

# **Moonanum James: ‘The Thanksgiving myth celebrates genocide’**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019



Moonanum James, co-leader of United American Indians of New England. SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

*Talk given at the 50th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 28, 2019.*

Once again on the fourth Thursday in November, [United American Indians of New England](#) and those who support us are gathered on this hill to observe a National Day of Mourning. Today marks the 50th time we have come here, in all kinds of weather, to mourn our ancestors and speak the truth about our history.

Those who started National Day of Mourning could not have envisioned that generations would still be here, year after year, carrying on this tradition. Many of the elders who stood on this hill and organized the first Day of Mourning are no longer with us, but we feel their spirits guiding us today. We are thinking today of so many, including Shirley Mills, a beautiful person who passed into the spirit world this fall. We mourn her loss here today.

Fifty Thanksgivings ago, my father, an Aquinnah Wampanoag named Wamsutta Frank James, was invited to address a gathering celebrating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims. When asked by the organizers to provide an advance copy of the speech he planned to deliver, Wamsutta agreed. When they saw his speech, the planners told him he could speak only if he were willing to offer false praise of the Pilgrims.

According to the organizers of the event, “The theme of the celebration is brotherhood and anything inflammatory would be out of place.” The organizers even offered to write a speech for him, one which would better fit with their settler-colonialist narrative. He refused to have words put into his mouth, and National Day of Mourning came into being as a result of that refusal. Instead of speaking at the banquet, he and a group of allies from throughout the Americas gathered here, on this hill, and observed the first National Day of Mourning in 1970.

## **A tradition of struggle**

That first year, my father never did get a chance to deliver his speech on this hill — although some who don’t actually know our history say he did. Maybe 100 or 200

Native people and allies gathered, depending on which person is giving their recollection of the day. Indigenous peoples from this region and members of the Boston Indian Center organized and were joined by others, including some famous members of the American Indian Movement. They spoke out about the Pilgrim invasion and issues throughout Indian Country, marched around Plymouth, boarded the Mayflower II replica, and even buried Plymouth Rock in sand — a tradition I am proud to say we continued well into the 1990s.

In the 1970s, UAIINE demanded the return of Wampanoag artifacts, including bones, that were being held by the gravedigger settlers at the Pilgrim Society Museum. At the fourth National Day of Mourning, the bones were returned to my father and given a proper burial. In 1972, the police followed us around with police dogs, and a young woman, Judy Mendes, who had a U.S. flag draped around her shoulders, was attacked and arrested.

Over the years, we repeatedly disrupted the Pilgrim Progress parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. The following year, in 1997, we were blocked on Leyden Street and arrested without warning when we simply tried to march. The resulting defense of the Plymouth 25 led to the National Day of Mourning plaque you see here on Cole's Hill, and the Metacombet plaque we will visit when we march.

Consistently, our organization has not collaborated with the Pilgrims or their institutions, whether museums or the Mayflower Society or the Plymouth 400. We have our own story to tell, in our own way. Consistently, we have sought to present issues that Indigenous people are facing internationally, not just here, because we are indeed all related.

### **Pilgrim myth vs. Indigenous truth**

So, what really happened at the first Thanksgiving — or what some of us call the first “thanks-taking?” According to popular myth, the Pilgrims, seeking religious

freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock. The Indians welcomed them with open arms, and then conveniently faded into the background and everyone lived happily ever after. The end.

Here is the truth:

First, the Pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first permanent English colony in North America, Jamestown, were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth. There are efforts now to teach schoolchildren about the African slaves kept at Jamestown. But no curriculum seems to want to teach the kids about settler cannibalism. Pilgrims and Indians are a much more marketable story.

Second, the Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn't need religious freedom — they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment.

When they arrived — on outer Cape Cod, by the way, not on that pebble down the hill — one of the first things the Pilgrims did was to rob the Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry. The writings of the colonists themselves describe these actions taking place.

The next part of the mythology is true: Some Wampanoag ancestors did welcome the Pilgrims and save them from starvation. And what did we get in return for this kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, slavery, starvation and never-ending repression.

### **The first 'thanks-taking'**

It is also important to remember that the first official Thanksgiving did not take

place in 1621 when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead it was officially proclaimed by Gov. Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

William Bradford of the Plymouth colony wrote of this event: "Those that escaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to pieces, others run through with their rapiers ... they thus destroyed about 400 at the time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire ... horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them."

And yet the history books call us the savages.

So why does any of this matter? It is simple: When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide, but also celebrating it.

But we did not simply fade into the background as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and thrived. We have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers. We will remember and honor all of our ancestors in the struggle who went before us. We will speak truth to power as we have been doing since the first Day of Mourning in 1970.

That first Day of Mourning in 1970 was a powerful demonstration of Native unity. It has continued for 50 years as a powerful demonstration of Indigenous unity and of the unity of all people who speak truth to power.

## **Capitalist crimes in Indian Country**

Sadly, many of the conditions that prevailed in Indian Country in 1970 still prevail today. In 1970, our average life expectancy was just 44 years. Today, it is up, but for

Native men, it is still six years below that of white people. Native women's death rate has increased 20 percent over the past 15 years. In 1970, the average Native yearly income was \$4,347. In 2019, 20 percent of Native people still earn under \$5,000. In 1970, our suicide and infant mortality rates were the highest in the country. This has not changed.

We all know that racism is alive and well. All of us are struggling under the oppression of a capitalist system which forces people to make a bitter choice between healing and eating. We will continue to gather on this hill until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the Earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

We will not stop until the oppression of our Two-Spirit siblings is a thing of the past. When the homeless have homes. When children are no longer taken from their parents and locked in cages. When the Palestinians reclaim the homeland and the autonomy Israel has denied them for the past 70 years. When no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. When insulin is free. When union-busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue.

In 1970, we demanded an end to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is still a demand today. Native nations should not need federal oversight to govern ourselves or take control of our own lands.

I hope you will stand with the Mashpee Wampanoag and support pending legislation that would give Mashpee the right to petition for land to be taken into trust. And please tell your congresspeople that this legislation should also be applied to Aquinnah and other tribes that were federally recognized after 1934.

As we did in 1970, we mourn the loss of millions of our ancestors and the devastation of the land, water and air.

We condemn all acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by all governments and organizations against innocent people worldwide. Since the invasion of Columbus and the rest of the Europeans, Native people have been virtually nonstop victims of terrorism. From the colonial period to the 21st century, this has entailed torture, massacres, systematic military occupations and the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands.

Let us not forget that this country was founded on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft. Let us not forget that under the pipelines, skyscrapers, mines and oil rigs, lie the interred bones, sacred objects and villages of our Native ancestors.

On our program will be only Indigenous speakers. This is one day when we speak for ourselves, without non-Native people, so-called “experts,” intervening to interpret and speak for us.

Today, on liberated territory, we will correct the history of a country that continues to glorify butchers such as Christopher Columbus, that makes slave-owning presidents such as Washington and Jefferson into god-like figures, and even carves their faces into the sacred Black Hills of the Lakota.

In 1970, very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today, many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate the 50th National Day of Mourning.

In the spirit of Crazy Horse, in the spirit of Metacom, in the spirit of Geronimo. Above all, to all the people who fight and struggle for real justice.

We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever.

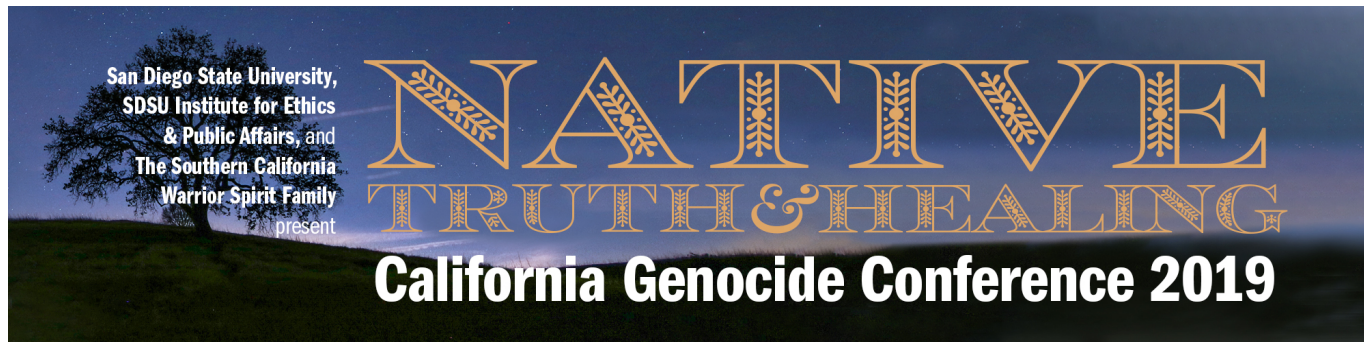




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# Native Truth and Healing, The California Genocide Conference

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019



“Native Truth and Healing,” the California genocide conference of 2019 at San Diego State University (SDSU), was held Nov. 21-24. The formal title of the event was [“The Genocide, Oppression, Resilience, and Sovereignty of the First Peoples of California.”](#)

The focus of the conference was on the genocide committed against the California



Indigenous population by the U.S. federal government, the state of California government and the settler colonists that started coming to California in large numbers following the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848.

The first governor of California put a price on the heads and scalps of Indigenous people as part of a campaign to exterminate the Indigenous people of California. The U.S. government reimbursed the state of California for the expenses related to this campaign. Spain, through its conquistadors and missionary priests, had previously started its own campaign of Indigenous genocide before the so-called California Gold Rush.

The conference began with a daylong film festival that consisted of a series of documentaries, including "Native America," "The Doctrine of Discovery," "Gold, Greed, and Genocide," "Native Veterans and Genocide Studies" and "Tribal Justice."

The documentary ["The Doctrine of Discovery"](#) was followed by a discussion with the lawyer Steven Newcomb (Shawnee, Lenape), who was featured in the film and is the author of "Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery."

Newcomb compared the Papal Bull of May 4, 1493—Pope Alexander VI's decree authorizing Spain and Portugal to colonize the Americas and enslave the Native peoples, as well as justifying the enslavement of African peoples—with the still-current U.S. law called the Doctrine of Discovery, which Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg used to deny a land claim of a Northeastern tribal nation in 2004.

The showing of ["Native Justice"](#) was followed by a discussion with the two tribal judges who were featured in the documentary, Honorable Judge Claudette White (Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe) and Honorable Judge Abby Abananti (Yurok Tribe). Both judges shared their moving personal and professional struggles to keep Indigenous children from their respective nations under tribal jurisdiction.

Most of the presenters spoke of the role of capitalism, capitalist imperialism and settler colonialism as being among the root causes of the genocide that occurred throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Anthony R. Pico (Viejas Band of the Kumeyaay Nation), who is a past tribal chairman of the Viejas Band, gave an inspiring keynote address.

Following Dr. Pico, presentations included:

- “The Free and Independent Existence of the First Peoples in California Before Invasion”;
- “The Doctrine of Discovery and the Code of Domination”;
- “Glory from Pre-contact to the 21st Century”;
- “Ninis’a:n-na-ng’a’/The World came to be lying there again, the World assumed its present position: California Indian History, Genocide and Native Women”;
- “An American Genocide: The California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873”;
- “Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas”;
- “Resisting the Myths of Discovery and Erasure of Genocide”;
- “Genocide: Indigenous Nations and the State”;
- “VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), Resiliency, and Empowerment”;
- “MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women)”;
- “Reevaluating Junípero Serra’s Canonization: Inverted Meaning, Modern Myth, and Human Rights Violation”;
- “The Branding of Genocide, the California Mission System, and Dispelling the Spanish Fantasy Heritage”;
- “Fausta and Sarafina: Indigenous Women and the Preservation of Power”;
- “Boarding Schools and the Contemporary Understandings and Oppressions of Native School Children”;

- “Child Welfare and ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act): Healing Our Children, Families, and Communities”;
- “Native Language Restoration and Native Stories”;
- “Land Restorations & Retelling of California Indian Histories”;
- “The Possibility of Compensatory and Non-compensatory Reparations in the Context of the California Genocide”; and
- “Tribal Chairwomen Leadership: Indigenous Women Continuing the Protection and Safety of our Tribal Communities”.

The speakers connected the dots from the Papal Bull of May 4, 1493, which called for the non-Christian “heathen” peoples of the world to be conquered and subjugated—taking their lands and resources—and enslaved. This Bull was the third in a series related to the reconquest of most of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabel of Castile from the Muslim Moors who were then expelled from Spain along with the Jews.

Most of the focus of the conference was on the real history of what occurred and the incredible resistance and resilience of the Indigenous peoples.

Several of the presentations began with the violent conquests that precipitated the Mission System and the resistance of the Indigenous nations to these attacks, and tracked on through the land grants and *ranchería* system that followed the end of the missions.

The most horrendous attacks with the largest number of people massacred occurred during the [California Gold Rush years from 1848 to 1855](#), followed by the period of the [Indian “Wars”](#) of the Reconstruction era — mostly blatant massacres of Indigenous peoples in their camps and settlements.

Then came the horrors of the boarding schools, the intentional kidnapping of Indigenous children, sending them hundreds of miles from their people for the

express purpose of “[killing the Indian to save the man.](#)” These institutions were about training the girls to be maids and the boys to be field workers as the only type of “education.” The children had their hair cut, their clothing changed to European styles, and they were brutally punished if they spoke their native language or tried to follow any of their Native customs.

The presentations made it clear that California Indigenous people were faced with only two possibilities: to assimilate and serve as the lowest class of laborers or to be exterminated. The U.S. Congress passed laws like the Dawes Act of 1887, ending communal ownership of reservation land, transferring traditional systems of land tenure into government-imposed systems of private property by forcing the Indigenous peoples to “assume a capitalist and proprietary relationship with property” that did not previously exist, and opening the “excess” reservation lands to white settlers and corporations for agriculture, ranching and corporate business development.

Following the period of the boarding schools, the federal government instituted the policy of termination of tribal reservations where Indigenous peoples were induced to move to cities to find work, after years of not being allowed to leave the reservations without written permission. The people were promised there would be support systems to help them find places to live and work. The reality was that they were transported to cities and left on the streets. The government’s next effort was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into white, settler society and break their ties with their traditional cultures. More recently, the U.S. government has made numerous attempts to open Indigenous lands to mining, energy and resource development by capitalist monopolies.

On the second day of the conference, an apology from Gov. Gavin Newsom on behalf of the state of California for the past actions of harm done to the Indigenous peoples and cultures by the state was heard. Speakers on the following days said that the

apology as an acknowledgement of the genocide committed against the California Indigenous nations was a good step in the right direction. However, as Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa/Yurok/Karuk) said on the third day, when people asked what they could do now, she told them to return the land to the Indigenous nations.

Dr. J. Angelo Corlett, a speaker on reparations on the fourth day, said that before the apology could be accepted, concrete actions like the payment of financial reparations and the inclusion of the real history of the Indigenous peoples in California in the public education system needed to happen.

The closing ceremonies on the fourth day of the conference included the raising of a Kumeyaay flag on the SDSU campus and the display of a collection of Silent Witnesses, appropriately dressed cardboard human figures to represent the hundreds of thousands of Indigenous peoples murdered during the campaign of California genocide.

The personal accounts of the women dedicated to the healing of their Indigenous communities — children, elders, women and men — and the documentary films revealing the genocide of California's First Peoples committed by the European settler/colonialists in the name of spreading "civilization" — Western capitalism — can only strengthen one's resolve to become part of the change leading to the liberation and self-determination of all oppressed people, which can only really occur in a socialist society.



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# Destroying the Pilgrim mythology

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019

[The Red Nation Podcast](#)

Mahtowin Munro and Kimimila Sa (Kisha) James talk about the National Day of Mourning, which celebrates Indigenous resistance, on a make-believe holiday settlers celebrate as “Thanksgiving.” Learn the true history of this day and its significance to the Wampanoag people — and all Indigenous people. Source: [The Red Nation Podcast](#)

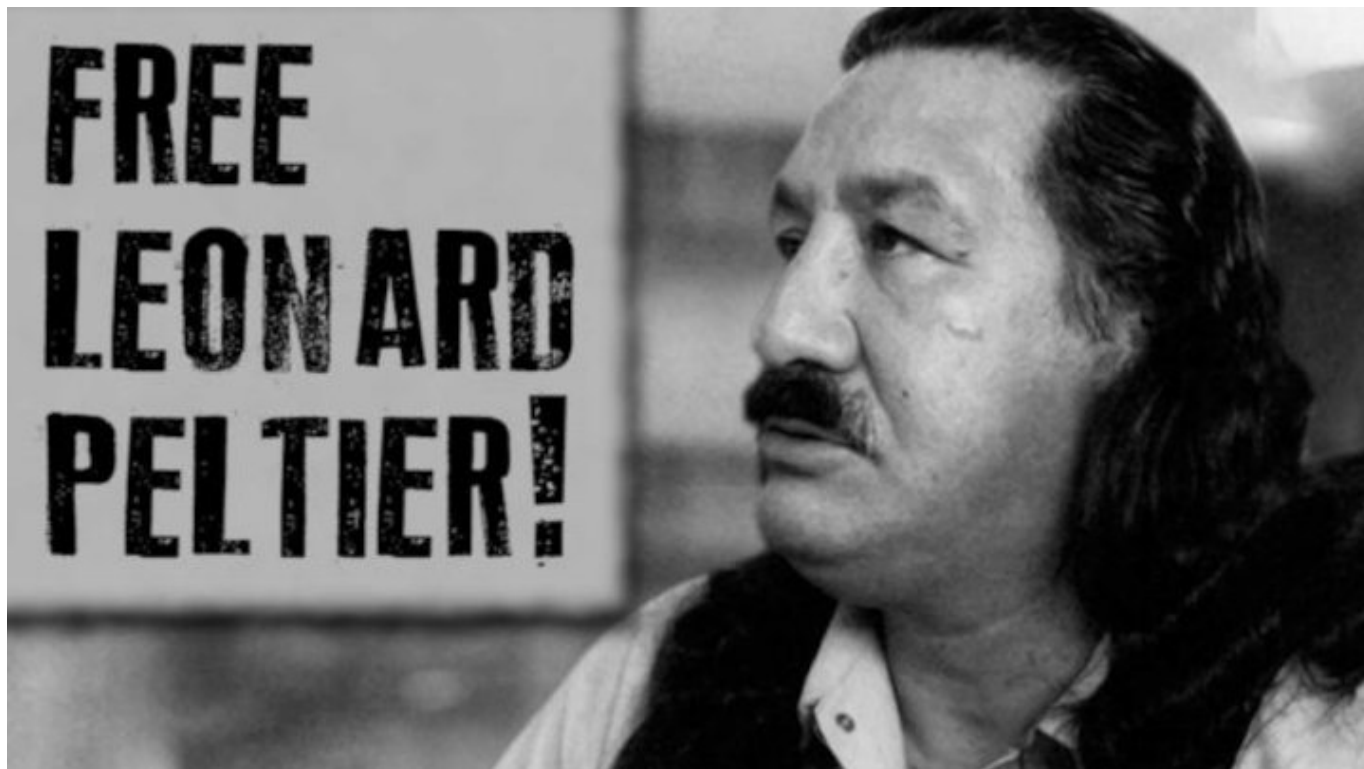
Support the Red Nation Podcast on Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/therednation>





# Message from Leonard Peltier: 'Walking on stolen land'

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019



*Leonard Peltier, member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians [of Lakota and Dakota descent — SLL], is incarcerated at the U.S. Penitentiary in Coleman, Florida, for his 1977 conviction in connection with a shootout with U.S. government forces, where two FBI agents and one young American Indian lost their lives.*

*Peltier, who is considered a political prisoner of war by many, released this Thanksgiving statement through the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee:*

The year of 2019 is coming to a close and with it comes the day most Americans set aside as a day for Thanksgiving. As I let my mind wander beyond the steel bars and concrete walls, I try to imagine what the people who live outside the prison gates are doing, and what they are thinking. Do they ever think of the Indigenous people who were forced from their homelands? Do they understand that with every step they take, no matter the direction, that they are walking on stolen land? Can they imagine, even for one minute, what it was like to watch the suffering of the women, the children and babies and yes, the sick and elderly, as they were made to keep pushing west in freezing temperatures, with little or no food? These were my people and this was our land. There was a time when we enjoyed freedom and were able to hunt buffalo and gather the foods and sacred medicines. We were able to fish and we enjoyed the clean clear water! My people were generous, we shared everything we had, including the knowledge of how to survive the long harsh winters or the hot humid summers. We were appreciative of the gifts from our Creator and remembered to give thanks on a daily basis. We had ceremonies and special dances that were a celebration of life.

With the coming of foreigners to our shores, life as we knew it would change drastically. Individual ownership was foreign to my people. Fences?? Unheard of, back then. We were a communal people and we took care of each other. Our grandparents weren't isolated from us! They were the wisdom keepers and story tellers and were an important link in our families. The babies? They were and are our future! Look at the brilliant young people who put themselves at risk, fighting to keep our water and environment clean and safe for the generations yet to come. They are willing to confront the giant, multinational corporations by educating the general public of the devastation being caused. I smile with hope when I think of them. They are fearless and ready to speak the truth to all who are willing to listen.

We also remember our brothers and sisters of Bolivia, who are rioting in support of the first Indigenous President, Evo Morales. His commitment to the people, the land,

their resources and protection against corruption is commendable. We recognize and identify with that struggle so well.

So today, I thank all of the people who are willing to have an open mind, those who are willing to accept the responsibility of planning for seven generations ahead, those who remember the sacrifices made by our ancestors so we can continue to speak our own language, practice our own way of thankfulness in our own skin, and that we always acknowledge and respect the Indigenous lineage that we carry.

For those of you who are thankful that you have enough food to feed your family, please give to those who aren't as fortunate. If you are warm and have a comfortable shelter to live in, please give to those who are cold and homeless; if you see someone hurting and in need of a kind word or two, be that person who steps forward and lends a hand. And especially, when you see injustice anywhere, please be brave enough to speak up to confront it.

I want to thank all who are kind enough to remember me and my family in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you for continuing to support and believe in me. There isn't a minute in any day that passes without me hoping that this will be the day I will be granted freedom. I long for the day when I can smell clean fresh air, when I can feel a gentle breeze in my hair, witness the clouds as their movement hides the sun and when the moon shines the light on the path to the sacred Inipi. That would truly be a day I could call a day of Thanksgiving.

Thank you for listening to whomever is voicing my words. My Spirit is there with you.

Doksha,  
In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,  
Leonard Peltier

Source: [NativeNewsOnline.net](http://NativeNewsOnline.net)



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# **50th National Day of Mourning @ndom2019**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019



Thursday, November 28, 2019 at 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM EST

Cole's Hill

Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360

50th National Day of Mourning, Cole's Hill, Plymouth, MA.

Official event organized by UAINE (United American Indians of New England) every year since 1970 on US "thanksgiving" day.

Donate: [gf.me/u/vumxka](https://gf.me/u/vumxka)

ORIENTATION FOR 50th NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING 11.28.19

WHAT IS NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING?

An annual tradition since 1970, Day of Mourning is a solemn, spiritual and highly political day. Many of us fast from sundown the day before through the afternoon of that day (and have a social after Day of Mourning so that participants in DOM can

break their fasts). We are mourning our ancestors and the genocide of our peoples and the theft of our lands. NDOM is a day when we mourn, but we also feel our strength in action. Over the years, participants in Day of Mourning have buried Plymouth Rock a number of times, boarded the Mayflower replica, and placed ku klux klan sheets on the statue of William Bradford, etc.

#### WHEN AND WHERE IS DAY OF MOURNING?

Thursday, November 28, 2019 (U.S. “thanksgiving” day) at Cole’s Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts, 12 noon SHARP. Cole’s Hill is the hill above Plymouth Rock in the Plymouth historic waterfront area.

#### WILL THERE BE A MARCH?

Yes, there will be a march through the historic district of Plymouth. Plymouth agreed, as part of the settlement of 10/19/98, that UAINÉ may march on Day of Mourning without the need for a permit as long as we give the town advance notice.

PROGRAM: Although we very much welcome our non-Native supporters to stand with us, it is a day when only Indigenous people speak about our history and the struggles that are taking place throughout the Americas. Speakers will be by invitation only. This year’s NDOM is dedicated to Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & Two Spirits, and to our thousands of relatives who are migrants and are being abused by ICE and other government agencies, including having their children stolen from them. We didn’t cross the border – The border crossed us! [#NoJusticeOnStolenLand](#)

Please note that NDOM is not a commercial event, so we ask that people do not sell merchandise or distribute leaflets at the outdoor program. If you have literature to distribute, you are welcome to place it on a literature table at the social hall following the speak-out and march. Also, we ask that you do not eat (unless you must do so for medical reasons) at the outdoor speak-out and march out of respect for the participants who are fasting. Finally, dress for the weather!

**SOCIAL:** There will be a pot-luck social held at a NEW social hall (to be announced) after the National Day of Mourning speak-out and march this year. Preference for first seatings will be given to Elders, young children and their caretaker, pregnant women, Disabled people, and people who have traveled a long distance to join National Day of Mourning. Please respect our culture and our wish to ensure that these guests will be the first to be able to sit and eat. With this understanding in mind, please bring non-alcoholic beverages, desserts, prepared fresh fruit & vegetables, and pre-cooked entrée items (turkeys, hams, stuffing, vegetables, casseroles, rice & beans, etc.) that can be easily re-warmed at the social hall prior to the social. Our amazing kitchen crew makes great food, with plenty of vegetarian and vegan dishes, too, but if you have special dietary needs, please bring something that will suit you so you will not be unhappy. Thank you.

Kitchen volunteers: Please contact us via [info@uaine.org](mailto:info@uaine.org) to offer your services.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Please check the facebook event page for 50th National Day of Mourning for updates on transportation, including buses and carpooling. We do not recommend MBTA service as it is limited on a holiday.

**DONATIONS:** Monetary donations are gratefully accepted to help defray the costs of the day and of UAINE's many other efforts during the year:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/uaine-20192020-fundraising-campaign>

On [Facebook](#)





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# **It's Autumn, and I can't wait for the Fall (of Columbus)**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019

I write this in October, in the midst of all of the fall celebrations in the U.S. — Columbus Day, Thanksgiving and even Halloween — that can give some big headaches to Indigenous people by enhancing the erasure of Indigenous history and the stereotyping of Indigenous peoples.

Responding to these fall holidays is just a starting point, but first steps are important. Of course, we still need to get rid of the vampire economic system that profits from misery and destruction of the Earth, along with settler colonialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia and much more. But in the meantime, we can all work to ensure that Indigenous peoples and histories are not marginalized and disrespected as one of the many ways to support frontline Indigenous struggles.

Here's some more information about the fall holidays to think about, including what you can do to bring positive change to each holiday.

## Columbus Day

Sometimes referred to as “Cruelumbus Day” by those who oppose it, Columbus Day is a disgusting celebration of the genocide of Indigenous peoples and theft of land that began when Columbus and his men got lost and arrived in this hemisphere in 1492. It does harm to everyone who grows up learning that he was a great hero and “discovered America.” The holiday sends the message that it is fine to completely whitewash history and celebrate the genocide of tens of millions of people.

Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and elsewhere were not “discovered” by anybody since they were already here. Nor did they need to have civilization or spirituality brought to them, since they already had civilizations and beliefs. They had and still have the inherent right to continue to live in their own ways on their own lands.

Columbus’ policies on the islands where he landed, including slave labor, starvation, sex trafficking and slaughter, resulted in the near-complete genocide of the Indigenous peoples of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places where the Spanish invaded. (Columbus was Italian, but he invaded on behalf of the Spanish crown.)

Altogether, Columbus shipped approximately 5,000 enslaved Indigenous people across the Atlantic — filling his pockets and setting the stage for the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the enslavement of millions of Africans as well as Indigenous people. He sold Indigenous women and girls as young as 9 and 10 into sexual slavery.

The Spaniards hunted down Taíno and Arawak people with huge dogs that tore them apart and devoured them. Babies were fed to these dogs. The men tested the sharpness of their blades by cutting off the hands of the people.

The brutality of Columbus’s actions would reverberate through all the other

invasions to come and the tens of millions of deaths that would follow. In fact, so many millions of people died as a result of European colonization that it even caused a climate change – [a “little ice age.”](#)

Celebrating Columbus erases centuries of Indigenous reality; it erases the decimation of Taíno, Arawak and many other peoples. It is an effort to silence Indigenous peoples and make them invisible. Pretending it is acceptable to celebrate Columbus has a terrible impact not only on Indigenous people, especially kids, but also on non-Native people.

What you can do: The Columbus Day holiday needs to be abolished. Indigenous Peoples’ Day is the holiday that replaces it. Work with Indigenous people where you live to get the truth out about Indigenous history and get Indigenous Peoples’ Day celebrated instead of Columbus Day in your community, school, organization, workplace. Put up signs saying that the day is Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Put the day in your union contract. We can lead and celebrate this day, making it part of everyone’s life, even when some bigots refuse to pass legislation.

## **Halloween**

Halloween is fun, especially beloved within LGBTQ2S communities and by kids. And yet, every year, Halloween is also a hailstorm of cultural appropriation, with non-Native people “dressing up as Indians,” wearing blackface, brownface and yellowface, and so much more.

Use of Pocahottie costumes (sexually suggestive fake-Native costumes for women) increases the view that Indigenous women exist for sexual exploitation. This is especially sickening given the crisis of thousands of #MMIWG2S (Missing & Murdered Indigenous, Women, Girls & Two-Spirits) in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

If you see someone wearing a costume that smacks of cultural appropriation, you

might talk to the person or send them this link ([“Step away from the ‘Indian’ costume!”](#)) for lots of information about what cultural appropriation is and why they shouldn’t do it. When you see fake-Native costumes at a store, tell them you won’t shop there unless they stop selling those costumes. Our culture is not your costume!

## **Thanksgiving**

You may be asking yourself: “Wait a minute. Can’t I even celebrate a harvest festival without this writer complaining about something?”

Here’s the problem: Thanksgiving in the U.S. is not just a harvest festival. It is a celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims and the English theft of Indigenous lands and colonization of the U.S.

The myth of Thanksgiving is that the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth, Mass., the Native people welcomed them, they had a feast together with the “Indians,” and everyone lived happily ever after. The myth doesn’t talk about the enslavement of the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Massachusett and other Native peoples, the colonial wars against them, how their lands were stolen and they were forced into concentration camps such as Deer Island, how widespread starvation and hangings of Indigenous people came to be.

And the myth of Thanksgiving certainly doesn’t tell you that the first official day of thanksgiving in Massachusetts was proclaimed by Massachusetts colony Gov. Winthrop in 1636 to celebrate the safe return of the white men who had helped to massacre several hundred Pequot children, women and men at Mystic, Conn.

On the East Coast, you can observe the [50th annual National Day of Mourning](#) in Plymouth, Mass., on “thanksgiving” day, Nov. 28. On the West Coast, you can observe “Unthanksgiving” at Alcatraz Island. You can also do something within your own family or community to tell the truth and decolonize the holiday.



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# Indigenous Peoples' Day

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019



Monday, Oct. 14, 2019, is Indigenous Peoples' Day in the U.S. In 1977, Indigenous leaders from around the world organized a United Nations conference in Geneva to promote Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Their first recommendation was "to observe October 12, the day of so-called 'discovery' of America, as an International Day of Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas."



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# A Native view of immigration

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019

*The following talk was given by Mahtowin Munro, a member of the Lakota Nation and co-leader of United American Indians of New England (UAIINE), at a Nov. 18 Boston forum entitled "The Struggle for Indigenous sovereignty and immigrant rights."* □

I am going to be talking about immigration tonight from a North American Native viewpoint. Many of us who are Native to this country have been outraged as our sisters and brothers from Mexico, Central America and South America have come under increasing attack by the right wing.

We are deeply alarmed by the existence of white vigilante groups such as the Minutemen, and by the stated intention of the U.S. government to build a wall separating the U.S. from Mexico.

As Indigenous peoples, we have no borders. We know that our sisters and brothers from Mexico, Central America and South America have always been here and always



will be.

The immigrant nation that is the U.S. has a short memory and is in denial of its historical facts. This government is descended from immigrants who came here and took our lands and resources, either by force, coercion or dishonesty, and banned the religions, languages and cultures of the original Indigenous peoples of this continent.

In the various discussions of so-called “illegal immigrants,” one historical fact is always overlooked: America’s own holocaust directed against African and Native people, carried out by uninvited foreigners who came to these shores and took everything they could.

Surely the deaths of tens of millions of Native and African people at the hands of marauding, manipulative European immigrants during a 400-year span should be worth bearing in mind.

U.S. history brims over with brutal, bloody instances of inhuman European immigrant actions that are far removed from the basic aspirations so often associated with today’s immigrants. The undocumented workers today in this country dream of a better life and seek to escape the poverty and repression engendered by U.S. imperialism.

Unlike the earlier immigrants and the perpetual forces they set into motion, I highly doubt that today’s immigrants are plotting to seize others’ property, kill babies and earn bounties based on body parts brought back from raids.

Consider that, in the late 1630s, the British wiped out nearly every man, woman and child of the powerful Pequot tribe of southern New England in retaliation for conflicts arising out of fur-trade struggles. A few years later, Dutch authorities in charge of the settlement of “New Netherland” on the island of Manhattan carried

out nighttime raids against the local Indigenous people, where infants were torn from their mothers' breasts and hacked to pieces in the presence of their parents.

Legislation approved in Massachusetts and elsewhere in New England in the 1700s authorized bounty payments for scalps or heads of Indians, young and old.

As it turns out, the immigrant authorities were just beginning their efforts to obliterate "the savages," as American history chronicles.

Some of the best-known names in American history are dripping with prejudice and arrogance aimed at Native people. Not only did Thomas Jefferson—a holder of hundreds of Black men, women, and children—live a life of ease on his great plantation as a result of that slave labor. He also was convinced that the best solution in dealing with Native peoples was to drive all of us west of the Mississippi.

The war-hero president, Andrew Jackson, was one of the most despicable Indian-haters on record. He made no bones about his racism and championed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which forced the Cherokee and other southeastern Native peoples from their homes and caused thousands of them to die on the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma.

The 19th century in particular is rife with accounts of the foreign intruders' invasions of Indian country, especially in the Southeast and West, and the carnage that resulted. The December 1890 Massacre at Wounded Knee of over 300 unarmed Lakota children, women and men by the U.S. Army is perhaps the best-known of what were countless massacres carried out by the immigrants and their army.

The wholesale abuse of Native peoples continues to this day, and it springs from the same destructive capitalist practices that were brought here by foreigners long ago.

As I listen to some people call other people "illegal" immigrants, I often wonder: How could it possibly be that their ancestors were considered to be "legal" while so

many immigrants now are considered “illegal”?

These comparisons between past and present miss a crucial point. So few restrictions existed on immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries that there was no such thing as “illegal immigration.”

For instance, the government excluded less than 1 percent of the 25 million European immigrants who landed at Ellis Island before World War I, and those mostly for health reasons.

We begin with a simple fact: We Native peoples had no immigration policies. When the Europeans began arriving and stealing our land from us and massacring our people, we did not have them take a citizenship test. We did not have them pass through Ellis Island. We did not have quotas for how many could come into the country.

So, when did the U.S. begin to have immigration policies, and what were those policies?

For many years, whiteness was the prerequisite for citizenship. The first naturalization law in the United States, the 1790 Naturalization Act, restricted naturalization to “free white persons” of “good moral character” once they had resided in the country for a specified period of time.

The next significant change in the scope of naturalization law came following the Civil War in 1870 when the law was broadened to allow African Americans, whose ancestors had been forced to immigrate here in slave ships, to become naturalized citizens.

During the 1800s, male Chinese immigrants were excluded from citizenship but not from living in the United States, because their labor was needed by the big railroads. Female Chinese immigration was severely curtailed. Congress in 1882 passed the

Chinese Exclusion Act, which was a virtual ban on further Chinese immigration. The Chinese immigration ban was not repealed until the 1940s.

In the early 1900s, Japanese immigration was limited as well, but the Japanese government continued to give passports to the Territory of Hawaii, where many Japanese resided. (At that time, Hawaii was not yet a U.S. state.) Once in Hawaii, it was easy for Japanese to continue on to settlements on the West Coast, if they so desired.

An 1882 law banned the entry of “lunatics” and infectious disease carriers. After President William McKinley was assassinated by a second-generation immigrant anarchist, Congress enacted in 1901 the Anarchist Exclusion Act to exclude known anarchist agitators. A literacy requirement was added in the Immigration Act of 1917.

During the 1920s, the U.S. Congress established national quotas on immigration. The quotas were based on the number of foreign-born residents of each nationality who were already living in the United States.

In 1924, the Johnson-Reid Immigration Act limited the numbers of southern European immigrants. Italians were considered not “white” enough and an anarchist menace. The numbers of Eastern Europeans were also limited because Jews, who made up a large part of those leaving that area, were not “white” enough and were considered to be a Bolshevik menace.

I should mention that we Native people were “naturalized” and “granted” citizenship by the U.S. government in 1924.

In 1932 President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the State Department essentially shut down immigration during the Great Depression.

In 1952, the McCarran-Walter Act revised the quota system again. This act removed

overt racial barriers to citizenship but solidified inequalities. Most of the quota allocation went to immigrants from Ireland, the United Kingdom and Germany who already had relatives in the United States.

This law was also particularly aimed at preventing socialist, communist or other progressive immigrants from entering the country. The anti-“subversive” features of this law are still in force.

During all these years, the entire Western Hemisphere, including Mexico, was exempted from immigration regulations. That changed in 1965 with the Hart-Cellar Act, which abolished the system of national-origin quotas.

A last-minute political compromise introduced, for the very first time, quotas for Mexico and the rest of the Western Hemisphere. This law racialized “illegal aliens.” A hierarchy of those deemed worthy and those deemed unworthy of becoming an “American” became increasingly deeply rooted.

Several pieces of legislation signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996 marked a turn towards harsher policies for both legal and “illegal” immigrants. These acts vastly increased the categories for which immigrants, including green card holders, can be deported. As a result, well over 1 million individuals have been deported since 1996.

In short, the notion of “illegal aliens” is a construct, an invention of the racist U.S. ruling class. The dominant powers for centuries codified Indigenous, African, Chinese and other people as essentially not “American.”

The revolting use of the word “illegal” as a noun is a linguistic way of dehumanizing people and reducing individuals to their alleged infractions against the law.

I do not have time tonight to discuss the details of the economic and social conditions created by U.S. imperialism and neoliberalism that have forced our

sisters and brothers from Mexico and many other countries to come to the U.S.

The United States is the true culprit in this situation through the robbery of the Mexican people, which began with the theft of their land and has continued with economic policies like NAFTA, which have destroyed the economy that sustained thousands of families, forcing them into exile and particularly into emigrating to the U.S.

As an aside, I want to explain what I mean when I say that the U.S. government stole land from the Mexican people, because this is rarely discussed in school or anywhere else. First of all, the land of course belongs rightfully to Indigenous peoples. Later, the various colonial governments claimed territory.

The “Mexican Cession” is a historical name for the region of the present-day southwestern United States that was ceded to the U.S. by Mexico in 1848 under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo following the Mexican-American War.

The cession of this territory from Mexico was a condition for the end of the war, as U.S. troops occupied Mexico City and Mexico risked being completely annexed by the U.S.

The United States also paid the paltry sum of \$15 million for the land, which was the same amount it had offered for the land prior to the war. Under great duress, Mexico was forced to accept the offer.

The region of the 1848 “Mexican Cession” includes all of the present-day states of California, Nevada and Utah, as well as portions of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. Note that the United States had already claimed the huge area of Texas in its Texas Annexation of 1845.

So we see that the U.S. literally stole millions of acres of land from the Mexican people, then established arbitrary borders such as the Rio Grande, and now hunts

down those who dare to cross those borders.

The U.S. government has now escalated its war against the Mexican people, whether they are in Mexico or in its Diaspora, by approving \$2.2 billion to begin construction of what is to be a \$6 billion apartheid wall between the two countries.

At the same time, massive raids are being carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security. In cities across the country, ICE is trying to push immigrant workers further underground and scare them away from organizing and fighting for their rights.

Local and state governments, most notably in Pennsylvania and Arizona, have been passing vicious anti-immigrant legislation. I just read on the Internet the other night that the Bush administration and the Justice Department now claim the right to hold any non-U.S. citizen indefinitely, without the right to a trial in a civilian court.

In recent years, we have also seen how attacks against even documented immigrants, particularly Muslims, have been carried out under the guise of "homeland security."

So all in all, there is a calculated attempt to create a thoroughly intimidating and threatening climate for immigrant workers, especially the undocumented.

Further, racists continue to push their "English-only" campaigns and to oppose bilingual education. I feel outraged by these "English-only" campaigns. Is English the Native language of this country? Generations of Native people were beaten for speaking their Indigenous languages and forced to learn English. Instead of English-only, maybe we should be insisting that people speak Mayan or Cherokee or Wampanoag.

Well, things were looking pretty bleak for a while. It had appeared that the capitalist ruling class and its representatives in the U.S. government had the upper hand



completely, and that the mass struggle was dormant.

But then came the magnificent immigrant rights demonstrations of last spring. These were led by workers from Mexico and Central America and South America, but they were joined by Caribbean, Asian, African and other allies. This development shook the ruling class. It frightened and deeply worried them. It gave a glimpse, even in the midst of periods of reaction, of the crucial struggles that are on the horizon.

Step by step, day by day, this movement will grow. The government can pass anti-immigrant laws but those laws will be repealed in the streets. It was the earlier heroic struggles of immigrants in the U.S. that led to the historic International Women's Day as well as May Day. Without a doubt, immigrants will make that kind of history again.

Let's ask some basic questions here: Why does the U.S. need immigrant workers? This country depends on immigrants being the most exploited workers, the ones who work in sweatshops and keep the luxury hotels running.

Without immigrant labor, the economy would collapse. So why the witch hunt? To drive immigrants further underground and to manipulate this reserve army of labor. The corporations want to super-exploit immigrant workers. They just don't want to be responsible for paying them the value of their labor or for providing benefits, services and basic democratic rights.

The corporations and the government are using the anti-immigrant legislation to mask the truth about the crisis looming for U.S. workers and the huge financial debt of the government.

This criminalization is also aimed at the rising tide of change developing throughout Latin and South America, from Venezuela to Oaxaca and Chiapas, a tide of

resistance like that of the people of Cuba to U.S. global policies.

Capitalism thrives on the scapegoating of certain groups of people, which they use to try and divide us as workers. They want to keep us divided amongst each other because they want to prevent us from uniting to fight back against their bloody-handed system.

This is not the first time that immigrants have been scapegoated. Irish immigrants of the mid-1800s were vilified. During the 1800s, Chinese workers in the western part of the U.S. were subject to the most virulent racism, including lynching, and endured the most brutal working conditions.

From World War I until the 1920s, the government conducted anti-Jewish and anti-Italian reactionary attacks, including the Palmer Raids. Former President Theodore Roosevelt and many other prominent citizens of his era proclaimed their fears that the Anglo-Saxon was an endangered species due to immigration and to higher birth rates among the immigrants.

On the West Coast, Japanese immigrants were interned in concentration camps during World War II, and there were widespread police attacks on Chican@ youth in California during the same era.

The current attacks against immigrants must be seen as attacks on all workers. This current assault on immigrants is just another tactic—like racism, homophobia and sexism—that the ruling class uses to pit workers against each other. The only winners when this happens are the bosses.

Native people have dealt for centuries with the terrorism of the U.S., Canadian, Mexican and other colonizing governments. I urge all of you here tonight to consider the knowledge that we have gained during that time.

If we had unified early on, worked together rather than as separate nations, we may

have prevailed and pushed the Europeans right back into the Atlantic Ocean.

When we unite struggles, when we build a movement, we must have sensitivity for each other's struggles. We must respect the right to self-determination of all oppressed nations. That means, for example, that only Indigenous peoples can decide what our goals are in the struggle and how we should best fight to achieve those goals. But others can help and support us while having respect for our leadership, and this is what happens at National Day of Mourning. And we cannot subordinate the fight against racism to any other struggle. That is at least in part why today's antiwar summit in Harlem is so important.

At the same time, while we are involved in the struggle, we learn about each other, and learn to trust each other, and become internationalist in our outlook.

That is the kind of unity perspective we will bring to the streets on December 1. That is the kind of unity perspective that we bring to the antiwar movement—and I want everyone now to mark the date of March 17 in your brain, because that will be an international day of action for the fourth anniversary of the U.S. war against the people of Iraq.

The things we seek, such as self-determination and sovereignty for the oppressed, an end to killer cops and racism and war and the oppression of LGBTQ people, full rights for disabled people, jobs and education, can never be fully realized under capitalism, a system that is centered on exploiting people and resources and making a profit.

Reforms help a little, but we need a whole lot more than reforms. We don't need a little less police brutality; we must put an end to it! We don't need a little more money in our minimum wage paychecks; we need a living wage, and free healthcare, and affordable housing for all! Youth and students shouldn't have to join the Army to be all that they can be; they need a real future! Rather than reforms, what we need

is to commit ourselves to making a revolution together!

We cannot allow ourselves to be fooled by the elections. We have been told for decades that we must put our faith in the bourgeois elections and in the Democratic Party, which supposedly will show us the kinder, gentler face of capitalism.

Didn't the Democrats vote for this war, and all the other wars? Wasn't it Bill Clinton and the other Democrats who happily gutted programs such as welfare, food stamps, college education grants and so many others?

Have the Democrats freed Mumia Abu-Jamal or Leonard Peltier? The Democrats represent the same class interests of the big bosses and corporations as the Republicans do. Regardless of who has won an election, millions around the world will continue to live in misery because of U.S. imperialism.

And if we really want a revolution, the history of Chile and other countries has taught us clearly that the ruling class will never just quietly give up power based on elections; at some point, there's going to be a fight.

The Democrats and Republicans alike have both feet squarely planted in the luxury liner of the big corporations and the filthy rich. I can picture them, out on their fancy cruise ship, living the high life, drinking champagne and eating oysters.

Meanwhile, all us poor and working and oppressed people are in a simple birch-bark canoe together. We look over, and we can see that their ship is named the Titanic. We know it is going to sink, baby. When they get little leaky holes in their ship, the rich get afraid and desperate, and throw more and more stones to try and sink our canoe.

Now, our bark canoe may not be as fancy as the Titanic, but it is sturdy, we have really made it well, and there is room for all of us on it. Every now and then, somebody tries to have one foot in the Titanic, and one foot in the canoe. The boats

go their separate ways, and that person falls into the water and drowns. We all have to choose one boat or the other, the Titanic or the canoe. Which one will you choose?

Sisters and brothers, the map of the world is colored with the patterns of our ancestors' spilled blood. I believe that someday we can make a new map of the world together, a map that does not have borders among workers. Ultimately we will take back everything that is rightfully ours, everything that was stolen from us and built by the blood and sweat of our ancestors.

But in order to do that, we must be highly organized and have a plan of action, because the ruling class knows perfectly well how to join ranks against us. What is required is a new movement of unity, solidarity and resistance in all parts of the world. Workers World Party is and will continue to be in the forefront of that new movement and we invite you to join us.

Our future, and the very future of our Mother Earth, requires us to struggle toward a socialist future. The threats to life in this country and around the globe demand from all of us a new way of thinking, acting and being. We must come together in unity to fight against this vicious government and the corporations that control it. Together, we can build a new movement, the likes of which this country has never seen before!

Sisters and brothers, this is OUR world. Let's work together to take it back!

Free Leonard! Free Mumia! Ho!



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# **We are Mauna Kea!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019

Kanaka Maoli — Native Hawai'ians — are engaged in a historic fight to protect their sacred Mauna Kea and stop the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project from being built there.

There are already 13 telescopes atop Mauna Kea, the highest point in all the Hawai'ian islands, and Kanaka Maoli have been opposing telescopes there since the first one was built by the U.S. Air Force in 1968.

The \$1.4 billion TMT would be 18 stories high and take up an area as big as four football fields. The project could be built elsewhere — La Palma in the Canary Islands would welcome it — but the state, the University of Hawai'i and other forces have been insistent on forcing it through at Mauna Kea despite opposition from Kanaka Maoli.

Mauna Kea is a place of ceremony and contains the bones of many ancestors. Native Hawai'ians have a sacred relationship with their land — a cultural value known as

aloha 'āina, love of the land. But for more than a century, the government of colonial Hawai'i that sits on stolen land has consistently overridden the Kanaka Maoli right to consent to or refuse development on their lands.

### **Arrest of Kupuna (elders) galvanizes struggle**

After years of going through hearings and courts, construction on the TMT was scheduled to begin on July 15. The Kanaka Maoli were prepared and set up a Pu'uhonua (refuge or camp) and road block at a site called Pu'u Huluhulu at the access road at the base of Mauna Kea so they could block construction equipment.

On July 17, some protectors bravely put their bodies on the line by locking down for hours onto cattle guards along the road.

That day, 38 kia'i (protectors) were arrested at the base of Mauna Kea – most of them Kupuna (elders) who volunteered to be the first arrested, even though many of them were quite frail. At the Pu'uhonua and around the world, Kanaka Maoli and other Indigenous people wept at the sight of the elders being taken away. The courageous actions of all those involved galvanized the struggle.

Among those arrested was Onaona Trask, who told [Indian Country Today](#) that one of the arresting officers was a former student she had known since birth. "It was kaumaha (with a heavy heart)," she said. "I talked to her in Hawai'ian, and told her that I love her. I said, 'I carried you as a baby, so it's okay for you to carry me now.'

"That's what colonization does to us," she said. "It divides and pits us against each other. But being colonized doesn't mean we aren't Hawai'ian. The Thirty Meter Telescope is the colonizer trying to exterminate our identity and our sense of self as Hawai'ians. But this mountain is so sacred to us we must protect it. In the Kumulipo (Hawai'ian creation story) Mauna Kea is where our akua (gods) dwell."

Throngs of Hawai'ians gathered outside Gov. David Ige's office. For two days, traffic



was slowed on the H1 highway. On July 21, more than a thousand marched in Honolulu. On July 22, when there was a march in Honolulu to support the popular uprising in Puerto Rico, some tourism workers also stopped work for a day to support the protectors at Mauna Kea. The access road camp has grown to over 2,000 people on some days.

There have been solidarity actions throughout Hawai'i, on the U.S. mainland and worldwide. The many expressions of Polynesian solidarity and unity have been inspiring.

This outpouring of support has pushed back Gov. Ige, who had declared a state of emergency and called in the National Guard and a militarized Honolulu police department. Ige, a proponent of the TMT, publicly smeared the Pu'uhonua camp as being disorderly, drunk and disorganized, and refused to meet with the protectors for several days. He was widely criticized and as a result backed down and came to visit the camp on July 23.

### **Kanaka Maoli culture leads the way**

Some media, university officials, scientists and others have falsely painted the Kanaka as being anti-science. But Kanaka Maoli were observing the stars and functioning as scientists on their own lands long before the Europeans showed up.

The Mauna Kea struggle has brought to the fore the issue of the need for scientists to decolonize themselves from colonialist and racist values and beliefs. Science needs to stop disrespecting and running roughshod over the rights of Indigenous, Black and other impacted communities in the name of "progress."

While many people are noting the similarities to the #NoDAPL defense at Standing Rock in 2017-2018, it is important to emphasize that the Mauna Kea defense is in another time and place and reflects distinct Kanaka Maoli history, practices and

cultural values.

The youngers have been studying with the elders who have been in the struggle for decades, and have also clearly studied past and current struggles in other places, as well, while bringing deep cultural knowledge to bear to make the essence of the resistance align with Kanaka values and beliefs.

The camp at the access road is beautifully organized, with many youth leading the way. In just a short period of time, protectors have set up free classes, cooking facilities, security, sanitation, childcare, trainings, medical care and much more. Everyone's work is valued. Being there is the first true taste of freedom on sovereign land that many participants have ever experienced.

Many non-Native people in Hawai'i, fed up with the ongoing disrespect for Native Hawai'ians and by the way in which the government and institutions have run rampant and have been in thrall to developers, are supporting the movement.

While the defense of Mauna Kea is Kanaka-led, the support is very multinational, including Filipino, Chinese, Okinawan, Japanese, Samoan, Puerto Rican, Black, white and many other nationalities. Hawai'i has a very multinational population, in part because workers from around the world were brought to Hawai'i for decades because the plantation and other bosses hoped that national divisions would prevent them all from organizing together as workers.

In Hawai'i and around the world, from the Philippines to Mexico to British Columbia, Indigenous peoples are defending their land and insisting that nothing should be built, extracted or developed without their consent.

The heroic defenses of land and water in Hawai'i and elsewhere are in some ways a reawakening and in other ways a continuation of the Indigenous resistance that began with invasion. Understanding this resistance can also open non-Indigenous

people to the possibility of honoring the land.

Capitalism, colonialism, racism, misogyny — all of these forces alienate humans from their attachment to the land and all living beings on the land. Under capitalism and colonialism, nothing is sacred; land is something to be conquered and exploited. Recovering a proper relationship with the land, water, air and life are key at a time of unchecked climate catastrophe.

## **Theft of Hawai'i**

As with any Indigenous land defense, the present cannot be fully understood without understanding the colonial poison that bubbles just below the surface.

From the time of Captain Cook's arrival on the Hawai'ian islands in 1778, invaders sought to leech profits from Hawai'i without regard for the land or population. Missionaries quickly set up shop to suppress Kanaka Maoli culture and Christianize humans they considered to be inferior and uncivilized.

By the late 1800s, the settlers passed a law mandating English-only instruction in the schools as part of an intentional effort to make it difficult for Hawai'ian culture and language to be passed from generation to generation.

In 1887, a militia made up of white businessmen increased their power by forcing Hawai'ian King David Kalakaua at gunpoint to sign a new "Bayonet Constitution" limiting Kanaka Maoli power and control. Soon after, in 1893, a group of U.S. capitalists and sugar barons, backed by Washington, [overthrew the Hawai'ian Kingdom](#) by forcing Queen Liliuokalani to relinquish control. The U.S. finalized its imperialist land-grab when it imposed statehood on Hawaii in 1959.

In 1993, the U.S. Congress formally apologized for the overthrow of the Hawai'ian Kingdom in 1893 — but the apology came with no reparations or return of the stolen lands.

In 1976, two protesters were killed when there were protests at Kaho'olawe, the smallest of the main islands, to oppose its use as a military bombing range.

"This mountain [Mauna Kea] represents the last thing they want to take that we will not give to them," [said longtime activist Walter Ritte](#).

## **Living conditions of Native Hawai'ians**

U.S. imperialism has extracted immense wealth from Hawai'i.

Tourism is a key industry. The beautiful culture of the Hawai'ian people — suppressed by colonialism in many ways — is often commercialized and stereotyped. Native Hawai'ians themselves are considered acceptable if they are entertaining the tourists, but not if they are defending their ancestral lands.

Military bases such as Pearl Harbor abound since Hawai'i is a strategic military outpost of the U.S.

Kanaka Maoli experience disproportionately high incarceration rates, and around 1,500 men from Hawai'i — most of them Kanaka — are imprisoned far from home at a for-profit prison in Saguaro, Ariz. Native Hawai'ians also experience health disparities and earn lower incomes.

For decades, Native Hawai'ians have been shoved off their lands to make way for tourism and homes for the wealthy. According to 2016 statistics, 42 percent of homeless people in Hawai'i are Kanaka Maoli or other Pacific Islanders.

Agriculture such as sugar, pineapple and macadamia plantations has led to unhealthy mono-cropping. Heavy use of pesticides has caused extensive damage to land and water and health impacts.

On Kaua'i, the state has been dumping millions of gallons of pesticide-contaminated

water in an area where families gather. On Maui, the state has handed over water rights to corporations for decades. On O'ahu, leaking underground military fuel tanks lie above water aquifers.

How can the colonial state, the settlers and the corporations possibly be trusted to do what is best on Hawai'ian lands? They can't. Mauna Kea and more must be returned to the Kanaka Maoli as the rightful caretakers.

### **How you can support**

At this time, allies who are not Kanaka Maoli or from Hawai'i are being asked not to just show up at Mauna Kea but instead to find other ways to support the struggle. Here are some suggested ways to help:

- Dozens of universities across the U.S. support the TMT project. Demand that they stop.
- Call Governor Ige's office at 808-586-0034.
- Support any solidarity actions near you.
- Spread the word!
- Donate: Legal support: [Aloha Aina](#) and [Community Bail Fund](#)

[Support the access road camp](#)

[Mauna Medics supplies registry](#)



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# From Mauna Kea to Okinawa, ‘U.S. imperialism harms our lands, waters and bodies’

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
December 4, 2019

*On July 17, at least 33 Indigenous Hawai’ian elders and others were arrested while defending the Mauna Kea volcano from construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project. Gov. David Ige then [declared a State of Emergency](#) to ramp up repression against the land defenders.*

*Struggle-La Lucha is publishing this letter from Hawai’ian activists with roots in Okinawa, another Pacific island chain which has been subject to U.S. military occupation and capitalist “development” projects that undermine Indigenous sovereignty and destroy the environment. We will have more coverage of the growing struggle at Mauna Kea coming soon.*

**An open letter to Governor David Ige**

We write to you as fellow Uchinanchu (Okinawans), born and raised in Hawai‘i. Yesterday, we watched video footage from Mauna Kea Access Road, where a line of kūpuna sat ready to face law enforcement in order to protect Mauna a Wākea from destructive and irresponsible corporate development. They sat in near-freezing temperatures, covered in blankets, singing songs of resistance and aloha.

As we watched those kūpuna, we were reminded of our trip to our own ancestral homeland—your ancestral homeland. In 2017, we traveled to Okinawa with members of Women’s Voices Women Speak, as Hawai‘i’s delegation to the International Women’s Network Against Militarism. As part of this gathering, we visited the frontlines of the ongoing movement to stop the expansion of a U.S. military base in a region called Henoko. There, we saw our elders putting their bodies on the line to stop the construction of an airfield on the vibrant reef ecosystem of Oura Bay. Just like the kūpuna at Mauna Kea, they sat together facing down law enforcement to protect what we hold sacred—the lands and waters that sustain us all. Through it all, they shared food, laughter and song, and reminded us of the joy we can find in righteous resistance to oppression and desecration.

Our movement in Hawai‘i is fueled by a fierce and steadfast commitment to aloha ‘āina. In Okinawa, the uniting principle is nuchi du takara, all life is precious. As Uchinanchu, we share with Kānaka Maoli the struggle against U.S. imperialism and the harm that it brings to our lands, waters and bodies. But the difference is that many Okinawans have come to call Hawai‘i home and now live on lands that were stolen from Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, who, despite prolonged occupation, have never relinquished their sovereignty. Because of that, we have a kuleana to serve as allies and accomplices in the struggle toward the collective liberation of the lāhui Hawai‘i. We are filled with sadness and anger, because while our Uchinanchu elders are on the frontlines fighting against the violence of U.S. colonialism in the land of our ancestors, you are imposing that same violence on Kānaka Maoli.



Capitalism, militarism and colonialism catch Indigenous people in tangled webs and force us to move through the world in complicated ways. We do not always have a choice in this—we are thrust into diaspora, separated from our sacred places and our histories, we become settlers on other peoples' lands. But you have a choice now. As governor of the occupying State of Hawai'i, you are uniquely positioned to stop this.

In this critical moment, you can enact the same colonial violence that your own ancestors survived and continue to fight against. You can hide behind the threat of tear gas, sound cannons and the National Guard. Hewa. Or, you can heed the call of our elders — both Uchinanchu and Kanaka Maoli. You can say no to the corporate interests driving irresponsible development without the consent of the people. You can say no to the imperialist will to “know” the universe even as we exploit the only planet we have. You can say no to the simplistic and insulting narratives that frame this conflict as one between science and tradition. You can say no to the blatant violation of Native Hawaiian cultural, religious and political rights. You can say no to the endless commodification, desecration and destruction of 'āina, from ocean to sacred summit. Our planet is suffering, and we feel it in our everyday lives in Hawai'i. Now is the time to turn to the wisdom of our ancestors — not persecute it.

Today, we are watching as kūpuna again stand as the first line of defense. As Uchinanchu, we stand in solidarity with them, and with all kia'i mauna. We say no to the TMT.

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UNITE HERE! Local 5

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*Resources from [United American Indians of New England](#) to aid the Mauna Kea struggle:*

Words of the day:

**kia'i** -used to refer to the Mauna Kea protectors

**kūpuna** — the elders.

Call Gov. David Ige at (808) 586-0034 or (808) 586-2211. Remember the time difference.

You do not need a script. Just say as much as you can of this:

- I'm outraged that elders are being arrested.
- I oppose the TMT telescope being built on Mauna Kea.
- I support Native Hawaiian people who are defending their own land.

Where to donate:

[Aloha 'Āina Support Fund](#)

[Hawai'i Community Bail Fund](#)

[HULI: To support the encampment with supplies](#)

