

THE JUST WORD



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NICARAGUAN PERSPECTIVE: AN INTERVIEW WITH FERNANDO CARDENAL, S.J. UNA PERSPECTIVA NICARAGÜENSE: UNA ENTREVISTA CON FERNANDO CARDENAL, S.J.

Maria de Jesus

Fernando Cardenal, Nicaraguan Jesuit and first Minister of Education in the Sandinista government, led the literacy campaign in Nicaragua in 1980. He was at Boston College in October speaking about his life and work during that important historical moment and about challenges facing Nicaragua and the world today. I spoke with him about many of his views. Below I include some of the highlights of that interview, with a particular focus on the concerns of the Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights. My thanks to **John E. Arias** for his transcription of the original Spanish.

Many people around the world wonder why U.S. citizens do not protest and speak out about the policies of the current U.S. administration. What do you think about this? How can people find their voice under conditions of repression, fear, and intimidation?

Before being able to speak out, one needs to develop consciousness. My impression of what is happening [in the United States] is that there is no critical awareness, there is no real



knowledge of how North American foreign policy affects our poor countries. I think this is the root cause. I think the media always gives one version of things. Mass media, particularly major newspapers and television news channels portray an incomplete

portrait... One cannot have a voice to defend something about which one is uninformed.

To give a concrete example: the current war in Iraq. It is enough for us [Nicaraguans] that President Bush manipulated the information, that he spoke of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction as if it were a sure thing, and that Iraq could attack the U.S. in 45 minutes and destroy entire cities. This was false—the United Nations Team never actually found mass weapons. Soon thereafter, the war began and U.S. soldiers are all over the country. Meanwhile, months and months go by and they do not encounter weapons of mass destruction. The regime of Saddam Hussein was an absolutely criminal and dictatorial regime. This is all true. The war was presented to the U.S. public as something that would protect their security and that if this war had not happened, the U.S. public would be in great danger because [the Iraqi]

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were connected to the terrorists of Al Queda of Afghanistan. The President was forced to state that there was no connection between the Al Queda terrorists and the Iraqi regime. The two reasons Bush gave for the war were not accurate. The U.S. public massively supported this war. People are starting to realize that it was not as he stated, that they had been deceived.



Can you talk some about U.S.-Nicaraguan relations, please?

We were 4 million inhabitants in the time of Ronald Reagan... We did not have an Air Force, a Navy, bombs, or missiles. And he made declarations to justify his politics and the aggression that we were supposedly committing against the U.S. He stated that we were a danger to [U.S.] National Security. This is what the President said; the public believed him. This is a huge problem, declaring something that is completely false. How could we threaten such a powerful country? ...Later he stated that we were persecuting the Catholic Church... [The U.S. government] was lying...

Also there is another aspect related to the global economy, capitalism, and another way of managing the economy. Some years ago the Director of a North American magazine told me: One can criticize anything one wants about the U.S. President but one cannot speak out against the capitalist system.



One of our grantees is "Harvesting Hope," a project of Wangki Luhpia on the North Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua which seeks to assist two indigenous Miskito communities. Can you talk about the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua?

The majority of people on the North Atlantic Coast are indigenous... On the Pacific Coast there are no longer any indigenous. The only indigenous peoples left in Nicaragua are [there] on the Caribbean coast... They are very abandoned economically. The Nicaraguan government is too poor to be able to uplift economically people who are so far away. Our government is economically weak....

The indigenous of the Atlantic Coast have the best autonomy law in Latin America and it was passed by the Sandinistas. But that autonomy needs to be accompanied by economic assistance so that they can improve their lives. They have the laws that allow them to live autonomously, but they don't have the economic circumstances that would permit them to survive with dignity.



Excerpts from Original Spanish Interview:

Mucha gente alrededor del mundo se pregunta por qué los estadounidenses no protestan, y no hablan sobre las políticas de la administración actual en los Estados Unidos.

*¿Qué piensa usted sobre esto?
¿Cómo puede la gente encontrar su voz bajo represión, miedo, e intimidación?*

Antes de poder usar la voz en eso hay que recuperar la conciencia. A mí lo que me da la impresión de lo que pasa es que no hay conciencia, no hay conocimiento profundo de lo que la política exterior norteamericana causa a nuestros países pobres. A mí me parece que eso es la causa más profunda. Me parece que en los medios de comunicación siempre se está dando una versión. En los medios grandes que a través de los grandes periódicos, a través de la informativa de los grandes canales de televisión, una visión que no es com-

pleta... No pueden tomar una voz para defender algo que no conocen.

Hablando de algo más concreto: sobre la guerra de Irak actual. Es bastante para nosotros que el Presidente Bush manipuló la información, que él hablaba de armas de destrucción masiva que habían en Irak como una cosa cierta y que Irak podía atacar a EE. UU. en 45 minutos y destruir ciudades enteras. Eso era falso—el Equipo de las Naciones Unidas nunca encontró arma masiva. Luego vino la guerra y los soldados están por todo EE. UU. el país y luego de meses y meses y no encuentran armas de destrucción masiva. El régimen de Saddam Hussein era un régimen absolutamente criminal y dictatorial. Todo eso es cierto. Al pueblo EE. UU. se le presentó la guerra como algo que iba a proteger su seguridad y si no lo hacían ellos el pueblo EE. UU. iba a estar en gran peligro porque ellos estaban conectados con los terroristas de Al Queda de Afganistán. El presidente ha tenido que decir que no hubo conexión entre los terroristas de Al Queda y el régimen iraki. Las dos razones de Bush para la guerra no son ciertas. El pueblo EE. UU. apoyó masivamente esa guerra. El comienza a darse cuenta de que no es como el decía, de que hubo un engaño.



¿Puede hablar, por favor, sobre las relaciones entre EE. UU. y Nicaragua?

Cuatro millones de habitantes en el tiempo de Ronald Reagan... No teníamos aviación, marina de guerra, bombas, misiles. Y él afirmó para justificar su política y la agresión que se le está haciendo al país. Dijo que éramos un peligro para seguridad nacional. Eso dijo el presidente; la gente le cree al presidente. Esto es un problema muy fuerte, llegar afirmar

FOCUS ON NICARAGUA

Editors' note: In keeping with our decision to develop a deeper understanding of the lives of our grantees, this issue highlights Nicaragua. In addition to the summary below this issue includes an update on one of our 2003 grantees, "Harvesting Hope," a project of Wangki Luhpia on the North Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, and an interview with Fernando Cardenal, S.J., the Nicaraguan Minister of Education in the Sandinista government, who led the literacy campaign in Nicaragua in 1980.

Population (July 2003 estimate): 5,128,517

Ethnic groups: mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white), 69%; white, 17%; black, 9%; Amerindian, 5%

Languages: Spanish (official); English and indigenous languages on Atlantic coast

Religion: mostly Roman Catholic; Protestant

Work Force (1999 estimate): services, 43%; agriculture, 42%; industry, 15%; considerable underemployment (2002 estimate), 24% plus

Literacy (age 15 & over who can read and write): male, 67.2%; female, 67.8%

Geography



Area: approximately 49,998 sq. mi. (slightly smaller than the state of New York; largest country in Central America)

Capital city: Managua

Administrative divisions: 15 departments and 2 autonomous regions (North Atlantic, South Atlantic)

Border countries: Costa Rica; Honduras



Economy



Monetary unit: Nicaraguan Gold Córdoba (\$1 U.S. = 15.37 NIO)

Gross domestic product (2002 estimate): \$12.8 billion (U.S.\$)

Population living in poverty (2001 estimate): 50%

Exports: coffee, shrimp and lobster, cotton, tobacco, bananas, beef, sugar, gold

Major markets (2001): U.S., 57.7%; Germany, 5.3%; Canada, 4.2%; Costa Rica, 3.3%

History



The Pacific Coast of Nicaragua was settled as a Spanish colony from Panama in the early 16th century.

Independence from Spain was declared in 1821 and the country became an independent republic in 1838.

Britain occupied the Caribbean Coast in the first half of the 19th century, but gradually ceded control of the region in subsequent decades. Violent opposition to governmental manipulation and corruption as well as social inequalities spread to all classes by 1978 and resulted in a civil war that brought the Sandinista guerrillas to power in 1979. The U.S. organized and supported anti-Sandinista "contra" forces during the 1980s, killed thousands, debilitated the economy, and undermined or destroyed the transformational educational and health programs at the heart of the Sandinista revolution. Despite early electoral successes for the Sandinistas, elections in 1990, 1996, and 2001 resulted in their defeat. The country was hard hit by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and is today one of the hemisphere's poorest countries, facing low per capita income, flagging socio-economic indicators, and huge external debt.

Sources: CIA: The World Factbook 2003 (Nicaragua) <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/nu.html> and Banco Central de Nicaragua <http://www.bcn.gob.ni/>

Editors' note: Interview with Ziad Abbas by Sarah Lewis (Ibdaa volunteer) and Shirabe Yamada (Middle East Children's Alliance).

The Ibdaa Cultural Center provides children and youth opportunities to nurture their talents and to reclaim their national identities and heritage, in the face of unending assaults on their community. This update of Ibdaa's work follows a 2003 grant from the MBF to support those with family members killed or imprisoned since the start of the second Intifada (September, 2000), and an Emergency Grant (2002) to repair Ibdaa's Children's Library.

Mental Health Programming

At the time of this writing, the Bethlehem area has been rather quiet. Since the withdrawal of the Israeli army (July, 2003), soldiers and tanks have disappeared from the streets reducing friction with the people. However, the surrounding area remains under siege from the army and the rapid building of the Apartheid Wall. The confinement directly impacts access to employment opportunities resulting in increased household poverty and desperation. According to a recent UN World Food Program report, malnutrition is pervasive in Palestine where 60% of the population eats less than one meal a day.

Under these conditions, Ibdaa's mental health programs focus on



women and children who have suffered directly from the intense trauma of extreme violence, although all camp residents have been affected by hardship and poverty. The main activities, supported by the MBF grant, have emphasized mental health workshops and counseling conducted in cooperation with various health organizations, local specialists, and volunteers such as the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, YWCA, Catholic Relief Services, and Bethlehem University. They include:

- ◆ Five workshops for 25 mothers who lost their children in the current Intifada, organized by the women's committee of Ibdaa and facilitated by local psychiatrists. These workshops prove to be extremely helpful as an outlet for mothers to speak about and share their experiences, cry together, and meet others who suffer the same losses.
- ◆ A series of workshops for girls held by a student majoring in child psychology from Bethlehem University.
- ◆ A workshop and counseling series organized by the Union of Social Workers for 92 school children.
- ◆ Four workshops for approximately 30 women held by a visiting Irish organization.
- ◆ Support for 13 young women from the 4th generation Ibdaa Dance Troupe provided by a psychologist from Spaford Mental Clinic in Jerusalem.
- ◆ Encouragement of 180 teenagers (including 25 girls) from the Ibdaa Sports Program to partici-



pate in these and other ongoing counseling and workshop initiatives provided by local experts.

Ziad Abbas, co-director and co-founder of Ibdaa, says of these programs: "I want our funders to know that we, at Ibdaa, are working despite all the difficulties. This mental health project has been helping a lot of people and the children. Although we haven't been able to provide enough services and programs - because there are so many women and children in need, this work has been very important to our camp and we are working to expand our coverage."

Children's Library

Ibdaa's Children's Library was severely damaged by Israeli army invasions into Dheisheh in the spring of 2002. Ibdaa was able to recover most of the losses through donations from many international donors, including the MBF who covered much of the cost. The MBF donation was used to replace damaged books, art supplies, and educational toys, as well as furniture.

Despite repeated invasions and prolonged periods of curfew, the library has carried out many of its much-needed daily activities. During curfew, children are confined to their homes, often unable to even attend school. When the curfew was lifted, the library provided an important

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PROJECT UPDATE – HARVESTING HOPE, NORTH ATLANTIC COAST, NICARAGUA

by Vicki Larson

Development Coordinator
MADRE, An International Women's
Human Rights Organization

The Melgara family is one of many indigenous families on the North Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua who lost the majority of their crops and, consequently, most of their food supply for the entire year, during Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Hurricane Mitch caused flooding and mudslides that destroyed entire rural indigenous villages along the Coco River. Then, in July 2001, flash flooding of the Coco River destroyed rice crops of an estimated 9,000 small farmers. Later in 2001, the worst drought to hit Central America in decades compounded the difficulties. More than 470,000 Nicaraguans were affected; fewer than 10 percent of those received help from relief organizations.

Today, tens of thousands of people in this area remain homeless and without access to sufficient food or clean water, and the economy of the region has yet to recover. Almost three-quarters of the population currently suffers from malnutrition. Unemployment is a staggering 90 percent. The destruction of these successive natural disasters and the loss of a secure food supply, as well as a lack of basic services and years of grinding poverty exacerbated by U.S.-driven economic policies, have generated depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder among many community members.

Last year, MADRE – a U.S.-based international women's human rights organization that has worked for 20 years on the North Atlantic Coast in partnership with Wangki Luhpia, an indigenous-led community organization – began implementing a project



called *Harvesting Hope* in two communities in the region. Since the project's inception, 10 families (including the Melgaras) have planted gardens that feed their extended families and neighbors. Surplus produce is sold in the local market, generating income for project participants. A community seed bank has been established, ensuring that seeds remain available in the event of floods or other natural disasters. The seed bank also enables seed-sharing, which helps the two communities develop relationships with other nearby communities as they exchange seeds and knowledge about planting and harvesting.

The families who participate in *Harvesting Hope* are also raising chickens, which provide them with essential protein. But the chickens offer more than nutrients. Mental health studies show that taking care

of animals helps alleviate depression and the pervasive sense of powerlessness that many impoverished people feel, because caretakers begin to see themselves as agents of change and integral members of a community project.

MADRE and Wangki Luhpia are also offering human rights trainings and conducting a U.S. public education campaign through *Harvesting Hope*, ensuring that the project has a long-term and international impact.

The Martín-Baró Fund provides approximately half the funds for *Harvesting Hope*.

For more information about *Harvesting Hope* or MADRE's work around the world, please go to www.madre.org or call us at 212.627.0444. ♦

PROJECT UPDATE – SOLIDARITY & RECONCILIATION PROJECT, SAN MARCOS, GUATEMALA

Joan W. Williams & M. Brinton Lykes

In July of this year Joan Williams interviewed Vilma Gódinez and other members of the REMHI Solidarity and Reconciliation Project in San Marcos and Brinton Lykes met with project coordinators, Rodolpho Gódinez and Victor Lopez, in Guatemala City. REMHI has used Martín-Baró Fund grants to organize programs for the more than 75% of the San Marcos communities that were directly affected by massacres, murders, and disappearances during Guatemala's nearly 36 year war. The project was developed to support and motivate local community members "to be successful in their quest to construct a new Guatemala and develop a more human and dignified life for all Guatemalans."

The first phase of REMHI's work included the publication in 1998 of *Nunca más: Informe proyecto interdiocesano de recuperación de la memoria histórica* [Never again: Report of the inter-diocesan project on the recovery of historic memory].

The second phase involves educational workshops and the organization of community-based actions that acknowledge the past while working towards healing some of its effects. To this end, much of the REMHI team's current efforts are focused on the accompaniment of local communities during the exhumations of clandestine mass gravesites. These exhumations and subsequent inhumations are among the reparatory processes secured through the Peace Accords. Permission to conduct an exhumation and reburial requires a lengthy legal process beginning with a formal petition and the inclusion of a forensic anthropology team. This

team carefully excavates the remains of deceased community members, identifies and marks each bone, transports them to a lab where they can be further documented, and then, returns the remains to relatives for reburial.



Members of the REMHI's Solidarity and Reconciliation Project work with local communities helping participants to understand the exhumation process and to manage their relations with the legal system. In contrast to some mental health workers in their area who offer individual counseling services to survivors, the REMHI project provides psychosocial support to communities as a whole. REMHI accompanies community members through the unearthing of the clandestine gravesites and waits with family members through the identification

processes and the reburial. Project members employ a combination of Mayan and Christian ceremonies, as well as resources from community psychology to support the families throughout this journey.

One exhumation/inhumation which was recently completed took over two years. For those who successfully identify the remains of relatives, the exhumation offers an opportunity to finally grieve their losses and brings closure to what the Argentine psychiatrist Fernando Ulloa once described as "frozen" or "altered" grief. Yet for those who are unsuccessful in their quest (as is often the case, as bones may have already decomposed, be missing or be unidentifiable), the experience can extend an already elongated grieving process. Regardless of the outcome, team members spoke of the psychological and emotional challenges of the exhumation and inhumation processes, not only for the families, but also for those who accompany them.

In addition to their work with the exhumation processes, team members conduct workshops to analyze how the years of oppression and violence have affected Guatemala. They offer resources at the individual, familial, and community levels. Community-based educational workshops focus on participants' human rights as Guatemalan citizens and as indigenous persons. REMHI is also developing a network of projects with colleagues from various parts of the country who are pressing for the development of national strategies to establish healthy reparation processes for all Guatemalans. Finally, REMHI organizes and participates in celebrations

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that mark important anniversaries in the fight for an equitable, peaceful, dignified life for all, including, for example, commemorations of the assassination of Monsignor Gerardi (see *The Just Word*, Fall, 2002).

At the end of the visits, the interviewees thanked the Martín-Baró Fund for its financial support of their work and expressed appreciation for our solidarity and for our visits. They emphasized the importance of knowing that others beyond Guatemala are aware of their struggles and contribute to their work through solidarity and material resources and by supporting the efforts which they make even in the face of hardship and, oftentimes, “with saddened hearts.” ♦



NICARAGUAN PERSPECTIVE: AN INTERVIEW WITH FERNANDO CARDENAL
 UNA PERSPECTIVA NICARAGÜENSE: UNA ENTREVISTA CON FERNANDO CARDENAL *continued from page 2*

eso que cosa más falsa. ¿Cómo va a haber peligro contra un país tan poderoso? ...Luego afirmó que perseguíamos a la Iglesia Católica... Se miente...

También hay otro aspecto sobre la visión económica del mundo, el capitalismo y otra forma de llevar la economía. A mí, me decía el director de una revista norteamericana hace algunos años: Tu puedes criticar cualquier cosa del Presidente EE. UU. pero no se puede tocar el sistema capitalista...



Un grupo que apoyamos financieramente se llama “Harvesting Hope,” un proyecto de Wangki Luhpia en la costa nordatlántica de Nicaragua que ayuda dos comunidades indígenas Mezquitas. ¿Puede hablar de los pueblos indígenas de Nicaragua?

En la costa atlántica la mayoría son indígena... En el pacifico ya no queden indígenas. Los únicos indígenas que quedan en Nicaragua están [allí] en la costa caribe... Económicamente están muy abandonados. El gobierno nicaragüense es

muy pobre como para poder levantar económicamente a aquello que están más lejos. Nuestro gobierno es débil económicamente...

La mejor ley de autonomía de Latinoamérica la tienen los indígenas de la costa atlántica que fue hecho por el Sandinismo. Pero esa autonomía debe ser acompañada con una ayuda económica para que ellos puedan levantarse. Tienen las leyes para vivir con autonomía pero no tienen la economía que le permita sobrevivir dignamente. ♦

Editors: Maria de Jesus, M. Brinton Lykes. *Contributors:* Maria de Jesus, Leah Diskin, Vicki Larson, Ramsay Liem, M. Brinton Lykes, Catherine M. Mooney, Claire Mooney, Joan W. Williams, Alden Jackson, Facultad de Psicología, Universidad de Buenos Aires. *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. Checks payable to: Funding Exchange/Martín-Baró Fund, tax deductible to the full extent permitted by IRS code. Thank you.

MEMORY AS A RESOURCE FOR THE FUTURE

Editors' note: This article, authored by colleagues in the Psychology, Ethics, and Human Rights Faculty of Psychology in the University of Buenos Aires, briefly discusses the psychological importance of recent revelations by Argentine military generals and current political responses to actions taken during the transition to democracy. The public acknowledgment of the military's responsibility for the disappearance of between 7,000 and 40,000 men, women, and children earlier this year as well as the Congressional and Presidential decisions of recent months have created new possibilities for human rights activists as well as for the wider Argentine populace. (see http://www.psi.uba.ar/academica/carreradegrado/psicologia/informacion_adicional/obligatorias/etica/index.htm, for more information)

*Where are the disappeared going?
look in the water and in the thickets
And why is it that they disappear?
because we are not all equal
And when does the one
disappeared come back?
each time one brings them to mind
How do you speak to the
disappeared?
with a tightened feeling from within.*

Rubén Blades, *Disappearances*
Recorded by Maná in México

“**H**ow can you get information [out of someone who has been detained] if you don't pressure them, if you don't torture them?... You think that we could have shot 7,000 people? To shoot three, no more than that... look at the mess that the Pope created for Franco with only three. The world comes crashing in on us. You can't

shoot 7,000 people.... And if we put them all in prison, what then? That's what happened here. Then came a constitutional government and they freed them all.”

These words acquire special importance because they are the first in which a repressor from the 1976-1983 military dictatorship explicitly acknowledged that the disappeared were secretly assassinated. These are the words of the Argentine General Díaz Bessone who was interviewed by French journalist Marie-Monique Robin in the documentary video *Death Squads: The French School*. The program was shown in France and in twelve other European countries the 1st of September of this year.

During decades, the Latin American military denied the existence of the “disappeared.” In the beginning, they pretended that these were people who were alive and had secretly left the country and were living in exile; later, they acknowledged a few cases as “excesses.” The video revealed that this was a systematic plan: to secretly assassinate and then to remove the bodies of the victims, preventing families from burying their dead.

Such cruelty against one's political adversary even after death is not new. More than 2,500 years ago, *Antigone*, by Sophocles, presented a similar argument. Creon, who had become head of the Theban army, prohibited the burial of Polyneices who died attacking the city seeking to reclaim his rights to the Theban throne. Creon's edict served as a punishment and also as a threat directed to those who dared to challenge state power. From this time forward, *Antigone's* heroic deed of burying the body of her dead brother in defiance of the city laws has been

interpreted as a symbol of an ethical act.

The protests about the fate of the disappeared in Latin America are both a denunciation and a possible way forward to process this tragedy. It is also worth noting that the figure of the “disappeared” is a corollary of the disappearance of those who disappeared them, since they are diluted or gradually disappeared themselves through an infinite chain of orders. The clearest expression of this perverse logic is the so-called Law of Due Obedience that freed thousands of soldiers who committed aberrant acts, displacing responsibility onto those higher up in the hierarchy. Psychological arguments underlie the legal arguments, many of them based on the conclusions of Stanley Milgram's experiment on obedience to criminal orders. This research generated significant discussion in the mental health field, one of whose protagonists was Ignacio Martín-Baró, the anniversary of whose assassination is commemorated November 16.

Fernando Ulloa [an Argentine psychiatrist] has said that “making justice” is like making love; it consists of peak moments and of ongoing everydayness. The recent annulment of the Law of Due Obedience in Argentina, together with other long-delayed democratic measures, should be taken not as an end point but as a point of departure. It's a wager for the future: the restitution of responsibility and memory as mental health strategies. ♦

Translated by Catherine M. Mooney and M. Brinton Lykes

Nota de los editores: Este artículo, escrito por compañeros de Psicología, Ética y Derechos Humanos en la Facultad de Psicología de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, trata brevemente de la importancia psicológica de las recientes revelaciones por parte de generales militares argentinos y las respuestas políticas actuales a las acciones tomadas durante la transición a la democracia. El reconocimiento público a principios de este año por parte de los militares argentinos de su responsabilidad en la desaparición de entre 7,000 y 40,000 hombres, mujeres y niños, al igual que las decisiones tomadas por el Presidente y el Congreso en meses recientes, han creado nuevas posibilidades tanto para activistas de derechos humanos como para toda la población argentina. (Para más información, http://www.psi.uba.ar/academica/carreradegradado/psicologia/informacion_adicional/obligatorias/etica/index.htm)

*¿Adónde van los desaparecidos?
busca en el agua y en los matorrales
¿Y por qué es que desaparecen?
porque no todos somos iguales
¿Y cuándo vuelve el desaparecido?
cada vez que lo trae el pensamiento
¿Cómo se llama al desaparecido?
una emoción apretando
por dentro.*

Rubén Blades, *Desapariciones*
Grabado por Maná de México

"¿Cómo puede sacar información [a un detenido] si usted no lo aprieta, si usted no lo tortura? ... ¿Usted cree que hubiéramos podido fusilar 7,000? Al fusilar tres nomás... mire el lío que el Papa le armó a Franco con tres. Se nos viene el mundo encima. Usted no puede

fusilar 7,000 personas.... ¿Y si los metíamos en la cárcel, qué? Ya pasó acá. Venía un gobierno constitucional y los ponía en libertad".

Estas palabras adquieren especial importancia ya que son las primeras en las que un represor de la dictadura militar 1976-1983 reconoce explícitamente que los desaparecidos fueron asesinados clandestinamente. Pertenecen al General argentino Díaz Bessone quien fue entrevistado por la periodista francesa Marie-Monique Robin en el video documental *Escuadrones de la muerte: La Escuela Francesa*. El programa fue emitido en Francia y otros doce países europeos el 1º de septiembre del presente año.

Durante décadas, los militares de América Latina negaron la existencia de los "desaparecidos". En un principio, pretendiendo que se trataba de personas que estaban vivas y que habían salido clandestinamente al exilio; más adelante, reconociendo algunos pocos casos en términos de "excesos". Las revelaciones contenidas en el video mencionado, demuestran que se trató de un plan sistemático: asesinar clandestinamente y sustraer los cuerpos de las víctimas, impidiendo todo ritual funerario por parte de sus familiares.

Este ensañamiento con el adversario político aun después de su muerte no es nuevo. Hace 2,500 años, la Antígona, de Sófocles, presentaba un argumento semejante. Creonte, devenido general en jefe del ejército tebano, prohíbe la sepultura de Polinice, quién murió atacando la ciudad para reclamar sus derechos sobre el trono de Tebas. El edicto de Creonte tenía función de escarmiento y a la vez de amenaza dirigida a quién osara desafiar el poder del Estado. De allí que la gesta de Antígona, que contra las leyes de la ciudad sepulta el cuerpo de su her-

mano muerto, haya sido tomado a lo largo de la historia como símbolo de acto ético.

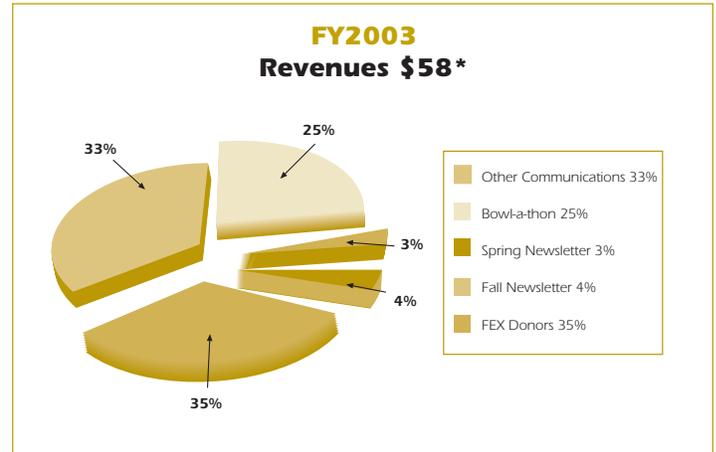
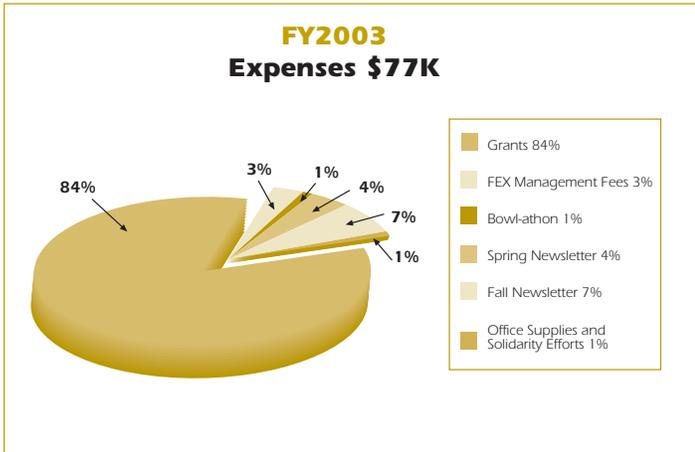
Los reclamos por el destino de los desaparecidos en América Latina son a la vez una denuncia y una vía posible de elaboración de la tragedia. Pero ocurre que la figura del "desaparecido" resulta correlativa de la "desaparición" del *desaparecedor*, diluido en la cadena infinita de las órdenes. La expresión más clara de esta lógica perversa es la llamada Ley de Obediencia Debida, que dejó en libertad a miles de militares que cometieron actos aberrantes, desplazando la responsabilidad a sus superiores jerárquicos. En los fundamentos de la ley abundaron los argumentos psicológicos, varios de ellos extractados de las conclusiones de la experiencia de Stanley Milgram sobre obediencia a órdenes criminales. Ello generó una enorme discusión en el campo de la salud mental, que tuvo como uno de sus protagonistas a Ignacio Martín-Baró, de cuyo asesinato se cumple un nuevo aniversario el 16 de noviembre.

Fernando Ulloa, ha dicho que hacer justicia es como hacer el amor; tiene momentos culminantes y constantes cotidianos. La reciente derogación de la Ley en Argentina, junto a otras medidas democráticas largamente postergadas, debe ser tomada no como un punto de llegada, sino como un punto de partida. Una apuesta al porvenir: la restitución de la responsabilidad y la memoria como estrategias en salud mental. ♦



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. ♦



*Funds carried over from FY2002 covered the difference between Revenues and Expenses in FY 2003.

Charts by Alden Jackson



PROJECT UPDATE – IbdAA CULTURAL CENTER, DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP, WEST BANK continued from page 4

outlet for the children to participate in art projects, theatrical productions, and artistic competitions that encourage self-expression, confidence, and creativity. Some library highlights include:

- ♦ April 24, 2003: 162 Dheisheh children participated in a children’s cultural festival in the Bethlehem area sponsored by the Ministry of Culture (the Palestinian Authority). Ten-year-old Wassim Abdul Halik from Dheisheh was emcee of the event.
- ♦ June 17, 2003: 80 children took a trip to the Golden Park Swimming Pool in nearby Beit Sahour. Dheisheh has no pool and the children have no opportunity to travel to the sea due to the occupation.
- ♦ September 12, 2003: 100 children participated in a U.S. comedy show, “Clowns without Borders,” in which they learned to juggle and put on a circus clown performance.

IbdAA is determined to insure that these and other activities of the Children’s Library are maintained in spite of the surrounding violence.

10TH ANNIVERSARY of SAGUARO FUND

Leah Diskin

On October 7th, the Funding Exchange hosted a dinner in Boston to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Saguaro Fund, one of its three activist advised funds that supports organizations serving communities of color organized and led by members of those communities. The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund was a co-sponsor of the event along with Grassroots International, Haymarket People's Fund, Political Research Associates, and United for a Fair Economy. This celebration of the Saguaro Fund's first decade provided an opportunity to highlight recent accomplishments of the Funding Exchange. Towards that end, Ramsay Liem, a Martín-Baró Fund co-founder, gave a lucid and moving account of the fund's inception and current work.

The evening also featured the presentation of a new Funding Exchange report on the impact of U.S. imperialism on people of color – Colonies in Question Supporting



Indigenous Movements in the U.S. Jurisdictions – by activist and author Surina Khan. Conceived out of discussions that Saguaro Fund members held on grantmaking in Puerto Rico and other U.S. jurisdictions, the report aims to identify the complexity and range of issues facing these communities particularly with regard to U.S. colonization, militarization, and cultural hegemony. In addition to examining local economies and industries, the report looks at existing community organizing efforts and the enormous need for greater financial resources to support them. Copies of the report are available from the Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, 5th floor, New York, NY 10012. ♦



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. As an organization based in the United States, we have a special responsibility to support groups in regions harmed by U.S. policies and addressing problems created or aggravated by those policies.

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.

“Psychosocial trauma...constitutes the concrete crystallization in individuals of aberrant and dehumanizing social relations like those prevalent in the situation of civil war...[which] especially affect children who must construct their identities and develop their lives within the network of these dehumanizing relations.... Therefore, we cannot be satisfied with treating post-traumatic stress.... It is of primary importance that treatment address itself to relationships among social groups, which constitute the normal abnormality that dehumanizes the...oppressor and the oppressed, soldier and victim, dominator and dominated, alike.”



—Ignacio Martín-Baró

Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. (A. Aron & S. Corne, Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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