

Photo by Bob Baker

Human rights activist Arnaldo Ramos says Americans will regret their government's support of El Salvador's military dictatorship.

Monster: Dictatorship will haunt America

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

The Reagan administration's aid to the dictatorship in El Salvador may lead to global war, says a Salvadoran human rights activist.

American support is beginning to backfire, according to Arnaldo Ramos, a U.S. representative from the national liberation front in El Salvador.

"More and more they become like Franksteins," Ramos says. "It's a monster created by a scientist, by a coup-calculated scientist from Washington, and then the monsters turn against you. Those monsters have killed American citizens, they will kill American soldiers if necessary."

Ramos visited the University Friday to discuss how the revolution in his country affects the United States.

As a representative to this country, Ramos tries to translate the movement's process to the American people.

"Since the government is very clearly opposed to any type of dialogue and is interested in suppressing our point of view from national press, our goal more and more is to establish this dialogue with the American people, going out and speaking in churches, community groups, universities," Ramos says.

"The type of reception we are getting is more and more not only warm but very interested. You see, the majority of the people of this country really are opposed to another type of Vietnam situation," Ramos says.

Ramos criticizes the Reagan administration's willingness to support a government that is "the antithesis of democracy."

"The United States has neither friends nor allies in Latin America," Ramos says. "All they have are interests like in a business relationship. And those interests in Latin America always have been not how we live or die."

He says the Reagan administration's recent report of improvement in the Salvadoran government's human rights record was a political justification of aid to the country.

"It is becoming more and more apparent that the U.S. really wants a military solution. Every step they take contradicts their words," Ramos says.

Approximately \$800 million in economic and military aid in three years has accomplished nothing, he says.

"The country is not closer to peace. You can hardly even define the country as on the road to democracy," he says.

Before describing the liberation movement's successes and failures, Ramos explained what the "opposition" is up against.

He says the current government in El Salvador, which has been in power since 1951, is the longest-standing military dictatorship on the entire planet, and is led by a "pathological killer."

After a 1977 coup, the liberation front was forced to work underground because the government attempted to kill the movement's major defenders.

For this reason, many supporters hide their sympathies because they are paralyzed with fear, Ramos says.

In spite of the danger, the opposition represents approximately 75 percent of the population, while about 12 percent support the "oligarchy," Ramos estimates.

He says that if the Reagan administration's policies continue, a global confrontation could erupt, involving every woman and child in this country.

"Don't forget that the place where the Soviet Union and the United States came very close to having a nuclear war was not in the Mideast, was not in Southeast Asia, was not in Europe but was in the Caribbean over Cuba."

Politicians exhort poor to learn to lobby

By Mike Anderson
Of the Emerald

Low-income citizens can make their voices heard through the legislative process, according to three state politicians who visited the University's Bean Complex Saturday.

State senators Margie Hendriksen and Grattan Kerans and Cynthia Wooten, a Eugene city council member, discussed problems confronting the poor and offered advice on how to fight for relief through the legislative process.

Kerans and Hendriksen both spoke out against Gov. Vic Atiyeh's threat to veto the Vocational Unemployment Benefit Bill. The bill would allow displaced workers to receive unemployment

benefits at the same time they receive state-funded vocational training.

Kerans attacked what he called a "miserable attitude toward the people of Oregon." He claimed that this attitude has led to a reduction in benefits when two welfare recipients are living under the same roof, forcing many families on welfare to split up to maintain their benefits.

To assist people who are put out of their homes, Kerans plans to introduce the Emergency Housing and Shelter Bill.

Hendriksen focused on what she called the "feminization of poverty." By the end of the century, Hendriksen said, "almost all the poor could be women and children."

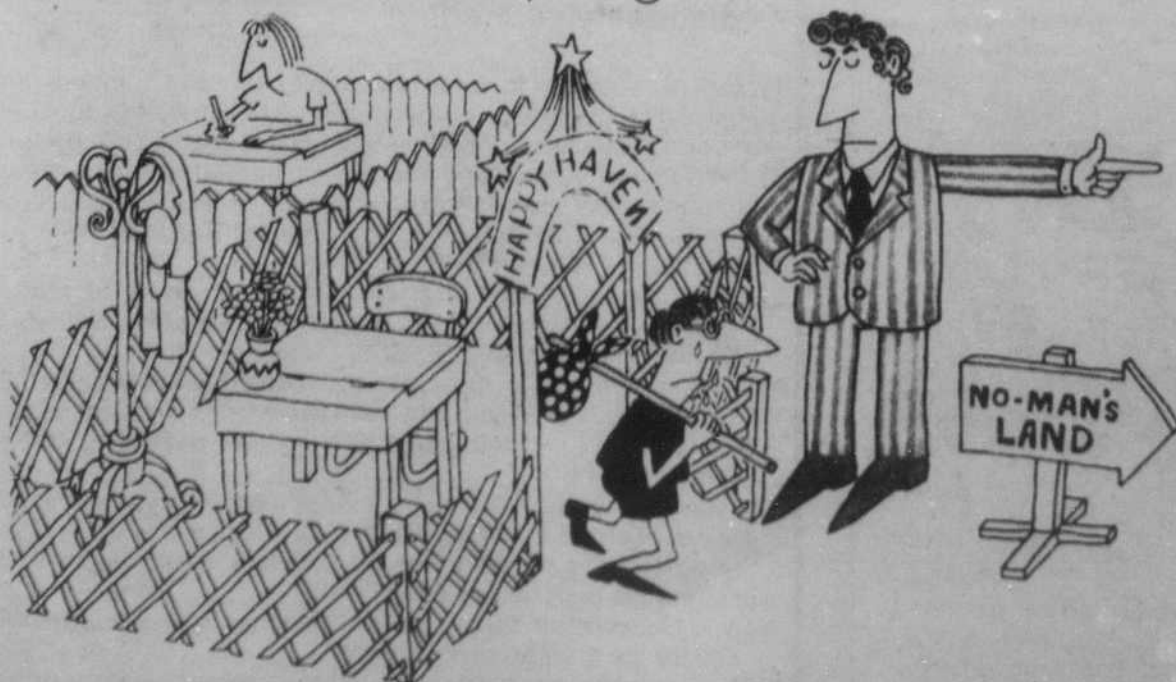
She said one of the most formidable barriers confronting low-income women is the sexually discriminatory notion that women are in the labor force by choice, not necessity.

Wooten concentrated on how people can have an impact on federal legislation. She encouraged Oregonians to utilize their representatives and senators — Mark Hatfield, chair of the Senate appropriation committee, Jim Weaver and Les AuCoin.

"Don't worry about not knowing the technical jargon. Just tell the people how you feel."

Kerans suggested a slightly different approach for people wanting to make their voice heard in the legislature. "Do it with facts and figures, unemotionally, (with) direct testimony," he said.

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