

over 48,800 renewed housing units. The current tenants are going to pay some \$3,000 for these homes, in payments to be made over a period of eight years.

In a paper presented to the International Metropolis Congress held in Mexico City in May, the Director General of RHP, Manuel Aguilera Gómez, reported on a study of housing conditions in the expropriated areas. According to

bathroom, kitchenette and laundry, in 40 square meters of space.

Under the RHP program the government provided 22,300 temporary shelters for use during the reconstruction period. The shelters were usually made of asbestos and galvanized aluminum and were equipped with electricity, water and gas. Here groups of 20 families shared bathroom and kitchen facilities.

The RHP program has also been in charge of restoring some 200 buildings classified as historical monuments. These buildings have been restored as dwelling places while at the same time respecting their antiquity and their architectural value.

The second phase of the Emergency Housing Program began in July 1986 with a budget of 45 billion pesos, (some \$30 million) to finance work on 15,940 damaged homes. 79% of the programs resources are earmarked for reconstruction and the remaining 21% is for repairs.

In addition to government efforts, non-government organizations such as the Red Cross, UNICEF and church groups have also worked in reconstruction, while universities and professional groups have provided technical assistance.

Residents in the damaged areas have also contributed to reconstruction, with their labor as well as in decision-making processes. Community organizations have sprung up and have now been working together for nearly two years. Both men and women report positively on their post-earthquake experiences in terms of cooperation among neighbors and in the learning of building techniques. (See Voices number 2).

In an ambitious attempt to reduce the national housing deficit, the government's 1987 housing program was allotted a budget of 2.4 billion pesos and includes facilities for 350,000 new loans for homes.

According to the report Metropolis and Health presented to the Metropolis 1987 Congress by Dr. Jorge

Ruiz de Esparza of the Conurbation Commission for Central Mexico, in 1980, 24% of the homes in the Mexico city metropolitan area had only one room, and 34% of the population lived in these conditions. In the same vein, a Bank of Mexico (Banamex) report called "La vivienda en México" (Housing in Mexico) states that in 1980 an average 5.5 people lived in each home.

The Banamex report also estimates that there will be a demand for 9.5 million housing units in Mexico by the year 2,000. A little under half of these, 4.3 million, will be necessary because of the deterioration of existing homes, while 5.2 million additional units will be needed because of natural population growth.

Jacqueline Buswell



Photo from Unomasuno Archive

The Neighborhood Assembly marches near Los Pinos, the presidential residence.

this study, before the earthquake, 63% of the population did not have their own bathroom, while 29% shared kitchens. Half of the homes studied lacked efficient water supplies and drainage. Mr. Aguilera said that the new housing—in blocks no more than three stories high—provides families with a living room, two bedrooms,

## The Fishing Industry Moves Forward

Over a million tons of seafood are hauled in each year

Mexico's fishing industry is like a small boat which has miraculously escaped being shipwrecked. In the midst of the economic storm this country is living through, this sector has achieved an average growth rate of 8 per cent. No other Mexican industry has managed that.

The Fishing Department believes the industry is in a state of inertia as far as growth is concerned. But, though production in 1986 was slightly lower than in 1982, it has fished over a million tons per year during eight consecutive years.

Mexican fishermen brought in 1.354 million tons of fish in 1986 alone; more than many other countries with a strong fishing tradition such as Britain, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Ten years ago it was quite usual to hear people in Mexico say that most of their fishing potential was unused. Nowadays, not only is the consumer market duly supplied, but there is a large amount for export. This sector accounts for 4.8 per cent

### Fishing Production 1986

(In thousands of tons)

sardine	468
anchovy	116
tuna and similar species	102
shrimp	73
mojarra	67
algae and sargasso	50
oysters	43
shark	20
carp	17
dogfish	13
mullet	12
sawfish	10

## the nation

of Mexico's exports (not including oil), which means more than 500 million dollars for the country.

The fishing boom results from the efforts of approximately 270 thousand people: fishermen, technicians, factory workers, researchers and office staff. This virtual army of people is posted along 7.147 km. of Pacific coastline and 2.756 km. belonging to the Gulf of Mexico, part of the Caribbean and the Sea of the Antilles.

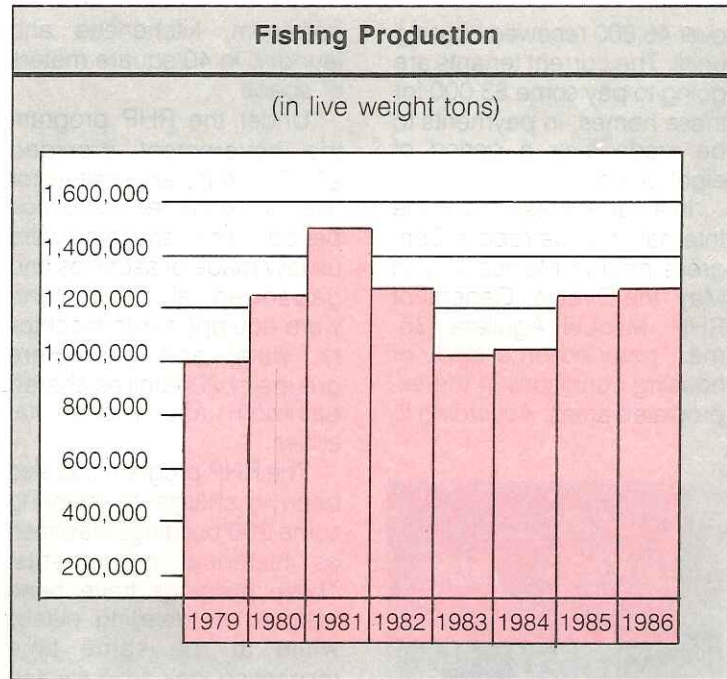
The Mexican fishing industry is divided into three groups: private firms, companies organized by the workers themselves and state-run companies. The private firms have the largest production, about 64 per cent. The companies run by the workers, which are usually a small sector in the Mexican economy, come second. They are organized in cooperatives and produce 25 per cent of the total fishing production, while the state-run companies produce only 11 per cent.

There are over 62 thousand fishing vessels in Mexico but only 3.500 are part of the fishing fleet. They can each carry 10 or more tons. This fleet concentrates mainly on shrimp, sardine and tuna-fish.

These ships are a far cry from the floating factories Japan and the U.S. have, as far as technology is concerned. But Mexican fishing ships do arrive in port with their shrimp ready and frozen, and some even get back with their tuna-fish already canned.

Nonetheless, the Mexican fishing fleet is also suffering the consequences of Mexico's financial crisis. It must face increases in the price of imported spare parts, fuel and fishing nets. Credit is also becoming more expensive and there are a series of other factors as well, all of which hinder the fleet's activity. This is why it operates only at 84% of its capacity and often starts work at the wrong moment.

The fishing industry has 485 processing plants which freeze



shrimp and can sardines and tuna-fish. Around 65 per cent are located on the Pacific, 34 per cent on the Gulf of Mexico and only 1 per cent in Mexico City. During 1986 these plants suffered financial restrictions and credit cutbacks, all of which increased operation costs.

The fact that Mexico is not keeping up to date in fishing activities means that both the actual fishing and the industrial processes will be affected. And we should keep in mind that

## Tuna Fish Exports Have Doubled

A country is entitled to the marginal waters within 12 miles of its shores. It is also entitled to another strip of sea which begins where the 12 mile limit ends and stretches as far as the 200 hundred nautical mile limit. This second strip can be used for economic purposes only by the country it belongs to.

Various countries used to fish unknown quantities of tuna-fish within Mexico's 200 mile limit. But during the López Portillo Administration, the government decided to develop the fishing industry.

Mexico then bought modern fishing ships, built new processing and canning plants and insisted on her right over this economically exclusive area.

Because of this, in July 1980, Mexico captured six U.S. fishing ships which were looking for tuna-fish in this area. The U.S. retaliated with an embargo on all Mexican

tuna-fish imports.

Mexico insisted on her right over this strip and refused to yield to pressure. But the embargo severely affected the tuna-fish industry, for the U.S. was its main client and Mexico had just increased its fishing fleet and was catching greater quantities of tuna. The international market was also out of the question because Mexico did not fulfill all the requirements concerning freezing point, degree of salinity and tests on amount of radioactivity and mercury.

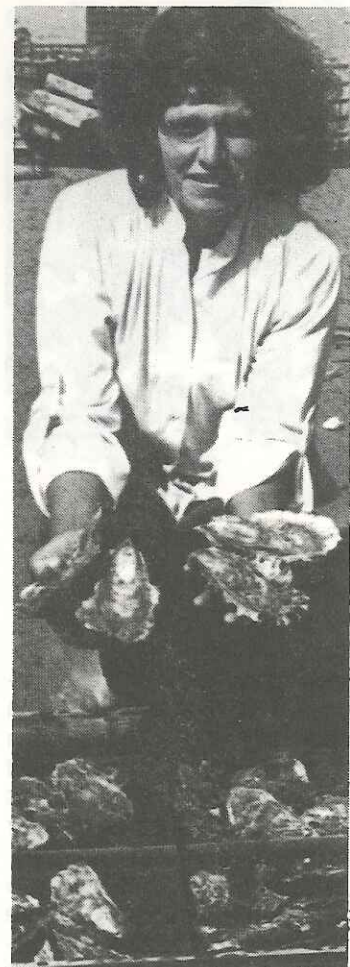
The consumer market also proved to be no alternative as the canned product is more expensive than meat or poultry. The fact that raw tuna-fish is cheaper made no difference, for the Mexican people are not used to buying it in that form.

The embargo decapitalized Mexican fishermen. In 1982, they caught 60 per cent

less than in 1981 and by mid-1984, there were millions of tons of tuna-fish stored away as the drop in prices made sales on the world market abroad impossible.

On August 13th, 1986, after a six-year embargo, during a visit President De La Madrid made to Washington, President Reagan announced that the tuna-fish embargo was over. At this meeting both parties tried to come to an agreement on trade and other issues and efforts were made to improve the relationship between the two countries.

By the time the embargo was lifted, Mexico had found a broader market for its tuna-fish, and Europe had become its chief client. Today, the tuna-fish industry has doubled the amount it exports: 35 thousand tons in 1985 compared to 65 thousand tons in 1986. Also, only 7 thousand tons went to the U.S.



Catching oysters.

we are talking about a gold mine as far as food is concerned.

Compared with other sea products, shrimp is the most important source of income. Last year, the U.S. bought 83 per cent of Mexico's 73 thousand tons of shrimp. That meant a \$400 million income for the country. The other 17% went to the consumer market. This seafood comes first in the Mexican fishing balance of trade and figures amongst Mexico's five principal exports in recent years.

The sardine is the most fished species in Mexico. The largest haul ever made took place last year, but because of its low price it is not economically relevant. Almost half of Mexico's 1986 sea production consisted of sardine, anchoveta, seaweed and sargasso. Nevertheless, they only added up to 2.3 per cent of the total value of sea products. Yet sardines are important because they are a balanced foodstuff within reach of most Mexicans.

Tuna-fish is also an important export product. When the U.S. set up a six-year embargo on Mexican goods, the country had to look for new markets in Europe. When the embargo was called off at the end of 1986 (see appendix), more tuna-fish was exported.

According to estimates, the present generation of Mexicans will see the end of this country's oil reserves. That's why Mexico is searching for new ways to increase and diversify the management of other resources which will keep the Mexican economy alive. The sea and its products are one out of various possibilities. If Mexico can achieve an ecological balance in its territorial waters and an economical balance by distributing its sea wealth in a socially just fashion, then the sea won't just be an alternative, it might mean the future itself.

Luz Guerrero Cruz

## Congresswomen Hold Third Peace Conference

The forum demanded more reasoned leadership of world affairs

The danger which the arms race offers to peace and people's development was the central preoccupation of all those who assisted at the Third Annual Conference of Disarmament and Development, organized by the World's Congresswomen for Peace, on the 14th, 15th, and 16th June, in the headquarters of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Mexico City. 480 representatives of 29 countries took part.

Work began with the topical seminar, 'Women and peace', on Sunday 14th, and continued with the conference on the 15th and 16th, with outstanding proposals and statements.

During the inauguration of the seminar, the president of the High Commission of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico, Antonio Riva Palacio, talked of Mexico's pacific tradition and declared that the seminar was a valuable facet of parliamentary diplomacy, an international exercise that, parallel to and complementary to formal diplomatic relations between heads of State, would lead to a rapprochement between people, through their representatives.

This vision of Mexican foreign policy was reaffirmed on the second day of activities, when the President, Miguel de la Madrid, declared the Conference formally opened. The President declared that Mexico has always fought for general and total disarmament which will only be achieved when world public

opinion is made fully aware of the danger we live in.

Congresswomen for Peace had their first conference in Stockholm, Sweden, on April, 1985, and the second in New Delhi, India, April, 1986. In both events it was pointed out how minimal is woman's influence in decision-making on peace, military budgets and structures, and in negotiations on disarmament.

The Third Conference, presided over by the unanimously elected Mexican senator, Silvia Hernández, became a forum for the voice of preoccupation, and insistence on better reasoning in the leadership of world politics.

The outstanding themes that were treated in the Conference were: world military spending, the economic crisis and the arms race; and the need for disarmament for development.

The North American representative, Bella Abzug, stated her support for the termination of nuclear tests, dependent on the attitude taken by the Soviet Union. She also declared that the women of her country were opposed to the military aggression in Central America.

For her part, the Soviet Congresswoman, Rita Kukain, reminded us of the Chernobyl accident and gave it as an example of atomic danger. At the same time she declared herself against the arms race in space.

Tamako Nakanishi, from

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