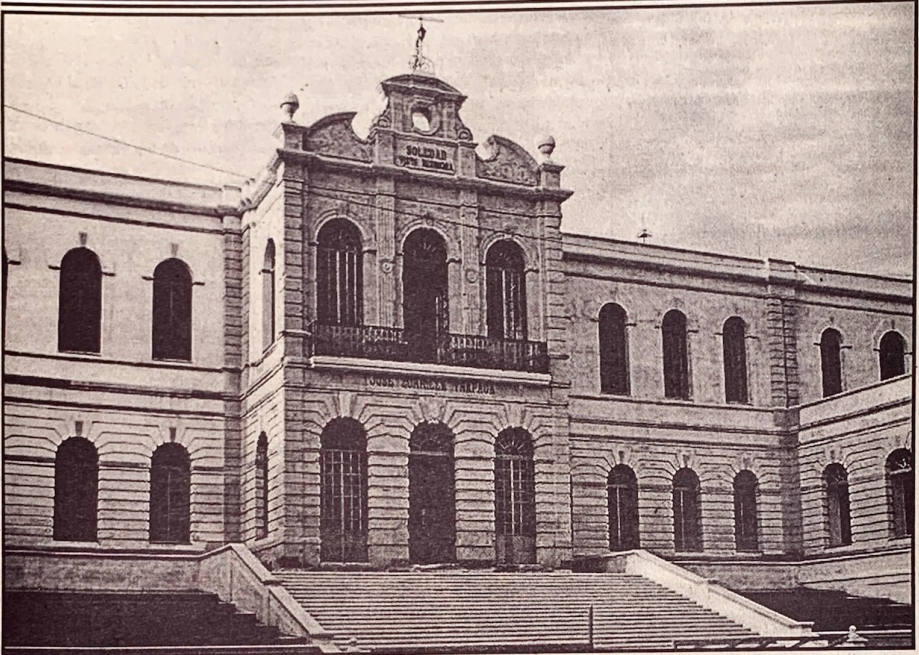




Oaxaca Times

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CASA: Art, Community & Environment Water Forum

After over two decades of vacancy, the abandoned textile mill Vista Hermosa (pictured above), overlooking the small village of San Agustín Etla, has recently sprung to life again. Within its antiquated walls, a state-of-the-art facility has been constructed. This unique center opened its doors on March 21st with a ceremony in which president Vicente Fox made the official opening.

The Centro de Las Artes

de San Agustín, CASA, will explore innovating ways to drastically reduce the environmental impact of artistic processes.

Where bobbins once flew through countless miles of thread, new projects will be envisioned and creations produced in a way that will turn the old images of sooty, pollution-spewing factories on their ears.

CASA is the brainchild of renowned Oaxacan artist Francisco Toledo, and is

backed by several government bodies, including Conculta (National Council for Culture and the Arts) and CENART (National Center for the Arts) whose director, Ms. Lucina Jimenez, was charged with leading the project and developing its academic component.

CASA is both a school and workshop. It is a home for the visual artists, including textile and graph-

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Late last month, Mexico was the host of the World Water Forum, a triennial meeting in which "the water community and the policy and decision makers from all regions of the world debate and attempt to find solutions to achieve water security".

Authorities of the hosting countries organize this forum in conjunction with the World Water Council (WWC), an organization based in Marseille, France that was established in 1996 in response to the increasing concern of the

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Learn Spanish at the ICC: Oaxaca's Best Language School

ic designers and photographers from both home and abroad.

Approaching the imposing 19th century edifice, "Fuentes Sangrantes" (Beeding Fountains), a Toledo creation, ebbs red alongside the stairway leading up to the impressive façade. Inside, two floors house the various workshops and the school. The site is also home to a park, providing spectacular views of the surrounding region.

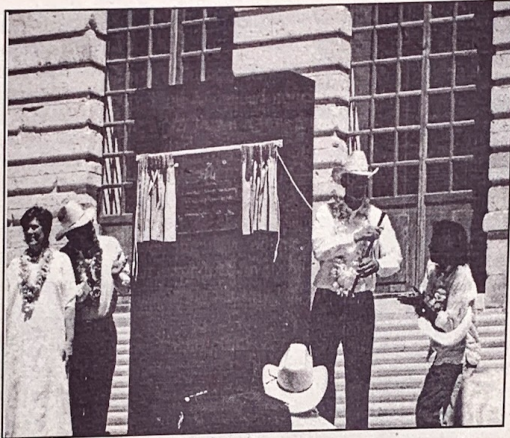
The center will be one of only a handful in the world, and the sole of its kind in Latin America. What makes it unique is its utilization of environmentally sound processes in art making, which normally yield high levels of chemicals and toxins. Under the

supervision of Architect Cláudia Lopez, the "clean center" is entirely

power sources. Thanks to rainwater collection and wastewater management, it will eventually be a self-sufficient entity.

All processes are planned with both environmental impact and degree of quality in mind. What is good for the artist will be even better for the earth. The center is planning on opening its textile and graphic design workshops in June, and hopes to have the photography center operational by winter.

To visit the structure, one can catch a collective just outside the second-class bus station, or hire a taxi for the twenty-minute ride.



President Vicente Fox pulling strings.

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¿Which School?

Estimado ICC,

I just wanted to write and thank everyone at the ICC for my wonderful stay in Oaxaca last month. To my great surprise, even four weeks of classes prepared me really well for the rest of my travels through Latin America. The handouts I received during the course have been really useful (might I even say invaluable!) and it's so great to be able to communicate with the people over here. Maestro Victor's vocabulary training has set me up to get the gist of what's going on in most situations, especially in the markets!

I've been in touch with my host family - I'm missing Señora Tico's mole like crazy and look forward to returning home and trying my hand at all the fantastic Mexican recipes Conchita taught me at the ICC cooking school.

Please give Nancy and Gregorio my best and tell them that I've been prac-

tising my salsa steps without the need to drink copious amounts of alcohol. I'm confident now so when the latino boys ask me to dance I no longer have to say no or down a few prerequisite beers.

I'm planning on returning back home via Oaxaca so I was wondering if I could return to the school just for a one-week intensive course at, dare I say it, intermediate level.

I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Muchas gracias otra vez,
Julia Fisher



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global community about water issues. Its mission statement declares that "it is devoted "to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of life on earth", not less.

Held for the first time in the Americas, this has been the fourth Forum; in 1997, the 1st World Water Forum was held in Marrakech, Morocco; the 2nd was in The Hague, the Netherlands, in 2000, and the 3rd was in Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, Japan, in 2003; the 4th Forum begun on March, 16 with President Vicente Fox leading the Opening Ceremony and concluded with the holding of World Water Day and the Closing Ceremony on the 22nd.

The Forum claims to be an open space where anybody with something to say on the topic is welcome, but there is criticism. For some, this is another summit in which governments and corporations make plans to control the world. Mild versions of the WTO protests were seen and a couple dozen were arrested, but the very same day, the Paris riots took the news's space.

With the motto "Local Actions for a Global Change", this forum intended to raise the question how to implement what is considered a right: the right to water. Several considerations were raised and discussed.

The right to water is defined in the General Comment Nº15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and entitles every human being to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use. This right to water includes the right to sanitation; it is necessary for the enjoyment of other human rights including the right to life and human dignity, the right to health, the right to adequate food, the right to adequate housing, the right to development and the right to a healthy environment.

It is common thought that national governments are primarily responsible for enabling implementation of the right to water through legislation, regulation, policies, work plans and associated budget allocations. However, the actual implementation is at local level where local governments and their service providers develop and extend services to the yet un-served. This public/private scheme has defined specific roles for both

However, these rights provide the tools for authorities and key actors to advocate and implement the right to water. The implementation of the right to water requires a clear definition of rights, obligations and responsibilities of each stakeholder, the identification of an authority to oversee the implementation of this right, as well as the allocation of adequate human and financial resources. The right to water can be implemented in various ways, which can all be effective if appropriate to the national and local context and actively involves all relevant stakeholders. For the successful implementation of the right to water, local initiatives and community's participation should be fostered. It is necessary to raise awareness about the existence of the human right to water, particularly amongst poor and marginalized people. Meeting the costs associated with implementation of the right to water requires solidarity between citizens, cities and regions to make access to water and sanitation services affordable to all people, especially the poorest. This solidarity must be institutionalized. Implementing the right to water in countries where almost all of the population has access to safe water has a different meaning than in countries where a large portion of the population does not yet have this access. International solidarity is particularly important in the poorest countries. For effective implementation, the right to water should be included in the national legislation but also in policies and action plans. However, the lack of explicit mention of the right to water in national laws should not be an excuse not to implement it. The implementation approach for the right to water must be sustainable, ensuring that this right may be guaranteed for present and future generations. There was not one speech in which the importance of water was not emphasized, however, the final declaration was ambiguous in relation to the recognition of the right to water as a universal right.



governments and private companies.

To ensure continued implementation of the right to water, sustainability of the water sources, both quantity and quality, is essential. Local as well as national governments should include protection of water resources and water ecosystems as a main element in any implementation program of the right to water.

In order for the right to water to be implemented, the leadership and initiative of key actors, including government departments, NGOs and international agencies are required as 'boosters' to help revise laws and policies, provide education and assistance to communities, and ensure their effective participation in decision-making. The fact that the right to water and sanitation is included in international law - and increasingly in national law - is only a preliminary step and will not automatically lead to implementation.

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Immigrant Song

Immigrants take a stand

It was the largest demonstration in California's history; according to the more conservative estimates, over half a million people marched through downtown Los Angeles on Saturday, March 25, in defense of immigrant rights and in protest against the Sensenbrenner Bill (US HR 4437).

After weeks of protest against new federal legislation, passed by the House of Representatives which would make illegal immigration a felony crime, as well as criminalizing all those who help illegal immigrants—including social service and charity workers who operate soup kitchens, homeless shelters and emergency clinics—this demonstration proved to be just the beginning of an unforeseen awakening of immigrants' political awareness and consequent activism; normally afraid of speaking up, illegal immigrants tended to keep low profiles to avoid deportation.

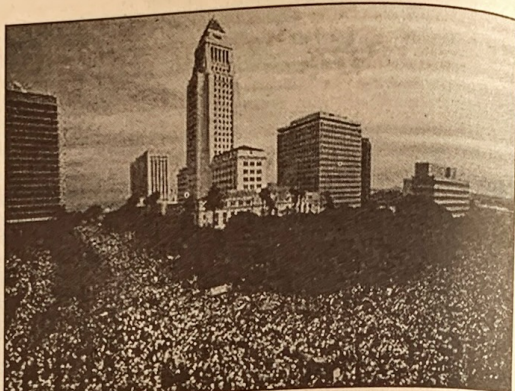
L.A.'s demonstration was not the only one, but was the largest. Another 50,000 people marched on Saturday in Denver, Colorado, in what was likely the largest demonstration in that city's history. Twenty thousand marched in Phoenix, Arizona, rallying outside the offices of US Senator Jon Kyl, who has introduced his own version of the punitive anti-immigrant legislation. Thousands more marched in cities as far-flung as Charlotte, North Carolina (3,000); Milwaukee, Wisconsin (30,000); Sacramento, California (4,000); Atlanta, Georgia (80,000); Washington, D.C. (30,000); Trenton, New Jersey (1,200); In the biggest such protest before Los Angeles, around 200,000 immigrant workers and their supporters rallied in downtown Chicago on March 11. In the same week.

According to organizers, the total number participating in the Los Angeles march may have exceeded 1 million. Throughout the day, thousands of new protesters joined the

march, causing Spanish-language network UNIVISION to arrive at an estimate of 2 million. So large was the Los Angeles demonstration that it took even the organizers by surprise, and the police, which had originally designated Broadway for the march, had to open adjacent streets to accommodate the endless stream of people, who then flooded adjacent Spring and Main Streets.

Among the signs that were prominently and repeatedly displayed by the marchers were, "Please, Let Us Be Part of Your Dreams," "We Are the Same, Ordinary People Like You," "We Are Not Criminals," "Amnesty and Full Rights For All Immigrants," "We are Not Criminals; We Are Students, Parents, and Neighbors," "I'm in My Homeland," "We Are Not the Enemy; We are Part of the Solution," "The United States: Land of Liberty, Land of Immigrants," "We Are All Immigrants in This Country," "Working Is Not a Crime," and "No to HR4437."

HR3447 was one of the main targets of the protest. It is also known as the Sensenbrenner-King Bill, which the House of Representatives passed last December under the main sponsorship of Wisconsin Republican James Sensenbrenner. Not only would it crack down on employers and businesses that hire undocumented immigrants, but it would also make anyone who assists them, or anyone who enters this country illegally, a felon. It would also expand enforcement of the law all along the border between the United and Mexico, which means erecting a fence 700



miles long.

While the bill had the support of the House Republican leadership, both the Senate Republican leadership and the Bush administration have expressed reservations, based on two concerns: objections from business interests that need immigrant workers to keep operating; and fears of a backlash at the polls from Latino and Asian voters, especially in states like California, Texas and Florida, which have large immigrant populations.

A bipartisan bill sponsored by Democrat Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Republican John McCain of Arizona has attracted the most Democratic Party support, as well as some Republicans, and it has features favored by the Bush administration, including a temporary guest worker program, which would turn millions of immigrants into a short-term, easily exploited labor force.

Interviewed during the Los Angeles demonstration, a Mexican immigrant declared "the law is racist, especially directed against Mexicans more than anyone else. It will criminalize the people that cross the border into the United States, as well as the people who help them. It will also punish the employers with jail. The law still hasn't finalized the details, but generally it will punish people who come here illegally.

"Right now at work there is an atmosphere of fear (that) began to take place because of everything that is happening, because of the anti-immigrant wave that's happening in the United States."

"I think that my message to the rest of the American workers is: accept us, and to see us their brothers, because we are all workers. We can do everything they can do. In fact, we are not afraid to do the work they refuse to do. I think we are all equal. We have the same aptitudes and abilities. All we need is an opportunity."

