6-30-1981

Resist Newsletter, May-June 1981

Resist

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/96
POLAND AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

FRANK BRODHEAD

What are the US government's goals in Poland? Does it want a reformed version of the present government? Or would it rather have a more Western-looking or neutralist government, even if this meant risking military intervention by the Soviet Union? Or would the US in fact welcome an invasion, an event which would be likely to result in a drawn out war, as in Afghanistan, and would certainly drive many neutral nations into the US camp? Certainly any Soviet move in Poland would provide a large increase in popular support for Reagan's aggressive foreign policy: what military responses would the US make to Soviet intervention? These and other questions make it important to think about the Polish situation and try to anticipate what courses of action we might take to lessen the chances of war growing out of these conflicts.

Recent developments in Poland must be seen in the context of the series of dramatic but short-lived revolutionary outbreaks in Eastern Europe since World War II, including the East German workers' uprising of 1953, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and the Czechoslovakian reform movement of 1968. Poland's own recent history includes a reform movement in October, 1956, a radical student movement in 1968, and widespread strikes in 1970 and 1976. All of these outbreaks met with severe repression, and the strikes of 1970 led to many hundreds of workers killed by the police. Yet unlike Hungary and Czechoslovakia, movements in Poland have not yet led to direct Soviet intervention.

Because of the widespread violence accompanying the strikes of 1970 and 1976, which were generally successful responses to attempts by the government to impose a general price increase, by 1980 the Polish working class had established a kind of veto power over price increases, at least in its own mind. Many industrial workers, indeed most people, had also participated in two rounds of intense collective struggle; and it was from this fund of experience that the Polish workers drew when the government attempted to impose new price increases — reducing the workers' standard of living to repay foreign loans — in the summer of 1980.

continued on page 4

WOMEN IN EL SALVADOR

AMANDA CLAIBORNE

The lives of women are distinctly different from the lives of men, and this is no less true in developing countries than in the US. Any general socio-economic portrait conceals this fact, as differences in employment, health, education and other areas are made invisible by "sex-blind" research.

In all countries women suffer from hardships additional to those of men. Some of these result from sexism or "machismo," or whatever name it goes under; and so one is not surprised to discover legal and "cultural" discrimination against women in the countries of Latin America where, after all, the word "machismo" was coined. What is perhaps not so obvious is the degree to which these hardships have been created by external forces to serve specific interests. The role of the multi-national corporation is particularly important and, until recently, has been little studied; while, with the increasing "development" of the Third World, its direct role in the oppression of women has greatly expanded. In the following study, I hope to show that from birth-control to bottle-feeding, and from malnutrition to the assembly line, the multi-national corporation has everything to do with the lives of women in El Salvador.

WOMEN'S WORK

One of the most striking things one learns about Salvadoran women is that their rate of migration to the cities is significantly higher than that of men. "Women's work" is in the cities.

In the countryside, wage-work is predictably concentrated in the agricultural sector, largely on the coffee and cotton plantations that are the source of much of El Salvador's wealth. There is some full-time work available, but the majority of it is seasonal, harvest work. This is the main source of income for Salvador's peasant population, many of whom are without land of their own. Two-thirds of all men make their living from agricultural work, while under seven percent of women are employed in this sector. (Available statistics probably downplay women's contribution in harvest work, however. Only the head of the family (usually the man) is officially hired (and paid), while in actuality the entire

continued on page 2
family, children included, will work full-time to fill the daily quota.)

Although the pay rates for harvest work are the same for everyone, this is not true of the wages of permanent hacienda workers. For this work, by law, women are paid the same as boys under the age of 16, approximately 40 percent of what men earn. The rationalization for this discrimination may be that women are hired for the “easier” work of planting and fertilizing, whereas men are given the “more difficult” work of clearing brush, and pesticide application.

Living conditions for plantation workers and their families are horrific. Although owners are supposed to provide adequate housing, including sanitary facilities, in reality this is almost never the case. The only housing available to the 300 or so people that will be employed on a coffee farm during the harvest will be an open, thatched-roof shed measuring about 30 by 50 feet. The only source of water available will be the drainage ditch which swarms with parasites, a major cause of disease in El Salvador, and is usually severely contaminated by pesticide run-off. This water is used for everything from washing to cooking to drinking. The consequent poisoning of the workers results in several deaths and thousands of hospitalizations each year. (See box below.)

Other income-producing employment available to rural women is in agro-industry. This includes work in such traditional areas as baking, clothing, candy, and fruit and vegetable processing, as well as in fishing and the production or processing of tobacco, alcoholic drinks, shoes and textiles. Many women in this sector are self-employed, making handicrafts or food and drink for sale in local markets.

For the majority of rural women, over four-fifths of whom are not considered “economically active”, life is no easier. A Salvadoran woman doctor who has worked with peasants for several years gave this description:

Their life is terrible. The average peasant woman gets up at 3:30 or 4 in the morning to light the fire for cooking the maize. Then she pounds it on a stone, feeds the animals, prepares the meal and washes the clothes. At midday, she takes most of the meal to her

**THE PESTICIDE CONNECTION**

Pesticide sales to the Third World are big business. A handful of multinational chemical companies like Bayer, Dow, and Monsanto, all of whom have distribution or manufacturing subsidiaries in El Salvador, supply millions of pounds of pesticides to the Third World, making millions of dollars in profits. Many pesticides, like DDT and Toxaphene, have been banned for use in the US because of their proven danger to all those who come in contact with them. The US General Accounting Office (GAO) estimated that over 15 percent of the 588 million pounds of pesticides exported from the U.S. in 1975 was comprised of products either never registered, or cancelled or suspended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In the same year, El Salvador used over 20,000 kilograms of Toxaphene and over 11,000 kilograms of DDT. Robert Van Den Bosch, a professor of entomology at Berkeley, discussed the effects of widespread pesticide use on the population of Central America:

The direct impact of [pesticides] on the human population was appalling. In Nicaragua alone, there were 383 reported deaths and over three thousand poisonings during the 1969-70 crop year. A study in Guatemala showed that residues in mother’s milk were the highest ever recorded anywhere. In an extreme case, a sample of mother’s milk contained 244 times as much DDT as would be permitted in commercial cow’s milk in the United States.

The other major side-effect of pesticide spraying is the increase in the incidence of malaria, as unintentionally sprayed mosquito populations become increasingly resistant.

Why are pesticides banned for use in the US allowed to be exported to developing countries? In 1978 hearings before Congress which were considering implementing restrictions on the export of products banned in the US, Esther Peterson, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, testified that “an export policy must take into account economic burdens that the policy may impose. . . . A restrictive policy would exacerbate this problem [of US balance-of-trade deficit] through lost sales.”

Since 1972, the EPA has been required to notify foreign nations of any action taken by them concerning pesticides. But, according to the GAO, from 1972-1978 the EPA requested notification in only five out of the fourteen instances when regulatory action was taken. Whether or not the EPA actually requests notification, the GAO reports that the warning is seldom received by the purchasing government. An official at one US embassy told the GAO that “he did not routinely forward notifications on chemicals. . . because it may adversely affect U.S. exporting.”

Pesticides are not used to increase food production in the Third World, but are used almost exclusively on export crops, in the case of Salvador on cotton and coffee. In 1976, the US purchased 37 percent of Salvador’s coffee crop. According to the Food and Drug Administration it is likely that almost half of those beans contained residues of pesticides banned in the US.
husband and while he eats, she ploughs the field or wields the scythe and generally carries on with whatever her husband was doing. Afterwards she goes home, feeds the children and eats what little is left. Then she goes to fetch water and feeds the animals again. (Slaves of Slaves, p. 151)

Perhaps it is the hardness of the life that is responsible for the continued practice of genital mutilation of female infants. The doctor quoted above gave this report:

I worked in the country for a few years, about 26 kilometres from Santa Ana, and I was always coming across little girls of two or three months with serious vaginal infections. At first I thought it must be due to a parasite, but I was wrong. I began to question the mothers. The peasant women are very taciturn on the subject and it takes time to win their confidence. After several months, one of them gave me the true explanation. She told me that it was fairly common to remove a new-born infant’s “virtue”.

“What does that involve,” I asked.

“Taking a razor blade and cutting a little cross, just there,” she answered without naming the clitoris more specifically.

“Why?”

“So that later, they will work harder and stay away from men longer.” (Ibid., pp. 148-49)

Rural and urban, poor women are discouraged from getting an education. Slaves of Slaves, an important recent study of Latin American women, attributes this to the patriarchal attitude that the best place for little girls is where their mothers can keep an eye on them. Statistics show that while equal proportions of women and men complete the first three grades of primary school, the percentage of women who then went on to complete the next three grades dropped by almost 5 percent while male enrollment remained stable.

Of the one quarter of Salvadoran women who are considered economically active, one out of five of them are employed in domestic service. Not surprisingly, most of these jobs are in urban areas, and it is this which, to a large degree, accounts for the high rate of female migration. It is not unusual for a girl of 10 or 12 to be brought to the city to live with a wealthy family as a “house daughter.” They will give her room and board, which her parents were unable to provide, in exchange for her labor as a maid. For the first few years she will not be paid. As she becomes more proficient her salary will increase and, if her employers are generous, may eventually reach $100 per month, a good wage in El Salvador and also just over the legal minimum.

A common “occupational hazard” of domestic service is rape. It is still the custom among the upper classes for the adolescent son to lose his virginity with one of the family maids, who is also subject to the abuses of the father. According to one upper-class woman, no one will admit that their husband is guilty of this, but everyone knows someone else’s who is. Asked what happens to the girl if she gets pregnant or if the mistress of the house finds out, she told me that the maid would certainly be forced to leave. This last scenario is in part responsible for prostitution, for which no statistics are available.

In part II of this article (to be published in the next issue of the Resist newsletter) we will consider women in the factory and the family, birth control, the marketing of infant formula, and women as refugees and revolutionaries.

---

**Reading**

**GENERAL:**


“Maria” and Debbie Farsin, “Women in El Salvador; What We Are Fighting For,” Union WAGE (March-April 1981).


Interview with Carmen Silva, April 23, 1981. Ms. Silva is a civil engineering student at Northeastern University and a native of San Salvador. Her brother, Mauricio Silva, was Undersecretary for Planning in the October 15, 1981 junta. He later resigned, and is now in the Planning Dept. at M.I.T.

**PESTICIDES:**


“Pesticides Create a ‘Circle of Poison’”, Dollars and Sense, No. 67 (May-June, 1981).

For example, workers in the occupied shipyards on the Baltic Coast cautioned each other to continue their occupation of the yards, rather than marching on politically symbolic targets at the risk of murderous attack, as had occurred in 1970.

The strikes of 1976 had left a more substantial legacy. Many of the networks that originated in this strike remained intact after the strike was over, in spite of the repression carried out against strike leaders. Several workers' newspapers circulated illegally; and a Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) grew up primarily among radical intellectuals to help defend strikers and other victims of repression. KOR and the workers' press were instrumental in politicizing and helping to circulate information about the 1980 strikes, particularly the strike at the massive Gdansk shipyard, which became the focal point for hundreds of other strikes. The Gdansk strikers' Twenty-One Demands [see box], particularly their demand for free and independent trade unions, became the model for demands elsewhere. Gdansk workers formed an Inter-factory Strike Committee, and this too became a model for similar committees throughout the country. At the conclusion of the successful strike, in which all the workers' demands were granted at least in principle, the network of Inter­factory Strike Committees became the nucleus of the new industrial union, Solidarity.

Today Solidarity has more than ten million members. By contrast, the Communist Party has only three million, and it is believed that a large percentage of the Party's working-class membership is also enrolled in Solidarity. Such a large membership has pushed Solidarity into increasing responsibilities for representing workers' interests. Several times during the fall Solidarity threatened a general strike if certain agreements were not kept, forcing the government to back down in successive confrontations. This increased the power of the radicals in Solidarity over those who favored a more moderate course. When the Solidarity negotiating team conceded to government demands to call off a threatened general strike if certain concessions weren't given, as it did in the most recent confrontation, it was clear that a substantial part of Solidarity's leadership thought they had given in too quickly. In spite of this setback, or stabilization, many changes continue to take place consistent with Solidarity's goals. The peasants or farmers union — Rural Solidarity — has been recognized by the government. Solidarity groups have spread to the universities, and neighborhood or community groups have begun. Supporters of the movement — the "Renewal" — have begun to organize themselves within the Communist Party, and these changes have been recently acknowledged by the Party leadership, in a desperate attempt to keep pace with the rank and file.

---

THE "TWENTY-ONE DEMANDS"

The following are the Committee Demands:
1. Acceptance of free trade unions independent of the Communist Party and of enterprises, in accordance with convention No.87 of the International Labour Organization concerning the right to form free trade unions, which was ratified by the Communist Government of Poland.
2. A guarantee of the right to strike and of the security of strikers and those aiding them.
3. Compliance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, the press, and publications, including freedom for independent publishers, and the availability of the mass media to representatives of all faiths.
4. (a) A return of former rights to: people dismissed from work after the 1970 and 1976 strikes; students expelled from school because of their views. (b) The release of all political prisoners, among them Edmund Zadrożynski, Jan Kozlowski, and Marek Kozlowski. (c) A halt in repression of the individual because of personal conviction.
5. Availability to the mass media of information about the formation of the Interfactory Strike Committee and publication of its demands.
6. The undertaking of actions aimed at bringing the country out of its crisis situation by the following means: (a) Making public complete information about the social-economic situation. (b) Enabling all sectors and social classes to take part in discussion of the reform programme.
7. Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for the period of the strike, with vacation pay from the Central Council of Trade Unions.
8. An increase in the base pay of each worker by 2,000 zlotys a month as compensation for the recent rise in prices.
9. Guaranteed automatic increases in pay on the basis of increases in prices and the decline in real income.
10. A full supply for the domestic market, with exports limited to surpluses.
11. The abolition of "commercial" prices and of other sales for hard currency in special shops.
12. The selection of management personnel on the basis of qualifications, not party membership. Privileges of the secret police, regular police, and party apparatus are to be eliminated by equalizing family subsidies, abolishing special stores, etc.
13. The introduction of food coupons for meat and meat products (during the period in which control of the market situation is regained).
14. Reduction in the age for retirement for women to 50 and for men to 55, or after 30 years' employment in Poland for women and 35 years for men, regardless of age.
15. Conformity of old-age pensions and annuities with what has actually been paid in.
16. Improvements in the working conditions of the health service to insure full medical care for workers.
17. Assurances of a reasonable number of places in day-care centers and kindergartens for the children of working mothers.
18. Paid maternity leave for three years.
19. A decrease in the waiting periods for apartments.
20. An increase in the commuter's allowance to 100 zlotys from 40, with a supplemental benefit on separation.
21. A day of rest on Saturday. Workers in the brigade system or round-the-clock jobs are to be compensated for the loss of free Saturdays with increased leave or other paid time off.
If there is a peaceful way forward for Eastern Europe, Solidarity seems to have found it. All of the Polish reforms have taken place with no deaths, and with no more violence than your average US local strike. It is true that Solidarity so far seems to be a democratic organization primarily for male skilled workers, but it is also true that the victories of Solidarity have opened up the country’s political life again, and made advances possible for many other sectors of the population. The contagiousness of the “Polish disease” is underscored by the swift action of government authorities in closing Poland’s borders with other East European countries.

The program and dramatic struggles of Solidarity have won it support throughout the world, but not always for the same reasons. The Western media has characteristically attempted to trivialize a great social struggle by personalizing it, focusing on the colorful leader Lech Walesa. Our mainstream press also applauds Solidarity’s determination to do something about labor exploitation in Poland, supporting their demand for a 40-hour week for the Polish miners, while opining that the West Virginia miners are being unrealistic in raising the same demand. Much of the left press has supported the Polish workers’ struggles, but some sections of the left have raised serious criticisms of the Polish movement, or have at least expressed fears that the workers may be going too far. Because these criticisms will arise in the case of almost any radical movement within Eastern Europe, we focus on them in some detail.

The thrust of one set of criticisms is that the effect of the Polish “Renewal” movement is to threaten the existence of socialism in Poland, raising the possibility of capitalist restoration. One line of attack here is to return to Lenin’s views on the role of the trade union in a socialist state, which is held to show that Solidarity is rapidly ceasing to be a union and has become in effect a political opposition. Another approach is to highlight the influence of KOR, and to resort to a kind of outside agitator theory about the role of “bourgeois” or “anti-socialist elements” in leading a legitimate labor dispute astray. Critics also point to direct Western influence in precipitating the Polish economic crisis: Western banks now hold more than $27 billion in Polish debts, run up by the Polish leadership in an attempt at heavy industrialization during the 1970s, and now requiring annual repayments greater than the entire value of Polish yearly exports to hard currency markets. Finally, there is concern that the overt aid given Solidarity by the AFL-CIO and other anti-communist labor organizations indicates a Solidarity - CIA connection, with the goal of destabilizing Poland. One sustained criticism of Solidarity claims that the organization is in fact a puppet of Western banks, which will refinance and stabilize the Polish economy only in return for concessions that amount to the reintegration of Poland into the capitalist West.

Some of these criticisms should be taken seriously. It has been true since the end of World War II that one goal of US policy toward Eastern Europe is to reopen this region to capitalist trade and control, though it is also true that the US had demonstrated on several occasions (Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968) that it is prepared to accept the division of Europe into Soviet and US spheres of influence.

The main problem with this criticism of the Polish movement, however, is not what it says about US intentions, but what it assumes about socialism. Essentially this criticism rests on the assumption that there are two forms of social organization in the world, capitalism and socialism, and that a form that is changing can only turn into the other. Without minimizing the complexities that are wrapped up in the question, ““what is socialism?””, we reject the view that there are only two forms of social organization. Moreover, the criteria that make the Soviet Union or Poland “socialist” — collectivized property and the rule of a Communist Party — are inadequate to define what we believe constitutes a socialist society. This is an issue of broad significance, for the outcome of such a simplistic division of the world — either “capitalist” or “socialist” — is to force us into a position of choosing between the United States and the Soviet Union, while to lessen and eliminate their conflict is the only hope for world survival.

A second criticism of the Polish movement, and one shared by supporters as well as critics of Solidarity, is that the main beneficiary (or instigator, to some) of all this is the Catholic Church. The Church in Poland has always played an important political role, up until 1945 generally on the side of the rich and powerful. Since the end of World War II, however, the Church has sided, though not very strongly, with critics of the government. In part this is to satisfy the Church’s own aspirations, which some believe include the creation of a pluralistic political system, and the formation of a Christian Democratic party. The Church has already made gains, from the influence of Walesa’s own religiosity to the recognition by the government of Rural Solidarity, which the Church feels closer to than the Solidarity of the urban workers. The Church now seems likely to get regular access to the government media, and will possibly gain a greater role in the regulation of family life and the education of children. Many supporters of Solidarity particularly fear this latter development.

Yet it is important not to overestimate the influence of the Church among the workers where the Church’s message does not support the working class point of view. For example, the Church was ignored by the workers when it encouraged them to call off their strike in August; and the Church’s opposition to birth control seems to be very unsuccessful in influencing people’s behavior. But greater Church control seems like a real possibility, particularly in areas like education, where participation is involuntary. The final balance on the extent to which Church power grows in Poland will depend on the degree to which the government, not the workers movement, asks the Church to help stabilize the country in return for a greater measure of power. The best defense against the gains of the Church, therefore, will be a strong workers’ movement which will help confine the power of the Church.

Even if some of the worst fears of the holders of these
criticisms of the Polish movement were realized, at a more general level we are forced to address the questions of autonomy and national self-determination for the countries of the Eastern bloc. It is evident that there are conservative as well as radical forces that will be unleashed with the loosening of Soviet control over Eastern Europe. By what criteria do we condemn a workers’ movement which is supported by conservative forces? If we admit that Poland does not even satisfy the most minimal conditions for a socialist society — that the working class run the country — then we should certainly support movements and measures that will increase people’s ability to govern their own lives, even if it means the possibility that genuinely dangerous ideas might thrive.

An oft-cited example of this is the alleged reemergence of anti-semitism, which is thought by some to be endemic to Eastern Europe. Part of the discussion here must be about what is true: for it was the faction of the Party headed by General Moczur which led the purge of Jewish Party members in 1968, and initiated a movement to encourage Jewish emigration that resulted in all but a few thousand of Poland’s Jews leaving the country. Moczur was recently reinstalled into the Party leadership. It is also believed that the anti-semitic demonstrations held in Poland last fall were actually the handiwork of government agents and secret police. It is certainly significant that this anti-semitic demonstration was held to counter a Solidarity demonstration, and that Solidarity has made it clear that anti-semitism will have no support from the organized workers’ movement and that it is abhorrent to the values of the movement.

Yet the US left must also address the general question of what restrictions we would place on self-determination when the nations involved are at least nominally socialist. The question was muted in the case of the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in 1979 by the generally felt revulsion towards the practices of the Pol Pot regime. And, though widely opposed, the criticism from the left of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan never reached the level, say, of a large demonstration. This was in part because of the relatively reactionary nature of the anti-Soviet uprising in Afghanistan, and also because much of our energy was pitted against the US military buildup, which was using the invasion as a pretext or occasion to make a new leap ahead in the Cold War. While the Reagan Administration has not yet put together a coherent picture of their likely response to different possible scenarios in Poland, it has clearly indicated that it will make it the occasion for vigorous anti-Soviet moves. We must find a way to defend the right to self-determination of the Polish people while at the same time opposing the US military buildup. At least one part of our strategy should be to make people aware of the content of the Polish movement, of what they are really trying to accomplish and what we might learn from their experiments.

A final problem concerns the requirements for peace in the world. If we start from the premise that the most important thing is to keep the US and the USSR from engaging in a nuclear war, then might we not fear that the Polish workers’ movement is provocative, for if it leads to Soviet intervention it is certain to heat up the Cold War, and could conceivably lead to disaster. The logic of this position is based on a regretted but firm acceptance of the division of the world into two camps, always at the mercy of the arms of the superpowers. Supporters of arms control and armament reductions have expressed the view that a precondition to bringing the arms race under control is the emergence of stability in the Eastern as well as the Western bloc.

There is certainly evidence for this view. The present renewal of the Cold War can easily be viewed as the result of the loosening of the empires of both the US and the USSR, with the consequent instability empowering the hawks of both countries’ elites, who in turn crank up the arms race. Yet this view is opposed by others who are also concerned about the arms race. One voice is that of European Nuclear Disarmament (END). This movement is attempting to create a nuclear free zone throughout Europe, East and West. At present END is based only in Western Europe, yet it believes that if its slogan — “No cruise missiles! No SS-20s!” — is successful in halting the emplacement of the new NATO missiles, the security of Western Europe will be increased, whatever the Soviet Union does concerning the SS-20. The END carries out in practice what we earlier proposed in theory, that the division of social systems, certainly existing social systems, into a choice between “socialism” and “capitalism” is no longer a practical guide to reality.

Nevertheless there are clearly inherent dangers in the development of the Polish workers’ movement, for the further that it goes in the direction of democratizing the politics of the country and opening up possibilities for new social movements, the greater the likelihood of Soviet intervention. And if it is true, as some supporters of Solidarity believe, that the movement can survive in Poland only if it spreads to other countries, the possibilities for US-Soviet conflict seem boundless. Yet it also seems certain that the Soviet Union’s tenacious hold on Poland is motivated by a concern for its national security which has some basis in realities of the Cold War. With the loss of influence in China, Egypt, and Iraq, and great uncertainty in Afghanistan, Poland, and the rest of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union is likely to feel that they must draw the line; and if only for domestic political reasons the leadership of the USSR will have to appear to be very stern with Poland.

The only solution to this danger, as far as I can see, is not to support the US government position of greater military buildup to make the USSR keep out of Poland, but instead to work to lessen US military presence in Europe so that the political situation in Poland, and in Eastern Europe, is of much less military significance to the Soviet Union. This means working against the introduction of the cruise and Pershing II missiles into Europe; and it also means opposition to the military buildup that is promised in Reagan’s budget, as well as opposition to the reintroduction of the draft that will be necessary to implement it. We should support the Polish workers by making known their program and accomplishments, and by pursuing all disarmament initiatives that will relax tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.
KEEPING TRACK

We thought you'd like to know what's been happening to some of the organizations that Resist has given money to recently.

UNION WOMEN'S ALLIANCE TO GAIN EQUALITY (P.O. Box 40909, San Francisco, CA 94140).

Union WAGE is ten years old. On March 7, 1971 at a women's conference at UC Berkeley, trade union women formed an organization to combat discrimination on the job, in unions, in society — and to fight for equal rights, equal pay and equal opportunities. WAGE has traditionally had a broad outlook, linking together struggles of all types. As an activist organization and publication, it has been able to join in local strikes, demonstrations, and organizing campaigns, and to talk about the larger implications of these issues. The newspaper's special 10th anniversary issue, for example, includes articles about Women in El Salvador and feminists in Russia, and announces a WAGE educational program on Women's Resistance to Apartheid. The editorial page reminds us that Reagan's budget proposals "strip funds from domestic programs aiding women, minorities, children, and the elderly, and turn them over to the military for war toys. The underlying political strategy is to divide and conquer the opponents of these plans."

In the past Resist has contributed to a WAGE organizing conference and has helped reproduce one of their valuable publications by and for working women. At this 10 year mark we would also like to recognize the importance of WAGE's style of connecting local struggles to international events, joining with others working for social justice and an end to oppression everywhere.

BOSTON ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST AND POLITICAL REPRESSION (2 Park Sq., Rm. 314, Boston, MA 02116).

The Boston Alliance has been working since 1974 as a coalition dedicated to the task of protecting people's rights to organize. Last year Resist helped them with funding for a multi-media event called "Docudrama 1970-1980", commemorating the political struggles of a decade in Boston. Recently, their efforts have focused on the defense of political prisoners, opposing the Ku Klux Klan, and supporting labor rights. Now they have joined with the Boston Committee Against Executions to form a statewide coalition against the death penalty. The Committee includes about fifty people and member organizations who came together in July 1979. They have sponsored rallies and educational forums, produced an informational brochure, and held vigils at the Boston State House whenever an individual has been scheduled to be executed. The two groups held an all day conference at Harvard Law School on May 2 which Resist supported. About 20 groups were represented by 75 conferees, and an additional 600 people have been invited to participate in the coalition. At the conference particular emphasis was put on reaching third world and working class people who have been the most frequent victims of capital punishment. Speakers on the opening panel included Municipal Court Judge Margaret Burham, and Jerry Sousa who was just released from an eighteen year prison term. Workshops focused on organizing community, religious, and labor groups to participate in the statewide mobilization.

The present Massachusetts death penalty statute was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Judicial Court in October, 1980. However, the legislature is seeking to enact a constitutional amendment which will supersede the decision and allow for the resumption of the capital punishment. It is likely that the amendment will be before the Massachusetts voters as a referendum issue in the 1982 elections.

LEONARD PELTIER SUPPORT GROUP (P.O. Box 176, Mohegan Lake, NY 10547)

Leonard Peltier is a Sioux-Chippewa man serving two consecutive life sentences in Marion Federal Prison. He was tried for "aiding and abetting" in the deaths of two FBI agents who led a SWAT attack on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota on June 26, 1975. (On that same day one-eighth of the reservation was illegally signed away to the US government. This land is rich in uranium deposits). When Peltier was tried, the judge ruled 80% of his defense inadmissible, including all the evidence used to win acquittals in earlier trials. Federal authorities have since conspired to murder him in prison. Fellow inmate Robert Hugh Wilson, aka Standing Deer, was approached by government officials to help assassinate Peltier. Instead, Standing Deer told Leonard about the plot, and Peltier escaped from Lomoc Federal Prison with Dallas Thundershield and Bobby Garcia. Dallas was killed in the escape and Bobby was captured outside the prison. Leonard was captured five days later, given an additional seven years, and sent to Marion's infamous control unit for an indefinite sentence. With the help of a letter campaign, he was released to the general prison population. Bobby Garcia was sentenced to five years for the escape. On December 13th he was found hanged in Terre Haute Federal Prison. Since then Standing Deer has been transferred from there to the Federal Correctional Medical Center in Springfield, Missouri, and prisoners who were in the unit where Bobby was killed have also been transferred to other institutions.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee has a number of support groups in the US and Europe. The New York chapter recently asked Resist to help fund a booklet of statements and poetry written by Leonard Peltier, Standing Deer, and Bobby Gene Garcia. The booklet is called In Total Resistance and is available for $2.00.
The Nicaragua Solidarity Committee was formed in 1978 to support the insurrection in Nicaragua. Since then Resist has made several grants to support the struggle of the Nicaraguan people, and for educational projects around Boston. The fast pace of developments in Central America makes it difficult for solidarity groups to keep themselves up to date and to inform the American public. One of the major handicaps has been the lack of direct communication with Nicaragua and El Salvador. In order to help establish personal contact among the countries, the Solidarity Committee sent a delegate to the First International Convention in Solidarity with Nicaragua, which was held in Managua earlier this year. Resist was pleased to help with this trip which has since provided a resource person not only for the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee but for other organizations in the area working to help the peoples of Central America.

GAY/LESBIAN DRAFT COUNSELING AND RESISTANCE NETWORK (5343 La Cresta Court, Los Angeles, CA 90038).

Statistically speaking, between 10-20% of the persons reaching out for draft counseling and resistance information are gay men. Yet, after a decade of vigorous gay liberation consciousness-raising around such issues, many draft counselors are ill-equipped to provide accurate information specifically designed for gay men. There is very little material available anywhere which provides instruction on how the “gay option” works or on the political implications involved in gay men using such an option. As a result, gays are frequently treated shabbily and are often misinformed. In response to these needs and discriminations the Network is preparing a “Gay Draft Counseling and Resistance” pamphlet. Resist’s grant will help to distribute the pamphlet to individuals, gay and lesbian organizations and media, and other draft counseling and resistance groups around the country.

LABOR SELF-EXPRESSION GROUP (c/o George Corsetti, 1741 Book Building, Detroit, MI 48226).

In cities around the country factories are closing and unemployment has skyrocketed. In Detroit, General Motors and the city have decided to demolish a stable, integrated neighborhood known as Poletown in order to build a new Cadillac plant. The community is being bulldozed for a new, highly mechanized factory that will employ fewer workers and produce more profits per worker. As in other cities old factories are being abandoned along with surrounding neighborhoods and small businesses. Both workers and Poletown residents are fighting back fiercely. There have been numerous demonstrations attracting national attention. One group of auto workers at GM and Chrysler is making a documentary film showing community and worker resistance to plant closings and “reindustrialization.” The film will be geared to an audience of community people, students, and workers (union and non-union), and will be completed under the guidance of workers and community people to ensure accuracy and a true reflection of their attitudes. In the last couple of years this Labor Self-Expression Group has been involved in show floor organizing, the publication of a newsletter, and in-plant petition drives. For the film project LSE has formed a unique alliance with interested media experts who have provided some essential video and film services. Resist is helping to fund the film project.

DRAFT INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTER (Bennett House, 305 Willey St., Morgantown, WV 26505).

The history of the Bennett House at West Virginia University is one of draft counseling and social involvement. Small but significant, the draft group has been distributing information all over the state. Just before the renewal of registration this past January, counselors were busy contacting universities and high schools. Every high school in every county was included, and several draft workshops were held. Brochures were sent to school superintendents, asking for alternative presentations to military visits. Interested mental health workers were taught draft counseling techniques because of their accessibility to the rural poor and minorities. Since the number of Vietnam fatalities from West Virginia was proportionately higher than any other state, a major effort was made to reach as many people as possible. Newspapers were supportive and anti-draft spokespersons appeared on several radio and television programs. The results were that the Bennett House received many calls from people with further questions about their options. More young men felt hesitant as compared to last summer, and only half as many actually registered. Currently, the Bennett House is preparing for an anti-draft workshop at the spring session of the West Virginia Guidance Counselors’ Convention. Resist contributed to this important, on-going work in peace education.

THE RESIST PLEDGE SYSTEM

The most important source of our income is monthly pledges. Pledges help us to plan ahead by stabilizing our monthly income. In addition to receiving the newsletter, pledges get a monthly reminder letter, containing some news of recent grants.

Yes, I would like to be a Resist pledge

Name ____________________________________________
Street ___________________________________________
City __________ State _______ Zip ______