

message to Leonard Peltier

(September 12 , 2013, day 3 of the Symposium)

Bill Means reads a collective message: [*He Speaks in Lakota*] Buenos días. Good morning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today is the birthday of Leonard Peltier, prisoner of conscience as noted by Amnesty International and many other human rights organizations. One of the issues brought by the Indigenous Peoples to the United Nations in 1977 was the freedom and justice for the indigenous human rights defender Leonard Peltier, a member of the American Indian Movement. Sadly enough, he remains in prison, after 38 years, as a political prisoner who should be unconditionally and immediately released. Truth, justice and reconciliation are needed between Indigenous Peoples and States, as stated in the United Nations' Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in the UN Special Rapporteur's, James Anaya, conclusions in his report on Indigenous Peoples in the United States of America. Executive clemency by President Obama and freedom for Leonard Peltier who is considered by many as Indigenous Peoples' Nelson Mandela would be an important step in this direction.

On October 2nd to the 4th of this year, on the Onondaga Nation, near Green Bay, we will have the Leonard Peltier International Tribunal, so many of you are invited, those of you that can attend. The purpose of the tribunal is to show, not only the international solidarity, but also to begin a campaign for clemency by President Obama and to breed new life into the situation and the movement to free Leonard Peltier. Today, September 12th 2013 is Leonard Peltier's birthday so we dedicate this day and this song that we are going to sing to Leonard Peltier and his family and those human rights defenders from around the world who remain in prison, fighting for the indigenous rights throughout the world [*Sentence in Lakota*].

(September 13, 2013, day 4 of the Symposium)

Bill Simmons: Yes. I just wanted to make a brief statement. We did mention Leonard Peltier yesterday. I just wanted to deliver a message:

From Leonard Peltier:

“Thank you and bless you for all my friends and family out there celebrating my birthday. I wish I was out there with you, but since I can't be, enjoy the day. Have extra kind words for each other. Put a smile on someone's face. Wipe the tears from someone who is crying. Be a brother or sister to someone in the struggle. Do something kind for our elderly and something gentle for our babies. Be the voice for those who are afraid to speak. Be the protector for the weak. In doing that, you are a warrior for our people. It is my prayer that the Creator touches you with good health and happiness, that you

live to enjoy many many more years to come. Thank you for remembering me on this day, the day the Creator breathed life into me. I am truly blessed with your friendship.

[?] and the spirit of Crazy Horse.”

Leonard Peltier”