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Funding social change since 1967

RESIST

Newsletter #238

A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

September, 1991

Rosario Ibarra: Indomitable Spirit

TATIANA SCHREIBER

On the last weekend of my recent month-long visit to Mexico, I had the opportunity to meet Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, a well-known figure on the Mexican political scene because of her single-minded commitment to locating disappeared people in Mexico (founding the Committee in Defense of Politically Persecuted, Imprisoned, Exiled and Missing Persons in 1977) and her status as the first woman even to run for President in that country. Now Doña Rosario, as she is called by everyone, is running for Senator (in elections that were to be held as this issue went to press) on behalf of a small left-wing party, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, or PRT.

There are a number of small opposition parties in Mexico (along with the "loyal opposition," the PAN; and the supporters of Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, the PRD) that are attempting to challenge the authority of the PRI, which has held state power since 1929. The PRT is described as Trotskyist and has long been on the fringes of political discourse. However, during my visit, it seemed to me that the party was gaining credence among grassroots activists because of its willingness to take strong stands on: women's issues, including abortion rights; gay and lesbian issues; the rights of workers; the treatment of political prisoners; and prostitutes' rights. Out of awareness that prostitutes



August, 1986. Rosario Ibarra and other mothers demanding that the Mexican government free the disappeared.

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were facing extreme risk to their health, and abuse and blackmail from the police, the party asked the leader of a prostitute's union in Mexico City to run for Congress on their ticket. Naturally this stance hasn't won the PRT any glory in the mainstream, but women's organizations are very supportive.

Dofia Rosario, though she has agreed to be a PRT candidate, says she does not consider herself to be a member of any party. She is, however, a "symbol of popular resistance to oppression," in the words of human rights activist Mariclaire Acosta, and a symbol of the growing visibility of women in activist movements for social change in Mexico.

Rosario also represents the emergence of women in Mexico's electoral arena. Las Mujeres en Lucha Para Democracia is a newly formed coalition of women in various organizations, unions, and political parties that is pressuring all the parties to run women candidates in local and federal elections. Rosario's candidacy is part of that effort, though she herself would not call herself a feminist (one friend of mine in Mexico said when I went to meet Rosario that I'd be meeting a "lady") and she insists that with true democracy no one will be marginalized... therefore we should fight for democracy, not for women's rights alone. Almost despite herself, however, her commitment and passion have been inspirational to feminists in Mexico.

Rosario founded the Frente Nacional Contra la Represion, has run for the Presidency twice, served in Congress from 1985-1988, and was nominated for a Nobel peace prize in 1986 and 1987. She has moved increasingly to the left since she was plunged into political life following the abduction of her son, Jesus Piedra Ibarra, by the police in 1975. She organized, along with other mothers, to confront the government and its violent repression of dissidence. In recent years, a number of other organizations for the defense of human rights have emerged in Mexico, but Rosario's organization remains firmly committed to its purpose, the release of the disappeared. The group changed its name in 1989 to Eureka ("I have discovered, I have found") to reflect their vision of a future in which they are reunited with their family and comrades.

Rosario lives alone in a run-down

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LETTERS

Dear Resist:

I'm not much of an activist, only a journalist, but I want to respond to Patricia Rodinoff-Peck's despairing letter in your April issue about the powerlessness of the U.S. antiwar movement to stop the Persian Gulf slaughter.

It seems to me that despair is the natural response to many issues the left cares about: for me, the most pressing are growing inequality here in the U.S., the future of the global environment and the future of socialism. Despair, though, means giving in emotionally to the enemy and the forces of evil. Despair over this particular war, out of the many we've had during my 42 years on the planet, also seems like an overreaction to a terrible reality that's a constant in our lives — the reality that the U.S. truly has developed into an imperialist power and that the pay-offs of imperialism for most people here are sufficient to make the system pretty stable. As the Marxist Samir Amin has written, there shouldn't be anything surprising about the regular failure of radical politics in a prosperous imperialist country. And from this perspective, I think we need to count whatever wars we manage to halt or even slow down significantly — the potential invasion of Nicaragua in the early 1980s, for example — as tremendous victories and surprising signs of hope. When we fail to stop the bloodshed, on the other hand, its just business as usual — and if the history of even the greatest empires proves anything, that business will eventually have to change.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I also think antiwar activists and anti-imperialists need to press even the racist white ruling class of this country to recognize the one area in which imperialism does not ultimately serve their interests, which is the area of global conservation. Led by Lester Brown's Worldwatch Institute, the World Bank-funded World Resources Institute, and such quasi-conservative environmental groups as the National Wildlife Federation and the Environmental Defense Fund, a portion of the upper-middle-class environmental movement is becoming uncomfortably aware that by devastating the Third World economically and militarily, we also seal the fate of tropical rainforests and other foreign ecosystems on which the fate of hundreds of thousands of endangered species and the stability of Earth's climate ultimately depends. In the name of

averting global catastrophe through something loosely called "sustainable development," a number of U.S. environmental groups are now preparing for an active role in the upcoming "Earth Summit" or U.N. Conference on the Environment and Development scheduled for 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Peace activists urgently need to be working with the environmentalists, learning about the process, and pushing for an outcome to the conference that serves international peace and justice rather than the usual corporate agenda. Meanwhile, let's remember Mother Mary Jones's slogan: Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living.

Andy Feeney
Washington, DC.

Resist welcomes letters, comments and suggestions from readers concerning issues raised in the newsletter. Please write "not for publication" if you do not want your letter printed. We reserve the right to edit letters to meet space constraints.



ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

Funding Social Change Since 1967

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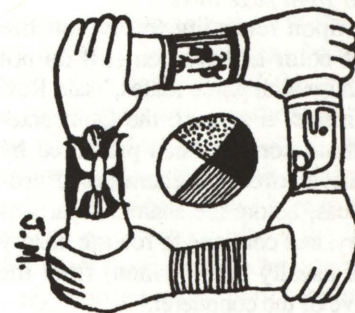
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Columbus Wasn't First!

Clergy and Laity Organize to "Rediscover the History of the Americas: 1492-1992"



Clergy and Laity Concerned is an interfaith, multiracial, anti-racist organization working on peace and justice issues. Initiated nationally in 1965, CALC concentrated on opposing the war in Vietnam. Following the war, CALC developed a range of programs to respond to U.S. militarism while promoting economic justice, racial justice and international self-determination. Starting in 1980, in response to a challenge from an African-American member on CALC's national staff, the organization began to make a concerted effort to address issues of racial justice in the U.S. and within CALC. The group restructured itself to better reflect the racial, ethnic and religious diversity it promotes.

Currently CALC's membership and leadership includes African-Americans, Native-Americans, European-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latinos; Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and followers of traditional Native American religions. CALC has also shifted its style of work from primarily education and protest to work informed by the principles of grassroots organizing.

This year, CALC's nationwide network of chapters and affiliates has taken on the responsibility of actively countering myths surrounding the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. Native American organizations working with CALC and endorsing this project include the International Indian Treaty Council, the national Indian Youth Council, and the National Indian Law Alliance.

Although we rarely reprint press releases in this newsletter, we make an exception here by including extensive material from a recent "media advisory" put out by CALC's chapter in Decatur, Georgia. Many Resist supporters and grantees have called or written our office wanting to know who is doing what surrounding the 1992 quincentennial and asking how they could get more information. CALC is one very important resource. Interested readers may contact your local CALC chapter or the national

office in Georgia for more information: Clergy and Laity Concerned, P.O. Box 1987, Decatur, GA 30031. Telephone: (404) 377-1983.

As 1992 approaches, plans are faltering for the official Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission. The Commission, which received a grant of \$87 million to carry out a wide range of activities, was headed by Miami real estate developer John Goudie until his recent resignation in the face of probable indictment for fraud and misuse of funds. Florida - a key state in official Quincentennial plans - is dealing with widespread failure in fundraising from corporations and individuals for its Jubilee Commission.

"People are calling us because they cannot locate their state's official Quincentenary Commission," said Rev. Emory R. Searcy, Jr., Executive Director of CALC. CALC and its affiliates are organizing alternative activities around the country. "Already we've given out 25,000 stickers that say 'Columbus Wasn't First,'" reports Rev. Searcy. "We've just printed another 25,000!" CALC has also produced an organizer's packet, resource lists, and special issues of its newsletter, CALC Report.

According to Rev. Searcy, "this is a 'teachable moment' in history. While the mistakes of the past can never be undone, we can - we must - forge new understandings. Otherwise we will continue to be trapped and degraded by events set in motion more than 500 years ago. In setting the record straight we free ourselves for the serious work of learning to cooperate instead of conquer, to respect each other across lines of race and cultural differences, and to conserve our planet instead of destroying it."

October, 1992, will mark the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. Recently a traveling exhibit, "First Encounters" began touring the country. Soon life-size replicas of the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria will sail; cities named Columbus will hold major celebrations; and three solar pow-

ered space ships named after Columbus' caravels will have a race to Mars. Republican Congressman Jim Kolbe of Arizona has introduced legislation which would replace the Susan B. Anthony coin with a gold-colored, "better designed" dollar coin featuring the face of Columbus.

"We know what will be missing from the official celebrations," Rev. Searcy said. "Don't expect to hear about the fate of the Arawak Indians or the Incas, or how the Iroquois influenced the drafting of the U.S. constitution, or why Africans were brought to these shores in chains. The brutality toward indigenous peoples who were living here when the Europeans arrived and the destruction of the land itself will once again be swept under the rug.

"It is vitally important for CALC to work with Native Americans, historians, educators, religious leaders, artists and performers to plan alternative resources and events. Native peoples of the Americas will counter official celebrations with educational campaigns and protest demonstrations. Religious leaders, educators, cultural workers, and organizations that work for justice and peace are beginning to recognize the importance of providing information and help in promoting a broad understanding of the histories and cultures of all people who have lived in this hemisphere.

"The racism that evolved to justify slavery and the extermination of indigenous people in the Americas is a stubborn legacy that refuses to go away," said Rev. Searcy. The Quincentennial comes at a time of deepening racial polarization in the U.S. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Center for Democratic Renewal, and others who monitor "hate crimes," violent attacks against people of color have reached a crisis stage.

"Racial and ethnic minority peoples in the U.S. fear that their contributions to the American experience will never be recognized or justly rewarded by the white majority. The Gulf War heightened frustra-

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tion that upon returning to civilian life people of color and women still do not have equality with white males," said Rev. Searcy. In such a context, the Quincentenary Commission has been pressured by conservative forces to champion Eurocentric ideas, ignore the shameful parts of our history, and continue to rewrite history (as it has usually been written) from the perspective of the conquerer.

"At this historic moment our country needs a different kind of commemoration," Rev. Searcy emphasized. "Without negating the courage of early explorers, we must understand and teach the true history of the Americas if this country is ever to fulfill the democratic values it honors on paper but so rarely practices. The 1992 Quincentennial offers a unique opportunity to reinterpret the past from the perspective of those who have been left out of the history books and to counter the racism, militarism and Eurocentrism that have poisoned the American experience since 1492. Only when we understand our own history will we be able to offer guidance and creative models to a world in search of a new order."

In June of 1990 Nilo Butler, who is Native American, represented CALC at the First Continental Meeting of Indigenous People in Quito, Ecuador, planning responses to 1992. In March, 1991, CALC sent a representative to the Bay Area Regional Indian Alliance conference to plan activities for "1992: Year of Indigenous People." That conference was a follow-up to the 1990 gathering in Quito and an October, 1990 meeting in Minneapolis, at which CALC also was represented. A primary concern of Native Americans at these meetings is guaranteeing the rights already granted under existing treaties.

On July 21, 1990 CALC and its New York affiliate, "Columbus in Context," held a national consultation in New York City for individuals and organizations to share information and begin generating specific projects. The consultation was well attended by Native American representatives. A press conference and cultural celebration held in conjunction with the consultation marked the project's official beginning.

Because CALC believes that the way [it goes about its] work must be consistent with [its] goals and values, [the organization is] circulating a Covenant among organizations engaged in alternatives to the official celebrations. Covenant organizations pledge to actively solicit the

leadership and involvement of Native Americans and other people of color in planning and carrying out work for 1992. This includes seeking Native Americans and other people of color to provide leadership on boards, steering committees and working groups. In seeking foundation funding participating groups will include a copy of the Covenant with all funding proposals and request that funders give top priority to projects initiated by Native American groups.

CALC chapters in Oregon, Atlanta, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Chicago, Minnesota, San Francisco and other parts of the country have established planning committees and begun activities geared toward "rediscovering the history of the Americans." (See grants section for a report on the recent work of CALC's chapter in Eugene, OR). A Resource Guide is available from CALC for \$1.25 postpaid. An Organizer's Packet, which includes the Resource Guide, is \$8.00 postpaid. (See address above)

Resist grantees and others who are organizing alternative events around the quincentennial, or who are involved in coalitions planning events should feel free to contact the Resist office and let us know of your activities. As 1992 approaches we want to keep readers informed of events and organizing occurring in their communities. Thanks!



Missile Silo Site Occupation

October 4-6, 1991
Knob Noster State Park, MISSOURI

Early on Sunday morning, October 6, a group of peaceful individuals will find their way over, under, or through the fence enclosing one of the 150 Minuteman Nuclear Missiles near Whiteman Air Force Base in a civil resistance action protesting the use and existence of these weapons.

Nukewatch and the Missouri Peace Planters call those interested both in providing support and entering the silo to join the weekend gathering, which will feature music, community building, and non-violence training workshops.

For a brochure, contact:

NUKEWATCH
P.O. Box 2658
Madison, WI 53701-2658

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brown concrete building in downtown Mexico City. When I knock on the wooden door, it swings open to the sound of bells, and there she stands, a tiny woman at the top of her stairs, having pulled the door wide with her pulley-rope adorned with ribbons and bells. She is a little stooped, her skin crinkly but resilient, her voice strong. She ushers me to her parlor, a room covered every inch with photos of her family, doilies, painted aluminum mirrors, and cat figurines, cat cushions, cat ashtrays, cat candelabras... she told me there are over 200 cats in the room...I thought I had never seen a room so crammed with chotchkas until I remembered my Hungarian grandmother's parlor, which looked almost the same.

When Rosario talks she is passionate, flinging her hands about wildly. She is frustrated by her inability to completely express herself in English, and we often stop during the interview to think together what the right word might be. No matter what I ask she is ready to respond with a great smile for the simplicity of her cause: *we are right*. Meeting her, one cannot help but think, as well, of the terrible emotional cost borne by all those who fight on behalf of tortured and murdered "desaparecidas" in countries throughout the world.

TS: First I wanted to ask you about your background and how you got involved in politics...

Well, like millions of women here in Mexico, I was a housewife. I had four children, but I was a nonconformist. I didn't agree with the way the government of Mexico was doing things here...I was very angry after the second of October, 1968, when the government killed so many students at the Plaza de Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco, [more than 300 people were killed when the government cracked down on the student movement] and I was also angry in June, 1971, when the government again killed many students in San Cosme.... I was always speaking with people about this, but I didn't really participate...

But, in 1975, when the government took my child, my son, Jesus, I couldn't do anything else. I came to Mexico City and I began this struggle, and if I find my son, I am going to go back to my home! I want to be with my husband, my other children, with my grandchildren. I thought I was only going to be here 15 or 20 days, and I have been here 16 years! I want to go back and live with them, but I cannot

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go if I do not find Jesus. If I don't find
him, if they killed him, if they did some-
thing terrible to him, I am going to contin-
ue fighting until I die, and I think I'm
going to live many years; my grandmother
and all my aunts, they lived 103 years, 96
years, I want to live. I am now 64, but I
want to continue living to fight with this
ugly government that has been doing such
terrible things to my country, to my peo-
ple!

When Jesus was kidnapped [he was
21 at the time], I began looking for him
everywhere. I went to the Attorney [gener-
al's office] and to all the prisons in Mon-
terrey. I couldn't find him, so I came to
Mexico City to look for him and it was the
same thing. I found that other mothers like
me were looking for their children and I
spoke to them and [we formed] the com-
mittee to defend political prisoners and the
persecuted, exiled and disappeared. So, we
founded this committee in 1977.

The Mexican government is the
[principal violator of] human rights here....
We have a list since '77 of 500 people
who have disappeared. In 12 years we
were able to make the government release
148 disappeared. Not my son, but the chil-
dren of other mothers. This is a very good
thing to us.

**TS: What are the reasons for the disap-
pearances?**

Well, there is no reason to disappear
a person. Mexican law is very clear... no
one can kidnap a person and take this
human being to a clandestine jail, and tor-
ture them....The list of the disappeared is
from the previous governments, but also
from [that of] President Carlos Salinas de
Gortari...we have a list of 12 disappeared
persons from de Gortari's government....

**TS: Have you been able to gain any
information about those 12?**

Well, recently the National Commis-
sion of Human Rights, a creation of the
government of Salinas de Gortari,
informed us that they were "aclaración"
[clearing up] two cases; they found two
persons killed. [They reported that] one of
them died in torture, and the other one was
found dead in a cistern, ...asphixiated. We
are very angry with this kind of "explana-
tion" and we are going to continue fight-
ing for human rights here because we
don't want that any person can be disap-
peared.

TS: These people who are disappeared,

**had they been previously charged with
any kind of illegal activity?**

Not in front of a court...they say this
is a dangerous activist, but they don't say
these things in a legal way, they just say
this is a very very dangerous person, but
these people never had an opportunity to
defend themselves.

**TS: Can you tell me more about your
opinion about the government commis-
sion on human rights, their work, what
kind of pressure you want to put on
them...?**

Well, since 1975, we were the only
organization here in Mexico...then began
to be born many other NGOs and the gov-
ernment recently thought 'we must have a
national commission on human rights,'
but, it has to do with the Tratado de Libre
Comercio [Free Trade Agreement] ...they
began to try to improve their image to the
U.S. public opinion and to the Congress of
the U.S., because they wanted both gov-
ernments to sign the fast track [the six-
month plan for implementing the Free
Trade Agreement, which has since been
approved]. I think this [establishment of
the human rights commission] is an agree-
ment between Salinas and Mr. Bush. They
just want to have a good image to impress
the public opinion of the U.S. and Canada
and all over the world...

**TS: Do you feel you can have any suc-
cess getting investigations into disap-
pearances through this Commission?**

No, no, no, no, no. This is not a mat-
ter of investigations. The Mexican police
took them to the secret prisons, they have
them. They have archives, records, files,
they have everything. I think the only
thing that is needed is the will of the Presi-
dent, the "voluntad politica" as we say, to
order them to put an end to this illegality,
the disappearances and torture in Mexico.
That is what is the most important thing,
the will of the President to do this, to order
the army, the police, to open the prisons
and release the prisoners — not
investigations, they know, they know
where they are and what they did with
them.

**TS: If you can't force the government to
reveal this information, what are inter-
national human rights groups able to
do?**

Well, we went to the U.N, [and] to
Amnesty International. Since 1978 we
have been sending letters and telegrams to

all those organizations all over the world
and it has been very important, because AI
helped us to find some of these people.
The government was pressured to release
some of them because AI sent to the gov-
ernment hundreds, thousands of letters and
members of Amnesty came here to ask the
Mexican government about the human
rights of all these people. Our government
is very worried when public opinion in
other countries is asking about these
things. They don't care about the public
opinion of Mexico, but they are very wor-
ried when someone of the U.S., Canada, or
Europe comes to Mexico, especially from
the U.S. We have been always trying to
inform people from other countries so they
can help us in this way, writing letters to
the President, asking the President what
happened to the disappeared so he can
order to open the prisons and release all
our children.

**TS: So that is your sole goal, rather
than any kind of compensation to the
mothers and families...?**

There is no compensation to a moth-
er, there is nothing, "nada que valga la
vida de nuestros hijos"...the life of our
children has no price, we don't want gold,
we don't want any millionaire check, we
want our children, we shout: "Vivo se los
llevaron, vivo los queremos," alive they
took them, alive we want them. Yes.

**TS: What about the Mexican Congress,
how do they respond to this pressure
that you put on them?**

The Congress in Mexico is just a
club of friends of the President, two or
three or a few Congressmen of the opposi-
tion, they speak, they shout, but the major-
ity, the PRI, always wins. The only legisla-
tor in Mexico is the President, not the
Congress. The Congress "es un zero a la
izquierada" [worthless].

TS: But you are running for Congress?

Yes, a group of organizations want
me to be a candidate for Senator, but I do
it not because I think or believe that with
this you can go to the Congress and
change things. You cannot change things
that way, but we cannot leave space to the
government. We must be fighting in any
place, in every place, and that's why I
agreed to be a candidate, but I think we
must do many, many other things also, to
win.

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Rosario

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TS: There has been a huge proliferation of human rights organizations here in the last five years...have they been effective?

I think they are honest, and they are against the violations of the government, but they have confidence in the National Human Rights Commission. They think 'well, these are good people, from the university, we think they are going to do good things,' and I say they are not, because they are part of the government, and the main violator of human rights here is the Mexican government. If they are part of the government they are violators too.

TS: What does your family think about your activism, your husband, your sisters and brothers?

They agree with me that if they took away one of your children, you are like a lion, you are going to fight for that son or daughter, no matter how many years it takes. I have been married 41 years. I was 16 years old when I met my husband. We got married seven years later, in 1950, and in 1975, they took our child. We were always together. I didn't go out without him and he didn't go out without me, and we were very very close. When they took my son...well, we are not poor, but we are not rich, not millionaires, so my husband must continue working to support me. He is in Monterrey and I am here, and that's why this room, the whole house, but this room especially, where I work, is full of the pictures of my daughters, my grandchildren, my sons, my husband...all the things I love I have here, their images, because I must live only with this, they are 1,000 kilometers from here. I live here alone. They all are married now, they have their lives to live, and I am here fighting for my other son who needs me more than they do, no?

TS: Is that a picture of you there?

Yes, that's in the Presidential campaign, this was taken by my youngest child...

TS: It's very beautiful, you look very powerful there. For a woman to become so politically active is unusual. Has your husband's attitude toward women changed as a result?

Well, he knows that this is good for the struggle for the disappeared, and he agreed with me that I should be a candidate for the PRT, that this is one way to fight for our children, so yes, he supports me.

TS: Do you support or agree with most of the positions of the PRT, such as their advocacy of abortion rights, or the rights of prostitutes?

Yes, it's one of the reasons I have accepted this candidacy. If we fight for democracy, we are going to arrive at a better life where you are not going to find these groups in ghettos, marginalized. If we fight to have a government really, really representative of the people, we are going to have the freedom to do what we want, to be what we want, and that's what I want, and I do not agree with some people that are asking the government permission to do this and that...I want to have the whole, not parts, not pieces. I want to have democracy, and then we will have what we want according to law, not according to the government of the PRI.

TS: What is your personal feeling about abortion rights?

Well, I've never had to have an abortion. I was the mother of four children and I wanted all of them, but I understand women that have the need to do this and I want to have a fair law about this because here in Mexico there are thousands of women who have died of illegal abortions. It is necessary to inform women and teach them how to protect themselves from pregnancy. Here, women in demonstrations shout: "el aborto no es un gusto, es un ultimo recurso"...abortion is not pleasant, it's a last resort. They don't want to have abortions, but it is sometimes necessary.

TS: It must be difficult to work within a small opposition party against the powers of the "partido de estado," as you say...the rewards must be slight?

Well, it is very very difficult, it is "desigual" - they are very very big and powerful and we are small, but we have something that they don't have. We are right. Yes, we are right. That's why I feel proud of being on this side, because it is the side that wants better things for all Mexican people.

TS: Following the "defeat" of Cárdenas in 1988, was not that a real blow to opposition groups in terms of utilizing electoral strategies to make change?

Well, I don't agree with Cárdenas, with his program, but Cárdenas won. He could be now the President of Mexico. If he would fight more for his victory, perhaps the people of Mexico could take him

to the government...but the people, they are disappointed because Cárdenas' party didn't fight as much as they should have...I don't know...I am fighting from another part of the opposition, smaller, but, well, I think this is the right path...

I don't think that this electoral [strategy] is going to be the way to have democracy...I think we must change all the structures of this country that has been suffering for more than sixty years with this partido de estado...I want to change this.

TS: Now that the fast track for the Tradado de Libre Comercial has been approved, what are your concerns for workers and women?

We are afraid of the TLC. We can't compete, our products cannot compete with the U.S. and Canada. The only thing we can sell at a very low price is the "mano de obra" [labor]...a few months ago, the lowest labor costs were in Taiwan. In Taiwan, they pay the workers very, very little salary, and now in Mexico you can get labor even cheaper. That's the only merchandise we can offer the U.S. in exchange for the products they are going to send here. Our land is a rich land, we can cultivate many kinds of fruits and vegetables, and we are going to send all our beautiful products to other countries, and Mexican people are going to buy things that are not necessary for living, just "chucherias" (trinkets). We are going to become more and more poor....

Many of us are fighting against it, but when the Mexican government wants to do something, they don't ask the people they just make propaganda, appear on TV, but there is no dialogue.

TS: What are the personal rewards of your work?

Well, we have recovered 148 disappeared. If just one person was free because of the 16 years of struggle, I would be satisfied as well. I want to find my son. I want him back, and also, if you know the things that happen in a country and you don't do anything to help, you are complicit. I don't want to be complicit, never.

TS: What do activists in the U.S. need to know to better understand the political situation here?

It is very difficult for people from other countries to understand what happens in Mexico because of the government propaganda. They spend millions on this.

Rosario

continued from page

The people of the U.S. don't understand the democratic government. They want them to know many times the Mexican government continues to say they are for human rights, the ecology, the environment, lying, and they must change because we say it, I am for the people of Mexico.

If the people of the U.S. and Europe come here, they are like skirts of the big cities, in these places, they want to see many many children, they are going to see children and we know there are children living in the streets, no nutrition, every 4 minutes, and many children continue to have malnutrition who are hungry. They don't go to schools, and not enough to live. This is the reality. I want readers to understand this.

I ask them to understand. If they ask the government to build a prison, they will build a clean prison and they will tear down the walls, but this is not the solution. Prisons in the small cities are terrible terrible for poor people, not for rich people. They are poor people who defend themselves.

I also want to ask the U.S. to write letters to Salinas de Gortari, to Pinos, Mexico, D.F. I want to be very worried, always thinking about the situation in the U.S.

*Tatiana Schreiber
Resist newsletter.
on situation of political
Mexico, contact: Resist
366, Col. Roma Sur,
Mexico, or call (52) 55
an umbrella organization
groups in Mexico:
de Defensa y Promoción
Humanos, Apartado
06500, Mexico, D.F.
25-25-45.*

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Rosario

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The people of the U.S. and Canada must understand the demagoguery of the Mexican government. They are always lying. I want them to know that no matter how many times the Mexican government continues to say they are respecting human rights, the ecology, democracy, they are lying, and they must understand this, not because we say it, but because the reality of the people of Mexico is saying this....

If the people of the U.S., Canada and Europe come here and go to the outskirts of the big cities, or to the countryside in Guerrero, Chiapas, Oaxaca, all these places, they will find misery, hunger, many many children with parasites... you are going to see children malnourished, and we know there are 15 million children living in the streets; if you read the statistics, every 4 minutes a child dies of malnutrition, and many malnourished women continue to have more and more children who are hungry. We have not enough schools, and not enough houses for people to live. This is the reality, and I want your readers to understand this.

I ask them to come to visit prisons. If they ask the government to take them to a prison, they will take them to a very very clean prison and they are going to paint the walls, but this is not the reality...the prisons in the small cities and the villages are terrible terrible places....They are full of poor people, not murderers and robbers. They are poor people that have no power to defend themselves.

I also want to ask the people of the U.S. to write letters to President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The address is Los Pinos, Mexico, D.F. That's all. He's going to be very worried about it, because he's always thinking about the public opinion in the U.S. □

Tatiana Schreiber is the editor of the Resist newsletter. For more information on situation of political disappearances in Mexico, contact: Rosario Ibarra, Medellin 366, Col. Roma Sur, 06760 Mexico, D.F. Mexico, or call (5) 5-84-81-30. There is an umbrella organization of human rights groups in Mexico: the Comision Mexicana de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, Apartado Postal 5-170, CP 06500, Mexico, D.F., MEXICO. Tel. (5) 5-25-25-45.

Grants

continued from page eight

ry of the Americas" campaign described below. These include an Alternatives to Militarism working group which provides draft and counter-recruitment counseling and classroom presentations. CALC provides information to communities of color, rural areas and at-risk and low-income youth. Recently the group provided a bilingual/bicultural workshop for the Latino community. The group planned self- and community education activities this summer on topics such as racism and militarism, women and war, the environment and racism, and the drug war and militarism.

CALC's racial justice program schedules Recognizing Racism workshops including a recent one for teen parents and another for the religious community. CALC has assisted seven elementary schools to declare themselves Racism Free Zones.

The "Rethinking the History of the Americas" campaign will encourage critical thinking about the true history of this land since the European arrival/invasion. CALC will involve people of color, youth, educators, and the religious community in celebrating diversity and fostering an understanding of the values of indigenous communities. CALC hopes to achieve community-wide visibility for an exposé of 500 years of injustice and resistance.

Youth-oriented projects include organizing a summer mural project for middle school students on the campaign theme; developing a resource library about the European conquest and its consequences, and indigenous resistance and contributions; continuing work on curriculum enrichment with the schools; and

exploring with Native Americans, other people of color, and educators various models for workshops and conferences.

With the religious community CALC plans to engage many diverse groups in acknowledging the injustices of the past and the complicity of the institutional church in racism. CALC hopes to expand opportunities for people in faith communities to put aside denial and renounce oppression based on racism.

Other parts of the overall campaign include production of a poster with excerpts from Chief Seattle's speeches and Northwest Indian art; organizing an entry in the 1991 Eugene Celebration parade on the theme of "Rethinking the History..." and offering a film/video festival of Native American films.

Resist's grant went to general expenses for the campaign.



Join the Resist Pledge Program

We'd like you to consider becoming a Resist Pledge. Pledges account for over 25% 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.

Yes! I would like to become a Resist Pledge. I'd like to pledge \$ _____ / _____ (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, 2x a year, yearly).

Enclosed is my pledge contribution of \$ _____.

I can't join the pledge program just now, but here's a contribution to support your work. \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Resist

One Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02143 • (617) 623-5110

GRANTS

In each issue of the Resist newsletter we highlight a few recent grants made to projects in a particular area. This issue features grants to groups working on Native American issues, including two emergency grants. Emergency grants are grants of \$150 which are used to provide quick dollars for projects and events which could not have been anticipated in time for our regular grant process. In some cases (as in those reported here) the organization only became aware of the possibility of Resist funding when the need for funds was urgent. Emergency grant decisions are otherwise based on the same criteria as regular grants, and groups receiving emergency grants may still apply for a regular grant (less \$150) in the same year.

The information in these brief reports is provided to us by the groups themselves. For more information, please write to them at the addresses listed.

Black Hills Teton Sioux Nation-Treaty Council, HCR 49, Box 70, Porcupine, SD 57772

The "treaty of 1891" between the Lakota (Sioux) Nation and the U.S. government leased most of North and South Dakota to the U.S. government for 100 years. The Teton Lakota Treaty Council called a gathering in June of this year to renegotiate the treaty. This requires representation of two thirds of the adult population of the Lakota Nation, covering eight bands including two small reserves in Canada.

In speaking before the U.N. Commission on Human Rights concerning the U.S. government's failure to uphold its part of the agreement with the Sioux people, Antoine Black Feather said, "The full blooded members of the Sioux Nation Bands are very weary of the way of life they are subjected to. We believe that our plight has become comparable to the conditions of many foreign lands where the United States has political influence. We feel that the existing governmental powers on individual Sioux Indian reservations as it is now, falls only short of a dictatorship....It is not our intention to take any course of violence, but rather to employ the tools of diplomacy. It is our intention to proceed in every way by legal procedure in the name of justice, in the name of the memories of our Chiefs and Headmen who strived hard to make this a good place

to live, and in the name of a future for our children, their children, and their children's children..."

Resist's grant was used to provide food and supplies for those Indians traveling to the gathering to discuss ways to renew or renegotiate the treaty of 1891 and shape something closer to justice.

Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127.

The Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance was initiated in January 1991 by the Soviet Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement which successfully forced a primary Soviet nuclear test site to shut down. This international alliance of grassroots organizations (including Nevada Desert Experience) has begun to coordinate efforts to achieve a Comprehensive Test Ban as a first step toward ending the arms race. The alliance includes representatives of indigenous Western Shoshone, Kazakh, and Polynesian peoples on whose land nuclear testing is conducted.

In the last two years, Western Shoshone have actively participated in the campaign against nuclear testing; Western Shoshone representatives have gone on speaking tours; spoken at rallies, public hearings and other events; organized Native American participation in test ban events at the Nevada Test Site; participated in the May 1990 Citizens Congress for a Test Ban in Kazakhstan and in the founding of the Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance in January 1991; addressed the Test Ban Treaty Conference in New York City that same month; and planned and organized the All Nations Healing Ceremony on April 6, 1991 involving spiritual leaders and representatives from eight Native American Nations.

Resist provided emergency funds for non-travel expenses enabling two Western Shoshone activists to attend the second meeting of the Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance held in Stockholm in June. This meeting was to address directions for the international test ban movement, including a proposal to plan a major international conference in Las Vegas and an action at the Nevada Test Site on the Quincentenary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. The events would affirm Native American land rights and focus political attention on nuclear weapons testing. The Western Shoshone National Council has backed this proposal

and its representatives were to present it at the Stockholm meeting. (We'll provide an update in the next issue of the newsletter...)

Tahoma Two-Spirits, P.O. Box 4402, Seattle, WA 98104.

Tahoma Two-Spirits is a Seattle-area group of Native lesbians and gay men, their friends, and their lovers and family members. The group formed after the Third Annual International Native Lesbian and Gay Gathering held last year in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Tahoma Two-Spirits organized the fourth annual Gathering held in Oregon this August. 150-200 people from all over the U.S., Canada and Mexico were expected. This Gathering is a place where Indian gay men, lesbians, and their friends and families can be together in a safe, supportive, drug- and alcohol-free environment. "There are never many of us in any one community," the group wrote Resist, "and we are often the only gay people in an Indian community or the only Natives in our gay and lesbian communities. This Gathering is place where all parts of ourselves come together...to share and renew our cultures, to network on regional land and treaty rights issues, and share information...There will be workshops, talking circles, sweats, a giveaway, and a powwow with traditional dancing. There will also be AIDS education and clean and sober support."

Resource people attending the gathering were to include Chrystos, author of *Dream On* and *Not Vanishing*; Muriel Miguel, co-founder of Spiderwoman Theatre in New York; Ron Rowell, executive director of the Native American AIDS Prevention Center in Oakland; Deb Klenk, member of the Two Spirited Thunder People Native American Dance Troupe of Minnesota; and Dian Million, member of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee's international office.

Resist's grant was used for organizational expenses for the gathering. We hope to hear more about the event and future plans of Tahoma Two-Spirits in a future issue of the newsletter.

Clergy and Laity Concerned, 458 Blair Blvd., Eugene, Oregon, 97402.

CALC of Lane County, Oregon is involved with several projects in addition to the "1492 - 1992: Rethinking the Histo-

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