

LA GENTE DE AZTLÁN

FREE/GRATIS

DECEMBER 1996

who's
next?

3 strikes

the community takes it personally

welfare cuts

they scar for life

Prop. 209

High School Students:
Will you be left behind?

From Our Readers

Dear La Gente,

I would like to start this letter by giving props to the La Gente staff and the founders. I am pleased to finally see a paper that speaks the truth and has the same point of view that a lot of Chicana/os have, not what the media and so-called Mexican American sell out politicians are preaching. I picked up La Gente at a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta and enjoyed the articles and drawings. Ever since, I've been trying to find more issues but I can't. Please tell me how I can get a subscription.

Keep up the great work and Viva la Raza!!!!

Sincerely,

Jaime Perez, Long Beach CA

Dear La Gente readers,

We publish six issues per year. Our publication dates for January - June 1997 are: Jan. 27, Feb. 26, April 24 and May 22. Pick us up at markets, bookstores, high schools, community colleges, and Universities throughout Los Angeles and in places across California.

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Sincerely,

La Gente Staff

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Editorial

En las semanas anteriores a la votación sobre la Propuesta 187, corrian rumores de que si esta lograba pasar, tendríamos disturbios peores que aquellos ocasionados por el veredicto Rodney King. Se organizó la masiva "Marcha de la Dignidad." Miles de Latinos salieron de sus hogares y dieron voz a su coraje. Sin embargo, la Propuesta pasó y, esa noche, hubo silencio en esta ciudad. La propuesta 209 nos hizo recordar aquellos tiempos. Nos organizamos, marchamos, votamos...el resultado fue el mismo. La historia se repite no solo en lo que concierne a estas propuestas sino en lo que concierne al trato hacia los Latinos en este país. En los años treinta sufrimos las deportaciones de miles de latinos sin importar su ciudadanía. Después vendrían las golpizas a los pachucos en los disturbios Zoot Suit de 1943, la "Operación Mojado" de los cincuentas, el Moratorio Chicano de los setentas...en fin. El caso es que lo han intentado todo contra nosotros. Y seguimos de pie. En nuestro país hemos sobrevivido hambre, guerra y tiranía. Si a pesar de eso aún tenemos nuestra fuerza, en este país unas cuantas palabras llamadas leyes jamás lograrán demoralizarnos. Adelante Raza!

El caso es que lo han intentado todo contra nosotros.

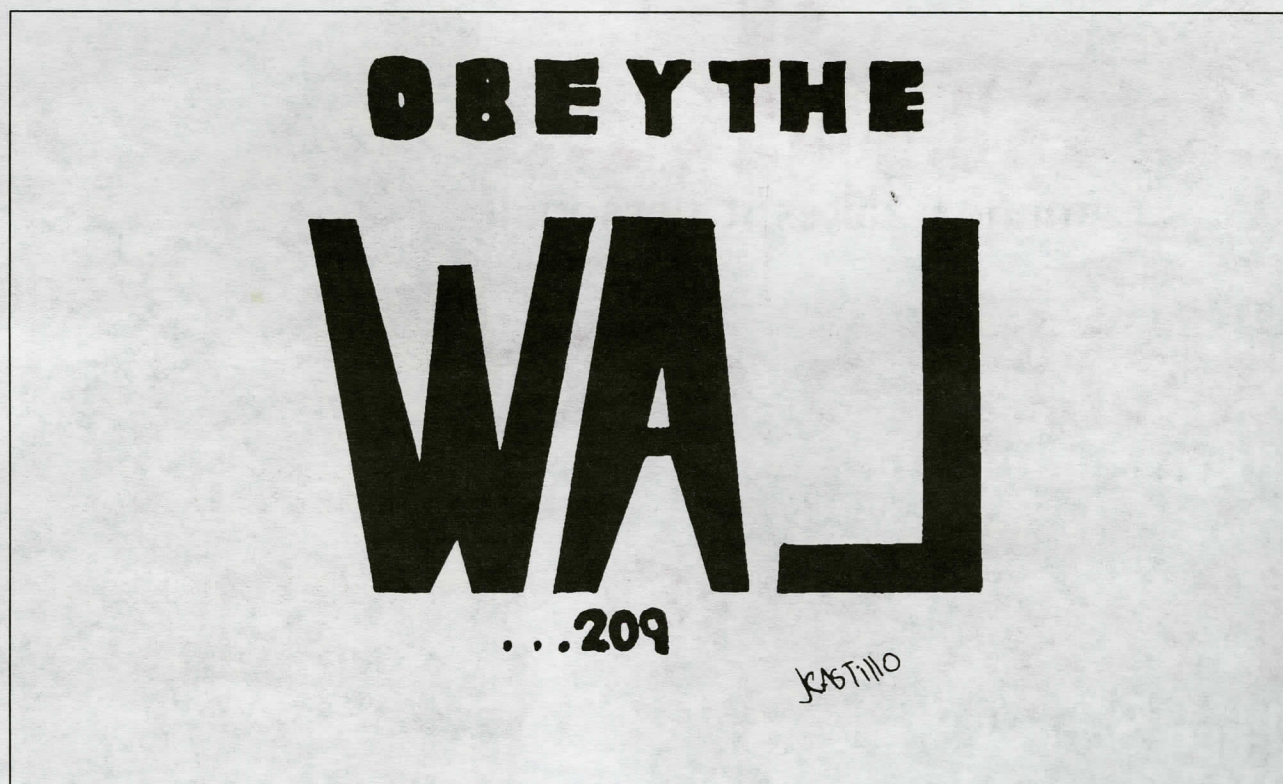
In the weeks before the passing of Proposition 187, it was rumored that if it passed, we would have riots worse than those caused by the Rodney King verdict. The massive "Marcha de la Dignidad" was organized. Thousands of Latinos came out of their homes and voiced their anger. But the Proposition passed and, that night, there was silence in the city.

Proposition 209 reminded us of those times. We organized, we marched, we voted...the result was the same.

History repeats itself not only in regards to these Propositions, but in regards to the treatment of Latinos in this country.

In the thirties, we suffered the massive deportation of thousands of Latinos without concern for their citizenship. Later, the beatings of pachucos in the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943, "Operation Wetback" in the fifties, the Chicano Moratorium in the seventies...it goes on. The fact is they have tried everything against us. And we are still standing. In our home countries we have survived hunger, war and tyranny, and in spite of this, we still have our strength. A few words called laws will never demoralize us. Adelante Raza!

Political Cartoon



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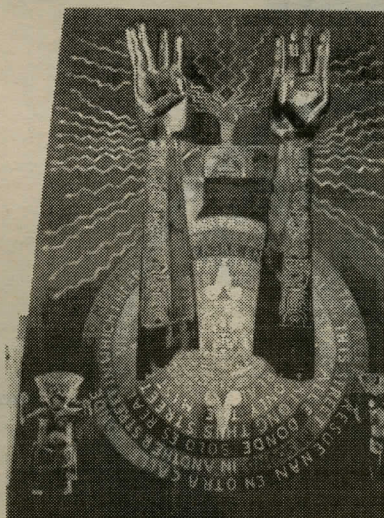
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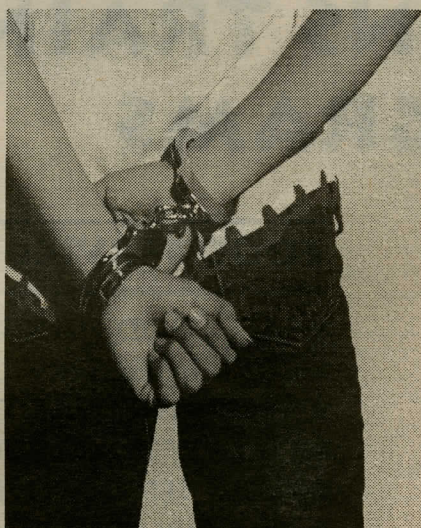


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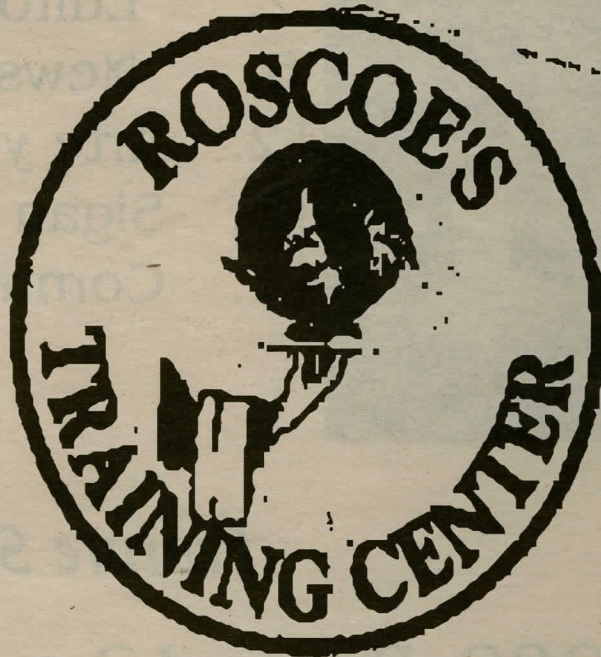
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Mundial

Cuernavaca, Mexico: Recent abductions in Mexico have aroused doubt in the country's national security and unleashed a sense of chaos among its citizens. Kidnappings have generated international attention since a Sanyo executive disappeared in Tijuana and was released after Sanyo paid a \$2 million dollar ransom. No longer a concern exclusively for the rich, many workers and peasants are paying ransoms for the release of relatives too. A 1995 study found that Mexico had more abductions than Brazil, whose population is twice the size. Still, government officials feel a great number of abductions remain unaccounted for.

Santiago, Chile: Gladys Marín, leader of the Chilean Communist Party and a critic of the Chilean government, was arrested on charges of slander. Her charges stem from a law issued during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship which outlaws the defamation of an elected official. Although charges against Ms. Marín were dropped three days after her arrest, questions are being raised about the extent of free speech in Chile.



Country

Washington DC: Polling sources indicate the Latina/o vote tremendously influenced the re-election Bill Clinton. Clinton obtained a majority in California, losing only in Orange County by a fraction of a margin. Sources conclude that this narrow margin and dwindling support for the republican party in this traditionally conservative area is largely attributed to the 25% Latina/o population.

Browning, Montana: The Native American Rights Fund filed a class-action law suit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs on behalf of 300,000 Indians with accounts held in trusts by the BIA. The plaintiffs contend that funds in their tribal accounts have disappeared. The US government may have to pay billions of dollars in restitution if the case is settled in favor of the account holders.



State

Sacramento, California: Assemblyman Cruz Bustamante (D-Fresno) was elected the first Latino Speaker of the California Assembly. His electoral victory is indicative of the growing voting power among the Latino community. Other legislators, such as Democrat Bob Mullohand, state that the Latino vote is an important asset to the victory of the Democratic party.

Berkeley, California: 23 students were arrested after taking over the prestigious campanile tower at the University of California, Berkeley. The students demanded that the university pledge non-compliance to the passage of prop 209. They also demanded an increase in funding for education and a decrease for prisons.

Los Angeles, California: A group of UCLA students held a protest on Monday, November 11, in front of the university's historic Powell Library. The demonstration began when students displayed a banner reading "EDUCATION IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT" and passed out flyers. Their goal, in solidarity of Berkeley's recent anti-prop 209 action, intended to block access to the main student library. In blocking the entrance the demonstrators tried to make students understand how it feels to be denied access to education, an expected consequence of the passage of 209. As the demonstration continued, more students joined the group and helped distribute flyers and carry the banner. In addition, students spoke in defense of the human rights declaration established at the Geneva conference, signed and supported by the United States.

NotiRaza



World

Cuernavaca, México: Varios secuestros de México ponen en duda la seguridad nacional del país y han causado terror entre la población. Los secuestros en territorios mexicanos llamaron atención internacional cuando un ejecutivo de la corporación Sanyo fue tomado en Tijuana y liberado después de que su empresa pagara 2 millones de dólares americanos. Lejos de ser un problema exclusivamente para los ricos, muchos obreros y campesinos se han visto obligados a pagar por la liberación de parientes secuestrados. Un estudio materializado en 1995 reveló que en México hubo más secuestros que Brasil donde la población es lo doble que la mexicana. Sin embargo, oficiales gubernamentales han revelado que aún hay bastantes secuestros mexicanos sin ser declarados.

Santiago, Chile: Gladys Marín, líder del Partido Comunista de Chile y oponente del actual gobierno chileno, fue arrestada por difamar. Los cargos se derivan de una ley creada durante la dictadura de Augusto Pinochet que declara ilegal la difamación de oficiales gubernamentales. Aunque los cargos en contra de Gladys Marín fueron retirados tres días después de su arresto, se duda cuanto en verdad se mantiene la libertad de expresión en Chile.



País

Washington DC: Encuestas revelan una gran influencia que tuvo el voto Latina/o hacia la victoria presidencial de Bill Clinton. De hecho, en el estado de California Clinton sólo fue derrotado en el condado de Orange donde Bob Dole ganó por un margen mínimo. Un factor determinante en la disminución del apoyo republicano, se debe a un incremento en la población minoritaria de este condado, el cual ya asciende al 25%.

Browning, Montana: La organización, Native American Rights Fund, iniciaron una demanda en contra del Bureau of Indian Affairs por mal manejo de miles de cuentas bancarias de Indios. Los demandantes contienden que los fondos de sus cuentas de ahorros desaparecieron. El gobierno estadounidense pudiera ser obligado a pagar billones de dólares si el caso resulta favorable a los demandantes.



Estatal

Sacramento, California: El diputado Cruz Bustamante (D-Fresno) se convirtió en el primer orador latino de la cámara de diputados de California. Su victoria representa el poder creciente que la comunidad latina a acumulado en las urnas. Otros legisladores, como el demócrata Bob Mullohand, afirma que el voto Latina/o es un factor importante para las victorias del partido demócrata.

Berkeley, California: 23 estudiantes fueron arrestados tras tomar la torre Campanile de la Universidad de California Berkeley. Los estudiantes exigían que la universidad se comprometiera a no enforzar la ley 209 y el aumento de fondos para la educación y menos para las prisiones.

Los Angeles, California: Un grupo estudiantil de la Universidad de UCLA protestó el Lunes Noviembre 11, limitando el acceso a la biblioteca Powell. Los estudiantes colocaron una bandera que demandaba el reconocimiento de la educación como un derecho humano. Su meta era dar apoyo al movimiento de la universidad de Berkeley, el cual se opone a la ley 209. El simbolismo de la acción se encuentra cuando uno considera que al limitar el acceso a la biblioteca, los estudiantes trataron de dar a conocer como se siente querer adquirir una educación pero no poder debido a que hay leyes que están en violación de los derechos humanos establecidos en la conferencia de Geneva la cual establece a la educación como básica en el desarrollo humano.



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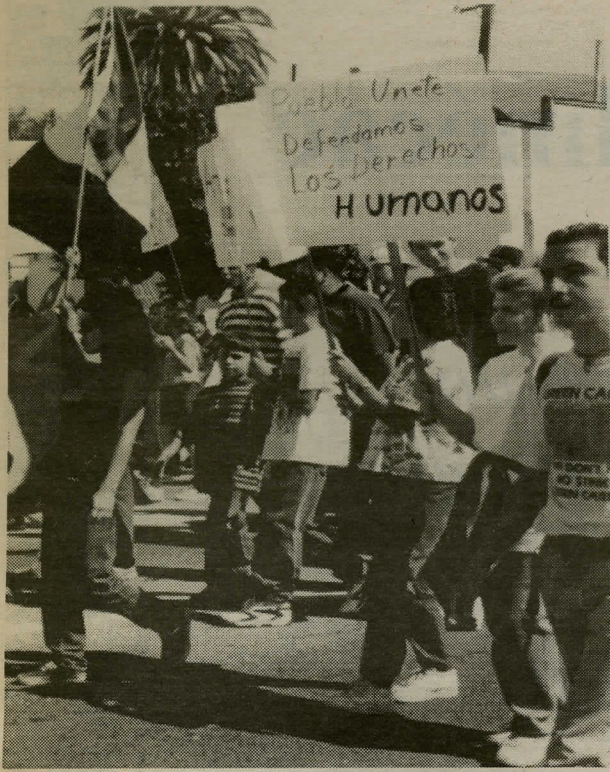
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A CALL TO HIGH SCHOOL RAZA: Politicize!



Students in a 1994 march against prop. 187

Imágenes de trabajadores de campañas políticas generalmente no incluyen a estudiantes de high school porque la mayoría de ellos no son de suficiente edad para votar. Pero las caras en la Central de Campaña para Impedir la 209 crean una imagen nueva y mejorada. Tienen como voluntarios desde profesionales hasta estudiantes. Los estudiantes de high school, particularmente los latinos, tienen un lugar crucial en la política. Son el grupo de votantes de más rápido crecimiento en California.

En las elecciones de noviembre, "Cincuenta por ciento de los votantes tienen entre 18 y 24 años de edad," dice Rafael Gonzalez de la Campaña de Acción Afirmativa de MALDEF (el Fondo Mexico-Americano de Defensa y Educación Legal). Sostiene que el 60% de latinos elegibles votaron — más de 1.2 millones. El 76% de ellos votaron en contra de la Propuesta 209. Agrega que los "[latinos] salieron como un grupo."

Educación

"La verdad, yo no pongo atención [a la política] porque no puedo votar," dice el estudiante de high school Mark Sepulveda. Al igual que varios estudiantes, él no ve la importancia de el conocimiento político. No solamente ofrece poder, sino que entre más pronto se eduque a las personas, más pronto estas podrán educar a sus amigos y familias.

Porque la información política es difícil de conseguir en la escuela, los jóvenes prefieren otras opciones.

"[Los estudiantes deben] llamar a sus legisladores y exigir saber los efectos de propuestas como la 209," explica Read Scott-Martin, un profesional de la Campaña para Impedir la 209. Además aconseja leer "periódicos y revistas para saber lo que en realidad está pasando."

Participación de Estudiantes

"[Estudiantes] llegaron de todo el estado," explica Martin. "Teníamos muchos voluntarios

Los estudiantes de las escuelas secundarias tienen el poder para influenciar el proceso electoral. Pero, ¿lo usan?

By Adria DeBaca

Images of campaign workers do not usually include high school students, since the majority of them are not of voting age. But the faces at the Headquarters for the Campaign to Stop 209 create a new and improved image. Volunteers range from professionals to students. High school students, particularly Latinas and Latinos, play a crucial role in politics. They are the fastest growing group of eligible voters in California.

In the November elections, "50 percent were young voters ages 18-24," notes Rafael Gonzalez of MALDEF's (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund) Affirmative Action Campaign. He cites that 60% of eligible Latinos voted — over 1.2 million. Seventy-six percent of those voted against 209. "[Latinos] came out as a block," he adds.

Education

"I don't really pay attention to [politics] because I can't vote," states high school sophomore Mark Sepulveda. Like many students, he does not realize the importance of political awareness. It increases students power. Also, the sooner people are educated and knowledgeable, the sooner they can educate friends and family.

Because current political information is often difficult for students to obtain at school, they must pursue other sources.

"[Students need to] call local legislators and demand to know the effects of propositions such as 209," states Read Scott-Martin, a professional from the Campaign to Stop Prop. 209. He also advises them to check out "news-papers and magazines to get to know what's really going on."

Student Involvement

"[Students] came from all over the state," notes Martin. "We had many volunteers thanks to organizations such as the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) and MALDEF."

"Students are usually more than happy to volunteer, but they need to feel somebody wants them," comments Sal Castro, a Belmont High teacher and longtime activist. He recommends classroom visits by groups who need students to get involved. He adds, "We used to have field trips to the City Council [and] Board of Supervisors. Now, due to so many cutbacks, the money is just not there."

"Young people were involved," says Rafael Gonzalez about the stop 209 campaign. "We spoke to high school students about their responsibility to their community and about how prop. 209 will affect them." They visited many Los Angeles area high schools, including Lincoln, Wilson,

Belmont and South Gate.

Teresa Cano of Morningside High School is educating herself about issues. "I think we should all be given an opportunity to get an education no matter what race or [gender]," she states about prop. 209. "I also feel it will affect us a lot because it's going to mess up a lot of people in my generation," she adds with concern.

Students were also very active in the mobilization against 1994's anti-immigrant proposition 187. They organized walkouts at their schools and participated in community marches and rallies.

"In the 1970's, 18 year olds did not yet have the right to vote."

recalls Castro. "The kids got up in arms and became involved in the political process to amend the constitution. This was the largest display of student action I've ever seen."

Reasons for Defeat

"We can't just have students involved during campaign time," says Gonzalez. "It must be on a year round basis."

The education of high school students is imperative because of the need for knowledge among uninformed eligible voters. One of the reasons 209 passed was that people did not know how to interpret the vague wording.

"The language was very deceitful," Gonzalez comments. "But people bought it anyway."

It's Not Over

The ACLU recently filed a lawsuit challenging 209, and MALDEF is investigating legal challenges.

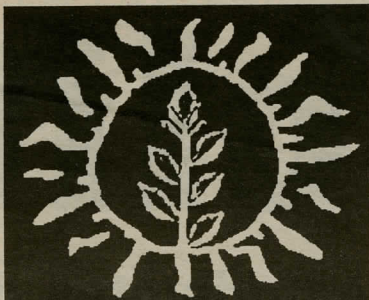
"We are paying close attention to [Pete] Wilson and [Dan] Lundgren as to how they will interpret 209," says Gonzalez. "The language is so general that we don't know what the hell they mean."

To help keep high school students involved, MALDEF will continue making campus visits. They plan to include college students in the future to serve as inspirations.

"College students and teachers need to be role models," states UCLA Student Gerardo Felix. Gonzalez agrees, "Young people have the power, but they need to learn how to use it."

"We are not done with this issue," asserts Gonzalez. "As Latinos, we must see that this is a continuing attack. There is still a lot of work to be done."

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Our Children: the poorest of the poor

by Wilibaldo Pulido-Argüello



Con una firma el pasado 22 de agosto, el Presidente Clinton deshizo una parte importante de la red de seguridad social al cortar la Ayuda a Familias con Hijos Dependientes (AFDC) y permitir a los estados el establecer sus propios programas. Vera Juarez, una madre soltera y sus cuatro hijos se encuentran entre los millones de mujeres y niños que se verán afectados por la nueva ley.

Una dependiente del sistema de welfare por los últimos siete años, Vera ya pasó el límite de cinco años que dicta la nueva ley y ahora cree que le cortarán los servicios. Se cuenta como una de las recipientes de más suerte porque recibe welfare para suplementar su salario de tiempo completo.

Pero aún, su dependencia en AFDC pone en peligro su habilidad de proveer techo, ropa y comida para sus hijos si es

número de niños que viven debajo de la línea de pobreza.

Las estadísticas citadas por el Dr. Lindsey revelan que la mayoría de niños que viven en la pobreza son afro-americanos y latinos y son bastante sobre-representados en el AFDC. "En este estado, [la pobreza] casi rompe las barreras del color."

De los niños que se añadieron al AFDC en 1992, el 44% son latinos. La comunidad de padres de crianza también sentirá las consecuencias de niños que serán sometidos a profundidades más hondas de pobreza por la reducción de AFDC.

Más de el 66% de niños en cuidados de crianza provienen de familias que reciben AFDC. Desde 1990, el número de niños bajo la protección de el Departamento de Servicios para Niños y Familias (DCFS) ha subido de 45,000 a

"What are we doing for these kids' futures? We're building prisons and locking people up...if we don't provide access to opportunity."

que le niegan el welfare. Aunque existen provisiones que ordenan la asistencia a madres como Vera, no hay ninguna garantía que los estados las implementarán.

Las reducciones, que aumentan a \$60 billones, se llevarán a cabo a través de un periodo de cinco años. La reducción total cuando la ley sea implementada completamente reducirá los fondos de AFDC por 40%. El impacto de estas reducciones parece drástica por las siguientes razones: en California, 2.6 millones de niños están actualmente en AFDC; solo en el Condado de Los Angeles, 670,000 niños están actualmente en AFDC; cerca de un tercio de los niños de California viven la pobreza. Con la ley implementada, el 40% de estos niños no calificarán para ayuda federal.

De acuerdo al Dr. Duncan Lindsey, un especialista en temas de bienestar de niños en la Escuela de Póliza Pública y Estudio Social de UCLA, esta ley afectará a California más severamente que otras regiones del país debido al gran

70,000. De estos niños, aproximadamente la tercera parte son latinos.

Schylar Sprowles, Director de Asuntos Públicos en DCFS, predice que su departamento verá un aumento en su larga línea de clientes. Aunque los niños que se encuentran en el sistema de protección aún reciben dinero federal, Sprowles piensa que el número de casos de abuso infantil crecerá como resultado de la nueva ley.

De acuerdo a Sprowles, la ley tendrá consecuencias negativas para los niños debido a los problemas económicos que se les agregaran a familias ya pobres. "Cuando la economía se deteriora, la familia se deteriora. La presión y el mal funcionamiento de un futuro oscuro lo llevarán los niños." Por ahora, el DCFS se prepara para un volumen de casos más alto.

"Que pasará con estos niños? No sé," continúa el Dr. Lindsey. "Estamos tomando a los más desventajados...ellos no tuvieron nada que ver con esto. La mayoría de estos niños tienen

pase a NIÑOS p. 18

With one sweeping signature this past August 22, President Clinton unraveled a major piece of the federal social safety net by cutting Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and allowing states to enact their own stringent programs. Vera Juarez, a single mother, and her four children are among the millions of women and children affected by the new law.

An on-again-off-again welfare recipient for the past seven years, Vera surpassed the five year lifetime limit the new law dictates and foresees herself being cut. She counts herself as one of the luckier recipients who receive welfare to supplement her full time job.

Still, Vera's dependency on AFDC jeopardizes her ability to adequately provide shelter, clothing, and food for her children if she is denied welfare. While there are provisions that mandate assistance to mothers like Vera, there is no guarantee that states will implement them.

The reductions in welfare, which amount to \$60 billion, will be phased over a period of five years. The total net reduction of funds when the law is fully implemented, will reduce the current AFDC budget by forty percent.

The impact of these reductions are drastic for the following reasons: In California 2.6 million children are currently on AFDC; In Los Angeles County alone 670,000 children are currently on AFDC; nearly a third of California's children live in poverty. With the law fully implemented, forty percent of these children will be ineligible for federal assistance.

According to Dr. Duncan Lindsey, a specialist in child welfare issues at UCLA's School of Public Policy and Social Research, this law will affect California more severely than other regions in the country due to the

already large number of children living below the poverty line.

Statistics cited by Dr. Lindsey reveal most of the children living in poverty are African-American and Latino and are greatly over-represented in AFDC. "In this state it (poverty) sort of breaks down on color lines."

Of the children added to AFDC in 1992 forty-four percent were Latinos. The foster care community will also feel the consequences to children thrust into the greater depths of poverty through the reduction of AFDC.

More than two thirds of the children in foster care come from families receiving AFDC. Since 1990 the number of children under the protection of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has rocketed from 45,000 to the current 70,000 children. Of these children, approximately thirty percent are Latino.

Schylar Sprowles, Director of Public Affairs at DCFS, predicts his department will see an increase in their "steady stream of clients." Though children in the protective system will still receive federal monies, Sprowles believes the number of child abuse cases will rise as a result of the new law.

The passage of the law will have negative consequences on children because of the economic hardships that will be placed on already poor families. "As the economy deteriorates, families deteriorate. The stress and dysfunction of a bleak financial picture will be borne on the children," Sproul says. In the meantime DCFS is preparing for larger case loads.

"What will happen to these kids? I don't know," Dr. Lindsey continues. "We're taking the most disadvantaged...they had nothing to do with it. Most of these kids are under six

See CHILDREN p. 18

THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT

stories of struggle, frustration, and strength

by Vivian Trujillo

"HAVE YOU SIGNED THE PETITION TO amend the Three Strikes law?" is the first question we ask after we greet people. In a single breath, we explain to them that a coalition of community organizations and concerned individuals is trying to amend the Three Strikes law to apply to only serious and violent felonies.

Seventy-five percent of the cases in which the law has been applied are for nonviolent felonies, we tell them. The responses are mixed. One 6-year-old boy and his 9-year-old sister whose father is doing 25 to life under Three Strikes tell a personal story about how the current law and order attitude of criminal prosecutors has turned their world around for the worse. On the other hand, many students at universities such as UCLA don't really know what Three Strikes is all about. Many, make that most, people don't believe Three Strikes affects them. To get them to sign the petition we are circulating, we have to explain in great detail why they should support this struggle.

Three Strikes is a kind of kick off point for discussion about the many issues that affect our communities: police abuse, prison culture, criminalization of black and brown youth, the myth of freedom for parolees, the devastating effect incarceration has on family and community, the boom in publically funded prisons and the corresponding drop in educational investment, and the near absence of a rehabilitation component in the prison system. The ones who know what it's like to live in a community under siege sign without hesitation.

"With all the money they are putting into the prisons, what they spend on one inmate could be put on creating jobs for them, educating them out here instead of keeping them confined to 12 x 12 walls. [It] could be put into programs for kids so they don't have to be on the streets," one woman told us during the course of petitioning.

These concerns could serve as a laundry list of issues that elicit strong feelings among the poor and people of color. Reminding them of, if not confirming, a common feeling of being systematically targeted for harassment and repression by the state. Even during these passing discussions, many of us forget how narrowly removed we are from the influence and effects of Three Strikes. "It happens only to criminals; it could never touch us or our loved ones," or so we hope and believe, and sometimes take for granted.

The people whose stories follow once thought Three Strikes would never come down on them. Now they believe.

Alma's Son

One rehabilitation center after another couldn't help Jesse. When he felt he had fallen into the addiction abyss, all he could do was plead to his family not to let him go.

"Please don't give up on me, momma," Alma Gearing recalls Jesse saying to her. The family did stick by him while he fought and sometimes lost bouts with his addiction. Last year when Jesse was busted with \$10 worth of cocaine, everyone knew he would do time again. But no one expected the sentence he got. Twenty-five years to life. The prosecutor convinced the court that a robbery case Jesse did time for 15 years ago would account for two prior convictions on the way to strike three: possession of cocaine.

"Twenty-five to life," says Alma, lamenting last year's court decision during a recent interview. "That's like tearing a mother's heart out. Where was the court, the government, the lawmakers, when my son was crying out for help? Instead they sent him to the penitentiary."

"My own struggle is to figure out how I can help him. They don't want to hear the parents in court. Without a lot of money, how do I help him? The lawyers who will fight your case charge you \$30- to \$40,000 dollars. Everybody don't have OJ Simpsons money."

She worries about what kind of future awaits her son. He's 35 years old. If he does 20 years, he'll be 55 when he gets out.

"They turn around and treat them like hardcore criminals," Alma said. "[Then] they let them back out on the street. With a felony record, where do they go from there. They can't get a job."

The justice system Alma has borne witness to seems to prey on the poor, she says. Alma recounts what happened years ago at another son's court trial for robbery. While seated in court, another young man went before a judge on robbery charges, Alma says, repeating her memory of what was said.

"If I didn't know your uncle so well, I would send you back to the penitentiary," the judge said, according to Alma, before the young man was released. Moments later, Alma's son went up before the same judge for robbery charges. "If there's one thing I hate is a thief," the judge said before sending Alma's son to prison.

"My babies weren't born bad, and I know what caused them to be," she said, her voice broken by tears. "The police ride through the neighborhood picking at your sons when they are 12 or 13. They accuse [them] of this and that until they turn them bitter. And they do

WHERE WAS THE COURT, THE GOVERNMENT...WHEN MY SON WAS CRYING OUT FOR HELP?

ly. The system puts certain scars on your
t that you live with every day of your life."

Lost a husband and father

She was riding down the street with
hell, when someone put a gun through
window, pressed it to Mary's head, and
her necklace. Afterward, Mary's husband
ed carrying a gun in the car for protec-
Darnell was afraid something like this
d happen again, and he wanted to be
to defend himself and Mary if threatened
Instead of helping to protect his family,
gun got him busted for possession of a
m. With two priors for residential bur-
es, Darnell was sentenced 25 years to life.
Mary says the circumstances of her hus-
's arrest were suspect. She says sheriff's
ties did not have probable cause to
n him initially. Deputies told the couple
pulled him over for "running a stop sign."
They had their lights off, pursuing him at
miles an hour," Mary says. "I know the
t they're talking about. No way a van
50 miles [an hour] can make that nar-
turn." Deputies arrested him amid slurs to
rder of, "Nigger, get on your hands and
," Darnell told the court, explaining
he felt had been an arrest prompted by
attitudes held by the deputies. Mary,
nced that a deputy lied on the stand,
onted him. "All he kept on saying was
" Mary recounted. "But sorry is not
to help me pay my bills; sorry is not
to bring my children's daddy home."
Mary pleaded for the judge to reconsider
5 years to life sentence handed down to
usband. The Romero case, which serves
cedence to give judges some discretion
ntencing Three Strikes cases, had not
decided. Her pleas were to no avail.

After Darnell was released from serving
for the burglary, he had gotten a job and
urthering his education. He would pick
children up from school and take them.
e, paying special attention to his son who
ttention deficit disorder. Mary told the
she feared the effect his absence would
on her 6-year-old son.

"I'm scared [for] my son," she said during a
t interview. "He sees how the system
t. In 10 or 15 years, my son could be in
ame courtroom [in front of] the same
"

When they took her husband away, they
her family's second income. Although
tries to stretch the salary she earns from
time job, she fears welfare may offer
support for her children, than she can
part-time. But income is one thing. The
hat her children will not be raised by
father is an issue or an entirely different
itude. The children miss their father.

Three Strikes p.19

UNO TIENE QUE VIVIR TODOS LOS DÍAS DE LA VIDA CON LAS CICATRICES QUE EL SISTEMA DEJA EN EL CORAZÓN

“¿HA FIRMADO LA PETICIÓN PARA CAM-
biar la ley “Three Strikes?” es lo primero
que preguntamos después de saludar a
las personas. En un solo aliento, les expli-
camos que hay una coalición de individuos y
organizaciones comunitarias que quiere cam-
biar la ley “Three Strikes” para que aplique
solo a las felonías serias y violentas.

El 70 por ciento de los casos donde la ley
se ha aplicado han sido por felonías no vio-
lentas, les decimos. Las respuestas que reci-
bimos varían. Un niño de seis años y su her-
mana de nueve años cuentan de como la ley
actual ha empeorado sus vidas desde que su
padre fue sentenciado a pasar 25 años hasta
el resto de su vida en la cárcel. Por otra parte,
muchos estudiantes en universidades como
UCLA no saben de lo que se trata “Three
Strikes”. Muchos, mas bien la mayoría, no
creen que “Three Strikes” los afecta. Para
convencerlos que firmen la petición que esta-
mos circulando les tenemos que explicar en
detalle por que deben apoyar este esfuerzo.

“Three Strikes” es el punto de partida
para discutir los problemas que existen en
nuestras comunidades: el abuso policíaco, la
cultura de las prisiones, la criminalización de
los jóvenes afroamericanos y latinos, el mito
de libertad para los que están “libres” condi-
cionalmente, el efecto devastador del encar-
celamiento en nuestras familias, la campaña
para construir muchas prisiones financiadas
con recursos públicos y la correspondiente
caída de inversión en el sistema educacional,
y la ausencia de programas para rehabil-
itación en el sistema penal. Las personas que
saben lo que es vivir en una comunidad bajo
ataque firman la petición sin dudas.

“Con todo el dinero que invierten en las
prisiones, podrían usar lo que gastan en un
prisionero para crear trabajos para ellos,
educándolos aquí afuera en vez de tenerlos
encerrados entre paredes que miden 12 x 12.
Ese dinero lo podrían meter en programas
para que los niños no tengan que andar en
las calles” nos dijo una mujer cuando
estabamos circulando las peticiones.

Estas inquietudes pueden servir como
una lista de problemas que provocan fuertes
emociones en la gente pobre y de color.
Recordando, si no confirmando, un sen-
timiento común entre la gente de que el esta-
do dirige la represión y el hostigamiento sis-
temáticamente contra nosotros. Aún

durante estas discusiones pasajeras, muchos
olvidamos que no es mucho lo que nos sepa-
ra de la influencia y los efectos de “Three
Strikes”. “Eso solo le pasa a los criminales;
nunca nos podría afectar a nosotros ni a
nuestras familias” solemos pensar y creer y a
veces lo tomamos por seguro.

Los cuentos que siguen demuestran que
lo contrario es cierto. Estas personas no
creían que “Three Strikes” les afectaría.
Ahora si lo creen.

El hijo de Alma

Ningún centro de rehabilitación podía
ayudar a Jesse. Cuando el sentía que había
caído en el abismo de la drogadicción, solo
podía suplicar a su familia que no lo dejara
solo.

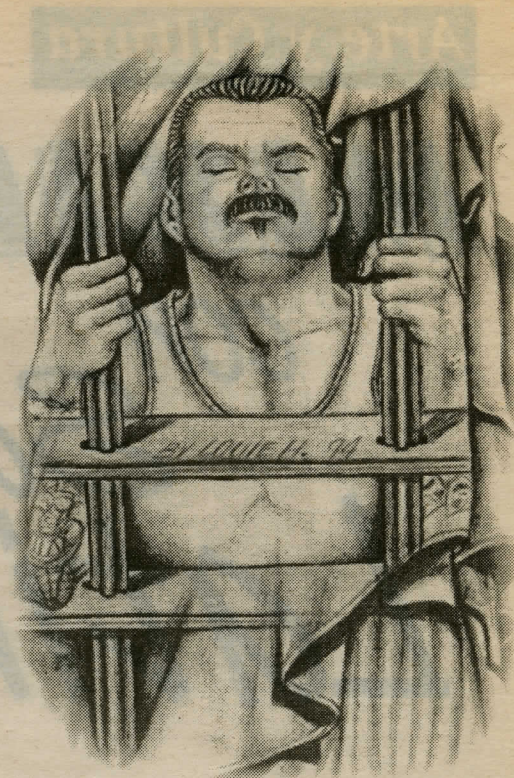
Alma Gearring, su madre, recuerda cuan-
do Jesse le rogaba, “Por favor, no dejes de
creer en mi, Mamá”. Y su familia seguía a su
lado mientras el combatía y a veces perdía la
batalla contra su adicción. El año pasado
cuando arrestaron a Jesse con \$10.00 de
cocaína, todos sabían que lo iban a meter a
la cárcel otra vez. Pero nadie esperaba la sen-
tencia que le dieron. Veinticinco años a
cadena perpetua. El fiscal convenció al tri-
bunal que un caso de robo por el cual Jesse
había estado en la cárcel hace 15 años podría
contar como dos convicciones anteriores y el
caso de la cocaína podría contar como el ter-
cero.

“Veinticinco años a cadena perpetua”,
dice Alma, lamentando la decisión del tri-
bunal durante una entrevista reciente. “Eso
es como arrancarle el corazón a una madre.
¿Dónde estaba el tribunal, el gobierno, los
legisladores, cuando my hijo pedía ayuda? En
vez, lo mandaron a la cárcel”.

“Ahora mi lucha es de afigurar como le
puedo ayudar. No quieren escuchar a los
padres en el tribunal. Sin dinero, ¿como le
puedo ayudar? Los abogados que pueden
defender a uno cobran de \$30 a \$40 mil
dólares. Todos no tenemos el dinero de OJ
Simpson”.

Ella se preocupa por el futuro que le
espera a su hijo. El tiene 35 años. Si solo pasa
20 años en la cárcel, tendrá 55 años cuando
salga.

“Los tratan como si fueran los peores de
los criminales”, dijo Alma. “Luego los dejan
salir a la calle. Con una felonía en el récord,
pase a “Three Strikes”, p.19



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WHERE WAS THE COURT, THE GOVERNMENT...WHEN MY SON WAS CRYING OUT FOR HELP?

MIXING it up . . .

CON Sabor Latino

by Andi Meck

Latinos are making their mark in the often considered African-American music style, Hip Hop. Although Latino visibility and participation seem to have appeared in the past few years, Darryl James, owner of Rap Sheet Magazine, says it always existed. "When you look at New York, you have the Boriquas there all along." He adds that Latinos were particularly visible in break dancing.

Prince Whipper Whip from Zulu Nation, who once rapped with Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five, states, "When we were doing it back in the day, it was black dominated. But now, [with] Kid Frost and the Mexikanz, Latinos are more accepted. People are more open now. They can [no longer] shut out what they know nothing about. Its all about being real"

As Latinos in Hip Hop become increasingly prominent, the Latino community's reaction is similar. Aspiring rap artist Cisco Jones observes, "When I first started, the Latino community was not really accepting it 'cause they wanted me to kick lowrider stuff [which] is what they knew." But after they heard what he was rapping about they began to accept his music. "[As a Latino] I have something to contribute," he adds.

Whip explains that he mixes salsa, mambo and merengue in his music. Click the Supa Latin says he raps in Spanish because "it's natural" and adds that being true to yourself is the name of the game.

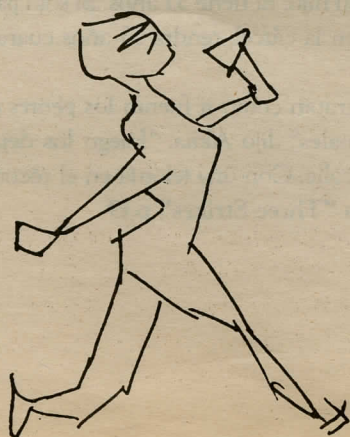
"People might not understand what you are saying, but its the feeling [that they understand]."

Latino artists combine Spanish lyrics and Latino cultures with hip hop beats — resulting in their own unique styles. Artists are often marketed for their unique lyrics and music, but according to Darryl James, record companies do not know how to market Latinos in Hip Hop. "There is definitely a market," he says, and adds that it is just a matter of promoting.

No matter how far Latino artists have come, breaking into the business is still a difficult task. In general, record companies do not put enough money behind the promotion of Latino artists. Joe Hernandez, the owner of an independent record label, explains that you can have a weak

artist, but

See Hip Hop p.18



Ultimamente ha crecido la influencia de los latinos en la música primordialmente asociada con la comunidad afro-americana, Hip Hop (rap). Aunque la presencia y participación latina aparece haber aparecido hace unos cuantos años, Darryl James, dueño de Rap Sheet Magazine, afirma que siempre ha existido. "Cuando piensas en Nueva York, te das cuenta que los boriquas siempre han estado allí." Además sostiene que la presencia latina fue particularmente visible durante la era de break dancing.

El propio Prince Whipper Whip de Zulu Nation, quien en un tiempo participaba con figuras como Grand Master Flash y los Furious Five, indica: "Cuando tocábamos en aquel entonces, todo era dominado por negros. Pero ahora, [con] Kid Frost y los Mexakinz, latinos son más aceptados. La gente es más receptiva hoy. Ya no pueden negar algo de que no tienen la menor idea. Todo se trata de ser real."

Conforme la presencia latina en la música Hip Hop va creciendo, la reacción de la comunidad latina es similar. El rapero aspirante Cisco Jones observa, "Cuando recién empecé, la comunidad latina no lo aceptaba porque preferían que

tocara ondas de lowrider que es lo que conocían. Después de escuchar lo que tocaba empezaron a aceptar su música. "[Como latino] tengo algo que contribuir", agrega Jones.

Whip explica que él mezcla salsa, mambo y merengue en su repertorio. Click el Supa Latin dice que cantar al estilo rap en español "es natural" e incluso dice que todo se trata de ser honesto con si mismo. Quizás la gente no entienda lo que uno dice, pero entiende lo que se siente.

Artistas latinos combinan versos en español con la cultura latina de ritmos de Hip Hop — resultando en su estilo que los hace únicos. No obstante los artistas son promovidos en el mercado por sus versos y música que los hace únicos, según Darryl James, las empresas de discos no entienden como promover a latinos en el comercio de Hip Hop. "Definitivamente hay un mercado" dice, y agrega que es sólo una cuestión de promover correctamente.

Por más lejos que hayan llegado los latinos, entrar al negocio aun es una tarea sumamente difícil. Por lo general, las empresas de discos no invierten lo suficiente para promover artistas latinos. Joe Hernandez, dueño de una empresa independiente, explica que uno puede empezar como un artista mediocre, pero si se le invierte

Pase a Hip Hop p.18

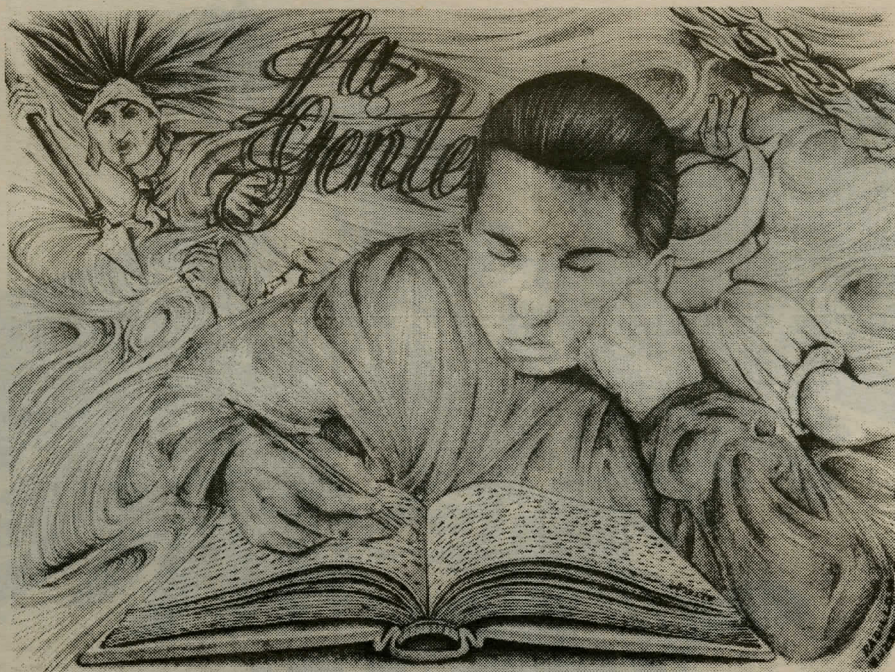
SIGAN LUCHANDO IS A SPACE FOR OUR INCARCERATED brothers and sisters to share their knowledge and experience with us through artwork, poetry, and correspondence.

For the past five years, we have tried to meet some of the educational needs of our brothers and sisters in prison. Since we have more than 700 prisoners in our program, we expanded the Sigan Luchando section to include an educational component called Free the Mind.

Free the Mind is a student-run community project of *La Gente de Aztlán* newsmagazine. We provide prisoners with educational material. We also do community forums on issues relating to incarceration. We welcome volunteers, suggestions and donations.

If you want to be part of the family, write to us at *La Gente de Aztlán*, Sigan Luchando: Free the Mind, 308 Westwood Plaza, 118 Kerckhoff Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90024. or call Vivianna, Bernadette or Veronica at the Community Programs Office (310) 825-0747 or at *La Gente* (310) 825-9836.

SIGAN LUCHANDO



Artwork by Ruben Radillo, incarcerated brother at Pelican Bay State Prison

Para el Estudiante Mexicano

Estudia y prepárate
para el futuro,
así te puedes ayudar a tí mismo
y a todos los tuyos.
La arma más poderosa del mexicano
es la mente,
Y con ella peleamos sin parar
por nuestra gente.
Así que sácale filo a tu mente
y prepárate para la batalla,
por que el grito de un mexicano educado
nadie lo calla.
Para que el futuro
del mexicano siga adelante,
se depende mucho
en el estudiante.
Esta batalla solo unidos
la vamos a ganar,
asi que edúcate
y prepárate para pelear.

Román Gutierrez
Pelican Bay State Prison

25 to Life

This is my life,
trapped between four walls.
When I look up,
I can't even see the stars.
I'm looking for answers,
but my mind is all blank.
I feel like I'm nothing,
as I sit in my tank.
I grew up without parents,
and never got love.
So life for me
has always been tough.
When I would want things,
I would always take.
Even between these walls
of my holding tank.

Before I would sleep,
I would always think
that when the next day is here,
I would always fear.
Because nothing would change,
it would always be the same.
It's the game of the system,
that will remain.
My room is dirty,
my blankets are old.
When I try to breathe air,
I only smell mold.
This is the life that's in store for me,
I have to live with the pain
that I will never be free.

Anonymous
Los Angeles Central Juvenile Hall

Sitting in Prison

I'm sitting here in prison with a pen in my hand,
where I spend most of my time trying to understand
the meaning of love
and of its truth that there's a God above...
How should I put this, how should I start
to express it straight from my heart...

I woke up this morning in my prison cell,
it was dark as a cave and cold as hell.
I looked in the mirror to see what I could find.
What I saw staring back at me almost blew my mind.

I saw an old man where youth once stood.
I finally realized how I got so old,
why my face got so bitter and my eyes are so cold...
I started to reminisce about the times I laughed
and about the times I cried.
I thought about my family and wife
and how I left them when they needed me the most...

So if you listen to me my brother and sister, you'll hear
the wisdom of an old man through a young man's tears..
So don't act like a fool thinking that you're cool.
You're better off living by the Golden Rule...

I'll tell you once, I won't tell you twice,
if you play with crime you'll pay the price...
You see, I live in a world where death is a test,
you've got to be deadlier than all the rest.
It's a dog-eat-dog world where the strong survive.
There are fools walking around taking good men's lives.

You see, I tell you this cause I know it's real.
There are somedays where you can't feel anything
but your own hate and despair.
You catch yourself knowing that you just don't care...
My neighbor received bad news from his wife,
so he tied a sheet around his neck and took his life.
They found him in his cell with the morning light,
swinging back and forth, now that didn't seem right...
Well ashes to ashes and dust to dust,
for a man must do what he feels he must.

I feel no grief and I feel no pain,
all I hear is the pouring rain
beating against my window pane,
filled with sadness and gloom.
I heard them say that
they are coming to my cell to take me away,
down the hallway at the end of the corridor
where a priest once told me I'll soon be free,
there awaits a chair for me.
They'll strap me down,
my eyes they'll hide,
I'll take a breath of cyanide.

Perhaps you'll hear my silent scream
as I give up all my hopes and dreams.
Tell my family and wife that
I'm sorry this is the way it had to end.
As the final tears fall from my eyes,
perhaps you'll hear me say
Goodbye, Goodbye.

Ramiro Guzman and Roger Villarreal
Mule Creek State Prison

MEChA de UCLA

Raza, Get Involved!!



GENERAL BODY MEETINGS
EVERY WEDNESDAY
PUBLIC POLICY 2355
6:30PM-8PM

RAZA
GRAD
1997

MEETINGS
HAVE BEGUN

EVERY
TUESDAY
6:30PM TO 8:00PM
BUNCHE 3164

RAZA
YOUTH
EDUCATION
PROJECT

WEEKLY MEETINGS
EVERY MONDAY
KERCKHOFF HALL 152
6PM-8PM
BE THERE!

¡¡La Union Hace La Fuerza!!

Paid for by USAC

CADA TARDE DE LA SEMANA, EN UN pequeño edificio de ladrillo en el área de Pico-Union, un grupo de inmigrantes latinoamericanos arreglan sillas y mesas formando salones de clase en pasillos y oficinas. Las salas están llenas y a veces no hay suficientes mesas para acomodar a todos.

A los estudiantes les faltan libros, dependiendo sólo en fotocopias y en sus notas para estudiar. En algunas oficinas facilitadores de clases se sientan en los escritorios, cargando pizarrones o recargándolos en dos sillas mientras enseñan.

La mayoría de estudiantes, si fueran enfrentados con una situación similar a la anterior, se desilusionarían al tener que atender salones y clases que están tan limitados en sus recursos escolares. Es difícil estudiar sin libros y el tener que sentarse en pasillos abiertos al público, teniendo que soportar al mismo tiempo ruido alrededor. Sin embargo, cada tarde regresan los estudiantes a tomar sus clases.

Estos estudiantes tan dedicados, están matriculados en un programa conocido como "El Proyecto Educativo." Este proyecto forma parte de una organización comunitaria llamada "El Rescate." Desde 1991, el objetivo del proyecto ha sido la educación y la concientización de inmigrantes latinoamericanos que habitan en Los Angeles.

Los planes de las clases buscan incorporar temas socio-políticos que afectan a estudiantes cotidianamente, al mismo tiempo que los facilitadores tratan puntos gramaticales, que tienen aplicaciones prácticas a lo discutido.

En los Estados Unidos el inglés es necesario, "tanto para trabajar como para comunicarse con las demás per-

sonas," expresa José Rivera, un estudiante de inglés nivel uno. Para Rivera, como para otros alumnos, la educación no es sólo un pasatiempo sino también una manera de abrir puertas, de aumentar oportunidades y de desarrollar las pericias para sobrevivir.

El programa de educación para adultos está compuesto de cuatro clases: Una de alfabetización, y tres de inglés como segundo idioma. El papel del facilitador es, no sólo enseñar, sino la de resumir las perspectivas y contribuciones de los estudiantes para crear un aprendizaje recíproco, en el cual el facilitador aprende del estudiante, y este último aprende del facilitador y de los otros alumnos.

La pedagogía está basada en la filosofía de aprendizaje de Paolo Freire, conocida como educación popular. En esta clase de enseñanza se utilizan palabras para generar discusión. La palabra es usada en contextos que tienen relación a la vida de los estudiantes.

La educación popular usa el "tema general, la palabra general, pero también generadora," explica José Roberto Flores, el coordinador del proyecto, agregando que "a través de la palabra, uno puede generalizar varias palabras."

Por ejemplo, en una lección de inglés, la palabra empleada puede ser "work" (trabajo) así de esta se genera una discusión sobre aspectos como lo necesario para con-

EDUCACIÓN POPULAR

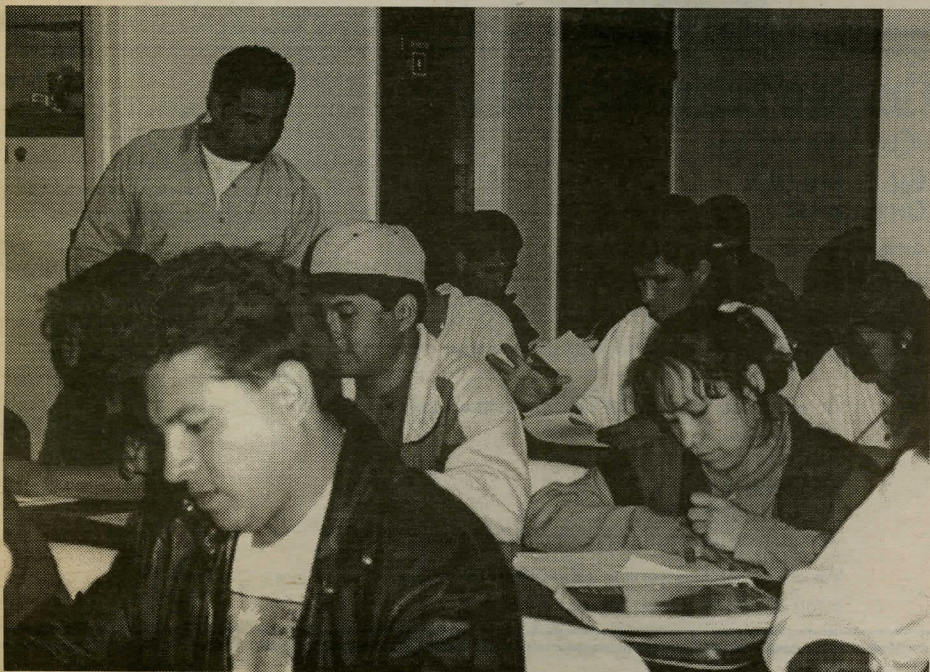
taking education into our own hands

BY TANYA BRAUER & JORGE E. CASTILLO-CABRAL

seguir trabajo, de esto que se derive a la discusión el tema del racismo. La participación de los estudiantes es esencial, especialmente la cooperación entre ellos mismos. La práctica del inglés permite que los estudiantes comprendan su situación social.

Actividades semanales como rifas y ventas de comida, crean una unión entre los estudiantes. Los recursos son escasos debido a que "El rescate" no puede dar el apoyo necesario, pero de todas maneras el programa continúa. Gracias al esfuerzo y dedicación de los alumnos el programa ha logrado sobrevivir.

Para seguir mejorando, el proyecto necesita la participación de personas como ustedes, con ganas de apoyar y de aprender, que puedan colaborar como tutores o facilitadores. Si desean más información, favor de llamar a Tanya Brauer (310)390.5888



EVERY WEEKDAY EVENING IN PICO UNION A GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS sets up chairs and tables to form classrooms in hallways and offices in a small brick building. The rooms are crowded, and sometimes there are not enough tables to accomodate everyone.

The students also lack textbooks and rely solely on their notes and photocopies for study purposes. The space is so limited that some of the facilitators have to hold their chalk board while sitting on an office desk, or place a chalk board on two chairs.

Sitting in hallways, open to public view and to noise, certainly is enough to discourage students from returning to class. Many students would be disillusioned if they were

in a similar situation. But the students continue to faithfully attend classes every evening.

These dedicated students are enrolled in an educational program known as 'El Proyecto Educativo', which is part of a larger community organization, El Rescate. Since 1991 the objective of El Proyecto Educativo has been to educate and to raise conciousness of Latino immigrants in Los Angeles. Through the curriculum, they are challenged to discuss socio-political issues that directly affect their lives. In addition, practical, grammatical points are incorporated as needed.

In the US, knowing English is essential "to get a job as well as to communicate with other people," expresses Jose Rivera, a student of English level one. To Rivera and other students education is not only a pastime or a step towards personal development, but also a way to increase opportunities - to develop skills for survival.

The adult education program includes four classes - one literacy class (teaching students how to read and write in Spanish), and three levels of ESL, which are each run by a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is not only to teach, but also to synthesize the various perspectives and contributions of the students and to create reciprocal learning,

such that the facilitator learns from the students just as the students learn from the facilitator.

This strategy coincides with the teaching philosophy known as 'Popular Education', as conceived by Paolo Freire. Within this process new words learned by students are used to generate ideas for discussion - allowing for the placement of these words in areas important to students' lives.

Therefore the most important principles in teaching are "The general theme, the general word, yet the generating word," states Jose Roberto Flores, Coordinator of El Proyecto Educativo. He adds, "Through the word, one can generate several questions."

For example, in a particular English lesson, the word may be "work". The lesson treating this word would probably involve a discussion of the difficulty of finding and keeping a job then move on to themes like racism in the workplace. Through this discussion they not only practice their English, but they also begin to understand how their personal experiences fit into the bigger struggle that immigrants face as a group in Los Angeles.

Weekly events - food sales and raffles, serve to unify the student body and to raise funds for class materials. Fundraising is left up to the students due to a lack of support from El Rescate, which does not contribute anything to the school. However El Proyecto has continued its work, thanks to the participation of the students.

In order to survive, El Proyecto Educativo needs the participation of people like you, with ganas to contribute to and learn from the community by volunteering as a tutor or facilitator. If you are interested in participating, or you would like more information about the proyecto, please call Tanya Brauer at (310)390-5888.

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Announcement UCLA Drug Abuse Research Center M. Douglas Anglin, Ph.D., Director Predoctoral & Postdoctoral Fellowships

Sponsored by: National Institute on Drug Abuse

National Research Service Award Training Grant

Aim: Under the supervision of Center research staff, this two year training fellowship will provide selected participants with firm grounding in drug abuse knowledge and issues, in sound research techniques and in practical research experience. The program is designed to provide trainees both with exposure to a variety of drug abuse settings, personnel, topics, and methods, and with the opportunity to select a specific area of focus for independent research at one of the participant research sites. Training curricula of formal coursework and supervised research. The program will provide research opportunities in epidemiology, etiology, treatment processes and outcomes, pharmacotherapy, and social policy issues.

Eligibility: Predoctoral candidates — UCLA only, with completion of required formal coursework in a social science (psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, social work, public health, or nursing), a GPA of 3.0 or better. University tuition and fees are paid.

Postdoctoral Candidates — Completion of the M.D. degree or Ph.D. degree in a social science (see areas listed above), education, social work, or health-related science such as public health or nursing from an accredited university.

U.S. citizens and permanent residents only.

Application Procedure: Submit a letter of application to include an outline of research experience, interest, desire for a career in drug abuse research, specific area of research and a focused research problem within that area; current curriculum vitae including a list of pertinent publications; university transcripts; and letters of recommendation from the applicant's major advisor or supervisor and two others familiar with the applicant's scholastic and research background potential. After review of written material, the most qualified applicants will be interviewed.

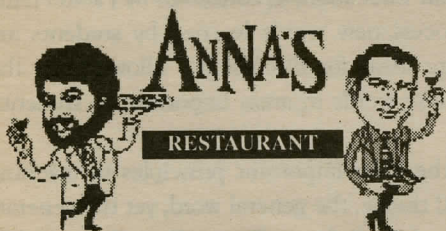
Stipends: Predoctoral fellows receive an annual stipend of \$10,008. Postdoctoral fellows receive an annual stipend based on years of postdoctoral experience. Health insurance and predoctoral tuition provided.

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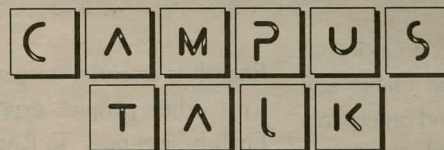
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Chicano, Queer, & Anti-209: ¿Tienes Algún Problema Conmigo?

By Alex M. Ortega

I'll never forget Wednesday, October 23, 1996. That day, progressive Raza joined other oppressed communities and voiced our opposition to the racist/sexist Proposition 209. *La Familia* (UCLA's Raza Lesbian and Gay student organization) was there in full force. We lead chants of "Hey hey Joto, Vote No on 209!" and carried signs reading "Lesbianas/Jotos vote No on 209!" and "Get out of the closet and into the March!"

Two of us *La Familia* members were arrested as the civil disobedience shut down Wilshire Blvd and sent AmeriKKKa the message that we will not tolerate the racism and sexism Governor Wilson is unleashing on our communities.

As the police lined up to arrest us, some Raza began chanting "culero, culero" at the police. I was deeply insulted by the ignorance and homophobia of this chant. I got out of the civil disobedience circle, ran over to the individuals with the microphone and speaker, and demanded they stop. The chant-leaders wanted to denounce the cowardliness of the police and they chose the word "culero," which means "faggot" to express this message. Obviously, the people chanting thought this word was an appropriate insult to hurl at the police. They couldn't understand what my problem was until I said "Look, it's very simple: two of us 'culeros' are getting arrested in this demonstration. We're doing this for our gente, we're doing this for you!" It was then that they understood and finally stopped their chanting.

I then demanded they stop saying "puto" in reference to Pete (Pig) Wilson. "Puto" means "fag" in Spanish. It's crucial that la Raza becomes aware of the homophobia in these (and other) expressions and stops using homophobic words that undercut courageous members of la Raza.

My experience with these homophobic terms is similar to sexist insults in the Chicana/o culture. For instance, when a group of male Chicanos are hanging out and one of them does something considered weak or cowardly (for example, crying) he is told "no seas vieja!" Which means, "don't be a woman" in vulgar Spanish. This is inherently sexist because being considered weak or cowardly is equated with being a woman. We all know that, if anything, the complete opposite is true: women are the backbone and strength of the community.

I'll never forget that day in October when I was arrested by the police and attacked by my own Raza. I will use this memory to educate my gente. If someone makes homophobic or sexist remarks, they must be corrected — because women and queer Raza have an equal right to be respected members of the Chicana/o community.

Alex M. Ortega is a senior in Chicana/o Studies and a member of *La Familia* and MEChA.

Nunca olvidaré el día Miercoles, 23 de Octubre de 1996. Ese fue el día en que Raza progresiva se unió con otras comunidades oprimidas y declaramos nuestra oposición a la racista/sexista propuesta 209. *La Familia* (el grupo de estudiantes Lesbianas y Jotosexuales mestizas/os de UCLA) estaba presente también. Con gritos de "Oye, Oye Joto, vota chale 209!" y llevando

letreros como "Lesbianas/Jotos voten No en 209!" y "Fuera del closet y dentro a la Marcha!" (Usaré la palabra jotossexual para la comunidad de hombres mestizos homosexuales por que somos tan odiados que ni siquiera hay una palabra positiva para nosotros en el idioma español como la hay en ingles, "gay").

Dos miembros de *La Familia* fuimos arrestados despues de que acción política cerró la calle Wilshire y mandó un mensaje poderoso contra el racismo/sexismo que el gobernador Wilson quiere imponer sobre nuestro pueblo. Mientras la policia se aliniaba para arrestarnos, unos Chicanos comenzaron a llamar "culero, culero" a los policias. Yo me sentí gravemente insultado por la ignorancia y homofobia (intenso miedo a homosexuales) de este canto. Me levanté del circulo de estudiantes que iban a ser arrestados, corrí hacia los individuos que gritaban esto y les ordené que pararan. Ellos querian criticar la cobardía de la policia y usaron la palabra vulgar "culero," que quiere decir "homosexual," para expresar esta idea. Obviamente, la gente que gritaba este insulto pensaba que esta palabra era apropiada para insultar a la policia. Tal vez ellos pensaban que no habian homosexuales protestando con ellos. No comprendian mi problema con el uso de esta palabra como insulto hasta que les dije, "Miren, es muy facil. Dos de nosotros 'culeros' vamos a ser arrestados en esta acción política. Lo hacemos por nuestra gente, lo hacemos por ustedes." Finalmente comprendieron y cesaron su canto homofóbico.

Además de esto, yo pedí que dejaran de llamar "puto" al gobernador Pete (Puerco) Wilson. "Puto" es una palabra vulgar que significa "homosexual" y supone que los homosexuales somos cobardes como el gobernador Wilson. Pero, como espero que



sepan, esto no es cierto. Es importante que la Raza aprenda que estas y otras palabras nos insultan y deben dejar de usarlas porque atacan a valientes miembros de nuestro pueblo que luchan por todos nosotros.

Mi experiencia con estas palabras insultantes es parecida a la de nuestra cultura mestiza con palabras sexistas. Por ejemplo, cuando un grupo de mestizos están conversando y uno de ellos hace algo que se considera débil (por ejemplo, llorar) sus compañeros le dicen "no seas vieja." Esto es precisamente sexista porque en decirle a un hombre que no haga algo que se considera débil, le decimos que él será considerado igual a una mujer. Como si ser mujer significa ser débil. Eso no es cierto! Todos sabemos que la mujer es la fuerza y valentia de nuestra comunidad.

Nunca olvidaré ese día en Octubre cuando fui arrestado por la policia y fui atacado por mi propia Raza. Usaré esta memoria para educar a mi gente y cerciorar que esto no vuelva a ocurrir. Las mujeres y la comunidad Jotossexual y Lesbiana de la Raza tenemos el derecho a ser respetados como miembros del pueblo Chicano.

Hey, Hey Joto, Vote
No on 209:
Queer Raza was **OUT**
in force

ESTUDIANTES P. 7

gracias a organizaciones como la ACLU (Unión Americana de Libertades Civiles) y MALDEF."

"A los estudiantes, por lo general, les gusta ser voluntarios, pero necesitan saber que alguien los necesita," comenta Sal Castro, un maestro de Belmont High School y activista de larga historia. Él recomienda que grupos que necesitan estudiantes visiten salones de clase. Necesitamos tener viajes al Concilio de la Ciudad y al Consejo de Supervisores. Ahora, debido a los recortes, no hay dinero."

"Los jóvenes participaban," dice Rafael Gonzalez. "Hablamos con estudiantes de high school acerca de su responsabilidad gracias a organizaciones como la ACLU (Unión Americana de Libertades Civiles) y MALDEF."

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Teresa Cano de la escuela Morningside está aprendiendo más sobre los temas políticos. "Creo que todos merecemos la oportunidad de obtener una educación sin importar la raza o [el género,]" comenta sobre la Propuesta 209. "También creo que nos afectará bastante porque perjudicará a muchas personas de mi generación," agrega con preocupación.

Los estudiantes también fueron muy activos en la movilización en contra de la anti-inmigrante Propuesta 187 de 1994. Organizaron marchas en sus escuelas y participaron en demostraciones comunitarias. "En los años 70, personas de 18 años aún no tenían el derecho a votar," recuerda Castro. "Los estudiantes tomaron armas y se involucraron en el proceso político para enmendar la Constitución. Esa fue la muestra más grande de acción estudiantil que he visto."

Razones por la Derrota

"No podemos tener estudiantes participando solamente durante tiempos de campaña," dice Gonzalez. "Debe ser de una manera continua."

La educación de los estudiantes de high school es imperativa por la necesidad de conocimiento entre votantes elegibles." Una de las razones por la cual pasó la 209 fue porque personas no supieron como interpretar la manera en la que fue escrita.

"Las palabras fueron muy engañosas," comenta Gonzalez. "Pero la gente lo creyó."

No Termina

La ACLU recientemente inició una demanda en contra de la 209, y MALDEF está investigando los retos legales.

"Estamos poniendo atención a [Pete] Wilson y [Dan] Lundgren y a como interpretarán la 209," dice Gonzalez. "La manera

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"Estudiantes universitarios deben poner el ejemplo," dice el estudiante de UCLA Gerardo Felix. Gonzalez está

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CHILDREN p. 9

years old that are going to lose income protection."

Lindsey suggests that the creation of a universal system of financial assistance, similar to social security, might be beneficial. Unlike the current residual system which only helps children when they are already mired in poverty, this universal system would help all children regardless of need and provide opportunity from the beginning.

As for the future, Dr. Lindsey concludes, "What are doing for these kids' futures? We're building prisons and locking people up. And we may have to continue doing that if we don't provide access to opportunity." Still, Dr. Lindsey is cautiously optimistic about the future and believes that one of the benefits arising from the new law will be finding the true needs of these children.

Vera remains resilient and optimistic that she and her children will manage to survive despite any AFDC cuts. Still, she painfully concedes that the thought of giving up her children for adoption has crossed her mind if she is unable to take care of them, although she leaves that only as a last resort. Like a martyr Vera remarks, "I'm not really worried about myself. To tell you the truth, I think I'm going to be just fine. What about those other people who aren't going to be fine? Those are the ones that I'm thinking about. Because I'm just not thinking about myself. I'm thinking about everybody."

HIP HOP p. 12

bastante dinero su canción puede resultar exitosa. Lo contrario también es verdad. Si uno empieza como artista de gran calidad y no le invierten lo suficiente, ese artista no va a llegar a nada.

De modo que, ¿Cuál es el futuro de latinos en Hip Hop? Algunos miembros de la industria afirman que hacen falta más empresas independientes e impresarios latinos dentro de las actuales empresas de disco para modo que los artistas latinos

sabemos que diablos quieren decir."

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NIÑOS p. 9

menos de seis años y van a perder la protección de ingresos."

Sugiere que la creación de un sistema universal de asistencia financiera, similar al seguro social, podría ser beneficiosa. A diferencia del sistema actual que ayuda a niños ya cuando estan sumergidos en pobreza, este sistema universal ayudaría a niños, cual sea su necesidad, y proveería oportunidades desde el principio.

Hacia el futuro, el Dr. Lindsey concluye, "¿Que estamos haciendo para el futuro de estos niños? Estamos construyendo prisiones y encerrando gente y quizás tengamos que continuar haciendolo si no proveemos el acceso a oportunidades." Sin embargo, el Dr. Lindsey está cuidadosamente optimista hacia el futuro y cree que uno de los beneficios de la nueva ley será que se encontraran las verdaderas necesidades de estos niños.

Mientras que Vera permanece resiliente y optimista en que ella y sus hijos logran sobrevivir a pesar de las reducciones a AFDC. Pero admite que sí ha pensado en dar sus hijos en adopción si no logra cuidar de ellos, aunque deja eso como un último recurso.

Como una mártir, Vera explica, "La verdad, no estoy preocupada por mi. Para decir la verdad, creo que voy a estar bien. ¿Qué de las personas que no van a estar bien? En ellas estoy pensando. Porque no pienso en mi. Pienso en todos."

obtenan el reconocimiento que merecen if you put a lot of money behind him/her the song can become a hit. The reverse is also true. If you have a tight artist but no money to put behind him/her, they will not go anywhere. So what is the future of Latinos in Hip Hop? Industry people agree there need to be more independent record labels and Latino executives in existing record companies for Latino artists to get the recognition they deserve.



Morningside High School Student Teresa Cano

Due to prison policy, family visits are prohibited for at least another five years, according to Mary. (Visits allow inmates to spend a couple of supervised days with family members.) They can actually have physical contact and spend time without corrections officers overt presence. Because Darnell is under "closed custody," (part of his "Three Strikes" status), he is not entitled to family visits until he is released from closed custody.

"They consider him a lifer" she says, as she utters a series of questions that churn inside her head.

"Do they feel bad after they've sentenced a person. Can they sleep at night knowing that they put somebody away for so many years for something that was a misdemeanor?...The [district attorneys] need to realize how many lives they're destroying with this law."

For prisoners, fighting back means extended sentences, canceled visits, solitary confinement. For those of us on the outside, fighting against Three Strikes means bucking the system, which more often than not means trouble. But consider the alternative: not fighting back leaves us all vulnerable to a law that is trouble of the deepest sort for anyone with a record. And judging from the stories we've heard, anyone means just that: you and I and those we care most about.

We believe we have no alternative but to fight. We're trying to get 500,000 signatures by the end of January to support legislation to amend Three Strikes. One battle at a time, we can win the war.

We are: Black Awareness Community Development Organization (BACDO), Barton Hill Neighborhood Organization, California CURE, CAUSE, Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice, First AME (Prison Ministry), Islands, Mothers Reclaiming Our Children and La Gente de Aztlán: Free the Mind. If you would like to get involved, contact Free the Mind at (310) 825-0747 or at La Gente (310) 825-9836.

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"THREE
STRIKES."**

a donde pueden ir. No pueden conseguir trabajo."

El sistema de justicia que Alma ha presenciado parece cazar a los pobres, ella dice. Ella recuerda lo que pasó hace años en el juicio de otro de sus hijos por robo. Mientras estaban Alma y su hijo en el tribunal, un juez estaba dando audiencia al caso de otro joven por robo, según lo que recuerda Alma.

"Si no conociera a tu tío tan bien, te mandaría de nuevo a la cárcel," le dijo el juez antes que de dejar al joven libre, según Alma. Momentos después, el mismo juez le dio audiencia al hijo de Alma por robo. "Si hay algo que odio, es un ratero", dijo el juez antes de mandarlo a la cárcel.

"Mis hijos no nacieron malos, y yo sé que fue lo que los causó que se hicieran así" ella dijo, empezando a llorar. "La policía anda en el barrio acosando a nuestros hijos desde que tienen doce o trece años. Los acusan de una cosa u otra hasta que se amargan la vida. Lo hacen desde temprana edad. Uno tiene que vivir todos los días de la vida con las cicatrices que el sistema deja en el corazón".

Perdió un esposo y padre

Manejaba por la calle con Darnell, cuando alguien metió una pistola por la ventana, la apretó contra la cabeza de Mary, y le robó su collar. Después, el esposo de Mary comenzó a cargar un

arma en el carro para su protección. Darnell temía que algo como esto podría volver a suceder y quería poder defenderse por si los volvían a amenazar. En lugar de ayudar a proteger a su familia, la pistola le consiguió un cargo de posesión de un arma de fuego. Con dos antecedentes por robos residenciales, Darnell fue sentenciado a encarcelación de por lo menos 25 años.

Mary asegura que las circunstancias de la detención de su esposo fueron sospechosas. Argumenta que la policía no tenía causa probable para detenerlo inicialmente. Los oficiales les dijeron a la pareja que lo detuvieron por "correrse una luz roja."

"Tenían sus luces apagadas, siguiéndolo a 50 millas por hora", dice Mary. "Yo conozco la calle que ellos dicen. No hay manera en que una van que viaja a 50 millas [por hora] pueda dar una vuelta tan angosta". Los oficiales lo arrestaron mientras usaban terminos derogativos como, "Negro, ponte de rodillas", dijo Darnell al tribunal cuando explicó que cree que su arresto fue motivado por actitudes racistas de los oficiales. "Lo único que decía era perdón", recordó Mary. "Pero decir perdón no me va a ayudar a pagar las cuentas; perdón no va a regresar al padre de mis hijos a casa".

Mary rogó al juez que reconsiderara la sentencia de 25 años a vida que le impuso a su esposo. El caso Romero, que sirve como precedente para dar a los jueces algo de discreción al sentenciar, aún no se había decidido. Sus palabras fueron en vano.

Después de que Darnell terminó su condena por el robo, había conseguido trabajo y continuaba su educación. Recogía a

los niños de la escuela y los llevaba de paseo, poniendo atención especial a su hijo con desorden de deficiencia de atención. Mary dijo al juez que temía las consecuencias que la ausencia de su esposo podría tener sobre su hijo de 6 años.

"Tengo miedo [por] mi hijo", dijo en una entrevista reciente. "El vé como funciona el sistema. En 10 o 15 años, mi hijo podría estar en la misma tribunal frente al mismo juez".

Cuando se llevaron a su esposo, se llevaron el segundo sueldo de su familia. Aunque Mary trata de estirar el salario que gana en un trabajo de tiempo parcial, ella teme que va a tener que pedir asistencia pública para mantener a sus hijos. Pero los ingresos son una cosa. El hecho de que sus hijos no serán criados por su padre es un tema de magnitud completamente diferente. Los niños extrañan a su padre.

Debido a las reglas de la prisión, las visitas familiares son prohibidas por lo menos por otros cinco años, de acuerdo a Mary. (Las visitas permiten a los encarcelados el pasar un par de días con sus familias bajo supervisión.) Pueden tener contacto físico y pasar el tiempo sin la presencia inmediata de los oficiales correccionales. Pero Darnell está bajo "custodia cerrada" (parte de su estado de "Three Strikes") y no se le permiten visitas familiares hasta que salga de "custodia cerrada."

"Lo consideran como alguien que estará encarcelado por vida",

dice mientras menciona una serie de preguntas que dan vueltas dentro de su cabeza.

"¿Se sentirán mal porque han sentenciado a una persona? ¿Pueden dormir en la noche sabiendo que han encerrado a alguien por tantos años por algo que fue un

crimen menor? Los [fiscales] se deben de dar cuenta cuantas vidas están destrozando con esta ley".

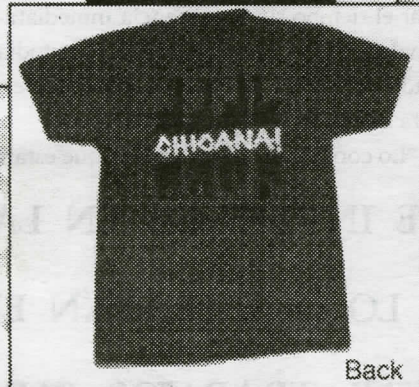
Para los que están encarcelados, defensa de si mismo causa extensiones de sentencia, la cancelación de visitas, y incomunicación. Para los que estamos afuera de las prisiones, el luchar en contra de la ley "Three strikes" requiere un ataque al sistema gubernamental, que muchas veces quiere decir problemas. Pero consideren la alternativa: el no luchar nos deja sin defensas, espuestos a una ley que simboliza problemas de los mas graves para cualquiera que tenga un récord. Juzgando en las historias que acabamos de leer, cualquier persona significa usted, yo y todas las personas importantes en nuestras vidas.

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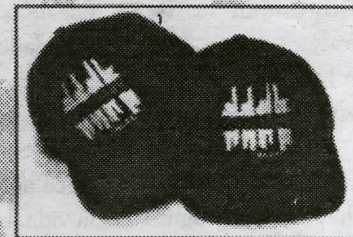
Grupos afiliados en contra de la ley "Three Strikes" somos: Black Community Development Organization (BACDO), Barton Hill Neighborhood Organization, California CURE, CAUSE, Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, First AME (Prison Ministry), Islands, Mothers Reclaiming our Children, y La Gente de Aztlán: Free the Mind. Si quieren contribuir, hagan el favor de llamar al (310) 825-0747 o a La Gente (310)825-9836.

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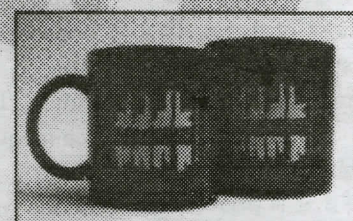
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