

The

# Vindicator

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for space?

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and much more!

RACIST RED  
SAMBO

A MULTICULTURAL STUDENT PUBLICATION OF CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

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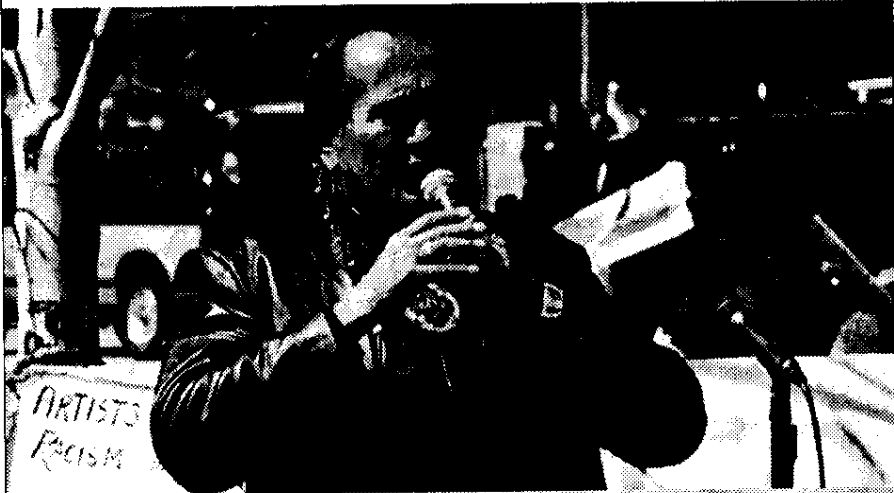
**On the cover:**Standing up to a racist  
tradition.

photo by Brian Lynch

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# Waging A War Against Wahoo

Protesters file a lawsuit against police



Native American activist Russel Means

by Jessica Bryski

**O**n April 9, 1999, a lawsuit was brought against the Cleveland Police Department by five activists who claim they were unlawfully arrested at a protest in front of Jacobs Field baseball stadium. In the lawsuit, which was filed in the Court of Common Pleas of Cuyahoga County, the five plaintiffs accused the police of violating their free speech, false arrest, false imprisonment and invasion of privacy.

The lawsuit stems from an incident that occurred last year. On April 10, 1998, a group of protesters demonstrating against the Cleveland Indians organization, in opposition to the team's name and mascot, Chief Wahoo, were arrested during a demonstration at Jacobs Field during the team's home opener. In the course of protesting, they burned a straw effigy of Chief Wahoo.

The five people were arrested on suspicion of arson, remained in jail for a day and were then released without being charged with any crime. The plaintiffs involved in this case are three American Indians, Vernon Bellecourt, 67, of Minneapo-

lis and President of the American Indian Movement, Juan Reyna, 53, of Cleveland, and Charlene Teters, 46, of Santa Fe, Zizwe Tchiguka, 43, of Cleveland and a member of the All African Peoples Party, and James Watson, 42, of Lakewood.

According to the Committee of 500 Years of Dignity & Resistance which organizes many of the demonstrations and protests on behalf of Native Americans and their allies, the name "Indians" evinces mythical, often detrimental, images of indigenous peoples who are warlike savages. The group also says that Chief Wahoo promotes a negative stereotype of Native Americans because it characterizes a whole group of people as a goofy cartoon, much in the same way as Black Sambo and the Frito Bandito were degrading to African Americans and Hispanics.

In response to the argument about the importance of tradition behind the team's name and logo, the Committee of 500 Years of Dignity & Resistance states that racism is also an American tradition.