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Witness For Nonviolence:
For Treaty and Rural Rights in Northern Wisconsin

This organization of white, Native American and Black activists formed in 1987 in response to what appeared to be a serious crisis in Northern Wisconsin, threatening the safety of both Indian and non-Indian communities. The recent struggle of the Chippewa people to win recognition of their fishing rights brought to light smouldering prejudice among non-Indians in the area.

In the 1800s, the Chippewa nation, under political pressure from expanding European-American settlement, ceded the land that is now the northern third of Wisconsin to the United States. In ceding the land, they retained the right to hunt, fish and gather wild rice on off-reservation as well as reservation land. This is similar to the property rights tradition where one can sell one’s land but retain water or mineral rights on that land. But treaties have even higher legal standing because Article VI of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that “all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land.”

The tradition of spearing fish has long been maintained, but only began again on off-reservation, public lakes in the 1980s, after the courageous testing of the treaties’ constitutionality by spearing families. In 1987, federal Judge James Doyle affirmed these treaty rights: to harvest all natural resources

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This special issue of Resist is devoted to “progress reports” from some of the groups we funded in 1989. Many readers and supporters of Resist have told us they would like to hear more about what folks have done with the money! Well, things may at times appear bleak out there in the belly of the beast, but here at Resist we have the opportunity to learn about some incredible, brave, persistent and passionate resistance and action on the part of our grantees. It’s inspiring to us as we continue doing our part to help raise the money and spread the word about the issues and controversies important to our movements. By the way, we’d love to hear from readers about the newsletter. Do you want to see more reports like these about Resist grantees? Are there issue areas you want to see covered in the newsletter? What articles have you most appreciated in 1989? Drop a line to: Tatiana Schreiber, Newsletter Editor, Resist, One Summer St., Somerville, MA, 02143. Thanks!

All the information in the progress reports included here is excerpted from materials sent to us by the groups themselves. If you would like to know more, or have questions, you’ll find the address for each group at the end of the report.
Treaty Rights

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that were used at the time the treaties were written; to use both modern and traditional methods; and to extract a modest living from the sale of the harvest. These hunting and fishing rights apply only to the Chippewa, not to Wisconsin’s other Native nations: the Menominee, the Winnebago, the Oneida, the Potawatomi and the Stockbridge-Munsee.

In response to the affirmation of these rights, bigotry against the Chippewa flared into a violent anti-treaty rights backlash, focusing on the treaty right to harvest fish. There were ugly letters to the newspapers, and anti-treaty protest leaders called on their followers to go to the boat landings during the ten-day treaty fishing season and do anything they could to disrupt the fishing. Witness for Nonviolence formed to organize a Witness for Peace action at the boat landings to help prevent violence, and to plan long-term educational and intercultural activities that would contribute to a just solution to the conflict. The group is part of a growing regional network of treaty rights support groups, including the Madison Treaty Rights Support Group and the Chicago based Indian Treaty Rights Committee (also a Resist grantee).

Resist contributed funds to organize the witness events at the boat landings during the 1989 fishing season, including training participants and recording the events for education and outreach. The group recently sent us a package of information about their work over the year, but to provide some background, this is testimony from the 1988 Witness, and conclusions the group reached as a result.

Sunday, April 24, 1988, Big Arbor Vitae Lake

“It was crazy. Crowds of people were following the Chippewa everywhere they went, taunting them on shore, on the docks. The police were there but could barely restrain the crowd. You didn’t know what was going to happen. Fifty to seventy people following the spearers around .. making fun of the tobacco ceremony at the beginning . . . and saying things like “When you get all those fish, you can get off welfare.” The spearers gather together on the dock and sing “My Country ’Tis of Thee.” The crowd doesn’t know what to do with that. They back off. Then along comes Kevin Herening of P.A.R.R. (Protect Americans’ Rights and Resources) waving an American flag with a crowd of P.A.R.R. protesters behind him. . . . He gets in a boat with a P.A.R.R. leader and goes out on the lake to confront spearers. There’s three Department of Natural Resources boats and four spearing boats. Wherever the unprotected spearing boat is, the protesters’ boats race over and harass.”

Tim, northern Wisconsin witness.

When Witness for Nonviolence first approached Resist for a grant, they sent us a statement describing events during 1988 and their conclusions. Here are excerpts:

There were nightly confrontations on the lakes by protesters in boats. The main tactic this year was not the boat landing incidents but the physical and verbal abuse heaped on spearers on the lakes. Wakes were created to try and swamp boats. Anchors were dragged through spawning beds and rocks were thrown at spearers from non-Indian boats. George Meyer, head of enforcement for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said, “It’s not against the law to carry rocks in your boat.”

The worst boat landing incident this year was the Big Arbor Vitae Lake confrontation, and if repeated next year, it could easily lead to violence. Another Sunday night, May 1, 1988, at Crescent Lake near Rhinelander, an angry crowd

Enough Typewriters!!!

Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you for calling us about your excess typewriters. (We solicited typewriters to donate to prisoner organizers.) We are asking all those who called to please hold on to your typewriters until we get back to you. We have to figure out the logistics of getting these machines to the people who need them. Unfortunately, many prisons do not allow prisoners to directly accept gifts like these. Once we have worked out a way to handle those that have been offered, we’ll arrange their delivery. But please, no more for now! However, you might consider contacting prisoner advocates in your community, or calling the prison itself, to see if you can make your contribution directly. Again, thanks for your generous donations.

Uncensored Special Issue Coming Up!

Resist is planning a special issue on Art and Censorship/Political Struggle and the First Amendment. We are looking for essays, short articles, poems, cartoons, photos, and artwork for this issue. Naturally we expect there is a range of perspectives among our readers. If you would like to contribute, or have ideas for the issue, please contact us!

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Enough Typewriters!!!

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Resist Newsletter
Veterans Teach the Realities of War

The Veterans Education Project (VEP) was organized in 1984 by a group of Vietnam era veterans who were incensed by a series of militaristic school assemblies staged by the Green Berets in several Western Massachusetts high schools. These assemblies featured helicopter landings, weaponry and "self defense" demonstrations, shooting blanks at students, and sexist humor. In contrast, VEP gives young people an opportunity to speak with people who have directly experienced war and its consequences. VEP provides a supportive atmosphere for discussing war, and encourages thoughtful and well-informed decisions on whether or not to enlist.

Specifically, VEP is concerned that young people become aware that events in Central America and the Persian Gulf are very similar to events in Vietnam. Speakers urge young people to read a variety of books and magazines and not believe everything the government tells the public without question. The group is particularly interested in gaining access to inner city schools so as to counter the work of military recruiters who target minority youth. Resist's 1989 grant was used to update and print 5,000 copies of VEP's brochure, "The Day the Helicopter Came to School."

"I just want to say that they should keep on doing this job of telling students what war really is. It is not fun. It involves life and death. I myself have a father who went to Vietnam, but he doesn't talk about it, he just screams when he thinks of it."

Carmen, Putnam Vocational & Technical High School Springfield, MA

—from VEP brochure

VEP sent Resist this report on the group's work since the beginning of the year:

In June of 1989 we reached our goal of 140 presentations for the 1988-1989 school year. We are pleased that virtually every school invites us back the following year. This spring, four new speakers joined the group, allowing us to meet the increasing demand from schools. One of our newest speakers, Dave Rodrigues, served in the Army and has just completed his term with the National Guard. Because of his age and his recent experience with today's military, he is a valuable asset to our group. We have not yet been successful in attracting women or minority veterans to join VEP, but we continue to invite them.

VEP appeared on two television programs this year. Two of our veterans were guests on an Amherst community action TV show. This program will be shown frequently on the station for one year. One of our veterans also appeared on the "Today Show," which discussed the pros and cons of military service.

Our Inner City Outreach program witnessed several successes this spring. We spoke at five schools and community groups in the Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee area. One of these engagements was at Chicopee High School, which we had been trying to get into for four years. The teacher was so impressed with our presentation that we were invited to return for an assembly of the entire Junior and Senior classes. This was the first year that we used the assembly method (we did one at another school) and it was well received.

We recently met a matching grant by a major donor to research and publish a bilingual alternative career and job training pamphlet. This pamphlet will provide low income and minority youth information about career options other than the military.

We have received numerous requests from veterans nationwide who want assistance in forming a group similar to VEP. To address this need, we have spent some time in the last several months developing our National Training Program. Our Training Manual is at the printer and we are seeking foundation support to create a training video. We realize that this is an enormous undertaking, but the desire for this type of project is clearly evident in the requests we receive. Furthermore, given the military's current recruitment budget of $2.1 billion, there is a great need for this program.

"VEP is the only place where a balanced and thoughtful alternative to the media blitz of the military is available. It is an alternative that is desperately needed in the public schools..."

Robert W. Blossom, English Teacher Franklin County H.S. Turners Falls, MA

For more information, write: Veterans Education Project, P.O. Box 416, Amherst, MA 01004-0416.
The racism the Chippewa people face is frightening. On some nights in the spear fishing season, gunshots were heard in the woods and bottle rockets were thrown near the spearers. Chippewa families expressed fear about cars following them for too long, and two treaty rights activists have had their cars run off the road. An atmosphere of intimidation pervades, and racial epithets are common: "red nigger," "timber nigger," "squaw." Tragically, many young people have taken on the strong and prejudiced views of their parents ... a youngster said to an elderly Chippewa woman, "God made us Whites. You don't belong here."

2. There is no threat to natural resources from the Chippewa spear fishing. Spearers take only 2% of the state's walleye total and 1.5% of the musky. Both the state DNR and four Chippewa reservations have their own fish hatcheries to replenish lakes and streams. There does, however, appear to be a threat from the resources from industrial pollution and contaminants. The DNR has issued fish consumption advisories on over 100 northern Wisconsin lakes and rivers due to high levels of mercury. Acid rain, sulfide ore mining, paper mill sludge, and a possible nuclear waste dump, all threaten the biology and long-term economy of northern Wisconsin.

3. The state of Wisconsin has fought in court against the treaties since the 1970s and at each federal court hearing subsequent to Judge Doyle's 1987 decision. Where the state of Wisconsin could have created moral leadership and support for the treaties, they have created a vacuum. Into this vacuum stepped the backlash; anti-treaty and hate groups who have taken the lead, and appear to speak for all Wisconsin, in damning and confronting the Chippewa.

4. There is, however, a real basis for unity between the Chippewa people and the European-American people in northern Wisconsin. A serious commitment to resource protection is the common ground for all those who love the lakes and forests and beauty of northern Wisconsin. Fishers and hunters, even from differing traditions, have equal stake in protecting fish and game from the ravages of air pollution, industrial toxins and mismanagement of waste. Tourism also benefits both the Native American and European-American artist and business person, and the whole economy of the northwoods. Racism is the biggest threat to tourism, not Chippewa spear fishing. Racist remarks, inflammatory newspaper editorials, and threats to the spearers if they try to come again next year, all this is what could destroy the next tourist season and many to come.

This fall, Witness organizer, Rick Whaley, sent us an update:

The 1989 Chippewa spear fishing season brought a severe escalation of violent intimidation against Chippewa spear fishers and their families. Anti-treaty protesters fired rocks and ball bearings at spearers from wrist rockets, this year's weapon of choice. Pipe-bombs were brought to one landing and gun shots were fired on a number of nights in an attempt by angry whites to disrupt the treaty-guaranteed, off reservation harvest. Most nights brought out huge protests at the boat landings, featuring the vilest racial and sexual remarks as well as attempts to block the launching of Chippewa boats. Few prosecutions have resulted from the massive violations of civil and safety rights of the Chippewa this Spring.

The response of the Chippewa was one of dignity, restraint and non-violence. Witness for Non-violence helped shine a light on the terrorist activities in northern Wisconsin and, eventually, media and law enforcement people could see that this was a one-sided and racially motivated fight. The state of Wisconsin's response to the disturbances were, first, to go to court to block the Chippewa's exercise of rights, and then, to offer to buy out the off-reservation harvesting rights, in an effort, they said, to quell the racist backlash.

The larger agenda of the state of Wisconsin has been exposed. The Governor's top aide is James Klausen, former Exxon lobbyist. Corporate plans to make northern Wisconsin a new mining district as well as plans to build new paper pulp mills could be blocked if these developments would impact negatively on the harvestable resources (fish, wild rice, deer, timber). Such blocking of harmful development would be prevented if a buyout agreement were signed between the Chippewa and the state. A unity of Native American and Green/environmental-
ists has emerged from the struggles of both communities for democratic control and basic safety.

In a stunning vote, 439-366, on October 25, 1989, the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa rejected the buyout of rights agreement, over the wishes of their own tribal government and the expectations of every politician in Wisconsin. Lac du Flambeau members saw their rights as well as their cultural heritage at stake in the attempted buyout. The same week as this dramatic, grassroots victory, Glaskibosh, tribal chair of the Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa, filed a letter of intent to get involved in the public hearing on Kennicott's open pit mining proposal for Ladysmith, Wisconsin. Saturday, November 11, 1989, the Lac Courte Oreilles brought together Chippewa elders, government officials, treaty activists, and Greens for an historic gathering; treaty network and anti-mining meetings, and a veteran's pow wow.

With the failure of violent intimidation at the boat landings to stop spearfishing, and the failure of the take-money-for-rights idea, anti-treaty groups and politicians will now ask Congress and the President to abrogate treaties with Native American nations. This is part of the New Right and corporate strategy to remove all obstacles, including “restrictive” environmental regulations, to the next plunderer of America's resources. The multi-racial constituency of Greens and witnesses in Wisconsin appeal nationally to all concerned people to inform their Congresspeople of this racist backlash against Native American rights in Wisconsin and urge resistance to all Congressional efforts to abrogate treaties and land claims with Native nations in Wisconsin and elsewhere.

For more information, contact the Midwest Treaty Network, c/o The Grapevine, Box 1350, Bayfield, WI 54814, or the Milwaukee Greens Treaty Rights Task Force, Box 16471, Milwaukee, WI 53216.

Rick also sent Resist this letter:

Dear Friends,

Thanks so much for your support of the 1989 Witness. While spearfishing lasted two weeks, it has really turned into year round work. Witnesses went back up north for the summer and fall gillnetting. We've been back up north for numerous solidarity rallies and pow wows, and hosted spearfishers in Milwaukeefor education meetings and actions (against the buyout) and meetings with lawyers.

The spearfishing protests were massive and vile this spring, but we feel the witness made a significant difference. We had witnesses out each night, 200 on the first weekend, and for closing night at Butternut Lake, a 3.5 mile long caravan of supporters came (including A.I.M. from the Twin Cities with their drum). Most of your grant went to pay phone bills for the month around spearfishing — the Milwaukee Witness had probably close to $500.00 just for that month or so. Our phone bills and all continue, but so do our fundraising efforts — house concerts, grantwriting, donations. Thanks again for all your help and support.

Witness gave extensive legal testimony before Wisconsin's Equal Rights Commission, on the extensive civil rights violations this spring. It may be the basis for lawsuits and our efforts to ensure full protection next spring.

Finally, Witness for Nonviolence sent Resist this letter of support which they received from Anita Koser, Secretary of the WA-SWA-GON Treaty Association:

During our past spearfishing season we sent out a cry for help and the Witness for Non-Violence responded immediately. Several people had been prepared to come at a literal moment's notice. It is our firm belief that the Witnesses' presence at the boat landings and their accompanying us to and from those landings via car caravans averted serious physical violence and possibly even death from being inflicted upon our spearers, their families and our supporters.

In the past four months they have had at least three training workshops in two northern Wisconsin communities. They have developed a bond of trust, respect and cooperation with the WA-SWA-GON Treaty Association, and we will be relying on them to provide a peaceful presence during future spearfishing and gillnetting harvests.

Since our ceded-territory lies upon the upper one-third of the state of Wisconsin and our Tribal harvesting occurs there, it has been costly for the Witnesses to travel the 287 miles from Milwaukee to Lac du Flambeau. Other Chippewa reservations are even farther away. Transportation and phone money would benefit this effort. Some W.T.A. members who worked closely with the Witness can attest to bills of $300.00 for a two and a half week period. These expenses are necessary to preserve human lives and dignity.

The Witness women have reached out to Chippewa women with empathy, giving us much needed moral support. (The anti-treaty people are especially vile and virulent to Chippewa women who are shocked and sickened by degrading, sexually explicit threats and remarks made to them.)

The Witnesses have helped our peo-continued on page eight
Colombian Activists Counter Disinformation

The Colombian Human Rights Committee of Washington, D.C. was founded in May, 1981, to respond to escalating levels of violence and human rights violations in Colombia. The primary goal of the organization is to pressure Colombian authorities to take concrete measures to guarantee basic human rights for all Colombians. At the same time the group wants to promote discussion in the U.S. public and in policy-making spheres here that would focus on the necessity of tying U.S. military aid to protection and respect for human rights. Finally the group tries to aid each of its members in gaining organizing skills.

Initially the group published a quarterly newsletter, presented lectures at area universities, and conducted telephone and letter campaigns to the U.S. Congress and Colombian authorities. Similar groups were forming throughout North America, and the difficult task of creating links and building a national network was underway. The group now sees itself as an important focus for the national and international coalition of organizations that will monitor the climate of human rights in Colombia and provide solidarity for those groups and individuals who are victims of human rights abuses.

The group continues to publish Colombia Update. Among its other activities, the group has organized a speaking tour of two representatives of the Colombian Peasant Association, ANUC, which leads peasant struggles for land rights and opposes political and economic repression; worked to prepare for the event "Colombia Vive," bringing together artists, musicians, academics and others from around the world in a call for the right to live and create peacefully in Colombia; is developing a campaign to aid displaced Colombians; and planned to attend the International Conference on Drug Policy Reform held in Washington in November.

Resist was the first foundation the Colombia Human Rights Committee approached for funding, and the group considered its efforts in going through the process an important step in its development of a strong financial base.

"You are thinking that at any time they can kill you, they can arrest you, you can lose your family. So people have no sense of security. You can't say what you are thinking or go without worrying."
Maria Marin, sister of a human rights activist murdered in 1986.

"Every day, I receive a list of assassinations, threats, attacks and 'disappearances'... I ask myself, 'What is this?' This isn't democracy, this isn't a country. This is the law of the jungle."

This was the way Carlos Mauro Hoyos, Colombian Procurator General characterized the situation in a statement to the press on November 25, 1987. Just two months later he was abducted and murdered.

Resist's 1989 grant was used to organize, along with several other Colombian solidarity groups, a two-day conference to address the need for an international response to the crisis in Colombia. In describing the need for such a conference, the group wrote:

-the reports of human rights violations in Colombia both from local and international organizations continue.
-
- Colombian groups have requested our support in helping mount international pressure to investigate the disappearances and death of hundreds of Colombians.
- Working relationships need to be established and strengthened between groups in North America and Colombian grassroots peace and human rights organizations.
- A quick response network and other "witness" activities can help reduce human rights violations. The media overemphasis on drug-related stories, which obscures news of the "dirty war," needs to be countered with more accurate information.

Resist received this brief report on the meeting, which was held October 6-8 in Madison, WI

The conference was divided into two parts. The first part was a public conference.

Six people from Colombia, representing different sectors of Colombian society, attended the conference. They are: Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa, of the Comité Permanente de Derechos Humanos; Clara López Obregón, of the the Liberal Party, Diego Montaña Cuéllar, of the Patriotic Union: Aida Avella, vice-president of two trade unions; Father Manuel Uribe, SJ; and Dario Restrepo of the Guapo de Enlace, which is made up of Colombians in Bogota who have lived abroad and who provide biweekly information packets and analysis of Colombia for human rights and solidarity groups outside the country.

The second part was a meeting of various regional committees. In this meeting we discussed the formation of the national network. Washington will be the national office. We named a coordinating committee made up of one or two members from each committee. This coordinating committee has the functions of helping to organize the next national meeting; and helping the national office to make decisions and share responsibilities.

As the national office, Washington will be in charge of publishing the newsletter, Colombia Update.

As a network, we want to organize delegations to Colombia and also bring people from Colombia to educate the U.S. public about the human rights situation there, and to generate support for families victimized by rights violations. We also want each committee to specialize in a specific activity. For example, Washington is in charge of the newsletter; Madison, urgent actions; Chicago, resources, and so on.

Resist will follow the work of the network and publish information about the political and economic situation in Colombia in future issues of the newsletter. For more information, write: Colombia Human Rights Committee, P.O. Box 3130, Washington, D.C., 20010.
Supporting Gay and Lesbian Youth in Des Moines

One of the first groups Resist funded in 1989 was the Gay and Lesbian Resource Center (GLRC) in Des Moines, Iowa. The group noted that there were no support groups for gay and lesbian teens or young adults in the community. They planned to establish two such support groups (for those under 18 and those between 18 and 24), and also to provide information on gay issues to teachers, counselors and school administrators. Resist provided funding to advertise the teen support group.

According to their report, there are about eighteen teens who attend the teen group regularly, and many find this the first place they are free to be themselves. The GLRC placed ads for the group in three school papers, and, predictably, that’s when homophobia in the community became more and more visible. The ads generated these comments in letters to the school newspapers:

—“Please consider banning this ad from any further newspapers in the future. Let’s keep our school newspapers from promoting a homosexual lifestyle.”
—“In this latest issue of The Challenger, I found myself perplexed at the amazing lack of morality...this gay ad has gone too far.”
—“In a recent ad run by this school’s newspaper, I became very concerned about a very unnatural lifestyle being promoted...I hope Hoover High School will CHOOSE TO DISCONTINUE TO RUN THIS AD AND OTHERS LIKE IT!!!”

These letters also generated letters of support for the ad, and promoted discussion of discrimination against gays, gay bashing, the high number of suicides of young gays, and the meaning of “promotion of gay lifestyles” as well as censorship. In May, this op ed piece appeared in the Valley High School newspaper:

**Freedom For All? Parents, students question homosexual rights.**

*Sarah Dohrman*

The rights of homosexuals have come under fire recently from community members, both vocally and violently. Negative reaction has been voiced by parents and students to an advertisement placed in *Spotlight* for a local support group for homosexuals. Earlier this spring, students were supposedly involved in “gay bashing” in downtown Des Moines. Complaints from students and adults followed the publication of a Gay and Lesbian Resource Center ad which appeared in *Spotlight* April 7th.

Several parents contacted school administrators asking that the ad be removed. One of these, Connie Tow, said, “I think this could create interest in a lifestyle that may not otherwise be there. We need to seriously consider the potential this could have for bringing AIDS to the student body.” Other parents also expressed concern. “In a day and age where kids are searching for different lifestyles, they could get involved with the Gay and Lesbian Resource Center if they don’t fit in other groups,” said parent Leslie Shively. “I’m very, very concerned about what comes across to students. They need to be protected from the outside world,” she added. “I don’t believe gays and lesbians have any necessary rights; civil rights are for all races and creeds, but this is a lifestyle.”

Yet, clinical psychologist Craig Rympa said gay support groups are important. “When struggling with your sexual identity, it’s helpful to have a support group, but also a supportive society at large. Sexual preference isn’t something that’s chosen. You can’t turn those feelings off so it’s not necessary to change them. Society’s not going to change the fact that there are homosexuals.” Claire Hueholt, a director for the Center, also defends the purpose: “The Gay and Lesbian Resource Center is a place where people can find other people. We don’t encourage them to be gay, we just let them talk,” she said.

Nicole Ehler, editor-in-chief, explained *Spotlight’s* reason for running the advertisement. “We had similar complaints about a Planned Parenthood ad earlier this year and the assistant state attorney general, Marie Anne-Brick, informed us that we would be in violation of the organization’s First Amendment rights if we refused to run an ad that didn’t violate our *Spotlight* or school board policy. This is the same type of situation.” Hoover High School and Roosevelt High School have the same sentiments. “We plan on running the ad until the end of the year,” said Steve Mazie, the editor of the *Roosevelt Round-up*.

But parents are not the only ones to react to gay rights. Some Valley (High School) students have taken their animosity beyond words to violence. Social studies teacher Kerald Yearns said, “I heard some students talking. They said there was a group in school called ‘gay bashers.’ I got the impression that they beat up on students who they believed to be homosexual.” This group created violence once in March, but has not done so since, according to a sophomore group member who asked that his name be withheld. He explained that he and friends went downtown to harass gays and one boy hit a homosexual.

Rympa believes such incidents often occur because “anger or a violent response in general are emotions people use to mask or displace more frightful feelings...it’s easier to be mad than scared. Gays scare people.” Yet, the sophomore considers the incident more of an innocent youthful activity. “My best analysis of why we did it was to go against the norms,” he said. “I realize how stupid it was in the end. We didn’t have anything to do that night,” he continued, “I would compare it to when teenagers vandalize for an outlet.”

Well, obviously there’s still work to be done, and it will take courage in the face of such hostility and ignorance. For more information on this group’s work with gay teens, write: The Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312.

Incidently, as Resist goes to press, we in Massachusetts are celebrating, after seventeen years of struggle, the passage of a state gay rights bill. Unfortunately, the language of the bill which finally passed contains amendments that may limit its effectiveness. Nonetheless, opponents are already mounting a campaign to repeal the new law, via a state referendum. No one ever said fighting for liberation and justice would be easy!
Equal Rights Congress Targets Police Abuse in LA

The Equal Rights Congress (ERC) is a national organization that formed in 1976 to bring together different minority groups to fight for social and economic justice. The Los Angeles chapter, formed in 1981, has sought to promote cooperation among various communities of color by focusing on systemic reasons for problems faced by each group.

The chapter has worked on issues of police accountability, childcare advocacy, electoral issues, immigration rights, housing, and education. Located in a community center in an impoverished section of the city, the organization has gained considerable credibility among the many people its programs serve. Among its projects: bilingual workshops on welfare rights and classes in "survival English"; a campaign to end detention of undocumented children; providing technical and emotional support to victims of police abuse; and organizing residents against displacement. Resist assisted the Equal Rights Congress/LA with rent for its office space.

The group recently sent us a number of press clippings that reflect the non-stop advocacy, activism and agitation undertaken by its members. At the beginning of the year, one clipping showed ERC/LA demonstrating in front of an Immigration and Naturalization Service detention facility to call attention to the fact that children as young as three were being held there for months at a time without their parents. According to Lourdes Silva of the ERC, the children are often separated from relatives at the border. "These children are physically abused, they receive no formal education during the time of their incarceration and if they are ill they are not treated." Silva added that from 1,500 to 3,000 children can be detained and incarcerated in a year. ERC's report to Resist stated that its protests and petition drives to end this practice were largely successful.

In the summer, the ERC was busy responding to incidents of police violence. A July demonstration outside the Criminal Courts Building included family members of people killed by police waving large portraits of their loved ones and demanding that the police be prosecuted for their crimes. The demonstrators said that of 1,000 cases of police use of excessive force investigated by the DA's office, only 2% resulted in prosecution. The remainder of the cases were thrown out. They pointed to the case of Yusuf Bital, a bus driver, who was shot three times in the back by a California Highway Patrol officer who had stopped him for running a red light. After a five month investigation, the case was dropped for lack of evidence.

Cases like these have led the ERC to initiate, this past fall, biweekly Police Misconduct Small Claims clinics. The group aids victims to file complaints against abusive officers; file claims against the police department, city, county or state; and find legal assistance. The ERC is also organizing against jail construction and for programs to reduce crime. They opposed the construction of a 289.4 million dollar jail to be built on 30-40 acres of city land, saying the money would be better spent on housing and education. At the same time the group is protesting housing demolition (to make room for government agencies) and the jailing of women held on minor crimes.

All this activism requires meetings, meetings, meetings, and the ERC holds at least four meetings a month at the center. For more information, write: The Equal Rights Congress/LA; 4705 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90037.

Join the Resist Pledge Program

We'd like you to consider becoming a Resist Pledge. Pledges account for over 30% of our income. By becoming a pledge, you help guarantee Resist a fixed and dependable source of income on which we can build our grant making program. In return, we will send you a monthly pledge letter and reminder, along with your newsletter. We will keep you up-to-date on the groups we have funded, and the other work being done at Resist. So take the plunge and become a Resist pledge! We count on you, and the groups we fund count on us.

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Treaty Rights

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people to remain peaceful, courageous, dignified and steadfast in the face of adversity. They have reinforced our resolve to not react to violence and confrontation with like actions. When our spirits were at the lowest, they showed us that not all non-Indian people hate us and want to harm us. We need their peaceful support.

In closing we would like to reiterate our statement of support for the Witness for Non-Violence. They serve a necessary and invaluable purpose of reaffirming the dignity of Chippewa people and standing against the blatant racism, sexism and horrific degradation of human spirit we must face for exercising our court-affirmed treaty rights.

For more information, write: Witness for Non-Violence and Rural Rights in Northern Wisconsin, 3132 N. Bartlett Ave., Milwaukee, WI, 53211