

THE JUST WORD



THE IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ FUND FOR MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

VOLUME VIII No. 2

A PROJECT OF THE FUNDING EXCHANGE

Fall 2002

UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM THROUGH THE LENS OF IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ'S LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

Maria de Jesus

Editors' note: This article is based on ideas presented by M. Brinton Lykes, Ramsay Liem, and Maria de Jesus (Boston College/Martín-Baró Fund), Maritza Montero (U. Central de Venezuela), Tod S. Sloan (Psychologists for Social Responsibility), and Bernardo Jiménez-Domínguez (U. de Guadalajara) in June 2002 at the meeting of The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) in Toronto, Canada. The panel offered an opportunity to explore how psychologists in the Americas draw on Martín-Baró's legacy as we seek to understand and confront terrorism.



Situating terrorism globally enables us to locate the actions of September 11, 2001 within a wider context and to analyze why these events occurred and some of the conditions that gave rise to them. Doing so neither excuses these horrific actions nor replaces the processes of 'post-trauma recovery' for direct and indirect victims of 9/11 and their families. Rather we draw on the legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró to explore our social position within a global community and to craft a broader and more sustained response to multiple manifestations of terror in our world today.

An Australian Aborigine described one possible set of connections across North-South borders in this way:

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. (*The Community Psychologist*, 34(4), 29).

In seeking to generate a cycle of nonviolence and peacemaking toward a more just world, we continually search for connections born of shared needs and to teach others about them. Peoples in countries of the Southern hemisphere, for example, describe experiences of enduring structures of violence (e.g., poverty, illiteracy) that sow terror. The Philippine-based *Children's Rehabilitation Center* works with youth whose families were killed when Manila's central garbage dump, where they were living, collapsed (see *The Just Word*, Fall 2001). Rather than offer economic support to accompany Filipinos in their struggles for creating a better life, Bush's war on terror has brought U.S.

continued on page 9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM THROUGH THE LENS OF IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ'S LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY	page 1
FOCUS ON GUATEMALA	page 2
ADMI REACHES OUT AND Multiplies its Work	page 3
BISHOP JUAN GERARDI CONEDERA	page 6
REBUILDING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY ETHNOPOLITICAL VIOLENCE	page 7
STEPPING STONES ACROSS DIVIDES: EXPERIENCES OF NORTH KOREA	page 8
FUNDING PROCEDURES FOR 2003	page 10
MARTÍN-BARÓ FUND'S PROGRAM COMMITTEE RESPONDS TO BUSH'S PLANS FOR WAR ON IRAQ	page 11

FOCUS ON GUATEMALA

Editors' note: In keeping with changes in the Martín-Baró Fund's funding procedures and our decision to develop ongoing ties with a smaller number of programs, this issue focuses on Guatemala. In 2002 we are continuing our support of the Association of Maya Ixil Women - New Dawn, Chajul, and have initiated a two-year collaboration with the Solidarity and Reconciliation Program in San Marcos. These two Mayan organizations are confronting the psychosocial effects of genocide amidst growing political instability, ongoing structural poverty, and ongoing violations of human rights. As we go to press, the Guatemalan appeals court overturned a lower court's conviction of four men who had been found guilty of assassinating Guatemala's Bishop Juan Gerardi. Three former military officials - Colonel Byron Lima Estrada, Captain Byron Lima Oliva, and Obdulio Villanueva - and Bishop Gerardi's assistant and housemate, Father Mario Orantes, had been convicted and sentenced to prison in 2001. This decision had been seen by many as a small step towards truth with justice.

Population (2001 estimate): 12.9 million

Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed Spanish-Indian), 56 %; indigenous, 44 %

Languages: Spanish; 21 indigenous languages

Religion: mostly Roman Catholic; Protestant; traditional Mayan

Work force: 50 % of the population works in some form of agriculture, often at the subsistence level

Literacy (age 15 & over who can read and write): 68.7% male; 58.5% female

Geography

Area: 42,042 sq. mi. (about the size of Tennessee)

Capital city: Guatemala City

Other major cities: Quezaltenango; Escuintla

Economy

Monetary unit: quetzal (\$1 U.S.=Q7.8)

Gross domestic product (2000 estimate): \$46 billion (U.S.\$)

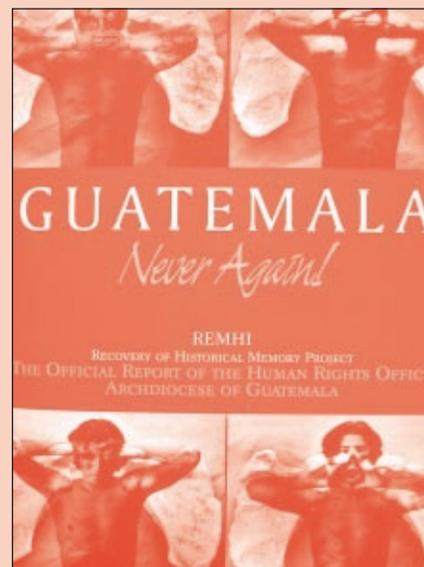
GNI per capita: \$1690 (U.S.\$)

Population living in poverty (2000 estimate): 75.2%

National health expenditure per capita: \$56 (U.S.\$)

Exports: coffee, sugar, meat, cardamom, bananas, fruits and vegetables, petroleum, clothing

Major markets: U.S., Central Am. Common Market, Europe



History

The Mayan empire ruled what is today Guatemala for more than 1,000 years. Spaniards colonized, then ruled, from 1524-1821. Guatemala was briefly a part of México and the United States of Central America before the republic was established in 1839. In 1945 an elected government replaced the long-term dictatorship of Jorge Ubico. The CIA helped topple the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 in order to protect United Fruit Company holdings there. Since then the U.S. has supported numerous Guatemalan governments including military dictatorships found responsible for genocide against the Maya during 36 years of civil war that ended in 1996.

Sources: *The 1998 World Almanac*; U.S. Department of State Background Notes: *Guatemala, 1998*; WHO at

http://www.pawha.org/guatemala_statistics.htm; *New Internationalist*, <http://www.newint.org/>; CIA: *The World Factbook 2001*

(Guatemala) <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

ADMI REACHES OUT AND MULTIPLIES ITS WORK

M. Brinton Lykes

As reported in the Spring 2002 newsletter, the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund has partnered with the Association of Maya Ixil Women – New Dawn (ADMI) in a two year project through which they are extending their mental health and development work into five villages, all of which are within a day's walk of Chajul. In July 2002 I visited Chajul and traveled with Gaspar Ijom Pacheco, ADMI's Outreach Coordinator, to learn more about this work. Details about the villages described below were drawn from Gaspar's report which is available in Spanish on our website, www.martinbarofund.org. Here I briefly summarize the context in which ADMI is working and one of their workshops that I attended.

State-sponsored violence

There are many similarities among the women of the five villages where ADMI is now offering psychosocial workshops: widows whose husbands were killed or disappeared; children now young adults, who were orphaned; families whose animals, crops, and homes were scorched by the army. Yet each village has its particular history, and each group of women faces distinctive challenges.

Villagers of *Txe'l* and *Tchemal* were tortured and disappeared while others fled massacres, living for many years in the mountains above their town, without food, salt, clothing, or medicine. After wandering for months some constructed small

homes from brush and twigs and began to cultivate corn in the mountains. Soldiers and Civil Self-defense Patrols (PACs)¹ arrived, destroyed

to have offered them any assistance.

Massacres were constant in the village of *Xatchmoxan* and the community suffered regular aerial bombings by the army. Homes and fields were burned to the ground and many were forced to abandon their lands. Returning with only the clothing on their backs, they discovered that their lands had been occupied. To date they have neither resolved this land dispute nor received government help to rebuild their lives.

Unlike some of its neighboring communities, *Sotz'il* was not destroyed nor were there massacres.

Although villagers were killed, others survived as workers in a nearby coffee plantation, La Perla. The army had established a military base there and the owner, Luis Arenas, cooperated with them, negotiating for the lives of many villagers who served as his laborers, ensuring the plantation's profitability.

Yet survival in a militarized community had other consequences. The army forced the men of *Sotz'il* to participate in the PACs. They murdered villagers who had fled their homes to escape persecution and served as first columns in military attacks on nearby communities, sowing terror.

Despite having worked on the plantation and have labored for the military during the war, the villagers of *Sotz'il* who survived own no land.



Tchemal today

crops, stole animals and forced them to flee again, "tying the beaks of the chickens they managed to rescue so that the animals would not be heard by neighboring villagers" as they sought refuge deeper into the mountains.

The army razed the earlier community of *Tchaza'*, massacring those who were unable to escape. Some took refuge in the town of Chajul whereas others fled to the mountains, living among the Communities of Populations in Resistance². They were homeless, fleeing army bombardments, often with only the clothes on their backs. The current, resettled community has no municipality building, no school, no electricity, and no health center. The road does not reach the village, a long day's walk from the town of Chajul. ADMI is the first institution

continued on page 4

ADMI REACHES OUT AND MULTIPLIES ITS WORK

Thus far they have been unable to negotiate with Arenas or with the government. Some have invaded land the current government describes as private property and have been murdered. Most are living without homes and without health care.

Psychosocial effects of war: Challenges facing women and their communities

Women from these villages shared images of loss and described “a sadness that has been constant” for more than twenty years. The military strategies described above widowed many of them and left parentless children, some of whom are now young women attending workshops. Families lost their capacity to support themselves.

In the workshop I attended Maria (not her real name) talked about her daughter having been hung in the town center and about soldiers having murdered several of her sons. She described scars, “still not healed.”

Although many have returned to their communities of origin after nearly two decades of exile, these lands have been denuded and there are few resources to assist them in rebuilding. They talked about how the sorrows from these losses and the violations they experienced “robbed them of trust” and “instilled great fear.” They spoke of the loss of their dignity as human beings, as women, and as Maya, as a result of the massacres of the 1980s and the ensuing poverty of the 1990s.

Working toward a better future

The psychosocial workshops are a gathering spot and, for many, a first opportunity to share their stories. I attended the third meeting of a series of monthly gatherings organized in *Tchemal*. Twenty-two women in this village of 70 families arrived in a



Workshop participants

small schoolroom, the only public meeting space in the town. As each person presented herself she shared a little bit about herself, including her age, her primary language, and why she had come to the workshop.

The topic for the day was poverty. A few women began by speaking of the limits of current income generating activities. Some earned cash selling weavings, collecting used clothing and reselling it, or raising and selling chickens. Most agreed the funds were insufficient to support themselves and their children. Others described working on nearby plantations or migrating to the South Coast. They spoke of returning from a season of work with debt, not income. They spoke of the sadness and preoccupation with which they awaken each morning, knowing that

they cannot support their children with these limited earnings.

Poverty was described as having given rise to the war and as one of its effects. Other effects of poverty included illness and alcoholism.

Consequences that they attributed more specifically to the war included the burning of their homes, the loss of goods, the disappearance or murder of parents and/or spouses, the lack of work and of community projects, and violations of their rights.

After these ideas had been shared and questions clarified, Gaspar invited the women to participate in an activity that required them to find the other puzzle pieces to match one that he had distributed to each of them. After extensive

searching, small groups of three or four women joined pieces, identifying an insect or an animal. The remainder of the workshop was an exploration and discussion of each figure, identifying its negative and positive characteristics, and situating the figure within the local context. For example, they discussed the “ant” who causes sorrow when it bites a person or when it destroys a crop but who has a strong system of organization and mutual support which contributes to its ability to both build and destroy. The “bee” stings but also gathers its own food, is a multiplier, and produces honey that both tastes good and has medicinal properties. A “cat” scratches children and can be a nuisance but is also quick and always captures what it hunts. Gaspar interspersed their comments

continued on page 5

ADMI REACHES OUT AND MULTIPLIES ITS WORK

with traditional Mayan tales about these animals, drawing from local Ixil lore or from his readings of myths and legends from other Mayan communities.

In each case the women or Gaspar situated the insects' and animals' strengths within a wider natural and social context. For example, one woman compared her search to meet basic necessities to the cat's agile hunting practices. Another spoke of women's need for community organization if they were to succeed in feeding their children, comparing this to the cooperative strategies used by bees and ants.

Connections were made between their lives as humans and the natural world, as well as between their present lives and the past, not only the years of war, but the history of the Maya. They described coming together as a resource and an opportunity not only for sharing stories of what had happened in the past but for learning about their rights, for rediscovering their dignity, and for improving their current situation. The workshop concluded with a brief evaluation and a shared meal, provided by ADMI.

Having worked for many years among the women of Chajul – and having facilitated a workshop with 25 women in the town the previous day – I was impressed by the integration of the many layers of Mayan reality



Gaspar facilitating creative technique

in this workshop. Gaspar shuttled between traditional beliefs and contemporary problems while maintaining a focus on the pain that accompanied the women's memories of the past and the sorrow and frustration they continue to experience. The traditional stories enabled him to entertain them while facilitating their rediscovery of their own and their community's strengths and traditions. They affirmed their needs and their capacities as women and his reflections linked these to their history as Maya.

Consciousness of gender and culture was threaded through the workshop. Through psychosocial work – work that includes stories about past and present poverty, sorrows about the war and its effects, and the identification of resources for confronting current problems – these women vindicated their rights as Maya and as women. The workshops are a context for learning, as one woman said, how to “suffer less from the past,” through situating oneself as a subject who confronts the legacies of the past as well as the challenges facing one as a rural Maya woman in Guatemala today. ♦

¹Civil/Civilian Self-defense patrols [Patrullas de Autodefensa] (PAC) were set

up by the military government in most of rural Guatemala in the early 1980s as compulsory militias for all adolescent and adult men. In many places the PAC was identified as the direct perpetrator (under military orders) of war crimes, although participants were forced to commit such crimes under threat of death. The army formally disbanded the PAC in 1996.

²Communities of Populations in Resistance [Comunidades de Población en Resistencia] (CPR) were groups of local peasants who fled the army's scorched earth tactics and established well-organized “hidden” communities in remote regions including Chajul, Ixcán and Péten, and in this way resisted army persecution.

Editors: M. Brinton Lykes, Maria de Jesus. *Contributors:* Francine Cardman, Maria de Jesus, Joan H. Liem, J. Yul-San Liem, M. Brinton Lykes, Catherine M. Mooney, Ann Brian Murphy, Tod S. Sloan. *Distribution:* Alden Jackson. Please support our work. Letters, inquiries, contributions can be sent to: **Martín-Baró Fund**, P.O.Box 2122, Jamaica Plain, MA, 02130, www.martinbarofund.org. Checks payable to: FEX/Martín-Baró Fund, tax deductible to the full extent permitted by IRS code. Thank you.

BISHOP JUAN GERARDI CONEDERA

Renny Golden

*Editors' note: The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund supports the Solidarity and Reconciliation Program in San Marcos, Guatemala. They collaborated in the **Recovery of Historic Memory (REMHI)** project initiated by Juan Gerardi. Today the San Marcos group facilitates psychosocial workshops with survivors of war who seek to reconstruct their lives through working together. The violent murder of Gerardi is one of a growing number of human rights violations that continue to plague Guatemala despite its tentative steps towards democratic governance.*

JUAN GERARDI CONEDERA was Bishop of the El Quiché diocese in the Guatemalan Highlands during the height of the wars against the Mayan populations.

It was his memory of this event that motivated Monsignor Gerardi to initiate the REMHI project, which was completed in 1998. Over a two-year period, almost seven thousand people, mostly Mayan, reported what had occurred in their villages in the 1980s. The report, titled **Guatemala Never Again, [Nunca Más]** was intended to reveal the truth of the army's systematic elimination of Mayan populations and to begin to heal the deep wounds of those who carried the secrets of persecution, torture, and assassination. REMHI gave voice to those silenced by a war of terror....

On April 24, 1998, two days after the report was made public, Gerardi was killed, his head smashed in by concrete slabs. He was beaten so viciously that he could only be identified by his Bishop's ring. Forty-eight hours before he was murdered, Gerardi had publicly presented the REMHI report to the Mayan nations, saying, "We want to build a country different than the one we have now. For that reason, we are recovering the memory of our people. The path has been, and continues to be, full of risks, but the construction of God's reign has risks and can only be built by those that have the strength to confront those risks."

GUATEMALA NEVER AGAIN [NUNCA MÁS]

The Bishop speaks into a blind wind
that stabs its knife bone deep.
Here, in the altiplano, he hears Mayan children,
ghosts singing in the rocks.
"What is a shepherd?" he asks the dead.
He knows one thing: seminary dictums
are parrots repeating a parrot's gospel.
The Bishop pulls back, the way a flower
rises up in the hands of the wind.
"What is a shepherd here
in El Quiché?" he asks no one, recounting
the month's murders.

He closes down the diocese of El Quiché
as if it were a condemned building, because the church
He believed would protect them is marked, quemada.
What can he ask the nuncio
who sips wine with bishops?
"Brother, will you come here
where the dust is caked
with dark clots the color of sherry?"

Alone, he seeks the people,
wants cornfields without
a subterrain of skeletons,
wants a church with the imagination
of ordinary peasants.

Years after the dead covered the highlands
with a tattoo of Mayan bones,
years after Bishop Juan Gerardi can do
little more than cry, repeating
"Let me stay with you, my suffering friend,"
the Guatemalan earth answers back,
opening like a body to tell of the Maya in the 1980s:
the moist sack of earth with its trove of bones.

"Dig here," the Bishop says, "dig here."
The terrible witness of ribs, bashed skulls,
tiny femurs, and the frail wings of shoulder blades
speak of the Kaibiles¹

In the nineties, like a rain seen across a field,
survivors come down from the mountains to testify
because a Bishop who thought he was useless, asked them,
a Bishop who gives back to them their words,
a terrible witness of fire in a book that opened
the last door of the blackened house.
It is a book written by peasants whose
Words tear open windows in the sealed walls.
"This path," the Bishop says, "is full of risks."

His last.



I am the most gigantic
of the dead who will
never close his eyes
Until I see you saved.

-Julia de Burgos

From *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Minneapolis: Mid-List Press, 2000). Reproduced with permission.

¹ Guatemalan army soldiers named after the Mayan chief Kaibil who fought against the Spanish invaders during the Conquest.

REBUILDING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY ETHNOPOLITICAL VIOLENCE

Tod S. Sloan

Editors' note: In July, M. Brinton Lykes, member of the Program Committee of the Martín-Baró Fund, joined others who also have lived and worked in zones of armed conflict in Maine for a conference convened by Psychologists for Social Responsibility. Below, Tod Sloan, Co-Coordinator of PsySR (psysr2@earthlink.net) summarizes highlights from that gathering. Programs supported by the Martín-Baró Fund are concrete settings where participants are working through many of the issues discussed in this article. In these contexts community residents and local workers are responding to the psychosocial effects of ethnopolitical violence and developing programs that reflect more just and equitable social relations and work towards building cultures of peacemaking. This article reflects some of the current thinking of professionals with whom the Fund seeks to dialogue in pursuit of a psychology articulated by Martín-Baró that is both liberated and liberatory.

Numerous dilemmas are faced by organizations offering psychosocial humanitarian assistance to communities struggling to rebuild themselves during and after a period of civil war, state-sponsored violence, ethnic cleansing, or genocide. There is little consensus among professionals and policy makers about how best to address trauma and build a foundation for peace.

In July 2002 fifty experienced professionals, program directors, and evaluators gathered at the University of Maine to address this issue. They participated in a facilitated dialogue with several objectives: to discern commonalities and divergences in current approaches to psychosocial assistance; to identify strategies for assessing the impact and effectiveness

of existing psychosocial programs; and, to develop a set of guidelines to improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of such assistance.

Prior to gathering, conference participants submitted questions such as the following in preparation for their dialogues:

- What do we mean by “mental health” when we work with communities experiencing ethnopolitical warfare and its effects?
- What are the main problems and ethical issues associated with intervening in complex emergencies?
- What is involved if planning is to be genuinely participatory?
- What issues of culture and power arise in psychosocial implementation and intervention?
- How do local ideas and practices about, for example, gender, religion, ideology, and healing, intersect with or inform implementation strategies?
- Is it possible to combine a clinical and a human rights approach in the context of ethnopolitical warfare?
- Is integration of psychosocial assistance and humanitarian aid and/or development work a desirable goal or should we pursue entrenchment of psychosocial support as a fourth or fifth pillar of humanitarian assistance?

The conference succeeded in clarifying commonalities and differences between the different perspectives that inform this work. Those advocating a “mental health” orien-

tation and those who self-defined as “human rights activists” sometimes found communication challenging. Despite this participants concurred on the following points:

- Workers in psychosocial humanitarian assistance need to be especially clear about their own motives for doing this work and about their own sociopolitical embeddedness in the situation.
- Psychosocial programs must work on the basis of models of well-being and resilience, not trauma and pathology.
- Clinical, cultural, and community development approaches to psychosocial assistance need to be much better integrated. Training of field workers needs to be revised accordingly.
- The linkage between communities affected by violence and the overall political context must be examined to focus our work on changing the political forces underlying the violence.

The proceedings are being reviewed intensively to distill as many insights as possible in a report that will be available on the web in early 2003 at www.psysr.org. Smaller follow-up conferences that engage, among others, grassroots recipients of humanitarian aid in dialogue about these and other issues, are in the planning stages. ♦



STEPPING STONES ACROSS DIVIDES: EXPERIENCES OF NORTH KOREA

J. Yul-san Liem

Editors' note: Sections of this article were published in the Korean American National Coordinating Council (KANCC) Newsletter and are reproduced here with permission.

My twin sister Wol-san and I grew up near Boston, MA. Because of the work of our parents and their colleagues we became aware of social injustice and international movements to eliminate it at an early age. My childhood memories are laced with heated debates in English and Spanish, of Central American guests who brought stories of color, fear, passion, and struggle, of Holly Near and Canto Nuevo, and of stuffing envelopes. It was our greater fortune that one of our guests during those years was Ignacio Martín-Baró. Although he stayed with us for only a short time, his vigilant compassion for even the youngest was so strong that he felt like a wise and weathered uncle to us. When he was assassinated in 1989 and the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund was set up in his name we wanted to help out.

As our knowledge and understanding of Ignacio's work and the work of the Fund matured we began to take on a more active role in discussions and decision-making. Thanks to study (and the desire to know a language our parents didn't understand) we were eventually able to aid in translating grant applications written in Spanish. We also worked with others to start *The Just Word*.

Wol-san and I presently reside in NYC and work with a Korean community organization called *Nodutdol* (Stepping Stone). Although most of

our projects do not overlap ethnically or geographically with those of the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund, like the Fund, Nodutdol's work is based on a common and ardent belief in the need for social change.

This summer we had the opportunity to visit north Korea with six other Nodutdol members and allies. The DPRK Exposure and Education



Program (DEEP), one of Nodutdol's projects, is an effort to bring Korean activists in the United States to a country that is often demonized by the mainstream media and the present administration. Upon our return, we seek to provide alternative images of north Korea to the people of the United States by sharing our experiences and the knowledge we have gained. Below you will find a few of my memories and reflections about our trip. Please visit www.nodutdol.com for more writing and photos.

In the short time we had, we saw

schools, a hospital, a factory, and a cooperative farm as well as many of the sights, such as Mangyongdae (the birthplace of General Kim Il Sung), more typically visited by overseas Koreans and foreigners. Our schedule flooded our minds and hearts with new images and information. Our heads spun as we struggled to understand a society so different from that of the United States, but one that, we came to realize, was in some ways more our own.

Although all of us were highly critical of the United States' stance towards north Korea, we were somewhat shocked to find that we had internalized some of the reactive stereotypes about the north that most U.S. citizens have. We should be careful of what we say, we thought. There are certain sites we have to see and a certain way we should act.



We should not ask critical questions or express doubt. Thus, we were surprised when the director of the Overseas committee, Mr. Byung Chul Shim, urged us to tell him what we truly thought and when our guides told us we could and should give input for the schedule of the next

continued on page 9

STEPPING STONES ACROSS DIVIDES: EXPERIENCES OF NORTH KOREA

delegation, eliminating and adding site-visits as we thought best.

Among the most important of our experiences was a three-hour conversation we had with a professor from Kim Hyung Jik Teacher's College, during which we grilled him about the north Korean people's relationship to their leadership, explaining how difficult it was for people from the United States to understand. It was through this dialogue that we began to realize that in a typically self-centered U.S. way, we were often comparing north Korean society to that of the United States, narrowly judging its successes and failures on a scale shaped by U.S. stan-

dards and ideals. The professor helped us to see that if we really want to understand north Korea we must try to view it through the lens of its own history and culture rather than through a U.S. framework and a U.S. value system.

As the trip wore on we discovered the people we met were open to and curious about our differences, but that in spite of these they still felt we were family. For me, these feelings of familiarity were fully solidified at our farewell visit with the Overseas Committee, when Mr. Shim told us that he believed that even more than blood and language, it is our love for our homeland and our commitment

to bring forth its peaceful unification and liberation that binds us as a people. For a bi-racial third generation Korean who struggles with our language, these words seemed to place stepping stones across many divides.

Of course, I cannot say that we became experts on north Korea or that we fully understand all that we saw and heard. We can only tell people what we learned and felt, that we must try to understand north Korea from within, that we must get to know her people before we judge them, and that while we should question and try to understand that which we see and hear, we should also question ourselves. ♦



UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM THROUGH THE LENS OF IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ'S LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

continued from page 1

troops back to this country and resulted in, among other things, deaths and displacement of Muslim children in the country's Mindanao region (see *The Just Word*, Spring 2002). As activist psychologists who draw inspiration from the writings of Ignacio Martín-Baró we are challenged to articulate the connections that draw those of us in the North and our Southern sisters and brothers together. We must resist working from a uni-dimensional framework of dichotomies and polarizations that speak primarily of *us versus them*. Rather we must highlight the important and complex direct and indirect links between terrorist acts (as witnessed in the United States on September 11th), our government's responses to them, and the enduring structural inequality and violence in Central America, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Ignacio wrote about U.S. aggression in El Salvador and challenged us to recognize and remind ourselves of our non-neutrality in our work as researchers, teachers, or practitioners. We were drawn to his idea that psychology should de-center itself, shifting its attention from defending its scientific status in order to focus on the urgent needs of the vast majority of Latin American people who are excluded from its theories and its applications. He exemplified this through his political polls of Salvadoran peasants. They provided lessons from the "majority world" where people were living in contexts of ongoing terror. As importantly, he 'thickened' the stories of marginalized voices in his writing and cultivated both a community vision and our imaginings of new possibilities for more just praxis. He demonstrated how these peasants' lives give mean-

ing to our own, contributing importantly to our self-understanding as we develop solidarity beyond our borders.

Ignacio's liberation psychology challenges us to adopt a critical and historically contextualized model for explaining mental health. He stressed the need to carry on a psychological praxis and a "search for truth," contributing to the personal and social transformation of people, through the recognition of the virtues that have allowed for their historical survival, as well as for their development of a new consciousness. The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights (aptly named after him) is one of the ways in which some of us have sought to actualize this challenge, recognizing and strengthening the interconnections between our liberation and that of peoples beyond U.S. borders. ♦

FUNDING PROCEDURES FOR 2003

Joan H. Liem

The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund Program Committee has been trying to find ways to develop closer relationships with the projects we support. Since 2001, we have been making changes in our procedures for soliciting and funding new projects, exploring ways of providing grantees with more than financial assistance, and expanding efforts to educate ourselves and audiences in the U.S. about the problems our grantees confront. In 2001, we invited proposals only from those projects we had funded in previous years and selected and supported seven grantees in Guatemala, México, El Salvador, Peru, the Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2002, we funded many of the same projects for a second or third year and added several new projects as well. In 2003, a majority of our grant-making will again go to support ongoing

projects. A small number of new projects will also be identified.

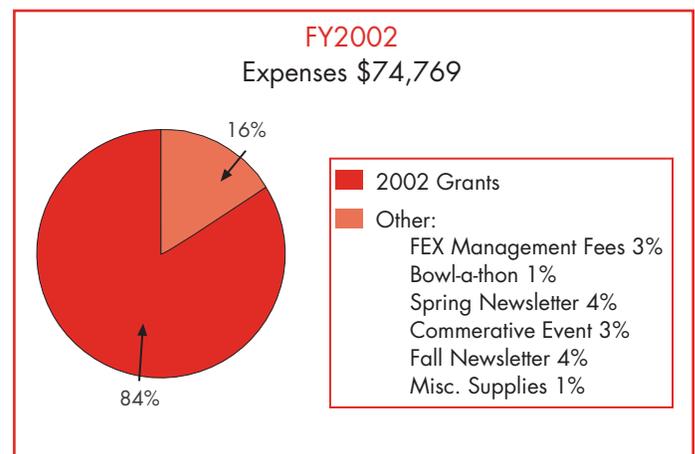
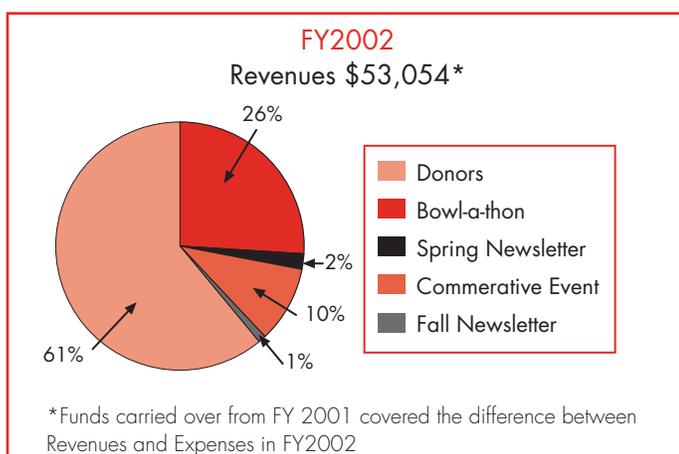
Projects currently receiving funding in 2002 will be contacted by their program officers this fall to discuss continued funding for 2003. Existing grantees that have not already received three years of support will be informed by December 31, 2002 about their eligibility for continued funding and the process for obtaining it. In most cases, additional support will be provided for a maximum of one to two more years.

Applicants who had never before been supported by the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund were invited to submit a 1-2 page letter of interest between June 1 and September 1 of this year. Eleven letters of interest have been received from many parts of the world. They include, for

example, requests to support work that addresses the social repression of women in rural India, decreases powerlessness and depression while increasing self-sufficiency and sustainable development for indigenous women in Nicaragua, and promotes new leadership for community change in Guatemala. Other requests address human rights violations against ethnic minorities by the government of Georgia (in the former Soviet Union), and respond to multiple needs of Burmese refugees who are victims of forced migration to Thailand. These letters of interest are currently being reviewed and a small number of these projects will be invited to submit full proposals to the Fund. Successful applicants, old and new, will be informed early in May about their awards for 2003. ♦

Help Us Make A Difference

The number of grants we are able to make is determined by the success of our fundraising efforts. Last year we distributed more funds than we raised. You can help us meet the growing demand for our resources and expand our grant-making by sending a generous contribution to the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund, P.O. Box 2122, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, www.martinbarofund.org. Checks should be made to: FEX/ Martín-Baró Fund and are tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by the IRS. ♦



Charts by Alden Jackson

Editors' note: The statement below, the Martín Baró Fund Program Committee's Response to Bush's plans for war on Iraq, was coordinated by committee member Ann Brian Murphy.

Let us not become the evil that we deplore," said Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) on September 14, 2001, as she cast the only dissenting vote in Congress against President Bush's use of force resolution.

These words have resonated painfully over the past year, as we watched growing militarism and intolerance in our country. Many of us on the Martín-Baró Fund have worked for years as psychologists and activists to address the profound psychological and emotional trauma inflicted by war, torture, and other forms of state-sponsored violence. We are acutely aware that the attacks of September 11, 2001, constituted a trauma for many U.S. citizens who had previously felt themselves immune to the violence and suffering experienced by many cultures around the world. Among the results of such trauma can be a simplifying and polarizing worldview, a consuming desire for vengeance, and a tendency to demonize the "enemy." These reactions are surely understandable, yet yielding to such impulses, on the part of the citizenry of a country with enormous military reserves and imperial power, will only continue the spiral of violence and trauma. The groups we work with around the world demonstrate daily that there are many alternatives to violence and revenge.

We must not allow the Bush administration to use our grief and anger to justify policies that are destructive of peace, justice, and equality. In Afghanistan, the initial satisfaction many of us felt about the liberation of women from Taliban oppression has given way to a recognition that that country is in danger of sinking back into factionalism and violence, while the U.S. refuses either to play its part in "nation-building" or to share its responsibilities fully with other countries. The trauma we have experienced cannot justify or excuse the egregious efforts of the Justice Department and the INS to subvert and erode civil liberties for U.S. citizens as well as foreign nationals.

Above all, it cannot justify the Bush administration's recent assertion of an imperial right to take unilateral and pre-emptive military action around the globe. The possibility that the U.S. public condones this form of neo-imperialism is as disturbing as the policy itself.

We strongly oppose the government's claim to be the moral and military policeman of the world and we strongly oppose the government's rush to wage war — without full democratic discussion and debate — against a nation already suffering the calamities of dictatorship and economic boycott.

War is a tragic failure of human intelligence and imagination, and the cause of enormous suffering and human loss, perpetuating those very ills it ostensibly seeks to assuage.

In the words of Howard Zinn, "We have a lot to do.... We can engage in civil disobedience, in strikes and boycotts. We can all do what was done in other times in American history, when it was necessary to build a national movement to say to the government, 'No, you don't speak for us. You're not doing this for us. You aren't doing this in our name.'" ♦

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights was created to foster psychological well-being, social consciousness, and active resistance in communities affected by institutional violence, repression, and social injustice. We believe that the scars of such experiences are deeply seated in both the individual and society and, therefore, seek to support projects that explore the power of community to collectively heal these wounds and move forward.

Through grants, networking, and technical support, the Fund seeks to encourage the development of innovative, grassroots community projects that promote progressive social change and community mental health. In pursuit of this mission, the Fund's goals are:

- ♦ To develop a holistic perspective for understanding the connections between state and institutional violence and repression, and the mental health of communities and individuals;
- ♦ To support innovative projects that explore the power of community to foster healing within individuals and communities trying to recover from experiences of institutional violence, repression, and social injustice;
- ♦ To build collaborative relationships among the Fund, its grantees, and its contributors for mutual education and empowerment; and,
- ♦ To develop social consciousness within the United States regarding the psychological consequences of structural violence, repression, and social injustice.



"If the foundation for a people's mental health lies in the existence of humanizing relationships, of collective ties within which and through which the personal humanity of each individual is acknowledged and in which no one's reality is denied, then the building of a new society, or at least a better and more just society, is not only an economic and political problem; it is also essentially a mental health problem."

-Ignacio Martín-Baró



Writings for a Liberation Psychology: Ignacio Martín-Baró (Aron A. & Corne, S., Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.120.

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit # 59215

Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund
P.O. Box 2122
JAMAICA Plain, MA 02130
Printed on recycled paper. 