

Voz Fronteriza

¡PARA LA TIERRA, PARA EL PUEBLO Y PARA LA LIBERACION NACIONAL!

VOL. XXI NO. 2

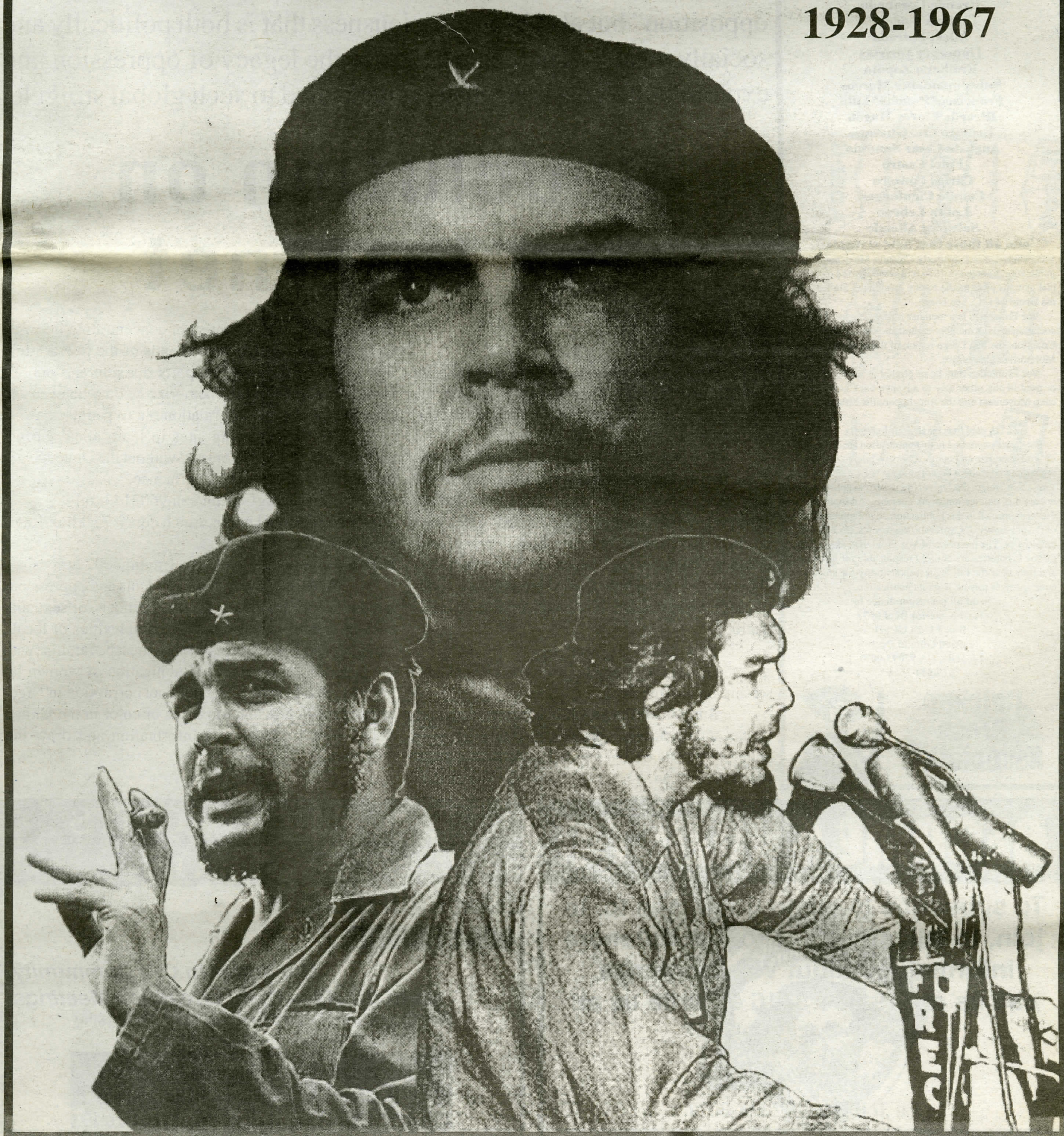
SAN DIEGO, CALIFAZTLAN

MARCH 1996

"I believe in armed struggle as the only solution for the peoples who are struggling for their freedom and I act in accordance with my beliefs. Many would call me an adventurer, and I am one; only of a different sort, one of those that risks his skin to demonstrate what he believes to be true."

Ernesto Guevara de la Serna

1928-1967



VOZ FRONTERIZA

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Augusto Cesar Sandino

Fidel Castro

Carlos Fonseca

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Salvador Allende

and all those that have struggled

Voz Fronteriza is a quarterly Chicano Mexican student publication founded in 1975 and is recognized as an official campus print media by the Associated Students Media Board of U.C. San Diego.

Voz Fronteriza is a member of the Chicano Press Association and is a member organization of the Raza Rights Coalition, the San Diego region of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee.

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Chicano
Press
Association

From the Editor . . .

This issue of *Voz Fronteriza* is dedicated to the resistance movements against American expansionism and imperialism. It is interesting to note the reality which sits at the doorsteps of a "first" world country. The contradiction between the "third worlds" and the "first" is so blatant but nonetheless goes unchallenged. This can be seen with the contradiction that is immediately seen south of the politically defined border. The conditions that affect Mexicanos are ones which must be questioned, especially when their oppositional counterpart is found at such close proximity.

While American politics tries to circumvent the reality of the world by embodying itself in a dialogue of nationalistic discourse against people of color, it tries to underscore the resistance of people of color; not only in a culture that has been defined as a "culture of opposition" but also by a consciousness that is both politically and socially aware - a people who know the legacy of oppression and exploitation. This issue then, is dedicated to such global struggle.

Revolution on
the Internet

by Kelly Lytle

At the University of California, San Diego each student has the opportunity to get on the internet. Students of a progressive spirit should immediately take advantage of this.

The people's revolution in Chiapas was one of the first revolutionary movements to mobilize and organize via the net. We must understand that the current drive on the part of the United States government to censor the net is not about pornography or other "inappropriate" issues like they claim. It is about access. It is about fear of broad-based coalitions for social change. It is about controlling information.

Information is power!

Get on the internet. Take power. Fight censorship on the internet.

But, remember the class issues surrounding the net and the access it provides to information. As college students we have an opportunity not available to everyone. So, do not horde the knowledge.

The net poses a serious threat of concentrating information/power/knowledge in the hands of the few; a situation which traditionally supports division and oppression. Download, print, memorize ... do whatever you need to do to get the information out to people.

Try the following sites to learn about current political movements within and without the United States borders, but all under U.S. influence.

<http://www.peak.org/~justin/ezln960214.html>

<http://www.personal.engin.umich.edu/%7eaklink/Rage/reviewsf/peltier-95.html>

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~tank/spg-1/mumia002.htm>

We need to learn about incidents and oppressions not only concerning our own race, gender, or sexuality backgrounds. To understand the complexities of local, national, and global oppression we must be familiar with the positions of others. The subjugation of women laborers in Southeast Asia, the political corruption in Nigeria, and the oppression of people of color in the United States are all related. Get information and draw the connections.

BECOME A VOZISTA!

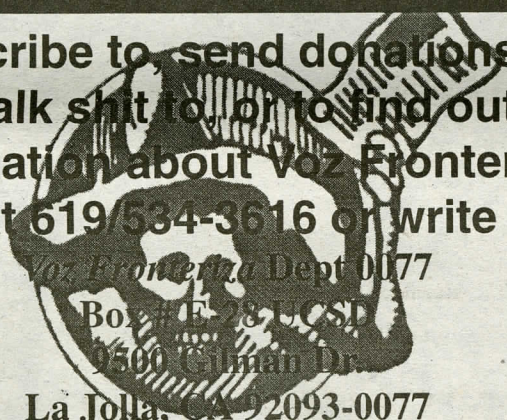
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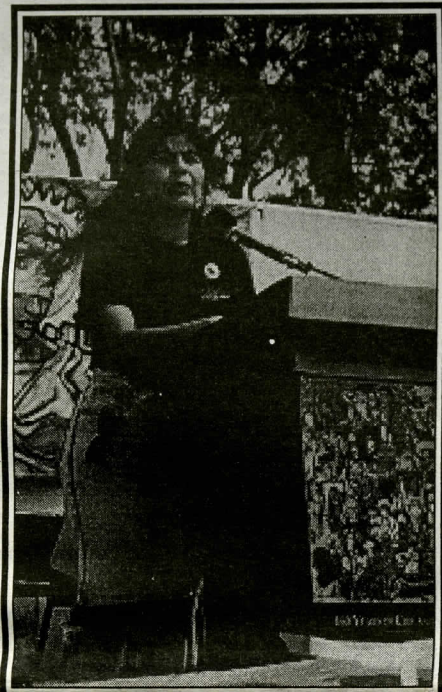
Mujeres Revolucionarias En Lucha Por La Liberación Nacional

Unión del Barrio's

Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin

Summing Up Some Critical Aspects Of The Question Of Women And The Liberation Struggle

The Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin understands that as colonized people, Raza suffer daily exploitation: we are forced to live in poverty, we are victims of police/migra terror, our children are



Patricia Marin speaking at the 20th Commemoration of August 29, 1970 in East Los Angeles.

mis-educated and forced to drop out of school, and the great majority find themselves exploited in the work place or without a job. Raza women, generally speaking, are further oppressed. They face sexism in the form of double standards, domestic violence and rape, inequalities in the work place and at home, and in political struggle.

The political, social, and economic exploitation of Raza women, is part of the over-all oppression of our people by U.S. capitalism-colonialism. Therefore, we believe that liberation cannot take place until all sectors of a colonized people are free. We assert this in Section 10 of Unión del Barrio's political program, where we state, "The absolute and unequivocal liberation of Raza women is a fundamental component of our struggle for liberation as a people." Furthermore, we recognize that sexism and male chauvinism are bourgeois features imposed upon us by the European colonizers over 500 years ago. Therefore, the main contradictions facing our Raza is colonialism, not sexism. If we take the time to study and analyze how the colonial system functions we can see clearly how it promotes the oppression of women and the division of the sexes.

History provides us with lessons that explained that women's oppression can only be eliminated through national and class liberation. In order to insure that we move forward this process, women must play a leading role in liberation struggles. In places where a national liberation movement has taken place or is strong, is where we find the most liberated women (for example Cuba or among the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación

Nacional in México). Unión del Barrio, with the help of the Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin, is taking the necessary steps to advance the struggle for the total liberation of Raza women. Join Unión del Barrio and help us move forward the struggle for the total liberation of all Raza.

The Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin is named after deceased Unión del Barrio cadre Patricia Marin. Patricia started her activism in M.E.Ch.A. in Orange County. She was one of the Mechistas de Corazon that took on the so-called League of Revolutionary Struggle, these were the Mechistas that took the stage at a M.E.Ch.A. Conference at Berkeley in 1986. She eventually helped start-up the Orange County Chicano Moratorium Committee in 1989. In 1990, at the 20th Commemoration of the Chicano Moratorium of August 29, 1970 in East Los Angeles, she spoke on behalf of M.E.Ch.A. After joining Unión del Barrio she moved to San Diego and became active in the Raza Rights Coalition, the San Diego region of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee. She was a leading member in Unión del Barrio's Women's Commission and at the time of her death she was the coordinator of the Chicano Mexican Prison Project. Because of her activism and commitment to her Raza, Unión del Barrio and the Women's Commission, at a retreat held in January of 1996, decided to name the Women's Commission after this dedicated compañera. By taking on the name Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin, we hope to keep alive the legacy of this righteous mujer and help advance the cause for the total liberation of all Raza.

Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin 10 Point Platform

1. We recognize that through over 500 years of colonization, oppression, and exploitation of Raza, there exists a more intense type of oppression of Raza women (and women of other oppressed nations); not only exploited by race and class, but also by gender.
2. We believe that in a true struggle for National Liberation, Raza women must participate as leaders, organizers, and revolutionaries.
3. We understand that the success of our revolution depends on the extent to which Raza women take part.
4. We uphold the right of all Raza women to participate in the revolution in a way determined by their desire and ability and hold positions of authority if they are freely and democratically elected.
5. We must struggle against all forms of sexism and chauvinism which are manifestations of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism.
6. We understand that Raza men are not our enemy, therefore we must fight equally and side by side with our



compañeros to liberate and reunify our nation.

7. We understand that Raza men who challenge and stifle the progress of Raza women within our organization, Movement, and communities are only working against our liberation.

8. We uphold the right of Raza women to decide the number of children they will have.

9. We uphold the right of Raza women to enjoy all benefits equally as they pertain to health, work, and education.

10. We believe that Raza women's physical and psychological integrity must not be violated. Any violation must be severely punished.

For more information on the Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin, write to:

Comité de Mujeres Patricia Marin
P.O. Box 620095
San Diego, Califas 92162

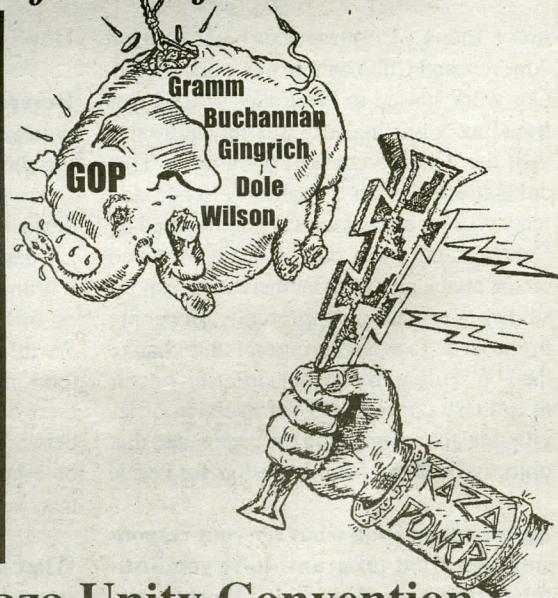
National Raza March Against The Republican National Convention MONDAY AUGUST 12, 1996

SAN DIEGO, CALIFAS

*Join Us In The Struggle Against Racism
And In Defense Of La Raza*

Demands:

- Rescind Proposition 187!
- Rescind All "English Only" Laws!
- Annul The "Clinton Crime Bill!"
- No Social Or Education Cutbacks!
- Abolish The I.N.S. And The Border Patrol!
- Demolish The Border!
- Annul NAFTA!
- U.S. Out Of México!
- Impeach Pete Wilson!



National Raza Unity Convention Sunday August 11, 1996

Endorsed by:

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**Organized by the
National Chicano Moratorium Committee**

Interview with Reverend Lucius Walker and Ellen Bernstein of

Pastor's for Peace

The following interview was given by Vozista Angelica Ramirez on February 29, 1996 at the frontera in San Ysidro, Califas. On the day of this interview five members of Pastors for Peace were in day nine of their Fast for Life. The Pastors are demanding the release of 400 computers, that they were shipping to Cuba, that were confiscated by U.S. Customs agents. As of press time U.S. Federal Agents raided a storage facility in San Diego that was holding other computers owned by Pastors for Peace that were also going to be sent to Cuba.

What is Pastors for Peace?

Reverend: Pastors for Peace is a special project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), it is a special project to which we have intensified our work in solidarity with the poor and oppressed people of Central America and Cuba since 1988.

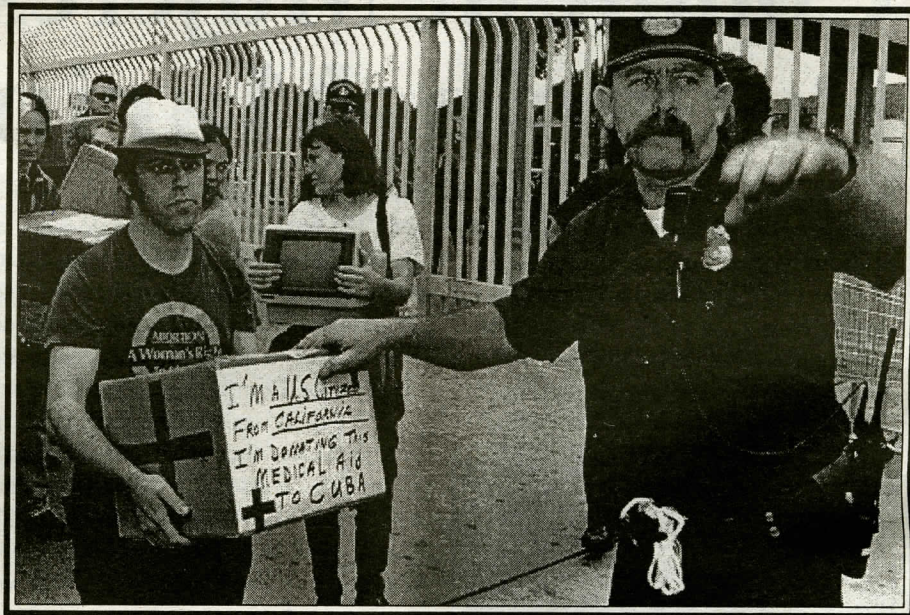
What are your views on U.S. Policies in Mexico and Central America?

Reverend: We work towards the improvement of relations. Our view is that our pri-

Corporation. In the early 1980's we began work in relationship to Central America and the Caribbean, this took the form of doing thirteen state wide information campaigns in various states. In the United States we have organized study delegations, work brigades, brigades [bringing] people from Central America to the U.S to tell their own story to the U.S audience. Our work has been educational striving to encourage a more humane policy by the United States and it has been humanitarian aid in character.

With what goal or objective in mind does Pastor's for Peace support community development projects?

Reverend- Our objective is to contribute to empowerment of the people at the base, we believe that people ought to have a saying in shaping the policies that govern their lives, they are to help develop the solutions to their problems, that their sovereignty and dignity ought to be respected, so our purpose is to advance the struggle of peoples in the United States and in the Third World, who are seeking to improve the quality of their life.



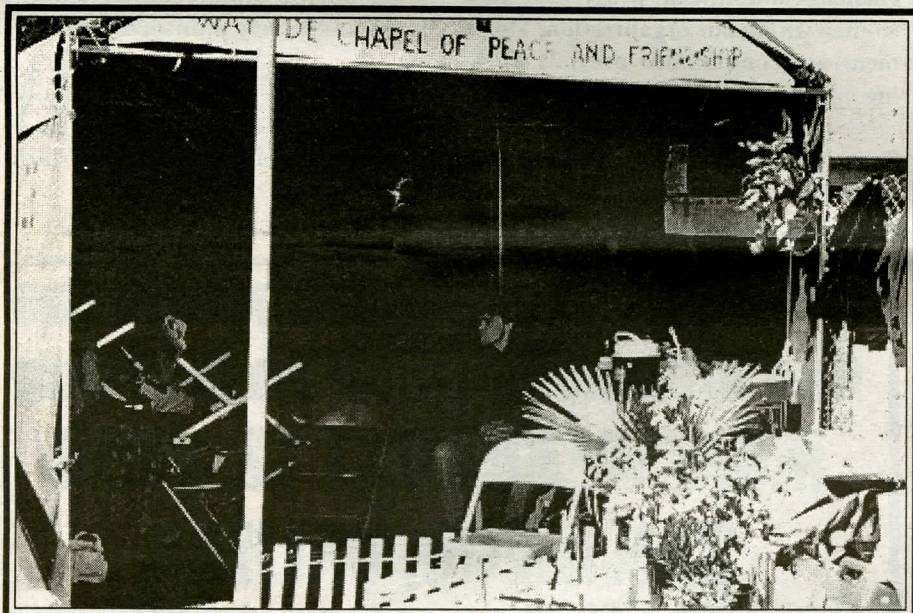
Federal pig confiscating donated computers destined for Cuba.

were being held prisoners. We sent another delegation to be observers at the Democratic Convention that was held, we sent two caravans so far which brought a small amount of aid, a token amount of aid, its never enough to address all of the peoples problems but, it is a sign of solidarity that we respect the struggle there and that we trust the people there to make decisions about how the aid needs to be used and distributed.

What happened with the January 31st and February 17th attempts to deliver humanitarian aid to Cuba?

Ellen- On January 31, there were about 75 caravanistas who were here in San Diego about to cross into Mexico with a shipment of 325 computers that had been donated mostly by people in California. The computers were/are to be used as part of an Information Network in Cuba for their health scientists so that family clinics, hospitals, medical libraries can communicate with each other about new treatment methods, about where medicines are located, about how to locate specific educational materials. As you know, we had taken five caravans previously to Cuba each time there has been some type of confrontation with the Treasury Department who has tried to stop us from going with our cargo of humanitarian aid but we've always been successful in getting the aid across, this time for a reason that we are not clear about, but it has to do with a change of sentiment in Washington, the customs agents, who were instructed very carefully not to let any of the computers go across and on the 31st of January. They changed the locks on the vehicles that were holding the computers, they sawed off the locks and put on their own locks, they manhandled drivers and pulled them out of the vehicles. They confronted with physical force people who were crossing the bridge with boxes filled with computers and computer parts. They assaulted a number of our folks who were injured, they confiscated all of the computers. They put eleven people in Federal Prison, initially they detained 17 but

eleven were brought up on Federal Charges and put in the Metropolitan Correctional Center. The charges against them, we think, are ludicrous because we were very carefully trained in nonviolent tactics and moved very peacefully carrying cargo across the bridge and it was the officers who assaulted our people not the other way around. On the 17 of February, there were more than 300 people who came from many parts of the United States; they came with more computers and items of medical aid. The Treasury Department had a very strict mandate and confiscated everything that was a computer or computer part, so now they are holding close to 400 computers. Cuba needs the computers. We are learning that while this campaign is going on that there has been so much international attention that there are solidarity organizations in Europe, Latin America that are going to donate comput-



Pastor's for Peace hunger strikers on day 9 of their "Fast For Life."

mary focus of course has been Central America and Cuba, where our work started. Our work started in Nicaragua when I was traveling with the religious delegation to visit the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. That delegation was on a regularly scheduled ferry passenger boat which was attacked by Contra's and I was one of those wounded on the attack and I felt an increased responsibility to provide an opportunity for people in the U.S. to work to correct and change the U.S. Policy that meant suffering or war or military oppression or subversion of legitimate governments in the region and that objective took the form of Pastors for Peace.

As an organization what are your responsibilities, what programs have you instituted to help people in Third World countries?

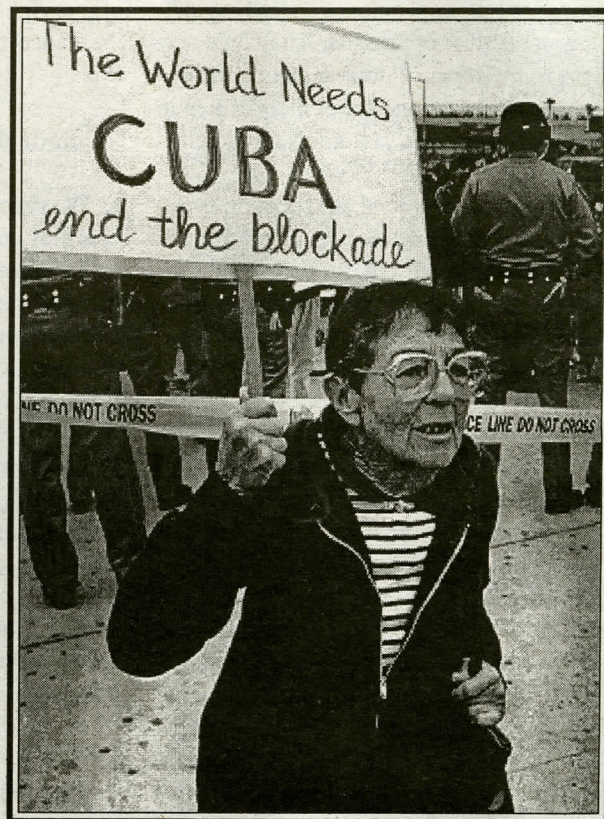
Reverend- In the late 1960's early 1970's we worked to support African liberation efforts, in support for their welfare and social services, enabling many organizations in the U.S. to raise money to send clothing, food and other humanitarian aid to Angola, Mozambique, what was then Rhodesia which, after its independence became Zimbabwe. In the late 70's we supported indigenous native Canadian groups in Canada, the Lubricane Lake Indian band, in their efforts to resist the encroachment upon their ancestral land by the Western Energy & Oil

How is the U.S embargo affecting Cuba?

Reverend- The U.S embargo in Cuba is a policy of death, it is a policy which is hurting the poor people, women, children, the sick and the aging. It is a policy which is despicable, which is really illegal by international law, it is immoral by any standard, it is unjustified and does not serve the interest of either the U.S or the people of Cuba. We think it is a policy which has lasted for too long, 35 years, and ought to be ended, there ought to be normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba, there ought to be a policy of trade and shared economic ties.

What support have you provided to the struggle of the EZLN for justice, peace, land in Chiapas?

Ellen- As soon as we learned of the struggle we started to send observer delegations of notable persons from the U.S., grass roots organizers, religious leaders. We pulled together a number of important delegations who went just to visit and to meet with folks of the EZLN and to meet with Bishop Samuel Ruiz. We've had delegations present at several very important times, one right at the time when the military was cracking down very hard on the EZLN, it was a Pastors for Peace delegation that was able to push to visit some of the people who



A supporter of Pastor's for Peace demanding an end to the illegal blockade of Cuba.

ers and they will send them directly to Cuba, so Cuba will end up with the computers definitely whether we get these or not but we intend to get these primarily because we want to lift up to the people of the United States this very clear example of the absurdity, the inhumanity, the brutality of the U.S blockade. We hear Congressman Torecelli on the radio saying a lot of food and medicine goes to Cuba, we send lots of charity

aid. Number one we don't send very much, Number Two Cuba is not asking for charity they're asking for the right to run their own health care system which is the best in the Third World and in some ways better than ours.

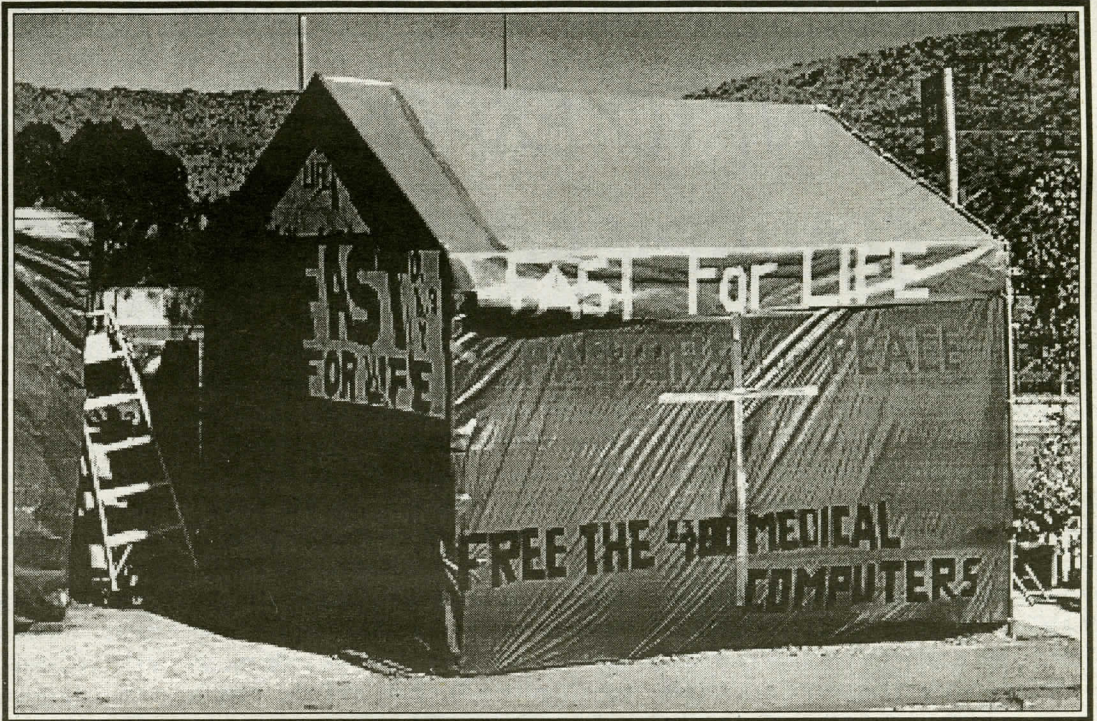
The U.S Government has made countless efforts to stop humanitarian aid from reaching Cuba, what is the motivation/drive that the United States has that is causing them to act in such a manner?

Ellen- They are motivated by a lot of old attitudes that come from the late 50s and early 60s. They are motivated by the sense of resentment that Cuba has been able to stand up and stay on its feet, in spite of neglect and deliberate abuse by the United States. They resent that Cubans insist on a fair distribution of their property, on healthcare and education for everyone. The mechanisms that keep all of this in place are, have to do with people who were trained by the CIA in the late 1950s, early 1960s to invade Cuba, to overthrow Cuba, to assassinate the President, to reek terrorist havoc in the country, to destabilize it in any way and what we have seen over the next 35 years are just one form or another of the same thing. The most recent provocation by "Brothers to the Rescue" is just one more example of that. The Cubans understand that very clearly.

What is your response to the Brothers To the Rescue Tragedy? How do you see it affecting the Fast for Life?

Ellen- The tragedy around "Brothers to the Rescue" was a tragedy in a number of different ways. We always regret when lives are lost and we almost always regret when

military force needs to be used. Perhaps the greater tragedy in this moment is that through yet one more act of provocation the folks in Miami, these Ultra Right wing folk who want to cut up Cuba into little pieces and eat it up for dinner, they have managed with this one act to take the issue of Cuba and put it right back in the middle of Washington D.C to debate one more time so that now all the candidates are rushing to see who can be the toughest on Cuba. They have shifted the issues sufficiently, we watched the propaganda and the disinformation around all of this, ignite like someone had thrown a match into a pile of dry wood. Early in the day there was very fair reporting that said that the two governments agreed that the planes had flown over Cuban territory that they had been warned a number of times. What wasn't reported here was that the Cessnas were flying over a military base. To have Madeline Albright [U.S. delegate to the United Nations] sit in front of the U.N and try to act as if the Cuban soldiers are inhumane is just another aspect of the disinformation, so that they can move their own political agendas forward. We know that the majority of the people in the Senate think that the Helms Burton Bill is inconsistent, unenforceable, illogical and a violation of international Law and yet they're



Pastor's for Peace tent in San Ysidro, Califas where the "Fast For Life" is taking place.

voting for it anyway. For the folk here in the Fast, it makes the Fast more important than ever, it makes the presence here a righteous testimony in the midst of the sea of disinformation, it says that there is an immorality here. The folks from whom we take our inspiration is the Cubans they've been able to live in the currents of all of the disinformation about them, the isolation and economic hardship, they understand where the problems are coming from, they understand that staying on their feet is more important than living on their knees.

Suppose the government doesn't concede to releasing the 400 medical computers

that were seized, what further measures will Pastors for Peace take?

Ellen- We will continue to organize in anyway we know how, mobilizing support in various ways we're hearing that there are demonstrations being organized in 30 cities around the United States for March 6 by local groups, there are churches that are preparing to participate in various ways in fasting, vigils, prayers. The Fast is going to go on, these folks are prepared to be here for a very long time.



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The NCMC has regions in El Paso, TX, Los Angeles, CA, Oakland, CA, Oxnard, CA, Riverside, CA, San Diego, CA, and San José, CA. The NCMC is united under the principles of independence from government funding or control and for Chicano Mexican self-determination and the following program/demands:

- Full employment with union jobs and wages for all;
- Quality education for all our children;
- Affordable healthcare for our families;
- Decent affordable housing for all;
- Community control of the police and sheriffs;
- Abolishment of the racist Border Patrol;
- De-militarization of the Mexico/U.S. border;
- End drug trafficking in our barrios;
- End barrio violence;
- U.S. out of Latin America.

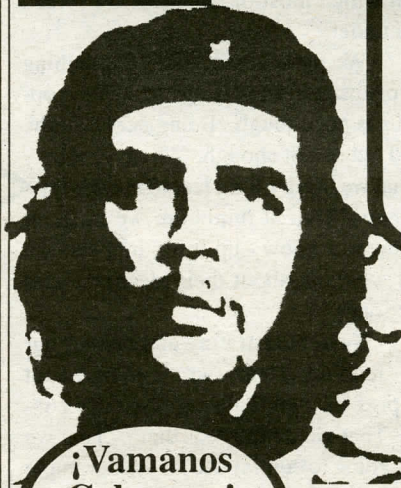


**For more information on the NCMC write to:
NCMC, P.O. Box 1842, San Diego, CA 92112.**

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Organizing the August 12th National Raza Marcha Against the Republican Party Convention

WE WANT TO EXPOSE THE RACISM AND MODERN SLAVERY FOUND IN OCCUPIED AMERICA

excerpts from a presentation given by Ernesto Bustillos at a forum held at Moorpark Community College [Ventura County, Califas] on March 8, 1996. The forum was organized by M.E.Ch.A. and the Oxnard Region of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee (NCMC). Also speaking at the forum were Eliseo Cisneros (Oxnard NCMC), Jose Moreno (Oxnard NCMC), and Jaime Cruz (Los Angeles NCMC). We salute the compañeros and compañeras who put together the forum for the hard work that went into organizing the event.

I would like to preface my presentation by briefly giving you an introduction to Unión del Barrio. We are an organization dedicated to winning the liberation of all Raza (north/south of the militarily imposed border). La Unión was founded in 1981 by veterans of the movimiento - who did not give up the ideas and objectives of the Chicano Power Movement of the 1960's/70's.

Since our founding we have organized (literally) hundreds of demonstrations, pickets, marches, and conferences - all with the objective of raising the consciousness of the Mexicano community, winning people to the politics of national liberation and creating an organization of disciplined, committed, and politically advanced individuals. Since the enemy is very powerful - in numbers, organization, and money - we feel only this type of organization can lead us to self-determination. Also, Unión, along with many other organizations/individuals, form part of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee. In fact, we were one of the co-founders of the NCMC in 1989.

Having said that - we would like to address the topic we were asked to speak on.

We were invited here this evening to sum-up the objectives of the National Raza March Against the Republican Party Convention, why we see this marcha to be of importance or significance to our people's struggle for liberation, and to update you as to where we are at - as to the organizing and mobilizing for this event (endorsers, publicity campaign, etc.).

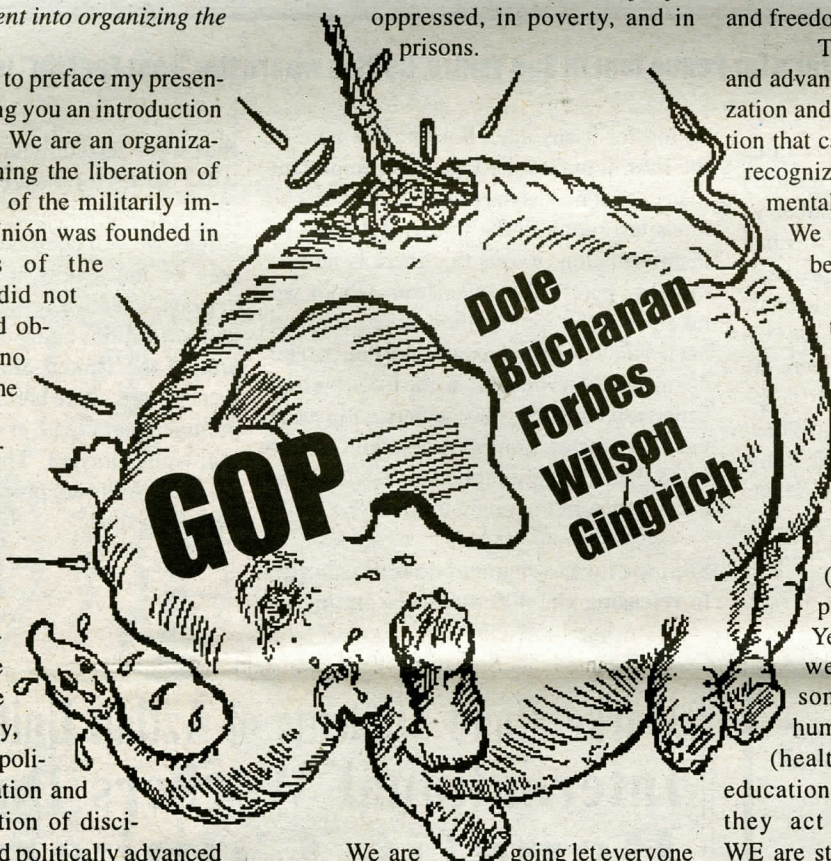
We want everyone this evening to clearly understand why we, politically speaking, are jamming-up the Republican Party when they gather in San Diego on Aug. 12, 1996.

On Aug. 12, we plan to have hundreds, and hopefully thousands, of Mexicanos marching in opposition to the policies of the Republican Party. The NCMC has basically four objectives for organizing the Aug 12 demonstration.

Our first objective will be to expose to the world the terrible oppression faced by the great majority of the nuestra Raza. We understand that there will be media from throughout the U.S., Latin America, and others part of the world, covering the Rep. Convention. We want to take the mask off the U.S. government, we want to expose the hypocrisy of the U.S. government. A government who portrays itself as a "democratic society" where there exists

justice and freedom for everyone.

We want to bring the truth to world. We want to let the whole world know that racism and modern slavery, in the form of vicious exploitation of Mexican workers, is alive and well in the U.S. And that this racism and the worst kind of exploitation is being kept alive by the Republican Party; that this program of racism and modern slavery is found in the so-called "Contract With America" which is nothing but a contract to keep Mexicans, Africans, and other people oppressed, in poverty, and in prisons.



We are going let everyone know that this program and so-called contract is coming from the mouths of sick-racist-fascists such as Dole, Forbes, Pete Wilson, Pat Buchanan, and the rest of the leadership of the Republican Party.

The second objective will be to confront those in U.S. society who are directly responsible for the misery and oppression in which most of our Raza are forced to live under.

We understand, that complaining about or simply "criticizing" those who oppress us is not enough. Being here tonight is good but its not enough. We say that its time that we bring a little fear to those who oppress us. That at minimum we must let the oppressor know - up front, in their face - what we think about their ideas, policies and actions

By demonstrating and raising our voice - loud and clear - we're going to put those pigs on notice that we are not confused. That we do not fear them. That we are not going to continue to let them trample with our dignity. And that we are going to organize and defend our rights by any means necessary. The marcha is going to give us the opportunity to confront our oppressors.

A third objective of the march will be to educate the community, in a real/concrete way, to the burning issues facing our Raza. By educate, we mean raising issues and defining them based on our experiences and our interests: the experiences and interests of the working class, barrio youth, prisoners, and the poor - which are the experiences and interests of the majority of the Mexicano people - and not from the gabacho ruling class or from the lackeys, the hispanic vendidos - so called professionals.

We want to educate people on Prop 187, the CCRI (anti-affirmative action initiative.), the "3 strikes you're out" laws,

English Only laws, the militarization of the border, etc. We want to educate our people (and indeed the whole world) that these laws are nothing but a war of genocide against Mexicans and other oppressed nations. We want to educate. . . we want to "wake-up" our Raza to the realities of what's coming down. . . and that if we care for our children. . . if we want to survive. . . then we are going to have to organize, unite, and do whatever needs to be done to insure our survival. . . to insure our right to peace, justice, and freedom. . .

The fourth objective is to project and advance a position, during the mobilization and during the marcha itself, a position that calls for Raza self-determination; recognizing that this is the most fundamental and natural right of all people. We want the voice of Mexicanos to be heard.

We don't have to tell you that for hundreds of years our voice has not been heard. For over five hundred years the system has taken our land and used us as slaves. Every damn negative thing that happens is blamed on us (drugs, unemployment, etc.). Yet every time we ask for some simple human right (health care, education, etc.) they act like WE are stealing from them. All of our concerns and our needs have been

totally ignored. We have been treated like animals. This is the reality in which the majority of us exist.

We understand very well. . . that if WE, you and me, do not struggle for our own self-determination. . . NO ONE will. When we say "self-determination", we're saying that we have a right to control our own lives.

At the march, we're not going to be talking about "saving the whales" or "registering people to vote," we're going to demand self-determination. At the march. . . we're going to push a Mexicano agenda. . . we're not going to put aside our concerns. . . we're not going to worry about offending anyone.

We're going to push a Mexicano agenda because we have learned from history that if we don't struggle for our own liberation NOBODY else will! Like Ricardo Flores Magon, a great Mexicano revolutionary [during the Mexican Revolution of 1910] once said "We must be our own liberators."

By taking a pro-self-determination

stance we are not saying we oppose the rights of others. In fact we welcome the support and participation of all progressive people. But we say that this support and participation must be under our leadership. This is called "respecting the rights of others." We're asking progressive people to support our rights.

As Jaime Cruz [who spoke on behalf of the Los Angeles NCMC] mentioned, we will also be hold a "National Raza Unity Convention" the day before the march.

The purpose of the Raza convention will be to bring together as many movimiento forces as possible to discuss issues and solutions to the many problems facing our communities. We also want to create a "working network" so that our work, our struggle, and the movimiento can be more effective. And finally, we want to develop a "joint or collective declaration" outlining some mutual concerns and committing conference participants to working for Raza self-determination.

Before I sum-up our presentation, we want to emphasize that this Marcha and Conferencia is of tremendous importance because it is fundamental, one more building block so-to-speak, in the process creating and consolidating a National Mexicano Liberation Movement. The marcha and conference will be the only events, that we know of, that are being organized and led by Raza for Raza.

We also want to make it crystal clear - that the marcha is NOT a pro-Democratic Party event. In fact, the NCMC, as summed-up by Jaime Cruz, is opposed to both the Democratic and Republican Parties. We see them like compañero Corky Gonzales (of the Crusade for Justice) once said (in 1970), they're two heads belonging to the same beast.

Compañeros y Compañeras, there are two reasons we are concentrating our efforts against the Republican Party. One, because at this particular time they are the most vicious and open in their hostility and hatred towards the Mexicano people. We know that at different periods in history, the Democratic Party has taken the lead in open attacks against La Raza. And second, logistically speaking, we can make the most impact by concentrating our resources against the Republican Convention, since it will be in San Diego and we have some organized forces there.

In closing, we have already begin to work vigorously in mobilizing for Raza to attend the Marcha. We have organized several press conferences and community meetings, at least four mass-mailouts and we have spoken throughout Califas. And we will be traveling throughout Aztlán, beginning in Tejas this coming April, trying to win people to supporting and participating in the march of Aug. 12th.

This forum is part of our publicity campaign to convince people to join us on Aug. 12th and to join the struggle for the total liberation of the Mexicano people. We want everyone of you here tonight to not only come down on the 12th, but to bring at least ten people with you. We want to take a strong and united stand.

Gracias, y !Que Viva La Raza!

A Chicana's Experience at UCSD

By Angelica Gallegos

When I first saw UCSD, I didn't see all there is to see. I was with a bunch of high school juniors touring all of the UC's in Southern California. We were all in EAOP (Early Academic Outreach Program). This program targets under represented and some economically disadvantaged students. We were a bunch of kids from the Bay Area looking at colleges. Personally, UC San Diego was the school I wanted to get to because it had been my childhood dream to attend a San Diego school.

When we finally arrived to UC San Diego it was everything I had dreamed it to be. I don't remember our tour guides' name, but I do remember she was latina and a Muir student. She showed us the Price Center, and explained to us the way the residential halls worked, she showed us the library and the medical school. I was very impressed with all the tall buildings and the way the campus seemed safe, but the one thing I remembered most of all as we were touring was a student that was walking to her class shouting out, "come to this school because its the best school." There was no doubt in my mind, I was determined to come to UC San Diego.

I applied and got in. I felt all of my hard work in high school had paid off because I got accepted in a really good school and one I've always wanted to go to. But my parade was soon to be rained on. Right about the time I got accepted to UCSD, I found out my mother was three months pregnant! From then on, each day it seems more impossible for me to go away to college. I couldn't leave my family when they needed me the most. Each day that passed, I saw my mom's belly grow and I would ask myself, "why am I being so selfish? I should forget about going away and stay and help." But something inside my head kept telling me to go.

I went to orientation, and every-

one seemed very friendly. At orientation I realized something was missing in this school, I couldn't really tell at first, but by the time orientation was over, I had figured it out. There were hardly any Raza at UCSD, in fact I hardly saw any people of color. All my life I was used to being around Raza, Africans, and Asians, a whole big mix. But in orientation I seemed to be the only brown skinned person there. I ended up telling myself that I was probably just imagining things. I thought back to the tour with EAOP, how impressed I was, so I ignored the idea of the absence of people of color at orientation.

During the summer it got even harder to say good-bye to friends and family because they were treating me so good, like if I was already gone and they were already missing me. My mom's belly got bigger from the pregnancy and I saw my brother to be, slowly growing. When the invitation from Summer Bridge came, I had to turn it down because I was working and I felt I needed to spend more time with my family. But still the day came in which I had to leave for college. I can't really say my parents were happy I was going to get an education, but I can say they were very disappointed that I was leaving to college. My mom kept asking questions like "Que ya no nos quieres? Es por eso que te vas?" and "Que te hicimos para que te vayas?" Those questions made it even harder to leave. I felt like the most ungrateful daughter in the world. I felt I was abandoning my family and my soon to be baby brother. It just didn't seem fair, why did it seem so easy before to say I was going away to college, and now that I was actually going it seemed so hard to do? Why did it seem like it was so much easier for the my neighbor across the street, who got accepted to the same school, to leave, taking with him his parents hopes and dreams? Why did it seem so wrong to leave?

I finally did leave, and it was a painful good-bye. If you're a person, (especially a mujer) who comes from a united family like mine, you know how hard it is to see our families tears. I said good bye to my friends and family and prayed to god I was doing the right thing.

UCSD greeted me with welcoming parties and social invitations, but when class started, I felt how much UCSD has hurt me. UCSD took me away from my loving family, my best friends and my Raza. I was very culture shocked. I rarely saw a brown face on campus, but when I did see them I didn't know them because I didn't go to Summer Bridge. I was still impressed with the library, the Price Center, and the tall buildings, but someone forgot to tell me how hard it was going to be. I felt I had left one world and stepped into a whole new one. I had to get used to taking care of myself, which was hard to do because I was used to taking care of other people before I took care of myself. But now the first person on my list and the only person on my list was me. I had a really hard time adjusting my first year, I felt very homesick, lonely and guilty. I felt guilty because I missed out on things, back home, that I shouldn't have missed out on. For example, my brothers birth. He was born one week after I left for school. I felt so unworthy of being part of my family again, but I needed them now more than ever. That's when I began to appreciate my family like I had never done so before. Finally I started answering some of the questions I had asked myself earlier, why am I leaving for college? Some will say, "well it was your choice to leave, you left because you wanted to." Sometimes I've even said that, but was it really my choice to leave for college?

My first year at UCSD taught me a big lesson. It taught me how to be independent, how to see a brighter side of a prob-

lem, how to appreciate everything and everyone, and it especially taught me how to learn. To learn from my own mistakes and from other peoples mistakes. During my first year, I would go back home to the Bay Area to visit. I felt I was living in two completely different worlds. Here at UCSD the biggest worry is about a paper that's due tomorrow and it's three o'clock in the morning and your just getting started. Back home there are bigger worries like: Is my friend that got shot going to be alright? What about my friend trying to get off drugs? And my old friend from high school, is she going to have a ride tomorrow to take her baby to the doctor? The problems at UCSD seem so silly compared with the ones back home. I realized in my first year at UCSD that I need UCSD to help me get educated so I can help my people, not only back home, but everywhere. So was it really my choice to leave for college? I don't see any better choice than for me to be in school.

For first year students or any other student who feels homesick or sometimes just feels like quitting, please don't give up. We are privileged to be here. Sometimes it feels like were stuck in a hole and we can't get out. And sometimes we feel very homesick and can't guarantee you will ever stop feeling homesick because I know I still feel homesick sometimes. But take this opportunity that you have earned to be here at UCSD, y educate Raza, educate yourself. There are a lot of people on campus that are willing to help you, but first you have to help yourself. Stay in school, even though sometime it seems as though all odds are against you. When I first saw UCSD, I didn't see all there is to see. UCSD is a very conservative school and it's a challenge being here. We have to defeat this challenge and hopefully when all this is over, we will all be able to go back to our families, guilt-free, and tell them, "I did this all for you and for our future."

Voz Fronteriza welcomed José Ponce

The Cuban Revolution is Revisited

On February 6, 1996 UCSD had the opportunity of hosting the visit of Cuba's First Secretary to the Interests Section, Jose Ponce. The event co-sponsored by *Voz Fronteriza*, Unión del Barrio (Pablo Aceves of Unión del Barrio) MC'd the forum, and the Cross Cultural Center, brought to light some facts that broke away at the media-propagated assumptions about the People's Republic of Cuba.

At the base of the lecture were two main points to be elaborated by the Cuban spokesperson; 1) the question of race/racism in Cuba and 2) the progression of the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Pointing to some of the problematic political practices which the United States electoral process involves itself in, a strong case was made for the inherent contradictions in the "Democratic" process of the American political apparatus. Noting that no campaigning was allowed in Cuban politics, Ponce pointed to the socio-political legacy of capital-based campaigning that has historically existed in the U.S. whereby the legacy of an Anglo male dominated political apparatus has been sustained. Simply put, people with some financial backing get into the higher echelons of the political system; thus the net result is not just a racially disparate politic body but also a class disproportion within the so-called democratic electoral system. Contrarily, Ponce pointed out that in Cuba race differences are blurred by an electoral process where no campaigning is allowed because the issue is the effectiveness of the candidate in question not

financial backing. Furthermore, this system cancels out the question of partisan participation so inherent in a two-party system like that of the United States.

In the course of the lecture Ponce highlighted various social structural systems such as free education and an universal free health care in Cuba that helps erase racial



José Ponce Cuban 1st Secretary and Pablo Aceves of Unión del Barrio

and class distinctions. Ponce also alluded to the judicial system in Cuba and how it actually rehabilitates the criminal element to become productive members of society.

In a question and answers session Ponce responded to many questions about current and historical developments in Cuba. Prior to concluding his lecture Ponce invited "Americans" to not be imbued by the media but rather to try to personally visit Cuba and decide for themselves what the reality is. In concluding his lecture, a call for the removal of the U.S. embargo against the island of Cuba was made.

YOUTH BRIGADE TO CUBA '96



JOIN A DELEGATION of young people from across the United States to see and experience Cuba first hand on a ten day brigade this July. The delegates will have the opportunity to see sites, visit workplaces, and participate in various meetings and discussions.

The idea for this Youth Brigade grew out of the very successful International Youth Festival in Cuba last summer. The 1300 festival participants from across the world lived with Cuban families, participated in workshops, and marched with more than 500,000 Cubans to oppose the U.S. economic blockade against the island nation.

Although the exact dates and estimated costs are not yet finalized for this year's brigade, the National Network on Cuba (a network of more than 70 groups and coalitions across the U.S. in solidarity with Cuba) has begun to build it in order to guarantee a successful trip.

SIGN UP NOW!

For more information in the Southern California area, please contact the COALITION in SOLIDARITY with CUBA.
Laura (213) 365-1382 -or- Paula (213) 383-9283.

For those that have been living in a cave. . .

Constructing Dignity:

Background on the Zapatista Challenge to Mexico and the World

By Melissa M. Forbis, *American Friends Service Committee*

For a brief moment in the early months of 1994, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN or Zapatistas) caught the attention of the world media. The New York Times even went so far as to call them the first postmodern revolution, evidently referring to the creative use of the internet as a communicative channel by-passing the traditional media. But what is postmodern about the rising up in struggle of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, worn down by centuries extreme poverty and oppression, to demand self-determination and to protest the new imperialism of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement)? The struggle was framed in the media as front-page spectacle, the new flavor of rebellion, and quickly vanished. This media blackout is dangerous as the situation is changing to one of low-intensity warfare, with signs of increased U.S. involvement.

Roots of Rebellion

The story of the uprising in Chiapas goes back long before the start of NAFTA January 1, 1994 and should have come as no surprise. The elites of this southernmost state of Mexico had 502 years of warning. In the early years of the Conquest, Chiapas was home to Fray Bartolome de las Casas, who arrived as an advisor to Columbus and spent the remaining years of his life defending the indigenous peoples of Latin America. In the 19th century, after independence, colonial rulers gave way to large landowners who ran logging camps, hauling mahogany out of the jungle for export. Wealthy German coffee growers moved into the fertile Soconusco valley at this time as well. The indigenous population was treated like slaves in these labor camps, and suffered a practice known as *derecho de la noche* (nighttime rights) in which the women would be raped at night.

The EZLN takes its name and rallying cry from Emiliano Zapata, a leader of Mexico's 1910 revolution, whose slogan *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Liberty), continues to be heard throughout Mexico today. Zapata's agrarian reforms helped change Mexican society, but they never reached the landless of Chiapas. A group of landowners appealed to the government and were assured that the land reform would not be applied to Chiapas, where a dispensation was granted to elite families to hold up to 20,000 acres. Land was finally distributed in the 1930s, under reform-minded president Lázaro Cárdenas. However, the generals in charge of the plan gave the indigenous peoples, who make up over one-third of the total population of Chiapas, the worst land on steep mountainsides, barely arable. Tensions grew slowly with occasional conflicts, such as in 1974 when a group of Tzotziles ejected the elites from San Andrés Larrainzar, site of the current peace negotiations. As campesino committees formed and grew, so did the military repression, until finally the cry, *basta* (enough), was heard.

It is no coincidence that the EZLN emerged in Chiapas, Mexico's poorest state. Chiapas occupies 3.8% of the total surface area of Mexico but provides 20% of the nation's energy needs, including almost half the country's hydroelectric power and a significant amount of oil and natural gas. Of the state's 3.2 million inhabitants, more than a third are of Mayan descent, representing ten main groups. They are concentrated in Los Altos and Lacandon, the two poorest of the eight areas of Chiapas.

A statistical survey of the state compiled during the Salinas administration (1988-1994), revealed grave inequities. Although Chiapas produces electric power for the whole country, 63% of its homes do not have electricity. Ninety percent of the indigenous people's homes do not have potable water. The state of Chiapas produces 28% of the nation's meat, yet 90% of the indigenous people say they rarely eat any. The illiteracy rate of 30% is the highest in Mexico; more than half of the schools only go up to the third grade. The average salary in Chiapas is one-third the national average. Fifty-four percent of the population is malnourished.

Chiapas has the highest mortality rates in Mexico. The infant mortality rate is double the national average (66 vs. 33 per 1,000); there are 0.54 doctors per 1,000 people and one-third of all adult deaths are due to curable infectious diseases. Prior to the uprising, Subcomandante Marcos, [of the] EZLN, noted, In San Cristobal de las Casas (the capital), you can buy or sell anything, except indigenous dignity. Here, everything is expensive but death.

The Uprising

It is within this context that the EZLN grew. Begun 13 years ago by three leftist intellectuals from the north and three indigenous campesinos, the EZLN is like no other army. It is made up primarily of members of the four largest indigenous groups in Chiapas (Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojoloba and Chol), and it responds directly to the orders of a council of representatives from each of those communities, the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee (CCRI). This direct link to the population, which is protected by the EZLN and is therefore repressed by the government, is a rarity in the history of insurgent movements. The wearing of ski masks springs not only from the desire not to be recognized (a realistic fear), but is intended to make sure that leaders' voices are treated as a collectivity, to avoid acting as caudillos, or political bosses.

The EZLN has stated emphatically that they have no desire to rule Mexico. Their goal is not to take power but simply to live with dignity. On the first day of the uprising, they put forth an 11-point plan of demands: work, land, shelter, bread, health, education, democracy, liberty, peace, independence and justice. They announced their opposition to NAFTA, stating: To us, the free trade treaty is the death certificate for the ethnic peoples of Mexico.

Chronology

War: January 1st, 1994. Shortly after midnight on the day that NAFTA went into effect, the EZLN seizes four towns in Chiapas, including the capital, San Cristobal de las Casas. The EZLN announced to the world that the poor, dispossessed people of Mexico would rather die on their feet than live on their knees. The first communique was issued from the Lacandon Jungle proclaiming ¡Enough is Enough! Fighting continued with casualties on both sides, but the EZLN and civilians sustained dramatically more.

The Cease-Fire: January 12, 1994. The government unilaterally calls for a cease-fire. This call is accepted by the EZLN and is almost immediately broken by the government on January 13, with an attack on a Zapatista unit, and on January 16, with two attacks on towns.

Dialogue: February 21, 1994. The first peace talks begin in San Cristobal de

las Casas. Volunteers form a ring of safety around EZLN leaders, remembering all too well the assassination of Emiliano Zapata in April 1919, as he entered Chinameca for peace talks. The talks quickly reach a stalemate. A long period of consultations and consensus-building in the EZLN communities follows. A broad array of individuals and institutions of Mexican civil society lend their good offices to pressing for a just resolution to the conflict and for a society-wide response to the historic and legitimate demands of the indigenous people of Chiapas. Bishop Samuel Ruiz is active in the negotiations.

The Consultations: August 8, 1994. In an attempt to reach their goals of democratizing Mexico, the EZLN organizes the National Democratic Convention (CND), a coalition of groups and individuals intended to address the needs of the poor, the indigenous, women, campesinos and others. Although participation was high, the CND created no lasting coalition or process.

The Governor: December 8, 1994. Protesting the fraudulent elections of August, in which yet another PRI governor, Rincon Robledo, was installed in Chiapas, Amado Avendaño, the candidate of the center-left PRD, is inaugurated in front of thousands of supporters, in a traditional Mayan ceremony in which the staff of power is handed over to him, to serve as the new governor of the transitional government in rebellion. At this time, independent intelligence reports indicate that two-thirds of Mexico's army is in Chiapas.

Government Military Offensive: February 9, 1995. The Mexican police make 21 arrests in what they describe as the break-up of three EZLN cells. The people arrested are tortured and made to sign false documents. The Mexican military begins its offensive against the EZLN and its supporting communities in the Lacandon jungle, breaking the cease-fire and attacking the population, sending 25,000 Mayan campesinos fleeing into the mountains. A press blackout imposed for 72 hours is finally lifted but only for four reporters from Televisa, part of the state media monopoly, who were previously excluded from all of the EZLN press conferences. In mid-February, the search for EZLN leaders is halted. Amnesty International issues a report condemning the Mexican government for its use of torture and illegal and arbitrary detainment in Chiapas, Mexico City and Veracruz. The Guardia Blanca, or white guards, paramilitary groups hired by ranchers to carry out intimidation and repression against campesinos, are operating openly.

Consulta Nacional: July 1995. The EZLN sponsored a five-question national consultation that over a million people responded to. Questions included, Do you agree with the EZLN's 11-point set of demands? and Do you think the EZLN should convert itself into a new and independent political force? The overwhelmingly positive response to these questions constituted a show of popular support for the EZLN.

Low-Intensity Warfare: Fall/Winter 1995. This period is best characterized as a building of low-intensity warfare, with increased intimidation, detainments, arrests, searches, rapes, evictions and beatings. U.S. involvement in the war begins to escalate. U.S. financial institutions pressure the Mexican government to extinguish the indigenous uprising as part of the bailout package, a strategy revealed in a memo leaked from a Chase Manhattan Bank executive. Weapons used against the EZLN have been provided for the most part by the

United States; likewise, a significant number of Mexican military officers have received training at the notorious School of the Americas in Georgia. U.S. advisors are working closely with Mexican security and intelligence forces, often under the cover of the War on Drugs. The influence of the military in Mexican political life grows. (See *Lightning at the End of the Tunnel: U.S. Military Involvement in Mexico's Quagmire Deepens* by Peter Lumsdaine, Global Exchange, Sept. 1995 [published in the November 1995 issue of *Voz Fronteriza*])

Building of Centers of Resistance: December 1995. Four indigenous communities build centers aimed at providing cultural, educational and political support to the surrounding populations. Plans include providing medical assistance, skills training and teacher training. These centers become the focus of a campaign by the military to stop their construction. Despite stand-offs on the roads leading to the communities and both armies on red alert, the centers are built and violence is averted. During this period, the Mexican Immigration Department begins a campaign against foreigners, deporting people suspected of working as international observers, although no state of emergency has been declared and no charges have been filed against those deported.

Creation of a Political Front - FZLN: January 1996. The EZLN holds an Indigenous Forum and announces the creation of the FZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Front) to act as a political entity which will work with the civilian population. They reiterate that they do not want to become a party or electoral force, but are working for the dignity and autonomy of Mexico's dispossessed.

The "Dirty War"

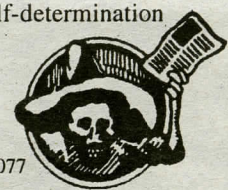
The current mood in Chiapas is tense. Although peace talks are continuing, government intimidation has increased, with such recent acts as immigration officials photographing tourists attending Bishop Ruiz's mass in the cathedral of San Cristobal, the attack and attempted rape of a Dominican nun working in a poor village, the expulsion of foreigners from the area, and increased helicopter flyovers and tank patrols of communities. In a recent article in the Mexican daily *La Jornada*, when government officials state that time favors us not the EZLN, they point to a government tactic of waging a "dirty war" which will wear down support for the rebellion.

Such a war in Chiapas, waged with the blessing of key elements of the U.S. power structure, must be addressed. The goal of the Mexican government is to isolate the EZLN and the indigenous communities who have decided that 500 years of colonization is more than enough. Given the U.S. media blackout of all but the most dramatic encounters, it would appear that this campaign of isolation is working. International solidarity is crucial to keep the peace process alive and end the war.

RAZA ACTIVISTS WANTED!

Voz Fronteriza is looking for Raza Activists to get involved in the struggle for Raza Self-determination

Call 619/534-3616.
or write to:
Voz Fronteriza Dept. 0077
Box # E-28 UCSD
9500 Gilman Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92093-0077



5,000 Zapatista Women March in San Cristobal

EZLN celebrates the woman with dignity, the one who struggles

From *La Jornada*, March 9, 1996

Jose Gil Olmos, writer, Elio Hernandez, correspondent, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas

In one of the largest concentrations of indigenous women that has ever been done in the state, in which nearly 5000 Zapatistas from the jungle, the highlands, and the border area of Chiapas participated, the demands were for the demilitarization of the regions occupied by Army troops, which have been present for more than a year, and the elimination of the white guards in the state.

After a journey of days and hours from their communities, the thousands of indigenous women, with ski-masks and bandannas over their faces, marched through the main streets of the Royal City, to celebrate International Women's Day, and to denounce the racism that "the government never has admitted."

Barefoot or in sandals, in boots or tennis shoes, with their children wrapped in shawls at their breast to feed them, the Zapatista indigenous women also protested against the oblivion created by the government and the society.

"We struggle so that in Mexico there is justice, that our rights be respected, that we live as human beings and not as animals, that we be recognized as the peoples that we are and as citizens," they demanded while gathering in the plaza in front of the San Cristobal Cathedral, in whose center a seven meter high (21 foot) wooden cross was raised. Some of those who came to the former Joyel had never before left their communities, hidden in the Lacandon jungle or set back in the mountains of the Highlands. The opportunity to participate in the march was also an opportunity to get to know the city, to leave their communities, where no one knows they exist.

"..Nothing is said about the indigenous as peoples, and even less about the indigenous women; we do not appear in any law that the government makes because for it we do not exist," said of the women who, for the first time, spoke before thousands of her own people united in one place.

The cold of the city and the light rain that slowly soaked through were the reception for the indigenous Zapatista women who conducted the largest march ever of Tojobal, Tzotzil, Tzeltal, and Chol women, sympathizers and soldiers of the EZLN.

Some traveled by truck for several hours, others came to the city early. Silently they put on their ski-masks and walked through this city, famous for the racism of its inhabitants, the "authentic coletos," in honor of the Spaniards who founded the Royal City, who wore their hair tied up, in "a pony tail."

In a disciplined manner, they gathered in the Main Square of San Cristobal, and there they listened to the message which Subcomandante Marcos sent them through a communique: "doubly humiliated, as women and as workers, the Mexican indigenous women are also humiliated for the color of their skin, their language, their culture, their past. A triple nightmare that forces Zapatista women to take up a weapon and add her "Enough is Enough!" to those of their male compañeros. A triple nightmare that forces a triple rebellion."

But in the face of the idea that the struggle for the dignity of women is against the man, Marcos stated: "we understand that this struggle is not against men, but is also for the rights of women. We understand that this struggle is not against Ladinos nor Mestizos, but is also for the rights of the indigenous women."

Later, an indigenous woman read a long communique from the Women for Dignity from the Zapatista Front for National Liberation. In broken Spanish, she said that the Zapatista indigenous women rose up with their

compañeros" because we were tired of the many injustices that the bad governments had submitted us to."

We are, they said, the product of 503 years of slavery, injustice, misery, exploitation, discrimination, and lack of rights. But now "we have begun our struggle to make ourselves valued, to make ourselves heard, to fulfill the demands that have never been met".

The rebel women spoke of the lack of services in their communities, of the absence of clinics and medicines to combat curable diseases, from which their children die, of the scarcity of schools and decent housing, potable wa-

ter and electricity, and the lack of resources to make a land productive which is increasingly sterile.

They stated that they had risen up in arms in order to "struggle for our independence, so that the wealth of our country no longer be pillaged by foreign monopolies, so that our country no longer be run by a select few." Wrapped in their shawls, "chujes" and sweaters, the Zapatista women lifted up their bandannas with the demand that "the federal army leave our communities." Along these lines, in the communique, they denounced the fact that soldiers, police and economic bosses have fomented alcoholism and prostitution in the indigenous communities.

They described the situations created by the military presence since February of last year: "Our homes are used as warehouses, the few classrooms for our children are occupied by the soldiers; the sports fields are used as parking space for tanks, helicopters and armed cars of the bad government."

Before leaving the plaza, which was guarded by dozens of soldiers and plainclothes police, some of whom were posted in the balcony of the city hall, the Zapatista indigenous women demanded to be taken into account in the agrarian laws, in order to have rights to the land; they



demanding new labor laws to protect them; a national fund to support economic projects; special laws to punish the constant violations to which they are subjected; and that all forms of discrimination be considered crimes.

From *La Jornada*, March 9, 1996

Communique from the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee - General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation

To the people of Mexico:

To the peoples and governments of the world:

To the national and international press:

Brothers and sisters:

Today, March 8, International Women's Day is celebrated. We, the Zapatista men and women, celebrate the day of the woman who struggles, of the woman with dignity. In the world in which we are forced to live and die, there is no place for dignity. The powerful want dignity to be kept in oblivion, in silence, in jail, and in the tomb. In the long chain of humiliations that the powerful construct to make itself powerful, the humiliation of women is repeated in all parts of society.

Doubly humiliated, as women and as workers, the Mexican indigenous women are also humiliated because of their color, their language, their culture, their past. A triple nightmare that forces the Zapatista women to take a weapon and add their "Enough is Enough!" to those of their male compañeros. A triple nightmare that forces a triple rebellion.

Our compañeras Zapatista soldiers, insurgents and militia members, and our compañeras in the base communities of the EZLN have demonstrated that dignity has a special place among women.

But not only the women of the EZLN have given lessons on dignity. Thousands of women in Mexico and the world say and say again their "Enough is Enough!" to a system of domination that corners them as things to be used and thrown away, that names them according to their possessor, and which curtails in deeds what is recognized as rights.

The women Zapatistas, soldiers and non-military members, struggle for their own rights as women. They also confront the macho culture that the Zapatista men act out in various ways. The women Zapatistas are not free by the fact that they are Zapatistas; they still have a lot for which to struggle and gain. We understand that this struggle is not against men, but it is also for the rights of women. We understand that this struggle is not against the Ladinos nor the Mestizos, but it is also for the rights of the indigenous women.

Today we want to salute our sisters who have fallen in the two years of the military encirclement, to our dead.

Today we want to salute also all of the women who have helped us so that our voice is heard.

Today we want to salute all of the women who have seen in the Zapatistas a mirror of their own dignity and rebellion.

Today we want to salute all the women who struggle everywhere, so that nowhere is being a woman a shame, a nightmare or an adornment.

Today we want to salute all women who have dignity and who struggle.

Health, women in struggle!
Health, women with dignity!

Democracy!
Liberty!
Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast

Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine

Committee - General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Mexico, March 1996

National Advisors to the EZLN

The Dialogue of San Andres and

by National Advisors to the EZLN

The National Advisors to the EZLN is a permanent body convoked by the EZLN to bring a national perspective to the issues being resolved in San Andres. It consists of more than 100 national community leaders.

I. Indigenous rights and the national dialogue

The first phase of negotiations with the federal government has ended, the one which deals with the theme of Indigenous Rights and Culture. What are the characteristics of this negotiation? How does the EZLN conceive the dialogue in San Andres? First of all, the Zapatistas have converted what was supposed to be a negotiation between two distinct parts into an open dialogue, inclusive and participatory, face-to-face with all of society and with the participation of the broadest parts of public opinion with any potential involvement in each theme. The political trajectory of the EZLN has been to conceptualize itself as a force NOT destined for disappearance or surrender within the negotiations, as the government has tried to characterize it to public opinion, but as an armed organization, with a strong social base, which is in transition to conversion into a national political force. This force will grow to construct an ample and inclusive path with all Mexicans, a force which will open up spaces where other voices, other steps, and other hearts can walk. The EZLN has been accompanied in this process, since the end of the first phase of the war, by a civil society with a growing commitment to new forms of political relationships, and with its attitude has parted the waters in a historic ... in recent national history, placing the EZLN in the immediate future; it is the first time that an organization of the opposition, and in this case, in rebellion, against the established order has included society in its entirety in a negotiation which has as its final goal, a transition to democracy.

Although it is the EZLN which negotiates, the recognized party by the federal government, the EZLN believes that the present government, immersed in a crisis which has increased its authoritarianism - has all other avenues of dialogue with society closed. Only armed force and the growing moral authority of the Zapatistas have obliged the government to accept a negotiation and in this sense, the EZLN's capacity as a national facilitator has been expressed in the different working group in the National Indigenous Forum held in January of 1996. Little by little, accompanied by a majority of indigenous organizations, the Zapatistas have included on the negotiating table of San Andres, demands which come from every corner of the Mexico which has been denied and buried. The following thematic working groups on democracy and justice, and social well being and development, will broaden even more the participation of urban sectors and others impacted by the economic, political and social life of the country.

In order to avoid generalized violence, and contribute to a peace with justice and dignity, the Zapatistas have done everything possible so that the demands of the Mexican people can be given voice in the singular access bridge with a government which has lost legitimacy and control, which piece by piece, sells the sovereignty of the nation and which turns deaf ears unto the cries of devastation imposed on a society by neo-liberal politics imposed by outside intervention. The first theme of this negotiation which deals with indigenous Mexico, has been accompanied by the awakening of

the consciousness of indigenous people. However, the EZLN does not consider itself its head or vanguard, but a part of this movement. Although the EZLN is primarily indigenous, and has its own conceptions about the themes of this phase (autonomy, rights, territorial rights, self-determination, women's rights, etc.) it has not imposed these conceptions on the thematic working groups; not on its invited guests nor on its advisors. The EZLN has instead opted for including the broadest range of demands, and some of them contradict each other or are being debated or are in construction, but they now confront the government delegation, as well as Mexican society in its totality. San Andres now projects itself as a space for a National Dialogue, the forum for expression so necessary for the Mexican people to construct a new national project. Throughout the negotiation, the EZLN has been gathering and synthesizing these diverse opinions in order to commit the government to a resolution of the undignified misery lived by the indigenous peoples of this country. Although the government has refused to accept the autonomy of these peoples in its totality, the EZLN retains autonomy in the context of a much broader and diverse national struggle, as part of the autonomy of civil society in general. The EZLN is perfectly clear that indigenous autonomy by itself will not end this ancient regime, and that indigenous autonomy will be a possibility only when the people of Mexico have autonomy, independence and liberty.

In terms of reforms to Article 27, and the need to actualize and recuperate the original spirit of Emiliano Zapata - something rejected by the government, the EZLN knows that this reform will depend on the correlation of forces and will be one of the principal tasks of a new political and social order.

The Zapatistas are perfectly clear that the present regime has enormous limitations and limited capacity to resolve problems which now escape its possibilities of gestation and control. The Zapatistas consider as well, that present negotiations occur in an environment of complete uncertainty and that they are sitting at a table with a government which represents the final phase of an antiquated regime, a party-system state which is criminal and corrupt, and which pretends to perpetuate itself by any means, or minimally shift power to right-wing forces, in obedience to the bi-partisan scheme recommended all the way from the United States.

Within this context the Zapatista struggle has represented since 1994 an obstacle for those who have already decided to sell the nation to moneyed interests, and with their presence and constant political initiatives have radically altered the placement of all the political and social forces in motion in the country. The EZLN is a factor for change and hope, particularly for the poorest and smallest, and has decided to convert itself into an impulse for a radical transformation of all social relations. The EZLN intends to change from the bottom up the general configuration of the system, including its bases of reproduction, promoting, together with many of other forces which struggle in the same sense, the substitution of a party-system state for a political and social order based on democracy, where those who rule, rule by obeying, and where a legitimate government which operates by the rule of law can exist.

The Zapatistas aspire as well and have given voice to this aspiration since 1994, to reclaim the supreme interests of the

nation and the legitimacy which has been undermined by government authoritarianism, thus establishing the basis for the collective elaboration of a New Constitution, with a legal structure reinforced by a broad and representative democracy: for this reason the Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle of January 1, 1996 proposes the creation of a political force with a different notion of power and its public exercise, the Zapatista Front for National Liberation, which will, organizationally deal with the fall of a regime which is precipitous in its dissolution.

This first phase of negotiation is contained within a national conception of the conditions of the country, with a clear intent to propel the substitution of the neo-liberal economy which jeopardizes humanity and creates global disorder. San Andres has its own dimensions within that, it is a point of departure but in no way a final point or goal. San Andres is the space for a much broader strategy of profound transformation of relations among Mexicans. The conclusion of the actual phase is a continual point of a growing struggle where the principal actors are not seated at the negotiating table, but responding to the common rhythm of a negotiation which the EZLN has made into a dialogue of a new kind, supported by diverse sectors of the social spectrum, which reflect the rich and diverse character of Mexican civil society.

II. Two strategies for negotiation

The conclusion of the Indigenous Rights and Culture, makes it necessary to evaluate the development of the dialogue between the federal government and the EZLN, in order to avoid the obstacles which have disabled it and limited the scope of the agreements.

The new dialogue, made possible thanks to the mobilization of civil society, should have as its objective the formulation of a new jurisdictional frame work and the definition of a political relationship which can satisfy the legitimate causes of the uprising. This obliges the parties to participate with an open disposition to the solution of the profound problems being discussed, which will benefit all the indigenous peoples of Mexico and a national society which seeks a democratic existence.

Nevertheless, hopes for the achievement of a just and legitimate solution have lessened in various important moments of the process, due to the repeated government actions and attitudes which have made negotiations arduous.

During the entire process of dialogue, the government has sustained and increased its military presence in the conflict zone, and has ordered its armed forces against the indigenous population, in a strategy of low-intensity warfare which has been amply denounced by national and international civic society. In addition government representatives have sustained their racist and insulting attitudes towards Zapatista delegates, and they have mocked and ridiculed their intelligence. The federal government has violated its own Law for Concurrence and Pacification, and has restricted the constitutional guarantees for free transit for EZLN members. These problems began in San Miguel, when the government delegation assumed an arrogant and prepotent approach to the Zapatista delegation. During this first phase the government attempted to impose the lowest level possible, e.g. limiting items for discussion to the state of Chiapas. The EZLN, through the integration of advisors, invited guests, and active leaders and members of the indigenous

movement in Chiapas and the nation, as well as intellectuals, academicians, and recognized participants in institutions tied to the indigenous community and communication media. The result was significant; the quality of this input was on the Zapatista side and in addition; a significant amount of indigenous people invited by the government itself agreed that such a debate would not have been possible before the Zapatista uprising of 1994. Once this dike broke, the government strategy fell, and this allowed positive results which gave rise to optimism.

The second phase of the working group on Indigenous Rights and Culture did not have the same results. Again, the problem came from the government side. It refused to recognize previous agreements, it ridiculed the Zapatistas, as well as other participants in the Dialogue. It placed the debate, once again, on a local level, and refused to acknowledge input of those not present. It rejected a previous agreement to recuperate the original spirit of Article 27 of the Constitution and the rejection of neo-liberal politics. It also attempted to reduce the definition of an indigenous nation, for example, to a "village" and to reject key concepts like self-determination.

Between phases 2 and 3, i.e., between November of 1995 and January of 1996, the government reinforced its scheme to "shrink" Zapatismo and its allies. Not only did it do this within the dialogue but by using military and political encirclement as a matrix. The government delegation then argued that the EZLN had no ideas or definitive proposals for the negotiation process.

By then it was evident, that there was an immense imbalance in media access and these were utilized to misrepresent and twist Zapatista proposals and ideas, and magnify government positions. Nevertheless, the majority had such intense and extensive interests, that it hurdled the information barrier, and opened its heart and ears to the daily messages of the EZLN delegates and their advisors.

Just as the National Plebiscite for Peace and Democracy of August 1995 forced the government to give a new impetus to the negotiations, the National Indigenous Forum of January 1996 gave the third phase a new turn, even after the invasion by military tanks against Oventic and La Realidad at the end of December. The National Indigenous Forum, during this last phase of the Working Group, had a primordial importance. It represents one of the most significant steps, organizationally and in terms of programmatic definition which the national indigenous movement has made in the past decades. In spite of the governmental strategy outlined above, the third phase recovered finally the dimensions of the original Zapatistas proposal. The indigenous question as a national issue. In addition the expression of the indigenous movement in the national forum of 1996, opened lines of definition which took form in the three documents which were the final product of the working group.

III. The struggle for indigenous rights

Declaration:

The Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee - General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and the advisors of the EZLN, in accordance with point 1.5 of the procedural guidelines make the following pronouncement in regards to the minimal accords of San Andres:

The fundamental demands of indigenous people have not been completely

the Rights of Indigenous Culture

fulfilled in the actual phase of negotiation. Therefore, in spite of our agreeing to these minimal accords with the Supreme Government in this first Working Group on Indigenous Rights and Culture, we pledge our continual struggle to achieve these demands; we call upon a broader mobilization of civil society in general, social organizations, and the representative sectors of the indigenous movement.

Specifically we will promote the needs and demands reflected in the agreements expressed through the National Indigenous Forum held January 3-8 of 1996 in San Cristobal de las Casas; in phase 1 and 2 of the Working Groups on indigenous rights and culture in San Andres Sacamch'en de los Pobres and in response to the results of the vote by Zapatista communities in regards to Working Group 1 on Indigenous Rights and Culture in the month of February 1996. We will seek out an ever-increasing political participation, from the ground up, which is not restrained by an electoral arena, and which makes possible a reversal in the correlation of forces.

There are omissions we wish to point out.

In order that there be a solution to the national agrarian problem it is necessary to reform Article 27 of the General Constitution of the Mexican United States. This article should recover the spirit of the struggle of Emiliano Zapata summarized in two basic demands: the land should be owned by those who work on it, land and liberty.

This reform should contain the recommendations elaborated by our delegation throughout the second phase of the negotiations. It should guarantee territorial integrity to indigenous peoples, based on the understanding that territory is constituted by the totality of the lands in which they reside. There should be integrity of communal and ejidal land. The incorporation of the norms in the 169th Convention of the OIT in agrarian legislation. Access to land by women and men who do not have it, through inheritance and restitution. The break-up of plantations in order to satisfy the agrarian necessities and a prohibition of land ownership by mercantile companies and banks. In the documents of agreements and minimal commitments between the EZLN and the federal government neither regional nor municipal autonomy is recognized. It is not enough that indigenous communities have the right to associate in municipalities in order to coordinate their actions. It is necessary to have autonomous structures which, without excluding the non-indigenous would exist as autonomous structures of government and break with centralism.

The demand for autonomy of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, in a regime which simultaneously includes communal, municipal and regional levels is expressed within phases 1 and 2 of the negotiation table at San Andres Sacamch'en de Los Pobres, as well as in the National Indigenous Forum. This autonomy should include the recognition of the territory of indigenous peoples and the establishment of their own governments, so that these communities may make decisions about their economy, about the administration of justice and control of their own security, as well as define their agrarian regime and solve conflicts on their own terms. Autonomy implies as well the recognition of indigenous rights, in a regime which is jurisdictionally plural, and where applicable norms to autonomy may co-exist with those applicable to all Mexicans. The re-distribution of jurisdictional

power remains to be done in all arenas, especially the political one.

However, autonomy does not imply that the government is free from responsibility in these instances. Indigenous peoples should retain the rights to public compensation funds and others which correspond to them, if and when they are exercised according to their plans and government structures. This autonomous regime implies constitutional reforms as well, at least within articles 3, 4, 43, 73, 115 and 116. Another grave omission is the problem of justice: that the viability of the rights and guarantees, not only of individuals, but of the collective well-being of indigenous peoples exists as well. The indigenous peoples should be able to have their own government because only in this way can they have ample jurisdiction over their territories and only then can they impart justice based on their justice systems. This would constitute a system of judicial pluralism. The struggle against inequality should be a matrix of a new political culture which can allow all national cultures to flower and endure in the acknowledgment of its own base. This would also permit the prevention of any form of racism and especially pernicious forms of ethnocentrism.

The right of the indigenous peoples to access to means of mass communications (print, radio and television); both public and private should be given. In order to achieve this a percentage of space in this media should be assigned to indigenous peoples and they should have the right to decide the content, use, management administration and purpose of these spaces.

The State should guarantee indig-

enous peoples the use of channels for the transmission and reception via satellite of information, voice and image, as well as the means necessary to achieve this goal.

In regards to the triple oppression suffered by indigenous women (because they are poor, indigenous and women) there are demands for the construction of a new national society with another economic, political, social and cultural model which includes all women and all Mexicans. Among the public resources which belong to the indigenous peoples there should be a special consignment for women, administered and managed by them. This will give them the economic capacity so that they can begin their own productive projects, guarantee them potable water and enough food for everyone, and allow them to protect health and improve the quality of housing.

In all the reforms of the Constitution which are made, women should be included specifically, thus eliminating any official discrimination against them.

We demand as well that in accordance with international conventions, ratified by the World Conference of Women in Peking, the rapes perpetrated in the conflict zones should be considered war crimes and punished as such. Women demand a re-distribution of the public budget, transferring what are now military costs towards costs of health and education programs.

Women should have full participation in all the arenas of autonomy without any limiting internal or external condition.

At the end of the actual phase of negotiations, we believe that only the broadest social mobilization can give body to these fundamental demands. This will be

achieved only by carrying forward an independent organization, which should evolve as a primary task of the National Indigenous Forum, which should cover all the regions of the country.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

An unjust and criminal political system, the Mexican political system, has obliged a group of citizens, primarily indigenous to take up arms in order to be heard and to call attention to the grave problems suffered by the indigenous peoples of Mexico. The political option of dialogue and the solution to the principal demands of the Mexican people will not come from the Supreme government, but from civil society, from social and political independent organizations. A new peace, the one needed by us Mexicans, the one we deserve, will come from ourselves, from our own initiative, and our own hope.

The dialogue of San Andres completes a phase. The struggle for the recognition of indigenous rights continues. Its path will open alongside other paths, alongside other Mexicans who carry the same banners, the ones which seek democracy, liberty and justice and the same aspiration: national liberation.

Democracy!

Liberty!

Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican South-east: Zapatista Army of National Liberation Mexico, February 1996

For the committee of advisors of the EZLN for a just and dignified peace

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Communique from the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee-General Command of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

EZLN accepts agreements regarding Indigenous Rights and Culture

To the people of Mexico:
To the peoples and governments of the world:

Brothers and sisters:

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, a Mexican organization that struggles for democracy, liberty and justice for all the world, has finished counting the votes to decide whether to formalize the first minimal agreements with the supreme Mexican government within the boundaries of the dialogue of San Andres. The first of six stages of the dialogue process and negotiation has finished, and it addresses the themes of indigenous rights and culture.

Since the dialogue in San Cristobal in 1994 the EZLN has been committed to the path of dialogue to seek a political solution to the war initiated on January 1, 1994. Since then all of the initiatives for a new, just and dignified peace have come from the EZLN and the national and international civil society, and all of the initiatives of war have come from the supreme government. Now that this stage has ended, we want to tell you what was and is our thinking in this democratic process of internal consultation regarding the agreements reached.

Based on the above, we present:

The results of the consultation of the Zapatista bases regarding Mesa #1 on indigenous rights and culture. Several dozens of dozens of thousands of men and women were consulted, the majority of whom are indigenous.

Of the 100% of the bases of support for the EZLN consulted, 52% were women and 48% were men.

Of the 100% of the men and women making up the Zapatista bases of support consulted: 96% supported the following positions:

a) Reject the lack of a solution to the grave national agrarian problem and insist that Article 27 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States take on again the spirit of Emiliano Zapata, summarized in two basic demands: the land belongs to the person who works it, and land and liberty.

b) Reject the lack of jurisdictional recognition of the autonomy of municipalities and regions by complying with the resolutions of the National Indigenous Forum held in San Cristobal de las Casas in January 1996.

c) Reject the lack of a solution to the demands for the right to information and justice and political rights which were detailed in phases 1 and 2 of the table on indigenous rights and culture and in the National Indigenous Forum in January 1996.

This same 96% also supported the following:

d) Accept and formalize with the supreme government the following minimal accords, the first in this long process of constructing a just and dignified peace:

1. The agreements and commitments stated in the documents of joint pronouncements by the government and the EZLN regarding national themes, with the specifications stated above.

2. The agreements and commitments stated in the document of resolutions for Chiapas; from the state government, the federal government and the EZLN, with the specifications stated above.

e) Make a declaration by the EZLN

and its advisors regarding the demands which have not been resolved and which are related to the results of phase 1 and 2 of the table on indigenous rights and culture and the National Indigenous Forum and to which the EZLN commits itself to sustain as its own demands and to continue struggling for their solution.

2% supported the complete rejection of the results of phase 3 of the table on indigenous rights and culture. 1.4 percent abstained.

.6% supported a vote of confidence in the CCRI-CG of the EZLN so that it make the decision.

As a result the Zapatista villages that rose up in arms against the supreme government to demand democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans ordered the delegates of the EZLN to the dialogue in San Andres Sacamach'en de los Pobres that they carry out the following directions:

First. That they explain to the brothers and sisters of the body of advisors for a peace with dignity and justice, to the people of Mexico, and to the peoples and governments of the world, the process of consultation that was carried out amongst the men and women who make up our Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Second. That they formalize the minimal agreements, which we have agreed to, with the supreme government.

Third. That they continue with the dialogue, insisting in the demands that we have stated to them as a result of this consultation.

Fourth. That they inform all of the brothers and sisters of all of the Mexican indigenous peoples about what we have decided.

Fifth. That they continue until the fundamental demands that were the basis for our just uprising are fulfilled: democracy, justice and liberty for all Mexicans.

In this consultation the following considerations are to be taken into account:

First. Profound agreements regarding the reform of Article 27 of the Constitution were not achieved, which is the problem of land. It was agreed that it should be addressed again in the table on well-being and development. This is important because the problem of land is the principal issue for the Zapatistas and all the indigenous people and campesinos of Mexico. We can not accept leaving Article 27 of the Constitution unchanged; we should insist on it in the subsequent tables.

Second. Recognition of local and regional autonomy was not achieved. This point was partially addressed with the recognition of the right of the indigenous people to "free determination", but the problem of autonomy is still pending and it is necessary to insist that the just indigenous demand be achieved.

Third. The government had to accept national themes after it had said that it would not address any national question. It became clear that the problem of Chiapas could not be resolved if the national problems were not resolved. This was a victory because the table in San Andres, which had been called a state-level discussion, became a national dialogue.

Fourth. The agreements on constitutional changes and in national laws open a great space for indigenous participation. With these agreements the national and independent indigenous movement has an

umbrella that lets it advance in its struggles for their rights and demands. As a result of what has been accomplished new demands can be advanced and the national indigenous movement can organize to demand the fulfillment of these agreements and to demand more.

Fifth. The agreements for Chiapas represent the most advanced ones in all of the Mexican Republic, and this will help so that in other states there is organizing to demand that they have the same rights.

Sixth. The agreements represent a victory of a new form of dialogue and political negotiation that no one has ever done. The EZLN negotiated cleanly and openly and invited everyone to negotiate together with the EZLN. The results of San Andres are not only a result of the EZLN but also the advisors and guests who represent or participate in the best of the national independent indigenous movement.

Seventh. Together with the results of the National Indigenous Forum they create a program of struggle for the indigenous movement.

In summary the agreements benefit the national indigenous movement and the local advances are not few.

However they continue to be only paper agreements, but with the National Indigenous Forum it is possible to create a movement that demands that the agreements be fulfilled and that continues with the demands that the indigenous organizations and peoples present in the forum agreed upon but are yet pending.

We know that we still have the military pressure surrounding us and the government has no intentions of diminishing its pressure; it is this way because the bad government wants to obtain through force what it can not get through reason. The government offered to lessen the military pressure if the EZLN renounced its national demands and accepted local solutions.

The Zapatista villages had to choose: if we only think about our problems and we look for agreements that only benefit us, then we are like other organizations that are only interested in their own concerns and nothing else matters to them; we would remain a local organization, limited to Chiapas, or even only one part of Chiapas.

We can not renounce our national struggle to obtain local benefits; knowing that if we insist upon the national demands, the government will continue its repressive blows, the EZLN reaffirms its commitment to the poor of Mexico.

This was and is our thinking by which we conducted the consultation on the first minimal agreements. The consultation of the Zapatista bases of support was not just a democratic exercise within the EZLN: it is the fundamental base of the legitimacy of our organization and the guarantee that we are following the interests of the people and not the interests of individuals or a group.

The struggle for indigenous rights has not ended, just a step on the road of liberation has been taken. This, liberation, will only be fulfilled and completed when it exists for all the Mexican brothers and sisters who deserve democracy, liberty and justice.

The struggle for indigenous rights continues, follows, will continue...

Democracy!

Liberty!

Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican south-east

Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee-General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation
Mexico, February 1996

Translated by Julia Sanchez, M.P. National Center for Democracy, Justice and Liberty

National Commission for Democracy in Mexico, USA

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North of the Mexican Border*

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From the American Friends Service Committee:

Sexual Violence in Chiapas:

By Rachael Kamel, *American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)*

A few short years ago, an outpouring of condemnation was voiced across the United States and internationally, in response to charges that rapes in massive numbers were being used as a weapon of military terror against civilian populations in Bosnia.

Such outrage helped propel the world's governments, gathered in September 1995 at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, to reaffirm that rape in the context of armed conflict constitutes a war crime, and under certain circumstances . . . an act of genocide. (Platform for Action, 147e).

More recently, however, an eerie silence has greeted revelations that widespread rapes have once again become a weapon of state terror in another, less prominent conflict: the low intensity war being waged against the largely Mayan population in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas.

The silence here remained unbroken even when a U.S. citizen, Cecilia Rodriguez, became a target herself. During a visit to Chiapas last October, Rodriguez was surrounded and raped by a group of armed men; one of them, she reports, said to her, "You know how things are in Chiapas, right? Shut up, then, or you know what will happen to you." A longtime U.S. activist, Rodriguez is coordinator of the National Commission for Democracy in Mexico-USA (NCDM) and serves as the official U.S. representative for the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

U.S. Media Blackout

The assault on Rodriguez prompted statements of outrage by various national organizations, including AFSC, and demonstrations at Mexican consulates in San Francisco, New York and other cities. But it has gone essentially unremarked by the mainstream media.

According to NCDM, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times interviewed Rodriguez following the Nov. 3 press conference where she disclosed the assault, and filed a story based on her case. His editors declined to run it, however, commenting that we've already done enough on Chiapas from a U.S. perspective.

This silence serves as yet another reminder that rape is among the most elastic of crimes. In a U.S. context, its horrific nature is most easily granted public recognition when the victim is white, while similar attacks against women of color are largely ignored or trivialized.

Likewise, the visibility accorded to incidents of rape is often dictated by a larger political agenda. Although the war in Chiapas has shaken Mexico . . . to its social and political foundations, it has been a decidedly secondary story here in the United States, especially outside the Southwest (where Mexico tends to be more visible in the media).

In the secret calculus of deserving victims, a key U.S. supporter of the Zapatistas, who is moreover a woman of color, does not rank very high. Indeed, according to NCDM, some women reporters have said that their male colleagues who cover the Mexico beat are questioning whether the assault on Rodriguez ever occurred.

The Campaign Against Sexual Terror

At the time of the attack on Cecilia Rodriguez, many Mexican women's organizations were already involved in a cam-

paign to spotlight the use of rape most often directed against indigenous women as a weapon of military terror in Chiapas. The Women's Organization of San Cristobal de las Casas, the capital of Chiapas, has documented more than 50 such cases over the past two years. They believe that many other victims have been afraid to come forward.

The silence was first broken in June 1994 by three young Tzeltal women, who were raped and beaten by a group of soldiers from the Mexican federal army at a military checkpoints in the municipality of Altamirano. The women aged 16, 18, and 20 were on their way to a market with their mother.

In October 1995, three nurses all part of a government vaccination team were sexually attacked by a group of 25 heavily armed men with their faces covered. The attack occurred in the community of San Cristobalito, 30 miles north of the municipal center of San Andres Larrainzar, the site of negotiations between the EZLN and the Mexican government.

So far, no prosecutions have resulted from any of these cases, despite the declarations of victims and witnesses. On November 25 which is celebrated throughout Latin America as the Day Against Violence Against Women Mexican women's groups presented a letter to Emilio Chuafet, the Secretary of Governance (roughly equivalent to the U.S. Justice Department), denouncing these and other cases of violence and demanding official action.

However, an open letter signed by 36 prominent Mexican women including five deputies (members of the national legislature) charges that to date no response of any kind has been made, and now we have

a new case of rape against a woman of Chiapas by members of a police body. The letter was published January 15 in the Mexican daily *La Jornada*.

The new case mentioned in the letter is that of Julieta Flores Hernandez, an 18-year-old Tojolabal woman, who was detained on December 16 in the agricultural cooperative of Nueva Palestina in the municipality of Ocosingo, where she was tortured and raped by eight judicial agents.

Most recently, on January 26, a Dominican nun, Norberta Lopez Garcia, who was accompanied by two children, was attacked by three armed men whose faces were covered with ski masks on her way to Tzacabatl, also in Ocosingo. The attackers threatened to rape her and forced her to strip at gunpoint, but then fled at the sound of an approaching bus.

The Campaign Continues . . .

The protests by Mexican women continue. At this writing, a broad coalition of Mexican women's groups is preparing to present a letter to the Comisión de Concordancia y Pacificación (COCOPA, or Peace and Harmony Commission, the high-level legislative commission that is sponsoring the dialogue between the Mexican government and the EZLN). The letter details the many steps that have been taken with local and national authorities to seek justice for the rape victims, all so far to no avail. The Mexican women are requesting that letters of support be sent to the president of COCOPA, Lic. Jaime Martínez Veloz.

In Cecilia Rodriguez's case, the prospects for a legal remedy seem dim. After fleeing Mexico in fear for her life at the

time of the assault, she returned in January to file an official police report (No. 002096, filed Jan. 9, 1996 with the Ministerio Público in San Cristobal de las Casas). However, she has been advised that the reports of medical examinations she underwent in Mexico City and Los Angeles will be inadmissible in Mexican courts, because they were not conducted by an official police physician.

Rodriguez reports that the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, where she initially reported the attack, has been unresponsive to her requests for help. Currently, NCDM is exploring the possibility of bringing the case before the United Nations or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, a body of the Organization of American States.

In related developments, NCDM and others have charged Mexican authorities with a campaign of harassment against foreign observers. In mid-January, Mexican newspapers reported that Mexican National Security and Immigration Agents were searching hotel registries in San Cristobal de las Casas to find and deport foreigners attending the National Indigenous Forum. Meanwhile, on Feb. 9, Human Rights Watch Americas issued a report charging Mexican authorities with a pattern of human rights violations during last year's government offensive against the EZLN, including torturing prisoners to extort confessions.

For the women of Chiapas as well as for Rodriguez, sustained protests by civil society, in Mexico and internationally, offer an important avenue of hope for bringing an end to the violence: an end to the coldblooded use of rape to sow terror among a civilian population; an end to the failure to bring the perpetrators to justice.

¡Concientización, Organización, Acción, y Liberación!

UNION DEL BARRIO

Advancing the Chicano Mexicano Movement

Unión del Barrio Eleven Point Program

Unión del Barrio is a pro-independence Revolutionary Nationalist organization. We have identified the following eleven points as central to our internal development and political direction, essential to the formulation of an independent Chicano Mexicano political line, and as a necessary source of practical clarity for organizations involved in the Movimiento for Chicano Mexicano Liberation.

1) MEXICANOS IN AZTLÁN ARE A COLONY OF THE U.S. ILLEGAL SETTLER NATION. 2) MEXICANOS IN AZTLÁN MUST SELF-DETERMINE OUR DESTINY. 3) AZTLÁN/MEXICO

OCUPADO IS THE HOMELAND OF THE MEXICANO. 4) SOMOS MEXICANOS. 5) THE CHARACTER OF OUR MOVEMENT IS REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM. 6) MEXICANO INTERNATIONALISM IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR MOVEMENT. 7) CONCIENTIZACIÓN OF OUR GENTE IS CRITICAL TO OUR LIBERATION. 8) COLLECTIVISM, ORGANIZATION BUILDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR STRUGGLE. 9) A UNITED FRONT IS CRUCIAL IN OUR STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION. 10) THE ABSOLUTE AND UNEQUIVOCAL LIBERATION OF RAZA WOMEN IS A FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT OF OUR STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION AS A PEOPLE. 11) DIALECTICAL/HISTORICAL MATERIALISM IS KEY TO FORMING STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR OUR LIBERATION.

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For more information on Unión del Barrio, write to:

Unión del Barrio

P.O. Box 620095

San Diego, Califas 92162



CHICANO MEXICANO PRISON PROJECT

General Objectives of the Chicano Mexicano Prison Project:

- To raise the social and political consciousness of Raza prisoners.
- To expose the role of prisons in the criminalization of La Raza and in maintaining colonialism, capitalism and imperialism.
- To advocate for the civil and human rights of all prisoners.

We provide free literature to all Raza prisoners, send us their name, number and address and we'll add them to the CMPP mailing list.

For more information write to:

CMPP

P.O. BOX 620095

SAN DIEGO, CALIFAS 92162

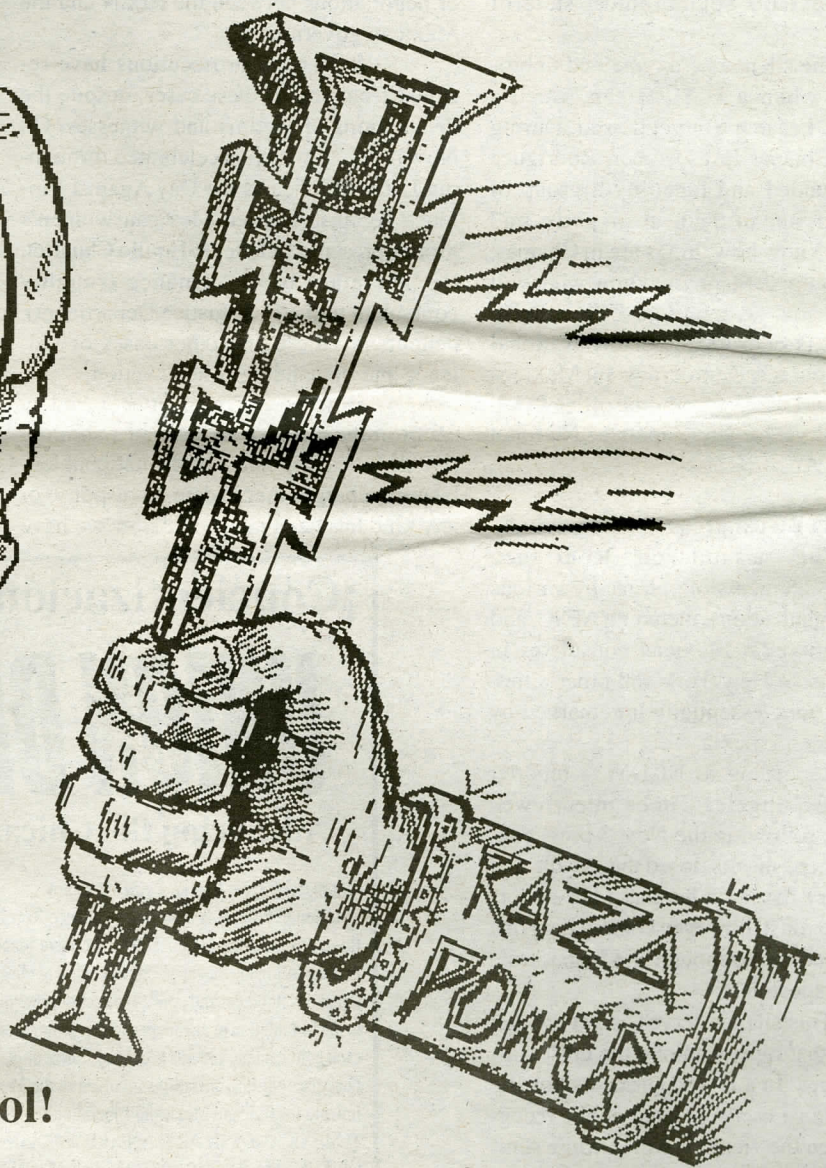
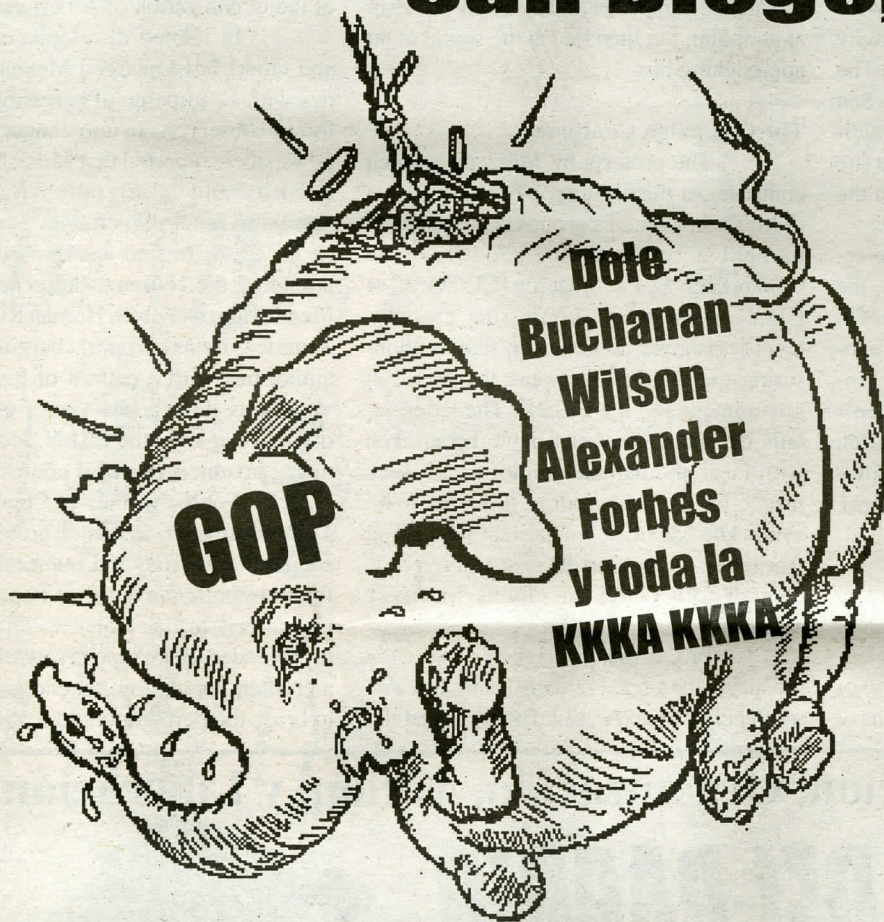
The CMPP is a Project of Unión del Barrio



Raza Contra el Racismo del Partido Republicano

PROTEST MARCH AGAINST THE REPUBLICAN PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION

**August 12, 1996
San Diego, Califas**



DEMANDS:

- Rescind Proposition 187!
- Rescind All "English Only" Laws!
- Annul The "Clinton Crime Bill"!
- No Social or Education Cutbacks!
- Abolish The I.N.S. and The Border Patrol!
- Demolish The Border!
- Annul NAFTA! U.S. Out of Mexico!
- Impeach Pete Wilson!

National Raza Unity Convention To Be Held On August 11, 1996

**¡RAZA, HOMBRES Y MUJERES, A LUCHAR POR LA
JUSTICIA, DIGNIDAD, Y AUTO-DETERMINACIÓN!**

ENDORSED BY:

•Brown Berets de Aztlán•Voz Fronteriza•La Raza Unida Party•Unión del Barrio•Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo•Chicano Press Association•
SD Mesa College MEChA•SD City College MEChA•SDSU MEChA•UCSD MEChA•UT-San Antonio MEChA•National Peoples Democratic Uhuru Movement-SD
•Regeneración•Chicano Park Steering Committee•Chicano Park Artists Task Force•SDSU Mexican American Studies Dept•African Peoples Socialist Party
•CSU San Marcos MEChA•University of Michigan MEChA•Razateca Magazine•
For more information call : (619) 280-8361 or Email at: Magonbros@aol.com

Organized by the National Chicano Moratorium Committee