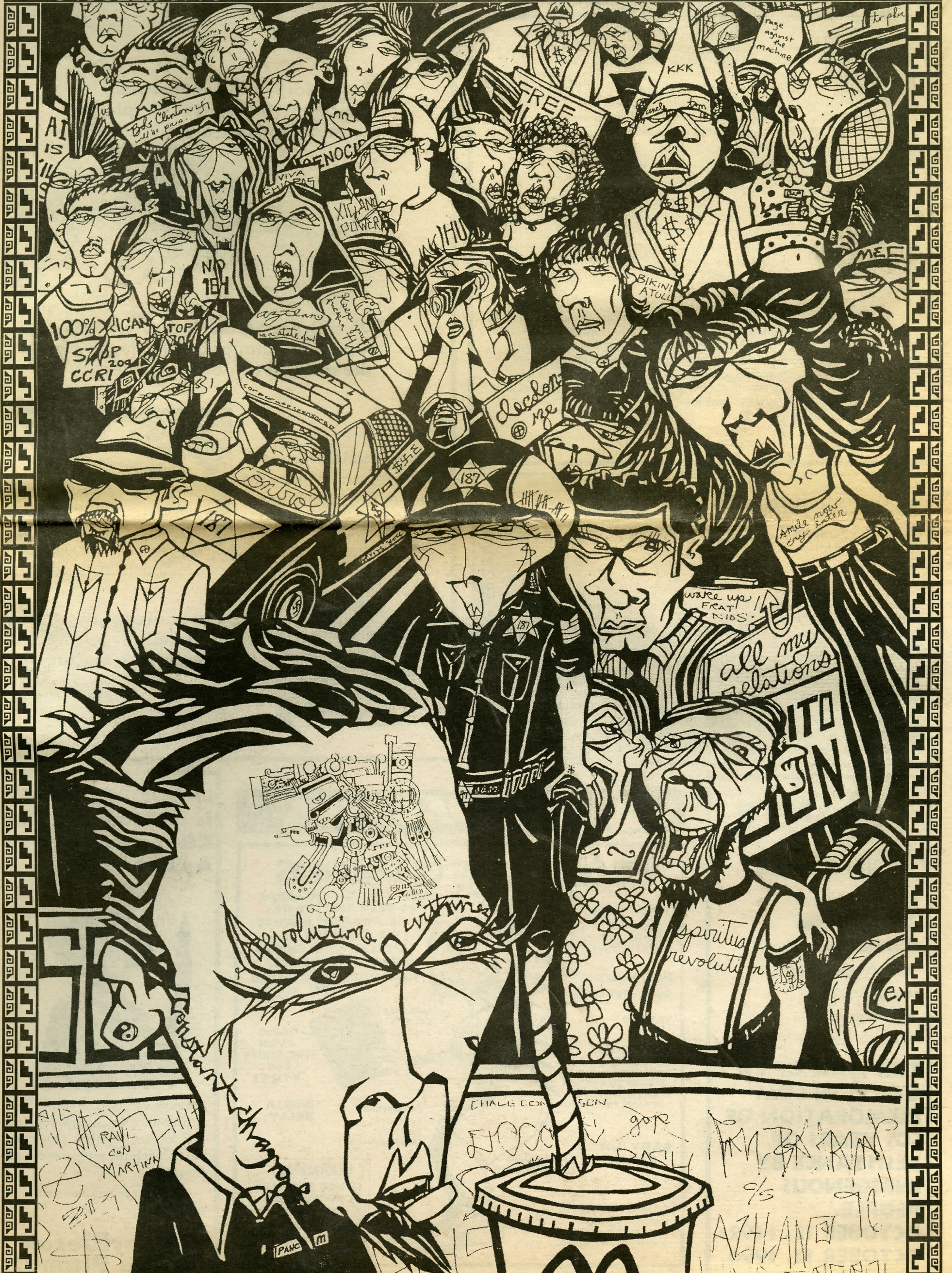


# LA VOZ DE BERKELEY

OCTOBER 1996

BERKELEY

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1





## Dear Readers

The unfolding of this new academic year has proven that we still continue to confront many of the same issues and obstacles we faced at the beginning of last year. As we near 505 years of living on occupied land, as a Raza comunidad we are realizing that we must continue to struggle, fight, in order to preserve what we gained within these past five centuries. Our goals are becoming more focused and we are more conscious about the need to be heard as collective entities. A core group of these entities have come to grips with the knowledge that our demands need to be heard and met by new rules that cannot be defined by western laws and cultures. The reality of sustaining our gains, many times seems too abstract to process into our daily realities. But the resources and privileges that we live in today are legacies of what people that wanted to live in dignity and peace put everything on the line for.

Therefore, *La Voz de Berkeley* will attempt to be responsible for providing a space where alternative perspectives can engage in informing the campus community, the surrounding comunidades, including young people, women and men, and our elders. The staff facilitating *La Voz* this semester are responsible for making sure that that space is available so that the people's demands may be heard and our resistance acknowledged.

Our core group of editors are not the only ones who can sustain *La Voz*. It is also the responsibility of campus Raza to contribute to the construction, development, and creation of the only monthly publication that challenges our colonization and the justification for it, and defends the people and their resistance. We welcome you all to engage with us in this production. Remember that October 12, 1996 marks a day of commemoration and celebration for Indigenous nations and peoples. Thank you for the attention you have given this message.

Maria Brenes  
Facilitating Editor

Take the Xicano Xallenge: Use your most favorite La Causa Jargon, your Mexican Eagle Eyes, and your "Yeah I'm a hard vato/ strolling through Sproul—Sf Se Puede" attitude to answer these questions and to find out:

Where's Pancho???

The first thirteen people to send in the best answers will win a fabulous, top of the line, eat your heart out Diego Rivera, eat this César Xavez, original hand painted poster of this latest *La Voz* cover arte by Xicano artist, Raul Baltazar. These collector's items are sure to go fast, so hurry and take the Xicano Xallenge today! Send your answers in a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope by any means necessary to  
Raul Baltazar  
1705 Paramount Blvd.

Montebello, CA 90640

Questions:

1. Where's Pancho?
2. Name on the deity on Pancho's forehead?
3. Find La Virgen?
4. Why is the Xola's Nike Swoosh upside down?
5. Why does the Xola have a hook for an arm?
6. Name the clowns?
7. If you could be any character, which would you be and why?
8. How many people are there in total?
9. Which one is Pito Wilson?

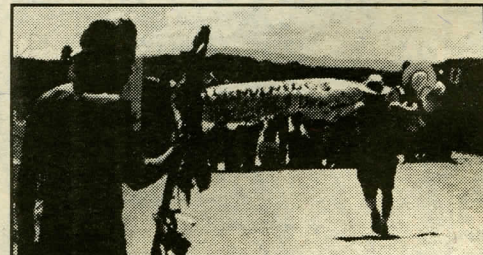
Bonus Activity:

Tell us what "Aztlán is a state of mind," "Smile now, cry later," and "Spiritual Revolution" means to you.

COVER ART BY RAUL BALTAZAR

## Inside of La Voz

**From North and South of the Continent: Indigenous people are running for Peace and Dignity**



**Viva Xicano Studies! : the name might have been changed by the faculty, but the students do not recognize it.**

**Peace and Unity march in Watsonville brought the people together to bring peace in the barrios**



**Raza organize against environmental racism in the high-tech industry**



## LA VOZ

### Editorial Staff

- Maria Brenes
- Catalina Garzón
- Evangeline Camarena
- Luis Angel Alejo
- Jesus Barraza
- Raul Baltazar
- Martina Estrada Melendez

**THIS ISSUE OF LA VOZ IS IN COMMEMORATION OF 505 YEARS OF RESISTANCE BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.**

**OCTOBER 12, 1492-  
OCTOBER 12, 1996**

# LA CHUPACABRA

VLO ALSARAZ 1967

## HOW TO SPOT THE CHUPACABRAS

NOW THAT CHUPACABRAS HAS BEEN SPOTTED IN L.A., YOU MUST REALIZE THIS CREATURE IS SKILLFUL AT BLENDING IN. THIS CHART WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE DREADED GOAT-SUCKER.

**RETRO PUNK HAIRDO**  
(DYED BLONDE AND EXTRA SPIKY)

**NOSE PIERCING**  
**GOAT PIERCING**

**TATTOO**

**GOAT SKIN WALLET**  
MIGHT CONTAIN:  
-EXPIRED TOURIST VISA  
-LAMB SKIN CONDOM  
-SEASON PASS TO ZOO

**BABY GOT BACK**

**TICKETS TO GALAXY GAME**

**"AIR CHUPAS"**  
MADE WITH THE KATHIE LEE GIFFORD STAMP OF APPROVAL

**GOAT**  
"CHUPACABRAS" OR "SELENA" T-SHIRT

**GOING OVER SPEC SCRIPT FOR "X-FILES"**

**WALKMAN FAVORITE MUSIC: "CHUPABANDA"**

**BIRRIA BELLY**

**WARNING:**  
IF YOU SPOT THE CHUPACABRAS:  
① APPROACH W/ CAUTION AND  
② GIVE UP DRINKING.

**LA VOZ DE BERKELEY is a Member of the Chicano Press Association**



The primary objective of the CPA is to advance the struggle for Raza self determination by promoting and unifying the progressive Raza press/media.

For more information write:  
Chicano Press Association P.O. Box  
620095, San Diego CA 92162

**iGuerilleros De La Pluma!**



## Peace & Unity March Calls For End to Violence

By Luis Angel Alejo

As Rosa De Ramirez left her house early Sunday morning, she looked at the altar she had set up for her 19 year old son, Antonio Ramirez Valdivia. Even though Antonio was killed nearly three years ago in a drive by shooting, the pain in his mother's heart remains strong. On this altar lay many of his personal belongings: his weights, his pictures, his necklace, even his childhood toys. On the way out the door, she grabbed his photo, embracing it in her arms.

She drove to the plaza, where she would be among approximately 150 people at the Watsonville Peace & Unity March. The first March was held three years ago when De Ramirez's son, Jessica Cortez, age 9, and Jorge Cortez, age 16, lost their lives to the violence in our streets. The March is an event sponsored by various community organizations and parents. Yet the core of the organizers are local youth, mostly high school students. Organizers say that the goal of the march is to bring an awareness to our community that we are in crisis. Too many of our youth are losing their lives to the madness of the streets and the ones who continue to suffer the most are the family members especially the mothers such as Rosa De Ramirez. However, many young

Xicanos are also being lost to state prisons and other state institutions.

On August 5, 1996, many community members, children, family members, and friends gathered to remember the many who have died over the last three years. Some of the other names remembered were Victor Simental, 23, Mike Echeverria, 22, Mariana Zavala, 14, Servando Renteria, 21, Andres Rodriguez, 43, Edgar Chacon, 16, Augustin Jacobo, 16, Jose Hernandez, 16, Gloria Hassemer, 42, and Jose Torrez, 19. The names and ages tell the importance of such an event.

The residents of the community of Watsonville were willing to take the message of Raza peace and unity to the streets where they feel it needs to be heard not only by the youth, but by entire families as well. For that purpose, the March goes into various neighborhoods throughout Watsonville. For the last two years, Classic Memories Car Club has supported the March and that Sunday, they brought out their fabulous looking cars to lead. Behind them were the White Hawk (IZTATUTLI) Aztec Dancers, who would bless each of the barrios with their dances. Some of the other groups present were Barrios Unidos, Watsonville Voter Registration Project, and the Ohlone Dancers.



PHOTO BY LUIS ANGEL ALEJO

Rosa De Ramirez, Liz Ayala of Barrios Unidos, and a young Barrio Warrior(front) await to take their messages throughout varrios neighborhoods in Watsonville.

The primary organizations involved in putting the March together this year included a spectrum of various community organizations including the Watsonville Brown Berets, Fenix Services, PVPISA, Youth Services, Hope Ministries, and G.A.N.A.S. Working together, they believe they could begin to bring about a change in the

day...I feel pain, a pain that I can't forget," Rosa said. "He is in a better place than we are...Yet I have to do something." Since his death, Rosa has supported the youth who have organized the March. She plans to start a mothers' support group that will aim at educating other parents to get involved



PHOTO BY LUIS ANGEL ALEJO

Patrick Orozco & Ohlone Indian Dancers open the Peace & Unity March with a prayer for all those who have died to violence in our streets.

## UC Berkeley's Women's Resource Center Threatened by Prop. 209

By Aisha Kelley

Located on the second floor of the Golden Bear center is a unit of Student Activities and Services called the Women's Resource Center, which is devoted to "enhance the academic achievement and personal development of all women at Berkeley." It has been rumored that the Women's Resource Center may no longer exist at UC Berkeley due to a recent review of the unit. Fortunately, according to Karen Kenney, Director of Student Activities and Services, the possible closing of the Women's Resource Center due to an internal review is just a rumor.

The Women Resource Center strives to respond to the need of women on campus by providing support groups, crisis intervention, internships, and a specialized library for and about women. The Center also promotes information and events designed to help women succeed on campus. Among its premiere programs are a Sexual Harassment Advocacy and Peer Education Program and Student Parent Services.

Was is it ever a consideration to close the Women's Resource Center? "No," said Kenney, "We are using Carla Trujillo as a consultant to conduct a review of the center's services and make a recommendation on how we might enhance the services or increase the efficiency of the Center." To take part in the review process Trujillo has been temporarily relieved of some of her responsibilities as Director of Women and Graduate Students of Color in Engineering Program.

Kenney also wanted to assure everyone that the Center

will remain at its current location, the Golden Bear Center.

"There are two phases of the review," said Kenney, "The first phase includes other committees reviews, internal reviews, and use the center's resources. The Women's Resource Center trust Kenney says that the first phase probably continue throughout the year."

Kenney describes the second phase as considering and implementing suggestions for resources and efficiency of the center. The review will begin in the Spring Semester and will be completed by summer. However, Kenney said that the review will take place this Spring.

Among possible suggestions for the center include developing a formal curriculum, strengthening academic connections with the Berkeley YWCA and the Women's Resource Center, and strengthening academic connections. Kenney says that she welcomes all suggestions regarding the Center.

Unfortunately, what does pose a threat to the Resource Center is Proposition 209, the "Rights" Initiative (CCRI).

"If CCRI passed a possible initiative, the Resource Center will not exist."

For the many who value the services of the Resource Center's current services, these services would be to vote in the California Civil "Rights" Initiative.



# THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT: People of Color redefine environmental activism

By Catalina Garzón

"WE, the People of Color, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby reestablish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages, and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and to secure our political, economic, and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples..."

—Preamble to the Principles of Environmental Justice  
The contemporary environmental justice movement was borne out of the struggles for social justice by peoples of color. In fact, its roots as a movement can be traced back to the invasion of 1492 to the present, when the European colonizers began the

natural resource extraction that would simultaneously desecrate the lands of the continent while enslaving millions of Native and African peoples in mines and plantations. Resistance to this eco-cide and genocide has been an ongoing process in which today's peoples of color throughout the world continue what their ancestors began 500+ years ago.

In this era of the globalization of corporate capital, both human and environmental exploitation is accelerating at an unprecedented scale. Huge transnational corporations transcend borders in their thirst for increasing profits and ever cheaper natural resources and labor. Peoples of color suffer the brunt of economic hardship in sweatshops and factories in the name of economic "development." At the same time, peoples of color are also left to deal with the environmental devastation which arises from industrial pollution and the literal corporate takeovers of entire regions of Third World countries and inner city neighborhoods.

Sadly but predictably, the mainstream environmental movement has failed miserably in addressing such environmental and economic justice issues. In fact, the environmental movement spearheaded by an affluent white elite can actually exacerbate the struggles of peoples of color to regain control of their cultures and their lands. For example, environmental legislation coupled with federal agencies attempt to

force the Timbisha Shoshone nation from their ancestral lands in Death Valley in the name of creating a national park there. In doing this, environmentalists

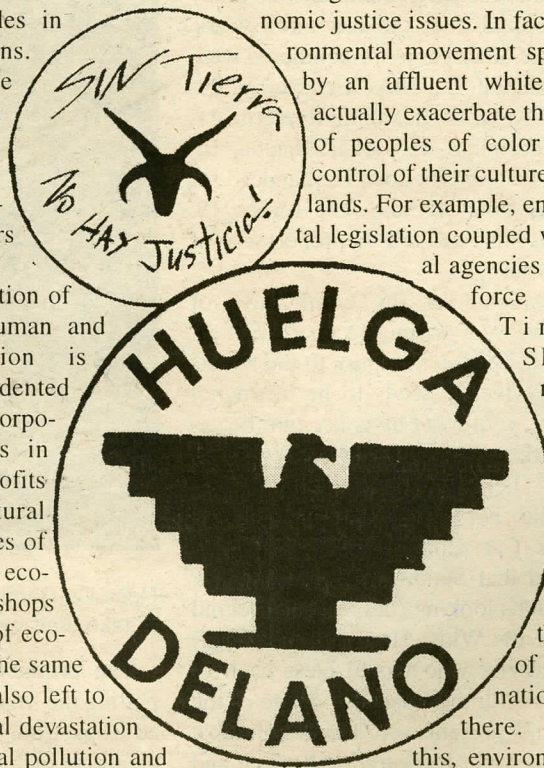
juxtapose an alien Western culture vs. nature ideology on the indigenous peoples who have coexisted in harmony with this

particular fragile ecosystem for thousands of years.

The same reaction can be expected in the case of the world's tropical rainforests. In scrambling for protection of such ecosystems from deforestation pressures, the conventional white movement has tended to villanize the rural populations of Third World countries. Rather than address the real culprits of the majority of deforestation, namely transnational corporations, thousands of indigenous peoples continue to be displaced and evicted from their ancestral lands in the creation of park systems, biosphere reserves, and debt-for-nature swap deals, as has happened recently in the Chocó region of Colombia.

Adding insult to injury, peoples of color are portrayed as populations overflowing the boundaries of the planet's carrying capacity for humans, driven by ignorance and poverty. Again, the mainstream does not emphasize the disproportionate damage of the Western consumption and ideology that has been forcibly imposed on Mother Earth and nonwhite cultures. The contributions of peoples of color to the preservation of the wilderness that is left, is seldom

**Continued on Page 11**  
**Look for Environmental Justice**



## CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA

### INTERNS NEEDED!

Centro Legal is currently seeking interns for the fall semester. Join an organization that has been helping La Raza for over 25 years in the Fruitvale District in Oakland. Work on cases of domestic violence, student's rights, tenant's rights, consumer/debt protection, property defense, and immigration rights! Gain valuable experience while helping empower the Raza community. The internships are on a volunteer basis. All potential law school students are especially encouraged to apply. Call us as soon as possible for an appointment. Spanish speaking skills required. Chicano Studies 98/197 units also available. Your help is needed now!!!

#### CONTACT

**CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA**  
**1900 FRUITVALE AVENUE SUITE 3A**  
**OAKLAND, CA 94601**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: Isela or Evelyn (510) 261-3721**



## Continued from page ??? Xicano Shorts

Environmental, religious, and Raza groups are infuriated that such a struggle must take place to salvage a part of California's natural heritage. "It's sickening for the lumber companies to think that they have control over trees that have existed on this land for over a thousand years, while they have been logging for less than one-tenth of that time," said Sean O'Shea of Casa Joaquin Murrieta.

As of September 15th, Pacific Lumber Co. will halt logging activities for the next three weeks or until it strikes a deal with the Federal Government.

## Heroin Planted in the U.S-bound Plane of Colombia's President

### Bogota, Colombia-

Four kilograms of heroin were found on the airplane that Colombian President Ernesto Samper was to board in order to attend a United Nations conference in New York. The night of September 22, hours before the scheduled flight, an anonymous caller tipped off the Colombian Air Force, who in turn contacted drug enforcement officials at the Bogotá airport. A thorough search uncovered fourteen cigarette-pack sized bundles of low-grade heroin in the nose of the plane.

This is the latest in a string of drug-related scandals which have brought Samper to the brink of resignation. In July, the United States government withdrew Samper's tourist visa after accusing him of funding his 1994 presidential campaign with millions of dollars from the Cali cartel.

It is not yet known who masterminded the setup, although some suspect U.S. agency involvement in attempting to further tarnish Colombia's image. Regardless of the perpetrator, Colombian officials are just thankful that the heroin was discovered prior to the plane's departure for New York. "Can you imagine the international spectacle and the defamation brought upon our country if U.S. authorities been the ones to find that heroin in the President's plane? That would have really been the beginning of the end," stated a Colombian Air Force official.

## Jose Angel Gutierrez Need Your Support!

### Arlington, Texas-

Jose Angel Gutierrez, co-founder of La Raza Unida Party and an associate professor at UT Arlington, has taken action against the university for its attack on the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS). Since the Center's inception in 1994, Gutierrez was named the director after a long fought battle for its funding.

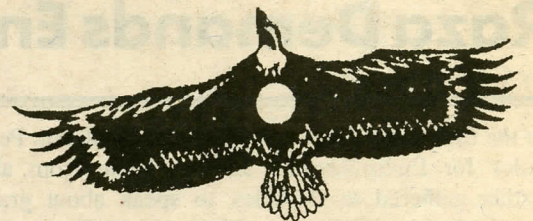
On July 26, 1996, Gutierrez was notified by Provost George Wright that his position would be eliminated as of August 31. Gutierrez was to assume only regular duties as associate professor and the two staff employees of CMAS would be fired. Although Gutierrez never was notified of any discontent, the university had already planned to move CMAS into the School of Urban and Public Affairs. Gutierrez said, "I have to go after them...I've been wrongly accused. I have to correct that...They don't want an independent center run by Mexican-Americans. We are going to have a fight, and in the words of John Paul Jones, I have not yet begun to fight."

Professor Gutierrez needs your support. Send a message of support to the following people. Only by doing so will the UT Arlington administration recognize the support our Raza professors have.

President Robert Witt, UT Arlington.  
Arlington, TX 96019. E-mail: Witt@UTA.edu  
Provost George Wright, UT Arlington.  
317 Davis Hall. Arlington, TX 76019. E-mail: gewright@UTA.edu

## Leonard Peltier Pleads: Please Don't Forget Me

First printed in Windspeaker Newspaper



June 26, 1975 started out as a beautiful day. I could feel a warm breeze as I lay in my tent listening to the women laughing and gossiping outside as they prepared breakfast. I heard one of them say "Oops, I just dropped this pancake on the ground," and another answered, "Don't worry about it. Just dust it off. They'll never know the difference." She meant us men. I laughed quietly with them and later found out that Dino had overheard them, too.

But suddenly this beautiful morning was cut short by the sounds of gunfire. It seemed far off, and at first I dismissed it as someone practicing in the woods. Then I started hearing the screams. I had never before felt this frightened, knowing that there were so many women, children, and old people there at our camp. I rushed out, grabbing my shirt and rifle, and started running for the houses where I believed the Jumping Bulls were trapped. The heat of the day hit me like a fist, and as I ran, trying to wipe the sweat from my eyes, I dropped my ammo bag. Bullets zoomed from every direction. I could hear them flying around my head. I had to drop onto my belly and crawl.

When I got to the house I warned everyone inside to get out of the area. Dino had told Nilak to gather the women and kids together and hide in the woods. I could not believe that this was happening. I could not believe that our wonderful, peaceful morning could be shattered by such violence. I did not know why we had come under such vicious attack. I knew only that my job was to help protect these innocent women and terrified children. I knew that I could not give in to my own fear, and I worried that someone's panic could spell their deaths. I told the young ones that it was time to be brave, to be warriors.

Somehow, almost everyone was able to make it out of the area and to temporary sanctuary that night. We lost our Brother Joe Stuntz to a sniper. Two agents also died. We prayed for their safe journey into the next world. The Creator watched over our escape that day, and although bullets raced past us, other than destroying a hip flask, none hit their targets. We were, and are, thankful to the many people that helped us. We conferred with our Elder about what we should do, and it was decided that we would stay in the area until Sundance at Crow Dog's.

The FBI and GOON's were participating in the largest manhunt in the United States history. They tore up homes without search warrants and harassed anyone they believed to be an AIM (American Indian Movement) supporter. After seeking guidance from my Elders again, I went to Canada. We had come to believe that everyone present that day would be prosecuted, and although we were innocent, it was decided that for our safety we should move in different directions.

I was extradited from Canada because of affidavits signed by Myrtle Poor Bear, who stated that she was my girlfriend and an eyewitness to the deaths of the agents. I had never met this woman, but learned later that she was mentally and emotionally unbalanced and had spent much of her life in and out of institutions. Her family told us that she suffered delusions. You could convince her that she had been at a certain place and done certain things, even if it had never happened. We discovered later that the FBI had dusted for fingerprints all over our camp and had not found a single print placing her in the area, yet they used her anyway. In fact they tortured this poor woman, terrorizing her into signing documents she had not even read. This was the first real indication that I had that I was not going to receive a fair trial.

My co-defendants had been found not guilty in a trial at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. My trial was mysteriously moved to Fargo, North Dakota, a place famous for anti-Indian sentiment. My trial judge was Paul Benson, a man so racist that the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals has revered him on anti-Indian remarks he made during one of his trials. Every motion, every defense allowed by my co-defendants was denied by the judge. I did not even have a jury of my peers. In fact, sitting on this all-white jury was a woman who openly remarked that she was a racist. I was convicted of killing both FBI agents at point blank range with an AR-15. I was then given two consecutive life sentences.

My first stop was at Leavenworth, then Terre Haute. Finally I was sent to Marion Federal Penitentiary "The new Alcatraz." Marion was a horror. I spent much of my time in complete isolation. The government expects its citizens to believe that only the nation's most violent and incorrigible prisoners are housed there. The truth is that political prisoners find their way there, too. What better way to keep us quiet?

We soon filed an appeal based on 12 automatically reversible errors. The senior judge was William Webster. I wasn't until after oral arguments that we discovered that he had been nominated for, and accepted, the position of new head of the FBI. He finally removed himself from the appeals procedure, but not before prejudicing the other judges against me. The critical piece of evidence, the murder weapon, convinced the court to deny the appeal, despite all of the government misconduct.

A second appeal was filed a few years later when we discovered, through a Freedom of Information suit, that the critical piece of evidence appeared to have been fabricated. We learned that the FBI had evidence of at least four AR-15's on the scene that day, and that the rifle and shell casing they claimed as their "most important" proof of the crime, had been given a firing pin test and it had concluded that they could not be linked. During two trial and one appeal, the government had maintained that a firing pin test could not be performed because the weapon had been severely damaged. This was a lie. When questioned on the stand about this, agent Evan Hodge, claimed he had "Misspoken to avoid perjury charge."

We were excited. We could not prove my innocence. The government had already conceded that Myrtle Poor Bear was not an eyewitness and now the ballistics evidence proven false. Yet, despite findings of the court that my trial judge had erred in his rulings, evidence had been fabricated exculpatory evidence withheld, and that government witnesses may not have been telling the truth, despite prosecutor Lynn Crooks announcing that they "do not know who killed those agents" nor what part I may have played in their deaths. Eleven months after litigation the court denied my appeal.

They wrote that it did not meet the very rigid legal standard for granting a new trial. Today I am in prison on a technicality; the difference between possibility and probability. One of those judges, Gerald Haney, has since come forward asking the president to consider a commutation of my sentence.

On November 9 of last year we had yet another appeal. It was based on the fact that the government has changed the theory of my conviction from murder in the first degree to aiding and abetting.

**Continued on page 11  
Look for Leonard Peltier**

## Listen to Me!

By Leonard Gwarth-ee-lass Peltier

Listen to me. . . I have a story I want you to hear about a Nation of people whose hearts are filled with Love and passion for all the Great Spirit's Creation. . . Listen to me. . . As I tell you about the evils done to the Proud Nations of People, who only wanted to show love and friendship to the people of Foreign lands. . . Listen to me. . . as I tell of the history of my People whose philosophy of life is to live in peace and harmony with Mother Earth and would extend a hand in friendship before we would in anger Listen to me. . . When I tell you how our offer of peace through our many Peace Treaties which are sealed with the oath of our sacred pipe ceremony were dealt with lies, deceit, hostility and death. . . Listen to me. . . When I answer people who tell me things have changed for the better in America for all, that nothing has changed for us Indians; we are still living in the highest poverty, alcoholism, unemployment rate, and we are still being dealt with lies, deceit, hostility and death. . . Listen to me. . . I am the Indian voice crying out from millions of Graves for peace, justice, and freedom. . . and for the return of our Holy Lands the Black Hills. . . Listen to me. . .



## Raza Demands Environmental Justice in the High Tech Industry

By Catalina Garzón

At the fifth anniversary celebration of Nindakin: People of Color for Environmental Justice, gente from all over Aztlán gathered in Berkeley to speak about grassroots community organizing around the issue of environmental racism. The High Tech core group from the Southwest Network for Environmental & Economic Justice, based in Albuquerque, New México, brought together representatives from Austin, Texas to Richmond, California to discuss the impacts of the electronics industry on the environmental health and safety of our barrios and Raza workers. "We have come today in response to the corporations formalized by NAFTA to exploit our communities in order to make profits," said a SNEEJ representative. He described the need to demystify the myth of the electronics industry as a "clean" industry, pointing to the reality of the industry's exodus from the Silicon Valley in search for lax environmental regulations and cheaper natural as well as human resources elsewhere in the Southwest and across the border.

According to María Chávez from the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) out of Albuquerque, computer chip manufacture requires enormous quantities of water—a resource that is already very scarce in New México's dry desert environment. While the industry monopolizes this water, gente in the barrios might not have enough clean water for drinking and daily use. Chávez also spoke about the conditions in the plants where she once worked, which have left a legacy of health problems in her life as well as those of many coworkers. "A lot of people die with cancer, tumors, heart attacks, because they handle toxic chemicals," she said. "Employers don't inform workers of [the chemicals'] hazards or even when they run the risk of being exposed." Chemical poisoning in young mujeres due to the inhalation of noxious fumes has led to frequent miscarriages and birth defects, as well as chronic depression, migraine headaches, and nervous system disorders.

"It is very difficult to unionize the high tech electronics industry," says María Loya, a representative from PODER!, (People Organizing in Defense of Earth and her Resources), a group based in Austin, Texas which was started in 1991 by Xicana/o activists in the East Austin barrios. For non-English speaking immigrant workers, the intimidation faced in asserting themselves and demanding

their rights in the workplace can be overwhelming. Warning labels, for example, are almost always in English, if posted at all. PODER in particular is organizing to make information accessible to the workers in terminology which they can understand. "Even for someone with a college degree, the legalese [concerning environmental health and safety] is impossible to understand," says Loya. Because of this, PODER has put together "Promotores de Derechos" groups to pass information onto community members so that they in turn can teach others. This empowerment runs the spectrum from educating workers about their rights in the workplace, to their rights with the police and the migra.

PODER, organizing around the slogan that "Ningun segmento de la sociedad debe monopolizar el aire limpio, el agua limpia, o lugar de trabajo limpio," is also campaigning against the racist policies of the local government. "We would get the impression that the state agencies were working for the companies," says Loya. In fact, the recent increase in electronics industry plants moving into East Austin is due to the fact that Austin officials have made it a point to direct construction of such "undesirable industry" facilities to East Austin, a predominantly Latino neighborhood. Such blatant environmental racism is not taken lightly by PODER, which filed a civil rights complaint with the regional EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) offices against the city of Austin for discriminatory policies in placing the high tech industry in communities of color. Due to PODER's and other grassroots community efforts, the city and the corporations alike have been forced to recognize that there is a lot of community resistance. "When Samsung was thinking of moving in [to East Austin]," says Loya, "they called up PODER to set up a meeting with us."

Hitting closer to home, Henry Clark of the West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC) in Richmond, California talked about the impacts of environmental injustice on the Northeast Bay's gente. "Richmond is home to the Chevron refinery, General Chemical company, Superfund sites, and now the high tech industry," Clark says. "We know this is environmental racism, and we know we continue to be considered expendable because Richmond is a lower-income community of color." In Richmond as in Austin, a web of corporate interests operates in conjunction with state agencies and officials, not only to withhold informational access from Richmond's

citizens, but to facilitate the enrichment of a few at the expense of the environment and of the majority. General Chemical Company currently ships sulfuric acid to its plant in Baypoint to be refined into electronic-grade sulfuric acid, which is then used in the manufacture of electronics within the high tech industry.

"The Chevron refinery just pumps oleum (concentrated sulfuric acid) right next door to General Chemical," says Clark. This corrosive chemical is then stored in tanks on site in Richmond, which aggravates the potential for accidents. After suffering through the disastrous General Chemical sulfuric acid release in 1993, which sent over 20,000 people to local hospitals, Richmond faces the threat of another assault by Chevron, which already has a petroleum refinery in the community. Now Chevron Chemical Company wants to increase the capacity of their hazardous waste incinerator in Richmond, which would contaminate the air with even larger quantities of deadly metals like arsenic, lead, and chromium, as well as the extremely toxic substance dioxin. Of the application that Chevron recently filed with the California State Department of Toxics, to grant a permit for increasing incineration at the facility, WCTC says, "Chevron and State officials seem not to care about our human rights to clean air and a safe environment."

People of color are organizing all over Aztlán to combat the environmental injustices that Raza must grapple with every day of their lives. From the United Farm Workers' unionization efforts to fight deadly pesticide spraying in the fields, to urban trabajadores in the electronics industry demanding that their employers abide by stringent environmental health and safety laws, our people must collectively acknowledge the environmental justice movement as an integral part of La Causa. Western society has trained us to be separatists and look at everything as disconnected instead of as an interdependent whole, but we must take initiative in the decolonization process by reaffirming the quality and sovereignty of the environment as an important aspect of our struggle. As PODER says, "Any threat to the environment endangers all of us. In our traditional ways, we view the Earth and her resources as living entities to be honored ... As people of color, we must redefine environmental issues as social and economic justice issues, [and] address these concerns as basic human rights."

## Critical Race Theory Defends Social Struggles

By Luis Alarcon

Teachers of color in the legal academy who choose to join the tradition of racial teaching have sought, in their teaching and scholarship, to articulate the values and modes of analysis that inform their vocation of struggle. These efforts have produced an emerging genre known as critical race theory. Critical race theory is grounded in the particulars of a social reality that is defined by our experiences and the collective historical experience of our communities of origin. Critical race theorists embrace subjectivity of perspective and are avowedly political. Critical race theorist's work is both pragmatic and utopian, as we seek to respond to the immediate needs of the subordinated and oppressed even as we imagine a different world and offer different values. It is work that involves both action and reflection. It is informed by active struggle and in turn informs that struggle.

Critical race theory cannot be understood as an abstract set of ideas or principles. Among its basic theoretical themes is that of privileging contextual and historical descriptions over trans-historical or purely abstract

ones. It is therefore important to the origins of this genre in relation to the particulars of history. Critical race theory developed gradually. There is no identifiable date of birth, but its conception can probably be located in the late 1970s. The civil rights movement of the 1960s had stalled, and many of its gains were being rolled back. It became apparent to many who were active in the civil rights movement that dominant conceptions of race, racism, and equality were increasingly incapable of providing any meaningful quantum of racial justice. Individual law teachers and students committed to racial justice began to meet, to talk, to write, and to engage in political action in an effort to confront and oppose dominant societal and institutional forces that maintained the structures of racism while professing the goal of dismantling racial discrimination.

The consciousness of critical race theory as a movement or group and the movement's intellectual agenda were forged in oppositional reaction to visions of race, racism, and law dominant in this post-civil rights period. At the same time, both the movement and the theory reflected assertions of a com-

monality of values and community that were inherited from generations of radical teachers before us.

Group identity forms in a way similar to individual identity. Its potential exist long before consciousness catches up with it. It is often only upon backward reflection that some kind of beginning is acknowledged. The same holds true of intellectual influences. Some influences are so significant that they become transparent, they fade into what become the dominant picture. Often it is not until one engages in a conscious reconstruction, asking what led to what else, that a history is revealed or, perhaps more accurately, chosen.

### Suggested writers in the field:

Bell, Derrick  
Crenshaw, Kimberlé  
Delgado, Richard  
Freeman, Alan D.  
López, Ian F. Haney  
Matsuda, Mari J.  
Williams, Patricia J.  
(please note, some of these writings will be found under sections of law or legal studies, Afro-American Studies, and the social sciences - many of these authors are also published in legal journals)

## ¡COME JOIN LA VOZ DE BERKELEY!

Let your voice be heard in the Raza Community

Attend our next general meeting for interested writers and artists:

Wed., October 23rd  
5:30 p.m.

Casa Joaquin Murrieta  
2336 Piedmont Ave.  
(corner of Durant & Piedmont)

EMAIL: LaVoz@Uclink4.Berkeley.edu



## Environmental Justice

Continued from page 4

acknowledged. Instead, technocrats and environmentalists alike sweep in, attempting to "improve" upon native cultures with scientific theories, innovations, and a disturbingly Eurocentric conviction that only thought emerging from their race can "save" the Earth and the peoples of color from themselves.

In urban as in rural settings, peoples of color are continually marginalized from the decision-making process, in what environmental justice activist Maite Cortes has called the "white man (knows what's best) mentality (1)." Wealthy white neighborhoods don't want dumps, sewers, or factories in their neighborhoods, even though many of their residents might belong to environmental organizations founded by conservationists. So garbage, hazardous waste, and smokestacks are funneled into barrios and ghettos while national environmental groups worry about fencing off large tracts of "wilderness" from original indigenous inhabitants so their members can camp, hike, and hunt there in the future. To give a few examples from the state of California alone, nuclear dump sites are proposed for Colorado River Native Nations reservation land in Ward Valley, hazardous waste incinerators for

Richmond, and landfills and sewers for East Los Angeles.

Simultaneously, people of color are deceived and exploited in their economic employment. Raza mothers working in the toxic industries in the bordertowns of Brownsville and Matamoros have children which are born without brains. Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley are sprayed with pesticides as they labor in the fields. Native Americans are employed in uranium mines on reservation land, later coming down with the symptoms of radiation sickness.

As they have for generations, people of color are creating their own elements of resistance from the ashes of white environmentalist interpretations which have failed them. Just in the Bay Area, organizations such as CBE (Communities for a Better Environment), PUEBLO (People United for a Better Oakland), West County Toxics Coalition, and PODER (People Organizing to Demand Environmental Rights) are providing visibility to the needs of people of color and their environments. The Urban Habitat program's Executive Director, Carl Anthony, has transformed Earth Island Institute so that at last a large environmental organization could directly address the

needs of people of color and their communities. As Anthony says, "In this context, we cannot avoid the racial dimensions of sovereignty questions raised by indigenous peoples, the wholesale underprivileging of rural communities in the South and Southwest, (and) the ecological destruction caused by suburbanization and inner city abandonment (2)"



Grassroots organizing is also taking place at the regional, national, and international levels, transcending the "unjust and artificial border(s) that divide people but not corporate environmental racism (3)," in the

words of Catalina Muniz. A few examples are the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and Tonatierra.

Environmental justice is therefore also a cry for socioeconomic justice. The movement recognizes that a holistic approach is the only approach which will encompass the true reality of human rights violations as going hand in hand with the violation of Mother Earth. Now, as much or perhaps more than ever, peoples of color everywhere must unite in a common struggle for the survival of their cultures and their relationships to the land.

### REFERENCES:

- (1) "Is the Green Movement Too White?" December 1993 issue of Terrain, Ecology Center monthly newsletter.
- (2) "Sustainability & Justice: An Urban Habitat Program Reader," Earth Island Institute, 1995.
- (3) "Latinos and the Environment," Fall 1993/Winter 1994 issue of Race, Poverty, and the Environment: A newsletter for social and environmental justice, Earth Island Institute.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots, ed. by Robert D. Bullard, South End Press, 1993. Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest, by Laura Pulido, Univ. of Arizona Press, 1996.

## Leonard Peltier

Continued from page 9

ing. I did not have a trial for aiding and abetting. This is a violation of my right to due process. We are also arguing that the government is guilty of misconduct in both the investigating and trying of this case. Once again Lynn Crooks admitted in a court of law that they simply never proved that I had killed the agents. He went as far as stating that there was no direct evidence to link me to this crime. Yet, he argued that I should remain in prison because I had been granted a trial based on alternating theories and so I could be found guilty as either the trigger man or an aider and abettor. This is an outright lie. I was not tried for anything but murder.

I thank you for taking this time to remember the events of June 26, 1975 and for attempting to spread the word about the injustices I have suffered and suffer still. In honesty, I wish I hadn't been at that camp, but I do not regret that I was one of those who stood up and helped to protect my people. I have sacrificed over 20 years for my people. I have given up over one-third of my life so far. I am tired.

Over the years I have hid away my suffering. I have smiled when I felt like crying. I have laughed when I felt like dying. I have had to stare at photographs of my children to see them grow up. I have had to rely on restricted telephone calls to be linked to my mother and grandchildren. I miss having dinner with my friends. I miss taking walks in the woods. I miss gardening. I miss babies. I miss my freedom.

Please do not forget that Indigenous people worldwide are being oppressed. Please do not forget the tragedy of political prisoners. Please do not forget me tomorrow.

As you probably know, this June 26th marked the twentieth anniversary of the Oglala fire for which I have now served nineteen years of a double life sentence. It is hard to believe that two decades have passed and the tragedy of that day still has not been resolved. The FBI in an effort to steal Indian land and to quash the recently announced investigation by the Church Committee into their horrific and illegal dealings with AIM, decided to attack our camp. The government's assertion that somehow we decided to ambush its agents is absurd. We had women cooking, kids playing outside, all of our belongings, clothing and personal items left behind. In fact we now know that one month prior to the fire, the FBI released a memo concerning "paramilitary operations on Indian land." They had been gearing up for such an assault against us.

The government had admitted that there is no direct evidence against me, that they do not know who killed their agents nor what participation I may have had in the deaths. Yet my appeals have been denied. Recently it was discovered that a terrible error was made in my second appeal. My attorney mistakenly agreed with the judges that a witness had placed me at the scene of the crime when in fact the witness had stated during my trial just the opposite. Judge Heney has stated publicly that he feels that clemency should be granted by the president in my case.

I filed for executive clemency in November of 1993. The petition is still under review by the US Justice Department. Once a review is completed, a recommendation will be sent to the President. I need for my supporters to make known their call for justice by writing, phoning, and faxing the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania, Washington DC, 20500; phone 202-456-1111; fax 202-456-2461 and e-mail president@whitehouse.gov.

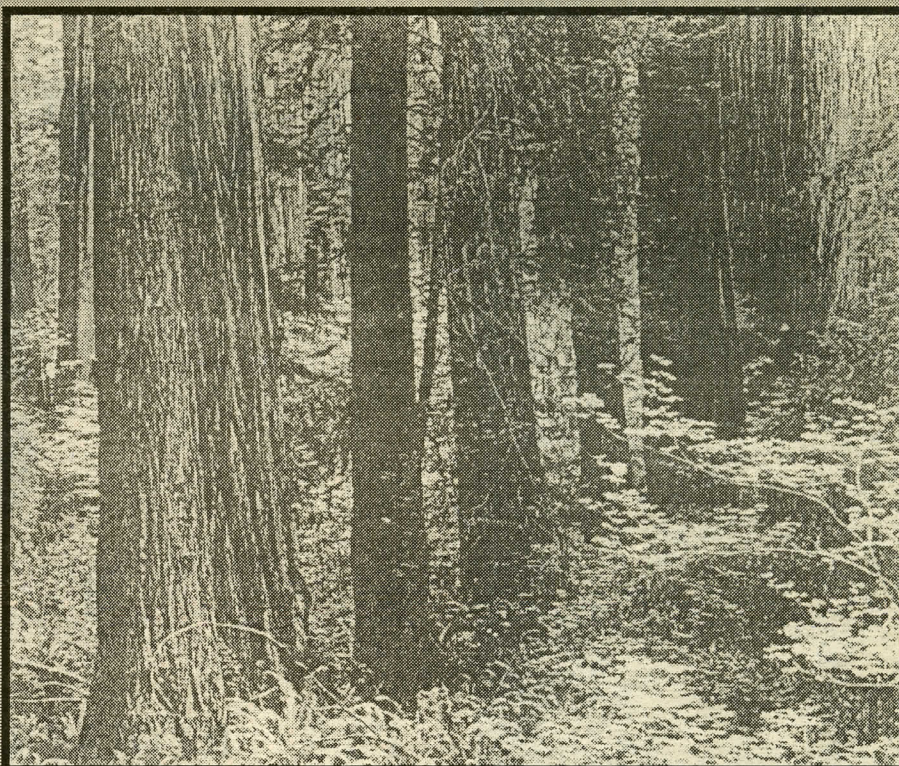
We also need for people to contact their elected representatives and ask them to support the clemency drive by writing a letter or making a statement of support OR by supporting me and those who would potentially join the network.

I thank you for allowing me to speak to you in this way and I pray that we may soon see justice, not just for myself, but for all those who have suffered along the way. May the Creator keep you close,

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,  
signed-Leonard Peltier

Please remember Leonard by writing, sending soft cover books, photographs (excluding Polaroids) and postal money order (he needs the money for phone calls, stamps, paper, etc.) to:

Leonard Peltier #89637-132  
Springfield Medical Facility  
1900 W. Sunshine, P.O. Box 4000  
Springfield, MO 65808



THE REDWOOD TREES ARE SACRED. They are a special gift and reminder from the Great Creator to the human beings. The Great Creator made everything, including trees of all kinds, but he wanted to leave a special gift for his children. So he took a little medicine from each tree, he said a prayer and sang a powerful song, and then he mixed it all with the blood of our people. Then he created this special redwood tree from this medicine. He left it on Earth as a demonstration of his love for his children. The redwood trees have a lot of power: they are the tallest, live the longest, and are the most beautiful trees in the world. Destroy these trees and you destroy the Creator's love. And if you destroy that which the Creator loves so much, you will eventually destroy mankind.

- Minnie Reeves, 1981

These are the words of Minnie Reeves, a Chilula elder who lived to well over a hundred years old. The Chilula, the Indian people of the Redwood Creek area, lived on the most intimate terms with the redwood forest until their invasion and removal to Hoopa Valley in the mid-nineteenth century.



# LATINO YOUTH SUMMIT

OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

S A N F R A N C I S C O  
S T A T E  
U N I V E R S I T Y

• • •

O C T O B E R

5

1 9 9 6

• • •

FOR REGISTRATION MATERIALS

*c o n t a c t*

L U I S O R T E R E S A

• a t •

4 1 5 - 5 4 3 - 5 5 9 8

*<http://thecity.sfsu.edu/~gente>*