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Rigoberta Mench was born on January 9, 1959 to a poor Indian peasant family and raised in the Quiche branch of the Maya culture. In her early years she helped with the family farm work, either in the northern highlands where her family lived, or on the Pacific coast, where both adults and children went to pick coffee on the big plantations. Rigoberta Mench soon became involved in social reform activities through the Catholic Church, and became prominent in the womens rights movement when still only a teenager. Such reform work aroused considerable opposition in influential circles, especially after a guerilla organization established itself in the area. The Mench family was accused of taking part in guerrilla activities and Rigobertas father, Vicente, was imprisoned and tortured for allegedly having participated in the execution of a local plantation owner. After his release, he joined the recently founded Committee of the Peasant Union (CUC). In 1979, Rigoberta, too, joined the CUC. That year her brother was arrested, tortured and killed by the army. The following year, her father was killed when security forces in the capital stormed the Spanish Embassy where he and some other peasants were staying. Shortly afterwards, her mother also died after having been arrested, tortured and raped. Rigoberta became increasingly active in the CUC, and taught herself Spanish as well as other Mayan languages than her native Quiche. In 1980, she figured prominently in a strike the CUC organized for better conditions for farm workers on the Pacific coast, and on May 1, 1981, she was active in large demonstrations in the capital. She joined the radical 31st of January Popular Front, in which her contribution chiefly consisted of educating the Indian peasant population in resistance to massive military oppression. In 1981, Rigoberta Mench had to go into hiding in Guatemala, and then flee to Mexico. That marked the beginning of a new phase in her life: as the organizer abroad of resistance to oppression in Guatemala and the struggle for Indian peasant peoples rights. In 1982, she took part in the founding of the joint opposition body, The United Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition (RUOG). In 1983, she told her life story to Elisabeth Burgos Debray. The resulting book, called in English, I, Rigoberta Mench, is a gripping human document which attracted considerable international attention. In 1986, Rigoberta Mench became a member of the National Coordinating Committee of the CUC, and the following year she performed as the narrator in a powerful film called When the Mountains Tremble, about the struggles and sufferings of the Maya people. On at least three occasions, Rigoberta Mench has returned to Guatemala to plead the cause of the Indian peasants, but death threats have forced her to return into exile. Over the years, Rigoberta Mench has become widely known as a leading advocate of Indian rights and ethno-cultural reconciliation, not only in Guatemala but in the Western Hemisphere generally, and her work has earned her several international awards. From Les Prix Nobel. The Nobel Prizes 1992, Editor Tore Frngsmyr, [Nobel Foundation], Stockholm, 1993 This autobiography/biography was written at the time of the award and later published in the book series Les Prix Nobel/ Nobel Lectures/The Nobel Prizes. The information is sometimes updated with an addendum submitted by the Laureate. Selected BibliographyBy Rigoberta Mench TumCrossing Borders: An Autobiography. New York: Verso, 1998. (First published in Italian, October 1997, and in Spanish, April 1998.)I, Rigoberta Mench. An Indian Woman in Guatemala. Edited and introduced by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. New York and London: Verso, 1984. (Her life story, based on a week of recorded interviews with the editor, a Latin American anthropologist, who revised and arranged the transcripts. The original Spanish title in 1983 was My Name is Rigoberta Mench and This is How My Consciousness Was Raised. Translated into more than twelve languages and received several international awards. The autobiography became a most influential image internationally of the atrocities committed by the Guatemalan army in peasant villages during the civil war. In 1999 a controversy arose over its credibility, see Stoll below Other SourcesCalvert, Peter. Guatemala. A Nation in Turmoil. Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985. (Excellent historical introduction to Guatemalas social and economic problems, with the comparative perspective of other volumes in Westviews series on the Nations of Contemporary Latin America. By a British scholar.)Hooks, Margaret, ed. Guatemalan Women Speak. Introduction by Rigoberta Mench Tum. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1991.Perera, Victor. Unfinished Conquest. The Guatemalan Tragedy. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: Univ. of California Press, 1993. (By a native Guatemalan, whose story of the civil conflict is based on both personal experience and scholarship. With an important bibliographical essay.)Simon, Jean-Marie. Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.Sommer, Doris. No Secrets: Rigobertas Guarded Truth. Womens Studies 20 (1991): 5172. (Analyses I, Rigoberta as an example of womens testimonial literature and discusses implications of the contrasts between Rigobertas mother tongue and Spanish, a hierarchical language with gender concepts very different from Quich.)Stoll, David. Mench and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999. Stolls critical examination of Rigobertas autobiography, based on local interviews and documentary sources, shows that parts of her own and her family history are not correct, even when she speaks as an eyewitness of events described. Stoll approves of her Nobel prize and has no question about the picture of army atrocities which she presents. He says that her purpose in telling her story the way she did enabled her to focus international condemnation on an institution that deserved it, the Guatemalan army. As an anthropologist who has studied the Maya peasants, however, he feels that by inaccurately portraying the events in her own village as representative of what happened in all such indigenuous villages in Guatemala, she gives a misleading interpretation of the relationship of the Mayan peasants to the revolutionary movement. Asked about Stolls allegations, Professor Geir Lundestad, the secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, declared that the decision to award the prize to Mench was not based exclusively or primarily on the autobiography, and he dismissed any suggestion that the Committee should consider revoking the prize.Tedlock, Dennis, transl. Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985. (The sacred text of the Maya.) From Nobel Lectures, Peace 1991-1995, Editor Irwin Abrams, World Scientific Publishing Co., Singapore, 1999 This autobiography/biography was written at the time of the award and first published in the book series Les Prix Nobel. It was later edited and republished in Nobel Lectures. To cite this document, always state the source as shown above. Copyright The Nobel Foundation 1992 To cite this section MLA style: Rigoberta Mench Tum Biographical. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Prize Outreach 2025. Thu. 24 Jul 2025. < Back to top Takes users back to the top of the page Berryman P (1984) Christians in Guatemalas struggle. Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), London Google Scholar Comit de Unidad Campesina, Mench R (1996) Klage der Erde. Der Kampf der Campesinos in Guatemala. Lamuv Verlag, Gttingen Google Scholar Dudley (1999) On Rigoberta, Guerrilla, and Academics: an interview with David Stoll.NACLA Report, Vol. XXXII, No. 5, March/April 1999 . Accessed 25 Oct 2017Fernndez Fernndez JM (1993) Los Mayas de Guatemala en el Umbral del Siglo XXI. Modernizacin, Conflicto Socioal e Identidad tnica. Unpublished Manuscript, Madrid Google Scholar Grandin G (2011) Who is Rigoberta Mench? Verso, London Google Scholar Frngsmyr T (1993) Rigoberta Mench Tum. Biographical. . Accessed 13 July 2017Mench Tum R (1984) I Rigoberta Mench. An Indian Woman in Guatemala. Verso, London Google Scholar Mench Tum R (1998) Rigoberta: La nieta de los Mayas. El Pas-Ágular, Madrid Google Scholar Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG) (1997) El entorno histrico. Tomo III. Informe del Proyecto Interdiocesano Recuperacin de la Memoria Histrica (REMHI). LLL, S.A., Costa Rica Google Scholar Stoll D (1999) Rigoberta Mench and the story of all poor Guatemalans. Westview Press, Boulder Google Scholar ExplanationExplanation. To find the expression equivalent to x^(1/3), we can rewrite the expression as a product of powers of x and apply the property of exponents. Step 1: Rewrite the exponent as a product of powers of x. x^(1/3) = (x^(-1))^(1/3) Step 2: Apply the property of exponents. (x^(-1))^(1/3) = (1/x)^(1/3) Step 3: Simplify the expression. (1/x)^(1/3) = 1/(x^(1/3)) Therefore, the expression equivalent to x^(1/3) is 1/(x^(1/3)) (sqrt[3]{x^(1/3)}) , which is the second term.Rigoberta Menchs powerful autobiography begins with these simple words: This is my testimony...Id like to stress that its not only my life, its also the testimony of my people...My personal experience is the reality of a whole people. Some of the facts that Rigoberta shares about her life have been questioned. But her story can still be read as a description of the common experiences of many Indians who led lives of exploitation, deep discrimination and fear of Guatemalas brutal military dictatorships. Rigoberta was born into a large peasant family. Her mother and father were both leaders in her community. Her father organized a peasant group, the United Peasant Committee (CUC), and worked to hold on to his land. Many Indians, like Rigobertas family, had to spend half the year working on coastal plantations that typically exported coffee and cotton. The intense heat of the coast frequently made the highland Indians sick. Malnutrition and handling the fungicides used on the plantations frequently caused the workers to grow ill. Although Rigobertas parents could not read or write, Rigoberta was lucky enough to receive education when some Belgian nuns found her to be bright and promising. In spite of the familys money problems, she was kept by the nuns in their convent for a year, and attended school up through the first year of junior high. To better herself, Rigoberta worked as a servant in an urban middle-class household. Misused and criticized for her Indian ways, she experienced the deep divide that exists between the Indians and the rest of Guatemalan society. In her village, Rigoberta joined a revolutionary anti-government Christian movement. Observing the lives of the Indians, she came to the conclusion that their problems stemmed from the ownership of the land. The best land, which used to belong to Indians she says, was owned by big landowners who neither accepted Indians nor their ways. Wanting to take an equal part alongside her brothers in the struggle for justice, Rigoberta often faced male ridicule. Her mother gave her advice. Analyze your position as a woman and demand a share, she told her. A child is only given food when he demands it. The governments response to peasant organization was tremendous repression. The army occupied and even bombed Indian villages, believing that people who were fighting for their land were lending support to the rebels. The villagers fled to the mountains, without blankets or clothes. Rigoberta organized the women, getting them to build encampments and learn how to defend themselves. In this period, many who survived left their traditional land, becoming refugees. Political leaders were a special target of the military governments who periodically killed them in public punishments as examples to others. Because of such demonstrations, Rigoberta decided not to marry nor have children, something almost unheard of in her culture. She could not endure it if something horrible happened to one of her children. One of Rigobertas brothers, Petrocinio, was kidnapped and killed by the army. No one knows for sure how, but family members say that his body was dumped, along with those of several others, in a town square. Soon after her brothers death, Rigobertas father was killed, her mother three months later. Another brother was also killed. The horror of these events reinforced Rigobertas will to fight. But with death threats against her life, she went into hiding. In 1981 she had to flee the country: she remained in exile for 10 years. Outside Guatemala, Rigobertas opposition to repression took a new turn. She began speaking about the plight of her people at the United Nations as well as throughout the Americas. The Guatemalan authorities tried to stop her, calling her a Communist and leftist guerrilla. Several attempts were made on her life. With the publication of her autobiography, I, Rigoberta Mench, in 1983, and its translation into more than 20 languages, she reached an even greater audience. Rigobertas words became her most effective weapon in the fight for survival of her people. In her work during this time, Rigoberta helped to define the concept of indigenous peoples, differentiating it from the concept of ethnic or religious minorities. She says that indigenous peoples are original peoples, whose philosophies of life are rooted in their histories. They need to live communally, and recognize Mother Earth ... (as) the source, the root, the origin of culture and existence. Human beings need the earth, and the earth needs human beings. Although she distinguishes between indigenous peoples and other minorities, Rigoberta sees their struggle as one, saying that women, indigenous peoples and minorities must join hands and fight for their common interests. In 1992, at the young age of 33, Rigoberta Mench won the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the first Latin American woman and Indian to do so. Rigoberta acknowledged the prize as an homage to the struggles of indigenous people everywhere, and of indigenous women in particular. I consider this prize, not as an award to me personally, but rather as one of the greatest conquests in the struggle for peace, for human rights and for the rights of the indigenous people who, along all these 500 years, have been split, fragmented, as well as the victims of genocide, repression and discrimination. Rigoberta also saw the prize as an instrument with which to fight for peace and justice. The only way to build up a real democracy was to seek justice for those who suffer economic, social and cultural disparities. Rigoberta went on to explain, It is not enough to speak out against war; the causes of war must be eliminated. That is, we must end unjust distribution of wealth. I blame the first world for having taken our riches for so many years. Rigoberta used the money she was granted to set up the Rigoberta Mench Tum Foundation to aid indigenous people. Among its goals are the defense and promotion of human rights. It speaks out against continuing human rights abuses in Guatemala and elsewhere. It has played a major role in creating summits of indigenous leaders, trying to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts. After the signing of Guatemalas peace agreement, the foundation helped refugees return, finding them land and training them for jobs. Many projects are aimed at indigenous women, whom Rigoberta calls the most exploited of the exploited ones...but still they are the ones that produce life and riches. As a result of her efforts, the United Nations declared 1993 the International Year for Indigenous Populations. In 1996 Rigoberta was appointed Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO. At conferences and campuses throughout the world, a small brown figure appears, radiant in her traditional clothes. It is Rigoberta Mench, still stirring the consciousness and activism of the world. Time Line: Guatemala 1960 A failed revolt by junior military officers against one of Guatemalas military dictatorships leads to armed insurrection against the government. Extreme right-wing groups of self-appointed vigilantes kidnap and torture anyone suspected of involvement in leftist activities. 1970s Grassroots groups, including peasant organizations, unions, the churches, intellectuals and others, begin to mount serious challenges for power. In attempts to crush the rebellion, the dictatorships commit great atrocities. Efran R90s Montt, a demagogic, right-wing general, is the countrys president during its most violent periods. Forms of repression include disappearances and mass killings. 197883 The military attacks Indian villages, destroying over 400 and killing hundreds of thousands of people. Thousands of children are orphaned, one million people uprooted to become refugees; many flee to southern Mexico to escape systematic military repression. 1982 The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), an umbrella organization made up of four insurgency movements, is formed to lead the struggle against the government. 1985 An election relatively free of fraud is accomplished. Rounds of talks between URNG, the government and the army begin. 1992 Rigoberta Mench wins Nobel Peace Prize. 1993 Ramiro De Leon Carpio, a popular human rights activist, moves the process forward, brokered now by the United Nations. 1996 The Government of Guatemala and representatives of URNG sign the last of a number of accords which bring to a close the 36-year-long internal conflict, the longest in Latin America. The agreements include the resettlement and economic integration of displaced people into Guatemalan society, the creation of a human rights commission, recognition of the countrys cultural diversity, and the right of indigenous people to live by their own cultural norms. Today Thousands of refugees have returned and the army is supposed to be downsizing. Unresolved is the reality that in Guatemala more than half the population are descendants of Mayan Indians, most of whom live in poverty, two-thirds in extreme poverty. The wealthiest 10% of Guatemalans receive almost one-half of all the nations income; the top 20% receives two-thirds of all income. Only 4.28% of all landholders hold 61.8% of the arable land. Most rural households are landless, and many highlands peasants must migrate each year to the large southern coastal plantations to pick export crops. Here they work in subhuman conditions. Also, vigilante acts by right-wing military groups still occur.

Rigoberta menchu tum what word did she consider synonymous to revolutionary.

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