building PUEBLO worked with in East Oakland, after filling out the PUEBLO checklist, tenants went with PUEBLO to file official complaints with the city. As a result of this action, Bob Williams, the Assistant Housing Manager in Charge of Housing and Conservation, went with the inspector assigned to the East Oakland Housing district to do official inspections of the building and apartment units.

When city inspectors went out a second time, they found more Housing Code violations than PUEBLO had anticipated. The landlord met with the tenants and PUEBLO on July 22. In this meeting, PUEBLO was able to get the landlord to negotiate rent increase problems, agree to specific repairs to be made within a 30 day time period, to hire a Spanish-speaker in his office, and to make himself more available for communication with the tenants. Some of the most pressing repairs have already been made, and a Spanish speaker has been hired to work in his office. Tenants stood up for their rights, whereas before they did not know what their rights were as tenants, and/or lived so much under the threat of retaliation that they were fearful of speaking up.

From the summer campaign around housing, PUEBLO was successful in getting a sense of the situation in Oakland. It is sad to report that the situation is a grim one. According to PUEBLO's lead organizer Sandra Davis, PUEBLO will only continue organizing around if they decide to turn it into a long-term campaign. "We would have to organize around the Just Cause Eviction Act. Fighting for rent control makes no sense in Oakland because it is not winnable." Interns feel that the housing campaign was an important experience for them because they not only learned how to turn a problem into an organizing issue, but also saw themselves develop with and through the process.

Libero feels that it was "an interesting experience, finding out what things we could get from the city and what things we can get on our own". Belkis says that, "I was afraid at first because I didn't know what to expect from people and the tenants were also afraid, but now we are working together. Now they even invite me to their house for dinner."

Stopping a Racist Witchunt

Another issues which came up for the interns was the firing of one of the PUEBLO members by the Oakland Army Base AAFES (Army & Air Force Exchange Service). Edelberto C. Pineda, father of PUEBLO staff organizer Rowena Pineda, was fired for suspicion of having taken part in a sports betting pool. He was just one of over one hundred mostly Filipino workers disciplined by the distribution director of AAFES, David Painter, in what a local paper called a "racist witchunt." The interns immediately jumped on the campaign and pulled off two actions against Painter. He's really shaking in his boots now! He should have known better than to mess with PUEBLO!

All of the interns learned from the experiences of the summer, and will take PUEBLO lessons with them wherever they may go. When Libero goes back Providence, Rhode Island, Belkis back to New York and La Raya to her home in Baltimore, these young activists will be kicking butt and taking names. They all agree with La Raye when she feels that she is leaving PUEBLO a completely different person.

CONSUMER ACTION

NEIL GENDEL
TOXICS PROJECT DIRECTOR

116 NEW MONTGOMERY STREET, SUITE 233
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
(415) 777-9648
(800) 999-7981
(FAX) 415-777-5267

"Let it be Said That Rima is Doing her Best To Help make This world A better Place To Live in"

An Admirer

MAAP FIELD REPORTS: Los Angeles, California

All that we need is the air that we breathe

People have been known to live more than a month without food and a week without water, but a person can only live a few minutes without air. With this in mind, and knowing that the Los Angeles basin is the smog capital of the nation MAAP interns Amy Hsi (Lexington, Massachusetts), Sam Liu (Richmond, California), Claudia Martinez (Merced, California), and Maria Salazar (Queens, New York), and site coordinators Rinku Sen and Joselito Laudencia, joined the crew of the Labor/Community Strategy Center's WATCHDOG Environmental Project.

The WATCHDOG's current campaign involves organizing communities to combat corporate environmental polluters.

The Strategy Center itself is a home for long-term organizing projects, and a site for training a new generation of activists. It evolved out of the victories of many progressive organizing experiences — the United Auto Workers "Campaign to Keep GM Van Nuys Open," the efforts to establish ethnic studies departments on college campuses, and the Jobs With Peace initiative.

The Interns
Sam Lin
Claudia Martinez
Maria Salazar
Amy Hsi

The Campaign
Air Pollution

Most Memorable Experience
"When we went out on the streets, our throats would hurt and our eyes would water from the smells. But people would say 'what smell? What refinery? There's nothing to worry about."

Corporate polluters in Los Angeles had MAAP interns Amy, Sam, Claudia and Maria on their trail this summer.

"The goals of the Strategy Center are to make Los Angeles a more democratic and livable city, and to develop new models of urban coalitions for worker and community empowerment," according to director Eric Mann.

The interns and WATCHDOG members began the initial outreach campaign by walking door-to-door in the Wilmington and Carson areas (areas with a large concentration of oil refineries and other industries) to gather information on people's health concerns. The Center's research has shown that these areas, which are heavily populated by people of color and/or low-income and working class people, are subjected to contamination from toxic emissions by nearby multinational oil companies. After the initial outreach and the gathering of information on people's health concerns, the interns followed up with personal visits for the long term community-wide educational part of the campaign. The interns were also able to attend public hearings of the South Coast Air Quality Management District to see