

**Loneman School, White Clay District  
Pine Ridge, Lakota Nation, South Dakota  
June 21, 1986**

**COMMUNIQUE NO. 10**

Massasoit, the Wampanoag Chief who saved the original Plymouth Colony from starvation, died in 1661 at the age of 81. His eldest son, Alexander, succeeded him. Alexander was promptly summoned by the Governor of Plymouth to acknowledge English authority. He refused, and died mysteriously on his way home from the meeting. His younger brother, Metacom, also known as King Phillip, succeeded him, and after a bitter war with the English he was killed. His head was cut off and put on a pole at the gates of Plymouth Colony. It remained there for twenty years, a grisly warning to all Indians who would challenge English authority. Thus, the pattern of imprisoning and killing indigenous leaders who fought for their land and their peoples' rights became a part of the American heritage.

Illustrious Indian leaders such as Tecumseh, Pontiac, Osceola, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Crazy Horse were killed in the field, assassinated, imprisoned, and/or murdered in cold blood. Today both Dennis Banks and Russell Means have served prison terms for defending their people, and Leonard Peltier is serving two life sentences as a scapegoat of contemporary federal Indian policy. The history of the world is filled with these events. Champions of the people, humanitarians, patriots of indigenous nations, have suffered similar fates. The world has inherited this racist philosophy, and continues to deny human rights to indigenous peoples and nations up to this moment.

Witness: Steven Biko, killed for challenging the racist authority of the Republic of South Africa.  
Witness: Nelson Mandela, imprisoned since June 12, 1963, for challenging the racist authority of the Republic of South Africa. Witness: The thousands of deaths of Black people of the Republic of South Africa, killed for challenging this same racist authority. Witness: The Group Area Act that isolates Black South Africans in homelands too small to support life agriculturally, thus providing a labor force for the mines and the industries of the apartheid state of the Republic of South Africa.

We, the Traditional Circle of Elders in council at the great Lakota Nation, make the following statement on apartheid in South Africa:

We are distressed and alarmed at the violence and killings of an oppressed people fighting for peace and freedom against a savage policy of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa.

The history of racism, founded on the theory of manifest destiny, the wedding of Christianity and the military, and colonization of virgin lands, continues up to this moment.

Exploitation of human and natural resources continues to be the fuel of apartheid. Racism provides the philosophical mechanism for oppression, and the original countries of this philosophy continue to support this policy of apartheid.

The natural law of the creation says that all life is equal, and, as each life is a gift and a manifestation of the creation, so we must respect and protect life as our sacred duty. The self-made policies of men and nations contrary to this law will not prevail. It is now that men and women of goodwill must stand for the principles of life which are freedom and peace. Join hands in this common effort for life and the future of nations.

The Black people were the first of the original peoples of our Mother Earth. The Yellow people were second, the Red people third, and the White people fourth. All colors form the family of mankind - equal and instructed to live in peace. Each of us is charged with upholding the natural laws so that life will continue in a state of peace and tranquility.

Apartheid has not only ruptured and violated the group rights and human rights of the oppressed, but also denies spiritual life to the oppressor.

Our concern is for the suffering of our Black brothers and sisters, and for their welfare and future.

The Traditional Circle of Elders stands in the Circle of Life. Our prayers are lifted through the sacred smoke to the Creator: We pray that the suffering and killing of our Black brothers and sisters will cease. We pray that they take their rightful place in the family of mankind with dignity and respect. We pray that we all be joined in the great spiritual union of peace.

We announce to the world that we stand in solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters in their desperate struggle for land and life. We seek peace and justice, and the recognition of the principle that all life is equal.

*Ho lena hecetu kte lo;*  
*Pila mayaye lo.*

The Traditional Circle of Elders