

International news

Union backing for Salvador fighters

Every Area of the National Union of Mineworkers was represented at the El Salvador Solidarity Conference last Saturday 14th.

There were 338 labour movement delegates altogether, plus 100 observers.

Jenny Pearce (author of the book 'Under the Eagle') and comrade Juan Martinez of the Salvadoran Revolutionary Trade Union Federation told us how landless rural labourers were forced to look for work in the towns, and how those lucky (or unlucky) enough to find work in industrial free trade zones were forced to accept low wages and subjected to persecution if they attempted to organise unions.

Militant unions have been organised since the mid-70s, despite the repression. They now fought around six demands:

1. A living wage;
2. Decent housing for all;
3. Repeal of all anti-working class legislation;
4. Release of all political prisoners;
5. Reductions in the prices of basic goods;
6. A national dialogue between government and oppositionists.

On the question of Nicaraguan and Cuban involvement in El Salvador, Martinez declared 'Revolutions cannot be exported, but great examples have no frontiers'. More revealingly, Jenny Pearce reported that a US State Department official had concluded that the Nicaraguans were giving the FMLN 'no more than peanuts'.

The Conference was undoubtedly a great step forward for the solidarity movement in this country - a turn towards the labour movement and away from middle class pressure group politics.

Politically, however, it was

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IN Washington, the uneasy combination of 'liberals' and conservative politicians who have held back Reagan's Central American war effort appears to have arrived at a compromise package of military and economic aid to the Savadorean junta.

Military aid for this year is fixed at \$76m - \$60m less than Reagan had requested. Otherwise his demands are largely accepted.

Meanwhile it has been revealed that yet another US clandestine agency is active in Central America over and above the CIA forces now acknowledged by Washington.

The Army Intelligence Support Activity is pushing its nefarious line of work in both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

dominated by those sectors of the FDR/FLMN who

