

A LIFETIME OF STRUGGLE FOR OUR CLASS

LOS ANGELES—A few days ago, I was invited to a dinner to support the humanitarian activities of the priest Rogelio Poncelle, in El Salvador, especially in the area of Morazán. Another panelist was the Mexican writer, Hector Ibarra Chavez, Genaro, who had supported and participated with the guerrilla of the FMLN during the war. In the audience there were more than 50 people, among them ex-guerrilla fighters, unionists and other supporters of the FMLN.

The priest Poncelle talked, detailing the terrible reality of poverty that Salvadoran workers suffer and how he helps build small cooperatives, clinics, and other forms of aid. During his presentation he said that we must help, but also that we must reconcile ourselves with the past. Basically he said that we should forget the past and try to build a world of peace and love.

Genaro said that socialism failed. He's putting forward the point of view that capitalism is invincible, that nothing else can be done, and that we have to support the FMLN.

After these presentations, there was a question and answer period. A youth asked, "How can we forget what the military did, the massacres, rapes, and tortures, especially at El Mozote, where they massacred more than 900 people, mostly women and children?" The priest responded that we have to pray and look inside ourselves for forgiveness.

A representative of Central American Studies at Cal State University at Northridge said that he thought that the war hadn't been worth it, that we don't need to fight, and that we don't win anything by doing so. His perspective was capi-

talist, saying that we shouldn't fight and that we don't win anything by fighting.

Others spoke from a religious point of view. The priest, as well as the writer, gave their points supporting capitalist reformism.

At the end a worker spoke, explaining that we must never forget but instead learn the lessons for the next battle. Forgetting would be to betray those who rose up to say "enough" to exploitation and died thinking of a better future for all the workers. He said that the conditions of exploitation, poverty, and repression that caused the war to start are still there, that the capitalist henchmen are still there. He explained that it's true the struggle failed, because they didn't fight for communism. Socialism is state capitalism and it can't lead to communism.

He said that there are men and women workers here in the US, in Mexico and Central America who are fighting for communism, that communism continues to be the alternative for the future that we all want and need. He called on them to join ICWP. He also said that there won't be peace while bosses and workers exist. That the future we need will happen when free workers take power and build communism. He ended by saying there are good people who fight for one year; that those who struggle for ten years are better; but those who fight for their whole lives are indispensable for the revolution.

A friend of his gave out *Red Flag* and the document *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* to some of those present. One of the regular readers of *Red Flag* said, "I want to see who dares to contradict that speech."



ICWP has published our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. It's available in English and Spanish. Order your copy or copies. Please send donations for the costs of printing and mailing. We also ask for your suggestions and criticisms.

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After the loud applause that we gave to his small but direct speech, there was silence. No comments.

Then the moderator said, "Well, umm, er, we see that there are different points of view...let's bring out the singers."