

CATEGORY: NICARAGUA: TWENTIETH CENTURY

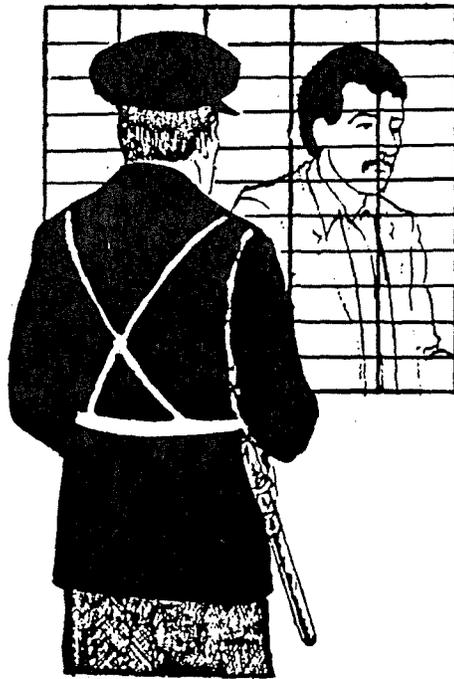
CONCEPTS: HUMAN RIGHTS, family

ACTIVITY: A POEM WRITTEN IN PRISON. This poem was written by one of the thousands of Nicaraguans who were imprisoned during the Somoza regime for their activities against the dictatorship. It portrays some of the basic human emotions felt by victims of political repression.

OBJECTIVE: This poem will introduce students to the human, individual side of the struggle in Central America. They will be able to think in terms of "real people" and not just statistics.

MATERIALS: Copies of the poem.

PROCEDURE: Have the students read the poem. Then discuss what it would be like to be jailed for political beliefs. Discuss particularly the feelings as portrayed in the poem, i.e. the personal level of missing everyday life with loved ones. By contacting human rights organizations you can get updates on human rights in Nicaragua and other countries.



LEVEL: MIDDLE GRADES

Source: Gibbs, Virginia G. *Latin America: Curriculum Materials for the Middle Grades*. Center for Latin America, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. 1985. 1989.

And if I Don't Return?

(Written by Edwin Castro Rodríguez while in prison in Nicaragua in 1958. He dedicated this poem to his wife, Ruth.)

Si algún día regreso
Volveremos al campo
y marcharemos juntos
por el viejo camino
que un día recorrimos
cogidos de las manos,
en el último abril
de nuestra dicha.

If one day I return
We'll go out into the country
And walk together
Along the old country road
As we did once before
Hand in hand,
In that last April
Of our joy.

Quizás será otro abril
caluroso y florido.
Se unirán nuestros pasos
en la alfombra de polvo.
Cruzaré los cercados
del pueblo vecino
para cortar racimos
de flores amarillas
que pondré en tus manos.
Le robaré al malinche
sus bellas flores rojas
que prenderé en tu pecho.
Bajaremos al río
y en sus aguas tranquilas
mojaremos las manos

Perhaps it will be another April
Warm and full of blossoms.
Our steps will unite
On the carpet of dust.
I'll climb over the fences
Of the neighboring village
To pick a bouquet
Of yellow flowers
And place it in your hands.
I'll steal the red blossoms
Of the lovely "malinche"
And pin them to your dress.
We'll go down to the river
And into its quiet waters
We'll dip our hands

¿y si no regresara?
¿Si no volviera nunca?
No importa. Vete al campo
y lleva a nuestro hijo
por el camino viejo
que un día recorrimos;
haz que corte al malinche
sus bellas flores rojas
para adornar tu pecho
y cruce los cercados
del potrero vecino
para llevarte ramos
de flores amarillas.
Baja con él al río
y mójale las manos.
En el agua tranquila
sentirás mi presencia
que llenará los cauces
abiertos por mi ausencia!

And if I don't come back?
If I never return?
It doesn't matter. Go out into the country
And take our son
Along the old country road
That one day we walked;
Let him cut the red flowers
From the pretty "malinche"
For your dress
And have him climb the fence
Of a nearby meadow
To bring you bouquets
Of yellow blossoms.
And take him down to the river
To moisten his fingers.
In the quiet waters
You will feel my presence
Flowing in the currents
Opened by my absence.