

Most Censored 2007 award to Indigenous Peoples
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Narco News

The "Project Censored 2007" awards are out and most of what was censored in Indian country was ignored. American Indian readers of the Censored blog say these topics were the most censored during the past year:

- Silencing of traditional and grassroots' voices by those in power
- Nuclear, uranium and coal genocide of Indigenous
- Border deaths and abuse of Indigenous; racism in border news reporting
- American Indian delegations in Venezuela
- Zapatistas' meetings at US/Mexico border
- Leonard Peltier

The silencing of traditional and grassroots' voices by those in power includes tribal leaders and councils who have silenced the voices of spiritual leaders and other people in their communities. Those in power continue censoring these voices in the tribally-owned news media; by court actions; local political oppression and access to tribal services.

Explaining the role of "puppet tribal governments in the United States," Hopi traditional elder Dan Evehema said it best, when he was 104 years old, before his death. Speaking through a translator, Evehema said the elected Hopi government was a "puppet government of the United States."

Evehema said the elected tribal government was never recognized or endorsed by the traditional Hopi elders, who maintained constant support for Navajos at Big Mountain and elsewhere on Black Mesa in Arizona, and the Navajos' right to remain on the coal-rich land that the United States government attempts to forcibly relocate Navajos from.

In some cases of media censorship of American Indians, highly-paid spin doctors discredit grassroots Indian voices in the mainstream media, such as in the case of the Navajos' Dooda Desert Rock opposition to the planned power plant in New Mexico. In other cases, tribes flush with casino revenues suppress spiritual leaders and target traditional people with police or court actions, as with the Shenandoah family of the Oneida in New York. Still in other tribes with casinos, including some in southern Arizona, management corporations reap huge profits while community members live in poverty.

One topic that is censored in the American Indian media is opposition to the war in Iraq. United States' military recruiters continue to target Indians, Chicanos, blacks and poor whites to die in Iraq, as pointed out by Western Shoshone Carrie Dann. In Iraq, American Indian soldiers are considered "expendable," remain serving as many as three tours of duty and are placed in the most deadly front lines.

As Acoma Pueblo poet Simon Ortiz and other American Indian activists point out, the same United States government responsible for the genocide of entire Indian tribes is now calling on Indian people to become soldiers and carry out the genocide of Indigenous Peoples in distant lands.

Censorship claws away, rooted in many sources. Advertisers play a role in the censorship, because publishers and editors often place revenues before truth. Sometimes elected political leaders control the newspapers, while other times politicians oppress editors. Sometimes writers and publishers fear for their own safety or loss of progress in their careers. Sometimes they just fear living daily life in a small community with harassment.

Access is not always granted to the media. The Navajo Nation Council opens their sessions to the news media, except for executive sessions on legal matters. However, other legislative councils require special permission for the media to attend sessions. The permission is seldom granted.

Across the nation, grassroots people struggling to protect sacred sites are receiving increased press coverage. Their efforts, however, have been thwarted if the struggles conflict with the agendas of tribal politicians.

Any issue related to Leonard Peltier tops the most censored in Indian country list, including the theater production "My Life is My Sundance." The role of the American Indian Movement and International Indian Treaty Council in protecting local communities, events and sacred land is another of the most censored issues. In Sonora, Mexico, this includes working to halt pesticides banned in other countries which now results in the death of Yaqui in agricultural fields.

The fact that many of the migrants dying at the US/Mexico border are Indigenous Peoples is a fact seldom covered by American Indian media. Victor Rocha's Pechanga Net is one of the few that does cover this.

Recently two Guatemalan Mayan women died on Tohono O'odham land, walking with their children in hopes of a better life. The Tohono O'odham Nation also has on its land an outdoor detention center near San Miguel, Ariz., where women and children are detained. One Mayan called it a prison "cage." The U.S. is also constructing spy towers on Tohono O'odham tribal land, which would enable tribal police and federal border agents to spy on the daily lives of O'odham at home.

A series of great events was censored in 2007 by most of the American Indian media, including the border gatherings of the Zapatistas. Subcomandante Marcos and Mayan Comandantes from Chiapas established the Cucapa fishing resistance camp in Baja, Mexico and supported Seri, Mayo, O'odham, Yaqui, Kickapoo and Raramuri struggles in northern Mexico in 2006 and 2007.

The Indigenous Peoples Day event in Tucson, hosted by the Indigenous Alliance Without Borders in August and Yaqui director Jose Matus, was one of the most powerful events censored in 2007.

Indigenous youths across the nation rose up with their voices and their video cameras, in a new era of courage and filmmaking. Robert Free Galvan, Native activist in Seattle, continued his efforts uniting Indians in the United States and Canada with Venezuela President Hugo Chavez and the Indigenous Peoples of Venezuela.

The Indigenous Border Summit of the Americas was established, organized by Tohono O'odham Mike Flores, to fight militarization of the border, prevent deaths on the border and halt corporate profiteering, while upholding Indigenous rights.

On the Navajo Nation, nuclear free activists united with Indigenous from Australia, India, Africa and Brazil to ensure a nuclear free future. Western Shoshone joined forces with Indigenous in Australia, Peru and Ghana to fight gold mining and human rights atrocities by Newmont and other mining companies, who are coring out of the hearts of mountains.

On the northern border, the Mohawks have led the Indigenous movement with their strength and adherence to no-compromise. From the ongoing defense of their territories to the bold action of a recent trip to Venezuela to join forces to fight colonial oppression, Mohawk women have led the Indigenous empowerment movement, based on the Great Law.

From the great women of the Western Shoshone to the Navajo, Lakota, Goshute and Algonquin, across the Plains and throughout all of the Indian Nations, women have given birth to hope, resistance and the constancy that ensures the procreation of a spiritual way of life for the future.

Throughout the Americas, Indigenous continue to risk their lives to fight the genocidal invasion of nuclear waste dumps, nuclear testing, gold mining, power plants, coal mining, corporate profiteering and genetically-modified foods. They struggle everyday, most without pay or recognition.

The Censored blog's Most Censored Award for 2007 goes out to all Indigenous Peoples who struggle, quietly and alone, without recognition or pay, answering only to the Creator.

This one's for you.

Posted by brendanorrell@gmail.com at 7:18 AM 0 comments Links to this post
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