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Resist Newsletter, Oct. 1991

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Funding social change since 1967

RESIST

Newsletter #239

A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

October, 1991

CETLALIC: Spanish for Activists

TATIANA SCHREIBER

If you want to study Spanish in Mexico, the most important recommendation I can make, after my recent sojourn at CETLALIC, is to stay as long as possible. Once you start learning a language it seems that the more you know the less you know. That is, the more of the language you learn, the more idiomatic expressions you understand, the more uses of tenses and pronouns... the more you feel as if you haven't learned anything, and the more you want passionately to continue learning.

I spent one month in an intensive Spanish study program at CETLALIC (an acronym for the Tlahuica Center for Language and Cultural Exchange), a school designed to meet the needs of North American and European activists, or people who work with Latin American development projects. Among the 20 or more language schools in Cuernavaca, Mexico, this one attempts to provide an educational alternative by using an adaptation of the teaching methods of Brazilian educator Paulo Friere.

Friere emphasizes the way that people can draw on their own life experiences to effect change in their local communities, so it's a questionable proposition to try to use Frierian methodologies when teaching a foreign language to foreigners in Mexico. Friere's work was originally in the field of literacy, teaching people to read



Spanish instructor Maricela Cuéllar and a student (Rejean, a Québécois) in morning grammar class at CETLALIC.

and write in their own language. That's quite different from learning another language, which has more to do with stepping into another culture than in re/discovering one's own. But, on the other hand, I found that learning Spanish and living in Mexico did require an examination of my own culture, politics, and means of emotional expression... so perhaps it's not such a stretch to imagine a Frierian way to study Spanish.

Tomás Kalmar, an adult literacy teacher here in Boston, a Mexican, and a person very much influenced by Paulo

Friere, thinks one way it could work is if people approach their monolingualism as part of a larger problem that must be addressed. "What you really need to do," says Kalmar, "is get a community together where there's a reason why a person might want to speak both languages and see in the real world what the problems are, and how a certain way of speaking two languages is a solution."

I think in some sense this is what CETLALIC tries to do, by bringing together activists and posing, in the form

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For Your Information:

Sustained Activism Book

For a work in progress on sustained peace and justice activism, the editor of the 1991 War Resisters League Peace Calendar (*A Way of Life: Celebrating Sustained Activism*) seeks long-haul social change workers for information on political experiences and personal equilibrium.

Pat Farren, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140. (Through 9/1992.)

1992 Peace Action Appointment Calendar And Diary

Three personal actions listed each day to promote peace and justice (\$10.72).

Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 25, N. Manchester, IN 46962. (Profits go to the work of Manchester F.O.R.)

Typewriters For Prisoners

The **Typewriters for Prisoners Project** (funded by a grant from Resist) has a few more typewriters to donate to prisoners. Preferences: 1. inside groups that are involved with education or organizing; 2. prisoners who are using typewriters to help a number of other people. Write and tell us about your project or work, and why you need a typewriter. Check with your mailroom and about regulations regarding the kind of typewriter you can receive and any special paperwork of shipping instructions.

Typewriters for Prisoners, c/o Prison Book/Redbook, 92 Green Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Nonviolence In Practice

Peace Brigades International is holding a training program on January 17-24, 1992 in the San Francisco Bay area for anyone interested in supporting or joining its peace teams. Volunteers serve as international observers; accompany threatened activists in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka; and offer workshops on nonviolent conflict resolution.

The weekend orientation (January 17-19) is open to everyone and conducted in English. The remainder of the training is in English for Sri Lanka applicants and in Spanish for applicants to the Central America project. The cost is \$50 for the orientation and \$100 for the entire training.

Peace Brigades International, 333 Valencia Street, Suite 330, San Francisco, CA 94103. (415) 864-7242.

LETTERS

Why Resist Supports AIDS Activism

Resist frequently receives letters from supporters that criticize specific aspects of our work. We are always appreciative of such letters because they let us know how you feel and provide us with an opportunity to clarify our policies. Sometimes they push us to examine and change those policies as well. (We are less enthusiastic about the frequent "hate mail" we receive, but that's another story. Someday we'll publish a few choice excerpts in the newsletter so all of you can know who's out there...)

Recently we received a letter from someone who supports most of our work but takes issue with funding organizing and activism around AIDS. The writer believes that individuals have control over their sexual behavior and their use of intravenous drugs. She writes that "any problems associated with that behavior, including...the risk of prolonged suffering and death, is also the business of those who choose to risk it." She suggests that people with AIDS "should raise the funds themselves" to fight the political battles concerning AIDS education and treatment.

Resist has published several articles in the past which reflect our perspective on this issue (See "AIDS Activists Take to the Streets" by Nancy Wechsler in issue #210, Nov. 1988; "Race, Sex and AIDS" by Evelyn Hammonds in issue #203, Feb., 1988 and "Act Up, Fight Back, Fight AIDS!" in the same issue.) Our general policy with regard to AIDS work is to look for grassroots, radical, activist groups organizing a political response to the AIDS epidemic which take into account the role homophobia and racism have played in the epidemic and the (lack of) government response. We reprint our response to this particular writer to let you know where we stand.

Dear Resist Supporter,

We have already sent you newsletter articles that address the issue of why organizing around AIDS can be politically and socially important. However, your recent letter raises another question which we feel compelled to answer as well as we can. You write that "the problem of contracting AIDS is not everyone's problem," and further, that those who become infected with HIV have only themselves to blame. We disagree with both these assertions.

No one chooses to contract a deadly illness. It is true that current research indicates that primary routes of transmission of HIV (the virus thought to cause AIDS — however, a body of research exists supporting the notion that HIV is only one factor contributing to the development of the illnesses which are collec-

tively labeled "AIDS") include particular sexual behaviors (heterosexual as well as homosexual) and sharing contaminated needles. Many people now infected with HIV contracted the virus before these routes of transmission were widely understood and therefore were unable to take the necessary precautions to avoid the virus.

That aside, access to this information is extremely dependent upon social and political factors. For example, in this country AIDS organizations have great difficulty providing specific and explicit information about HIV transmission because of pressure from the religious right to limit funding for these materials. In addition, literature that is culturally and ethnically sensitive for various groups of people is still in its infancy. To blame people for behaving in a way that, tragically, may contribute to the development of AIDS, lacks compassion, at best, but worse, supports the notion that only certain people are at risk.*

We are all at risk for AIDS, as we are for many other illnesses associated with immune system disfunction, such as so-called "chronic fatigue syndrome," and "environmental illness," both of which are showing up in more and more people of all races and social and

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ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY
Funding social change since 1967

For information and grant guidelines write to:
Resist, One Summer St., Somerville, MA 02143

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Unknown Secrets: Art and the Rosenberg Era

*Unknown Secrets:
Art and the Rosenberg Era*

REVIEWED BY SUSAN JHIRAD

A thirty minute film produced and directed by Daniel Keller, Charles Light and Rob Okun; narrated by John Randolph, featuring the voices of Ed Asner, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Tovah Feldshuh, Jack Gilford, Tony Randall, and Shirley Blanc Romaine. Available for rent to non-profit educational institutions at \$75; for broadcast, theatrical, or home video prices, write: Green Mountain Post Films, P.O. Box 229, Turners Falls, MA 01376. Or call, (413) 863-4754.

An accompanying illustrated art book, *The Rosenbergs: Collected Visions of Artists and Writers*, is available for \$24.95.

I never got over the Rosenberg case.

I was ten and a half when the Rosenbergs were executed. My parents were members of the Communist Party, and the F.B.I. visited our home several times. My father had lost a job because of the McCarthy hysteria, at a V.A. hospital where he was Chief of Ophthalmology. He was presented with a lengthy F.B.I. file on his political and social activities, about one-third of which was total fabrication. Our friends lost jobs, lived in poverty, shipped their leftwing books to secret apartments in Boston, whispered and feared.

I was the only kid in my elementary school whose parents wouldn't allow me to participate in the Nuclear Hysteria Exercises, where we had to lie down in corridors to protect ourselves from imaginary Russian bombs, and be fingerprinted so "our parents could identify our bodies in case of nuclear attack." "Don't your parents want to identify your body?" my horrified classmates asked. Of course I knew even then that they were wrong and my parents were right, that lying down and fingerprinting were exercises in futility, but I also knew that I was different. I was an outsider, an alien, a weirdo. To make matters worse, I was one of few Jews in a mostly White and Protestant elementary school in West Hartford, Connecticut.

In the summers, I went to a leftist camp attended by Blacks and Jews and

children of radicals and communists, as well as Robert Meeropol (Rosenberg), after his parents' execution. I remember his dark sad eyes when he played the violin, eyes so like his mother's. In the summer of my eleventh year, a bunkmate heard news of her father, a leading communist, being beaten into a coma in the jail where he was incarcerated. Because there were too many Susans in my bunk, I was given my middle name whenever I went to that camp; I became Beth. It reinforced my sense that it was all, somehow, an underground experience, part of my alienation from mainstream America.

When the Rosenbergs were fried it was the culmination of my worst fears. There was the recurrent early childhood nightmare of Hitler coming to our neighborhood with a kind of miniature gas oven, trying to shove me into it. I guess this was my rendition of "Hitler putting Jews in ovens."

To me, the Rosenberg case meant, above all, the paranoia of being different in America, the terror of being Jewish and left-wing, the sense that at any moment my parents could be taken away and put in that evil looking black chair with the cap and attachments I saw featured in a pamphlet my parents had about the case. It wasn't about "standing up" as some speakers felt in the film *Unknown Secrets: Art and the Rosenberg Era*. Although with historical hindsight I realize the courage

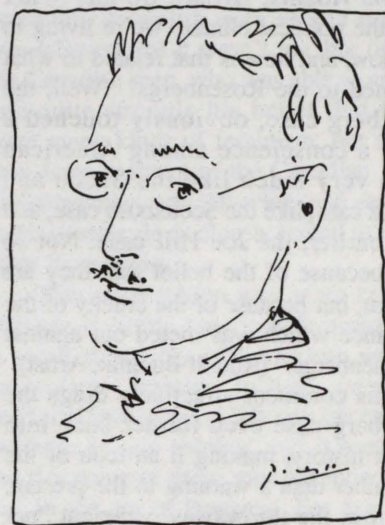
that Ethel Rosenberg in particular showed in not sacrificing the truth for her life, the fact remains that the Rosenbergs were not victors, but victims. For me their execution was about terror and a deep deep alienation, which I feel to this day.

That terror surfaced again quite recently, when frenzied mobs waved American flags for the "heroes" of the Gulf War, celebrating the deaths of 150,000 Iraqis in a war few understood or cared to understand. It surfaces when people who object to such wars are labeled unpatriotic, or traitors; when my local city council in Medford, Massachusetts passed an ordinance, seeking to deny federal scholarships to any young person who actively protested against the war. As our house remained one of the few on the block not sporting American flags and yellow ribbons, I began to fear retaliation. Fortunately, the war was over soon, and most of the yellow ribbons faded and dropped off.

But that sense of latent mob hysteria, that potential for violence against "alien" ideas, is not part of some remote past in the 1950s, it is with us today — in the Supreme Court beginning to be controlled by right-wing fanatics, in senators like Jesse Helms, and in the utter cynicism of former C.I.A. chief turned president, George Bush.

It is that sense of immediacy that

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Jimmy 10 from Michael A. Kelly Rosenberg
Jimmy

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seemed a bit missing for me in the film. It originated as part of an exhibit of art works, also entitled *Unknown Secrets*, that is currently touring the country. It includes a powerful set of paintings, produced between 1951 and 1988, inspired by the Rosenberg case. Also presented in the film are segments from a book entitled *The Rosenbergs: Collected Visions of Artists and Writers*. The film, art exhibit and book all purport to "explore the relationship between art and politics."

As an introduction to the art, the film is thoughtful and comprehensive. Although it fails to stir up any profound insights about the weighty topic of "art and politics," it moves one to want to see the art exhibit and discover for yourself what motivated these artists. But as a work of art itself, it seems curiously flat. Perhaps this is because it is two steps removed from the case that inspired the art — it is artists talking about the art they created, in some cases quite a long time ago. Perhaps, also, it is due to the fragmentary nature of the impressions — a piece of a painting by Ralph Fasanella, a paragraph from a memoir by Arthur Miller, and even more confusing, a segment of a novel by Robert Coover that focuses on satirizing the voice of Richard Nixon, only obliquely relating it to the Rosenberg case.

There is also an abstract, slightly detached quality to some of the testimony given by the artists involved. "I am very interested in, and I think a lot of people are very interested in, knowing the kind of political climate they are born into..." (Dennis Adams, Artist). So nu? What about the political climate we're living in right now, and how is that related to what happened to the Rosenbergs? "Well, the Rosenberg case, obviously touched a nerve, a conscience among American artists very much like the Sacco and Vanzetti case, like the Scottsboro case, and much earlier, the Joe Hill case. Not so much because of the belief that they are innocent, but because of the cruelty of the vengeance which was meted out against the Rosenbergs." (Rudolf Baranik, Artist).

This comment effectively drags the Rosenberg case even further back into ancient history, making it an icon of the past, rather than a warning to the present. Moreover, the throwaway comment "not so much because of a belief they were innocent" goes a long way to deflating the whole issue. After all, is it irrelevant that

they were probably innocent? I for one believe that they were, and certainly that the evidence against them was flimsy and doctored. Testimony based on Jello box covers — later admitted to have been manufactured by the F.B.I., and hollow furniture, also later conceded not to be hollow, throw doubt on the entire case. If we are reduced to the cruelty of the electric chair as the main reason the case was important, we must then weigh that against all the other cruelties and injustices that have occurred to righteous humans in the history of this nation, from the slaughter of the Indians to the cold blooded murder by the F.B.I. of civil rights heroes like Fred Hampton, who was not even given the benefit of a phony trial!

By sheerest coincidence, around the time of the execution of the Rosenbergs, I was reading Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* in which the protagonist is ultimately punished by electrocution. The horror of that death merged in my child's mind with the death of the Rosenbergs, and I spent a great deal of time fantasizing about how it felt to have the juice turned on. How it felt to be completely helpless, at the mercy of an uncaring and deceitful political system.

Yes, the Rosenberg case was for me, as for the many talented artists and writers who were inspired by the case, a true American Tragedy. Yet somehow, the film fails to capture the tragedy of it all. It's too intellectualized, too remote. We even have actors speaking for some of the writers, like Arthur Miller, instead of the writers themselves. This makes the film fall uncomfortably between fiction and documentary, robbing it of some of its effect. Indeed, the most moving portions of the film turn out to be, not the quotes from the novels, or the fragments from the paintings, but the actual footage of the Rosenbergs themselves, and the heartwrenching final letter, put to music, written by the Rosenbergs to their about-to-be orphaned sons.

Yes, we must always remember the atrocity done to the Rosenbergs, and yes we should celebrate the art that it inspired. The problem with this film may be, in the end, a problem of form — it's difficult, if not impossible, to create a work of art about art. A successful film cannot be a merely intellectual endeavor; an essay is adequate to that task. The medium of film has the capacity to make us feel more passionately than perhaps any other art form. Not to utilize that capacity is to throw

away an important opportunity. Unfortunately, the exceedingly well meaning makers of *Unknown Secrets* have not quite succeeded in conveying the rage, grief and sense of tragedy that were stirred by the Rosenberg case.

Finally, since I have spent much of my adult life mulling over the "relationship of art to politics," I have concluded that form is as important as content. Great political films like *The Battle of Algiers*, plays like Brecht's *Mother Courage*, poetry like Langston Hughes', fiction like Grace Paley's, art like Goya's, do not content themselves with right-on politics; they utilize the form in which they work at its highest level. Since it is the form, above all, that ultimately moves us, and pushes us to new modes of thinking and feeling, artists of the left must pay as much attention to their craft as do the artists of the right. □

Susan Jhirad is an Associate Professor of English at North Shore Community College and is a freelance writer who has published frequent movie reviews in Sojourner and Cineaste, and is currently writing film scripts. Resist welcomes suggestions for books, films, and other art forms for review in the newsletter.

Letters

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economic backgrounds. Because these illnesses have not been associated with homosexuality, victims do not necessarily suffer from homophobic violence, but they still may require support from an organization like ours because research into the nature of these diseases is controlled by corporate interests.

Let's take another example. Women with breast cancer have long been frustrated with the lack of research addressing environmental links to the disease. There are indications that exposure to radiation (in utero, as a child, as an adult, or a parents' exposure) may contribute. We don't know if this is true because there has been little research to document it. But supposing it is. Would you say that these women brought the disease on themselves by living near a nuclear weapons facility? Nuclear weapons facilities are thought by many to be very hazardous. Should we not fund groups of people working to expose these hazards because, since they choose to live there, they should raise their own funds for this work, as you suggest AIDS organizations do? We don't think the decision about where to live is really so simple. There may be a myriad of reasons why moving away from the facility is

impossible. And who is to say if the next location is really safer?

The same situation holds true for people with AIDS. Choice, in a country "infected" with racism, homophobia, and economic injustice, is not really so free. We will continue to fund AIDS organizations that address the latter issues in their work. We would do the same for organizations working to stop breast cancer, if they addressed the political questions surrounding research, treatment, and access to information. Similarly, we fund groups that fight environmental contamination by addressing the root causes of this contamination, and the political constraints on environmental health.

You may disagree with this point of view, in which case we will have to agree to disagree. However, we hope you will be persuaded to widen your own view of "choice" with regard to AIDS, and will continue to support the work of Resist.

Sincerely,
Tatiana Schreiber, for Resist

* Many people have AIDS, or are HIV infected. One frightening figure we heard was that 80% of hemophiliacs are HIV positive, having gotten the virus through blood products used to combat hemophilia. Many other people got HIV through blood transfusions before the blood supply was screened. Even now, with the blood supply supposedly screened, new cases of AIDS have resulted from contaminated blood. In New York City, as in many other cities, the fastest growing population of new AIDS cases is found in women of color of childbearing age. Some of these women con-

tracted the virus from sharing contaminated needles, but many contracted it from heterosexual sex with infected men. Often these women did not know the men were infected, or were unable to convince their sexual partners to practice safer sex.

Rosenberg Fund for Children

Dear Resist,

I am writing to you and Resist supporters, friends, and custodians of children who could benefit from grants by the Rosenberg Fund for Children (RFC), asking you to inform potential beneficiaries of our existence. The RFC was developed out of my own experience.

In 1950, when I was three years old, my parents, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, were arrested and charged with conspiring to give "the secret" of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. They were executed on June 19, 1953. Between 1950 and 1954, my brother Michael and I lived a nightmare. We were placed in an orphanage in 1950, denied the right to attend public school in New Jersey in 1953, and seized by New York City police from our prospective adoptive parents' home in 1954.

Anne and Abel Meeropol won the custody battle that ensued. The movement that fought to save my parents' lives raised a trust fund that enabled us to attend progressive schools and summer camps. As a result, we grew up with a positive attitude toward working for social change. In the mid-1970's, in the course of our effort to reopen our parents' case by suing the government under the Freedom of Information Act, we conceived a plan to start a

foundation in our parents' name.

In September 1990, after 15 years of planning and various detours, I opened the Rosenberg Fund for Children's doors in Springfield, Massachusetts. The RFC's mission is to provide for the educational and emotional needs of children in this country whose parents, as a result of their work for social and economic justice, have lost jobs, been injured, killed or imprisoned. My experience has taught me that our grants could be a major benefit to such children.

There are hundreds of potential RFC beneficiaries. They are the children of "whistle-blowers" and workers who have been fired because they fought racial discrimination, sexual harassment or gender bias. They are the children of parents who have been injured, killed or imprisoned because of their membership in groups that work for social and economic justice and to preserve our environment.

Parents or custodians apply for grants, and grants are made directly to institutions and professionals who foster beliefs that all people have equal worth, that people are more important than profits, and that society must live within ecological limits on growth. Grant decisions are made by the RFC's multi-cultural working Board of Directors. For a copy of the RFC's Funding Guidelines and a simple application form, please contact: Robert Meeropol, Executive Director, Rosenberg Fund for Children, 1145 Main St., Suite 501, Springfield, MA 01103. Or call, (413)739-9020.

Robert Meeropol
Executive Director

Spanish

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of conversation classes and visits to various community projects, difficult questions that are answered differently depending on one's personal history and point of view. For example, in the first week of my study, I remember Jorge Torrez, one of the teachers, asking me why everyone in the U.S. supported the Gulf War. Naturally the question upset me, since everyone I knew hated the Gulf War and tried to stop it every way possible.

I tried to talk to Jorge about what it meant to "support the war," that there were many meanings to that, that probably a lot of people did end up "supporting the war" because there were such limited ways and places in which to express one's misgivings, one's mixed feelings. We talked about the media, the way the government and the military controlled propaganda.... I felt like our conversation was

critical, and it had much more to do with being North American and Mexican, male and female, straight and lesbian, than it did with the fact that he is a native Spanish speaker and I am not. But we needed to be able to communicate, so my learning Spanish was/is a necessary bridge that I want to cross.

On another occasion, the participants in an afternoon discussion period included myself and two Canadian men, and three women teachers at the school. Each of the teachers was a single mother, and the focus of the conversation was supposed to be what it is like to be a woman in Mexico. We were going to talk about each teacher's personal experience, the students asking the questions. But before long we got into a rather heated debate about the nature of North American feminism. Maricela Cuéllar, the director of Spanish

instruction at the school, couldn't understand why feminists were so anti-male. I was relieved that it wasn't me, but one of the Canadian men, who was able to articulate quite strongly his belief that there were many kinds of feminism, but that a very large segment of the Canadian feminist movement was left-wing, and saw the feminist struggle as closely linked to many other movements.

This conversation was again critical, because if North American feminists are to work effectively with Mexican women on projects important to both, we really need to dispel some of the misconceptions we have of one another, and it seems to me that some of those misconceptions are due to our use of language. For example, the word "feminist" has many different meanings, but to Maricela it implied

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something quite specific, something I think I might call "lesbian separatism." And again, in this case, Maricela was able to begin to explain why, to her, that concept was not very relevant to her particular situation.

Learning Through Telling

Speaking of Maricela, I found her an excellent teacher, and I'm sad to say to readers that by this time I think she's moved to the U.S. to be with her honey, and I sure hope she's surviving culture shock OK. Maricela was extraordinarily open to learning more about the lives of lesbians and gay men in North America. CETLALIC is only four years old, and prior to my visit I had heard from friends that they had encountered homophobic teachers there. When I decided to attend the school, I wrote first, explaining that I was a lesbian and wanted to be able to be out to the family I lived with, if at all possible. They wrote back, saying that they had discussed this with all the families and the families preferred not to know. OK. But when I called a couple weeks later, I was told they'd found a woman I'd "really like" to stay with. It was true. I lived with a Mexican lesbian and her two sons, in a rural part of the city, some 20 minutes ride by bus....

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Maricela, after knowing me for a couple of weeks, asked me to present, for my conversation class, a history of the lesbian and gay movement in the United States. I said that was a bit large, so she allowed me to make the presentation in two days; four hours of listening to me explain about ACT UP and Queer Nation, and radical feminists, and lesbian feminists, and gay civil rights types.... I was careful to point out that mine was just one perspective, and the next gay students to arrive might tell the whole thing differently. I talked about Stonewall, and Gay Pride marches, and about the escalation of violence against us. I felt proud and lucky to have the opportunity to present our history and our culture in this way.

And, of course, the teachers tried to ensure that the cultural exchange flowed both directions. In one class my teacher asked me to ask her anything I wanted to know about her own life. We ended up talking about her family, about why her father wanted to make sure she received an education (while her mother insisted that she didn't need to go to college),

about her struggles as a woman with male professors who didn't respect her....

And we also participated in more formal cultural and political education, visiting the community of Salvadorans living illegally in Cuernavaca and surviving on their crafts production and donations from CETLALIC; the women's center; the slum city of railroad workers who live without water or electricity by the tracks; and the Diego Rivera murals painted on the outside wall of the Palacio de Cortez. There, we were asked to interpret the murals ourselves, in Spanish, while Jorge (one of the founders of the school and by far the most politically left-wing of the current teachers) stood by ready to correct our Spanish and explain his own perspective on the story and the symbols.

Classes Begin When They Begin

Well, perhaps I ought to tell you some of the details: At CETLALIC, one attends classes from 9AM to 2PM Monday through Friday. Morning classes begin promptly, well, more or less promptly, after we've all had some coffee and some *pan* and have chatted a bit.... Once classes start, we usually continue chatting for a while. No one in Mexico seems to think it's a good idea to get down to business too quickly. But soon we're discussing grammar, or practicing pronunciation. Morning classes focus on grammar, and students are assigned a class based on a test given the Saturday before one wants to start studying. There's a week by week schedule, and you are assigned new teachers each week. Usually 10-15 students attend the school, but in slow seasons there may be as few as five or six, so it's possible to have private classes most of the time.

Most days there are homework assignments. I did lots of papers on topics like "the uses of verbs," or "an essay using idiomatic expressions...." but that's just because the whys and wherefores of language are fascinating to me. The topics are flexible, as long as you write, and read your work in class the next day. After a break for a nosh, you are back in class at 12:30 for conversation with a different instructor. On alternate days there are field trips or discussions or guest speakers. One of these was Leticia Hernandez, a candidate for public office on the PRT ticket (a radical left-wing party). I found her explanation of the political scene very helpful, and, naturally, I used her talk as a basis for my homework project that night.

Most students went home for *la comida* with their families after school, but since I lived so far away I usually ate in town, and spent the afternoon wandering around the city, talking to shopkeepers in the market, or writing in my journal in cafes. It's always the case that one learns the most when you need to use your new language skills to do things you want to do, like have a dress altered, use a xerox machine, or, in my case, have my bag repaired after it was slashed by a robber. (It's true, in crowded streets in Cuernavaca one does need to be careful, and foreigners are always good targets.)

Some language students make the mistake of spending time mostly with other students, and this is easy to do in Cuernavaca which is so full of North Americans. But I found it very possible to avoid this, and the townspeople I met were unbelievably friendly and willing to chat all day despite my horrible pronunciation and lack of appropriate tenses.... I struck up a friendship, for example, with a potter who told me he used to be a school teacher until his glaucoma got too bad to read. We were able to exchange, along with the money and the pots, words for illness, disease, and parrot (he had a pet one working with him at his stall in the market).

The cost is \$115 per week, plus room and board with a family. It is also possible to rent an apartment, but most people want to live with a family in order to speak more Spanish. I'm not sure if there are other lesbians to stay with, but the woman I lived with is still associated with the school, so lesbians and gay men who are interested should mention in a letter that you'd prefer a family that is supportive of gay people.

Growing Pains

CETLALIC was started as a collective, but currently it does not operate in a strictly non-hierarchical fashion. When I was there the school seemed to be undergoing some growing pains in an effort to find teachers who were both good language instructors and supportive of the political philosophy of the founders. In addition, there was the classic conflict that usually arises in the development of a collective business, when some members are willing and able to take on more responsibility while others are not. Resentments build up, and a new system must be established in which commitment is rewarded, but all teachers, including part-timers, receive a fair salary.

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women recover from experiences of violence by sharing and validating their pain.

In addition to the Clothesline Project, the coalition has a media watch campaign, has worked to remove offensive newspaper ads and billboards, and has planned several community events. In the works are a book project about women's herstory on the Cape, a date rape workshop for teenage girls, and a fall tour of the Clothesline Project on college campuses.

The group supports abortion rights, and lobbies for federal funding to be diverted from the military to programs for families and children. The group is co-sponsoring efforts to have the local D.A. prosecute gay bashings as civil rights violations. Resist's grant was used to print brochures about the Clothesline Project and to purchase a telephone answering machine.

Montana Human Rights Network, P.O. Box 9184, Helena, MT 59601.

The Montana Human Rights Network is an umbrella group comprised of Montana organizations that are responding to the activities of white supremacist groups. Active for about a year, the group grew out of a state conference on racism and hate groups, and now serves as a resource for information about the radical right in Montana. The Network has adopted a broad mission statement supporting racial diversity in Montana, and promotes public discussion about racist bigotry.

The political work the group is engaged in includes passage of a Martin Luther King holiday in Montana; increased funding for civil rights enforcement efforts, repeal of the state's sodomy statutes (now same sex sexual contact is a felony in Montana), and restricting paramilitary training activities. The Network challenges public officials who make racist or anti-Semitic statements, and has provided support to lesbian and gay activists picketing homophobic and discriminatory businesses.

The Network's newsletter is an excellent resource including information about connections between traditional racist organizations and new anti-Indian groups which are springing up across the state. A recent issue of the newsletter included a discussion of the meaning of treaty rights, news shorts about hate group activities around the state, an article about the Christian Identity Church (subtitled

"Theology of Hate"), and book reviews of books about the Neo-Nazi Movement and America's racist underground. If all this sounds pretty horrible, the newsletter also highlights activities of anti-racist organizations like the Billings Forum on Racial and Ethnic Equality, which recently held its annual freedom festival, and which supports victims of discrimination.

Resist's grant was used to defray newsletter costs.

Rabanal Small Farmers Association, Box 1656, Cidra, Puerto Rico 00739.

The Rabanal Small Farmers Association, (APARI) is a grassroots organization of rural residents in the community of El Rabanal, Puerto Rico. It was founded in 1984 when two gay farmers combined their eleven acres of land and joined efforts with their neighbors to address the serious economic, social, and structural problems in the region. The two donated their land to APARI, which has since bought six additional acres. The group now has a governing board of seven representing a range of community interests, and sharing a commitment to the empowerment of small farmers.

The organization seeks to provide cultural, educational and economic programs for its members; to work toward conservation and preservation of natural resources; and to develop the community's infrastructure in terms of electricity, potable water, and telephone lines. The political perspective of the group is that self-development occurs when people use their life experiences to develop projects which, in turn, enable participants to free themselves from the psychological, social, political and economic aspects of living under colonialism. "Our commitment is to more than just obtaining a well-paying job," the group wrote Resist, "it is a commitment to change in attitudes, in relationships, in structures, and also in production systems."

Members of the group, and participants on the board of directors, are all poor, and include women, gay activists, older people, and disabled people. Interestingly, one group member who was mute has begun to be able to speak through a combination of therapy and the support and encouragement of the group. APARI works in coalition with Central American solidarity groups, and gay and lesbian rights organizations.

The economic project that forms the basis of APARI's work is the development

of a market for its own vegetables, ornamental plants, and coriander. The "niches" markets being developed for these products are out of reach for most wholesalers and multinationals because the costs to supply them are too high for large growers, but affordable for local community groups.

Resist's grant went to buy a typewriter, so that APARI could stop traveling to other organization's offices to use a machine. However, the group plans to make it's new typewriter (and typing desk and typing chair) available to all local community groups who need to use it.

Spanish

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While this is being worked out, the school is struggling to stay financially afloat. There is a commitment to support the Salvadorans and maintain relationships with other popular organizations in the community. And there is the dream of opening, in conjunction with the school, a coffeeshop, a bookstore, a library of political issues focused on Central America, and a program of cultural activities for both the North Americans and Cuernavacans.

Right now Jorge Torrez is in Europe trying to drum up business for the school. For North American and European activists it's a pleasure to study in a community in which your values are appreciated. As CETLALIC grows, it will doubtless evolve, I hope, to something close to the goals of its founders... a place that "foments cross-cultural communication." But I also want to point out (to myself as much as anyone else) that the U.S. is the fourth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. So, if you want to speak Spanish, you don't have to go to Mexico, you just have to find a reason to speak. □

Tatiana Schreiber is the newsletter editor of Resist. Thanks to Tomás Mario Kalmar for contributing his thoughts about Friere, and other things, to this article. For more information, write CETLALIC at Apdo. Postal 1-201, C.P. 62001, Cuernavaca, Morelos, MEXICO. Telephone (73) 13-35-79.

GRANTS

In each issue of the newsletter we highlight a few recent grants made to groups around the country. In this issue our reports reflect the diversity of issue areas and geographic regions in which Resist grantees are carrying on their work. The information in these brief reports is provided to us by the groups themselves. For more details, write to them at the addresses included here.

Rusk County Citizens Action Group,
N3386 County "G", Ladysmith, WI
54848.

Rusk County Citizens Action Group (RCCAG) was born in 1976 in response to a proposal by the Kennecott Corporation to begin mining operations on the Flambeau River in Rusk County. Community members wanted to inform themselves on mining issues in general and the impact the proposed mine was likely to have on the environment and on people's lives. Though the original proposal was defeated, the company (now Flambeau Mining Co.) came back in 1987 with a new proposal, and the struggle against corporate control of the community intensified. RCCAG says the company uses "every tactic at its fingertips" including threats, bribery, manipulation of local officials and discrediting its opposition to assert its control.

RCCAG believes the Flambeau Mining Co. has used its influence behind the scenes to weaken the state's mining laws, and is treating citizens in the region as guinea pigs in its untried methods of treating and disposing of wastes. The group is determined to ensure that mining

activities are held to strict environmental and public accountability.

RCCAG's efforts have included distribution of a newsletter covering the latest developments in the Wisconsin mining story, and financial support of a court suit challenging the local permit county officials signed with the company. RCCAG believes the agreement violates first amendment rights by prohibiting town, city, and county officials from speaking out against the mine. It also exempts the company from protective local zoning ordinances.

The mine will contribute massive sulfide and pyritic wastes, generating acid and leaching out toxic heavy metals into the surrounding ground and surface waters. The mine would be the first of ten or more proposed mining sites in northern Wisconsin, where all the headwaters of the state's river systems are located. Recently, two endangered species of clams and a dragon fly have been discovered near the mine site. RCCAG has been actively disseminating information to local media about these issues as well as staging civil disobedience actions at the site.

Resist's recent grant was used for production and mailing costs of the group's newsletter.

Cape Cod Women's Agenda, P.O. Box
822, Brewster, MA 02631.

The Cape Cod Women's Agenda is a coalition of feminist and peace groups formed on the Cape in 1989 to better address women's needs. The coalition's first projects were a Cape-wide directory of women's services and International

Women's Day events. In the spring of 1990, the group decided to focus on a broad campaign to raise awareness in the region about violence committed against women. After several meetings, members came up with the idea of creating a visual statement that would pay tribute to women victims and survivors of violence.

The Clothesline Project is a movable artwork consisting of different colored shirts hanging from a clothesline, each shirt memorializing a woman affected by violence. White shirts indicate women who have died as a result of violent crimes; red, pink or orange shirts are for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted; yellow, beige, or brown shirts are for battered women; blue or green for women survivors of child sexual abuse; and purple or lavender for women beaten because they are lesbian. People wishing to contribute memorial shirts to the project are asked to use these colors if they want, or to choose their own colors if they have a particular significance. Some of the shirts include women's names and information about them. Some shirts belonged to women who were killed.

The Clothesline Project was first shown last October in conjunction with a Take Back the Night march and rally. Since then, it has been shown eight times and displays 118 shirts. Several other communities have inquired about starting similar projects, and the Clothesline is the subject of two one-hour television documentaries. The TV programs feature ten women who have shirts on the line, telling their stories about experiences with violence. A group of men has asked the coalition to serve as a resource as they create a similar project dedicated to male survivors of child sexual abuse.

The Cape Cod Women's Agenda seeks to end violence against women; end advertising that is violent toward women; change statutes of limitation as they affect incest and child sexual abuse; obtain pardons for battered women now imprisoned for having killed their batterers; and build a diverse community of women on the Cape (and nationally and internationally) working on similar issues. The group wants to enable people to "break through the separation that exists between knowing something in their heads and understanding it in their hearts." They also believe projects like the Clothesline can help

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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 _____

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