CUTUMAY CAMONES

POR ESO LUCHAMOS
Cutumay Camones

Cutumay Camones was formed in May of 1982. With the marimba (an instrument similar to the xylophone), accordion, violon (bass), guitars, guitarron (a 6-string bass guitar) and percussion, Cutumay Camones has undertaken the serious task of rescuing the cultural roots of the Salvadoran people and helping create the new song of the national liberation struggle of El Salvador.

The group took its name from a town located in the Santa Ana province, site of a pitched battle that took place seven days after the beginning of the FMLN’s offensive of January 10, 1981. Ninety-seven FMLN combatants died in the Cutumay Camones battle and, in homage to their example and sacrifice, Cutumay Camones was chosen as the name of the musical group. The music of Cutumay Camones is an expression of the Salvadoran people’s struggle for liberty and independence.

They sing about the advances and victories, those fallen in the long war and, as Cutumay Camones describes, “the beautiful contradiction of making war in order to end war, and based on the conviction that it is a duty to take up arms in order to liberate our country.” Cutumay Camones has taken up arms in their music, the new song, which—like the revolution—is developed in daily struggle.

Cutumay Camones’ struggle has been one of recovering the cultural heritage and traditions of El Salvador which have been lost or destroyed over centuries of exploitation and repression. “We try to capture the richness of the people, their roots. We want to bring together the talent and liveliness of the masses . . .” Cutumay Camones has set out to discover what has been lost, maintain what still exists and, with their music, bring one more instrument to the struggle for the total liberation of El Salvador.

The task of recapturing the cultural identity of El Salvador also means that Cutumay Camones has had to present their music throughout the world. Cutumay Camones’ participation in building the world front of solidarity with the Salvadoran people has been extensive. They have performed in various festivals around the world, representing the struggle of the Salvadoran people through music.
A New Song Like The Revolution

In April 1983, *Cutumay Camones* participated in the “Second Festival of the New Song” in Managua, Nicaragua, and in July of the same year, were in the “Bolivariano Festival” held in Caracas, Venezuela. The group was also present at the “Third Festival of the New Song” held in Quito, Ecuador, in July 1984.

The group also toured Mexico in November 1982 and in 1983 toured all over Venezuela and Mexico again. They also made an extensive tour of seven European countries in 1984 and participated in the “Festival of Spring” held in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Another very important activity of *Cutumay Camones* has been to bring their cultural work to thousands of Salvadoran refugees. An estimated 800,000 Salvadorans have had to flee the country because of the misery and repression caused by the war. These refugees play an important part in the world front of solidarity with the Salvadoran struggle. It is through the work of groups like *Cutumay Camones* that Salvadoran refugees are able to play a leading role in building solidarity with El Salvador. *Cutumay Camones*’ message of hope is that one day all Salvadorans will be able to return to El Salvador to live and work in peace and liberty. This is also the hope of the solidarity movement whose task is to stop U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America.

Although the group is composed of 5 individuals—one woman and 4 men—the music is actually the accomplishment of the Salvadoran people’s struggle against the U.S.-backed oligarchy. *Cutumay Camones* states: “We are nothing more than people who tell what’s happening on the battlefield. Our songs tell the world what our combatants are doing in their daily struggles. . . .” *Cutumay Camones* presents the song of the Salvadoran people, a song of pain, suffering and sacrifice, as well as a song of the future—a free El Salvador.

The town of Cutumay Camones is still the site of heavy battle. But its namesake, *Cutumay Camones*, the musical group, has expanded the battle by rescuing the national culture and singing it to the world.
A New Revolutionary Education...
POR ESO LUCHAMOS
THIS IS WHY WE'RE FIGHTING

The words of this song are based on a solemn oath issued by the General Command of the FMLN in the “Eastern Front Francisco Sanchez” at the end of a meeting in which the historic document of July 1983, “Why is the FMLN Fighting?” was proclaimed. The formation of the FMLN-FDR as an armed force and legitimate representa-
tive of the Salvadoran people is a direct expression of the people’s need to vanquish all injustice and suffering imposed by the oligarchy’s dictatorship. The combativity and heroism of the FMLN-FDR is a reflection of the Salvadoran people’s conviction to fight, as this song proclaims, for the peace of tomorrow.

No olvidamos a los niños
Que mueren a diario
A lo largo y ancho del país
No olvidamos la aflicción
Por el sustento diario
De las familias obreras
En las zonas marginales
No olvidamos la tristeza
De nuestro pueblo tan amado
Analfabeto y descalzo
Sediento de libertad

ESTRIBILLO: Levantemos las banderas
Ya es hora de luchar
No habrá fuerza que detenga
El mañana de la paz
La Patria ya encendida
Fúlgor de un nuevo sol
Del fusil entre tus manos
Surgirá la libertad

No olvidamos la agonía
De nuestros campesinos
Sin tierra y comiendo
Tortilla y sal
No olvidamos el atropello
A la dignidad de las mujeres
En las fábricas o sirviendo
En las casas de los ricos
No olvidamos a los masacrados
En las calles y en el campo
Desaparecidos y torturados
Forjadores de la paz

ESTRIBILLO

HABLADO:
En nombre de esta Patria
Sangrada pero alzada y digna
No aceptaremos el chantaje imperialista
Nuestras armas garantía
Para un futuro de paz
Libertad y democracia
No serán depuestas, ¡Jamás!

CHORUS:
We do not forget the children
Who die every day
Throughout the width and breadth of our land
We do not forget the suffering
In the burned-out slums
Of working class families
In search for their daily bread
We do not forget the sadness
Of our beloved people
Illiterate and barefoot
Thirsting for liberty

We do not forget the agony
Of our peasants
Without land and who daily eat
Tortillas with salt
We do not forget the crushing
Of women’s dignity
In the factories or as maids
In the houses of the rich
We do not forget those assassinated
In the streets and in the countryside
The disappeared and tortured
All creators of peace

SPOKEN:
In the name of this homeland
Bloody but insurgent and dignified
We will not accept the imperialist blackmail
Our weapons, a guarantee
For a future of peace
Liberty and democracy
Will never be laid down, never!
The Salvadoran people are lovers of peace. But centuries of oppression and misery have unleashed the present war. It is this unjust reality which has thrown to the fore the "beautiful contradiction" of "making war to win peace." The bolero-type rhythm of this song expresses the Salvadoran people's historical struggle for peace, their mounting daily victories against an oppressor army on the verge of collapse and, in the face of U.S. military intervention, the developing strength and unity which bring closer the triumph of peace.

**VAMOS GANANDO LA PAZ**
**WE ARE WINNING PEACE!**

Side 1, Band 2: (3:27)

**ESTRIBILLO:**
Vamos ganando la paz  
Con fusiles guerrilleros y sonrisas en los niños  
Vamos ganando la paz

We are winning peace
With guerrilla weapons and in the smiles of children
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace with victorious banners aloft
In the heroic conquests of the guerrilla fronts
We are winning peace!

CHORUS:
We are winning peace
Holding each other in the struggle
Each sister and brother an entrenchment
Because we cherish peace
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace, defeating all injustice
Our people prepare for the insurrection
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace, which has always been denied
By the criminal dictatorship to the exploited people
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace with Bolivar and Sandino
And a homeland blooming with Farabundo Marti
We are winning peace!

**ESTRIBILLO**
Vamos ganando la paz derrotando la injusticia  
Nuestro pueblo se prepara para la insurrección  
Vamos ganando la paz

We are winning peace, defeating all injustice
Our people prepare for the insurrection
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace, which has always been denied
By the criminal dictatorship to the exploited people
We are winning peace!

**ESTRIBILLO**
Vamos ganando la paz que siempre nos han negado  
Dictaduras criminales a este pueblo explotado  
Vamos ganando la paz

We are winning peace, which has always been denied
By the criminal dictatorship to the exploited people
We are winning peace!

**ESTRIBILLO**
Vamos ganando la paz con Bolivar y Sandino  
Y una patria floreciendo con Farabundo Marti  
Vamos ganando la paz

We are winning peace with Bolivar and Sandino
And a homeland blooming with Farabundo Marti
We are winning peace!

CHORUS:
We are winning peace, all the people struggling
For the love of our children we construct the future
We are winning peace!

We are winning peace and the solidarity of the people
In the incessant struggle against the murderous Yankee
We are winning peace!

CHORUS
José Feliciano Ama was a cacique (a leader of the Indian people) in Izalco, a town in the western region of El Salvador, during the 1930s. During the Depression of the international market, the production of coffee, El Salvador’s main export, suffered its worst crisis, and the Salvadoran oligarchy cut back their investment. The effect on the coffee plantation workers was disastrous—unemployment, hunger and death. Izalco was one of the areas worst hit and became the heart of the worker and peasant insurrection of January 22, 1932. More than 32,000 Salvadorans were massacred in a matter of weeks by the Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez regime.

José Feliciano Ama was one of the leaders of the insurrection. He was captured during the massacre and hanged in the Central Plaza of Izalco by the Guardia Nacional in front of his people. The Western Front of the FMLN is named after José Feliciano Ama, in honor of his heroic example.

Because they killed you, Ama
Feliciano comrade
Because the legend says
That the Indians returned
From the depths of the volcanoes
That is why we brought our blood
Our blood, fiery with flint
Because they killed you, Ama
Feliciano comrade
We learned the word
That sets fire to the dawn
Your verse and song
Spoke of the universe
Your love for those
Who suffer for all

CHORUS:
Because they killed you, Ama
Feliciano comrade
It's as if those very same Indian people
Were coming down the mountain!
Because we know the strength of our drawn machete
We can even organize the dawn
So we went to the cities
Looking for freedom
And spread the message
Of the liberated land

Because they killed you, Ama
Feliciano comrade
When all is said and done
They never killed you
Just like they never shot
Anastacio comrade
Nor did the bullets ever hit
My papa Farabundo
Well, if you glance
Over there at the mountain
You'll see they've been growing
Aquinos in the canefields
Amas in the cornfields
Martis in the coffee groves
And through their lives
The dawn has set itself afire!

CHORUS
This poem, found in prison, was written by one of the many patriots who have given their lives for the liberation of El Salvador.

"The only weapon that a political prisoner has to defend himself from the enemy, who inflicts physical and moral torture to degrade him in prison, is revolutionary dignity and morality," said Ana Guadalupe Martinez, a prisoner of the secret police during 1976-77. The dedication and examples of such women and men made it possible for the popular movement to continue growing during the most difficult times of repression in the late 1970s. It was also this dedication to the liberation of El Salvador that led to the formation of the FMLN-FDR vanguard of the Salvadoran people’s struggle for self-determination.

Si no vienes a dar
El corazón la vida
Si no vienes a dar
El corazón la vida
No te molestes en entrar
Porque en tu entrada comienza
No te molestes en entrar
Porque en tu entrada
Comienza tu salida

Si tu vienes a buscar
Un lecho la ocasión muñida
No te molestes en entrar
Si tu vienes a buscar
Un lecho la ocasión muñida
No te molestes en entrar
Donde la flor más bella
Es una herida

ESTRIBILLO:
Este es un lugar propicio
Tan solo para el sacrificio
Este es un lugar propicio
Tan solo para el sacrificio
Aquí tienes que ser el último en comer
Aquí tienes que ser el último en tener
Aquí tienes que ser el último en dormir
Y el primero en morir (3x)

If you’re not here to give
Your heart your life
If you’re not here to give
Your heart your life
Don’t bother coming in
Because in your coming in begins
Don’t bother coming in
Because in your coming in
Begins your going out

If you’re here looking
For a good time lying around
Don’t bother coming in
If you’re here looking
For a good time lying around
Don’t bother coming in
Where the most beautiful flower
Is a wound

CHORUS:
This is a place favorable
Only for sacrifice
This is a place favorable
Only for sacrifice
Here you have to be the last one to eat
Here you have to be the last one to have
Here you have to be the last one to sleep
And the first one to die! (3x)
NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA Y EL SALVADOR

The five sisters are the five countries which make up Central America: El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica. History has united their aspirations for liberty and justice. Central America's independence struggle against the Spanish crown in 1821 was one struggle carried out by all five countries. Over the years there have been many attempts to unify Central America into one country, but the ruling oligarchies of each country cut this dream short in their rivalry to gain profits at the expense of the people of Central America.

Today Nicaragua, having broken the chains of misery and ignorance, is in the forefront of the fight for peace and justice for the people of Central America. This song by Cutumay Camones is a tribute to Nicaragua's example.

En mi pecho vibrante palpita
De mi pueblo el coraje y el valor
Un caudal en mis venas se agita
Sangre india de El Salvador
Suena al viento el tañer de campanas
Anunciando la feliz redención
De una más de las cinco hermanas
Que estrenará su liberación

ESTRIBILLO:
Nicaragua y El Salvador
Unidos en la Revolución

Patria libre por eso luchamos
No queremos al Yanqui invasor
Por la Patria la vida ofrendamos
Con coraje y mucho valor
Todo el pueblo en un mismo camino
Sacudiendo el yugo opresor
Farabundo Martí y Sandino
Nicaragua y El Salvador

CHORUS:
Nicaragua and El Salvador
United in the revolution!

Free homeland! That's why we struggle
We do not want Yankee intervention
We offer our life
With fury and courage
For the homeland!
All the people travel the same road
Throwing off the oppressor's yoke
Farabundo Martí and Sandino
Nicaragua and El Salvador

CHORUS
Lilian Mercedes Letona, Comandante Clelia, joined the revolutionary struggle in 1973. She was an urban guerrilla, a political organizer, and a leader of new members who joined the liberation movement. She was captured during the FMLN's general offensive of January 10, 1981. She continued to struggle during her imprisonment, and despite being tortured, was able to organize a women's section of the Committee of Political Prisoners of El Salvador. In 1982 a national and international campaign denouncing human rights violations forced the Salvadoran regime to grant a "general amnesty" for political prisoners, through which Comandante Clelia obtained her freedom. "I owe my liberty to the people's forces," she stated. "The first thing that I will do is return to the guerrillas." On August 1, 1983, Comandante Clelia fell in battle.
Ha caído una flor del pueblo
Ha caído en lo eterno de la historia
Ha pasado a enfilear la columna
De los que dieron la vida por la patria
Como las rosas te multiplicarás
En los combates donde el hombre fuera
Serás estrella que alumbrá el camino
Eres heroína, Comandante Clelia

ESTRIBILLO:
Mujer hermana guerrillera
Junto a tu pueblo te encontrarás
Serás el pan serás la tierra
Serás la gloria Comandante Clelia

En la cárcel enfrentaste el enemigo
No doblegaron tu moral de combatiente
Por el amor, la igualdad y la justicia
Por el triunfo en que mañana estarás
En agosto te has ido a reunir
A las páginas del pueblo glorioso
Entregaste tu sangre a la causa
Tu luchaste por vencer o morir

ESTRIBILLO
De la victoria sonará el clarín
Nacerá un sol armonioso
Un coro de niños luminosos
Tu sonrisa, Clelia, llevarán
Tu sangre nutre nuestras venas
Con valor, coraje y rebeldía
Surges en el pueblo cada día
Como fértil alborada de alegría

ESTRIBILLO

HABLADO:
Al igual que otros héroes
Forjadores de la lucha armada
Fuiste como abeja incansable
En la construcción de las fuerzas del pueblo
Y junto a él empuñaste las primeras armas
De la libertad
Cuando las posibilidades de victoria
Nos parecía como un sueño
Te forjaste en la lucha callejera
Megafonando el porvenir
En los mimeógrafos de mano
Y todos los instrumentos
Que nos han hecho posible
Contar con las fuerzas que hoy nos permiten ver
Los sueños de victoria
Como una realidad inmediata

A flower of the people has fallen
She has fallen into the eternity of history
She has passed into the ranks
Of those who gave their life for the homeland
Like roses you shall multiply
In the battles the people face
You will be a star that lights the course
You are a heroine, Comandante Clelia

CHORUS:
Woman sister guerrillera
Alongside the people you will be found
You will be the bread, the earth
You will be glory, Comandante Clelia

In prison you confronted the enemy
They could not break your combatant’s morale
For love, equality and justice
For the triumph tomorrow which you’ll be a part of
In August you left to join
The pages of the glorious people
You gave your blood to the cause
You struggled for Victory or Death

CHORUS

At victory the clarion will sound
A harmonious sun will be born
A choir of luminous children
Will carry, Clelia, your smile
Your spilt blood nurtures our veins
With courage, fury and rebelliousness
You surge forth from the people every day
Like a fertile dawn of happiness

CHORUS

SPOKEN:
Like the other heroes
Who organized the armed struggle
You were an untiring worker-bee
In the construction of the people’s forces
And united with them
You seized the first weapons of liberty
When the possibilities of victory
Seemed to us more like a dream
You developed in the street struggles
Your voice booming through the megaphone
Announcing the future
In the mimeographed leaflets
And all the instruments
Which have made it possible today
To have the forces which allow us
To see the visions of victory
Like an immediate reality
BRIGADA RAFAEL ARCE ZABLAH
RAFAEL ARCE ZABLAH BRIGADE

Rafael Arce Zablah, a brilliant and militant university student who became an outstanding leader, organized some of the first groups to carry out the armed struggle in the early 1970s. He was killed in the first armed takeover of a town, Villa del Carmen, in the province of La Unión, in September of 1975.

In the early '70s, armed groups operated under strict clandestinity with simple arms. This seed over the years has grown into the self-defense armed groups in the cities, guerrilla squads in the countryside, special units in military campaigns of the FMLN and now, in the example of the Rafael Arce Zablah Brigade, the military structure of a regular army made up of battalions, platoons, mobile units and special forces—all of which operate throughout the whole of El Salvador.

Frente al viento de la historia
Constructe el pensamiento
Encendida está la llama
Torrente de enseñanza
Adelante vamos siempre
Cultivando tu mensaje
Del Oriente al Occidente
Para el nuevo amanecer

ESTRIBILLO:
Brigada Arce Zablah
Siempre con gran valor
Valor que es decir pueblo
Pueblo Revolución

Comandante Arce Zablah
Vienes hoy mejor armado
A la muerte has vencido
Y en el pueblo has germinado
Somos miles de combatientes
Somos ejército permanente
Las escuadras y pelotones
Formamos hoy los batallones

ESTRIBILLO
Hoy sos Brigada Arce Zablah
Forjada por el pueblo
Teñida con la sangre
De sus hijos consecuentes
Es tu fuerza implacable
Que demuestra el accionar
Ni los Yanquis son capaces
De podernos derrotar

ESTRIBILLO

Facing the wind of history
You constructed the thought
The flame is lighted
A torrent of lessons!
We move forward always
Cultivating your example
From East to West
For the new dawning

CHORUS:
Arce Zablah Brigade
With great courage forever
Courage that says: The people
The people, revolution!

Commandant Arce Zablah
Today you are better armed than ever
You have conquered death
And germinated in the people
We are thousands of fighters
We are a permanent army
The squads and platoons
Who today form the battalions

CHORUS

Today you are the Arce Zablah Brigade
Created by the people
Imbued with the sacrifice
Of its best sons and daughters
It is your implacable strength
That demonstrates your conduct
Not even the Yankees are capable
Of defeating us

CHORUS
LAS MILICIAS POPULARES
THE POPULAR MILITIA

Side 2, Band 3: (4:04)

The popular militias are irregular military units which operate in the cities and countryside carrying out tasks of security, logistical support, political education and organization. This song is a recognition of the decisive work of the people active in the militias and a call to others to join them. The son rhythms of marimba (ancient instrument of Mayan culture), violon (bass), and guitars underscore the cultural traditions of the Salvadoran people to rise up in their struggle for peace and self-determination.

Hoy las calles de mi pueblo
Están tomadas todititas
Por los aguerridos compas
Que han formado las milicias
La Maria, Chepe y Sebastian
Ya se fueron a integrar
Donde el compa responsable
De este frente popular
Vamos ahora milicianos
La emboscada a preparar
Ya se acerca ese convoy
Con cargamento militar
Listos todos compañeros
La barricada a levantar
Pongamos ya los abanicos
Y los camiones vamos a volar

ESTRIBILLO:
Estas somos las milicias
En el campo y en la ciudad
Miles de hombres y mujeres
Ya nos fuimos a integrar
Surgimos en todas partes
De la masa popular
Defendiendo las victorias
De la Revolución

Las milicias Migueleñas
De La Unión y Usulután
Accionan muy decididas
Con Cabañas y Morazán
Vamos nos ya milicianos
A organizar los de Ahuachapán
Que Santa Ana ya está lista
Con su bravura peculiar
Izalco y su 32
Encenderá a Sonsonate
Chalatenango ya no se diga
Siempre presente en el combate
San Vicente y La Libertad
San Salvador, La Paz y Cuscatlán
Todos juntos marcharemos
Con el F.M.L.N.

Nowadays the streets of my town
Are controlled
By the battle-steeled compas
Who have formed the militias
Maria, Chepe and Sebastian
Have gone off to join them
Where they'll find the compa
Responsible for this popular front
Let's go, popular militia
To prepare the ambush
The convoy of military cargo is nearing
All the compañeros are ready
To set up the barricades
Place the mines
And blow up the trucks

CHORUS:

That's us, the popular militias,
In the countryside and in the city
Thousands of men and women
Who've gone to join
We came from everywhere
From the popular masses
Defending the victories
Of the Revolution

The militias from San Miguel
From La Unión and Usulután
Orchestrate their blows decisively
With those from Cabañas and Morazán
Let's go, militia
To organize those at Ahuachapan
Santa Ana is ready to fight
With its own type of fierceness
Izalco and its 32
Will set off Sonsonate
Chalatenango—you don't even have to say it—
Always present in the fight
San Vicente and La Libertad
San Salvador, La Paz and Cuscatlán
United we will march with the FMLN!
10 DE OCTUBRE
OCTOBER 10

On October 10, 1980, the FMLN (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional) was formed by the five political-military organizations that have led the revolutionary movement since its beginning. This event marked a qualitative advance in the popular struggle that went beyond military terrain. Three months after the formation of the FMLN on January 10, 1981, the first joint military action of the FMLN was carried out, forcing the oligarchy’s army to concentrate in the cities and allowing the FMLN to concentrate its forces in the construction of the liberated zones of control. Since August 1982, the FMLN has taken the initiative in the military field and has delivered severe blows to the oligarchy’s army from which it has not been able to recover.

Cuántos versos surgieron en el camino
Cuántos caminos conocieron el verso entero
Que corrían por el pueblo
De aquel día en que nació
La expresion de todo un pueblo
How many songs surged down the road
How many roads knew the entire song
Growing in momentum in that town
For on that day was born
The expression of all the people

CHORUS:
Sing my people
Sing the song
Of the people and of liberty!

October 10 in my freedom-fighter arms
Like dawn in the countryside and the city
In the midst of my people
The Vanguard, wind of liberty, was formed

CHORUS
Like a giant
Our call resonates in the voice of my Homeland
Like invincible sparrows
Peasants and workers
Students and women
For the triumph we will struggle!

CHORUS
The Salvadoran People
Their Struggle, Their Hopes

Roots of the People's Struggle

El Salvador is the smallest country on the American continent. Four-and-a-half million people live within its 20,000 square kilometers (13,125 square miles). Infant mortality, malnutrition, illiteracy, poor health and unemployment rates are among the highest in Latin America.

The Salvadoran people have lived under these intolerable conditions for a century. In the last quarter of the 19th century, the Salvadoran oligarchy was consolidated by taking over the land from the peasants—half of all productive agricultural land—and utilizing this property for growing coffee. An exclusive authoritarian regime structured the republic around coffee production, and the brown bean became the nation’s principal interest. Behind the changes of presidents, it was easy to see that this was a coffee growers' government. The country’s economy became subject to the fluctuations of the international market.

During the 1930s, the years of the Great Depression, most Salvadorans suffered from hunger and increased unemployment. Misery, agitation in the emerging labor movement, the memory of the plunder of lands, and the political instability of the government all led to the 1932 Insurrection, during which more than 30,000 peasants were assassinated in a single week of bloody reprisals. This massacre, known as La Matanza, left a profound mark on the national consciousness. The oligarchy was forced to turn to the army to control the people; from then on, the army took charge of protecting the oligarchy’s interests, responding to the people’s resistance with blood and fire.

In 1944, liberal urban sectors led the Salvadoran people in a general strike which forced the resignation of the repressive dictator, Martínez. However, broken promises and more military governments followed these struggles. In 1960, popular insubordination was again seen when masses of people became involved in civil resistance actions, strikes and street agitation, which helped bring about the overthrow of the military president, Arturo Araujo.

The beginning of the 1970s saw even greater misery, an armed conflict with Honduras and fraudulent elections. It was then that the most clear-minded popular fighters understood that the defense of the people’s interests was possible only by taking up
arms to fight the dictatorship. The 1970s was a decade marked by the growth of political-military organizations rooted in the heart of the people. An impressive mass movement blossomed, took to the streets and dealt blow after blow to the repressive dictatorship. In October of 1979, in an attempt to contain the popular movement, the U.S. backed a coup d’etat which overthrew the regime of General Romero. The political base of this new government was broadened to incorporate moderate and center-left sectors. Economic and political reforms were proclaimed, but in a short time, these reforms were revealed as mere gimmicks used to break the popular movement. After two months the pro-oligarchy army expelled the moderate sectors of the government and began a ferocious attack against the organized masses. To preserve a favorable image, the army forged a political pact with the Christian Democrats, who were charged with implementing the reforms-with-repression project, betraying their former allies.

The Assassination of an Archbishop

On March 24, 1980, while celebrating mass, a mortal shot tore through the heart of Archbishop Oscar Romero. He had occupied his position in the San Salvador Archdiocese from February of 1977, and during his term he committed himself to unifying the important sectors of the church whose interests were those of the majority of the people.

At first, Monsignor Romero saw the government that emerged after the coup d’etat in October 1979 as an alternative that had

"... The Christian Democratic Party is becoming an accomplice of the violators of the people. The ‘christian’ qualification in a political party does not mean that it is a christian party. What interests us is not the name but the reality which you yourselves can judge."

... There are people outside the country who say: “Christian Democracy is making reforms, what else do the people want? Why are they protesting?” I ask you journalists to be very clear and objective in writing about what is happening in El Salvador. It must be said, yes, Christian Democracy exists and the reforms are there. But what the people are receiving is a terrible repression. In that sense the Christian Democratic Party is becoming an accomplice of the violators of the people. The “christian” qualification in a political party does not mean that it is a christian party. What interests us is not the name but the reality which you yourselves can judge.

Monsignor Romero believed that the popular organizations were a project offering hope to the people. His participation in the political leadership of the country was to him fundamental—a way to initiate the social transformation that the people were demanding.

... I know that the people have the right to organize themselves, and I defend that right. I know that the people’s demands, expressed in their organizations, are just and they must be supported.

Of the left forces he maintained:

... I do not call them left forces, but forces of the people and their violence must be understood as the fruit of rage and social injustice. What they call “left” is the people and the people’s organization and I believe that a government without a people’s base is not a government of the people.

When asked why the government repressed the people so savagely, he answered:

... It can only be understood if one has the goal of destroying the organization of the people.

The support of the United States for the Christian Democrat military junta prompted Monsignor Romero to write to President Carter in January 1980:
... I am very concerned with the news that the U.S. is studying ways to support the arms race in El Salvador. ... Your government's contribution, rather than favoring greater justice and peace in El Salvador, will increase, without a doubt, the injustices and repression against the organized people who for a long time have struggled for respect for their fundamental human rights. ... I ask you, if you truly wish to defend human rights, to stop military aid to the Salvadoran government, and to guarantee that your government will not intervene directly or indirectly with military, economic, or diplomatic pressures, etc., to determine the destiny of the Salvadoran people. In these moments we are living through a serious economic and political crisis in our country, but it is undoubted that increasingly it is the people who have become conscious and organized, and it is these people who have begun to train themselves to be the leaders who will be responsible for the future of El Salvador, the only ones able to overcome the crisis.

The day before his assassination, in his Sunday sermon, he referred to the most recent massacres and reforms. He said:

... If what is intended is the slaughter of the organization of the people and the interruption of a process that the people want, then you must realize that another process is not possible. Without roots in the people no government can be effective even if it tries to establish itself with the force of blood and pain. I wish to make a special call to the men in the army, and specifically to the National Guard, the police, the garrisons. ... No soldier is obligated to obey an order that is against God's law. ... It is time for you to regain your consciousness and to obey that consciousness rather than sinful orders. ... We want the government to understand that reforms are of no benefit if they are stained by so much blood. In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven each day more tumultuously, I ask you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God—cease the repression!

The government considered the results that Monsignor Romero's call could provoke in the army and the need to contain the popular movement. Hoping that Romero's death would constitute an irreparable blow which could unleash a premature popular uprising as easy to crush as the one in 1932, the Christian Democrat military government ordered the assassination. Archbishop Romero was found guilty of taking his place alongside the people.

"... Reforms are of no benefit if they are stained by so much blood. In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven each day more tumultuously, I ask you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God—cease the repression!"

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**Human Rights**

The U.S. administration systematically obscures the situation of human rights in El Salvador by propagating ideas of so-called improvements. It attributes the genocide against the Salvadorans to extreme rightwing groups—the dirty work of death squads—outside of the government's control. When the direct links between the army and the death squads became all too obvious, publicity campaigns were mounted to present a picture of U.S.-backed groups in El Salvador, struggling at a disadvantage against the ultraright. All these lies were orchestrated to obscure the Salvadoran government's interest in destroying the popular movement, no matter how much blood was shed.

U.S. advisers assist in the planning and execution of the army's military campaigns of terror, including the use of artillery, aerial bombing and chemical warfare. The use of chemical substances such as napalm was being exposed by Marianella García Villas, the President of the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, when she was assassinated by the
government army near Suchitoto in March 1983. This was just
two months after the White House had certified that human
rights had improved in El Salvador.

Since October of 1979 more than 50,000 Salvadorans have
been kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the Salvadoran
security forces. Corpses are found on the highways and streets
and in lakes and rivers all over the country. Very few who are
captured escape immediate death; of these there are 700
political prisoners held in prisons who have not had a judicial
hearing. Existing judicial procedures are designed only to
prolong detention indefinitely. Periodically, uniformed security
forces enter the cells to interrogate, torture or "disappear"
prisoners.

The relatives of these prisoners are not safe. Family ties are
sufficient grounds to be denounced or suspected of belonging to
or sympathizing with popular organizations. Today these fami-
lies have organized themselves into the Committee of Political
Prisoners of El Salvador—El Comite de Presos Politicos de El
Salvador—and the Committee of Mothers and Relatives of
Political Prisoners and Disappeared—El Comite de Madres y
Familiares de Presos y Desaparecidos Politicos. Both these
organizations denounce the dictatorship's crimes.

The reality of human rights and the implementation of justice
in El Salvador are shown by the assassination of the North
American religious women Ita Ford, Maura Clark, Dorothy
Kazel and Jean Donovan; labor advisers Michael Peter
Hammer and Mark David Pearlman; and four Dutch journalists.

All these murders occurred at a moment when the ruling
sector of the country was violently divided as to how to carry out
the war. Some wanted to introduce cosmetic reforms to cover the
massive repression against the people; others saw no need for
propaganda decoration. Phony legal proceedings against the
murderers were used by the U.S. administration to justify
increased military, political and economic aid to the Salvadoran
government, aid which is used in turn to increase human rights
violations and genocide in the country.

**United States Intervention in El Salvador**

The U.S. government utilizes false principles to cover its
support for the genocide against the people of El Salvador. The
White House and Pentagon grossly obscure the long history of
the Salvadoran struggle for freedom, justice and a decent life.
They frame the Salvadoran crisis in the geo-political context of
an East-West confrontation; U.S. foreign policy apologists
pretend that this just struggle is the result of a Soviet-Cuban-
Nicaraguan plot against U.S. security, and use the pretext of the
"defense" of vital interests as the justification for maintaining
support of the brutal efforts to crush the popular movement. The
U.S. brandishes the notion that the real struggle in El Salvador is
between violent ultraright and ultraleft minorities and that there
is a moderate sector committed to reform.

International public opinion, however, recognizes that the
reforms are only a cover for the military solution adopted by the
governments of El Salvador and the U.S. The reforms are
designed not only to preserve the control of the traditional
oligarchy, but to paint the popular struggle as making unjustified,
radical demands. The truth behind the "reforms" is reflected in
the January 1980 resignation letter of the Ministers of
Agriculture and Education, when they said:

> ... Once again the democratic sectors of the country are
> being used and lied to. The reactionary oligarchy has
> been strengthened and has again imposed the thesis—
> invalidated by history—of carrying out reforms with
> repression, a thesis that always and necessarily in
> practice translates into a lot of repression and not one
> reform.

The supposed development of a democratic process is another
propaganda scheme of the U.S. government. Administration
propaganda applauded El Salvador's "popular democratic"
elections, despite the exclusion of the popular movement from
the electoral process in the middle of a generalized war. In
reality, the right-controlled elections of March 1982 only
resulted in bringing one of the main leaders of the death squads,
Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, to the presidency of the Constitu-
tent Assembly; the constitution which was approved closed the
path to substantial change.

The United States provided $795 million in the period
between 1980 and 1983, most of it for military assistance and for
the maintenance of the regime economically. The expenditure
has jumped from a half million dollars per day in that period to
$1.6 million per day in 1984. More dollars continue to be requested from the Reagan administration in 1985. By January 1985, the total amount had already reached one billion dollars.

The Course of the War and the Search for a Solution

It is important to understand who is winning the war in El Salvador after five years of hostilities.

In the face of technical superiority and vast resources provided by the United States, the Salvadoran conflict has confirmed again the contemporary experience of war: the side that enjoys popular support, strong motivation and moral strength is capable of defeating a powerful enemy equipped with highly developed military means.

For the Salvadoran people, nothing is clearer than the real causes of the war. And nothing is more fair than the justness of their struggle. In the people’s war now unfolding, their capacities and energies are being fully mobilized in the struggle for their own future of liberty and justice, without massacres or death squads, without pain and hunger.

The popular movement has created a regular army capable of inflicting strategic blows to the dictatorship’s army; it has developed a broad organization of popular militias that feed the FMLN’s regular army, and it has strengthened a growing mass movement in the cities. The organized masses are led by the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation—Democratic Revolutionary Front alliance (FMLN-FDR), which unites workers, peasants and the progressive middle class of El Salvador, and is prepared and capable of incorporating any social force really interested in seeking democracy and national sovereignty for El Salvador.

In five years of war, the FMLN has defeated the succession of counter-insurgency plans designed by U.S. advisers. The FMLN exercises control over a third of the national territory and disputes the control of another third. Sabotage of communication lines and other key parts of the infrastructure is carried out, and the government is incapable of stopping it. The development of the FMLN-FDR has permitted the mass movement, severely repressed since 1980, to demonstrate new signs of vitality and combativeness, confident of the secure fortress built by the popular defense structures.

With each passing day, it becomes clearer that no solution to the crisis in El Salvador is possible without the FMLN-FDR alliance. This has been demonstrated by the many political initiatives presented to the different governments in the period from December 1980 to the October 1985 meeting at La Palma.
and the following meeting in Ayagallo. There, President José
Napoleón Duarte offered a “democratic” proposal, the intention
of which was really the surrender of the FMLN-FDR.

There will be no solution without the guarantee of the
participation of all sectors interested in creating a pluralistic
government of broad participation in the country’s process of
transformation. It is time for the President, the army and the
oligarchy to work seriously toward that solution.

“. . . The side that enjoys popular support,
strong motivation and moral strength is
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means.”

Salvadoran Women and Popular Struggle

In the Salvadoran revolution, women are playing a very
important role. Women participate in mass organizations,
political leadership, underground work, war fronts, etc. She is
combatant, underground courier, teacher, nurse, commander. . . . She is in the kitchen and at the insurgent broadcasting
station.

In El Salvador women do not come to the struggle from the
perspective of being oppressed by men. Rather, they see that
they are fundamentally oppressed by the social force. In the
industrial plants, in all sectors, in union lines in
electronic equipment plants, the majority of the labor force are
women. Women have organized themselves in this context, and
consequently, many women’s organizations have been born in
the course of the Salvadoran people’s struggle for justice. As
their revolutionary thinking deepens, women adopt a broader
view of the role of women in the process of social change. One
woman, a leader of the mass organizations, has said:

“. . . For us there has never been discrimination against
our participation in any task because we are women; the
position of the organization is one of equality. The
participation of everyone is determined by the needs of
the organization and the capacity of each person. In El
Salvador women are subjected to double exploitation,
but we have carried out the revolutionary struggle
against that system of oppression. The existence and
activity of the revolutionary parties is what has allowed
the full incorporation of women with the main objective
being to defeat the system of exploitation. We women
have realized that women’s oppression is part of the
system of exploitation and that it is this system that has
to be defeated first.

The broad participation of women in the popular struggle
makes it natural that women form part of the leadership of the
popular struggle at the highest level. In one of the organizations
of the FMLN, women constitute half of the political-military
leadership; in another important organization of the FMLN, a
woman occupied the second highest position of responsibility at
the national level. Women’s participation has definitely given a
new perspective to the popular struggle. At the same time, the
revolutionary struggle has made clear to women the profound
conditions of their oppression, and allows them to put into
perspective their own views on their emancipation, according to
the concrete conditions of oppression of Salvadoran women.

One mother of three combatants expresses it this way:

“. . . I was about 16 years old and used to talk a lot with
trade unionists. When I realized the treatment received
by the workers I started to participate in the movement.
During the electoral campaigns I used to paste up posters
and propaganda until they captured my husband; I used
to say to him, “Some day I am going to take up arms to
defend us.” When we saw that the elections did not lead
to democracy, we joined the armed struggle, and here we
are. All my family is involved. I know one day they will
tell me, “Your son has fallen at such and such a place. . . .”And I think: Well, if we gave that vision to our
children, what can we do if they follow the same path that
we have?”

North American Friends of the Salvadoran
Struggle

Today 80 U.S. military advisers are part of the United States
government counterinsurgency efforts to defeat the just struggle
of the Salvadoran people. But many North Americans are
finding ways to protest this U.S. role. Some have lost their lives.
Religious women, journalists, and labor advisers have been
killed for their work while living in El Salvador. Others gave their
lives fighting with the FMLN. Joseph David Anderson—
“Lucas”—died in April 1982 while taking photos near the
frontlines. Carroll Ishee—“Carlos”—was killed by machine
gun fire from a U.S. helicopter in August 1983. Both died from
bullets coming from U.S. military assistance. Inside the United
States, the antiwar and anti-intervention movements are growing.
Work is being done to build demonstrations and to lobby in

“. . . This growing solidarity in the U.S.
and all over the world—for both El
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eignty, self-determination and a better
life.”

Congress; work is also being done with trade unions, with
chuches and in the Sanctuary Movement. These are examples
of the different roles that U.S. people can play in struggling for
the Salvadoran people’s cause.

This growing solidarity in the U.S. and all over the world—for
both El Salvador and the whole region of Central America—is
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BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS

General Command of the FMLN, The Revolutionary Situation and Heightened Intervention in El Salvador. (El Salvador, 1984.) (Spanish only.)
This document provides analysis of the political-military aspects of the war and characterizes U.S. intervention.
General Command of the Northeast Front of the FMLN Francisco Sanchez, Why Is the FMLN Fighting? (El Salvador, 1983.) (Spanish and English.)
This document describes the profound deterioration of the government army and the FMLN tactics used to gain initiative. It examines the correlation of forces within the government and oligarchy, and evaluates the possible effect of a U.S. invasion. It also discusses the program of the FMLN.
Ishee, Carroll. Interview. Reprinted from Signal of Liberty/Señal de Libertad. (Available through Paredon Records.)
Martinez, Comandante Ana Guadalupe, member of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR, Clandestine Jails of El Salvador. (El Salvador, 1979) (Spanish only)
Comandante Guadalupe tells of her experiences as a political prisoner of the Salvadoran secret police from 1976-77, and her release through a military action of the FMLN. This book provides information about methods of torture used by security forces, and reveals direct links to persons in the government, oligarchy, and armed forces.
This document analyzes the economic, political, social, and legal roots of the Salvadoran struggle.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Signal of Freedom/Señal de Libertad
International publication of Radio Venceremos, the official voice of the FMLN
English Edition: El Salvador Information Center (see above);
Spanish Edition: Sistema Radio Venceremos
Apartado Postal 7-907
Mexico, D.F., C.P. 06700
Estados Unidos Mexicanos

ORGANIZATIONS

El Salvador Information Center (E.S.I.C.)
P.O. Box 421965
San Francisco, CA 94142
Distributes English version of Señal de Libertad, Signal of Freedom, international publication of Radio Venceremos System, and has a silk-screen workshop.

El Salvador Media Projects
799 Broadway, Suite 325
New York, New York 10003 (212) 989-0541
P.O. Box 1006
San Francisco, CA 94110 (415) 826-5691
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Casa El Salvador
988 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 282-3094
3411 W. Diversey, Room 21
Chicago, IL 60647
(312) 489-3567

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New York, NY 10185
(212) 926-5825

1419 ‘V’ St, NW, #401
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 797-9128

3006 W. 7th St., 408b
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 381-6793

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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