

17 July 2014

Dear Colleagues, Community Members, Family and Friends:

Once again, I write this letter with care, love, respect, and not a little fear.

Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS) is an organization I hold very close to my heart. As a young West Texas A&M University student wandering around Austin for my unofficial tour of the University of Texas' graduate school program, I came across BookWoman. At this bookstore, I bought two books that went on to blow my mind and change the course of my scholarship and by extension my life's path: *Este Puente; Mi Espalda: Voces de Mujeres Tercermundistas en Los Estados Unidos* (1989) and *Chicana Critical Issues* (1993). Up to this point, I had very limited knowledge of Chicana/o Studies or Chicana Feminism. I loved Faulkner, Hemingway, English Romantic Poetry, the plays of Federico García Lorca, the short stories of Chinua Achebe. I had no knowledge of the cultural production of Chicanas/os in the United States (or for that matter any of the literature of people of color in the United States). That was to come in the final semester of my final year at West Texas A&M.

In these books, I encountered the work of strong women. It seemed as if Norma Alarcón, Gloria Anzaldúa, Toni Cade Bambara, Antonia Castañeda, Ana Castillo, Audre Lorde, Cherríe Moraga, Emma Pérez, Nellie Wong, Patricia Zavella (just to name a few) whispered in my ear and let me know that every doubt, every insecurity, every fear I had was legitimate and they were here to support me, mentor me, sustain me. For as long as I could remember I had felt so alone in classrooms, meetings, readings. Finally, I was not alone. There were so many others.

I did not know what MALCS was, but I learned. How wonderful – a Chicana/Native feminist-centered organization that works tirelessly for issues about which I care very deeply: social justice, access to education, discrimination, environmental justice, working class identities, sexuality and gender justice, etc. The discussions at the MALCS Institutes I have been able to attend have without question lived up to MALCS' original Declaración (1983) and updated mission statement (1991).

However, sadly, this is not the case for the Summer 2014 MALCS Institute. I have said before that I was excited to be included in the MALCS site committee. I was honored to have the piece I wrote become the opening statement for the Institute's 2014 Call for Papers. And of course I was hurt when President Barceló removed me from the site committee in May.

Nevertheless, I find it imperative that I let our diverse communities know one thing. I have expressed the following concern in both public and private communication via email, conversation, written correspondence. Please take a moment to allow me to address it here.

Sponsorship for the MALCS 2014 Institute.

There are numerous in-kind contributors to the MALCS 2014 Summer Institute at Northern New Mexico College. All of these are local and that is wonderful. However, I ask you to pay attention to one of the major “2014 MALCS Summer Institute Sponsors:” *Day and Zimmerman S.O.C. Los Alamos.*



Thank you to our Sponsors

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Screenshot: <http://malcsnm2014.com/sponsors/> July 2014

I have stated before that I voiced concerns regarding sponsorship from Los Alamos National Labs. I have also stated that I was reprimanded by Dr. Barceló for voicing these concerns. President Barceló's blind spot has now become the MALCS Executive Committee's informed decision to endorse taking sponsorship, funding and association from Day and Zimmerman S.O.C. Los Alamos.

I did not grow up in northern New Mexico. I did; however, grow up in Canyon, Texas. Therefore, I know I have the experience to speak to a large part of the Los Alamos

National Labs (LANL) issue. For over thirty years, my mother worked at Pantex (a nuclear weapons facility). We had great benefits, job security, excellent union representation. Pantex has been a significant employer for much of the populations of color in the Texas Panhandle. It does come at great cost. There are widespread health issues – thyroid cancers, thyroid imbalances, lymphoma, blood cancers, various tumors, etc. When I taught at Brown University, we discussed national areas of sacrifice. Many students were not familiar with this term. I named the effects of living in these areas. To emphasize these effects, I listed every member of my family who has been diagnosed with cancer. To me, this was significant, but not particularly exceptional (at least not exceptional in the Panhandle). The students were stunned. How could that much cancer happen to one family across generations?

There is no small amount of evidence that links cancer to the radiation produced by nuclear energy and its accouterments. We all know the cancer rates around the Trinity Site in Alamogordo, New Mexico are astounding. We know the effects of the major crises like Chernobyl or Fukushima. Organizations such as Honor Our Pueblo Existence (H.O.P.E.) led by Santa Clara Pueblo elder Marian Naranjo address these issues and struggle to make LANL accountable on a daily basis. I voice concern over the sponsorship of the MALCS 2014 Institute by Day and Zimmerman S.O.C. Los Alamos knowing that it is a double-edged sword. Los Alamos National Labs supports both the community and NNMC in innumerable ways. In just as many ways, it harms.

This we know. But I ask you to consider thinking about Day and Zimmerman, the corporation that provides Los Alamos National Labs with both management and security services. For over 100 years, this corporation (based out of Pennsylvania) has worked in the fields of energy production (oil, nuclear), weapons production, weapons disposal and security management.

They have established, acquired or contracted with the following military suppliers and partners during the past 70 years: Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Cressona Ordnance Plant, Lone Star Ammunition Plant, Korat Air Base in Thailand, Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, Hawthorne Army Depot in Nevada, SEACOR, Lockheed Martin, American Ordnance, Mason and Hanger, AREVA.

The Iowa, Kansas and Lone Star Ammunition Plants were key manufacturers of military weapons during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The Lone Star Ammunition Plant, in particular, increased operations during the Vietnam War.

Day and Zimmerman built the Korat Air Base in Thailand (1967), which housed the United States Air Force in Vietnam and from which the USAF was to support U.S. interests in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. According to the Public Health division of the Veterans Affairs, veterans who served at Korat between 1961-1975 are at high risk for exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange.

The Hawthorne Army Depot in Nevada, the largest ammunition storage depot in the United States is charged with the storage and disposal of chemical weapons and several

areas of chemical agent contamination such as mustard gas. The depot also joins with the military for these projects: Navy Special Forces high-desert training; Navy Undersea Warfare Center, Marine Corps Sniper team training and weapons testing; Army Ranger high-desert training. This facility sits in southwestern Nevada—60 miles from the eastern border of California. It borders the northern Paiute Walker River Indian Reservation and is only 30 miles from the reservation town of Schurz, the burial place of Ghost Dance prophet Wovoka.

Lockheed Martin is one of the world's largest defense contractors. It currently operates the only fully operational uranium enrichment plant in the United States. This is in Paducah, Kentucky. And unfortunately, there is more. Lockheed Martin partners with Areva and Urenco. Areva, the world's largest nuclear energy company is also a partner of Day and Zimmerman. With Areva and Urenco, Lockheed Martin is currently building a second uranium enrichment plant in Eunice, New Mexico. Eunice is less than 18 miles south of Hobbs, New Mexico in the southeastern part of the state. There are also plans to build another uranium enrichment plant in Idaho. But this is not all. Lockheed Martin is also contracted to operate U.S.-México border security systems in southern Arizona. Lockheed Martin is also putting out money to legalize drones for civilian use by the United States on the border.

Day and Zimmerman also merged with Mason and Hanger, the parent company of the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas. As I mentioned above, Pantex is a nuclear weapons facility. Aside from Pantex and LANL, Day and Zimmerman's Energy Department also has a security contract at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico. WIPP has been a great source of concern in New Mexico and is a particular concern of H.O.P.E. at Santa Clara Pueblo. And as many of you may have heard, a radiation leak did occur in February 2014 at WIPP. Following that leak, 21 workers tested positive for radiation exposure.

Cressona Ordnance and American Ordnance were and are producers/suppliers of ammunition and other military weapons. SEACOR owns, operates, invests in and markets equipment for the offshore oil and gas industries.

Other notable holdings of Day and Zimmerman are NPS Energy Services and the Atlantic Group, which address issues of energy and power maintenance. Also included in Day and Zimmerman's holdings are Protection Technology Incorporated and Reliable Security, which provide security to LANL and other corporate, high tech, pharmaceutical, chemical, educational and government facilities.

For me and for the members of our communities who live in national areas of sacrifice; live near or cross the U.S.-México border, serve in the military, it is imperative we inform ourselves of MALCS' sponsors. It is imperative we know this. As working class women, many of us have family who served in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of us suffer the health consequence of exposure to herbicides and radiation. I mentioned cancer above, but there are incredibly high amounts of

immunodeficiency diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis in our communities of color, particularly among women.

Undoubtedly, this has been a tedious document to get through. Please know I appreciate the time you have invested. And allow me to take just a few moments more.

Once again, I am aware of the complexity of the issue. Corporations such as Day and Zimmerman provide good jobs to many of our rural communities, but at what cost? I recognize the value of the MALCS Summer Institute. I also know considering the hostile environment at NNMC and the manner in which some of us were removed, resigned, or just simply ignored from the site committee, I may not attend this Institute; however, I encourage the audience of this letter to demand that a conversation be held at the 2014 Institute regarding the politics of this major sponsorship. I am somewhat familiar with the diverse fields of Africana Studies, Chicana/o Studies, Ethnic Studies, Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, Native Studies, Queer Studies, and Women Studies. The literature and theory that are at the foundation of all of these fields demand a critique of exactly the kind of activities in which Day and Zimmerman engages.

Within days of beginning graduate school, I discovered that *Este Puente; Mi Espalda* was the Spanish translation of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. The voice of Gloria Anzaldúa was, for me, a new voice. Her words arose from the page: “We are each accountable for what is happening down the street, south of the border, or across the sea.” As the MALCS Site Committee, we chose to embrace the connection between our bodies and our environment. We chose to embrace environmental science and environmental justice. How can we, in good conscience, have this conversation when we do not hold ourselves or the partnerships we cultivate accountable? We have worked so hard to form a model of women of color feminism and social change in MALCS, how can we let this go unaddressed? How do we call for a more just world, how do we honor our *antepasados*, our elders, the seven generations to come when we eat from the poisoned table of Day and Zimmerman?

Finally, I ask that we return just for a brief instant to *This Bridge Called My Back*. In her Foreword, Toni Cade Bambara describes the beautiful potential of communication: “Now that we’ve begun to break the silence and begun to break through the diabolically erected barriers and can hear each other and see each other, we can sit down with trust and break bread together.”

In the spirit of the women of color feminists/activists who have come before me, I ask that a discussion of all of the issues raised in this letter be held widely across diverse groups and forums as it concerns all of us. And I ask in particular that a discussion regarding these issues be held at the 2014 MALCS Institute at Northern New Mexico College.

Sincerely,

Dr. Patricia Marie Perea

RELEVANT LINKS:

MALCS Declaración (1983) and updated mission statement (1991) -
<http://www.malcs.org/>

Day and Zimmerman's Corporate History - http://www.dayzim.com/About_DZ/History

"Thailand Military Bases and Agent Orange Exposure," U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs - <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/thailand.asp>

"Baseline Report: Aeronautics and Defense Sector," Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development -
http://www.veterans.nv.gov/cmsdocuments/Aeronautics_And_Defense_Sector_Report_1.pdf

"MTADS Demonstration at the Walker River Paiute Reservation," Naval Research Laboratory -
<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.serdp.org%2Fcontent%2Fdownload%2F5565%2F77323%2Ffile%2Fux-2001-fr-01.pdf&ei=ZX3IU9bGL4qf8QHD14HABg&usg=AFQjCNGXK-tLLB-ss72DF6Pkd8-iJaaafQ&sig2=B3msAPRBSGWLWZc3rS85mA&bvm=bv.71198958,d.b2U> (Important PDF)

"Uranium in the U.S.A. - A Quick Look at the Industry Today," *The Center for Land Use Interpretation* - <http://tucson13.nytimes-institute.com/2013/05/31/moving-to-plan-b-for-border-surveillance/>

"What Are The Chances You'll Soon Encounter A Drone? The FAA, Boeing (BA), Lockheed Martin (LMT) And Northrup Grumman (NOC) Will Help Decide," *International Business Times* -
<http://www.ibtimes.com/what-are-chances-youll-soon-encounter-drone-faa-boeing-ba-lockheed-martin-lmt-northrup-grumman-noc>

"Mason & Hanger to merge with Philadelphia company," *Amarillo-Globe News* -
http://amarillo.com/stories/1999/04/15/new_merge.shtml

Marian Naranjo, founder of Honor Our Pueblo Existence on LANL and water
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUOXr3mQzDc>

"Crews Locate Area of Radiation Leak at New Mexico Nuclear Waste Site
<http://rt.com/usa/new-mexico-nuclear-waste-radiation-484/>

"LANL Waste Contract Denies Cat Litter Role in WIPP Radiation Leak," *The Albuquerque Journal* -
<http://www.abqjournal.com/424455/news/contractor-litter-not-to-blame.html>