A call to resist illegitimate authority

Culture Clash in Seneca County

KAREN KAHN

Thousands of women from across the country, and from places as far away as New Zealand and Australia, converged on Seneca County, New York, this summer to take part in the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice. We came from all walks of life, but we came with a common purpose—to protest the escalation of the arms race, and to begin making a world safe from the threat of nuclear holocaust. Many of us came expecting to be arrested for acts of civil disobedience at the Seneca Army Depot, a storage facility for nuclear weapons. What we didn’t expect were the crowds of angry townspeople shouting obscenities, brandishing flags as weapons, and seemingly ready to kill us for having even dared to set foot in Seneca County. Their hostility was frightening, often more frightening than confronting the military police at the Depot. The hatred was incomprehensible. As one Encampment woman put it, “I feel heartsick that people could feel so violent against people who want peace. What is wrong? I don’t understand it.”

The fear, the anger and the hate cannot be understood in terms of the politics of disarmament alone. Belief in a strong defense cannot explain the depth of the emotion with which we were confronted, the intensity of the rage. To the people of Seneca County we represented something much more terrifying than “people who want peace.”

As the summer draws to a close and we begin to evaluate our experiences at the Peace Encampment, it is time to give some thought to the response of local people to our presence. We have heard much to the effect that the confrontation drew attention away from our real purpose at Seneca—to stop the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing II—and thus diffused our effectiveness. However, if we look more closely at what the women at the Peace Encampment represented to the people of Seneca County, it is not clear that the confrontation was either avoidable, or that it was detrimental to the cause of peace.

“Commie Dykes, Go Home”

In the center of the small town of Waterloo, New York, a garage door is painted over with the words, “NUKE ‘EM TILL THEY GLOW, THEN SHOOT ‘EM IN THE DARK.” These words welcome women peace campers to Seneca County. American flags line the streets, decorating the doorstep of each home. It doesn’t take long to realize that these flags are the symbol of a struggle that penetrates deep into the soul of the community, much deeper than the politics of disarmament. “In this county you could be shot for not

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Organizing for GI Rights

I was very disturbed by the conclusion of your recent editorial ("What's Left?" June/July 1983), specifically your statement that we should "help those who want to get out of the armed forces, not those who want to stay in." Unfortunately, this attitude represents the mainstream of thinking within the peace movement to the extent to which GI issues are addressed at all. The source of this attitude, I think, is a moral revulsion of the military. This sentiment, which is understandable, often has a dangerous side effect: it leads many peace activists to adopt a hostile or insensitive attitude toward those who "volunteer" to serve in the military.

What most often is not understood about the folks who join the military is that most of them don't enlist because they worship John Wayne or anything like that. On the average, they are no more pro- or anti-war than the "average person." They join for reasons that are quite understandable: to get a steady job, to get some training, to get away from family problems, to earn some money for education, and to "establish themselves" in the world. In addition, for many people who are not privileged, this society has little to offer but a life of negativism—poor housing, bad schools, etc., as well as chronic unemployment. It is no wonder that in the face of these conditions many parents, such as the Black parents in many of the neighborhoods I've lived in, encourage their kids to join the military.

A peace movement that has nothing to say to that Black parent or the new recruit except "it's immoral to serve in the military; we will support you only if you want to get out," is a movement that makes itself irrelevant to the majority of decent people in this society. It is a movement that writes off entire races and classes of people.

There are no easy answers to this dilemma. Neither the military nor the civilian world offers much to people facing the "poverty draft." One thing is certain. Any program that seriously works against the "poverty draft" must include support for people who are caught up in this jam, whether they are outside or inside of the military. Counterrecruitment efforts that do not include this kind of work are ineffectual at best.

GIs need and deserve our support, for they have been both the victims of the military system and its most powerful opponents. They played a critical role in bringing the Vietnam War to a halt, a fact that has been acknowledged by both Vietnamese officials and some conservative American government officials. Notably, most of the struggles were led by people who "volunteered" for military service, not draftees.

Admittedly, we must exercise some discretion in the kinds of cases we put resources into. I could not imagine, for example, supporting the fellow who was denied entry into advanced Army ROTC as few years ago because he was a self-proclaimed Nazi (Blameuser v. Andrews, 7th Cir., 1980). And to use a less extreme example, many military counselors, attorneys and activists do not place a high political priority on pay and promotion cases that don't involve discrimination. It is difficult to know where to draw lines. But the criteria should not be whether someone "wants out" or can afford not to be in the military.

The Resist editorial delivers exactly the wrong message at the wrong time. It has been hard enough getting peace activists interested in conditions inside the military. Let's not come this far and then turn our backs on GIs. Our support can help end their isolation, and in doing so, encourage them to speak up.

—Harold Jordan
Project STP

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is about much more than a set of political goals, we can see not only that the confrontation with the local population around the Seneca Army Depot was probably inevitable, but also that it was extremely important. We didn't come to Seneca only to stop the Cruise and Pershing II; we came to establish an alternative community, to put into practice our vision of an alternative society. For local people who came to respect us, that vision is now accessible. Having challenged their way of understanding the world, we have opened the way for new interpretations of social reality. Although it may seem easier, and more politically astute, to establish our anti-nuclear coalition without forcing people to examine the fundamental cultural assumptions upon which our society is built—assumptions that underly institutionalized sexism and homophobia—in the long run we must recognize that we will never have peace without social justice. If we stand back from the cause of social justice for fear that the hostility we inspire hurts the cause of peace, we will find that we have lost both.

Karen Kahn works with Boston Mobilization for Survival and is an anthropology graduate student writing her dissertation on the women's peace movement. John Demeter and the Women's Video Collective provided the interviews for this article.
Life in a Liberated Zone

CHARLES CLEMENTS

Editor's Note: A few months ago, Dr. Charles Clements, a Vietnam veteran and former Air Force pilot who now practices medicine in California, returned to the U.S. after living and working as a physician in the Guazapa Front, a liberated zone in El Salvador that is controlled by the FMLN. The following article, which is an edited version of a speech that Clements gave in Boston shortly after he returned from El Salvador, provides a penetrating look into the everyday realities of life in the liberated zones. In this speech, Clements also addressed the issues of negotiations, prisoners of war, land reform, elections and non-violence in El Salvador.

The Guazapa Front is 25 miles north of San Salvador. It's an area 15 miles by 15 miles, or 8 hours a side if you are walking. And in that 225 square miles there are 10,000 civilians, 40% of whom are under the age of 12. Guazapa, we have been told by a recent congressional delegation that spoke to Air Force officers, is a free fire zone. Any of the Salvadorans living there could have told you that, because there isn't a day since July that the Front hasn't been bombed by American-supplied A-37's, or strafed by American-supplied Huey helicopters, or rocketed by American-supplied Cessna Skymasters, with complete disregard for civilian or military targets. And so health care, education, food production is made much more difficult there. And despite that, almost 1,000 people have chosen to come and live in Guazapa this year. That's a profound statement. They have come to live with that fear of daily air attacks rather than live with the terrorism that exists in the other parts of El Salvador.

The society that is unfolding in Guazapa is doing so under a great deal of stress, but despite that it is a very positive place to work because it reflects the hopes that they have for all of El Salvador. Health care is characterized by the equitable distribution of services that are free for everyone. And for many of the campesinos, it is the first time they have ever seen a physician or a nurse or a medic. Medicine is contraband in El Salvador, and so we have very few medicines in the Front. They all have to be smuggled into the Front at risk to those who bring them in.

So to compensate for that in the Front, we use a lot of natural medicines when we can't bring in, can't infiltrate, other medicines. We make an aspirin out of willow bark or willow leaves, having people boil that, and make a tea for people with chronic arthritis. We boil the bark of the quiquena tree to make a chloroquin to fight malaria much as the Indians and Spaniards did hundreds of years ago. People who are anemic and can't take iron tablets because there are none, or vitamins, soak large nails in glasses of water and clean them every 24 hours with a piece of lemon to have a little bit of vitamin C to help absorb the iron, and drink that rusty water, which is known as the Nail Cocktail. They make faces, but they know it's supplementing their otherwise meager iron intake. There's a great emphasis on public health, on patient education, on training Salvadoran workers, many of whom were students in the medical school and had to quit school when it closed down, but wanted to continue to serve their people. Diarrhea is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in most developing countries. There has been a latrine campaign to build latrines at 95% of the homes. There's been a campaign in the more than 30 elementary schools to teach children about the necessity of washing fruit because the soil is full of parasite eggs. And a campaign to teach mothers to make a rehydration solution because of lack of fluids which kill children with diarrhea. And mothers know to boil a litre of water and add 8 teaspoons of honey or sugar or molasses and a teaspoon of salt and make a solution that can prevent dehydration when their children have fevers like malaria or when they have diarrhea. And so very few children have died of diarrhea in the last six months.

Not long ago peasant cooperatives were formed in an attempt to change the decades of hunger and misery in El Salvador. The leaders of the cooperatives were tortured and killed but the momentum was moving by then, and the sons and daughters of the campesinos began to defend themselves because they knew every rock and tree in all of Guazapa. And the right wing death squads began to call in the military to help them and truckloads of soldiers would come.

In April I examined a woman in a prenatal clinic and I asked how many pregnancies she had had. She said seven. I asked how many children do you have living, and she said one, and I asked how many abortions or miscarriages, and she said one. I asked what happened to the others, to find out if there had been birth defects or prenatal problems, and she said, after she had recomposed herself, "They burned in the house in Palo Grande along with 36 other women and children." And I naively asked why didn't they run like we do now when the soldiers come. And she said, "That was before, before we even knew we were the enemy. Because we didn't belong to any organization. We'd never been to a demonstration." And the people of Guazapa were soon to learn, because the next massacre was 136 civilians who were dumped in a well in Sacamiel.

And the sons and daughters armed themselves and learned military tactics and grew better at defense measures and learned what a hammer and anvil tactic was. And there's been this spiral of escalation that has led to the revolution we know today. And Guazapa has become a control zone where the peasants live in some security from the intrusion of small numbers of soldiers. They don't come by truckloads anymore, because the guerrillas have defense perimeters and local defense garrisons and they've armed themselves better. And they've grown to be very sophisticated because they know if they make mistakes it will cost them the lives of their families. So they fight with a real determination.

The guerrillas fight mostly with arms that they capture: M-16's (American-made), FAL's (Belgian-made), G-3's (German-made), all standard issue of the Salvadoran army. I've never seen a Kasashnikov or an AK-47, the standard issue of Eastern Bloc weapons, in El Salvador. Nor did I see the sophisticated weaponry that the Salvadoran Army has.

Our State Department would have you believe that there is a tradition of violence in El Salvador, and that somehow all the weapons we are sending don't really contribute to what is going on down there. I was in this country less than one week when I was in a conference...
flying a flag,” we were told by a local woman visiting the Encampment. After all, “Waterloo is the birth place of Memorial Day.”

The flags became the key symbol of the struggle between the local people and the Encampment when, over Memorial Day weekend, a local man offered the Encampment a flag to fly over its entrance. The women involved with the Encampment at that point refused the gift. Over July 4th, opening weekend, the decision was reconsidered and, once again, the flag was refused. This decision came after many hours of difficult discussion in which some women very much wanted to accept the flag, while others argued that the flag represented everything that they came to Seneca to protest. Unable to reach consensus and accept the flag, the women eventually created an alternative solution satisfactory to everyone at the Encampment. Each woman was asked to create her own personal flag symbolizing her vision of a future America. Some women made American flags, believing that the American flag represented not only the negative aspects of American society and politics, but also that which they valued and the future they envisioned. In the weeks that followed many individual women chose to carry American flags at marches, rallies, and demonstrations outside the Depot. These flags, however, were summarily dismissed by the local people who already had concluded that women at the Encampment had proven to be at best unpatriotic, and at worst communist.

These people don’t belong here. I believe they’re communists, they’re paid by communists. They shouldn’t be here. Every other person here is a veteran of a different war. We’re here to show these people that they’re not coming to our village to keep our people off the streets and make our kids afraid to walk the streets by these people being lesbians and everything else.

—Counterdemonstrator, Waterloo, July 30

Our refusal to fly the American flag was linked in the minds of local people to other aspects of the Encampment that appeared “anti-American.” In almost every way possible we stood outside the boundaries of acceptable social and cultural practice. As a women’s encampment with a large number of self-identified lesbians we appeared immoral and anti-family; as a support system for women determined to do civil disobedience, we appeared lawless; as women seemingly independent of jobs and families, local residents assumed we were living on welfare and, thus, placing an unnecessary burden on their county. In crossing these cultural boundaries, we essentially stepped outside of the community’s understanding of what it means to be women. Thus, we can understand the words of an angry young man heckling a woman from the peace camp, “I go to work five days a week . . . the streets are for bums, not for pigs. I shave every day, what about you? You look like you belong in Africa.”

Once we were defined as somehow inhuman our actions took on the quality of everyone’s worst fears. Residents of Waterloo claim that Encampment women took their clothes off in the laundromat, the car wash, and at the local beaches; we made love in public; we destroyed property all over town; we fought with policemen and soldiers; and we desecrated the flag in every possible manner.

We have laws to live by and I don’t think these women should go down there [Samson State Park] stark naked and get away with it . . . . They’re walking around with no brassieres on.

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Interviewer: They had no brassieres on or they had no clothes on?
That’s just as bad in my book. You don’t walk around showing your breasts to the world. That’s something your husband and wife do.
—Minister’s wife, August 1

I don’t argue with the right to demonstrate. Just the acts of lesbianism that went on at certain times. I don’t want my kids seeing that, not even on T.V. It’s not necessary. I mean there’s the cover of darkness the good lord gave you to do whatever you want to do; you don’t have to do it in broad daylight. And defacing government property, that upsets me. And I’ve seen some of them spitting on the flag, walking on the flag. I mean that tears guys like myself who fought, it tears us down. And that’s what angers me.
—Veteran at small counterdemo, August 2

...You took matters into your own hands and tried to fight with the police and everything else . . . . You burn the American flag, you climb up on towers and write all kinds of pornography.
—Disabled Vietnam Vet, August 3

While some of these incidents may have occurred, all were greatly exaggerated as the word spread through town. Where fact runs into fiction, however, hardly matters. For these Seneca County residents what they heard was fact, and believing it, they were willing to fight us in the streets. Yet the same people who threatened us with physical violence feared the prospect of nuclear war just as we did. Some even supported a nuclear freeze.

Nobody wants war. I got two children and I don’t want them to go to war. I hope there never is another war, but we’ve got to have something to make sure there isn’t another war. And hope that we don’t have to fire the first missile.

—Counterdemonstrator, Waterloo, July 30

Nuclear war, nobody wants it. But the way I look at it, whether you’re here or in California, if there’s a nuclear war I’d just as soon get hit and have it over with instead of wondering when I’m going or not being able to live in the civilization that’s the way it will be after there’s a nuclear war . . . . I’m for a nuclear weapons freeze, but I think they’re [the Encampment women] going about it the wrong way. They should be writing letters to their congressman or
protesting in Washington...  
—Counterdemonstrator,  
Interlaken, August 2

Sharing our desire for a safe and peaceful world, we must look beyond the immediate issue of nuclear weapons to understand why the women at the Seneca Encampment inspired such hostility in the local community. True, some of us identified ourselves as lesbians, others as communists. However, the way in which we define these identities is very different from the way in which they were being defined by local residents. The confrontation at Seneca was a cultural confrontation in which two world views met head on.

Anti-communism and homophobia have long been associated in American history. The red baiting of the McCarthy era was accompanied by even more effective anti-gay purges, given legitimacy by Eisenhower's 1953 executive order making homosexuality grounds for terminating government employment. This historical connection suggests that anti-communism and homophobia are also culturally linked; that is, communism and homosexuality are understood by many Americans in similar ways. Strong believers in American democracy and freedom, the citizens of Seneca County understand these words to symbolize the sacredness of home and family, of work, and of property. Our refusal to fly the flag was interpreted as disrespect for these values. "Go back to Russia," they told us, implying that if we didn't like American democracy maybe we should have a taste of Russian communism. Communism is understood as the antithesis of democracy; it is totalitarianism. It is assumed that under communist regimes people are not free to own property, to choose their own work, or to raise their own families. Their fear of communism, and therefore the Russians, is real. As one veteran exclaimed, "If we didn't have them [nuclear weapons] they'd come over here and we'd end up being slaves."

It is in the domain of family and gender relations that American cultural logic links communism and homosexuality. According to this logic, under communist regimes the nuclear family is not sacred—children may be taken away from parents, husbands are not guaranteed authority over wives. Under communism, everyone is a "slave" to the state; that is, people are defined in relation to the state, rather than through their connections to one another in families. Homosexuals are also outside of families according to the logic of American culture. Homosexuals disrupt definitions of gender which are linked to familial roles. This is particularly true for women who are given their primary identity through their relationships to men, as mothers, daughters, or wives. A woman's space disconnects women from men, and the women at Seneca appeared to be neither wives, mothers nor daughters. Consequently, no matter how we looked, behaved, or presented ourselves to the people of Seneca County we were all lesbians. Hecklers not only called us "dykes" and "lezies" but chided us with remarks such as, "Why don't you find yourself a husband?" and "Why aren't you married?"

Seneca Citizens for First Amendment Rights

We are a diverse group of 54 women from throughout America who on July 30, 1983, began a peaceful walk along with 75 of our sisters. We set out from Seneca Falls, NY, to the Women's Peace Encampment in Romulus. Our purpose was to honor the great defiant women in our past who have resisted oppression and to bring their courageous spirit to the Encampment.

In the small town of Waterloo, 4 miles into our walk, our way was blocked by several hundred townspeople brandishing American flags and chanting "commies, go home." To diffuse the potential of violence many of us sat down in the classic tradition of non-violence.

—Statement of the Waterloo 54

The mob that blocked the Waterloo bridge on the morning of July 30th felt reminiscent of whites in the early 1960's, murderously angry at Blacks marching through their communities; or, once again, in the late 1960's when so-called "hard-hats" fought back against young anti-war protesters. The incident on the Waterloo bridge marked the peak of growing tensions between Seneca County residents and the Encampment. Fifty-four women were arrested. No townspeople were taken into custody. Although the incident itself could have been handled differently, a confrontation of some sort was inevitable. Just as in the 1960's, two world views were on a collision course.

Social movements are about more than satisfying particular political goals such as stopping the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing II missiles. They are also collective processes through which we redefine the terms of the social order. Movements challenge the shared understandings that underly the construction of social relations within our society, understandings of human nature, of gender, family, class, race, sexuality, etc. In challenging these cultural assumptions, participants in social movements necessarily disrupt the lives of those who continue to use those assumptions to define themselves and the world in which they live. It is for this reason that movement encounters often inspire seemingly irrational outbursts of fear and hatred.

Accepting the peace camp and what it represented entailed much more for local residents than simply accepting people who were different; it entailed accepting a world view that challenged the very assumptions through which they defined themselves and their world.

Realizing the depth of the crisis for Seneca County, it is a striking achievement that women at the Encampment were able to overcome some of the hostility and open the way for communication with the local people. In the week that followed the arrest of the Waterloo 54, tensions with the community began to subside. Angry counter-demonstrators still appeared at each protest staged by the Encampment, but others came to talk and to listen.

At a vigil outside the main gate of the Depot on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, a Quaker woman asked a counterdemonstrator if she could hold her flag. After some discussion it was agreed. The Quaker woman showed the local woman pictures of her children. She explained that she wrote to her congressman about nuclear weapons, that she went to Washington to protest, that it had all felt hopeless. She came to the Seneca Army Depot because she felt that it was time to take direct action; she had to save the world for her children. The local woman explained her fear of allowing her 14-year-old daughter to walk down the street, her fear that her daughter might encounter lesbians embracing or kissing one another. These women shared their experiences as mothers and they came to understand one another. The following morning they went to church together.

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gressperson's office. I saw a poster on the wall of a red, white and blue stars and stripes pistol. I don't have the exact figures, but it said, "Handgun Deaths 1982: England 7, Japan 12, France 28, West Germany 54, USA 10,670." And I wonder who's projecting whose tradition of violence on whom.

Land Reform and Elections

We hear, according to President Reagan, that 400,000 people have benefitted from this wonderful land reform program. That's what he said in his joint address to Congress. And then the next week in Newsweek we learn that only 1,700 titles had been passed in El Salvador. I was curious about this, so I called Martin Diskin, an expert on land reform at MIT, and he called the State Department and asked, "Where did you get this figure 400,000 when there have been only 1,700 land titles passed?" And they said, "Well, there have been 40,000 or 50,000 people who have applied for land titles and there's six people in every family, so if you multiply six by that you get close to 400,000."

I won't say much about land reform. I'll quote the December 28, 1980, Christian Science Monitor. A land reform official: "The peasants could hardly believe their ears when they were told the land was theirs. They were told to elect people and they did that very night. And the next day the death squads came and murdered everyone that had been elected. That's what land reform was in Vietnam, too, a way to identify peasant leadership and eliminate them."

We hear a lot about free elections. Of course we are trying to impose more elections on the Salvadoreans. And I'm amazed at the level of disinformation that exists here because we had many observers there. None of them seemed to understand that voting is not a choice in El Salvador. It was stated very explicitly before the elections that it's against the law not to vote, and that not to vote is considered treason. And that anyone who did not have a government election stamp on their ID card. No wonder there were long lines of voters in San Salvador. There were also only 13 polling stations for over 100,000 voters. It's a shame that Father Hesburgh (a U.S. election observer invited by the State Department) didn't notice that everyone had to sign a piece of paper beside a ballot number, and then they were given that ballot with a number in the righthand corner. And they were supposed to be able to tear off that number and keep it as a receipt to prove they had voted. Areaana, the rightwing party that would win the election and that doesn't object to the mutilation of bodies, objected because they said that was a mutilation of the ballot. So in no precinct was the number torn off, and everyone knew there was a written record of how they had voted. More importantly, there can be no elections in a country where there is no freedom of speech, or assembly, where there is not rule of law.

Prisoner of War

One of my jobs there has been to liaison to the International Red Cross. Out of respect for my neutrality and position as a physician, the FMLN has given me that charge. And so I see the prisoners of war soon after they are captured. I interview them; I treat them if they need medical treatment; I arrange an exchange of letters with their families; and then I finally arrange their releases. They're young men, as young as 14. All of them describe conscription and many of them a fierce conscription. Young men who admit they are trained and taught to kill women and children because "women are potential factories for more guerrillas and children are the seeds of the guerrillas that must be eliminated." But when you ask, "Why don't you desert?" they say, "We know what happens to families of deserters; we've seen pictures of deserters on the bulletin board with inscriptions like, 'Family killed in a crossfire.'" Young men have very few alternatives.

Before July of last year, the guerrillas used to release them on their own recognizance. But they would turn dead. The government said the guerrillas killed them. The guerrillas knew the government killed them because they suspected them of returning as collaborators, or being cowards because they are taught to fight to the death. And so they're profoundly affected after staying in Guazapa. There's an unofficial policy to guard them for two weeks, and they're guarded in homes. You can imagine a criminal coming to your home with a couple of deputies to keep an eye on him. And they are treated as victims, not criminals. And in homes they see families, they see worship services, they see town councils, they see schools. And this myth of the communist monster who rapes women and lives in caves and eats roots is suddenly dispelled. Those are words I have heard them use. And so those that refuse to return, and many stay with the guerrillas, are profoundly affected.

Before July we had never seen more than one or two prisoners of war. By the fall the guerrillas were seeing 30 to 40 surrender at one time. And in December a whole company surrendered with their lieutenants and all of their weapons. And since Jan. I the guerrillas have captured 900 prisoners of war. And indeed the guerrillas fight with bull horns. They say, "We're your brothers, campesinos, and we know that you're victims of the system, and we don't care to take your lives and we'll respect it if you surrender." And they surrender. In larger and larger numbers. And the gains of the guerrillas can be counted for by the very marked deterioration in the morale of the army and by the increased coordination of the guerrillas. They've captured 1,500 automatic weapons since Jan. I alone. They don't need to bring weapons from the outside. They're capturing more than sufficient to meet their needs.

Negotiations

The guerrillas have suggested to me some very cogent reasons that they want to negotiate. They don't fear elections; they just want elections in which they can participate. They don't want the bloodshed that another two years might mean to achieve a military victory. Reagan tells you that there is going to be a bloodbath when the communists take over. Curious statement. The Revolutionary Democratic Front is made up of Christian Socialists, Social Democrats, and indeed Marxists, the Association of Professionals and Technicians, the National Association of Teachers, the Federation of Christian Campesinos, the Association of Slum Dwellers (those were the sub-
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Local women arrived at the hearing of the Waterloo 54 with large signs reading, "WATERLOO CITIZENS FOR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS." Their presence inspired a celebratory dance inside the courthouse as Encampment women felt the power behind this show of support. Recognizing the injustice perpetrated by the authorities who arrested peaceful demonstrators, rather than an unruly and violent mob, these local women felt the need to speak out. Speaking out on our behalf they allowed us to enter into their world and offered us a certain legitimacy within the community.

The matron who spent five days with the women imprisoned at Waterloo felt herself transformed by our presence. With tears in her eyes, she explained how meeting these women, "so committed to their cause," changed her life. The evening following their hearing she arrived at the Encampment with a huge box overflowing with zucchini and summer squash for our communal kitchen.

Since the beginning of August local residents have invited Encampment women to a series of town meetings to discuss opposing viewpoints. The American Legion has met with women to discuss ways of reducing tensions, and ministers of churches in Romulus and Seneca Falls have given sermons supporting our anti-nuclear efforts. The air has by no means cleared, but the process of change has begun. Seneca County will never be quite the same. Even for those who remain committed to a world view that refuses to accept us as legitimate persons, everything is a little bit different. Fundamental assumptions about human nature, as well as the American government, the military and nuclear weapons, usually lying invisible below the surface of everyday life, have been brought into question. The very fact that people fought so hard to keep us out of their lives and out of their consciousness indicates that we had a tremendous effect. Moreover, for those who made contact with us as individuals and tried to understand us, the world is very different indeed. We are no longer a bunch of "commie queers," but women who share their commitment to life and a deepseated fear for the future of the human race.

Recognizing that a social movement

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realize through WIRE's work that the problems they face are international only around local issues but also in scope and that they must work not back. Many women's groups have told them that they have come to realize through WIRE's work that the problems they face are international in scope and that they must work not only around local issues but also international ones. For example, the forces that are trying to limit abortion rights for poor women in the U.S. are the same ones who are attempting to impose a policy of population control in Third World countries. For example, the same textile companies that moved away to the South where they could exploit southern women workers have now expanded their international assembly line to include shops on the Mexican border and in the Dominican Republic. WIRE was formed to gather and reproduce articles that examine these issues. They are putting together articles which focus on women in the Third World with an emphasis on Latin America. The articles listed in their catalogue include such topics as: Women and Reproductive Rights, Women and National Liberation Struggles, Women and Violence, Women and Multi-Nationals, Women Political Prisoners, and Women and Human Rights. Recently WIRE published a collection of poetry written by Third World women. Resist's grant was used for a promotional mailing. WIRE is confident that their publications will be valuable for feminists' groups, church-based women's groups, trade union-affiliated women, women's studies departments and human rights, Third World support and anti-imperialist solidarity groups.

Detroit CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), Labor Outreach Committee, 1920 25th St., Detroit, MI 48216.

Opposition within the U.S. labor movement to U.S. involvement in Central America is possibly greater now than it ever was to the Vietnam War. There are currently over 25 local organizations whose members are trade unionists and whose goal is to organize within the labor movement against U.S. foreign policy. A growing number of international unions and central labor councils are adopting strongly worded resolutions, and the National Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador is endorsed by the presidents of the UAW, IAM, ACTWU, GAIW, OCAW and a half dozen other major unions. This represents a significant beginning, but much work remains to be done. The AFL-CIO continues to support U.S. foreign policy, and the American Institute for Free Labor and Development continues to act as a tool for the CIA and the State Department. To address these issues the Labor Committee of Detroit CISPES has put together a "Labor and Central America Information Packet" that is aimed at both labor activists interested in doing solidarity work and solidarity activists interested in doing labor outreach. The background section provides a good package of information on the many issues relating to labor and Central America and is an easily reproducible handout for educational purposes. The organizing section provides concrete ideas for activities based upon the experience of already established labor committees from across the country. The section on forming a labor committee also acquaints the user with the wide range of activities beyond getting an endorsement or a resolution passed. Resist's grant paid for the costs of printing and distributing this crucial labor packet.

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**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. If you would like to learn more, drop us a note. Or — take the plunge! — and fill out the handy form below.

Yes, I would like to be a Resist pledge for

- [ ] $5/month
- [ ] $50/month
- [ ] $10/month
- [ ] $100/month
- [ ] $25/month
- [ ] $250/month

I enclose my check for __.

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Street ____________ 
City ____________ State ____________ Zip ____________

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October 1983

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