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The Military in Nicaragua

GERRY CONDON

Last November a delegation of eleven veterans from the U.S. visited Nicaragua as an expression of solidarity and concern over the U.S.-sponsored war. The trip received extensive media coverage in both Nicaragua and the United States. Gerry Condon, a Vietnam veteran and a former staff-person at National CARD was a member of the delegation. In this article he discusses the current situation in Nicaragua focusing on the Sandinista military, particularly the recent institution of a draft law.

Most of us were in the air at the same time, but coming from many different directions. From Washington State and California, from Arizona, Texas and Illinois. From New York and Washington D.C., we arrived at Miami International Airport. There were eleven of us. Most of us had never met, but we found one another. Three of us were Black, one Chicano, and one Native American. One was a woman. Some of us were very ill due to exposure to radiation and agent orange during military service. We ranged in age from barely 30 to almost 60. What we had in common was that we were all veterans of the U.S. military and we were headed for Nicaragua to help prevent a U.S. invasion there.

During our visit to Nicaragua we traveled extensively throughout the country talking with government of-
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Amendment Rights to research challenge: already much research is restricted because of health dangers; and the Pope, among others, has spoken about the inherent responsibility of the scientist for awareness of the purpose to which her work is put. However, CARB was able to exploit this concern to its advantage in the academic community although the underlying split among academics may have reflected different political orientations. The research question is a difficult one and many nuclear free zone campaigns may choose to avoid it by not including it in the wording of their legislation, but this weakens the legislation immensely. Much of the nuclear weapons work in this country is known in the field as R&D or “research and development” work. If the legislation does not reflect the terminology of the business, crucial parts of the development process will be left unaffected.

Although several of the major unions in Cambridge endorsed the NFC campaign, the jobs question was central. The working class white communities, which already tend to support a “strong” military stance for the U.S., were strongly affected by the jobs question, as perhaps were a number of higher class liberals. It is true in Cambridge, as well as nationally, that the nuclear weapons industry employs the fewest number of workers per dollar of any industry. But that fact and the long-term benefits of reprioritizing national and local expenditures were not convincing for all people, especially those for whom jobs was an immediate concern, not one that could be solved two or three years down the road.

NFC attempted to deal with the jobs issue by including an important clause in the legislation that called for assistance for affected defense industries with conversion. Clearly, if we are to turn our economy from its focus on nuclear weapons development and production, we need conversion plans that are workable and ready to be implemented. Conversion clauses in nuclear free zone legislation are essential and in future campaigns, because they are not popularly understood, these clauses will need better promotion in the education of the voters. Campaigns will also need to do more research into the actual logistics of conversion for the businesses in their communities and include this information in the implementation clauses of the legislation. The answer to the jobs question is still not complete, but avoiding it will only weaken the anti-nuclear movement; further work on answers will help us all link issues and work together.

Although CARB was successful in bringing voters in certain segments of the population to their side by raising the jobs and first amendment issues, it should be noted that other segments were not so easily convinced. Although the actual demographics of the votes are not known, patterns can be suggested by the composition of different wards and precincts and the specific experiences of canvassers. For instance, many of the poor, Black and Portuguese people seemed to have supported the NFC act as they questioned CARB’s slick mailings and the amount and source of their funds.

NFC Successes and National Implications

Although losing by a 60-40 margin, the Nuclear Free Cambridge Campaign was successful in many ways that were not shown in the election results. Stepping beyond non-binding, advisory free zones, the Cambridge campaign had a powerful educational effect on the general public and the anti-nuclear movement.

The binding effects of the referendum pushed every voter to educate themselves on the question of what nuclear weapons are built in their community. As a combination of community organizing and electoral campaigning, NFC created an important opportunity for empowering citizens to make a real effect on a national/international issue. Drawing on the resources of grassroots organizing, Nuclear Free Zone referendums educated as part of affecting the national policies of our government. The NFC campaign often had to answer the question of the national impact of such legislation, whether it was not simply a “symbolic” vote. Clearly, the willingness of the national nuclear weapons industry to spend so much money shows not only the national impact of such referendums, but also that such a referendum educates citizens as to the links between issues, such as the arms race and business interests. It was for these reasons that the vice president of Draper said on national television that “we know we had to nip this in the bud.”

While the non-binding nuclear free zone movement has been growing internationally, Cambridge’s binding legislation became a focal point of national and international attention, certainly the “bud” of a movement. The campaign was covered numerous times by regional and national newspapers and TV news programs. Twice the NFC was covered by Night Line, the most watched TV news program in the nation. The coverage was quite positive in helping to legitimize binding nuclear free zones as a method to help stop the arms race. Already nuclear free zone conferences have been drawing many interested groups, often attracting people who have never organized before. Nineteen eighty-four will see the passage of dozens of more non-binding and binding town council votes. In November at least seven communities will be voting on binding referendums affecting ongoing nuclear weapons work including Ann Arbor, MI, Madison, WI and Berkeley, CA. Because of the Cambridge referendum, progressive lawyers in these cities will have a clearer sense of the wording in their legislation and will be able to better anticipate the inevitable legal battles.

Nuclear Free Zone organizing is an important and effective strategy for the disarmament movement. By making nuclear weapons companies move frequently, NFZ can impose disabling effects similar to those of civil disobedience in the plans to rapidly increase the number of nuclear power plants. It also offers important opportunities for education, linking issues and groups and for having a national impact. Nuclear Free Campaigns are unique in empowering people to take control over national issues, at the level of their community, that effect the future of all of us and which ultimately we will have to decide. As Susan Levene, a coordinator of the Cambridge campaign, has said in advice to other binding NFZ organizers: “We can’t match their financial resources — we just won’t win in those areas. Our campaign task is to build strong community bases and large-scale grassroots organization. That is where our strength ultimately lies.”
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officials, newspaper editors, workers, farmers, soldiers, militia members, young and old, women and men. Perhaps the sentiments of our delegation were best expressed in a brief ceremony at Leon in a courtyard erected to commemorate all the martyrs of the Nicaraguan revolution. There, Anthony Guarios, a veteran of World War II and the Korean War and the Director of the International Alliance of Atomic Veterans, read a statement on our behalf. It read in part: “The people of Nicaragua paid a heavy price in order to gain control over their own country and destinies. You paid with the lives of the men, women and children who died in your revolution. We stand here to honor them. We are saddened by the knowledge that it is the U.S. government that is responsible for these deaths. And we are outraged by the fact that it is that same government which now threatens to rob the Nicaraguan people of the gains of their revolution.” We laid roses at the foot of the statue and reaffirmed our commitment to organize against U.S. intervention in Central America.

Popular Militias

As former military personnel, we were particularly interested in learning how the military is organized in revolutionary Nicaragua. In Managua we spoke with an Army spokesperson, Major Sanchez. He told us that the army was born in a popular fight, and that its conception was both military and political. “We perceive the Army as professional and dedicated to defense. We have no plans for expansion,” he told us. “The police have responsibility for internal order. The Army defends the national territory. The Army is not for internal repression or aggression, but for defense.”

Nicaraguans are also incorporated into defense through the Sandinista Popular Militias. “This scares some people,” Major Sanchez told us, “because we are a small country with over 100,000 people under arms. But we aren’t at war with anybody. We are defending ourselves against aggression. The size of our military forces depends on the level of aggression against us.

“Some Central American countries are afraid of this situation. They call themselves “democrats,” but what would happen if they gave arms to their people? A government with the people’s support should not be afraid to arm its people, because it is their right to defend their country. Here the people have something to defend, not just the government, but their own interests. They are very motivated.”

What Major Sanchez said rang very, very true. We had seen the slogans painted on walls everywhere we went: “Free country or death,” “They will not pass.” And we had been guests at a very enthusiastic militia meeting in an underwear factory outside of Managua. The meeting — about forty strong — was mostly women, both older and younger. They sang, chanted and traded greetings with us. One woman told us: “We have a reason to die. We’re not going to lose our lives in foreign countries fighting unjust wars.”

Major Sanchez also told us that there is much emphasis in the army on cultural and political development. “To carry arms is a big responsibility,” he said. “They must be clear what arms are for.” We had already been impressed by the responsible manner of those women and men who carried weapons. Not once did we see a weapon brandished carelessly or in an intimidating fashion.

THE NICARAGUAN DRAFT

A number of the veterans on our delegation have been involved in local anti-draft organizing in our hometowns in the U.S., and are connected with the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD). The institution of a draft law in Nicaragua shortly before our arrival therefore provided a poignant irony. To be quite frank, this was not one of the issues that kept us talking late into the night. We didn’t believe it was our place to explicitly support or oppose a Nicaraguan draft. We did believe it was our place, however, to support Nicaragua’s right to self-determination, which includes choosing how to defend themselves against outside aggression. We did talk about the draft law with quite a few people, including the Sandinista Youth group and the National Women’s Organization.

Over 50% of Nicaragua’s population is 15 or under. Children and youth are everywhere. Like the revolution itself, the people of Nicaragua are young. So it is easy to see, as Juan Pablo, the director of Casa Nacional Juventud Sandinista, explained: “The role of youth is critical in achieving the country’s two main priorities of defense and production.” Over 85,000 youth were organized into the Popular Literacy Army in 1980, a campaign which helped reduce illiteracy from 53% to 12%. Youth brigades also play an important role in the annual harvests of coffee and cotton, the two most important export crops of this agricultural society.

Juan Pablo went on to describe in some detail the extremely impressive contributions and considerable organization of Nicaraguan youth. “But there are problems in every process,” he told us. “A small minority of students resist participating. Often they have families outside of Nicaragua or they are from the wealthy class. This revolution is for workers and peasants, the vast majority here. But it is open to participation of all who work for the good of the majority.”

Another Juventud Sandinista leader explained his perspective on the draft system, called Patriotic Military Service. He told us that Nicaraguans were preparing to resist a war of long duration with three scenarios: 1) they must resist the attacks of the Somocistas (“contras”); 2) they must resist a possible attack by CONDECA, the anti-communist military alliance of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (recently reformed with U.S. encour...
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1) they must be able to face the worst — direct U.S. intervention.
2) The Patriotic Military Service is consistent, for many reasons, with the needs of the Nicaraguan people at this time. “Most important right now,” he said, “Reagan’s policies are not momentary, but long term. The Reagan administration has the political will to destroy revolutions — as in Grenada.”

Then he went on to detail the scope of the current military threat: the largest military maneuvers (joint US-Honduras) ever in Central America; nearly 10,000 U.S. soldiers in Honduras; Honduran army support for U.S. and “contras”; U.S. navy ships menacing both coasts of Nicaragua; mobilization of troops on Atlantic side in Honduras to open a “3rd front”; and 10,000 Somoza National Guardsmen in Honduras, trained and supplied by the US.

This young man was only twenty years old, but obviously very mature. He reminded us of the U.S. interventions in 1855, 1912, 1927, and 1933. “Our principal enemy is clearly the U.S. government,” he stated calmly. “Faced with this threat, we want to achieve better organization of the military and organize the popular will of the people who want to integrate into the defense of the nation.”

“We are also concerned that the tasks of defense don’t complicate the tasks of production and study. We need to plan how many people will be necessary for defense in the longer term, as opposed to previous crisis-to-crisis mobilizations, which were disruptive.”

Defense, Production, Study, Reproduction, Confidence in the Future. These will all be facilitated by the Patriotic Military Service, he told us. “Also,” he added, “it is a right, duty and obligation of all Nicaraguan people to defend the revolution.

“It’s not true that the draft is because people don’t defend the revolution,” he continued, “or that we are brainwashing people. But in the SMP we will continue to develop our sense of liberty, idealism and patriotism.”

Such high-sounding rhetoric may fall on jaundiced brains in the U.S., but in fact is was just this sense of liberty, idealism and patriotism which we found so overwhelming no matter where we went in Nicaragua. We had never experienced anything like it. Some of us just plain didn’t want to leave Nicaragua and return to the more complicated, divided and cynical milieu we were all too accustomed to.

Before we left the meeting with the youth group, this draft-age man made one final point: “This preparation (The Patriotic Military Service) will help us to prevent war — it will make the U.S. think twice.”

Larry Holmes, a Black Vietnam-era vet who works with the People’s Anti-War Mobilization in New York City remarked: “In the U.S. there is no such thing as Patriotic Military Service. It’s more like Racist Military Aggression.”

At the Managua offices of AMNLAE, the national women’s organization, we spoke with the mothers of children who had fallen in the struggle against Somoza or in defending the country against the Contra attacks. The mothers told us how they worried when their children first became involved in the struggle, but later learned that the best way to support their children was not to worry but to become activists themselves.

These women also had some very definite opinions on the Patriotic Military Service. They had waged a national campaign to get the original law changed so that it included women. Actually, in a compromise solution, women are included on a voluntary basis. Not all women felt the same about this, and some of the male legislators were adamantly against even voluntary service for women.

“One integrated force presents a difficult situation,” a Sandinista youth leader had told us earlier. “Because of the general education, attitudes exist against this. Women who wish to join have a double problem. Nicaragua is going through a transformation. Men and women are equal — with equal opportunity for all.”

The women at AMNLAE were unequivocal, however. Two of the mothers jokingly sneered at the backwardness of some of the male legislators. The AMNLAE women obviously see their struggle for equality to be integrally tied to their inclusion in the country’s defense.

“This has been a real triumph for the Nicaraguan women, who make up 60% of the territorial militias, 75% of neighborhood vigilance committees, and 90% of health workers,” said their spokeswoman. “SMP participation is logical. The SMP campaign strengthens women’s consciousness. In tasks of defense, there are not women’s and men’s tasks.” The “SMP,” the Spanish initials for Patriotic Military Service were to be seen everywhere in the country where the writing is always on the walls.

Not everyone in Nicaragua, however, was thrilled by the Patriotic Military Service. Though the majority of the popular sectors, organizations and institutions have reacted positively, some of the conservative political opposition used the occasion to launch a broadside attack against the Sandinista government, calling into question its very legitimacy.

The first negative public reaction to the draft was from the Social Christian Party. After deciding to withdraw its representative from the Council of State’s special commission to study the draft, it published a document which
was very critical of the law. An earlier document of the Social Democrat Party also expressed its opposition. But without doubt, the document of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference (of Catholic Bishops) was the most negative and produced the strongest internal reaction.

The letter from nine Bishops, while failing to even address the aggression with which Nicaragua is faced, says; “...as the State’s armed power, the army has no legitimacy if that same State does not have authentic moral legitimacy .... This social-legal-revolutionary concept has not gained its legitimacy freely, rather, it has been imposed by armed forces.” Because “the proposed (draft) law is highly politicized, has a party character, and follows the general lines of all totalitarian laws...those who do not share the ideology of the Sandinista Party...” may opt for a “conscientious objector” status.

This definition of “conscientious objector” obviously doesn’t do “conscientious objectors” any favors. In fact, it has so politicized the concept as to possibly have done irreparable harm to the very concept in Nicaragua. But to put this all in some context, it is necessary to realize that Nicaragua is a Catholic country. It is also obviously a revolutionary country. For some, this implies a contradiction. But not for the practitioners of “liberation theology”, many of whom we met in Nicaragua. We spoke with priests and nuns, some of them U.S. citizens, who told us frankly that most of these bishops and even many Nicaraguan priests owe too much to the old order and are unalterably opposed to the new. A Capuchion priest from the U.S. explained to us that while poor youth in the U.S. can sometimes attend a seminary and become priests with the financial help of the parishes, Nicaraguan clergy have historically been dependent on the sponsorship of wealthy families. “They know which side their bread is buttered on,” he told us.

The draft law was passed and implemented without mass social protest, although 2 priests, a Spaniard and a Costa Rican, were expelled from the country for inciting Sunday worshipers in one village to demonstrate against the draft. The first registration period was October-November, 1983 and 20,000 youth between 17-23 registered. Of these, 15,000 will be called for active duty for two years, 1984-85. Their service may be extended or shortened by 6 months, depending on the military situation. Men between the ages of 18 and 25 will be recruited first, and may be drafted into the reserves. The draft law does call for penalties of 6 months to 2 years in prison for those failing to comply. As of this time no provisions have been made for bona fide conscientious objection, but no one is actually being prosecuted either. While there may not be universal enthusiasm for the new draft, it is certainly preferable to the conscription practice in neighboring Honduras. There, army troops are known to ambush young men as they emerge from movie theatres.

When our trip ended, the veterans of another draft and war returned to their communities in the United States and are actively organizing against the draft and U.S. intervention in Central America. Our experience in Nicaragua has helped to form a strong bond among us and has encouraged us to redouble our efforts to convince U.S. citizens of the insanity and immorality of supporting another Vietnam War in Central America. Participants of this delegation, as well as other anti-war vets, are available for speaking engagements. This work is being coordinated by Veterans Against Intervention in Central America (VAUCA), 1800 Kilbourne Pl., NW, Washington, D.C. 20010 202/462-9204.

The following veterans participated in the delegation to Nicaragua:

Steve Clements (Veterans for Non-Intervention in Central America, Seattle, WA)
Gerry Condon (Veterans Against Intervention in Central America, Wash. D.C.)
Bill Distler (CISPES, Bellingham, WA)
Hank Erb (Vietnam Veterans Peace Project, Austin, Texas)
Tony Gonzales (La Riza Draft Counseling Center, Fresno, CA)
Anthony Guarisco (International Association of Atomic Veterans, Wash. D.C.)
Larry Holmes (People’s Anti-War Mobilization, NY, NY)
Tom LeBlanc (International Indian Treaty Council, SF, CA)
Job Mashariki (Black Veterans for Social Justice, NY, NY)
Ray Parrish (Vietnam Vets Against War, Chicago, IL)
C.J. Thompson-White (Women’s Veteran Information Network, SF, CA)
Binding the Weapons Makers

GRACE ROSS

Last summer Resist gave a $500 grant to the Nuclear Free Cambridge Campaign of the Boston Mobilization for Survival for seed money to get the campaign rolling. In this article, Grace Ross, a member of the steering committee of the Campaign and a member of the Movement for a New Society, analyzes the Cambridge effort as it relates to national nuclear free zone organizing.

In November, 1983, Cambridge Massachusetts hosted the most expensive campaign battle in the history of the United States; the nuclear weapons industry spent over $17.50 per voter in the months preceding a legally-binding nuclear free zone referendum election. This election sparked a controversy between the giants of the national nuclear weapons industry and local residents, including disarmament activists, who placed the question on the ballot. Although nuclear free zones have been established in different areas of the world, the Nuclear Free Cambridge Act (NFC) would have been the first legislation to actually stop ongoing nuclear weapons work. If approved, this binding voter referendum would have prohibited all "research, development, testing and evaluation" of nuclear weapons within the city.

Well known as the home of Harvard University and MIT, Cambridge has a population that represents a strange 'town and gown' mix, where a third of the adult population hold graduate degrees and half never finished college. Before the NFC campaign, most Cambridge residents probably did not know that nuclear weapons work went on in their own city. But today, almost everyone in Cambridge is aware that their city is the home of one of the largest research and development nuclear weapons firms in the country, Draper Laboratory. Draper does about $120 million worth of defense work annually, including the design of the guidance systems for the Cruise, MX and Trident missiles. This work makes Draper primarily responsible for these missiles' first strike capacity.

Opposing Campaigns

On November 8, 1983, the referendum was voted down by slightly less than a 60-40 margin. But the vote count is only part of the story. Citizens Against Research Bans (CARB), the "citizens" group drawn together, primarily by Draper to defeat the act, spent $507,000 in just two and a half months. CARB swung into action trying to persuade Cambridge voters that the act would endanger hundreds of city jobs and thousands of tax dollars and would throw innocent workers and academics taking part in "safe research" into jail. While promoting themselves as a grassroots campaign, CARB's list of supporters included only 27 contributions from individual donors — and only nine of those were Cambridge residents. The rest of their contributors reads like a "who's who" of the nuclear weapons industry: $25,000 each from Draper Laboratory, General Dynamics (which builds part of the MX, Trident and Cruise missiles) and Sperry (Trident, Pershing and Cruise); $20,000 each from Northrop (MX, Cruise) and Rockwell International (MX, Trident, Cruise, B-1 Bomber); $10,000 from Martin-Marietta (MX, Pershing), Honeywell (Pershing, Cruise) and Avco (Pershing, Cruise), as well as help from many other notable defense contractors.

CARB's efforts set the record for the most expensive electoral campaign in American history. Draper Laboratory hired numerous polling agencies at the beginning of the summer to design its campaign and to mislead voters with "objective" questions such as "how do you feel about the Soviets shooting down civilian planes" in connection with the referendum. By election day, every voter in Cambridge had been called between two and six times by CARB hired polling firms. CARB invested in six direct mailings, five T.V. ads, numerous radio spots, newspaper ads, leafletting and paid all their "volunteers" $4.50 per hour. Draper paid some of its employees to write ten letters each to Cambridge citizens asking them to vote "no" to save their husband's jobs.

The Nuclear Free Cambridge (NFC) Campaign spent about $30,000 which was raised primarily from hundreds of individual contributions. The most important organizing method of the campaign was a door-to-door canvass which covered the entire city twice, formed a strong base of educated voters and brought in many contributions. Other NFC organizing focused on a phone bank, leafletting, public speaking and mobilizing a large number of volunteers. The NFC campaign also took advantage of the Fairness Doctrine to get free air time to respond to the political commercials of the CARB campaign.

CARB's Issues—First Amendment, Jobs

Cambridge has a recent history of tending to support organizing on nuclear issues such as NFC and before CARB put its high-powered machine into action, the NFC had the support of about 60% of the voting population. Initially, CARB chose three issues on which to rest its campaign: the safety of Draper's work, the loss of jobs and city revenues and the infringement of first amendment rights in research. When CARB realized that they could not succeed in convincing Cambridge residents that no harmful nuclear weapons work was done at Draper Laboratory, they decided to base their campaign on the other two issues: the first amendment and jobs.

CARB was very effective in influencing public opinion around these two issues in large segments of the population and it was these two issues that the NFC campaign was least prepared to answer. The academic community, including the arms control experts, was clearly influenced by the "right to research" concerns even though there are clear arguments against the First
Amendment Rights to research challenge: already much research is restricted because of health dangers; and the Pope, among others, has spoken about the inherent responsibility of the scientist for awareness of the purpose to which her work is put. However, CARB was able to exploit this concern to its advantage in the academic community although the underlying split among academics may have reflected different political orientations. The research question is a difficult one and many nuclear free zone campaigns may choose to avoid it by not including it in the wording of their legislation, but this weakens the legislation immensely. Much of the nuclear weapons work in this country is known in the field as R&D or "research and development" work. If the legislation does not reflect the terminology of the business, crucial parts of the development process will be left unaffected.

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Boston Comite de Apoyo Pro-Alfabetizacion (CAPA), c/o Rachel Wyon, 73 Pearl St., Brookline, MA 02146.

For the majority of people in El Salvador and throughout Latin America, illiteracy is as much a part of life as hunger or inadequate health care. For the repressive Salvadoran government, education for the working poor is not only considered unnecessary; it is subversive. Illiteracy is an important device for social control, which inhibits the poor from developing critical insight into the causes of their poverty and prevents their initiating change in their own lives. As the war in El Salvador has escalated, it has become increasingly dangerous to be a teacher. Since 1979, 362 teachers have been murdered, 19 are held in clandestine prisons, 28 are held in public prisons and 4,500 teachers have been forced to become refugees in Central America and Mexico. As of October 1981, over 1,000 schools have been closed. Yet while the war in El Salvador continues, a literacy campaign is underway in refugee camps in Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica, and in the controlled areas of El Salvador. This campaign embodies the hope and commitment of the Salvadoran people to build a more just and free society. The campaign, which has incorporated more than 3,000 people of all ages outside El Salvador and 23,000 in the controlled zones, is organized by ANDES, 21 DE JUNIO — the National Association of Salvadoran Educators.

CAPA, the literacy support committee for ANDES, was formed by a group of people from various nations living in Nicaragua in 1982. Its purpose is to inform others of the work that ANDES is doing in the literacy campaign, and to support ANDES by raising funds and collecting educational materials to be distributed by ANDES. As part of the education campaign, CAPA has produced a 23-minute slide show. Resist's grant of $488 paid for the duplication of the slide show and audio/visual equipment. The slide show is available for rental and purchase at the above address.

Lesbian and Gay Organizing Committee for 1984, c/o Kathy Acey, North Star Foundation, 135 East 15th St., NY, NY 10003.

Nineteen Eighty-Four was proclaimed the International Year of lesbian and gay action by the International Gay Association. The IGA is an activist organization with a membership of 111 different organizations in more than 30 countries, making it the largest and only international grouping of lesbians and gay men. IGA has played a role in the creation of a network of groups fighting oppression and has also planned strategies and encouraged the development of lesbian and gay liberation movements in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Nineteen eight-four will represent a call for political action on local, national and international levels. The issues which will be addressed by dozens of demonstrations planned worldwide are: Anti-gay violence, the rights of lesbians and gays to employment, gay health, reproductive rights for lesbians and all women, and money for human needs of lesbians and gays, not armaments. The IGA has called for a mass demonstration on the United Nations to address these issues and in August, 1983, North American members of IGA began planning this action. In early discussion it was decided that a march was not enough. It was time for lesbians and gays to have further discussion, exchange ideas, and find out what is being done in other cities, regions, and countries. Plans are underway for a conference and a march on September 29-30, 1984. The conference will bring lesbians and gay men together for workshops and discussion. The march will bring them together in publicly addressing their concerns to the U.N. Resist's grant of $500 went towards the cost of a meeting held on March 3-4 where representatives from the many diverse parts of the lesbian/gay community began to plan these events.

San Diego CISPES, P.O. Box 5683, San Diego, CA 92105.

CISPES, both locally and nationally, recognizes the urgent need to direct their organizing drives towards broader sectors of the public if they are to build a broad, effective, anti-intervention movement. Over the last two years San Diego CISPES has done much work in developing ties and working relationships with the local peace movement. While this all important link will remain a focus for the coming year, they are currently initiating a program to outreach to minority sectors of the population. Given the size of the Latino population in San Diego, they have repeatedly felt the need to develop Spanish language flyers, brochures and informational pieces. Recently, this need has turned into a necessity. The Chicano organizations that the San Diego CISPES chapter works with need these materials to further educate their members of the threat of war in Central America. Resist gave CISPES $500 towards printing and production costs of two leaflets that will be used in their monthly outreach project. Outreach to the minority population will take place primarily on four fronts: 1. grassroots, "person-to-person" organizing; 2. organization contact and coalition work on specific projects; 3. minority media; 4. outreach to minority educators. According to organizers, this all sided approach will insure the widest exposure for CISPES and anti-intervention sentiment among the Black and Chicano communities in San Diego.

Bonnie Acker