

ROCLA UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

ROCLA

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, US trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendshipment. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for US policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of US involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

Steering Committee

Marilyn Anderson, Peg Gefell, Bob and Marilyn Kaiser, Grania Marcus, Arnie Matlin, Lew Montemaggi, Sandy Morales, Peter and Gail Mott, Gloria Osborne, Callie Rabe, Vic Vinkey, Tom Ward

Publishing Team

Editors: Gail and Peter Mott
Designer: Jim Anderson

CHILE TODAY

ROCLA's beginnings have important ties to Chile, so on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of ROCLA it is fitting that we have an event about Chile to be presented by Jeff Nieznanski.

Here is the background from a history of ROCLA organized by former member Michelle Spring Moore:

ROCLA came together as an organization in 1973 after the assassination of President Salvador Allende by Pinochet forces with the backing of the US government. Local activists Alison Clarke, Henrietta Levine and Bob Malone held the first meeting at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center on Clifford Ave. Early ROCLA members included Chileans such as Sylvia Salaff and US citizens who had traveled to or worked in Chile.

Jeff, a long time ROCLA member, labor activist and presently a lawyer with the

**CHILE TODAY
FEBRUARY'S
PROGRAM
FEATURING
JEFF NIEZNANSKI
WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 6
7:00 PM, DUPC**

Monroe County Legal Assistance Center in downtown Rochester, will give a talk with slides about the present situation in Chile where he has traveled many times over the past 17 years. These visits have given him the opportunity to personally observe political and economic changes during several presidencies, and to assess the reconciliation process after the repressive era of the dictator, General Augusto Pinochet.

Read related stories elsewhere in the newsletter: Four Chilean SOA Graduates Charged with 1973 Murder of Victor Jara, Letter from Kathy Castania and Peter Debes, who traveled to Chile last spring, and Changing Views about Democracy. ■



Jeff Nieznanski in Viña del Mar, Chile.



ROCLA TURNS FORTY

40 Years of Solidarity
with Latin America!

Celebrate ROCLA's
40th Anniversary
at our

**Gala 2013
Rice & Beans
White Dove
Awards Dinner**

Friday, March 1,
5:30pm
Gates Presbyterian
Church

(See articles inside)



GLOBAL JUSTICE ECOLOGY PROJECT TO RECEIVE THE INTERNATIONAL WHITE DOVE AWARD

GJEP Fights for Climate Justice and Indigenous Rights

Make your reservations now for ROCLA's 2013 annual fundraiser – an evening of camaraderie, fun, great food and celebration! 2013 White Dove award recipients Orin Langelle, Founder and Board Chair of the Global Justice Ecology Project and Anne Petermann, Executive Director, will be in Rochester to receive the 2013 International White Dove Award on March 1, 2013, at Gates Presbyterian Church. Orin will speak and show photos from his unique work as a “concerned photographer.” He and Anne will also discuss GJEP's work to defend the rights of indigenous peoples, protect native forests, oppose genetically engineered trees and expose social and ecological injustice in Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and elsewhere.

Rochester environmentalists, climate activists and those concerned with human rights should not miss this special

opportunity to hear how the Global Justice Ecology Project builds bridges between social, environmental and ecological justice groups to participate in the struggles of communities, activists, workers and indigenous peoples against ecological devastation, climate disruption, economic domination, human rights abuses and oppression of women. Since 1972, Langelle has used the power of photo-journalism to promote social change. “I approach my role as concerned photographer by not merely documenting the struggle for social and ecological justice, but by being an active part of it,” Langelle writes. “This is not merely a chronicling of history, but a call out to inspire new generations to participate in the making of a new history. For there has been no time when such a call has been so badly needed.”

Mr. Langelle's passionate lens has taken him behind



Anne Petermann, Executive Director of Global Justice Ecology Project, speaks to UN delegates about the dangers of genetically engineered trees during the plenary session of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil in March of 2006. Photo: Langelle/GJEP



Dust-covered photographer Orin Langelle in back of Russian truck while documenting the devastation caused by 1998's Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua during the first environmental justice delegation to the region. Photo: Cliff McCarthy/NicaNet

Zapatista (EZLN) rebel lines in Chiapas, Mexico, to expose the links between the destruction of the resource-rich Lacandon rainforest and the Zapatista struggle. He has also documented land occupations by the Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST) and indigenous Tupinikim and Guarani communities in Brazil, as well as the struggles of indigenous peoples for autonomy and land rights, including the Mapuche in Chile, the Abenaki in Vermont, the Ayoreo in Paraguay, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, Mexico, Indonesia and Kenya, and the Cree and Inuit of James Bay, Quebec.

Ms. Petermann has worked to protect forests and support the struggles of indigenous peoples since 1989. She co-founded and coordinates the international STOP Genetically

Engineered Trees Campaign, and acts as the North American focal point of the Global Forest Coalition. She has spoken around the world at UN conferences and community workshops about climate justice, forest protection, indigenous rights and the dangers of corporate-dominated false solutions to climate change such as forest carbon offset schemes like REDD (the UN and World Bank scheme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).

We look forward to your presence at this informative and challenging presentation!

For more information, tickets and reservations: Bob and Marilyn Kaiser, (585) 293-3194, rkaiser3@rochester.rr.com; Gail and Peter Mott, (585) 381-5606; interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net ■



Elders from the community of Amador Hernandez in the Selva Lacandona (Lacandon jungle), Chiapas, Mexico (Photo: Langelle 2011)



ROCHESTER COMMITTEE
ON LATIN AMERICA
40 YEAR CELEBRATION & FUNDRAISER

25th Annual Rice & Beans Gala Dinner & White Dove Awards

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 5:30PM

Gates Presbyterian Church* • 1049 Wegman Road • Rochester, New York

International White Dove Award

Local White Dove Award



Global Justice Ecology Project

Orin Langelle, Founder and Board Chair and Anne Petermann, Executive Director, will be here to receive the award, show their remarkable photography and talk about climate justice and the unique ways they organize to protect Indigenous Peoples' rights and native forests through a focus on climate change. GJEP exposes the interconnected root causes of social injustice, ecological destruction and economic domination and builds bridges between social, environmental and ecological justice groups to strengthen their collective efforts.



Tom Ward

Tom Ward is a moving force in Guatemala Partners, a Gates Presbyterian Church group that has supported self-development projects in Guatemala for many years. A "behind the scenes guy" with a passion for social justice, he can often be seen at protests or speaking out at meetings, and is unfailingly helpful.

**GOOD
FOOD,
FUN,
LIVE &
SILENT
AUCTIONS,
WHITE DOVE
AWARDS**



Tickets: Patron: \$40; Sponsor: \$30; Guest: \$20 (but no one is ever turned away)

For Reservations: Bob & Marilyn Kaiser: (585) 293-3194; RKaiser3@rochester.rr.com

Peter & Gail Mott: (585) 381-5606, interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net

Auction Items to Donate: Grania Marcus: (917) 579-0199; grania_marcus@yahoo.com

All proceeds benefit ROCLA's work for peace and justice in Latin America.

*The church is wheelchair accessible and looped for the hearing impaired.

LETTER
FROM CHILE**Letter from Kathy Castania and Peter Debes, who traveled to Chile last spring:**

Last week we were leaving Punto Arenas, Chile, which is in the southern part on the Strait of Magellan. We were being transported to Porto Natales on our journey to see the natural beauty of the Patagonia regions of Chile and Argentina. As we were leaving the town, we were prevented from going down the main coastal road because of a protest by the fishermen. Our guide explained that they were protesting for more money for their fish and for a lower price of gasoline. In Santiago, the capital, the gas is around \$1 per liter and in this small town it is almost \$5 per liter, making the cost of running their boats more expensive. When we arrived the fishermen had closed off the road with banners and were burning a tire on the median. The mayor of the town, a tall white haired man, who stood out among the indigenous looking fisherman who were small and darker skinned, was negotiating with the workers. The road as it turned out is the only road to the airport, the ferry that takes tourists to the penguin colony on a nearby island, and to get to other towns. Everyone who was supposed to go on the road parked their cars and went over to the protest. There were police standing around casually – with no weapons or riot gear. They didn't prevent us or anyone else from getting close and standing with the fishermen. After the negotiation, our guide said that we couldn't leave the town because the federal minister had to come from Santiago to continue the nego-

tiation and the road would be closed until he came at 2 pm. There were only about 50 fishermen blocking the road. I asked the guide why they were not being arrested; he said we don't do that in Chile. He shared that now they would have negotiations with the officials. We were shocked!!! We imagined this scene in the US when a major road needed for tourism and commerce is closed down. Surely the police with riot gear would have shown up and arrested the workers. They have done it for much lesser acts of civil disobedience. It is hard not to compare this situation with the US at the present time, where people believe we are the freest country in the world. It is not to say that Chile doesn't and hasn't had its own political problems, but maybe they have learned from their history of abuse of protesters. Our guide verified that – he talked about the horrors of the military and Pinochet in the 70's and 80's much of which was supported by our government at the time. He agreed that they learned from this and don't treat protesters like that now. About an hour later, the road opened. The protesters allowed it to open after talking with the mayor, and agreed to keep it open until after they negotiated with the federal minister. If they weren't satisfied with the negotiation, they would close it again. After arriving in Porto Natales, we talked about this with another man at the tour agency, who was arranging to take us into the National Park. He verified what the other tour leader said. He also added that he doesn't like the current federal administration and that they are the problem because they knew about the fishermen's needs and haven't done anything to solve them. I asked again why they didn't arrest them since they seemed to be a small number. He said that many more would come to take their place and that there wasn't enough room in the prison. The other tour leader said that many people are in alliance with the fishermen, even those who depend on the tourism industry like themselves. It was very interesting.

In solidarity, Kathy and Peter

FROM THE SOA WATCH WEBSITE:

FOUR CHILEAN SOA GRADUATES CHARGED WITH 1973 MURDER OF VICTOR JARA

On Friday, December 27, Chilean Judge Miguel Vásquez charged two Chilean officials, Pedro Barrientos and Hugo Sanchez, in the 1973, murder of Chilean folk singer Victor Jara; six others were charged as accomplices. Four of the eight took courses at the School of the Americas. Pedro Barrientos, the second-in-command of the National Stadium which was turned into an open-air prison following the September 11th US-sponsored coup, and Raúl Jofré took the same Officers' Orientation course in 1968; Edwin Dimter Bianchi took a Combat Arms Orientation course in 1970; and Jorge Smith Gumucio took a Combat Arms Orientation course in 1972. SOA graduate Pedro Barrientos currently lives in Deltona, a city southwest of Daytona Beach in Florida.



Victor Jara, one of the Pinochet regime's first victims, was a symbol of justice and progress in the Americas, and his voice encouraged millions to continue moving towards a just and fair society. Though his life was cut short by the brutal US-sponsored dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, his legacy lives on through the changes happening throughout Latin America. ■



CHILE CHANGING VIEWS ABOUT DEMOCRACY

By Peter Mott

Latin America is leading the way toward open government and true democratization. We hope this will continue and that the US will follow that example.

Readers know that in the past several years eight Latin American nations have elected “leftist” presidents. Their platforms have included placing their countries’ natural resources under the control of the majorities - not US corporations - and ending the conservative global economic systems of neoliberalism and “free trade.”

The first Chilean president to call for this was Salvador Allende. Allende’s two daughters, Isabel and Carmen Paz, recently accompanied one Latin American leftist president, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, as he toured Chile. Correa’s speaking tour urged a return to Allende’s goals. Speaking at the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) he declared, “For the first time in human history, poverty is not the result of a shortage of resources but the existence of evil and exclusionary systems.” He called for equalization of peoples with “the richest in society paying more taxes,” and public financing of “education and health - among other rights.” He noted that, unfortunately, the Chilean government promotes private education instead and “the privatization of the country’s natural resources, as in the case of lithium and fishing.” ■



GRANT CITIZENSHIP TO 11 MILLION

This year, we have the best chance we’ve had in a long time to create change in an immigration system that has left 11 million people living in the shadow of deportation. Ask your Congressperson to introduce a bill that would provide a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented people living in and contributing to our country. ■

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URGENT ACTION

End Haiti’s Killer Cholera Epidemic – UN Action Now!

Please sign Oliver Stone’s petition to Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the UN at http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/End_Haitis_Cholera_Epidemic_with_UN_Action_Now_1/

“We call on you to take urgent steps to help Haiti acquire clean water and sanitation infrastructure so as to eliminate cholera from the country. We urge you to use your position as head of the United Nations to lead international efforts to mobilize the funds and technical resources required to achieve this urgent task in the shortest time frame possible.”

Why this is important

The people of Haiti are fighting a deadly cholera epidemic introduced by UN troops that has killed thousands and sickened hundreds of thousands more. Since it caused this catastrophe, let’s push the UN to help Haitians stamp out killer cholera for good.

Since it began in October 2010, cholera has killed over 7,800 and brought untold suffering to poor Haitian communities. Although doctors, scientists, and even UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton recognize that UN troops brought the epidemic to Haiti, the UN has refused to take responsibility.

Following months of pressure from grassroots movements in Haiti and around the world, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced on December 11 of 2012 that his office would support a \$2.2 billion plan to respond to cholera with medical treatment and water and sanitation infrastructure. The initiative has secured \$238 million in funding commitments, but these funds cover merely 10% of the plan’s total price tag and their source remains unclear. While this new plan is a step in the right direction, it is long-delayed – announced two years after the outbreak, with only a small fraction of funding secured so far. At this pace thousands more Haitians will die before their communities receive clean water. ■

**Interested in being included on the ROCLA e-mail list?
Sign up here: www.stopoha.com/rocla/mail.cgi/list/rocla/ Enter your name and e-mail address You will then receive an e-mail to confirm.** ■

ROCLA

METRO JUSTICE EDUCATION FUND

ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

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ROCLA UPDATE ON THE **AMERICAS**

THANK YOU

to the following writers
who contributed to this issue:

Marilyn Anderson, Program
Marilyn Kaiser, Membership
Grania Marcus, Rice & Beans,
GJEP, & Mission Statement

ACT IN SOLIDARITY! MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS APPRECIATED

ROCLA is fortunate to have a loyal and committed group of people who are concerned about issues pertaining to Latin America. This commitment includes membership contributions that, each year, enable ROCLA to give financial support to many groups – local and national - on the frontline of the struggle for justice in LA, to send a truckload of health equipment and medicines to Cuba as part of the Pastors for Peace program, and to sustain our monthly programs.

If you have not yet made a contribution, please consider doing so. \$25 is the suggested amount, but any amount will help. Checks should be made out to ROCLA/Metro Justice and sent to Marilyn Kaiser, 150 Attridge Rd., Churchville, NY 14428. Thank you. ■

“¡EL PUEBLO UNIDO, JAMÁS SERÁ VENCIDO!”