

UPDATE on the AMERICAS

A bi-monthly publication of the Rochester Committee on Latin America

A Taskforce of Metro Justice

Fall 2011

ROCLA's December Meeting Will Feature Pacho Lane's WARRIORS OF THE SUN

We are honored to be able to present this film with one of its producers on Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7 pm at the Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St. Pacho Lane will give an introduction to his film. With this and his other work Pacho, a long time Rochester-based ethnographic filmmaker, makes an eloquent case for the underlying importance of community and cultural identity that we could miss if we concentrated only on political films and political action.

Warriors of the Sun-a film by Pacho Lane and Albert Wahrheftig

- reviewed by Gloria Osborne

This film is a wonderful story of how to reunite a community by restoring its cultural stories and rituals. When a young Totonac man from Huehuetla Puebla, Mexico, has a dream that he must revive the “danza de los voladores” (the dance of the flying ones), he seeks out a village elder with the knowledge and ability to teach it to a new generation. Once practiced quarterly to celebrate the seasons of the year—planting, growing, harvesting, and rebirthing, indicated by the four cardinal directions—it had been abandoned in the early 70’s due to the cultural and political upheaval at that time. Now it is rebirthed at Christmas as the sun begins its return following the winter solstice. Eight local young men are taught both the dance

and its meaning as the village comes together to support them, and as they erect first a practice pole and later a permanent pole from which to perform their “dance”. The dance represents our connections to the sun as co-creator in our birthing and the warriors represent those who have the courage to look within and accept this role.

The producers have done a wonderful job of capturing the metaphorical sacrifice necessary to create spiritual unity while balancing the importance of honoring sacred rituals vs. creating a tourist attraction for economic reasons.

ROCLA presents this film as we enter a season of light for many traditions and celebrate the sacrifices of the many who have contributed to a movement for human rights, overcoming separation, and embracing unity.

Let us OCCUPY EVERYWHERE together.

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THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE
ON LATIN AMERICA
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**Ready for a Fantastic Start
to 2012?**

Come to Tambien la Lluvia (Even the Rain)

Wednesday, January 4

6:30 PM (note earlier time)

**Downtown Presbyterian Church
in Celebration Hall**

This movie, dedicated to Howard Zinn, who collaborated with screenwriter Paul Laverty in developing the story, was part of Jon Garlock's Labor Film series – a brilliant choice. And Michael Moore agrees: "EVEN THE RAIN is a brilliant movie. At a time when the poor of the world seem to be rising up, I found myself deeply moved and completely enthralled by this film. I encourage everyone in search of a great movie to go see EVEN THE RAIN."

ROCLA at the Alternative Fair 2011

Once again ROCLA, as a proud task force of Metro Justice, will have a presence at Metro Justice's 30th Annual Alternative Fair, First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Avenue on December 2, (5-9pm); Dec. 3, (10am-2pm),

Please stop buy and purchase one of the beautiful Arte Maya Calendars published by the national Guatemalan support organization, NISGUA (Network In Solidarity With the People of Guatemala). By doing so, you help both the artists and aid funding of the important work of NISGUA.

This year, we are not selling Maya Fair Trade textiles but hope you will pick up ordering information for the groups MAYAN HANDS and UPAVIM who have been our wonderful suppliers for many years. Their items are easy to order on the internet and some are available at ONE WORLD GOODS.

We also will have information about our 2012 Rice and Beans speaker and White Dove Award recipient. You will want to – and can – make your reservation right there! And educational materials will be available to take. Marilyn Anderson will offer her cards and wood block prints for sale, (with part of proceeds going to ROCLA) and Pacho Lane will have an array of his wonderful videos.



Tambien la Lluvia comments for Oct. 14, 2011- Dryden Labor Film Series

—by David Tamarini

Last December, in conjunction with the first U.S. screening of her film *Even the Rain*, Spanish director Icíar Bollaín commented in an interview at New York's Cervantes Institute that: "Sometimes I say [that making a film is like making] a paella; you can cook a paella with all your love and with the best ingredients, and [the rice] stays hard because you didn't measure something correctly. It's the same thing with films, you can put years of work into a film but sometimes the ingredients don't mix well, and then a [critic] comes along and says that it was a failure."

Indeed, much passion, many years and many disparate ingredients went into the construction of tonight's film. *También la Lluvia* --- *Even the Rain* --- is a very ambitious and compellingly complex film. Integrating several interconnected stories, it is a movie about the making of a movie and the economics of movie-making; the movie-within-the-movie itself has a very serious story to tell. *Even the Rain* explores the nature of historical narration and the relevance of the past in understanding the present; it is also a movie about the interplay of personal convictions, political commitment and "pragmatic" necessity -as well as the nature of friendship- in the face of glaring injustice. It is a film about a centuries-old episode of historical colonialism, wrought by violent conquest, and also present-day neo-colonialism --in the guise of multinational corporate globalization-- wrought by international contracts, IMF/World Bank guidelines and compliant, sepyo third-world governments. It is ---when all is said and done--- a film about indignation, resistance, and survival.

The film's Scots-Irish screenwriter, Paul Laverty (widely known for his many collaborations with English director

Tambien la Lluvia comments (continued on page 7)

Ken Loach), began the original project over ten years ago. Laverty, together with the Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu, set out to make a film about the devastation of the Caribbean native peoples that followed in the wake of Columbus' arrival in the New World. It was to recount the Arawak-Taíno people's heroic but futile resistance to the invasion, focusing on the story of the Taíno cacique Hatuey, as well as to profile the first champions of human rights in the New World, the Spanish Dominican clerics Antonio Montesinos and Bartólome de las Casas. Laverty took inspiration and sought critical advice from Howard Zinn in the framing of the original screenplay's narrative. In fact the original project was envisioned to be one of several anticipated film adaptations of Zinn's *Peoples' History of the United States* as well as a cinematic homage to Zinn himself. For a variety of reasons that original plan was abandoned (including Iñárritu's decision to dedicate his energies to making the movie *Biutiful*—which I suspect might find its way into the roster of labor films in the future). Laverty, however, clung to the broad outline of the project—in other words, to complete a screenplay that was both a tribute to Zinn and that incorporated Zinn's narrative of the Columbus invasion. But as the years went by, Laverty began playing with his original ideas and eventually came up with a new, radically imaginative approach to the project. As he stated in an interview: "I was fascinated by [Bolivia's] Cochabamba water wars in 2000 and I often wondered how I could mix these two periods together [in a movie script]." The resulting revised screenplay incorporated—in director Bollaín's words—"the mad idea" to set the Columbus invasion narrative in that land-locked Andean country and against the backdrop of the popular resistance movement that came to be known as 'La Guerra del Agua'—the Water War. As to who should be recruited to direct this new incarnation of the project, Laverty was encouraged to bring aboard his own 'life partner' (his 'pareja sentimental' as the Spaniards say), Icíar Bollaín. An accomplished actress in her own right (some of you might recall her wonderful performance in Loach's Spanish Civil War film *Land and Liberty*), she is widely acclaimed as one of Spain's most celebrated female directors.

The result was this film, whose structurally complex screenplay juxtaposes the story of a group of Spanish filmmakers shooting a politically engaged historical epic in Bolivia with the Columbus narrative movie they are producing. At the outset of *Even the Rain*, as the crew is approaching the Bolivian city of Cochabamba where the movie is to be shot, one of the movie's characters, who is filming a documentary about the making of the historical epic film (another layer of complexity!) declares: "We're in Bolivia [to make a film about Columbus coming to the Caribbean]. It doesn't make much sense." The reply from the film's producer is: "Here you can negotiate things.

Hotels, transport, catering. . ." "So it's about the money?" the documentarian interrupts. "Yes, it's always about the money, always," is the reply.

The on-screen filmmakers are led by the idealistic director "Sebastián" (played by Mexican 'heart-throb' Gael García Bernal) and the film's cynical—one might even say "neo-colonial-minded"—producer, "Costa" (the versatile Spanish actor Luis Tosar who some of you will recall from his role in the Spanish film *Mondays in the Sun* which played in the Labor Film series a few years back.) They soon find, however, that the completion of their project is jeopardized, as militant popular protests breakout in reaction to the Bolivian government's sell-off of Cochabamba's municipally-owned water works to a private multi-national consortium. Sebastián and Costa's movie about the violent Columbus conquest is thus contrasted with the situation of the films' indigenous "extras" as they organize resistance to the "theft" of their life sustaining resource by the "neo-colonial" multi-national and to the government's brutal repression of the movement.

Furthermore, producer Costa's exploitation of the movie's "extras" by paying abusively low wages is framed as yet another parallel—if a considerably more benign one—to Columbus and the Spaniards' enslavement of Hispanola's native peoples. In Bollaín's words: "Paul [Laverty] made the connection, he realized that in the same way those who fought five hundred years ago, who resisted the conquest and exploitation, could be found fighting with sticks and stones against a modern army, against a multi-national, and against all the apparatus behind a multinational."

The most compelling link between the two historically disparate stories of exploitation and resistance is personified in the character of "Daniel," the indigenous Cochabambino who is recruited by the filmmakers to play the character of the heroic Taíno leader Hatuey. "Daniel" (movingly portrayed by the Bolivian filmmaker and novice-actor Juan Carlos Aduviri) is chosen for the role of Hatuey because "he has the right look" as well as for his strong and defiant personality. Daniel subsequently becomes one of the most visible and courageous participants in the fight to oppose the privatization of the city's water system. As the story unfolds, the evolution of the relationship between Daniel and Costa also serves—I believe—as the movie's intimate, humane moral compass.

There is another layer to the story of *Even the Rain* that is not revealed in the movie itself. Under what real conditions and under what terms did the real-life Spanish-led international team of filmmakers actually make this movie in low-wage Bolivia, in and around the city of Cochabamba? It was, according to Bollaín and Laverty, a very 'unorthodox' and eye-opening business; they certainly did not want to replicate the exploitative practices of their on-film

Time to Mark Your Calendar:

Friday, March 2, 2012

ROCLA's Annual Rice and Beans Dinner and International White Dove Award

There are lights that shine steadily through the darkness and keep justice alive in the most daunting of circumstances, serving as beacons of hope and evidencing the power of persistent advocacy. The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI) are two such lights. They "strive to work with the people of Haiti in their non-violent struggle for the consolidation of constitutional democracy, justice and human rights, by distributing objective and accurate information on human rights conditions in Haiti, pursuing legal cases, and cooperating with human rights and solidarity groups in Haiti and abroad."

For their grassroots work in Haiti - the poorest nation in Latin America, the worst example of US foreign policy at work on this continent, suffering cruelly with earthquakes, floods, and a cholera epidemic - ROCLA is honored to present the International White Dove Award. Brian Concannon, Jr., Esq., Director of the IJDH, will receive the award on behalf of these organizations. Brian co-managed the BAI in Haiti for eight years, from 1996-2004, and worked for the United Nations as a Human Rights Officer in 1995-1996. He founded IJDH, and has been the Director since 2004. He helped prepare the prosecution of the Raboteau Massacre trial in 2000, one of the most significant human rights cases anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. He has represented Haitian political prisoners before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and represented the plaintiff in *Yvon Neptune v. Haiti*, the only Haiti case ever tried before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

[Ed. Note: Elsewhere in this issue see Brian's article, "Blanco Go Home!"]

ROCLA is Proud to Present The Local White Dove Award to Bob and Marilyn Kaiser

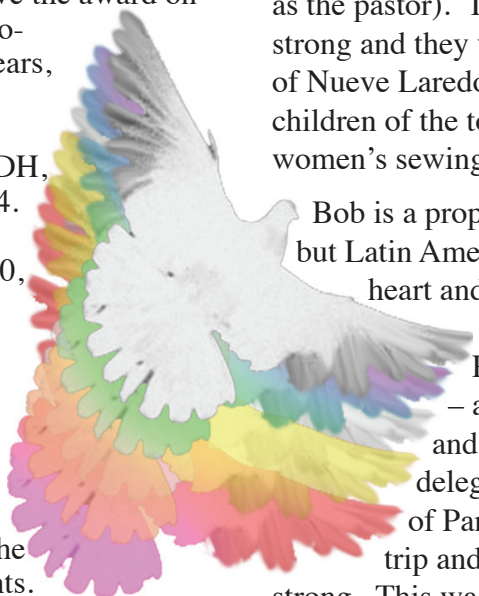
—by Tom Ward

For the past ten years Bob has been Convener of ROCLA and Marilyn has taken charge of membership, mailings, and lists. Together they have enhanced the vibrancy, morale and membership of ROCLA.

Bob and Marilyn Kaiser have been passionate about the struggles and the people of Latin America for many years, going back to at least 1988 when they took a trip to Central America then led a delegation of about 30 people to Mexico with the Presbyterian Border Ministry. There they helped with housing, painting a church, learning about the trashpickers' lives and more.

In 1992 the Kaisers took a sabbatical and spent three months making their way from Laredo, Texas, across the border into Mexico, then traveled by public bus to Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and back to Mexico. There they met another delegation from Gates Presbyterian Church (where Bob was serving as the pastor). This delegation was about 26 people strong and they worked in the small border town of Nueve Laredo on a house, medical aid, with the children of the town, and helped form and teach a women's sewing co-op.

Bob is a proponent of Mission work anywhere, but Latin America has held a special place in his heart and mind, so he formed a group to go to Guatemala. He partnered with Rights Action (Grahame Russell - another White Dove winner). He and Marilyn accompanied the first delegation there in 1998 to the village of Panacal. 18 people joined them on this trip and the mission there is still going strong. This was a mission to assist the Mayan widows of Panacal to become self-sufficient and today they are strong and doing very well with a cattle and pig project that GPC helped to fund. The church has sent delegates to the village six times since and has raised several thousands of dollars.



Continued on last page

October 2011, DC—Same movement, different sites

—by Gloria Osborne

[Ed. note: Excerpted for space. To read Gloria's full and exuberant report send an e-mail to interconnect_mott@frontienet.net.]

October 1, 2011

McPherson Square (15th and K street)—Occupy DC

October 6, 2011

Freedom Plaza-Human Needs not Corporate Greed

When I arrived Oct. 2, Occupy DC had just begun in McPherson Square -a lovely park with green grass and huge grandmother trees and ducks (yes ducks not pigeons) and homeless persons its main occupants. Although initially comprised mostly of young, local, folks it grew throughout the week to include professionals, students, parents, children, unemployed workers—in short, all those who are under-represented, including the many homeless who sometimes call Mc Pherson Sq. their home. Their vision: “We are interested in separating money from politics and improving the country’s infrastructure to fix healthcare, education, environment and the economy.” Those occupying were quick to point out that although Wall Street takes our money it is the financial district on K street that gambles it away—thus the decision to hold Occupy DC in Mc Pherson Sq.

Two young men held the space by staying overnight the first 3 nights while numbers occupying continued to swell during the day and organizing proceeded very quickly. By Tuesday Occupy DC was holding General Assemblies (GA’s) twice a day, organizing 1-2 short marches as direct action per day, and providing training in nonviolence, consensus, facilitating, medical, legal and security. Folks were beginning to sleep on the grass in sleeping bags, and infrastructure (food, bathrooms, security, physical needs, medical) was being created. Break-out groups were held to create organizing committees following each GA to create and support the movement as a whole. Food was being donated and a couple of nearby churches had offered sanctuary as well if needed. By Friday, Oct. 7, the marches had moved from the sidewalks to the street and from 50-100 people were sleeping in the NW corner of the park.

Folks practiced for flash mobs, prepared for marches, made signs to create an art space as well as for use on corners and took part in helping with general infrastructure. Several pizzerias were delivering food each day and one across the street welcomed occupiers to their restroom facilities. The ambiance was fluid and integrated with minimum interference from police and frequent encouragement from those passing by or through the park. A charter middle school and Howard University in DC were requesting representatives from Occupy DC to come and make presentations...

Meanwhile, Freedom Plaza (FP) began peace-keeper and legal training and set up canopy tents and stage...[and there were] many opportunities to express one’s feelings in the art area. Code Pink had created a park of cardboard houses to represent the foreclosures but also for folks to express their thoughts through slogans...

My affinity group, the pagan cluster, was comprised of @ 20 people from all over the US, as well as the local DC group who helped provide housing and support for us during the week. While half of our group facilitated trainings in both Mc Pherson and FP, the other half added support to marches and attempted to work with infrastructure—including creating buckets with filters for filtering drinking water and exploring the potential of using compost toilets—particularly at Mc Pherson which did not have the portapotty lineup FP had... Spontaneously people shared their dreams and visions as we stood under a clear, star-filled night in DC with a nearly full moon and Orion present with his warrior energy. This last ritual also served to help connect the two occupations as we suggested folks take pieces of the web to wrap around their wrists either as remembrances of our shared dreams or to share with someone occupying in a different place...

Freedom Plaza received a 4-month extension on their permit to remain grounded amidst the state buildings and the mall. Occupations, as we know, have now encircled the world. The “I” is becoming “WE” changing our paradigm from “I” lness to “We” lness...

Report from a Caravanista!

—by Sara Burdette

Traveling on the caravan through the U.S. was a fascinating experience. We went through much of the south and traveled to places I would think are more traditional and supportive of the U.S. blockade of Cuba. I was pleasantly surprised by the people we encountered, many of whom had been campaigning for years to actually end the blockade. We started off in Washington D.C. after traveling all night on a bus, and shortly thereafter were picketing outside the White House, chanting slogans such as: “Free the Cuban Five!” “Cuba Si, Bloqueo NO!”. It was quite interesting, especially when we picketed outside of USAID and Homeland Security came to watch us! We then traveled through Durham, North Carolina, Decatur, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama, New Orleans, Louisiana, Houston, Texas and finally made it to McAllen, Texas for orientation. After spending a few days in McAllen, we were ready to cross the border. The US Government ended up confiscating 7 computers but they returned them on the trip back (and some people, including Matt, had the opportunity to walk them over the border into Mexico, to be taken care of by our Mexican comrades!) We spent one night in Reynosa after spending eight hours at the Mexican border. The next day we proceeded to drive to Tampico, unloading material aid at the docks from 11pm-2am! Needless to say we were all exhausted, and quite ready for our arrival in Cuba the following day!

To describe all I saw and learned in Cuba would be impossible. There were so many amazing people and places that we went to. Some of my favorite parts of the trip were talking with our translators, Angel and Jesus. Since my Spanish can be considered mediocre, I was able to talk with them in English and grasp an interesting picture of the role of tourism in Cuba. It was especially remarkable to hear Jesús talk about his upcoming trip to Moscow and Turkey—once again quenching the incorrect belief that “Cubans



Arrival in Havana, Cuba at the Airport

cannot leave the country.” I also loved seeing the urban organic farms that have begun to spring up around the major cities. I found it fascinating that the Cuban people recognized a need for healthy, home-grown food in their communities, and were able to actually learn agricultural techniques themselves. These huge farms provide affordable and extremely healthy food for the Cuba people. They are truly a sight to behold, and a lesson the U.S. could definitely learn from. Another remarkable moment was when a young boy with cerebral palsy came to visit us when we were in our provinces in Santa Clara. Thanks to the caravan, he had a wheelchair that he could get around in. His sense of gratitude was absolutely overwhelming and touching. It made me fully realize why I supported the Cuba Caravan and what it stands for. [The author and Matt Dearstyne, recent graduates of Roberts Wesleyan College, performed chores for ROCLA members to raise money for their trip.]

Venezuelanalysis.com, a good location for news and views about Venezuela. I have used it often. Wilpert is a staunch supporter of Chavez.

UPDATE on the AMERICAS

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Tambien la Lluvia comments (*continued*)

film-makers. I don't know how much the movie's extras playing "extras" were actually paid; it was, I have little doubt, more than the meager two-dollar-a-day portrayed in the movie. But more importantly, compensation was negotiated collectively, and not just with those Cochabambinos who were selected to appear in the film (including many veterans of the actual anti-privatization protests of 2000). Negotiations establishing wages and other conditions were conducted with assemblies of the communities from which the extras were recruited. The individual actors were paid, but so too were their respective communities. Those payments, however, were not made in cash "so as to avoid corruption" and the unequal distribution of benefits, but rather in materials to address specific community needs (a water truck or so many loads of bricks to finish the construction of a school for example). The shooting of scenes involving extras could not take place on Sundays ("the day of rest") nor on Wednesdays or Saturdays (as these are Cochabamba's market days). As Bollaín put it: "They thought [and acted] as a community, not as individuals." By the way, the shooting of the film was completed in a mere eight weeks.

I would love to offer some comments on the "Zinnian" treatment of the Columbus/Hatuey/Las Casas story (in both the film and in Zinn's *People's History*) from a Latin Americanist historian's perspective, as well as to say something about the context of the Water War and the somewhat Pyrrhic victory the Cochabambinos achieved. For that matter there are important connections to be made between the events depicted in the film and the dramatic crisis which has gripped Bolivia these past several weeks that has shaken the Evo Morales government to its core. But I'll resist the temptation. Allow me in conclusion, however, to return to director Bollaín's analogy between film-making and the precarious cooking of a paella. "I have the feeling," she went on to say, "that [this movie] came out well. That it's tasty, that you can eat it!"

I hope and trust that you'll agree with her . . . although the 'meal' itself might sometimes be painful to ingest.

Thank you, and ¡buen provecho!
{David Tamarin, Department of History –
SUNY Geneseo}

Membership Update

— by Bob Kaiser, Convener

There has been an excellent response to the membership support letter that went out in October but we hope more people will want to become ROCLA members. Here are four reasons why:

- ROCLA's monthly programs feature speakers knowledgeable on issues facing Latin America, plus cultural programs and films.
- Our bi-monthly newsletter, *Update on the Americas*, provides important and timely information.
- ROCLA takes actions locally on migrant issues, nationally on legislation, and internationally through Urgent Actions from Amnesty International.
- In addition, ROCLA assists 26 organizations which are on the front line of the struggle for justice in Latin America. Every dollar given is used directly to help those who are hurting.

If you'd like to talk to me about membership please call 293-3194.

Membership support (suggested \$20-\$30 - Check made out to ROCLA/Metro Justice) may be sent to:

Marilyn Kaiser
150 Attridge Rd
Churchville, NY 14428

ROCLA WEBSITE

For current information about programs, actions, and news go to <http://rocla.us/> or simply type in rocla.us

ROCLA is a task force of Metro Justice of Rochester: <http://www.metrojustice.org/>

The Local White Dove Award (continued)

Marilyn is always working quietly in the background, supporting and taking care of the day to day details such as membership records. She and Bob have been co-moderators of ROCLA, but she mostly lets Bob do the talking! (At least in public!) But never underestimate her knowledge of the Latin American culture, people and language. She is fiercely passionate about the people there and angry about the injustices and the destructive policies she has seen placed upon these people. She is an amazing and dynamic individual.

Some of the above information may not be totally accurate, but it is hard to get the exact details from anyone but the recipients. At press time, this is a surprise to Bob and Marilyn, so any inaccuracies will be corrected at a later date. But rest assured that the substance of the article is accurate and that there can be no doubt that the Kaisers are very worthy of this award and it is long past due to recognize them for their tireless efforts and their love of the people of Latin America, the poor and oppressed everywhere.

After I Pick the Fruit, a documentary by Nancy Ghertner. 93 minutes including the credits. Follows the lives of five immigrant farmworker women over a ten-year period as they labor in the apple orchards and fields of rural western New York, migrate seasonally to Florida, raise their families, and try to hide from the Bush-era immigration raids that were conducted in response to 9/11. Filmed in New York, Florida, and Mexico, this intimate, bittersweet, feature-length film illuminates a community that is nearly invisible to most Americans, and will change the way you look at our national 'immigration problem. After I Pick the Fruit will donate the proceeds from DVD sales and speaker awards to support women and their families through projects at FLSNY, WARE, and RMM in upstate NY. <http://www.afteripickthefruit.com/>. It had its first screening at St. John Fisher on Nov. 3 and is now available from Nancy Ghertner

ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA (ROCLA)

ROCLA for many years has sought to be a bridge between the Rochester community and the people of Latin America. Monthly meetings on the 1st Wednesday of each month at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church provide an opportunity to learn more about what is going on in that part of the world. In addition to providing information, ROCLA is committed to working for systemic justice and supports numerous organizations that are on the front line of this endeavor. School of the Americas Watch, the Mexico Solidarity Network, Rights Action and the Rochester Labor Film Festival are among the many groups that receive assistance and encouragement.

ROCLA Steering Committee

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

Update on the Americas Publishing Team

Editors: Gail and Peter Mott; Designer: John Locke

ROCLA In Solidarity With Latin America Movements for Justice

ROCLA contributions for 2011 were divided into four categories: Organizing the National Movement, Poor Nations Organizing against Neoliberalism, Immigration and Farm Workers, and Rochesterians in Latin America, for a total of \$4100, including a gift of \$100 to the Downtown Presbyterian Church which so generously gives us meeting space and set-up free of charge. If you would like to be part of the selection process please let us know.

Each month we will highlight one of these organizations. Under the heading "Organizing the National Movement" is:

The Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC) is an association of national and local US-based grassroots Latin America and Caribbean solidarity groups, many of which have long histories of working with grassroots organizations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. LASC's goal is to define common goals and shared strategies for these groups. LASC's work circles around several hemisphere-wide issues as well as country-specific topics. We operate and structure our work from a solidarity model: we operate on the principle of self-determination; it is not up to us to determine what our partners in the Global South should or should not do. Nor is it up to us to determine the strategies and methodologies they use. We determine our strategies based on the needs of our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. \$200.