasants, priests, politicians, nuns, workers and human rights activists continue to be murdered with impunity."

— Senator Edward Kennedy
announcing his call for an immediate
cessation of U.S. military aid to El Salvador.



Family of Ricardo Laza moments after his arrest by the National Guard in a predawn raid.

IN CONGRESS

Three bills are before the Congress which if enacted into law would immediately suspend military aid to El Salvador:

- Dellums Bill, HR 3733
- Kastenmeier Bill, HJ Res. 54
- Kerry Bill, S 2083

• The next challenge to aid to El Salvador will take place during Congressional hearings to be held sometime in May, June or July, when the FY 1991 foreign aid bill is to be marked up. A floor vote on aid to El Salvador can be expected in September before the Congress adjourns in early October.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL THE NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE AT: 212-242-0700

National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador; 15 Union Square; New York, New York 10003.

THE NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE:

Douglas A. Fraser, President Emeritus, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America; Jack Sheinkman, President, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; William Wimpisinger, President Emeritus, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; CO-CHAIRS: Morton Bahr, President, Communications Workers of America; Owen Bieber, President, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America; Kenneth T. Blaylock, Former President, American Federation of Government Employees; William H. Bywater, President, International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Technical, Salaried and Machine Workers; Cesar E. Chavez, President, United Farm Workers of America; Charles B. Dale, President, The Newspaper Guild; John DeConcini, President, Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union; James Herman, President, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; John Hovis, President, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America; George J. Kourpias, President, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Frank D. Martino, President, International Chemical Workers Union; Gerald W. McEntee, President, American Federal of State, County & Municipal Employees; Joseph Misbrenner, President, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union; Henry Nicholas, President, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees; James J. Norton, President, Graphic Communications International Union; Vincent R. Sombrotto, President, National Association of Letter Carriers; John J. Sweeney, President, Service Employees International Union; William H. Wynn, President, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.



Farm cooperative family on land reform coop.

“The cause of all our ills is the oligarchy, that handful of families who care nothing for the hunger of the people but need that hunger to be able to have available cheap, abundant labor. . . starvation wages. . . and this explains their all-out opposition to any kind of reform or union organizing designed to improve the living standards of the popular sectors.”

— Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated March 24, 1980

CHRONOLOGY (continued)

men and accuses El Rosario members of being subversives.

- February 12, 1990: At 9:40 a.m. residents of Canton Los Magueyes see a truck pass containing uniformed soldiers along with two of the disappeared coop members, Gerardo Antonio Saldana Salazar and Leonardo Perez Nunez.
- February 26, 1990: A press conference by family members of the disappeared cooperativists is broken up when the military surrounds the FEDECOOPADES union headquarters in San Salvador.

► **Is there any government investigation into these disappearances?**

None that we are aware of. However, the families believe that the disappeared men are still alive and being held in clandestine death squad safe houses known to the military.

An investigation is possible if steps are taken to determine which military troops were on duty in the area the days of the disappearances. Witnesses could attempt to identify those involved. The coop truck from which the cooperativists were abducted on December 29 was never checked for fingerprints, despite the fact that the truck was driven by the kidnapers after the abduction.

► **Who is Colonel Staben?**

Colonel Staben was arrested in 1980 for plotting a coup with then Major D'Aubuisson. After being forced to leave the country briefly, Colonel Staben returned to El Salvador following the election of President Reagan. In the mid-80's Colonel Staben was also implicated in a lucrative kidnapping ring which, posing as guerrillas, abducted members of the oligarchy. Despite considerable incriminating evidence, Staben has never been prosecuted.

► **Are these disappearances isolated cases?**

No. Over 6,000 Salvadoran civilians have disappeared since 1980, and not a single case, not one, has been successfully investigated or prosecuted.

► **Is there anything we can do?**

An investigation could perhaps still save the lives of these disappeared cooperativists. The U.S. State Department must be urged to direct sufficient pressure upon the Salvadoran military to allow a thorough investigation. If successful, such an investigation would set a desperately needed precedent.

*Send calls for an investigation to Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson
[See the back page of this brochure for details.]*

In December President Cristiani announced that a student subversive from the National University had turned himself over to Salvadoran security officials and confessed during interrogation to FMLN responsibility for the union bombing. Shortly afterwards the Treasury Police named two additional detainees who made similar claims during interrogation. However, such extrajudicial confessions procured while being held in incommunicado detention hold little credibility given the extent of psychological and physical abuse practiced by the Salvadoran security forces during interrogations.

► Are Salvadoran labor and religious leaders demanding an investigation?

Yes, but what concerned the unions and political parties was the impossibility of a thorough and complete investigation if the military maintained its traditional immunity from civilian authority. They are also demanding protection of witnesses and the participation of international observers from the U.S. or European labor movement, from the U.S. Congress, the Organization of American States or the United Nations.

► Who might be responsible for the bombing?

Evidence collected by the Salvadoran Archdiocese Human Rights Office led Archbishop Rivera y Damas to place responsibility for the bombings with the death squads. **The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) also "holds the Salvadoran Government responsible for the attacks owing to its failure to control the activities of the paramilitary groups."**

► Is there a way to apply pressure calling for a serious investigation?

Yes. We can support the call by Congressman Howard Berman and forty-three other Members of Congress to "withhold a significant amount of security assistance from the Salvadoran Government unless and until it makes a good faith and meaningful effort to apprehend and prosecute those carrying out the bombing."



At 2:30 a.m. on November 16, 1989 Salvadoran military troops entered the Jesuit University in San Salvador and shot and killed six leading Jesuit priests and two staff workers, Julia Elba Ramos, 42, and her 15 year old daughter, Celina Marisela Ramos.

The demand for a serious investigation should be directed to the U.S. State Department Assistant Secretary for Latin America Bernard Aronson.

[See the back of this brochure for details.]

Six Farm Cooperativists Disappear

In December 1989, six cooperative members and leaders disappeared from a single farm cooperative (San Cayetano El Rosario) in the Department of Ahuachapan. To date their whereabouts remain unknown. The Salvadoran military denies holding them.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE EL ROSARIO DISAPPEARANCES

- December 4, 1989: Two hundred soldiers ransack coop office and homes of coop leaders.
- December 5, 1989: Coop members and brothers Juan Antonio Vasquez, 23 years old, and Julio Cesar Vasquez, 18 years old, are abducted from their homes by uniformed soldiers

from the Seventh Military Detachment. Family members witness their abduction. The two brothers remain disappeared.

- December 29, 1989: Coop President Gerardo Antonio Saldana, 23 years old; Secretary Juan Saldana, 25 years old; Treasurer Leonardo Perez Nunez, 23 years old; and member Jose Eladio Saldana Salazar, 33 years old are abducted by armed men in civilian clothing after soldiers stop the truck in which the cooperativists were driving. At least eight coop members witness their abduction. The whereabouts of these four men also remains unknown.
- February 6, 1990: Seventh Military Detachment commander, Colonel Roberto Staben, denies holding the disappeared

NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

15 UNION SQUARE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10003 • (212) 242-0700

LABOR RIGHTS ALERT

SPRING 1990

LABOR RIGHTS ALERT

How Much More Money for Murder in El Salvador?

- ✓ After nearly five billion dollars in U.S. aid to El Salvador over the last decade, aid the State Department assured us was conditioned upon respect for human rights...
- ✓ *In El Salvador trade unionists continue to be murdered and disappeared with impunity.*

Union Bombed

"I visited FENASTRAS on the first [of November] to console the mourners and express my solidarity with the workers... The opinion of Tutela Legal [Archdiocese human rights office] is that the same death squads responsible for sowing death for the past ten years are responsible. A serious investigation is necessary to end these massacres once and for all."

— Archbishop Rivera y Damas, San Salvador

The bomb which tore through the union headquarters in San Salvador on October 31, 1989 was meant to kill and maim as many people as possible. The deadly explosive was placed outside the union's soup kitchen and detonated at 12:30 p.m. when members and their families gathered for lunch. Ten people were killed, their bodies torn to pieces, and thirty-eight others including children were wounded.

► What was the Salvadoran government's response to the bombing?

The reaction was typical. ARENA leader Roberto D'Aubuisson attributed the bombing to the FMLN. Other military



Ten killed, over thirty-eight wounded. Union headquarters after October 1989 bombing.

leaders agreed. President Cristiani promised an investigation by a government appointed Commission of Inquiry. This was seen as just another ploy for international consumption. No opposition union or political party agreed to participate because, in the words of the Christian Democrats, "our participation would allow the government to evade its responsibility and then use the [political] parties as an excuse."

What happened to the investigation?

The investigation has gone nowhere. Amnesty International reported in January 1990:

"Despite assurances by the government that the killings would be investigated, to Amnesty International's knowledge there has been no progress in the investigation and those responsible have not been brought to justice."