

# SOLIDARIDAD

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Central America  
Week edition  
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acknowledgements  
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## CENTRAL AMERICA WEEK

1st-9th April 1989

### Background

The history of Central America since the 1850s is a history of US-inspired terror and of popular resistance. Since its attack on San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua, in 1854, the US military has again and again intervened - directly or indirectly - against radical nationalist or democratic movements in Central America and in favour of vicious pro-US dictatorships.

### Making them say "Uncle"

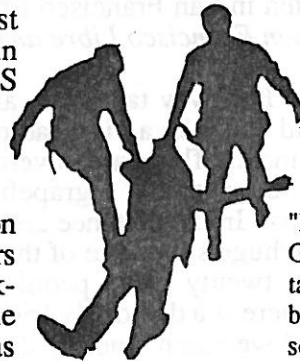
Reagan's ugly expression for his policy on Nicaragua in fact sums up US policy over the years towards what is arrogantly claimed as a "back-yard". Every country in the isthmus has felt the weight of US military might (even Mexico was invaded by Woodrow Wilson's army): none more so than Nicaragua. US invasions of Nicaragua in 1912 and 1926 blocked liberal upsurges, and when the Marines (under pressure from the resistance movement led by Sandino) pulled out in 1933, they left behind the first of the Somoza dynasty backed by a brutal "National Guard".

When General Hernández Martínez of El Salvador carried out a mass slaughter of his opponents in 1932 (*La Matanza*), leaving up to 30,000 dead, US warships stood offshore monitoring this "restoration of order". Reagan's administration played a similar role in the massacres by D'Aubuisson's thugs in 1980-1982 (*La Matanza II*). When Archbishop Romero pleaded with President Carter not to send more arms to El Salvador, Carter sent the guns to "help strengthen the army's key role in reforms"!! An early use for the weapons was in the murder of Romero himself in 1980.

In 1954, Guatemala's ten year experiment with democracy was ended by a CIA coup. Since that time a brutal, murderously anti-Indian, regime has had unstinted US support. Similarly, in the periods 1963-1972 and 1978-1989 a succession of ugly dictatorships in Honduras have had the backing of every US administration, in return for compliant acceptance of US (and later Contra) bases on their soil.

### "We can all do something"

... said Archbishop Romero on the day in March 1980 when he was assassinated. This is the theme for this year's Central America Week.

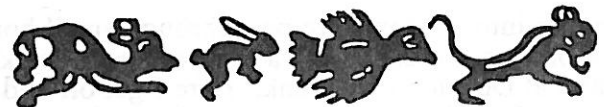


ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO  
(assassinated in El Salvador,  
24 March 1980)



"In Guatemala we are killed two ways. One is direct repression, which has taken the lives of thousands of our brothers and sisters, and continues to do so. The other is hunger and poverty."

Rigoberta Menchú, April 1987



### Nicaragua:

#### The threat of a good example

Since 1979 Nicaragua has provided an example of a radical socialist solution to the problems of a Central American country. It is Nicaragua's brilliant successes especially in 1979-1981 - in the fields of health care, literacy, land reform and popular democracy - which so frightened the Reagan regime, leading to an effective state of war between Nicaragua and the *norteamericanos*.

**Central America Day**  
Saturday April 8th, 11 am to 4 pm  
Reading International Support Centre  
103 London Street  
Events, Exhibitions, Sales, Videos  
Find out more about what is happening  
in Central America today.  
All welcome.