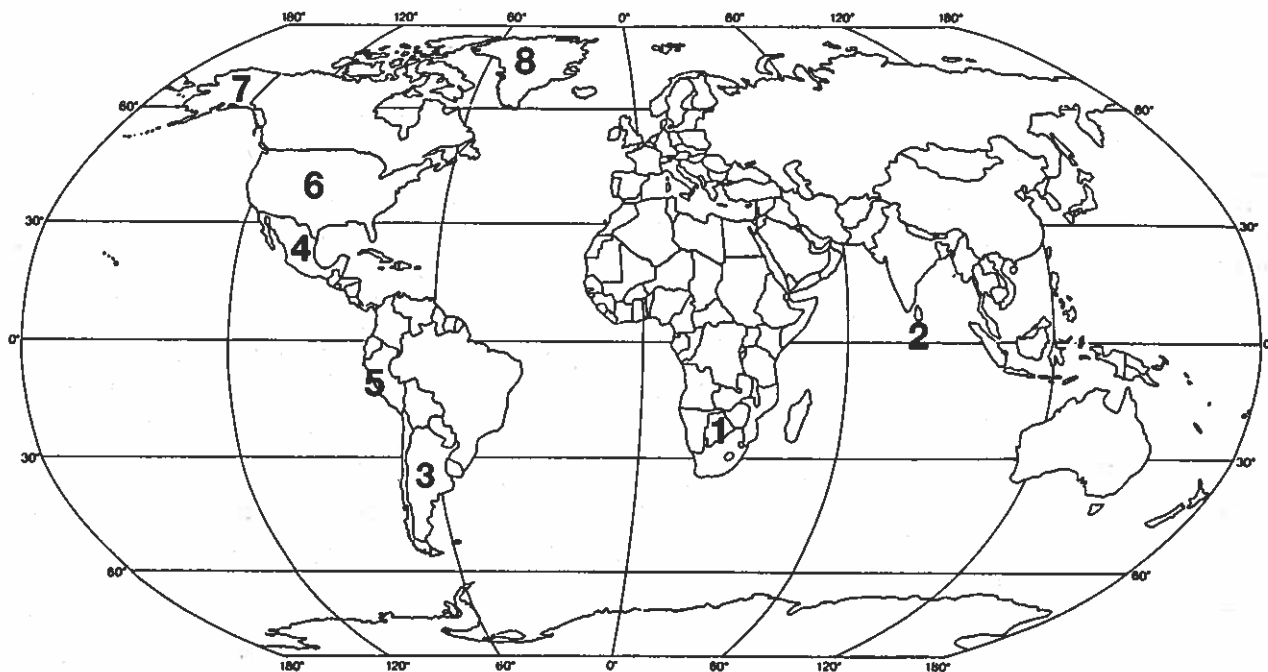


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NATIONAL GROUPS

Copenhagen:
Fiolstraede 10
DK-1171 Copenhagen K
DENMARK

Moscow:
Olga A. Murashko
RUSSIA
e-mail:
olga@murkre.msk.ru

Zurich:
c/o Ethnologisches
Seminar der
Universität Zürich
Freiensteinstrasse 5
CH-8032 Zürich
SWITZERLAND

Madrid:
c/o WATU
Claudio Coello 130, 5°
28006 Madrid
SPAIN

Gothenburg:
c/o Heidi Moksnes
Inst. of Social Anthropology
Brogatan 4,
S-41 301 Gothenburg
SWEDEN

Lund:
c/o Miljöbiblioteket
Winstrupsgatan 3
P.O.Box 1092
221 01 Lund
SWEDEN

Oslo:
c/o Institutt og
Museum for Antropologi
P.O. Box 1091
Blindern, 0317 Oslo
NORWAY

IWGIA INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

The International Secretariat of IWGIA, Fiolstraede 10, DK-1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Phone: +45 33 12 47 24, Telefax: +45 33 14 77 49

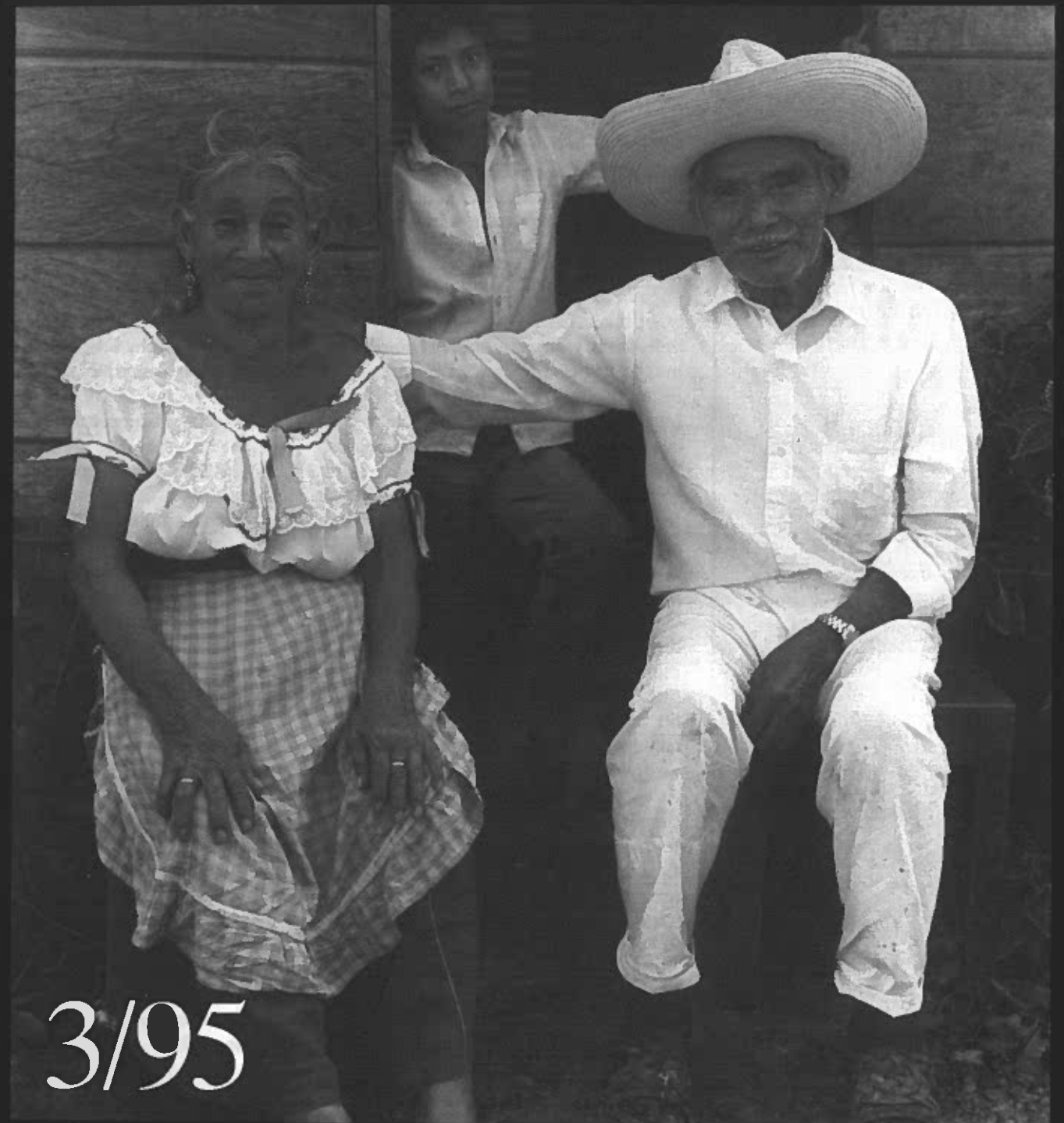
e-mail: IWGIA @login.dkuug.dk



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Editorial

Indigenous peoples' relationship with the United Nations is being highlighted in several ways this year.

First of all this is the year when the UN Draft Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights will seriously confront the attitudes of the governments and begin its hazardous journey upwards in the UN system, hopefully in the end to be adopted by the General Assembly. It took twelve years for the Working Group to create the Declaration and reach an agreement among the indigenous representatives and governments. From this perspective, and considering the urgency of the situation of most of the world indigenous peoples, it would not be too much to hope for a rapid and unconditional adoption of the Declaration in the Human Rights Commission, where it is currently in process. Prospects are dim, however, on the future of the Declaration. When indigenous issues were up for debate in the Human Rights Commission this year in February, the decision was taken to form a new working group directly under the Human Rights Commission to 'elaborate' the Declaration. As is by now well known, the first meeting in the new group is to take place in Geneva in November. Around 50 indigenous organisations have by now applied for representation to the new group, in spite of the fact that no financial support is provided for participation in this meeting by the Voluntary Fund. Most indigenous people find it of great importance to be present and make an impact in defense of the result of twelve years intensive work. At the same time there is an understandable scepticism towards the attitudes of many governments, as these have been expressed in former meetings.

This year's regular July meeting in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations did not deal with the Declaration, but obstacles came up in connection with the discussions on the Decade during the technical meeting. Opposition came mainly from Brazil, which made strong efforts to see that the governance of the activities of the Decade was kept within control of the Nation States.

A number of statements made by indigenous representatives during the review of developments are printed in this issue of Indigenous Affairs. Certain problems and concerns repeat themselves from year to year. West Papuans still have to fight against the activities of mining companies and their hard and merciless suppression. The Mangyans of Mindoro in the Philippines fight for their right to a designated place, at least on equal footing with plants and animals, and the Enxet of Paraguay make an urgent call for compliance with the Paraguayan State's own laws with respect to land rights and humane work conditions for indigenous people.

Two other events have taken place recently in the ongoing relationship between the the United Nations and the indigenous peoples.

One was a workshop on - as it ended up saying - "the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations". Hosted by the governments of Denmark and the Greenland Home Rule, it was attended by about 25 government representatives and the same number of indigenous persons. This meeting turned into an extremely interesting event, which clearly and unequivocally put the focus on some of the crucial questions in the relationship between indigenous peoples and certain, mainly Asian states. The defini-

tion and delimitation of indigenous peoples acquired much attention, due to the argument of, first and foremost, the governments of India and Bangladesh that no discussion could be held until this question had been dealt with. Furthermore these governments put forward the by now familiar argument that the term 'indigenous' covers peoples in colonial situations, which are clearly related to a specific point in history. India and Bangladesh do not recognize their indigenous peoples as such, in spite of these peoples self-identification as indigenous, and in spite of the well established and accepted definitions of the Working Group and the ILO among others. They still argue that no definition of indigenous peoples exists, and that this is a necessary precondition for further discussions on a permanent forum. It is to be hoped that the Asian governments will change their attitude through better acquaintance with the way their indigenous peoples see themselves and their own situation, and eventually adopt the term in the spirit of openness and dialogue in which it is in use in the current political and human rights work in the UN and other international fora.

The most recent encounter of the UN and indigenous peoples took place in Beijing in September, when 125 indigenous women from 23 different countries, representing organisations of all continents of the world, signed up to the statement of indigenous women, and among 35-40,000 other women from all over the world, presented their claims to the UN in the form of a declaration: *Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women*. It was created in an extremely productive, although rather chaotic and a somewhat humid atmosphere in the autumn rain at the NGO-Forum outside

Beijing. Latinamericans, Hawaiians, Asians, Australians, Saami and other indigenous women, the majority of whom came well-prepared from their home communities with drafts and points for discussion, cooperated creatively under the coordinative guidance of Victoria Tauli-Corpuz of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network. In the course of a week, the eight page long declaration was ready to be taken to the official conference. With the help of the Danish and Greenland delegation, a press conference was held, and the declaration of the indigenous women was distributed to all represented delegations at the conference.

The whole Beijing declaration of the indigenous women will be printed in a later IWGIA publication, together with statements and other documentation on indigenous women's lives.

For the moment, it suffices to say that the Beijing Declaration refuses to accept the whole framework within which the UN Platform for Action on women's rights is founded. It is criticised for being framed within the New World Order and condoning Structural Adjustment Programmes. "The New World Order which is engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonized and discriminated us, is being imposed on us viciously. It is recolonization coming under the name of globalization and trade liberalization" the declaration says. Another issue, which received much attention from the press, and which will be dealt with more extensively in the next issue of Indigenous Affairs, is intellectual property rights, and specifically the extreme case of the attempts to patent the genes of an indigenous woman within the highly criticised Human Genome Diversity Project.

by Inger Sjørsløv

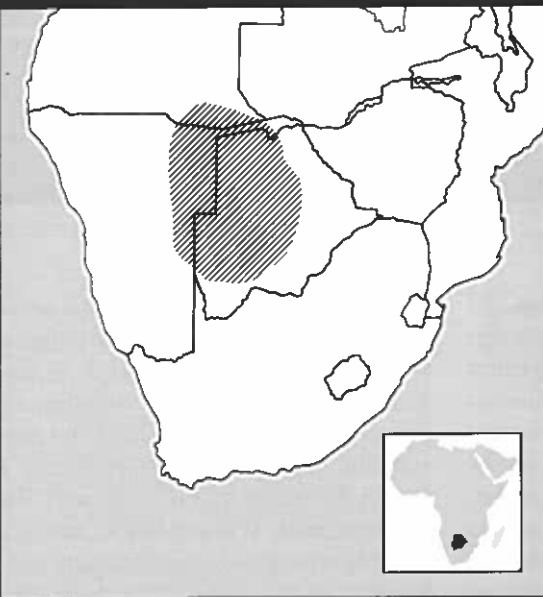
While putting emphasis on the areas of specific concern to women, the indigenous women's Beijing declaration is as such a general statement on the situation of indigenous people, both women and men. It remains to be seen what its further fate within the follow up on the Fourth World Conference on Women will be, but considering its strong and clear language and the urgency of the problems it deals with, it should not fail to have an impact on governments' awareness of indigenous women as a special area of concern.

In this case, the indigenous representatives chose to work parallel with the work of the government representatives and present their own statement, which criticised the whole conceptual framework of the official work. Some lobbying was done with respect to the wording of the final document, specifically on issues such as the 's' in peoples, and the paragraph on intellectual property rights. On the whole, however, the centre of gravity of the work lay in the NGO-Forum, where new contacts were established and networks expanded among indigenous women all over the world.

Whereas the degree of direct impact on UN procedures and results in this as in other cases can sometimes be doubted, the side-effects of indigenous peoples' participation in this international community work is not to be underestimated.

People, women and men, meet across continents and exchange experiences, information and viewpoints. New ties are established and old ones strengthened. And the most important activities, those that point towards future openings and dialogues, may very well be those that take place in a humid tent outside Beijing, or in the corridors, whether in the UN or elsewhere. □

KALAHARI



Grassroots Political Organizing among Kalahari Bushmen

Grassroots political organizing is a process that indigenous peoples have engaged in throughout their histories. North American indigenous groups organized in the 19th century to attempt to save their land and bring about cultural revitalization. In the 20th century, there has been a dramatic expansion of efforts by indigenous groups to organize as a means of obtaining recognition of their land rights, establishing sustainable development, and seeking political autonomy (Burger 1987; Durning 1992).

The Republic of Botswana in southern Africa is important from the standpoint of indigenous political organizing in that it has an indigenous minority, the *Bushmen* (*San, Basarwa*), that has become increasingly vocal, especially in the past two decades. In the past, Bushmen were excluded from politics by the *Tswana* majority. Their status was such that they could not take part in public policy discussions. For all intents and purposes, they were outside the sociopolitical hierarchy of the country, and they lacked basic civil, political and socioeconomic

members on events of government. Most important for democratic elections, civil society organizations act as the means by which members are mobilized for political participation.

Civil society organizations legitimize a certain party for group members, and they focus their members on the importance of certain issue positions for the group. These organizations also facilitate participation in electoral campaigns by organizing meetings with candidates, and they assist by contributing member funds to parties or candidates. In effect, civil society provides an alternative means to communal politics as a way to link to citizens to elite competition.

Bushmen and Politics

The approximately 49,500 Botswana Bushmen have been involved in politics since the time of the first election prior to the country's independence in 1966. A fairly sizable number of Bushmen have voted in every election that Botswana has held (of which there have been seven, including the pre-Independence election). Several Bushmen ran for and

rights (Hitchcock and Holm 1993).

A major problem of democratization of grassroots politics in the is the absence of a civil society in the rural areas (Holm and Molutsi 1989). Civil society is a network of groups which serves as an interface between individual members of the public and government. Group leaders speak for segments of the population and inform their

were elected to District Councils, three in 1989 and seven in 1994, and one has for Parliament. It is somewhat ironic, there, that Bushmen have been characterized as 'people without politics' and as people who were peripheral to the political process in Botswana. A prevailing assumption in Botswana government circles was that Bushmen communities lacked formal leaders and that they did not have organized political institutions. Observations of Bushman communities and discussions with Bushmen informants underscored the fact that virtually all communities had people who they respected and whose suggestions they frequently chose to abide by. These leaders made decisions, adjudicated disputes and represented the community in discussions with outsiders. In some cases there were groups of elders - or a core group of siblings - who formed what might be viewed as community councils. These people had a significant say in civil matters, such as how to handle disruptive individuals. They were also important in establishing access rules when other people requested that they be allowed to enter their areas in order to use local resources.

The traditional Bushman political system can be characterized as consensus-based, with all adults taking part in decision-making. Public policy discussions are carried out openly, and virtually all people present take part. Leadership tends to be ephemeral among these groups, which have been described by anthropologists as 'fiercely egalitarian.' Individuals who play leadership roles essentially work on behalf of the group as a whole.

There tend to be a small number of sociopolitical institutions among Kalahari Bushmen, although this should not be taken to mean that they are any less significant or experienced at resolving im-

portant issues. Besides individuals and families, there are or were bands, local groups comprised of a number of families linked through social, economic, and friendship ties. These social units essentially represent face-to-face communities of people through which rights to resources are held. In a number of instances these bands were part of larger multi-band entities or nexuses which were named units.

Among some Bushman groups (e.g. the *Tyua* of the northeastern Kalahari), the position of *//kaiha*, headman, was institutionalized to the point where it was passed down from one generation to the next, usually through the male line. These leaders were said to have had the authority to make binding decisions and to adjudicate disputes between different groups. Some of these headmen organized region-wide ritual activities such as circumcision ceremonies. *Tyua* leaders also planned and implemented large-scale hunts that included members from a number of different local groups, and they brought groups of people together for communal labour purposes.

One of the criteria for becoming a headman in Botswana is that the individual must have the ability to read and write. This requirement was problematic for many Bushmen since a significant proportion of the adults were non-literate. It is interesting to note that some Bushmen groups figured out innovative ways to get around this problem. In the case of *Ka/Gae* in the Ghanzi District, for example, a young man was appointed as headman, but he had a close adviser who was an elderly individual who was well respected in the community. There were also cases where the government relaxed its requirements, allowing non-literate people to become headmen.

During the course of interviews we conducted in Botswana concerning politics, some of the Bushmen headmen mentioned that they wanted to have more training in how to manage community affairs and oversee the customary courts. A few of them had been able to attend a training course at Ramatea in Kanye which was sponsored by the Ministry of Local Government, Lands, and Housing. Other prospective headmen went to villages and towns to observe the actions of official headmen as they went about their duties. In a few cases, headmen were given a short briefing by the District Commissioners prior to their taking up their positions. A few headmen pointed out that they had problems in getting people to listen to them because their appointments had yet to be announced by government officials.

There are only two official tribal authorities found in Bushmen communities. These are the lowest ranking headmen: (1) Headmen of Arbitration and (2) Headmen, Customary Courts of Record. The Headmen of Arbitration adjudicate disputes but do not handle criminal cases. The Headmen, Customary Court of Record, on the other hand, handle criminal cases, levy fines, and oversee the activities of tribal policemen and court clerks who are assigned to the community. Both types of headmen are paid for their work by the government.

According to the Commissioner of Customary Courts in the Ministry of Local Government, Lands, and Housing, various Bushman communities have been involved in electing headmen for a number of years, at least since the 1970s. Some of these headmen have been recognized officially by the Tribal Administrations in their respective districts, and their statuses have been confirmed by the Minister of Local Government,

Lands, and Housing under the Customary Courts Act and the Chieftainship Act. There are a number of cases, however, where headmen have been elected in communities but have yet to be recognized officially. There were also cases in which non-local people had become headmen, sometimes to the chagrin of community residents

There have been relatively few instances in which the decisions of local headmen have been challenged. Most people in communities with Bushmen headmen maintained that the headmen had been fair in their decisions. A few people mentioned that they thought the fines and other penalties had been too stiff. In one case, fines were levied on non-Bushman cattle owners for damage done by their cattle to the crops of Bushmen. when they protested the amounts of the fines, the Bushmen headman refused to back down. There were also cases in which Bushmen headmen faced inordinate amounts of pressure to drop criminal cases against non-Bushmen, the argument being that Bushmen headmen did not have the authority to assess the actions of non-Bushmen. In no case, however, did the Bushman headman capitulate.

There are a number of problems that have been encountered by Bushmen communities in running their own affairs. Some communities had over-zealous extension workers who played too large a role in local affairs, which left people feeling as though they had little control over their own actions. In other cases, there were overlaps in responsibilities among individuals involved in a number of different institutions. In these cases, there were conflicts between the headmen and his advisors and the Village Development Committees (VDCs), local institutions established in most

by Robert K Hitchcock
and John D. Holm

Bushman and other rural communities in Botswana. Yet another kind of problem occurred when an outsider took over the headmanship and refused to relinquish it. There are also a number of cases where factionalism occurred in the community, something that caused problems in running day-to-day affairs.

One reason that was cited by some government officials for Bushmen not doing well in district-level and national political contexts was that supposedly they 'lacked organizational abilities' or 'were not politically powerful.' Both Botswana and expatriate social scientists have pointed to the relatively egalitarian nature of some Bushmen groups, saying that this was a 'constraint to development' since people often preferred to keep quiet rather than advocate changes. The modesty and non-competitive nature of Bushmen was seen as a problem when it came to their representing themselves in court cases or district council meetings.

In contrast to this perspective, there is evidence that some of the leaders elected by Bushmen communities have definitely been highly effective at representing their constituents and advocating political positions advantageous to Bushmen. To take one example, the headmen of Ka/Gae in the Ghanzi District sent letters to the Ghanzi District Council complaining of the problems caused by cattle from two nearby boreholes. When nothing was done, he organized a deputation of community members that went to the district council meeting and complained formally. The result was that the council passed a resolution stating that the cattle would be removed from the boreholes, in spite of the fact that some of the district councillors had cattle that were being watered at those places.

Local Level Organizations in Botswana

There are many forms of group organization in rural Botswana. Most of these groups, however, have little or no political purpose and thus do little to create a foundation for civil society. The most extensive in terms of sheer numbers of groups and members are the burial societies, and some villages have several such institutions. In the larger towns there

may be fifty. Members contribute on a monthly basis to ensure that the society will provide an elaborate funeral when they die. These burial societies serve as a kind of savings club for local people, who sometimes take out loans from the societies' treasury. The only impact of these societies on party politics is that the parties must cancel any planned political rally when there is a funeral at the same time, since few will attend the rally.

A fairly sizable number of groups in Botswana are government sponsored collective action organizations. These organizations undertake a variety of tasks ranging from providing seeds to farmers to organizing women to produce local crafts. The civil servants who provide more of the leadership for such groups make sure that the groups steer clear of any activity which might even appear to be political. A third form of group has little interest in influencing government other than for help in building and maintaining playing fields.

Some groups in the rural areas do constitute the beginnings of a civil society. There are a few farmers' groups, some women's organizations, and a wide array of churches. While these groups are all bottom-up entities in the sense that they are launched and sustained by members of the local population, most of them are hesitant to become involved in 'politics' for one reason or another. Some lack the organizational capacity to mobilize their members. Others find it more expedient to focus on obtaining funds from the government for public sector activities (e.g. educating their members about social problems such as AIDS). To get involved in election politics could easily jeopardize this source of income in Botswana.

The result of the relatively minimal level of civil society development is that issues of politics and government tend to be discussed primarily by the political parties, by the government-controlled media, and by the private newspapers. Since newspapers are not a significant source of information in the rural areas, this means that most people in these areas rely primarily on the political parties. The result is that in Botswana, there is no filter or check to help citizens understand the differences, let alone the implications, of particular policy choices.

Voters have only one option in terms of making their choice: the communal or ethnic interpretation.

An examination of Bushman political actions in the period from the 1970s through the early 1990s reveals that they were more than willing to stand up for their rights as Bushmen and push for changes in the ways that they were treated. One of the best examples of such efforts relates to the reaction to the Botswana government's land and livestock development policies.

Since Botswana became independent in 1966, Bushmen land rights were threatened by a new land law and a series of large-scale livestock development projects. The Tribal Land Act of 1968 transferred the land allocation powers of the traditional authorities to tribal land boards. The act basically mandated the boards to allocate land to 'tribesmen' for residential, arable, and grazing purposes. The right of Bushmen to their traditional foraging areas was not specified in the Act nor in any subsequent legislation. The Tribal Land Act was interpreted by some to exclude Bushmen from even making applications for land since they were not seen as 'tribesmen.'

A land rights movement began among Bushmen in the 1970s, at about the same time as the Tribal Grazing Land Policy was announced. This policy was aimed at promoting conservation, raising incomes, and bringing about commercialization of the livestock industry (Republic of Botswana 1975). It resulted in the zoning of land into commercial ranches, communal grazing areas, and Wildlife Management Areas. The commercial ranches were leased out to individuals and small groups, some of whom required the Bushmen residents to vacate the land. Dispossession occurred in a number of parts of Botswana, but relatively little compensation was paid to Bushmen who lost assets.

Bushmen in a number of commercial and communal areas in Botswana protested the treatment that they received. Some of them took their complaints to the district councils or appealed against land allocation decisions to the land boards. Others talked to the media, arguing vociferously that they were not being treated fairly.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Bushmen communities asked for help from

anthropologists and others in representing their interests. Some of them requested that a case be brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) so that Botswana would be required to provide just compensation for losses incurred by the establishment of freehold and leasehold land, national parks, and game reserves. This tactic which was not pursued, was seen as a kind of fallback strategy.

River Bushmen in the Okavango Delta joined in protests against the Southern Okavango Integrated Water Development Project in 1989-90, arguing that water development would have harmful effects on wild resources and floodplain agriculture. These efforts resulted in the government putting the project on hold in 1991.

By the 1990s, a sizable number of Bushmen communities had formed their own self-help organizations. The community of D'kar in Ghanzi District formed an organization known as Kuru, a multi-purpose development organization which had its own horticultural and marketing projects. A women's group at the Bushmen settlement of East Hanahai in Ghanzi District started a small-scale agricultural and agroforestry project. There were also a number of communities such as Kedia and Mabutsane where community-based wildlife utilization projects were established.

Innovative rural development activities were initiated in a number of rural communities. At New Xanagas, Chobokwane, and D'Kar in western Botswana, local people are raising cochineal, a small insect used in the manufacture of carmine dye, a food colouring agent. In order to raise cochineal, people have had to plant and care for prickly pear, the plant upon which it feeds. Communities in Kgalegadi, Kweneg, and Ghanzi Districts got involved in the exploitation of grapple plant (*Devil's Claw*, *Harpagophytum procumbens*), a medicinal plant which is used in a kind of tea or in pill form, particularly in Europe. Members of several communities engaged in the cultivation and exploitation of morama (*Tylosema esculentum*), a highly nutritious bean rich in oils and protein. In the Okavango Delta region, women engaged in basket manufacture began trying to conserve palms used in the making of

the baskets, and in several places, propagation efforts were undertaken. All of these activities were based in part on the principles of self-help and community-oriented resource management.

The number of service-providing non-government organizations (NGOs) working with both rural and urban Bushmen has increased substantially over the past several years. Some NGOs such as Kuru, Thusano Lefatsheng, and Permaculture assisted local communities in projects ranging from farming to agroforestry and from ecotourism to rural industries. Others, such as the Kalahari Peoples Fund (KPF) and the Kalahari Support Group (KSG) have provided various kinds of assistance to Bushmen, ranging from small grants for community projects to technical advice to community organizations. These programs have enabled a number of people to expand their incomes and increase their involvement in self-help activities.

The creation of the Nyae Farmers Cooperative (NNFC) in Namibia provided the Bushmen in Botswana with an opportunity to watch the evolution of an organization that was aimed at promoting development and ensuring cooperation among a sizable number of Bushman communities. The NNFC, established in 1986, is a multipurpose organization engaged in a wide array of development and political activities ranging from education to running a mobile shop and from land use planning to water provision.

Like all organizations, the farmers cooperative has faced problems, some of them due to high expectations from those in the donor community and the Namibian government, who anticipated that the Ju/'hoansi would make a quick transition to representational leadership and enhanced institutional development capacity. The establishment of a governance system and community management in the Nyae Nyae region was a lengthy and complex process. There was a certain amount of confusion among the community leadership and the farmers cooperative and between newly elected leaders and their constituencies (Bieseke 1994). In spite of these difficulties, the cooperative has been relatively successful in establishing claims over Eastern Bushmanland

and in laying out ground rules for resource management.

Another organization representing Bushman peoples in Botswana is First People of the Kalahari. Founded in 1992, First People has sought to promote the interests of the *N/oakhwe*, a general term for Bushmen (which means, literally, the 'Red People'). Several representatives from First People met with the government of Botswana in early 1993 to outline what they and their constituents felt were important issues, including land rights and the right to education in mother tongue languages. First People of the Kalahari has also assisted in development activities, networking and information dissemination, and community organizing at the local and national levels in Botswana. This organization is a multi-ethnic one, with representatives from a number of different Bushman groups involved, including *Nharo*, *G/anakwe*, *G/wikwe*, and *Ju/'hoansi*.

Representatives of the various Bushman organizations have met at national and international conferences, including ones sponsored by the Namibian government in June, 1992 and by the Botswana governments in October, 1993. Bushmen also attended the international congresses and symposia, including one on 'Voices of the Earth: Indigenous Peoples, New Partners, The Right to Self-Determination in Practice,' sponsored by the Dutch Center for Indigenous Peoples, and held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (November 10-11, 1993) and the another on 'The Question of Indigenous Peoples in Africa' sponsored by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the Centre for Development Research (CDR) and held at Tune Landboskole, Greve, Denmark (June 1-3, 1993) (see Veber et al 1993; van der Vlist 1994). Bushmen also met at national workshops both in Namibia and Botswana, as was the case when the Ju/'hoansi attended the National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question held in Windhoek in June-July, 1991.

Efforts were made by NGOs, donor agencies, and Bushman communities to bring various indigenous groups together, as occurred when Australian Aborigines, Saami, and Ju/'hoansi met in Namibia from November 14 to 28, 1993. Representatives of Bushman support or-

ganizations (some of which are listed in the Table) came together at conferences in Botswana and South Africa in 1993 and 1994. In July, 1994, representatives of Kuru and First People of the Kalahari attended the annual meetings of the Working Group in Indigenous Populations (WGIP) of the United Nations. The various meetings and activities have provided not only useful experience and networking opportunities, but they have also enabled Botswana

projects involving Bushmen in Botswana indicated that the degree to which local people were able to plan and direct project activities tended to be relatively limited. The creation of active partnerships between local communities and agencies involved in project design and implementation is something that will require much more work. In many cases, the project management and staff holds most of the power and resources, while local people ha-

local community organizations, as is being done in some areas in southern Africa, will enable people to learn further lessons about innovative strategies being employed as well as pitfalls that they should be aware of.

Conclusions

Bushmen have participated in political activities in Botswana since the time of independence. A significant number of



Bushmen to gain significant insights into the array of actions and policies of government, donors, and NGOs well as other indigenous peoples involved in human rights and development promotion efforts.

Evaluations of the Remote Area Development Program and some of the

ve to depend on them for assistance.

Bushmen have called for the formation of community-project committees, expanded training, and greater efforts to strengthen leadership and local institutions. They have sought funding that would be controlled by them rather than by outside agencies. Networking among

the Bushmen interviewed in Botswana over the past twenty years said that they had voted. A few of them admitted that they often voted for the people for whom they worked or ones that their employers recommended. There were also cases in which people running for Parliament or district councils sometimes drove out to

their cattle posts in large trucks and brought people in to the polling places. There were reports in 1984 that government vehicles were being used to take people to polling places. In 1989, farmers told their workers that they had to vote for certain parties. A number of Bushmen said that they usually agreed to do as their employers wished, but when they got to the polling stations they voted the way that they wanted to.

In many ways, 1989 was a turning point

how effective they were in shaping public policy, there is no question that to many Bushmen, their success in having their own people elected to district-level political bodies was significant.

Grassroots politics in rural Botswana have chanced little during thirty years of elections. Adult males from the various local communities remain in power. The only option for the young, women, and minorities if they desire to become involved in the change which

politics is too strong; civil society is too weak; and the opposition remains unconcerned.

There are only two ways in which this situation can change. First, opposition parties such as the Botswana National Front (BNF) could develop a more rural-oriented approach. This would involve appeals to specific ethnic areas in terms of issues which are crucial to them. In the last election, such an approach worked very well in the district of Ghanzi. For



photos: Arthur Krasilnikoff

for the Bushmen from the standpoint of political participation. Several Bushmen ran for either parliament or for district councils. In Ghanzi District, which has a population made up of a large proportion (43%) of remote area dwellers, three Bushmen were elected to district council positions in 1989. While it is uncertain as to

is taking place is to leave for the towns and cities. There they may also take part in grassroots politics by becoming a part of emerging civil society groups and a growing opposition party. There is little hope that elections will change things, even though Botswana has a rural majority. the power of communal

the first time the BNF swept the council elections (seven seats) in the Bushman areas. The Party did so by emphasizing exploitation of these peoples by local ranchers and government officials. To emphasize this policy commitment, the party fielded a complete slate of Bushman candidates for these constituencies,

something it had never done before.

Second, the emergence of a viable civil society in the rural areas could undermine the impact of ethnicity on voter decision making. For this to happen, citizens groups must be formed which are the creatures of their members and not entities sustained by foreign aid or government subsidies. This will be a difficult task. Few in the rural areas have the funds which are required to sustain such groups or the skills to organize them. Moreover, those which are organized tend to have few connections with similar groups in other parts of the country (Botswana being the size of Texas, it is not easy to form national organizations because of the great distances which must be travelled by leaders).

The most promising area of civil society development in rural areas is among women. There are already three national women's organizations which have chapters all over the country: the Botswana Council of Women (BCW), The Red Cross and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). A fourth, which is more radical, Emang Basadi, is starting to establish rural chapters. In the last election, the four groups joined together for the first time to put forward a 'women's manifesto' which challenged the political parties to address a wide

range of women's issues. Both major parties responded by including a section on women in their own manifestos. Local women's organizations have been formed in a number of Bushman communities, and representatives of these groups have taken part in district-level and national meetings.

It is possible that other civil society groups may emerge in the rural areas. There are some indications that farmers' groups are beginning to mobilize. However, a critical problem with both women's groups and farmers is that most of their funding is coming from foreign organizations. Without this funding, for instance, Botswana's women's groups could not have done the research and writing necessary to publish their manifesto. Thus, the nascent civil society in rural Botswana could easily deflate if this support disappears.

In summary, grassroots politics in Botswana's rural areas continues much as it always has. There are signs of nascent change among minority communities. Their concern is that real political change will come only with urbanization. If this is indeed the case, the rural population will have no political future, in spite of the fact that Botswana continues to be democratic.

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Name of Organization	Date of Founding	Objectives and Activities
Bagane Development Program	1990	multipurpose development work in western Caprivi, Namibia
First People of the Kalahari	1992	promoting interests of Kalahari peoples, work with N!oakwe communities, information dissemination
Kagga Kamma	1991	an ecotourism program in the Cedarberg Mountains, Cape, South Africa, where 40 Bushmen obtain income and have education and training opportunities
Kalahari Peoples Fund	1973	technical assistance, grants, education, development research, provision of advisors
Kalahari Support Group	1991	networking, assistance in provision of development information, advisory work with Kalahari communities
Kuru Development Trust	1988	multipurpose development, including human resources and arts and crafts work, technical assistance
Nyae Nyae Development Foundation (NNDFN)	1986	generalized development including agriculture and income generation, health, education, technical aid, leadership training
!Xuu y Khwe Trust	1993	assistance to !Kung, !Xuu (Vasakela) and Khwe who were resettled in the Schmidtsdrift area, South Africa; projects include a craft-makers cooperative, education, arts projects, work on income generation and a hunters' unit

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SRI LANKA

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND SELF-DETERMINATION

A Case Study of the Wanniya-laeto (Veddahs)

by Wiveka Stegeborn

At the stroke of midnight on November 9, 1983 Sri Lanka established a new national park, thereby simultaneously transforming the only remaining group of hunters and gatherers into poachers. With their traditional forest set aside as a national park the Wanniya-laeto people lost all access to their traditional livelihood. This article will examine the 2500 year old subcontinental Indian colonial pattern of perpetual disregard for Sri Lanka's aboriginal people's right to self-determination. It considers the history and life-ways of the Wanniya-laeto (Veddah) people in the face of this cultural devaluation and their right to land and ethnicity based both on the virtue of having occupied the island from 'time immemorial', and on international and on human rights covenants ratified by Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka stands today at a pivotal moment in its constitutional history. At the time of writing this paper a proposal for a new constitution is being drafted in Sri Lanka. It was presented to the Sri Lankan parliament on July 15, 1995. It is pivotal because perhaps this time the indigenous people of that country may be recognized. This new standing in law would offer unique opportunity to the First People of the nation which few native peoples have ever had, a dream held through many generations from the Americas in the west, to Australia and New Zealand in the east.

Facts and Figures

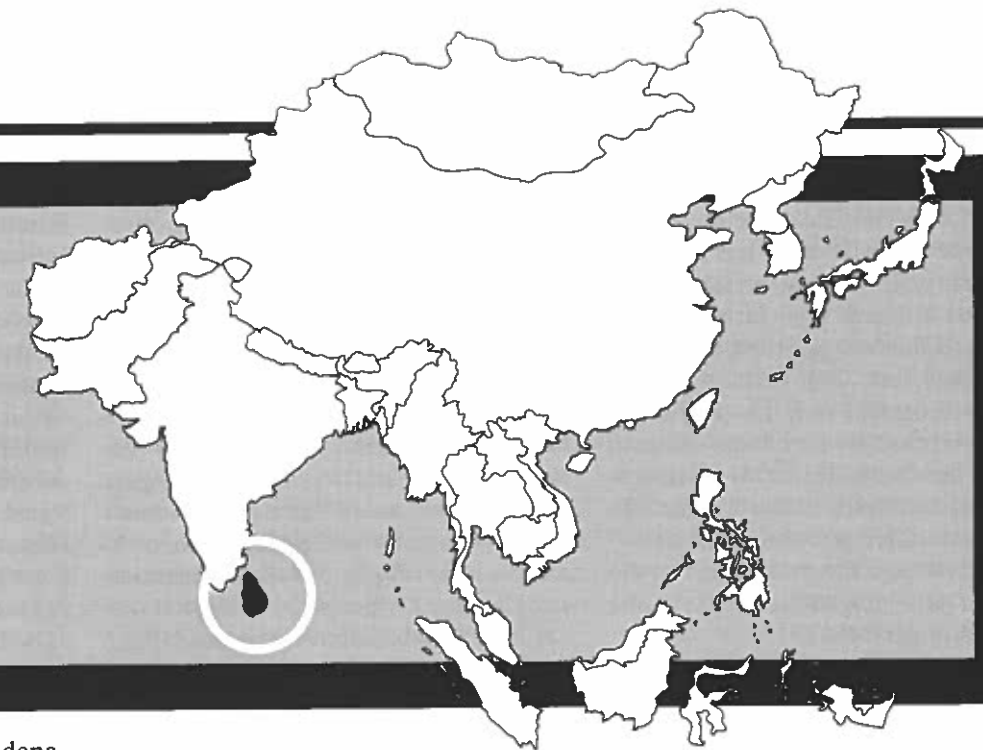
Sri Lanka is an island approximately seventeen miles south-east of India. Its total population exceeds 18 million people. The two major cultural groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, both migrated there from India 2500 years ago. The Sinhalese constitute 74 per cent of the total population and the Tamils, 18.2 per cent. Seven per cent are 'Moors', descendants of Arabic traders. The remaining 0.7 per cent are 'Burghers' (Metis) Malays, and 'others' (Whitaker's Almanack 1995:1019). Two thousand persons categorized as 'others' are Wanniya-laeto, who are the aboriginal inhabitants of the island (Burger 1990:184).

This now vanishing population of Wanniya-laeto lives in Uva Province in Sri Lanka's Dry Zone, located east of the central mountain massif. Their land borders the Eastern Province, where the Sinhalese-Tamil civil war is raging. The towns closest to the Wanniya-laeto hamlets are Maha Oya to the east and Mahiyangana to the west. Along the Maha Oya road, thirteen miles from Mahiyangana, is the village of Dambana. The landscape of Wanniya-laeto country is green, crossed by meandering rivers and streams and punctuated by lakes. Thick tropical forest covers the high mountains and lowlands, interspersed with rocky hills that thrust above the trees. Tall grasses predominate close to the east coast, where the land is drier, flatter, and more open.

Names and Families

The forest and the forest people are so interrelated that even their names are intertwined. 'Wanni' means forest (Sugathapala de Silva 1972: 2-27) and the Wanniya-laeto are the ones who live in it, the 'forest-dwellers' (Sugathapala de Silva 1972:2). The Wanniya-laeto regard themselves as creatures of the forest who share a complex moral universe of fellow visible and invisible beings in an environment where everything is alive. Neighbours include squirrels, scorpions, pangolins, bees and deer, along with the great hunting spirits and the deceased relatives of the Wanniya-laeto. They believe that their dead live in another dimension, yet are always with them. For the Wanniya-laeto, no one really dies until those who knew and loved him/her are also dead. On a mountain in the forest, the Wanniya-laeto believe, their ancestor spirits continue to live as they did in real life. This accounts for the husks and debris seen dancing down the creeks from villages where no humans live.

Like many native people, the Wanniya-laeto do not have a collective term for all the indigenous people of Sri Lanka. Rather, they take their names from the particular surroundings where they usually live, such as the Wanniya-laeto who dwell in the tropical dry zone *wanni*. Within this category, they identify themselves by specific family/place names. For example, the group that stays by the open grasslands or savannas are the Savanna people (Tale Warige) and those who live by the big nabudu, embille and kiribo



trees are naturally called the Nabudena, Embille and Kiribo people. The family/place name traditionally was transferred from mother to child but because of new government regulations regarding marriage, this practice changed in the late 1980s. In this article the term 'group' is used to indicate that a family/place name can identify not only one extended family that lived at or frequented a particular place, but also any kin or friends who joined them. Family/place names are almost always terms of reference, used by others for individual Wanniya-laeto. The Wanniya-laeto themselves do not use their family/place names in everyday life. Sometimes they have to think through their genealogies to be able to tell to which group they belong.

Prehistory

Sri Lanka is sometimes referred to as 'The Tear Drop of India' If that tear was shed by anyone, it was surely by the forest-dwelling Veddahs, or Wanniya-laeto [wanniya-läätö] as they call themselves. They have occupied the island for over 28,500 years (Deraniyagala 1992:323) but are not formally recognized by the Sri Lankan government as a distinct, defined, indigenous minority. So deliberate is this omission that archaeological and paleontological taxonomy sometimes were modified to suit the political history of Sri Lanka. In one instance, a supraorbital ridge from a human skull was found associated with hippopotamus fossils close to Ratnapura town in southwestern Sri Lanka. According to archae-

ologist Wickramapathirana (1984), this bone dated back to the Middle Pleistocene (125,000-750,000 B.P. Wickramapathirana believes that these ancient finds are probably ancestral to the modern Wanniya-laeto, who have continuously occupied caves in this region ever since the Palaeolithic Period. The Palaeolithic archaeological material culture is similar to that of the historic Wanniya-laeto. This attribution conflicts with that of P. Deraniyagala, a Sinhalese national and former director of the National Historical Museum of Colombo. To bolster the Indo-Aryan (Sinhalese) claim to antiquity on Sri Lanka, Deraniyagala named the fossil supraorbital ridge 'Homo Sinhalayus' (sic. Deraniyagala in Wickramapathirana 1984: 63), and proclaimed that the Sinhalese were on the island even before they appeared in northern India, although the Indo-Aryan (Sinhalese) and subsequent Dravidian (Tamil) migrations to the island are known to be comparatively late, c. 2500 B.P.

The history of Sri Lanka bears many similarities to that of the Americas and Australia. The difference is in the nationality of the colonizers. The contrast between five hundred years of European presence in the New World with the conservative estimate of twelve thousand years of native occupation is not presented in a balanced picture of the past in that historic literature (Lions et al 1992). The bulk of historic accounts overwhelmingly favours those who held the pen. This also holds true for Sri Lanka

and especially so for a non-literate society such as the Wanniya-laeto. As historian Hellmann-Rajanayagam observes in an article reflecting on the Tamil past:

Whoever possesses history possesses the moral high ground, and possession of history means possession of power and political initiative (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1990:120).

The Wanniya-laeto people do not record their history in writing. It is rather found in their oral traditions, their way of life and in their religion. Similar to the original populations of North America and Australia, they left few tangible traces of their presence. They lay, as the North American Indians say: 'softly on the earth.'

Mytho-Legendary History

The written history of Sri Lanka is based on the Sinhalese Buddhist trilogy, *Dipavamsa*, *Mahavamsa* and *Culavamsa*. According to the outlanders, the first humans on the island were themselves. Not coincidentally, the *Mahavamsa* describes their arrival as taking place at the precise moment that the Buddha took his last breath on earth (Geiger 1950). In Nirvana he asked the Hindu God Indra to protect the newcomers because the Buddha wished to establish his religion on the island. The Sinhalese colonizers needed protection because the island was possessed by 'demons' and 'evil spirits' which the conquerors fought fiercely. Having vanquished these 'evil spirits' Vijaya, the leaders of the group, took a

'demon' princess as his wife. With her influence he was able to make himself master of the island. Then, the story goes, he set aside this wife and their two children for a princess from South India more suitable to his rank. The former queen and the two children returned to her 'demon' people, but they accused her of treachery and killed her. The frightened children were advised by their uncle to flee into the forest. In the *Mahavamsa*, the legend continues that when the siblings became adults, they married one another and became the progenitors of the 'Veddahs', the indigenous people of the country (Geiger 1950).

Unfortunately for the island people, the land to which the North Indians came was Sri Lanka. The invasion was conducted by conquest and settlement. Retroactively the mytho-legendary historic scriptures rationalize this action by describing the island as vacant because its inhabitants did not meet their standards. Initially the standard applied was ecclesiastical (ibid). They were 'heathens'. The indigenous population was not Buddhist; hence, they were relegated to a non-Buddhist sphere, to the realm of demons and evil spirits (*Mahavamsa*). Since they were not people, they need not be treated as such. Successively, the standard shifted to a secular examination into the degree of 'civilization' possessed by the indigenous population. Obviously, the colonizers would not find that type of polity among the forest-dwelling island people. 'Civilization' is based on the concept of a city culture, a way of life not desired by the Wanniya-laeto. Since the Sinhalese people came from a socio-political structure very different from the non-stratified, egalitarian society of the Lankan island people, the latter were judged wanting accordance with the former's measure.

Most of the people who accompanied Vijaya were slaves. Their voyage started from the capital of Bengal (Vanga), a feudal kingdom with a centralized political structure. It was based on a Pre-Buddhist hierarchical caste system built on the stratification of the four *Varnas* in the Hindu religion. The rulers could donate or sell land to temples and private individuals, and were permitted to accumulate slaves (*Mahavamsa*). The hierarchy was reflected in the architecture: a

wattle and daub house for the farmer, and a palace for the king. Since the nature of the Wanniya-laeto was to 'live softly on the earth', they had no desire to dominate nature. Accordingly, the island was untouched by aqueducts, viaducts, palaces and cities, projects which require hierarchically organized societies. Incapable of understanding the relationship between the island people and the island, and perhaps not caring to try, the newcomers, once slaves themselves, eventually became their own lords and in turn subjugated the indigenous people. The former slaves believed the island people were inferior because there were no visible signs of accumulation of wealth, a measure of human validity and power so fundamental to the caste system. This hegemonistic concept still prevails in the pro-economic development policy of present day Sri Lanka.

The moral justification for the invasion is anchored in the religious scriptures, those mytho-legendary chronicles so integrated within Sri Lanka, that even the indigenous people believe in them. In the course of time the invaders' clan name was extended to designate all the inhabitants of Sri Lanka, the 'Island of the Sihalas', *Sihala-dipa* (Geiger 1960). The lion is now the official symbol of the country. It represents the Sinhalese Lion People ('Sinha' means lion in Sanskrit). It is the totemic symbol and the clan name of the invaders. The Wanniya-laeto withdrew into the dense tropical forests of the eastern and southern coasts of the island (Tennent 1860).

Whatever may have been Vijaya's first intentions, his subsequent policy was rather that of an agriculturalist than a Buddhist apostle. Buddhism was only adopted in Sri Lanka about two hundred years after Vijaya's arrival. Since the colonizers arrogated to themselves the power of defining the aborigines' identity relegating them to the realm of demons and evil spirits, there were no written treaties nor cession of land. The Wanniya-laeto people's own ways of social, economic, and political organization were not recognized by the new potentates. On the contrary, the feudal lords from Bengal (Geiger 1950) found no difficulty in convincing themselves of their own superiority and right to rule because they brought 'civilization' and Buddhism to

Sri Lanka. The island people's difference, labelled as inferiority, provided the justification for treating them as if they did not exist.

The island of Ceylon was renowned early in history for its many savory spices. A number of documents from different countries recorded encounters with the original people of the spice island. Occasionally a type of barter called 'silent trade' (Spittel 1957) occurred between the forest people and the foreign envoys. Fa Hian, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who lived in Sri Lanka in the fourth century A.D. recorded this practice as far back as 337-422 A.D. (Beal 1968). In the eleventh century, the Arabic geographer Alberini described the same silent trade, this time with the 'savage *Ginn*' (Spittel 1957). This barter is an indirect way of exchanging goods. The Wanniya-laeto spotted the foreign ships from afar, accumulated jungle produce (honey, wild meats, yams, fruits, cinnamon bark, peppers, nuts, etc.) approached the beach near the ship anchored at night, and left the jungle produce behind at a visible place. In exchange, the foreign visitors left merchandise for their shy partners to pick up later. The nature of this trade could be interpreted as wariness by the indigenous people based on the negative experience of the Indian incursion. In any case it certainly demonstrates the wish to maintain their integrity and control contact with outsiders.

On other occasions, the hunters and gatherers were used as bowmen in the forefront of foreign armies. One instance was documented by the Englishman Robert Knox in 1658, when the Sinhalese allied themselves with the Portuguese to fight the Dutch:

And with their Bows and Arrows [the Wanniya-laeto] did as good service as any of the rest but afterwards when they returned home again, they removed farther in the woods, and would be seen no more, for fear of being afterwards pressed again to serve the King (Knox 1681:62).

The eyewitness account 'pressed again to serve the King' indicates the recruitment was not voluntary. That the relationship between the colonialists and their subjects was not always as benevolent as

sometimes depicted in the colonial records is revealed in a more recent description by Uru Warige Tissahamy, a Wanniya-laeto representative and spokesman for his aboriginal people.

Some time ago, the Wanniya-laeto were required every year to bring certain quotas of honey and meat to the Kandyan king. No matter how difficult it was to collect, and how hard their own lives were, the king had to have his measure. The Wanniya-laeto were expected to bring to the king's vassals huge hollowed out pumpkins full of honey. The almost one hundred year old chieftain added: 'And after we had complied, we returned home (to the forest) to live in peace and without impediments from the outside' (Tissahamy, pers. com. 1978). Use of the 'silent trade' from nearly two thousand years ago to recent times demonstrates the Wanniya-laeto wish to maintain their cultural integrity, and their ex-

PLICIT desire for non-interference as expressed by Fa Hian, Alberini, Knox and U.W. Tissahamy.

British Colonization and Independence 1815-1948

After 1815, Great Britain claimed that the island and Ceylon immediately was annexed under English Common Law. The concept of land ownership and property rights changed from the petty kingdoms of the Sinhalese and Tamils to the law of the English Crown which now was the 'original owner' of all lands. A central concept in English property law is that of the right to exclude others from entering onto one's land (Levin 1993), an incomprehensible thought for a hunting and gathering forest-dweller.

After achieving independence for Sri Lanka in 1948, the dominant Sinhalese population formed the new government and wrote its constitution. The country

was divided into districts and representatives were elected based on the size, demography and district (Constitution 1972 § 78). Buddhism became the official religion, Sinhalese, the official language, and Tamil was *allowed* in accordance with special provisions (Ibid. §6, §7 and §8 [1]). Nowhere was there a mention of the First People of the Nation. The concept did not exist. A fundamental assumption underpinning the new law that governed the hosts of the country (without their consent) is that the State is an uncontested given. Earlier rule was justified by Indo-Aryan 'supremacy' and the indigenous people's lack of 'civilization'.

Parliament possesses the ultimate law-making authority over all citizens. The new constitution would carry over the powers, privileges, duties and obligation 'exercised or exercisable' by:

...Elizabeth the Second the Queen of Ceylon and of Her other Realms and



photo: Wiveka Stegeborn

Territories, Head of the Commonwealth as were in existence immediately prior to the Constitution coming into operation (Constitution of Sri Lanka 1972:7 §13.)

Thus nothing much changed from the standpoint of the native people. The Crown was formerly the original possessor and therefore owner of the Wanniya-laeto land, over which the State now asserted territorial sovereignty. Land could be bartered, sold or given by the State to its subjects. Since the original island people were not part of the market economy, they could not secure their land by purchase. The already extinguished ancestral land of the island people was given away without their consent or payment of compensation to them, and the State continues giving unsundered land to itself, i.e. the State Timber Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and forests, Department of Wildlife Conservation or to private entrepreneurs. Since January 1993, the entire country has been declared a Free Trade Zone (EIU 1992). Foreign investors are welcome to buy former British tea plantations, land, forests or stretches of beach for 'development'.

Eventually, the Constitution of May 1972 was repealed, and a new Constitution of 1978, went into effect in February that year. The name of the state was changed from the Republic of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. A strong proclivity for economic development emerged. To underline the importance of 'bringing up' Sri Lanka to a competitive level with other industrialized nations, the 1978 Constitution emphasized its purpose under Chapter VI:§27:

- (1) The Directive Principles of State Policy herein contained shall guide Parliament, the President and the Cabinet of Ministers in...
- (d) the rapid development of the whole country by means of public and private economic activity and by laws prescribing such planning and controls as may be expedient for directing and coordinating such public and private economic activity towards social objectives and the public weal... (Cooray 1989).

Sri Lanka's Policy and the Wanniya-laeto

Sri Lanka's first official development policy was that the traditional Wanniya-laeto mode of life must go, and the government was ready to take all steps necessary to expedite the process (Dharmadasa 1990). This drastic measure was deemed necessary because there was a severe imbalance between the amount of land available for agriculture and the number of people it had to support. The staple food of both Sinhalese and Tamils is rice, a labour-intensive crop. As in most agricultural societies, the more children, the more free labourers. Thus the bigger the family, the larger the fields. As of 1994, 58.1 per cent of the population is between the ages of fifteen to fifty-nine. A major portion of those are of reproductive age. 35.3 per cent are fifteen years old and below. The population density in Sri Lanka is presently 695 persons per sq. mile (World Almanac 1994:810).

To provide for the huge, young population, after independence Sri Lanka decided to develop its industry and commerce, hoping to rival Singapore as a world trading centre. There was simply no interest in a hunting and gathering people (Keuneman 1983:60). Thus, despite hundreds of years of life under various colonizing nations, it is particularly in the twentieth century that the Wanniya-laeto have been displaced from their equatorial forest. Between 1951 and 1955, Sri Lanka instituted the Gal Oya Scheme, which drastically affected the Wanniya-laeto in the eastern part of the island (Dharmadasa 1990). The Gal Oya Scheme built the country's largest reservoir (at Inginiyagala) and inundated some of the Wanniya-laeto's best hunting and food gathering areas along with several of their favourite cave dwellings. The Wanniya-laeto, primarily foragers who lived off the natural produce of their lowland monsoon forest supplemented by swidden and fallow-raised crops, were put under a government resettlement scheme to totally assimilate with agriculturalists (ibid). The government evacuated several Wanniya-laeto settlements, forcing them to yield to the socio-economic needs of the majority of the population.

One step taken by the Sri Lankan government to expedite the 'development' process was to establish the 'Backward Communities Welfare Board' which focused on the Wanniya-laeto of the Eastern and Uva provinces. This board facilitated the government's plan to move the Wanniya-laeto to make way for the Sinhalese and Tamil people, who needed more rice-paddy land. The government argued that the hunters and gatherers should change their ways, that the new life would be better. The Wanniya-laeto would benefit from living in permanent settlements and becoming agriculturalists. Despite all the persuasive arguments, however, the Wanniya-laeto hunters and gatherers followed their old strategy and retreated farther into the forest.

Even this strong approach did not satisfy some powerful politicians. As early as the 1950s, there were critics of the government's policies toward the Wanniya-laeto who felt that assimilation did not go far enough. In 1951, an opposition member of Parliament inquired whether the government was trying to keep the Wanniya-laeto as 'anthropological curiosities' (Dharmadasa 1990). At that time, Minister of Finance J.R. Jayawardene, displayed an extremely negative bias toward the Wanniya-laeto when he replied that the aim of the government was to:

lead them away from the hunter stage to the agricultural stage. We want to bring about a stage when the backwardness, the primitiveness of the Vedda... will disappear... and make them full citizens of Lanka (Ibid.).

Twenty five years later, this same man became the President of the country and the leader of the United National Party (UNP). He enjoyed unlimited executive power as head of state, head of government and head of the armed forces. In the Social Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, he could dissolve the Parliament at will (EIU 1994:2). His attitude toward the Wanniya-laeto would continue to play a major role in Sri Lanka's desire for 'progress'.

The constitutional ideology then and now greatly devalues the suggestion of an aboriginal nationality. President Jayawardene espouses a universalistic ide-

ology which in fact masks the assumption about the moral legitimacy of his ethnic majority group's occupation of Sri Lanka. It may be called colonial and/or racist, but it does not allow consociate thinking. Consociate thinking originates from the concept of being equal but not the same. Socio-politically this idea refers to self-determination and sovereignty over one's own nation, meaning ethnic group, partaking with other ethnic nations on an equal footing within the State. Michael Levin's interpretations of 'ethnicity' and 'aboriginality' are useful here:

Ethnic identity is the most widely used basis for legitimacy not only for minorities, but also for majority groups sharing a common culture. An ethnic group that is a majority may attempt to imprint its culture on the state.

Aboriginality is a more refined claim to distinctiveness based on historical experience. It emphasizes status as the original occupants of a place, adding depth to the idea of cultural differences (Levin 1993: 4).

Whereas previous government policies distanced Sri Lanka from economic aid provided by the West, when the United National Party came into power in 1977, foreign investors were invited to participate in its push toward economic recovery.

The government concentrated its efforts on turning Sri Lanka into an industrially developed country and, with Singapore as its model, South Asia's financial centre. To attract foreign investors, the government created a Free Trade Zone in the outskirts of the capital, Colombo. Foreign companies were offered a monopoly on duty-free imports of raw materials, plus cheap labour and tax exemptions. Banks opened; hotels and shopping mall structures rose to the sky.

To help achieve the goal of independence from the importation of rice, Sri Lanka needed foreign currency. By 1982, about 74 per cent of Sri Lanka's budget was financed with foreign assistance (Keuneman 1983:60). Sri Lanka received aid from almost every country in the West, and Japan. Great sums of the foreign

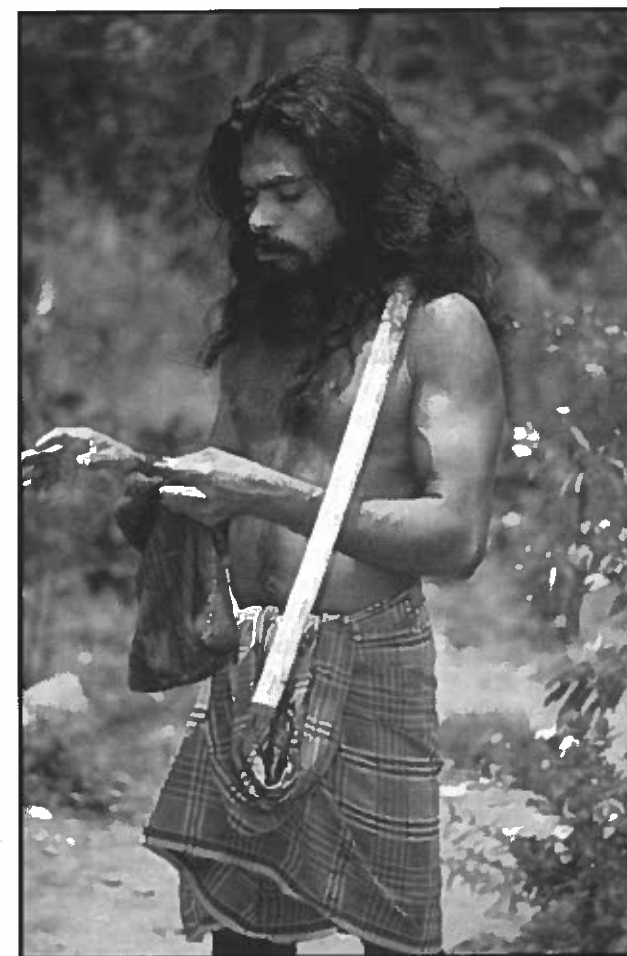


photo: Wiveka Stegeborn

About 640,000 acres of formerly 'undeveloped' land would be opened for cultivation. The project would provide new agricultural lands and homesteads for 140,000 families (Keuneman 1983: 64).

Modern Sri Lankan Environmental Policies and Politics

After attaining independence on December 14, 1956, Sri Lanka also joined the United Nations and its specialized agencies (Osmanczyk 1990:870). One very important issue advanced in 1982, by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was the *World Charter for Nature*. The charter is especially relevant for the Wanniya-laeto because its aim was to establish a worldwide network of protected ecosystems by setting aside national parks and reserves for endangered species, and for wildlife and genetic resources (IUCN 1975a:21). It was hoped that each country in the world would adopt its own National Conservation Strategy to include recognition of the rights of indigenous people to live on their ancestral lands. According to the principles of the World Charter, governments were to maintain and encourage traditional methods of living, and educational systems were to be oriented toward environmental and ecological principles based on indigenous peoples' knowledge. Some of the most critical

points of the recommendations state:

(3) That governments devise means by which indigenous people may bring their lands into conservation areas without relinquishing their ownership, use or tenure rights;

(4) That the governments of countries still inhabited by people belonging to separate indigenous cultures recognize the rights of these people to live on the lands they have traditionally occupied, and take account of their viewpoints;

(5) That in the creation of national parks or reserves indigenous peoples should not normally be displaced from their traditional lands, nor should such reserves anywhere be proclaimed without adequate consultation with the indigenous peoples most likely to be directly affected by such proclamation (IUCN 1975b:2).

In 1980, Sri Lanka's President requested assistance from the UNEP in developing a plan to establish and maintain a system of national parks. By accepting financial and professional assistance from the UN's World Conservation Strategy, Sri Lanka agreed to the principles of the World Charter for Nature and founded its *National Conservation Strategy (NCS)* (IUCN 1982:14). The Maduru Oya National Park was set up as part of this conservation strategy, but as events subsequently demonstrated, the Charter's guidelines did not accord with the NCS of Sri Lanka. The Maduru Oya National Park is a case in point.

The Maduru Oya National Park

On the east side of the country, between the central mountain chain and the sea where none of the colonizing powers had found it worthwhile to exploit the land for coffee, tea or rubber, the last remnants of the Wanniya-laeto lived in their traditional way as late as 1983. They sustained their basic needs by hunting and gathering supplemented by swidden and fallow cultivations. The northern part of their territory was drained by the Maduru Oya River and in the south by the Ulhitiya Oya River and the slowly flowing Mahaweli Ganga. With the establishment of the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project, and the proposed Maduru Oya National Park, the foragers were threatened from two sides.

On November 9, 1983, the remaining homeland of the Wanniya-laeto, comprising about 51,468 hectares, was designated a combined 'catchment area' and a Forest and Wildlife Reserve. It is called the Maduru Oya National Park and is administered by the Mahaweli Environmental Project. The Department of Wildlife Conservation marked off the land. Barriers, guards and outposts were stationed along the borders. No one was allowed to enter the park without a writ-

ten permit from the Wildlife Department in Colombo, on the other side of the country. Most Wanniya-laeto cannot read and write and from one day to the next their ancient life way became criminal in the eyes of the law. Yesterday's hunters and gatherers became today's poachers. As the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme proceeded, the old Wanniya-laeto country was segmented into systems, using alphabetic designations. Half the forest belonged to System B (north of Maduru Oya) and the southwestern half to System C. The forests were logged and the last hunting grounds and traditional honey bee sites were levelled by bulldozers. The Wanniya-laeto country underwent dramatic change into vast areas of rice, paddy cultivation, towns, villages, highways and infrastructure. Thousands of settlers poured into the area. Eleven thousand hectares of hunting ground were inundated. Two small villages situated close to a dam (Kandeganville and Kaeragoda) were threatened with flooding during the monsoon rains (Sri Lanka, 1985:5-12).

Unaware of the Master Plan, the Wanniya-laeto tried to survive in the forest. They searched for food unsuccessfully because the animals fled from the construction turmoil. There was famine. Finally they went to the developers for help, but were told that they could not collect food directly as before. The Wanniya-laeto now must follow the government's instructions to cut trees, blast mountains and dig channels in their hunting grounds.

They were told that never again could they return to their traditional life in the forest. Their hunting grounds would be reserved for the purpose of a combined catchment area between the two rivers and a national park.

According to the constitution of Sri Lanka all citizens are equal before the law. Therefore, since the national park regulations proscribe that anyone hunt, pick flowers, collect honey, light a camp fire, or make a living in any park, the Wanniya-laeto were hit hard. Instead, development programme villages awaited them, with schools, shops, health clinics, 'proper clothes', Buddhist temples and modern means of communication. Two and a half acres of irrigable land were

allotted to each family: two acres for cash crops and the remaining half acre for their own consumption. The Wanniya-laeto would have to learn to become agriculturalists and live in a 'civilized' way, with a 'civilized' language and religion. To ease the change for the first two years, the Wanniya-laeto would be given government assistance to free material to resettle. They were to receive artificial fertilizers, pesticides, hybrid seeds to cultivate, milk powder, Tripasa (a nutritious mixture of three kinds of flour) and whitewash for their houses. They were expected to move voluntarily.

Four Presidents have governed since the last Wanniya-laeto were resettled in the Rehabilitation Villages. For twelve years written and verbal promises have been made to the Wanniya-laeto that they might return to their home. But, as the old Wanniya-laeto spokesman, Uru Warige Tissahamy says: 'Leaves is all I have,' pointing to the pile of documents. On July 15, 1995 a new constitution was to be presented to the parliament. International Human Rights Organizations such as the International Labour Office and the European Parliament have expressed their concern about the Wanniya-laeto to the Sri Lankan government. International NGOs and local campaign groups are writing hundreds of letters to the various Sri Lankan embassies and to the Sri Lankan acknowledgement of Sri Lanka's aboriginal people (copies of these documents can be retrieved upon request).

Conclusion

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) was written as a result of the Second World War. Never again would one people be regarded as less worth than another. Hence, the first words in the preamble:

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world (Hannum 1993).

The integrity and autonomy of peoples and states would thereafter always be respected. At the time, the issue was to safeguard one country from being invaded by another. The problem of one country

invading itself was not yet an issue on the UN agenda. The Declaration was based on *territory*, not on *ethnicity*. Today International Human Rights law 'provides that all peoples may freely utilize resources based upon the principle of mutual benefit' (Williams 1994:17), but as Williams questions in an article about international law and environmental disputes; who defines people? In many former European colonies, the sometimes centuries old, local, European educated aristocracy assumed the office of their forbearers after independence. In the case of Sri Lanka, they continued where they left off upon European colonization. Since the State also determines the 'best interest of the nation', expansion and/or extraction of natural resources to benefit the ethnic majority is the norm. The first article in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: 'All people have the right of self-determination'. Sri Lanka is a signatory of that document (June 11, 1980), interpreted to mean in that country the dominant group. This is one reason why the Tamils are rebelling in the northern and northeastern parts of the island. Since the Wanniya-laeto are not recognized as a distinct people, the article refers to minorities, article 27 is applicable to them.

In the post-colonial era, specifically after the fall of the Second World the issue of ethno-nationality and self-determination has become a major issue. Indigenous peoples are completing their own UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and an increasing number of International Human Rights instruments focus on indigenous, ethnic and minority rights (Hannum 1993, Levin 1993, Burger 1990). The micro cosmos is also reflected in the macro cosmos in defining 'self-determination'.

There does not necessarily have to be a new independent state, borders, and total autonomy. That concept itself derives from non-Native thinking. History presents quite heart warming accounts of the welcomes given by the First Nations of the New World to Colombo, Cortez, and Lewis and Clark. These and other colonizers reported that they were treated, to put it modestly, with great respect, if not sometimes veneration. The indigenous nations believed the colonizers were trading partners on equal footing

with themselves. Similar to the 'silent trade' of the Wanniya-laeto, there was no wish for domination, only a wish for exchange. At present, there seems to be a moderation in 'self-determination' among indigenous people which is becoming equated not with independence, but with intra-dependence, including effective control over one's own community combined with effective interaction in the life of the larger state. There is a wish for devolution of power, similar in some respects to the European Community's principle of 'subsidiarity', seen as an appropriate response to demands for self-government and ethnic/linguistic preservation (Hannum 1993).

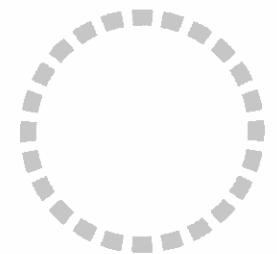
Instead of believing the State is weakened by equal footing among its ethnic nations, it may instead prove to be strengthened. Perhaps the little token expressed by dropping the word 'economic' in the European Union is a sign of cooperation not merely based on markets and money. Sri Lanka could benefit from this attitude. Billions of dollars are invested in the ethnic war in Sri Lanka, resources which could be utilized for peaceful purposes.

In spite of the undeniable claim of Wanniya-laeto aboriginality in Sri Lanka according to international customary law, and having an inherent and inalienable right to the land based on occupancy since time immemorial, the county's colonizers have pushed away and relegated them to an inferior, subhuman status. Still, to date the indigenous island people are neither formally nor legally recognized by the Sri Lankan government. Today, the argument may be that so few of them are left that they are not worth counting. This is alarming enough. What decimated them? As a matter of courtesy and respect for the Wanniya-laeto's persistent survival in spite of invasions, their use as cannon fodder, displacement by development projects and the latest, the taking of their last hunting ground for a national park, removing the forest people to make way for wildlife should call for emergency action to save what is left of Sri Lanka's indigenous population. Native difference and inferiority are no longer acceptable justifications for their continued patronization by another ethnic group. Now would be an excellent opportunity to change the course of

2500 years and acknowledge the First People of Sri Lanka and their right to their own identity and their rights according to customary law as well as international conventions.

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Argentina, the most southerly country in South America, sets its sights across the ocean towards Europe, but nevertheless keeps watch out of the corner of its eye on its fellow South American countries and boasts that it is the whitest country in America with no 'Indians' on its territory.

Despite this negation of indigenous peoples, more than 12 'Original Peoples' are reassuring Argentinean society and the world of our existence. Contrary to official figures produced by a state which assumes it can define who is and who is not indigenous, we number approximately 1 million indigenous people.

The geographical heart of our Mapuche population today lies in the centre of Ar-

resources are astounding. It is an area of mountainous countryside with seven extremely beautiful lakes: Ñorquinco, Moquehue, Alumine, Pulmari, Pilhue, Ruca Choroy and Polcahue. The lake is the source of five rivers which, together with abundant rain in certain areas and seasons, sustain over 10,000 hectares of forests. Among the existing species of fire, lenga, oak and cypress, is our ancient pewen, a tree closely linked to our Pewenche identity. Non-Mapuche call it araucaria. These natural conditions are one of the potential foundations in the Pulmari region.

After the criminal 'Desert Campaign' led by J.A. Roca, the general's presidential negotiations resulted in Pulmari being handed over to the English family, Miles, for the support they had given the killing of Mapuche.

From English occupancy, our land passed into the hands of the army in the middle of the 20th century through a policy of expropriation of British interests carried out by J.D. Perón. Furthermore, National parks were created covering large areas on the pretext of 'protecting the environment'. These are different forms of military occupation

created the Pulmari Interstate Corporation (CIP) to take charge of administering our 110,000 hectares. According to the Corporation's statutes a directorate was established comprising four representatives of the National State, 3 representatives of the Provincial State and 1 (one!) for the 6 communities in the Pulmari region whose population is almost 3,000 Mapuches. As if to reaffirm this act of 'real democracy and Mapuche participation' the Mapuche representative is elected by the Executive Power's decree.

Five years on and after intense negotiations to try to change the rules of the Corporation's game, we are denouncing to the authorities and Argentinean society the hotbed of corruption and theft which this depraved Corporation has become. We charge it of:

- * Illegally lining the pockets of the directors and officials.
- * Arbitrarily handing over land for commercial undertakings to businessmen in the region.
- * Handing over 11,000 hectares to one particular person - O. Alonso - for the genetic and reproductive improvement of cattle on haciendas in the region.
- * Refusing to provide accounts and financial reports of the CIP.
- * Destroying the natural forest by granting forestry concessions to private companies, so that the hundred year cycle will be impossible to recover.

In addition to these denunciations, there is the worrying situation of our Mapuche



ARGENTINA The State is Depriving the Mapuche of their Historical Territory

by Jorge Nahuel Coordination of Mapuche Organisations
TAIN KIÑEGATUAM

gentina, in the foothills of the Andes. Our ancestral Mapuche territory (Wallmapuche) extends on both sides of the Andean mountain range and almost reaches both oceans (Atlantic and Pacific). In the north of this territory one of the Mapuche people have their territory. They are the Pewenche or 'people from Pewen-Araucaria'.

In the Pewenche region lies a 110,000 hectare area called Pulmari where the environment is as rich as its history and the

of our territory and we continue to be foreigners in our own land.

The dark period of military dictatorship has been superseded in the last decade by the government of Alfonsín. He responded to the historical demands of the Mapuche for the 'return of Pulmari to the Mapuche'. After many years of discussion - without the presence of the Mapuche - the form in which the transference was to take place was resolved in Decree law 1410 which

communities, which are denied the use of this area, and are becoming impoverished by the day while they are forced to watch the vast Pulmari territory being depleted.

The Coordination of Mapuche Organisations 'Tain Kiñegetuam' is the organisation which brings together our traditional authorities, the Lonko. In this organisation the Lonko resumes his historical role in determining territorial jurisdiction; the Pillan Kuse as religious authority responsible

for science and the Werken as the transmitter of Mapuche political thought. Today we are reaffirming our sense of being a 'people' and uniting forces with the Mapuche living in the communities and those who have been relocated to the cities. We are proposing a 'new relationship' with the state, which has hitherto denied and oppressed us, based in coexistence and respect for our rights and fundamental liberties.

However, the Neuquen and Argentinean authorities did not listen to our message. They responded by threatening to proceed with the privatisation of our 110,000 hectares, of continuing the conflict. The state has turned a deaf ear but it knows that to hand over the Pulmari land to the 'free market' is an attack on our life and our future. The state's economic and development policies do not respect or take account of our own strategies and system of development. On the contrary, they violate the Mapuche communal way of life and the balance that we have ensured within our Wallmapu.

In a final attempt, we exhort the National and Provincial States to make a commitment to the recognition of the Original Mapuche People and their rights, given the commitment made by the United

external and unilateral agreements made on the fringes of our reality do not have our consent.

Nevertheless, the indiscriminate dividing up of our lands has continued and the government only responded after the offices of the immoral Pulmari Interstate Corporation were occupied for seven days by returning winter grazing lands for the animals of the six communities concerned. However, the approximately 20,000 hectares which have been recognised as legitimately belonging to the communities are only a small part of Pulmari. What will happen to the almost 100,000 hectares that remain?

This is the area where the Argentinean state wants to hang a gigantic spider's web, woven by the transnational companies and their multilateral trade agreements and

The Mapuche nation of Puel Mapu-Argentina demands the territorial restoration of Pulmari. To this end we have drawn up a proposal which is an alternative to the policy of the depraved Pulmari Interstate Corporation which today represents the interests of the Argentinean state. It is based on the following principles:

- * That the Mapuche take a leading role in decisions which concern their future and not the symbolic participation of a Mapuche representative in a directorate of 8 members, as happens at present.
- * The return of the land according to the concept of territorial restitution and no more 'loan agreements' as happens at the moment.
- * The fundamental right of the Mapuche to self-determination and to exercise it over these lands which guarantee our life, culture and future.

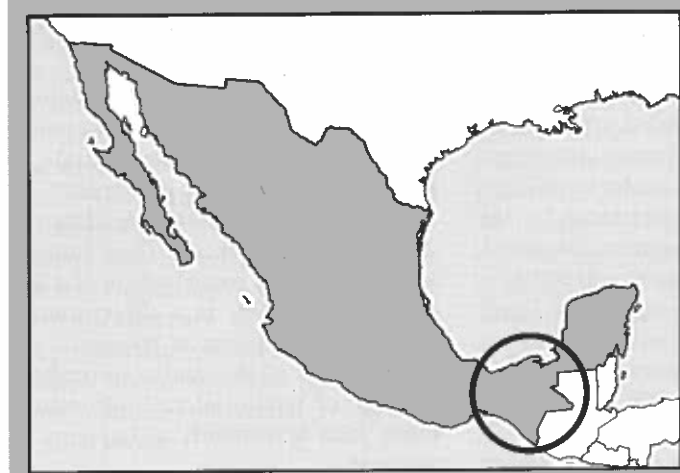


photo: Jorge Nahuel

Nation's forum in inaugurating the 'International Decade of the Indigenous Peoples of the World 1995-2004'. We ask that, in the context of its development programmes, it does not make agreements or take decisions which compromise the rights and the future of the Mapuche people in the Pulmari area because we Mapuche are more than just folklore. We want people to know that

which imposes a model of unlimited economic expansion and precludes sustainable development. Western technological culture's irresponsible and irrational attitude prevents an ethic of solidarity and communality while the plunder of Wallmapuche's natural resources is our our agony.

Marici Weu, Marici Weu, Marici Weu!!!
(We will live and triumph ten times over)



Restructuring Ethnicity in Chiapas and the World

by George A. Collier

MEXICO

Two recent events underscore subtle but important shifts in the ethnicity of indigenous populations in Chiapas. On March 19, 1995 several thousand people from dozens of diverse indigenous communities, among them Protestants and Catholics who have often been in conflict with one another, joined in the demonstration in support of Liberation Theologian Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Samuel Ruiz. Barely a month later, on April 19th eve of the scheduled renewal of peace talks between the Mexican government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), an equally diverse gathering of representatives of distinct indigenous communities and sometimes competing indigenous organizations from throughout the region converged on San Andrés Larrainzar to demonstrate support for the Zapatistas.

Ethnic identity once divided indigenous communities from one another in the Chiapas central highlands. Both recent events underscore a transformation: now, in the wake of the Zapatista rebellion, peoples of diverse indigenous background are emphasizing what they share with one another in revindication of economic, social, and political exploitation.

How has this shift in indigenous identity come about? This article argues that the transformation reflects changes in Mexican rural society stemming from fundamental redirections of Mexico's policies for national society and its place in the world order, marking the ending of an era of Mexican social policy and statescraft.

For decades, Mexico effectively managed peasants and Indians as distinct sectors within its 'institutionalized' revolution, along with workers, ranchers, merchants and industrialists under policies fostering development of a sheltered national economy. Mexico's all-embracing Institutionalized Revolutionary party (PRI) used a corporatist approach of giving each sector a role in sheltered national development as well as corresponding rewards. As the government developed rural programs, it focussed on communities, using agrarian reform to conform them separately, and Indianist policies that tended to 'naturalize' ethnic differences among indigenous communities while distinguishing them from those of non-indigenous peasants.

But in the past twenty years Mexico's national leaders have reoriented Mexican development to global commodity

markets and international high finance. More generally, national planners have embraced the philosophy of structural adjustment that governments throughout the world are using to shuck off social responsibilities to the poor. In Mexico, leaders have set aside the nation's social contracts with the peasantry and indigenous people, abandoning long-standing programs of agrarian reform - uniting peasants and indigenous peoples in opposition to the national state.

As the reorientation ripples through the Mexican countryside, the gap has grown between the better-off and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, and the old structures of community that once framed ethnicity have eroded, making way for a new and evocative indigenous discourse voiced by the Zapatistas on behalf of Mexico's poor. The Zapatistas, what is more, speak out from the position of indigenous peoples' historic subordination to protest problems that beset poor Mexicans everywhere, blurring the lines between indigenous, peasant, rural, and urban poor. To borrow a metaphor, we might say that the rebellion is recrafting ethnicity as an ecumenical rather than parochial dis-

course, evoked from and spanning society's base rather than being articulated from on high¹.

Oil Development and the Crisis in Mexican Agriculture

The Zapatistas chose January 1, 1994 - the inauguration of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) - to rebel as a way of protesting the government's 'selling out' of Mexico to foreign interests. But NAFTA was only the last link of a chain leading back to Mexico's decision, after the OPEC crisis of 1973, to sell oil into global markets, unexpectedly transforming and destabilizing Mexican agriculture and ultimately removing its insulation and protection from the global economy.

For decades after Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized foreign firms' oil holdings in 1938, Mexico reserved petroleum as a resource to tap for the internal needs of the national economy through a state-run petrochemical industry. To help the depression-era economy recover, Cárdenas subsidized Mexican industry and commerce, keeping the price of oil low and erecting tariffs and restricting imports to protect nascent businesses from foreign competition. Cárdenas stepped up agrarian reform so that peasant and indigenous farming could produce inexpensive foods enabling workers to get by on low wages favorable to developing Mexican businesses. These relationships among oil production, peasant and indigenous agriculture, commerce and industry in the sheltered economy of 'import substitution industrialization' sustained Mexico through several decades of growth.

After the OPEC crisis raised world petroleum prices in 1973, Mexico's decision to export oil distorted these relationships. To produce oil for export, not just for internal consumption, Mexico borrowed massively from the world banking system, glutted at the time with petrodollars from the Middle-East and eager to place loans. Mexico used credits to finance new oil exploration - especially in Tabasco and along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico - and to build new

infrastructure throughout the country. In Chiapas, the government established the existence of oil reserves under what has become the heartland of the Zapatista rebellion. It also constructed hundreds of miles of roads and completed three major hydroelectric dams along the Grijalva river that now supply the country with about half of its hydroelectric power.

The resulting boom drew labor into construction, commerce, and transport and began to undercut and transform agriculture. Agriculture declined from about 14 per cent of GDP in 1965 to about 7 per cent of GDP by 1980. In addition, farmers sought to cut labour costs by shifting to chemical inputs - fertilizers and herbicides - that reduced labour while intensifying production but that also made producers dependent on credits and subsidies. Responding to the crisis in agriculture in the late 1970s, the government extended credits, subsidies, and marketing assistance in an attempt to revive agriculture through López Portillo's Mexican Food System (SAM). Planners worried that the country had become too dependent on corn imported from the United States, a threat to Mexico's sovereignty at a time when US politicians spoke of using grains as tools or weapons of foreign policy.

But the 1982 debt crisis shattered Mexico's development boom and the ability of the government to subsidize the transformed agriculture. Collapse of world petroleum prices left Mexico unable to service \$96 billion of external debt, mostly borrowed on the unfulfilled promise of oil exports. The international banking system forced austerity on the Mexican budget. Credits, subsidies and market supports began to dry up in the Miguel de la Madrid presidency. Six years later, Salinas de Gortari embraced policies of liberal restructuring under which Mexico began to sell off or dissolve state-controlled enterprise in various sectors. Salinas targeted peasant agriculture as inefficient, removing remaining supports for peasant production and redrafting the agrarian code to bring agrarian reform

to a halt while allowing privatization and sale of indigenous and peasant lands that the code once protected.

Restructuring of Peasant and Indigenous Landscapes

Throughout Mexico, these changes plunged peasant and indigenous agriculture into crisis. Poorer peasants who lacked capital or access to credits needed to purchase fertilizer and herbicides abandoned their land or rented it to wealthier compatriots. In many areas of central Mexico peasants and indigenous people gave up farming and migrated to seek work in the urban peripheries or in the United States.

In Chiapas, reliance on chemical inputs began to differentiate the poor from the better-off within indigenous communities, often pitting wealthier indigenous elites of the *cabeceras* (municipal centers) against the poor of the outlying *parajes* or *aldeas* (hamlets) and breaking down community ethnic solidarities. Many of the poor were driven out of their ethnic homelands or left to seek their fortunes in the frontier colonies of eastern Chiapas and in squatter settlements around San Cristóbal de Las Casas. Others took up employment as unskilled workers in construction in oil and hydroelectric development. After the 1982 debt crisis, when austerity curtailed construction, unskilled workers who returned to Chiapas's agrarian economy no longer could find employment, swelling the ranks of the impoverished.

As a result, ethnic populations that once had been community-based began to spread across the geographic and social landscapes of southeastern Mexico, intermingling with different indigenous and non-indigenous rural and urban poor, sometimes even in new livelihoods and new kinds of communities. Many of those marginalized from Chiapas' highland indigenous communities joined Indians and peasants from other states flowing into the tropical forest frontier lands of eastern Chiapas from which the Zapatista rebellion has since emerged. While some retained identities of ethnic origin, others turned

MEXICO

to religion to consolidate frontier settlements, establishing them as communities of diverse worship - Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Mormon, etc. as well as Catholic-linked Christian-based.

Even as oil development redeployed people and identities in this supposedly remote area, it left them vulnerable to dependency on credits, subsidies and the marketing mechanisms of INMECAFE, the Mexican Coffee Institute. Eastern Chiapas' colonists allocated one-third of their production to coffee as a cash crop, another third to livestock and the remainder to subsistence crops such as corn and beans. When austerity and restructuring set in, colonists might have been able to weather the shift in economic tides had not the world price of coffee also plummeted in 1989, further devastating peasant producers who had invested in coffee as their principal cash crop. The collapse of coffee prices coincided with Salinas' abrogation of agrarian reform, dashing colonists' unfulfilled quests for land.

Zapatista condemnation of NAFTA thus implicitly protests the trade liberalization and structural adjustment that began two decades ago with Mexico's decision to enter global petroleum markets. Oil-led development threw agriculture into crisis; it undermined the solidarity of indigenous and peasant communities by differentiating people within them; it impoverished those made vulnerable to the collapse of credits and markets needed to survive in a transforming rural economy. Little wonder, then, that Chiapas' rural poor, no longer protected by the solidarities of old ethnic communities, should embrace the protest voiced by the Zapatista rebellion.

From Governing by Pact to Exclusion

The restructuring of ethnic identities in Chiapas also responds to a fundamental shift of Mexican government away from social policies that drew pacts among and support from the various different sectors of Mexican society. Increasingly, the government and its ruling party, the PRI,

have opted for policies that favour only the 'modernizing' sector linked to international high finance, with waning commitment to other sectors. Many Mexicans, including most of those in peasant and indigenous communities, now feel excluded from the government's social contract. Some have joined parties and organizations opposed to the ruling party.

For decades, beginning with the 1934-40 presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, the ruling party successfully managed public policy to give different sectors of society a sense that each had a voice in a political system that would mediate their sometimes-conflicting interests. In the countryside, the ruling party gave political access to peasants and Indians as well as to ranchers and commercial farmers; urban labour and industry also could count on being heeded. The government claimed to sustain a social contract acknowledging the legitimacy and needs of each sector. Mexico's relative social peace, and the willingness of the 'electorate' to allow the endorsement of ruling party candidates in decade after decade of managed elections, reflect the success of government by pact.

Pacting reached into agrarian landscapes and evoked a style of indigenous and peasant leadership in which, for the most part, organic leaders worked through the framework of municipal institutions and through those of the ruling party, the PRI, to help extract state resources for their followers in return for delivering the vote for ruling party candidates. The success of agrarian reform and Indianist policies in conforming ethnicity to municipal institutions matched the relatively strong loyalties of peasant and indigenous leaders to the government's ruling party.

Austerity, forced on Mexico by the world banking community after the 1982 crisis of debt, undercut the government's ability to sustain its social contract and sectoral pacts. Then, as modernizers within the PRI embraced the ideology of structural adjustment, the government cut subsidies for peasant agriculture and social programs for the burgeoning urban populace living in poverty.

As a result, the hegemonic success of the PRI eroded. In the 1988 presidential

elections, the PRI faced its first serious electoral opposition from the National Action Party (PAN) and from supporters of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, many of them PRI defectors who opposed the policies of structural adjustment promised by Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Under Salinas, government policy ceased to represent all sectors of society. Programs such as Solidarity, ostensibly intended to assist the poor, channeled funding behind the scenes to PRI supporters, to the exclusion of those in the growing opposition.

Peasant and indigenous leadership shifted in style, meanwhile, as rural production concentrated in the hands of PRI-affiliated power holders who controlled the capital and scarce credits needed to farm with chemical inputs. Elites who had established themselves in power by winning rewards for their followers in return for delivering the vote for the PRI began to monopolize government resources for themselves, using them to capitalize their own production in the transformed agrarian economy. As they no longer needed the labour of poorer compatriots in agrarian production, power-holding elites could cast off economic and political responsibilities to the growing numbers of expendable labourers in their own communities. The organic leaders of yester year thus transformed themselves into the caciques of contemporary times.

As support for the ruling party eroded, and as marginalized peasants and Indians began to affiliate with the opposition parties, the PRI resorted increasingly to coercive tactics to hold onto the peasant vote, withholding funds and services from those whose loyalties are suspect. Even in indigenous hamlets, authorities withheld the benefits from government programs from those who did not support the PRI. Such practices further fractured rural communities, sharpening the divisions between powerful elites and marginalized poor. Increasingly, as a result, organic leadership among rank-and-file peasants and indigenous populations has coalesced around opposition to the PRI, in coalition with political parties of the opposition, with independent organizations, and now with the Zapatistas.

Uniting against Arbitrary Agrarian Policies

Extremely diverse ethnic and religious affiliation marked the colonization that flowed into eastern Chiapas in response to the restructuring of the agrarian economy in the 1970s. What brought people together in a movement that now spans ethnic and religious diversity was resistance to the arbitrariness of government agrarian policy in the region.

During the 1970s, Luis Echeverría opened up eastern Chiapas to long-distance colonization by modifying the agrarian code to permit peasants to relocate far from their homes, even across state lines. Yet as colonists settled frontier areas, the government decreed huge tracts of the colonized land off limits to them as 'bioreserve.' The huge Montes Azul 'bioreserve,' which encompassed dozens of new frontier settlements, was 'reserved,' it turned out, for government timbering.

Agrarian authorities ordered colonists in the bioreserve to relocate, but most refused. Attempts by the PRI to coopt peasants in eastern Chiapas and to divide followers from dissidents only heightened antagonisms. As colonists resisted continued pressure to relocate during the 1980s, most of them aligned with opposition to the PRI. When the government claimed overwhelming electoral support in 1988 from eastern Chiapas for the PRI's presidential candidate, Salinas de Gortari, colonists knew the elections had been rigged. Upon taking office, Salinas de Gortari

rewarded colonists allied with the PRI in the Montes Azul bioreserve by legitimating their land claims - while denying the claims of dissidents and opponents. Shortly thereafter, Salinas announced legislation to 'reform' Article 27 of the Constitution, bringing agrarian reform

lieved that they had lost legal recourse to their lands claims.

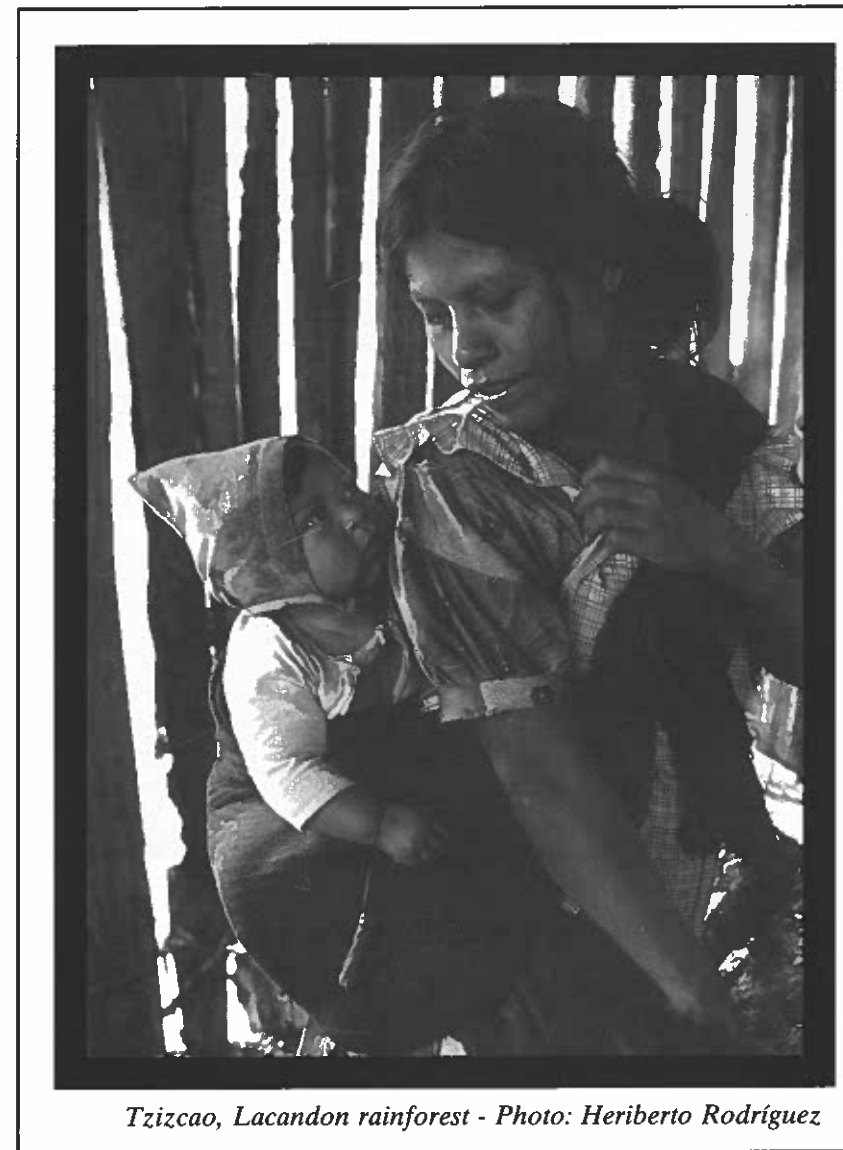
These arbitrary and contradictory government agrarian policies unified dissident colonists across lines of ethnic and religious difference, while forging links to agrarian activists of other regions in Chiapas and Mexico's south. The Zapatista movement has helped generalize the alliances to span indigenous and non-indigenous peasants throughout and beyond the area of frontier colonization in eastern Chiapas.

New Ecumenism in Indigenous Discourse in Chiapas

There is a new ecumenism in the ethnicity that is emerging in Chiapas as a result of the Zapatista rebellion - ecumenism with respect to religious difference as well as other kinds of difference.

The joining together of Protestants with Catholics among the indigenous groups who have been demonstrating solidarity with Bishop Samuel Ruiz's role as intermediary between the government and the Zapatistas in recent negotiations is an important development because religious difference has been a significant axis of conflict among indigenous groups in Chiapas in recent decades. I believe that the Zapatista rebellion furthered the evolution of such ecumenism.

Many analysts believe that the 1974 Indigenous Congress, organized by Bishop Samuel Ruiz at the request of the government of Chiapas to commemorate Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, laid the foun-



Tzizcao, Lacandon rainforest - Photo: Heriberto Rodríguez

dations for the indigenous movement that has coalesced in the Zapatista rebellion. The Congress pulled together indigenous representatives from various regions of Chiapas, including the colonizing region of eastern Chiapas, allowing them for the first time to articulate common demands for social change. In the wake of the Congress, independent organizing of indigenous and peasant communities in eastern Chiapas built upon the networks and channels of communication established in the Congress.

One must remember that the 1974 Indigenous Congress built on the catechist networks established by Bishop Ruiz in part to counter the spread of Protestant and evangelical churches in eastern Chiapas, where new religions afforded solidarities needed to consolidate frontier communities. Even though Liberation Theology galvanized indigenous alliances in the 1974 Congress, non-Catholic religious affiliation continued to grow, encompassing up to 40 per cent of the frontier population by the 1980s. In this context, independent organizers had the advantage over religious organizers of being able embrace groups of different religious persuasion into their movements. The Zapatistas built an inclusive movement in part by disavowing religious affiliation while affirming religious tolerance, epitomizing an ecumenism that has since become more prominent even in Bishop Ruiz's church efforts.

More generally, the Zapatista movement has adopted what one might characterize an ecumenical stance with respect to differences of political persuasion by welcoming diverse groups of civil society into a broad-based movement seeking reforms of Mexican society as a whole. As a result, diverse indigenous and peasant organizations have coalesced in organizations such as the State Council for Indigenous and Campesino Organisations (CEOIC) that echo and reinforce the Zapatistas' challenges to the national state.

The Transnational Context of New Regional Movements

The shift of ethnicity in Chiapas to transcend, yet embrace difference parallels the emergence of new regional movements in many parts of the world where 'borderlands' bring distinct cultures together in interaction without necessarily erasing their differences. Global development moves production 'offshore' and circulates people, goods, money and information in new kinds of translocational spaces shaped by economic restructuring. Peoples drawn together in new ways

confront ambiguities of identity and polyvalent senses and possibilities of being. They experiment with guises and roles, and sometimes they forge, reformulate, and mobilize ethnic identity to hail new sympathizers - as the Zapatistas' faceless indigenous visages have appealed to those who project their own identities onto those imagined behind the Zapatista masks.

Contemporary Chiapas illustrates how alliances can span heterogeneous peoples in borderlands without necessarily dissolving their differences. Oil-led development transformed southeastern Me-

xico, drawing the ethnically distinctive indigenous peoples out from Chiapas' agrarian economy and thrusting them together with non-indigenous peasants, workers, independent organizers and even evangelizers, in work, politics and religion not previously open to indigenous peoples. New alignments of wealth and power surfaced and sharpened the basis for a regional indigenous identity that emerged as the reversals of Mexico's energy development thrust the region into crisis. The Zapatistas tapped the discontent and consolidated a move-

ment that elevated indigenous identity out of its old parochial loyalties, linked to patronage and protection of the corporate state, into something new, the shared identity of those whom politicians have spurned in pursuit of neo-liberal modernizing.

There are other ways in which encompassing transnational political and economic systems reshape and sometimes consolidate loyalties and identities drawn from ethnic landscapes. A new pan-'Mixtec' identity, for example, has spanned the primary loyalties to township that Mix-



photo: Heriberto Rodríguez

tec speakers once held in Oaxaca. It grows from Mixtec migrants' shared experience of border camps in Tijuana and work in the tomato fields of California, Oregon, Florida and other parts of the United States where transnational agri-business has brought seasonally migrant workers from Oaxaca together in a new collective identity.

Regional identities and subnational popular movements also gain support from one another - much as the Zapatistas have tapped support from within Mexican civil society, from native-Americans' organizations and their supporters throughout the continent, from the Chicano movement, and from sympathizers in Catalunya. They draw support from independent organizations that challenge the state and from non-governmental organizations whose resources and constituencies transcend national controls. While contemporary nation-states are in many instances struggling to reassert their primary claims on citizenship and identity, they are no longer the only game in town in the post cold-war and increasingly transnational order, which is giving rise to new, multivocal solidarities and alliances.

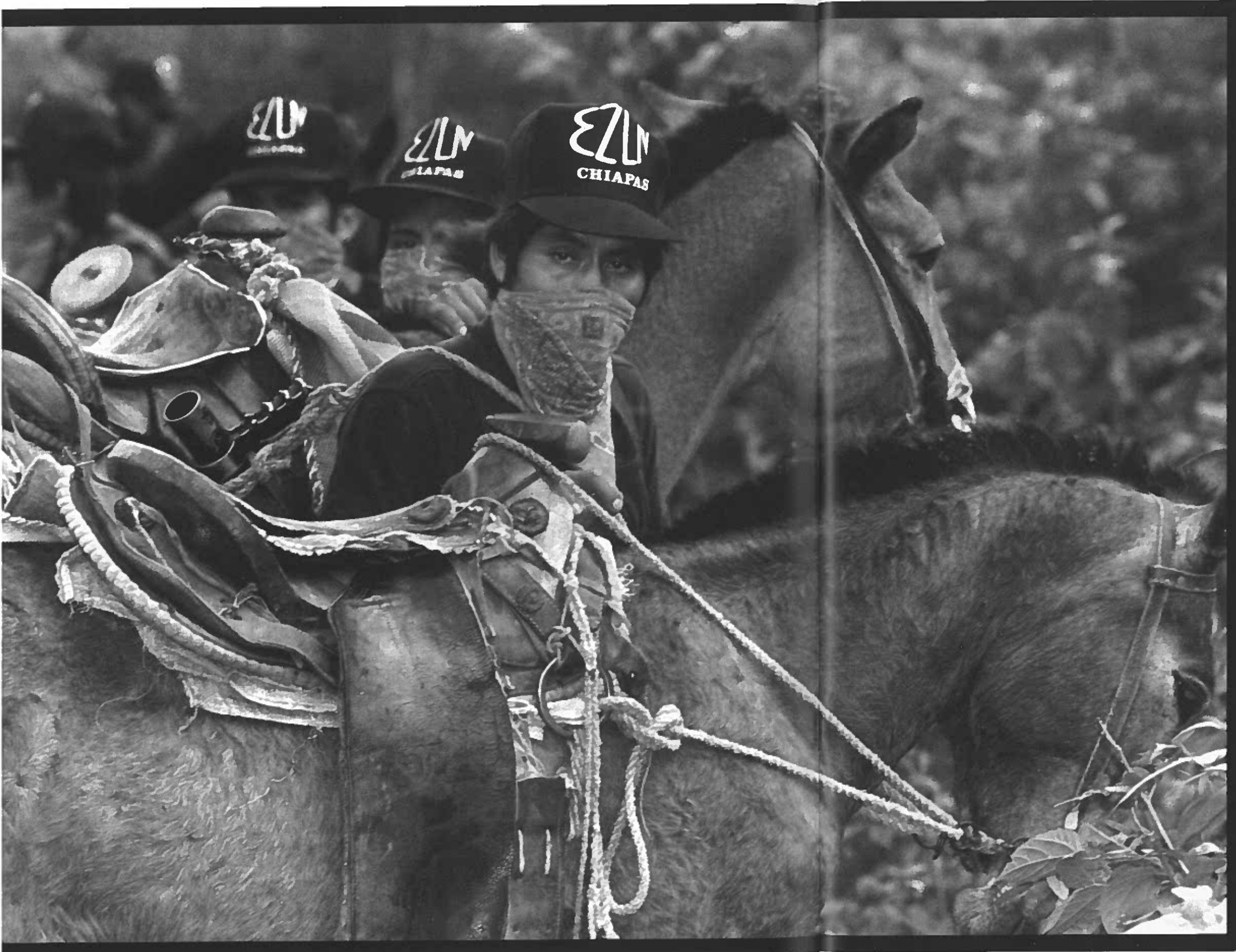
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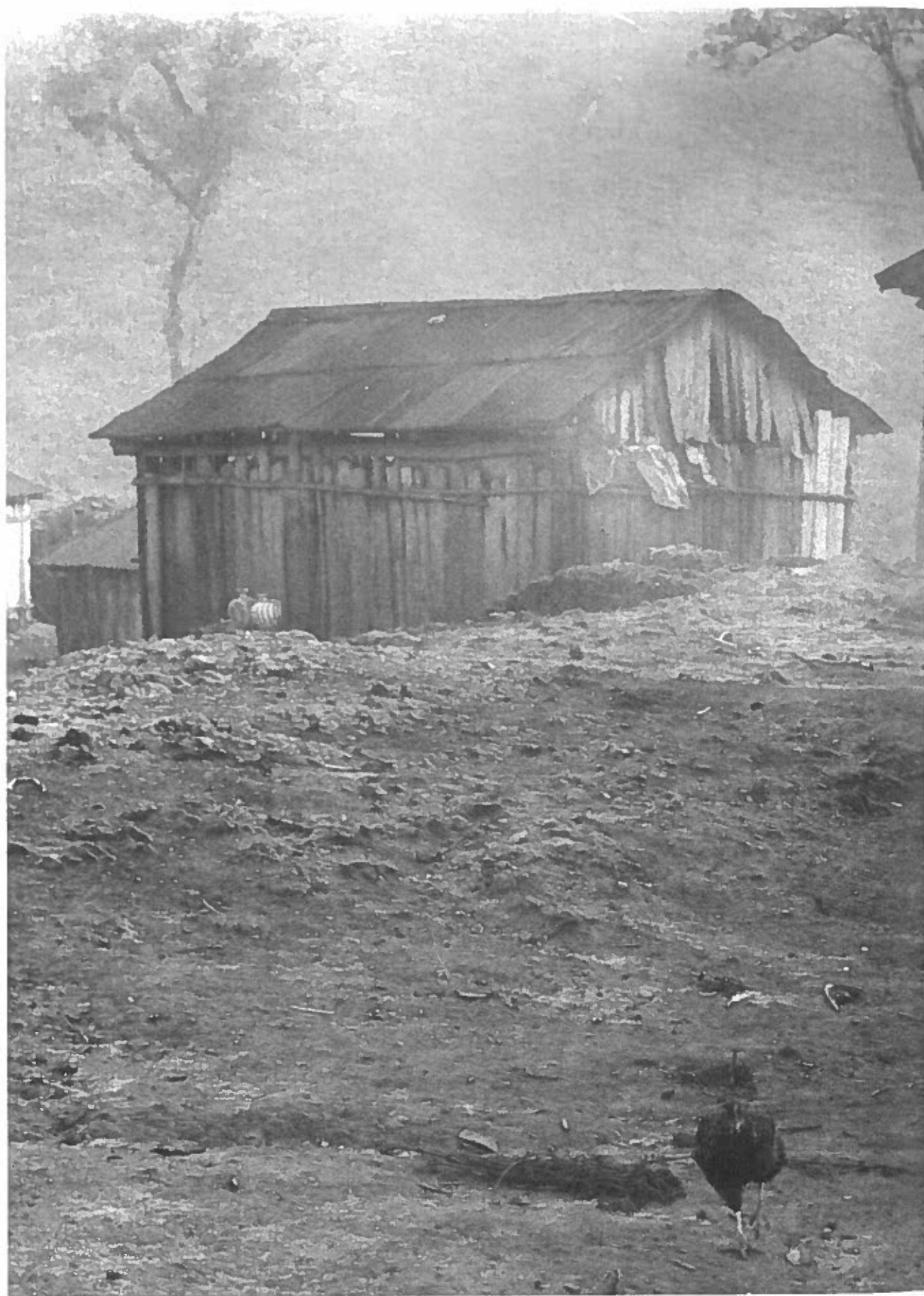
1. For an analysis of the roots of the Zapatista rebellion, see *BASTA! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas* by George A. Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello (Food First Books, 1994).

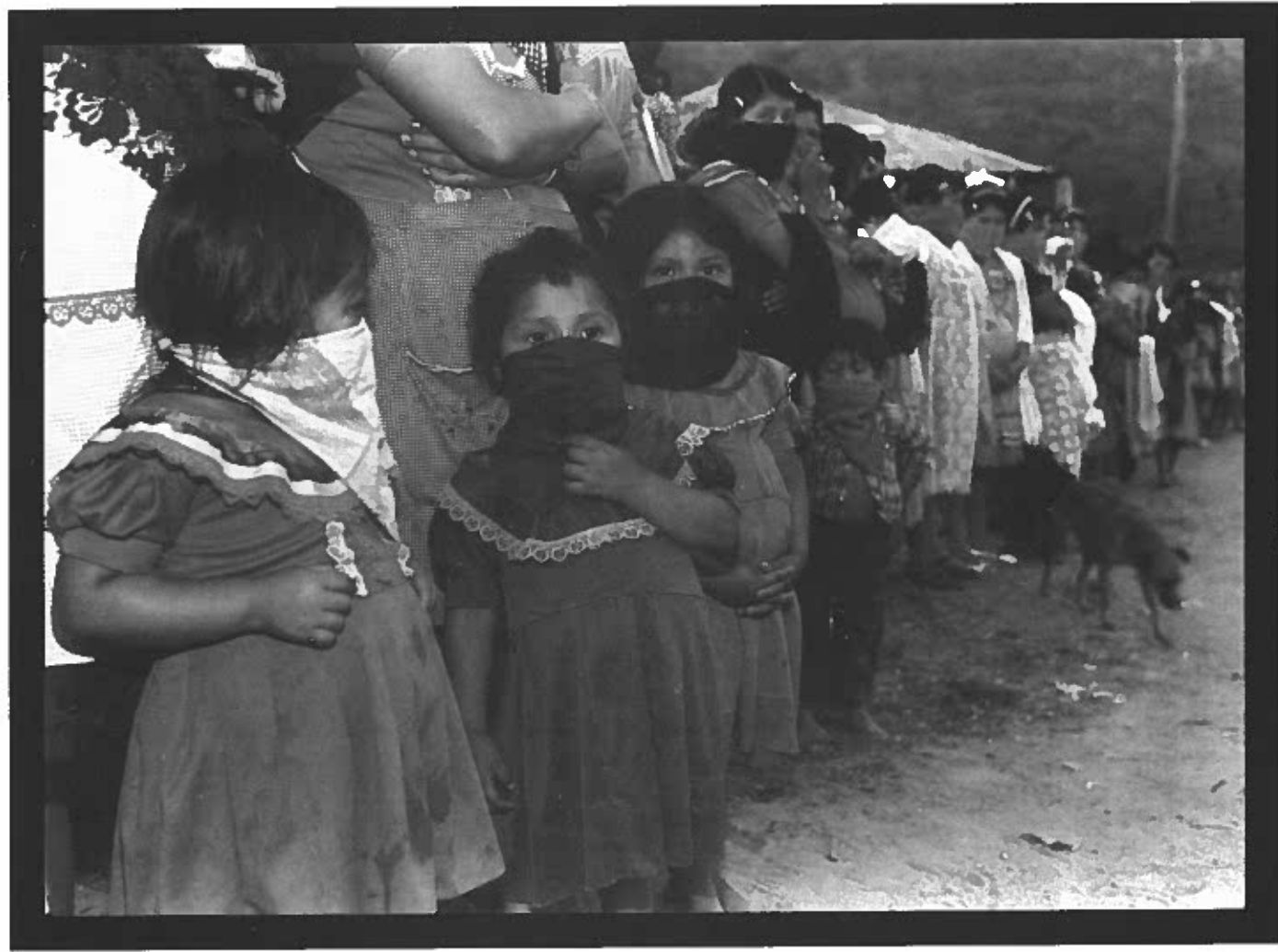
2. Even Mexico's oil sovereignty is falling victim to restructuring as the Ernesto Zedillo government contemplates privatization of the state-run petrochemical industry after having pledged oil revenues to US banks to guarantee repayment of the recent Clinton administration bailout. □

PHOTOS:
HERIBERTO RODRIGUEZ

CHIAPAS:
THE
EXPLOSION
OF
COMMUNITIES









PERU

Oil Mining Activities Threaten the Candoshi People

by Lilly La Torre

At this moment the indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon are facing a new threat which puts their present and future lives and culture in great danger: the government is authorising extensive facilities for oil exploration concessions in the Amazon which include the superimposition of rights to exploit hydrocarbons on protected natural areas and community titled land.

The entire Amazon territory has been divided into lots and over the last two years oil companies have been awarded more than three million hectares in which to carry out oil prospecting and exploitation.

The indigenous peoples today are living in national and international legal contexts which are quite distant from those which allowed the plundering of their resources in earlier times. In Peru the government ratified ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples which expresses very clearly the form and characteristics of the procedures for resources which are property of the state on indigenous lands.

States which have signed this Convention are committed to ensuring the rights of the indigenous peoples, and in particular articles 4, 5, 7 and 15, before granting permission for prospecting programmes or resource exploitation in their subsoil of their lands.

According to this regulation, indigenous peoples ought to:

- be informed about oil development plans in the region and determine whether or not the implementation of these plans is appropriate.
- be informed of the scale of the threat of the project for both the indigenous population and the environment and recommendations be made with regard to them.
- establish development priorities for the region in favour of the indigenous population and make recommendations with respect to them.
- be assured that they have integral participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project and the company's programme of activities which might affect them.

However, although Peru prescribes to the Convention, which is now law in Peru, these conditions have not been fulfilled.

The oil industry, with all the economic, technological and social benefits it has brought to humanity, is also one of the most contaminating industries and directly and indirectly responsible for harming the environment at the local and global levels and for the consequent social conflicts. These activities have had very serious consequences for indigenous peoples.

There are many negative impacts: the contractors attract ribereños farmers and the Mestiza population by offering paid employment thus encouraging them to leave their fields and generating con-

flicts over land. This encourages colonists to move into indigenous territories or leads to workers establishing settlements after their employment has ended.

There are reports of new diseases hitherto unknown to traditional medicine and a decrease in the quality of life and nutrition in the communities. Other consequences have been the plunder of forest animals, deforestation and loss of forest resources, degradation of the soil and countryside, contamination of the water, air and soils and the deterioration of the flora and fauna. Furthermore there is the impact on the way of life and culture of the peoples living near the areas of activity.

The Peruvian Amazon, especially in certain areas, presents one of the richest formations of biodiversity in the world. One of these areas is indigenous Candoshi territory. The Candoshi live between the headwaters of the rivers Morona and Pastaza in the district of Pastaza, province of Alto Amazonas, department of Loreto where Lot No. 4 has been granted to the North American company Occidental Petroleum Corporation of Peru (OXY) which covers an area of 881,123 hectares (8,881,23 km²) for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

Who are the Candoshi?

The Candoshi have occupied their lands since time immemorial. In 1988 they organised themselves into the Federation of Native Candoshi Communities in the District of Pastaza (FECONACADIP).

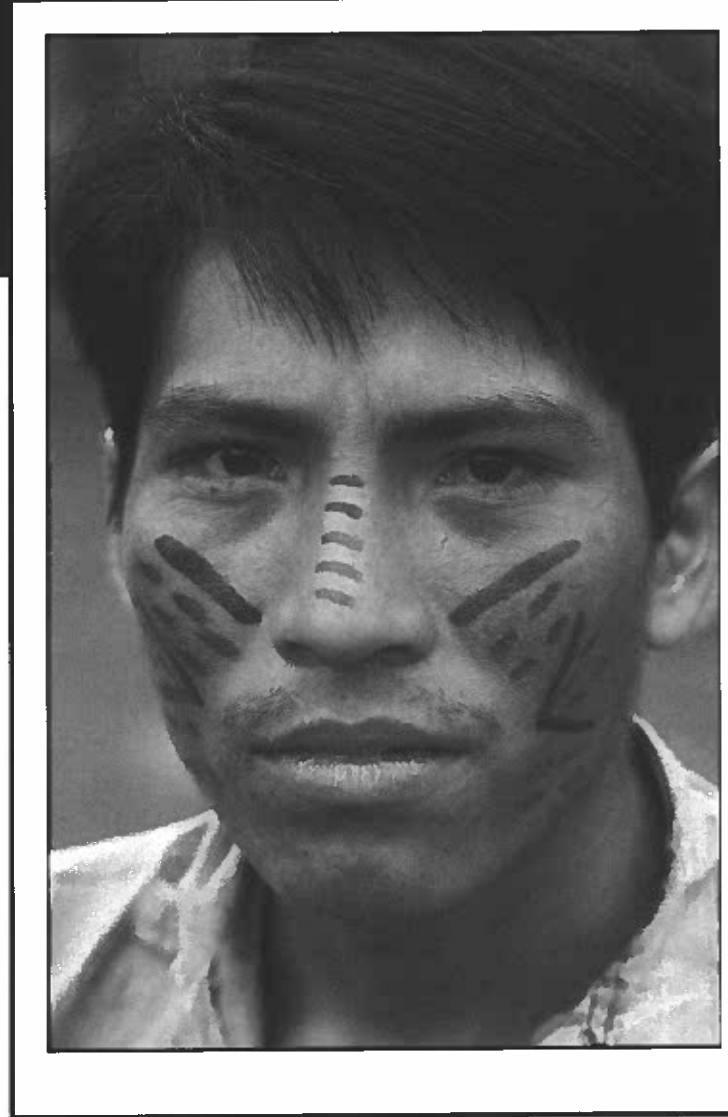
With a present population of 2,500 inhabitants, they are the only people who speak the Jibaro-candoa language and are descendants of the legendary group of Mayanas whose culture still retains a lot of vitality.

Their kinship and alliance system, history, spirits, medicine, war, funeral rights and customs, decorations and facial painting still express their vision of the world. The relative isolation which they have chosen and which they defend has allowed them to maintain the culture which they inherited from their ancestors to an exceptionally high degree.

The Candoshi live from fishing, hunting, collecting and itinerant agriculture. The majority of the population lives in communities on the banks of the rivers Chuinda and Chapuri, the main affluent of Lake Rimachi (Musa Karusha in Candoshi legends) and around the lake itself.

Lake Musa Karusha and its surroundings

The zone where the company OXY has decided to make borings and where indications suggest the best possibilities for finding oil, is on the banks of the River Chapuri. River access is across Lake Musa Karusha.



Lake Musa Karusha and its environs are also the last refuge for many species of forest animals in danger of extinction and legally protected. The entire region is one of exceptional ecological wealth and is possibly one of the areas of greatest genetical biodiversity on the planet. The National Geographic considers the area a National Sanctuary.

In 1991 the Candoshi took steps to defend their territory and protect the environment by expelling guards at the Ministry of Fisheries' base on Lake Rimachi. These guards, rather than fulfilling their responsibility to protect

the aquatic environment, were bribed by commercial fishermen who were endangering the stocks of fauna in the lake. After occupying the base, the Candoshi enforced a prohibition on fishing for three years which has meant that today the lake now once more has a large variety of hydrological resources to offer.

Lake Rimachi or Musa Karusha is the largest Amazonian lake and renowned for its beauty. It is also the centre of a hydrographical system formed by several rivers and hundreds of lakes and lagoons which the Candoshi know and name. These lakes are interconnected by canals which flood annually when the river rises forming a huge area of wetlands which create the physical conditions for the richest and most productive ecosystems in the world for aquatic fauna. This is why the lake harbours an abundance of hydro-biological resources which is the mainstay of the population of the region. Fish from thousands of kilometres of Amazon rivers migrate there to spawn.

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The threat from oil: the seismic exploration phase

From September to December 1993, to the great surprise of the Candoshi, the company began to move in personnel, set up camps in areas which belonged to the community of Puerto Barranquillo, fell trees, open paths, set off

explosives and generally initiate their seismic explorations.

The coordinating body for indigenous organisations in the region, AIDSESEP - San Lorenzo, entered into talks with company officials with the aim of securing some commitment towards minimising the environmental impact and in favour of the affected population in some way or other. The decision-making authorities within the company did not accept the proposals.

These discussions produced only a few offers and verbal agreements which were not respected. Quite the contrary, during the seismic exploration phase the teams working in the area maintained abusive and overpowering relations with the indigenous population.

Preparation for the second phase

In September 1994, faced with evidence that OXY was beginning the second phase of activities, the drilling phase, on communal lands a new assembly of FECONACADIP was held which declared that the indigenous people: "...would under no conditions accept the initiation of exploration work by the OXY company on our property". They stated in their Petition to the Government that the decisions the Candoshi had taken were with the sole consideration of defending the land which they had inherited from their predecessors, and was their source of subsistence for both the present their for their children's future.

A commission was immediately appointed to travel to Lima in order to justify their petition to the appropriate central government authorities and the top bosses of OXY to try to reach agreements so that they did not develop their activities in the part of Lot No.4 which directly affects the communities and the delicate ecosystem of Lake Musa Karusha.

They had meetings with the Director General of Hydrocarbons of the Ministry of Energy and Mines to present their proposal as well as with the President of Directors of OXY and Members of Congress of the Republic in Lima. Ministerial authorities and the company both

indicated that it was essential for their objectives to carry out exploration on these lands and that, moreover, all environmental risk had been foreseen in their Environmental Impact Study.

Nevertheless, while the Candoshi leaders were in Lima meeting with the authorities, in the Candoshi communities the company commissioned employees to try to make 'deals'. They presented the communities with money in their hands to try to convince some of them to cede their lands for a few gifts.

They had the support of the state authorities in the subregion of San Lorenzo. On two occasions the communities refused this treatment which did not respect the decision made by their highest authority, the Organisation's General Assembly.

In a third meeting, the company, this time with its own translators, managed to hold a meeting with community members who were, on the whole, monolingual Candoshi speakers. They drew up an agreement which they called the Act of Conciliation and a contract in which they offered to pay 12,000 soles (5,350 US\$) to the community members to cede to them their territory. They also included equipment for a school, help with medical attention at OXY bases for emergency cases and other gifts such as machetes, tins of oil, chainsaws, boats, radio-cassettes, axes, shotguns, motors and petrol.

When the other Candoshi communities learned more about this agreement it was clear to them that the company was not acting with respect and openness towards the indigenous communities.

The immediately called another General Assembly of FECONACADIP, and presented their position with respect to these events:

1. Rejection of the so-called Act of Conciliation and the Contract for the following reasons:

a. These were agreements proposed by OXY to a small group of community members in the name of FECONACADIP without their discussion or approval by the Assembly;

b. It was presented without any analysis and based not on understanding but persuasion by means of gifts and divisive measures between members of the communities;

c. The second of the documents is for the cession of communal land with-

out specification of area or location and the company dealt with members of the community of San Ramón but legally it belongs to the Native Community of Nueva Yarina which had not been consulted.

2. Ratification of the agreements taken at the FECONACADIP General Assembly held from the 3-5th September 1994 which demands that ILO Convention 169 be upheld and the total disagreement by the communities to the development of oil activities on their territories.

3. That the Government takes disciplinary measures to avoid the high risk which oil exploration presents in the Candoshi wetland territories and to guarantee the survival of the people, expressing, moreover, their rejection

of the means used by the company in its dealing with the communities.

Drilling for oil

In spite of the pronouncements by the communities, neither the authorities nor the company responded by taking the problem seriously. The only response they received was from the Ministry of Energy and Mines which invited AIDSESEP, as the national representative organisation, to attend the presentation of the Environmental Impact Study which OXY had done for this phase of their studies.

This invitation was merely to conform with a simple formality and it was sent only a few days in advance which meant that the technical advisors and indigenous leaders did not have time to prepare themselves adequately to argue their case concerning the measures and proposals which the company proposed in order to mitigate the negative environmental impact during its operations.

According to the Rules for Environmental Protection in Hydrocarbon Activities, the approval of this study gives the company the authority to carry out its activities in the area where it has its concession.

Nevertheless, although the approval of the study has still not been formally granted or the required time elapsed for approval of the application, the company has been moving onto the property of the Community of San Ramón since November 1994 and set up its base in an area previously used by the community members living around there. Moreover, valuable timber is being removed from the area which belongs to the communities, as well as from areas outside the areas under application for their operations.

For this reason, in February, the Candoshi communities called an Extraordinary Assembly specifically to assess OXY's work on lands belonging to the Candoshi people. At this meeting everyone present declared that:

"...the Government says that it is the real owner of the natural resources but it has left the Candoshi on their own to deal with OXY which has in a short



photo: Alejandro Parellada

space of time felled high quality timber from the communities and appropriated 37 trunks of tornillo, 38 cedar, 24 cumala 35 marupa and 34 lupuna.

"They said they would support us and help any sick people as well as help our communities to control epidemics but already seven people have died under the care of the company's health officer from diseases which are foreign to us.

"They said that they would not disturb the people but the company's guards have tried to abuse our women and disrespect the daily movements of our people to and from their hunting, fishing and gardening.

"The told us that they would not cause problems with the environment but they throw their toilet waste into the Kusiwari stream.

"The Candoshi are very worried about what might happen to totally change their way of life and destroy the resources, given all that has already happened with OXY only just started its work. What will it be like later? What rights do landowners have in other parts of the world? Do we have to wait until there is total disaster?..."

Subsequently, the regional indigenous coordination, AIDSESEP- San Lorenzo, contracted a technical team to carry out an analysis of the Environmental Impact Study and the company's Environmental Management Plan. They produced the following comments:

- The zone of influence of the project is not clearly outlined which means that the impact cannot be predicted.
- They have not carried out studies of the environmental characteristics in the work zone. The description of the environment is simply a copy of the scarce bibliographic material on the zone and only makes reference to similar geographical and ecological areas.
- They have not studied the aquatic ecosystems, the hydrological cycle, the hydraulic resources and the aquatic fauna, which are of great importance and likely to be the most severely affected. The information which is presented is based on weakly substantiated suppositions.
- They have not studied the forest fauna.
- They have not carried out an integral

evaluation of the forest which is directly affected, the study only makes reference to samples of local flora.

- In the event of spillage, there is no reference made to the Contingency Plan and measures which will be taken.
- There is no plan for managing the waste.
- There is no indication of the procedure for the management of the use of chemicals, lubricants, packaging, etc.
- It considers that the toxicity of the drilling mud will be low, which is not at all certain. It does not indicate the techniques and procedures for final disposal of the drilling mud and the water.
- It does not propose a programme of monitoring and control of the liquid emissions or the management of drilling mud in the septic tank.
- There is no indication of mitigating measure to be taken for the loss of fauna and flora in the Chapuri river.
- Concerning the native communities, it does not identify the important impact brought about by changes in the quality of nutrition and health of the population, not to mention the atmospheric and noise contamination which will affect the hunting and mainly fishing activities, given that 70 per cent of the protein consumed locally comes from hydro-biological resources: the impact on the changes in way of life, river traffic, forest felling, opening up of access roads, noise, lighting, etc.
- There is no clear indication of the policy in terms of relations with the indigenous population, only a description of some restrictions on contact with the communities.

To date the company has already finished the drilling exploration phase which has taken five months and, as the Candoshi predicted, throughout this stage, as with the previous stage, it has not even respected the recommendations made in its own Environmental Impact Study.

The technical team contracted by AIDSESEP-San Lorenzo carried out an audit during the drilling exploration operations and noted the following:

- Access to the zone has been entirely by river on the River Chapuri and Lake Rimachi. Heavy transport has been frequent (derricks, transporters, lev-

ellers, retro-excavators, trucks, compactors, dumper trucks, tractors, diesel engines, chainsaws, welding equipment, generators) in spite of a commitment to using helicopters for transport, to avoid contaminating the water and the disappearance of the fish.

- To ensure the navigability of the River Chapuri they have dredged the riverbed, disrupting the normal use made by the communities, disrupting the fishing because the fish hide and the destruction of their spawning habitat.
- The approximately 1,500 kg of domestic rubbish produced by 100 workers in 150 days has been deposited in two infills which lack adequate management. They have not built the cells, compacted the sides with earth or made it leak-proof with clay. It suffers from a lack of any drainage control system for gases and the trickle of liquids; they have not separated the organic remains from the non-organic and the pit has functioned as a rubbish pit open to the sky and a focus for potential microbiological contamination of the Corsihuari stream.
- For the 3,000 cubic metres of used water, they have installed a septic tank with a chlorine filter which then empties into the Chapuri river. The high content of chlorine has toxic effects on the aquatic organisms and will lead to the formation of trihalometans, a dangerous and potentially carcinogenic substance.
- There is no system for monitoring the gaseous emissions according to the AP-42 method of the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). In this phase of exploration there were emissions of 81,700kg of HOx and 17,100 kg of SO₂.
- The 700 cubic metres of drilling mud, the most dangerous of the residues, has no management, recycling and elimination procedure.
- The fuel store is situated close to the road which makes it inadequate and at risk to possible pipeline ruptures caused by traffic accidents or falling trees during storms.

The reasons for the Candoshi's opposition

At the last Extraordinary General Assembly of FECONACADIP held from the 12 -14 May 1995, it was decided unanimously to present another petition to

the authorities in which the reasons for the Candoshi people's opposition to the continuation of the oil operations on their territory were clearly presented:

- The experience with OXY during the prospecting phase in Lot No.4 has not been positive. Other indigenous peoples have had earlier experiences of OXY, for example in Lot 1-AB the Kwichua-alama peoples of the River Tigre, the Urañas, Achuar and Muratos of the River Corrientes and the Kwichuas of the River Pastaza members of whom have died through diseases brought from the outside. Furthermore, the oil operations have caused serious harm to the environment which has to this day still not been recognised or seen to by either the State or OXY.
- The territories which will be affected by the oil drilling explorations are situated on the banks of the river Chapuri. This river forms a hydrological wetland system with the parent lake Musa Karusha and more than 100 lagoons where the water flows very slowly so that any contamination or spill will have irreversible effects throughout the area, resulting in a huge ecological disaster. The contamination will spread through all the area affecting flora, forest fauna and aquatic fauna as well as the water sources for the entire population's consumption.
- Even the intensive movement of traffic on the river Chapuri and Lake Musa Karusha has scared away the fish which comprise the most important nutritional basis of Candoshi subsistence as well as the thousands of ribereños (riverside dwellers) from surrounding villages.
- A catastrophe such as mentioned above would rob the area of an exceptionally rich ecology which gives refuge to numerous species of animals which are in danger of extinction. Some comprise single pairs of the most protected species in the rainforest due to the Candoshi people's careful use of them.
- The Peruvian state did not consult the communities on the previous prospecting and exploration work as ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples demands it should. There should be informed consultation to de-

termine how and in what way the Candoshi people could be damaged by the exploitation of hydrocarbons in their territories.

- We do not agree with oil operations in the part of Lot No.4 which affects our indigenous peoples. But although we are unable to stop it, we want it to be known that our investment in the area is much greater than any extractive company and by our sustainable use of the biodiversity and its resources we can obtain a better economic income than that which the oil is really offering the country.

For this reason, we are asking the government:

- That the government explains who will take responsibility and how when there are problems, and what guarantees the Candoshi people have faced with the abuse of the lifestyle and health of its peoples.
- For help for our people to plan participative mechanisms for control and to provide us with accessible ways of making the company comply to the letter with all the safeguards it is obliged to meet.
- To explain to our people who and how they will benefit from the income generated by the oil exploitation and how this has been compared with other benefits which our living territory could provide.
- That the government fixes the place, day and the conditions for direct dialogue with our people, a commitment which it made before all bodies and nations which signed ILO Convention 169.

In addition to the Acts and Petitions which the Candoshi have sent to the authorities and to the President of the Republic, they have added a letter whose text is summarised as follows:

...We want to add that the Candoshi are only seeking to live on their lands where they have lived for many years in harmony and peace, organising themselves to develop alternatives so they benefit from the natural resources for their present and future wellbeing.

Our grandparents have taught us to serve the Amazon forest for thousands of years without destroying it. We have created a culture which has

learned to respect the diverse forms of life with which we share our house, that is the rainforest itself. We have learned many secrets about the environment and know what our lives can offer life itself.

The indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon have been able to survive the epidemics which come with the arrival of strangers. We have suffered the terrible manhunt of the rubber period and recently we have defended and avoided the expansion of cruel scourge of terrorism in the Central Amazon.

Today we want to continue to live simply and peacefully in our forests, a place of refuge for many species of animals in danger of extinction where we can find the resources we need and where the lakes and rivers teem with fish with which to feed our population and the beautiful natural surroundings which we all ought to appreciate.

We have a cooperative way of life and are sure that all our brothers in Peru are prepared to conserve and utilise it harmoniously. Nevertheless, so-called economic development is now bringing the threat of oil contamination to our waters and forest.

The Candoshi people do not want what happened to our indigenous brothers from the rivers Tigre, Corrientes and Pastaza to happen to our children, lands, rivers, animals and forest, which is for everyone. Their rivers are contaminated with lead and other metals which have caused the death of their children. OXY has been working there for several years.

Together with other indigenous peoples and their organisations in the Peruvian Amazon we will do everything possible to safeguard our homeland and its biodiversity and resources in order to guarantee their existence for future generations through the next century.

Meanwhile, we ask the authorities: it the choice between oil and life inevitable?

Lilly La Torre belongs to the Peruvian NGO 'Racimos de Unguhurai'. □

USA

Native Americans Bear the Nuclear Burden

by Andreas Knudsen

Native communities, primarily in the western US, have been chronically exposed to low doses of radiation for over forty years. This exposure derives from the many nuclear activities on indigenous land such as uranium mining and milling, uranium conversion and enrichment, and testing of nuclear weapons. More than one half of all US uranium deposits lie under reservation land. In the past, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized to lease tribal mineral resources for national defense purposes. In return for mining rights, the large energy consortiums have historically paid royalty fees and employed Indians in substandard working conditions.

Although native communities bear a disproportionate burden of risk from those activities compared to the general public, they are in many ways the least equipped communities to respond appropriately. Information on exposures and their health effects is often inadequate, incomplete, inaccessible and incomprehensible. The environmental consequences of uranium mining, atomic bomb testing and production, and radioactive waste disposal on or near reservation lands have often been disastrous. Estimates conclude that over 22,000,000 tons of mine tailings or waste by-products have been left at 24 locations in nine western states since the 1950s and that 220 acres of tailings have contaminated the Four Corners region alone. This article looks at the cases of two nations - the Western Shoshone and the Paiute-Shoshone of Ft. McDermitt.

The Western Shoshone Nation

Because of the long-term use of the Nevada Test Site (NTS), which is located on traditional Shoshone land, the Western Shoshone Nation has become known as the most bombed nation on earth. The

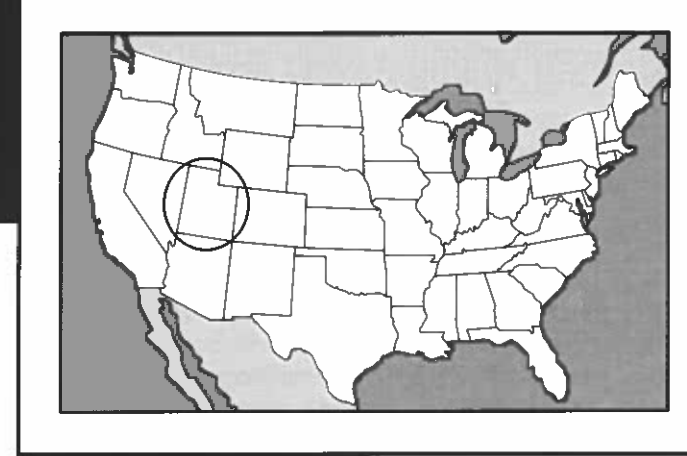
928 American and 19 British nuclear explosions in Newe Sogobia have been classified by the Western Shoshone National Council (WSNC) as bombs rather than 'tests'. The purpose of a bomb is to destroy while the idea of a test is to introduce something new. About 1,350 square miles of their total territory of about 43,000 square miles has been destroyed by hundreds of craters and tunnels, which are uncontrolled underground nuclear waste dumps, by nuclear bombs since 1951 when the bombing began. But no treaty, agreement, vote or sale exists that give the US permission to explode nuclear bombs on or under the Western Shoshone Nation. The Treaty of Ruby Valley of 1863, signed by representatives of the US and the Western Shoshone and ratified by the US Senate in 1866 and confirmed by President Grant in 1869, recognized Shoshone territorial sovereignty. The treaty did not transfer ownership rights and is still in effect. But through a variety of ethically and legally dubious methods, land was taken from the reservation. US authorities in the form of the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, etc., control now approximately 90 per cent of the Shoshone land.

Environmental monitoring reports for the NTS from the 1950s until 1991 document substantial low level releases of radioactive iodine, strontium, cesium, plutonium and noble gases that have contaminated lands in Nevada and Utah. The Western Shoshone reservations, Duckwater and Ely are within a fifty-mile radius of the NTS and were more heavily contaminated. Residents reported unusual animal deaths, hair loss and gardens turning black. The health of the

population still remains at high risk from cancers and birth defects. Despite these facts, the US government has now designated an area of the Western Shoshone Nation, known as Yucca Mountain, to become the final repository for the high level nuclear waste from the US nuclear industry. The Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that its scientific investigation of the site will be concluded by 2001, at a cost of \$6.3 billion (year-of-expenditure dollars) and a repository could be opened by 2010. The DOE is no longer looking for another site. Although the tribe is very concerned about observed health and environmental effects, there are no official health studies under way, no offers to remedy environmental pollution, no programs for early detection of disease or disease surveillance in place.

In order to collect data on the effects of nuclear fallout from the NTS, WSNC started its own project in 1994. The main goal of the Western Shoshone Health Project is to provide data on the state of the land, soil, water, plants as well as the health of the people. This project is part of the Native American Health Network. Various organizations such as the Childhood Cancer Research Institute (CCRI) and Native Americans for a Clean Environment (NACE) work together in that network. They targeted the Western Shoshone and Paiute communities in the Great Basin among their highest priorities.

The overarching goal of the project is to begin proactive steps to correct the imbalance of risk by fostering a better understanding of radiation health issues among members of Native American communities to meet growing concerns about past and ongoing exposures. The communities will be empowered to obtain appropriate health protection and community controls for the future. A part of



the project is the Training of Trainers program. This is a comprehensive, integrated program of training and technical assistance for the purpose of empowering native people to protect their communities and nations

by arming them with an understanding of critical social and technical radiation issues directly affecting their health and environment. The program will create a unique partnership between researchers, health care providers and native communities by promoting a combination of indigenous thinking coupled with technical skills. The community trainers will take technical information, processes and techniques and translate them into a cost effective approach for the communities by developing education modules. The modules will be utilized by the community trainers for educating community members on the issues. Beyond this, the general research goal will be to use existing data resources to compile important information on off-site exposures for the communities, including those exposures to and from specific environmental or food chain pathways. Health scientists from the Center for Technology, Environment and Development (CENTED) at Clark University, Worcester, MA, are maintaining a dialogue with the community as their research is carried out so that they may benefit from local knowledge and experiences. For example, the Western Shoshones have indicated that mule deer, sheep, rabbits and pine nuts are main sources of subsistence for their people. As such, research on the uptake of radionuclides to these animals and roots are of much interest to them. They also mentioned several nuclear tests that they were particularly concerned about. Such community input will guide the scientists' research, help

to prioritize data collection and lead them to investigate other related issues of concern.

The issue of the Ft. McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone - Background

The Quinn River Band of the northern Paiute originally inhabited the lands of the current Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation. As a result of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, the members of the tribe adopted a Constitution and Federal Corporate Charter, and became the federally recognized Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe. As for many other tribes, the adopting of an IRA Constitution and Corporate Charter was to terminate the Tribe's traditional form of government and dispute resolution. It also established a republican form of government and court system. The IRA also imposed tribal laws codified in the Tribe's constitution and federal Corporate Charter which tribal and federal officials neither take into consideration in their deliberations nor abide by. Furthermore, the IRA allowed the federal government more authority in intra- and intertribal affairs.

The tribe originally comprised a much larger land base, but a large part was taken away by dubious methods. Eventually, a Land Claims Commission was established to dictate monetary settlements, which many tribal members accepted. However, as many as two or three dozen of the more traditional families would not accept any monetary compensation, believing that by doing so they

would be relinquishing their inherent rights as indigenous people. But because they did not accept the money, they did not become enrolled tribal members. At the reservation there are now approximately 400 enrolled members and about 300 unenrolled.

The MRS localization process

Because of the desperate economic situation at Ft. McDermitt reservation, the Tribe Council was willing to participate. Participation in that process means access to \$100,000 in the first phase and \$200,000 in the Phase II-A for feasibility studies and education.

Research for a Monitored Retrievable Storage (MRS) for nuclear fuel has a very high priority for the DOE. The 23,681 MT (metric tons) of nuclear fuel in 1992 and its growth is a pressing problem. The Nuclear Waste Negotiator (NWN), a federal agency working closely with the DOE, but accountable only to the President and Congress, has to find one or even more sites where the radioactive material can be deposited for the next 30 or 40 years before final storage, possibly at Yucca Mountain Repository.

NWN's first attempt to establish an MRS in Tennessee failed because of the opposition of the State, the Governor and inhabitants. That is why NWN is now looking for sovereign volunteers. In May of 1991, the NWN sent a letter of introduction to all state and territorial governors, Tribal and Business Council chairpersons, and presidents of Pueblos and Native American Nations (both federally recognized and unrecognized). In June, feasibility assessment grants from the NWN Fund were authorized through the DOE. The size of the grants are determined by tribal conditions. Phase II-A offers an additional \$200,000 for con-

tinued education and feasibility studies. All nine of the Phase II-A applications were held by Native American Nations. therefore, if a MRS is to be sited, it will be on an Indian reservation. Phase II-B offers up to \$2.8 million to continue feasibility studies and education outreach, to enter into formal negotiations, identify potential sites and commence an environmental assessment. One has to remember that a volunteer participant can drop out of the MRS process at any time and without any explanation. At the time of writing, the Mescalero Apache and the Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma have voted down the plans of their Tribe Councils. But with the carrot or the stick tactics, the Apache's Tribe Council persuaded the tribe to a new and, for the Council successful vote. In this way, the pressure on the Ft. McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone will increase too. The tribal supporters of MRS expect \$60-70,000 per capita payments per year. But in spite of their poverty, most tribal members are unwilling to trade their land for money under the MRS arrangement. Tribal member Dennis Smartt said: "If I sell my land, I break my

connection with my heritage and I can never get that back." Many tribal members have complained about a lack of credible information concerning the MRS project, including outright fabrications put forth by DOE promoters. The result of a mail-in-survey which was organized by Citizen Alert shows that 77 per cent of tribal members are opposed to the project. Tribal members ousted four pro-MRS incumbents in the November 1993 election but the Tribal Council is still in favour of the MRS.

Grace Thorpe, who is the Sac and Fox Tribal Health Commissioner and daughter of the legendary athlete Jim Thorpe, stated to the National Congress of American Indians, "The nuclear waste issue is causing mental and possibly genocidal decisions regarding the future of our people. It is wrong to say that it is natural that we, as Native Americans, should accept radioactive waste on our lands, as the US Department of Energy has said. It is a perversion of our beliefs and an insult to our intelligence to say that we are natural stewards of these wastes."

For further information please contact:
Western Shoshone National Council (WSNC)
P.O.B. 210
Indian Springs, Nevada 89018-0210
Ph/fax: 702- 879- 5203

Western Shoshone Health Project:
Citizen Alert Native American Program (CANAP)
att.: Virginia Sanchez
P.O.B. 5339 Reno, Nevada 89513
Tel: 702-827- 5511
Fax: 702- 827- 4299

I want to thank Ms. Renate Domnick for her support with this article.

Sources: Monitored Retrievable Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel in Indian Country: Liability, Sovereignty and Socioeconomics by Jon D. Erichson, Duane Chapman and Ronald F. Johnny (Working papers on Agricultural Economics, August 1992). □

OBITUARY:

ALEXANDER PIKA

by Inge M. Larsen and Jens Dahl

On a day early in September two skinboats vanished off the Far Eastern Russian coast of Chukotka. 14 people disappeared. Among them were Alexander Pika, graduate in historical sciences from Moscow University, board member of IWGIA and one of the founding members of IWGIA-Moscow. He was taking part in a scientific expedition, travelling from the Yupik (Eskimo) settlement of Sireniki to Provideniya. Their walrus skin boat was heavily loaded and a fishing boat offered them help. Since they had travelled some distance and the weather was fine they must have judged that there was no reason for changing plans. What happened is unknown, except for the fact that this and another skin boat travelling in the same area disappeared.

It came as a great shock to learn about the death of Sasha and other persons known to us, late on Sunday evening, September 10, three days after the incident.

Sasha was a courageous person. As a member of a small group he campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of issues concerning the rights of indigenous peoples in the Soviet Union at the same time as Gorbachov made his famous speech of Murmansk. From our very first meeting with Sasha we knew he was someone who was dedicated to what he did and never looked for personal reward. He was energetic and hard-working - always with a smile and a laugh. At serious meetings his enthusiasm, kind appearance and good humour always made their impact.

As a scientist Alexander Pika has a number of publications behind him. He published the notebooks of the Russian engineer Evladov, who travelled across the Yasmal Peninsula in the late 1920s, he is co-publisher of a book on neo-traditionalism and indigenous peoples in Russia and he is co-editor of an IWGIA document to be published early next year.

We have lost a loyal friend and travelling companion. His tragic death is a great blow to historical and ethnographic sciences, to IWGIA, and to us, his friends and colleagues. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Tanya and his two sons Andrei and Cyril. □



book received

A Citizens' Guide on the Multilateral Development Banks and Indigenous Peoples: The World Bank - Publication by Bank Information Center

Since the 1960s, when the World Bank turned its attention to funding large-scale projects in developing countries, indigenous peoples have confronted the environmental and social impacts of multilateral development bank (MDB)¹ activities. Indigenous peoples faced large-scale infrastructure and development projects in their lands, funded through MDB loans, for the construction of dams and roads, the expansion of irrigation systems, increased forest harvest and the establishment of plantations, and the expanded extraction of such natural resources as oil, gas and gold.

Such projects remain part of the MDBs' portfolios, but increasingly indigenous peoples are now also facing social and environmental impacts of MDB loans that aim to restructure key sectors of national production (such as agriculture or water resources, to promote privatization and export production) or to establish environmental conservation or protected areas, often designed without direct consultation with the peoples who have lived in these lands for centuries or time immemorial.

When responding to these projects and changes, indigenous peoples frequently find information difficult (if not impossible) to obtain from the government and the MDB involved. Frequently they turn to an international network of US, European, Canadian and Japanese NGOs for help in securing such information and documentation. More and more, indigenous peoples have effectively influenced their design, before the bulldozers rolled into their communities. In some cases, such as the World Bank Chico Dam project in the Philippines, indigenous peoples have even stopped a project from being developed.

Among the international NGOs that provide this type of support to indigenous peoples' efforts to influence MDB projects, a key actor is the Bank Information Center (BIC), with its Indigenous Peoples Program, Latin America and Ca-

ribbean Program, and Information and Documentation Center.

Established in 1987, BIC is a non-profit, non-governmental (NGO) environmental group based in Washington, D.C. It serves as a clearinghouse for information on World Bank and other MDB-related projects that might adversely affect the environment, indigenous peoples, or local communities. BIC seeks to empower people in MDB project-affected countries by helping them to obtain the information they need to become informed about the potential impacts of a project, and to gain the necessary access to make their views known directly to the MDBs. Working within a broader international NGO community, BIC also lobbies the MDBs for policy reforms in the areas of environmental standards, indigenous peoples, public participation and access to information.

In 1994, BIC established the Indigenous Peoples Program (IPP) to strengthen its ability to provide support to indigenous peoples attempting to learn about, influence or resist MDB-founded projects in their lands. The IPP focuses primarily on:

- (1) providing support, through information and training, to indigenous peoples in their efforts to establish networks and strengthen their capacities to monitor and respond to MDB projects;
- (2) pressing the MDBs to adopt and/or strengthen their policies and procedures on indigenous peoples;
- (3) supporting indigenous peoples in their demands to be directly consulted by the MDBs about policies, procedures or projects that affect their lives, livelihoods, cultures or lands; and
- (4) responding to requests from indigenous peoples or their representative organizations about specific MDB projects in their countries.

BIC's IPP staff works most directly with indigenous peoples and NGOs in Asia,

Africa, Eurasia and Russia, while the staff of its Latin America and Caribbean Program (LAC) work with indigenous peoples on projects throughout Latin America. On universal issues affecting indigenous peoples everywhere- for example, the World Bank's current process to revise its operational policy on indigenous peoples- the two programs work jointly to ensure that indigenous peoples of all regions are informed and involved.

The IPP has produced an important reference book, *A Citizens' Guide on the Multilateral Development Banks and Indigenous Peoples: The World Bank*, that describes World Bank policies and procedures and how indigenous peoples can take advantage of the opportunities for public participation required by these policies. This handbook is available both in English and Spanish at no cost to indigenous peoples and NGOs in developing countries.

To receive a copy of the *Citizens' Guide*, or to request information or help regarding an MDB project under consideration in your country, please contact: Ms. Cindy Buhl, Indigenous Peoples Program, Bank Information Center, 2025 "I" Street NW, Suite #400, Washington, D.C. 20433 USA. Tel: +1-202-466-8191. Fax: +1-202-466-8189. E-mail address: <bicusa@igc.apc.org>

¹ The Multilateral Developing Banks (MDBs) include the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Inter-American Development Bank. Indigenous peoples have also felt the impacts of and have had to confront the actions taken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Bank Information Center, a US-based environmental NGO, monitors all of these institutions except for the IMF. □

7th Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) General Meeting

by Jens Dahl

July 24-28, 1995

The general meeting of the ICC is convened every three years. This year's meeting took place in Nome, Alaska. Nome was founded at around the turn of the century as a gold mining town. Today, about half of the 4,000 inhabitants are Inuit (*Inupiat*) and the town is a regional centre with only a few goldminers left. The regional Native corporation (Bering Straits Regional Corporation) and the regional non-profit association (Kawerak Inc.) have their main offices here. Recently, Nome has become the gateway for flying into easternmost Siberia.

The ICC is an NGO with consultative status under ECOSOC. It was founded in 1977 with the participation of Inuit from Greenland, Canada and Alaska. During this year's meeting the Inuit from Russia became full members. The general assembly consists of 18 delegates from Greenland, 18 from Canada, 18 from Alaska and 18 from Russia. The rules for electing the delegates vary between the four countries. The ICC has an executive council made up of 2 delegates from each country. At the general assembly in 1992 Eileen McLean (Alaska) was elected president, but due to other responsibilities she soon gave up her position, which was taken over by Caleb Pungowiyi (Alaska).

Besides the ordinary delegates there was a large number of artists from the Arctic regions as well as specially invited VIPs and a few other observers. IWGIA seems to have been the only indigenous support NGO represented at the meeting. The *Saami* were represented there and the Greenland Home Rule Government had sent the Premier, three Ministers and several high ranking officials. From outside the Arctic area the ICC had invited Aron Johannis and John Hardbatt to represent the *Kwe* people of the Kalahari and the organisation, First People of the Kalahari, Botswana.

The meeting was addressed by the Governor of Alaska, Tony Knowles, the Premier of Greenland, Lars Emil Johansen, the Canadian Ambassador to the Arctic and former President of ICC, Mary Simon, the President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Julie Kitka, Alexander Omrypkir, President of the Chukotka Native Association, Loretta Bullard, President of Kawerak Inc. who hosted the meeting, Samuel Simmonds, Chairman of the Inuit Elders Conference and Jørgen Wæver Johansen, Chairman of the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council.

ICC activities 1992-1995

In his account to the General Assembly, Caleb Pungowiyi highlighted some of the ICC's achievements and activities of the last three years:

- The Arctic Council will now be established with the USA as a member and with the participation of the three regional indigenous Arctic organisations, the ICC, the Saami Council and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the Russian North.
- The formation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in which the three regional Arctic organisations are being included as permanent observers.
- The recognition by the IUCN of the Arctic as consisting of regions and an expressed IUCN interest in working with the AEPS.
- A strengthening of the ties between the three Arctic indigenous organisations as joined by the Arctic Leaders Summit.
- In 1993, the first International Inuit Business Development Conference was held in Anchorage, Alaska, with about 100 participants.

- The amendment of the US Marine Mammals Protection Act. The amendments were the result of ICC lobbying activities and include, among other things, the right to exchange products made from marine mammals for non-commercial purposes.
- Negotiation with the US authorities on the expansion of the visa-free programme between the USA and Russia to include the North Slope and Bethel regions.
- Participation in the International Whaling Commission and in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- Involvement in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP).

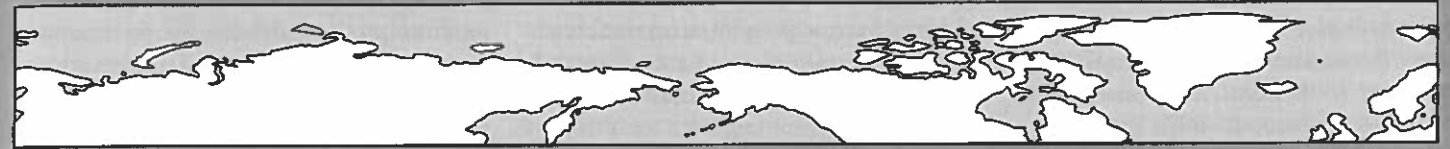
Important current issues

The state of affairs in the Arctic region was addressed by invited indigenous representatives. These reports were given by Julie Kitka (Alaska), Rosemarie Kuptana (Canada), Ludmila Ainana (Russia), Lars Emil Johansen (Greenland) and Olav Mathis Eira representing Saamiland.

Alaska

Julie Kitka highlighted three issues of predominant significance to Natives of Alaska.

The first is the subsistence issue. There are now different rules for subsistence on Alaskan state-owned land and on federal owned land. While the federal authorities give priority to 'rural residence', this has been contested by the state of Alaska under pressure from sports fishermen and sports hunters and under pressure from the urban predominantly White population. Julie Kitka outlined this development which has left Native peoples without any preference to subsistence. "The truth is that state politics have gradually, steadily



become more anti-subsistence, anti-rural and anti-Native, as the urban, non-Native majority has prevailed."

Secondly, she mentioned the quest for self-government and sovereignty claimed by the over 200 Native tribes (villages) of Alaska. This claim for recognition is a claim for the tribes to govern their own affairs in matters such as game regulation, law enforcement, immigration, etc.

Finally, Julie Kitka stressed the dire social state of affairs of Native communities: the low standard of living, alcohol and drug abuse and she commended the Alaska Natives Commission for having had the courage to state the real problem which is "the historical evolution of a self-destructive culture of dependency and powerlessness that is killing our people and destroying our communities."

Canada

The chairman of the Inuit Tapirissat of Canada, Rosemarie Kuptana, stressed a variety of themes in relation to the state of affairs in the Canadian Arctic.

The Canadian government seems to have decided to cut down funding which was reassigned to meet government obligations under the land claims agreements. This is being done in a situation of huge housing and social affairs problems.

Traditional subsistence activities are under pressure from pollution, from the anti-harvesting movements, from the European initiative to ban the import of certain fur products and from international treaties like the Migratory Birds Convention.

The Inuit of Labrador are now alone in not having entered a land claim agreement with the government. They are being opposed first of all by the provincial government, but also by lack of will on the part of the federal government in Ottawa. The situation in Labrador is now further aggravated by a huge mineral discovery.

Negotiations to establish a public gov-

ernment in northern Quebec continue even though the referendum on the future of that province within Canada makes the future uncertain. But the Inuit Tapirissat of Canada will not accept that the future of the Inuit of that province be decided upon by Quebec and have, therefore, announced a referendum to be held among all the Inuit of Canada to confirm the Inuit as a nation within Canada.

The implementation of the new Nunavut territory in 1999 (to be carved out of the existing Northwest Territories) continues, although the government is trying to delay the process and to make interpretations of the agreement as narrow as possible.

Russia

Ludmila Ainana gave a depressing picture of the situation of the indigenous peoples of northeast Russia.

The problems all over the Arctic seem to be the same, but they are more severe in Russia and the peoples of Russia are suffering. The indigenous peoples have no proper hunting equipment, no jobs and they suffer from all kinds of diseases, including tuberculosis.

The ICC office was recently established and this was due to economic support from outside Russia. They once received a gift from Alaska consisting of outboard engines, but they had to return them because the Russian authorities demanded a huge import tax on them.

Greenland

The Premier of Greenland, Lars Emil Johansen, spoke with great pride and enthusiasm about the accomplishments made by the people of Greenland during the 15 years of Home Rule.

According to the Home Rule agreement with Denmark, Greenland looks after its own rights and economy, and submits its recommendations to the Danish parliament in areas such as foreign policy and defense. Lars Emil Johansen

said that the Greenlandic government will seek to change that agreement this year to gain more influence in foreign affairs. Pressure for this change is a result of the controversial American base that was established in Thule through an agreement between Denmark and the US that did not involve consultations with the people of Greenland.

Lars Emil Johansen praised the relationship between Greenland and Denmark and concluded that "it has shown itself as an example to other indigenous peoples."

Social issues and health conditions

Before the panel discussion on this theme, Harold Napoleon (Alaska) addressed the audience. Mentioning the many problems relating to alcohol abuse, violence and self-destructive behaviour, he stressed that: "it's time to take a deep breath and decide how to make it to the end of time. We are survivors. We lost a lot of our people to diseases. We lost a lot of our cultures - we gave them up. We lost our languages." Addressing the Inuit leaders he said: "your challenge is to turn that around."

In a report from Chukotka, Valentina Golubeva, Deputy Mayor of Provideniya, enumerated the hardships suffered by the indigenous peoples of Chukotka: the high child mortality, the lack of food, shortage of boats, overcrowded, low-standard apartments, alcohol abuse, etc.

A number of suggestions emerged from the panel presentation and from the ensuing discussion. One of them came from Martha Flaherty, president of Pauktuutit, the national organisation of Inuit women in Canada. She suggested the establishment of an ICC facilitated network between Inuit in the various regions. Such exchange between women's groups would enhance knowledge about gender equality, family violence and other social issues.

A number of discussants gave examples of how the communities have tried to cope with alcohol abuse. In Alaska a number of communities have become dry. In the case of Barrow, alcohol-related problems had dropped 80% over nine months. A delegate from Greenland suggested that the ICC made contact with the Circumpolar Health Organisation in matters relating to health issues.

Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations

In an opening speech Dr. Noel Brown, representing the United Nations, stressed the significance of Agenda 21 and the contained recognition of indigenous peoples in relation to environmental management.

Henriette Rasmussen, Greenland, talked about the international involvement of the Inuit peoples, and, specifically, in connection with the ongoing processes within the UN system for promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. She suggested that the ICC should give priority to: 1) Working hard to lobby the Arctic governments in support of the establishment of a permanent forum within the UN, and to lobby the governments to endorse the Draft Declaration of Indigenous Peoples as adopted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations; 2) the ICC should work harder to bring knowledge about the situation of indigenous peoples from all over the world into the Inuit communities; and, finally 3) the ICC should organise and convene an international meeting with the purpose of discussing the permanent forum amongst indigenous peoples themselves.

Rosemarie Kuptana called for an intensive lobbying effort and top ICC priority in support of the Draft Declaration as it stands now, specifically the right to self-determination. "The right to self-determination is very important, because it is the very essence of collective rights. It recognizes the power and inherent right of each people to be distinct in deciding their own political, economic, social and cultural future", she said.

A Russian delegate urged the ICC to support the Russian indigenous peoples' demand for Russian ratification of ILO Convention 169.

The Arctic Council

The Canadian Ambassador to the Arctic, Mary Simon, presented an update on the development of the Arctic Council, which is expected to be put into effect in early 1996.

The Arctic Council is made up of the 8 Arctic Governments with direct participation of the three regional aboriginal organisations, the ICC, the Saami Council and the Association of Northern Indigenous Minorities in Russia. The Council will meet at least every second year and the chairmanship will rotate (Canada is expected to have the chair for the first two years). NGOs can be accredited; the accreditation process is currently being developed.

The establishment of the Arctic Council will make the ICC's input even more important and it will make it possible for the ICC to deal with all 8 countries at the same time instead of having to negotiate separately with each country.

The key objectives of the Arctic Council are: to discuss all issues relevant to the Arctic, to advance sustainable and equitable development, to discuss security related matters, to coordinate appropriate actions by the governments, to establish a system of early warning in relation to problems of common interests, to enhance cooperation and to further regional implementation of international agreements.

Resources and economic development

The Mayor of the North Slope Borough, Alaska, addressed the assembly explaining the economic success of his own Alaskan region. He finalised his presentation with three recommendations. The Inuit should develop the private sector in order to cope with government demands; the Inuit must develop economic plans and land use plans for the future; finally, he recommended that one should not always look for big projects, but develop plans which can be fulfilled by a few people.

From Quebec, Canada, a representative of Makivik Corporation, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, reported on economic progress within the Nunavik region. "Nunavik has evolved from being a Third World type region to one where people are now proud to live in and raise their families.

The reason behind this is that the Inuit of Nunavik have taken stock of themselves as individuals and because the federal and provincial governments have transferred large amounts of funds to the region". She also stressed the need for a change which focuses on the resources of the Nunavik region and on the formation of alliances between Inuit in different regions of the Arctic.

In Chukotka new companies are being established after the fall of the Soviet regime. The process of abolishing the old state farms and collective units is complicated and new companies are facing a number of difficulties. Some of these are: lack of capital, high costs of transportation, the bureaucracy and also direct sabotage by local and regional authorities. Dmitri Polusitov predicted that many of the social problems now facing the indigenous peoples of Chukotka will disappear when the economic conditions improve.

In Greenland the economy is to a very large extent controlled by the Home Rule authorities through various companies, and in Alaska some of the largest businesses are owned by Native corporations. A Greenlandic delegate pointed to the lack of economic leadership and also stressed that there are too many who have too little, and too few who have too much.

Several speakers mentioned the furthering of international Arctic business development and cooperation within the use of renewable and non-renewable resources and protection of handicraft and marketing of Arctic resources.

Environmental issues

In relation to these issues the ICC has been involved in the Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy which was significant in the establishment of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). The ICC is currently working on a report on the risk of contaminants for Arctic indigenous peoples for the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP).

Leslie Whitby, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, urged the ICC to take advantage of its official NGO status at the UN, and to keep attending international fora to put pressure on the international community to alleviate environmental contamination affecting the Arctic.

Several participants documented the existence of contaminants in the environment and in the Arctic flora and fauna. However, Ingmar Egede, Greenland, highlighted the danger of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic once again being abused by non-indigenous peoples and organisations. "While the risks from contaminants are real, there may be even greater risks from reacting too quickly, from avoiding our foods when their benefits still outweigh their risks," he said. "Our foods do more than nourish our bodies, they nourish our souls," he continued. "We must be careful to protect our spiritual legacy that has been passed down to us, and to continue to respect the benefits that Inuit food give to us Inuit... Only Inuit food can sustain the Inuit way of life," said Egede.

Among other issues, Robert Petersen, Rector of the University of Greenland, dealt with the animal rights movements which he called fundamentalistic. He warned against the type of colonialism practised by these dogmatic organisations and appealed to the assembly not to apply similar attitudes to counter attacks from outside. The Inuit need development, the Inuit need sustainability and the Inuit need cooperation between hunters and outsiders.

Several of the participants stressed the significance of subsistence to the Inuit way of life as the same time as all Inuit societies need to market their products. The Inuit not only have the right to subsistence, but also to use the living resources.

The involvement of Inuit in research and in the management of the resources was also dealt with, and Charlie Johnson, Alaska, stressed the significance of traditional knowledge and that the Inuit want cooperative management and not the type of co-management where the government manage and the Inuit cooperate.

Other activities

Besides the official ICC meetings there was also a major gathering organised by Inuit Elders and a meeting of the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council.

Every evening and during the daytime there were cultural activities performed by theatre groups, singers, dancers, artists, etc, from all over the Arctic. There were also exhibitions of various kinds.

Resolutions

At the end of the 5-day meeting the General Assembly adopted fourteen resolutions and a number of recommendations.

Among these were a resolution in support of the creation of the Arctic Council; support for the right of Inuit in Canada to harvest bowhead whales; a resolution which condemned the impending EU ban on the import of certain furs and resolutions on pollution of the fragile Arctic environment. In the resolutions and recommendations the ICC confirmed its commitment to support the UN Draft Universal Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to the establishment of a UN Permanent Forum. Within a year the ICC will host a con-

ference of indigenous peoples from all over the world to discuss the Permanent Forum and a special working group will coordinate activities connected with the UN Decade for Indigenous Peoples.

Election

There were two candidates for the presidency. From the Greenlandic delegation four persons sought nomination, but the final decision was to nominate Arqaluk Lyngé who, for many years, has been a member of the ICC executive council. The Canadian delegation nominated Rosmarie Kuptana as their candidate. Rosmarie Kuptana is president of the National organisation of Inuit in Canada, the Inuit Tapirissat of Canada.

During the first round of the election procedure Arqaluk Lyngé was nominated by the Greenlandic delegation and Rosemarie Kuptana by the Canadian and the Alaskan delegations. After two more rounds Rosemarie Kuptana had also gained support from the Russian delegation. When Arqaluk Lyngé then withdrew his candidacy the whole Greenlandic delegation gave their support to Rosemarie Kuptana, who will now serve as president of the ICC for the next three years.

(Note: Every morning during the 5-day meeting extracts of the previous day's events were being printed and made available to the participants. The quotations which appear above are mostly taken from these reviews). □

IWIGIA

A review of the main events
in the indigenous world

US\$ 17

THE INDIGENOUS
WORLD 1994-95

GREENLAND

Current Concerns of the Inuit People

The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action states:

'The World Conference recognizes the inherent dignity and the unique contribution of indigenous people to the development and plurality of society and strongly reaffirms the commitment of the international community to their economic, social and cultural well-being and their enjoyment of the fruits of sustainable development. States should ensure the full and free participation of indigenous people in all aspects of society, in particular in matters of concern to them. Considering the importance of the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people, and the contribution of such promotion and protection to the political and social stability of the States should, in accordance with international law, take concerted positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognize the value and diversity of their distinct identities, cultures and social organizations.'

The population of Greenland is 55,000 people, of which the Inuit are the majority (approx. 85per cent) Under the Greenland Home Rule, which was transferred to Greenland by adoptive law by Danish

Parliament after democratic and peaceful negotiations with Denmark, there is an elected Parliament with 31 members, and a seven-member Cabinet headed by the Premier. The Premier is responsible for the administration of the Home Rule, which has complete legislative power over internal affairs, with the exceptions of judicial and external and security affairs. These exceptions are being reconsidered by the Greenland Foreign Relations and Security Committee and by a research hearing of the joint commission on the Greenland judicial situation.

The Greenland Home Rule stresses the definition of indigenous peoples as collective entities being the first inhabitants of part of or all of the country. The Greenlanders have collective ownership of their land and resources.

Although we in Greenland are aware of the fact that our model for self-government may not be suitable for all other indigenous peoples, we hope that the way we have done it may be of inspiration both to states and other indigenous peoples. Our model shows that the principle of and the establishment of self-government does not necessarily mean secession or armed conflict - and that it is possible through negotiations and mutual respect to reach an agreement which can lead to self-

determination through self-government.

Home Rule has enabled us to establish our own priorities concerning our daily lives, and to plan the development of our society.

In addition to its material results, self-determination has also led to a noticeable change in the psychological climate in Greenland. It has brought a sense of empowerment, or what we could call surplus energy. At the International Women's Day this year, 1995, which was celebrated in many countries, Greenlandic women decided to pay tribute to the struggle of Guatemalan women by raising funds for an educational project for women in Guatemala, recommended by the UN ambassador, Rigoberta Menchú Tam. In general, the agenda at the local rallies for women concentrated on issues closely related to Greenlandic women's own struggles.

Our Home Rule, however, is commonly criticized for being 'guarded' by the capital, Nuuk, and that the situation is not much different from the post-colonial one where the guidelines for most planning and policies were set in Copenhagen, Denmark. That may be more an emotional reaction than a fact. But if we could look back and reorganize the introduction of Home Rule, there is no doubt that the uncritical transfer of the Danish legislative and administra-



cently, during Home Rule's 'adolescent phase', promoted slogans such as: 'Self-government to the roots - self -government to the villages' - greater respect for the Greenlandic language in both the political and administrative instances..' which shows that there are, or have been, problems concerning the implementation of Home Rule.

In addition, both the municipal authorities and the parliament have planned to cut down on the enormous administration, and this has been an important issue both in local and nationwide elections.

It is still an educational process for our people to keep structuring a Home Rule System in keeping with the decisions and aspirations of our people, and with fundamental freedoms and human rights.

In my opinion, land and resource ownership, including intellectual property, has never been questioned among us, the indigenous people of Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland.

During the introduction of the Home Rule, this issue was raised and, consequently, there was a dispute when the Inuit Ataqatigiit Party claimed full and collective ownership of the land and its resources. After a plebiscite the majority voted yes to Home Rule with clearly delimited ownership of land, resources and legislative power, not including the judicial system and foreign relations. The facts being presented in relation to Thule Air Base and the relocation of the local population to Qaanaaq, and the fact that the United States Air Force has violated agreements and has used the base as a depository for nuclear bombs, resulting in a disaster in 1968 when a plane loaded with nuclear bombs crashed, shows the weakness of the Home Rule Act in the face of powers like the US and also the weakness of the Danish state, which now has aroused consensus both in Greenland and Denmark.

That demonstrates the need to extend the sphere of Home Rule in the direction of reassuring the rights of we, the indigenous people of Greenland, and our way of life.

We are a partly industrialized society, with a modern infrastructure and mod-

ern fish processing factories caught in the big 'deep-freezer' - the Arctic sea. The limited company, Royal Greenland A/S, owned by the Home Rule, had its 10 year anniversary commemorating the date when it took over from the Danish state, and is, along with the tourism, the 'flagship' for the Greenlandic economy.

Tele Greenland A/S is a modern telecommunications system connecting the large island radio and television chain, telephone, telex and data networks, coastal radio and meteorological services, satellite communications for the benefit of sea and air traffic.

The trading company, KNI A/S, and its sister shipping company, Royal Arctic Line A/S, are partly owned by the Home Rule.

During the last few years, attempts at privatization in the field of Home Rule-owned companies is under political consideration - and that has created a shift in the political constellations of power.

Thus, a modern, industrialized Greenland coexists with a sizeable proportion of the population, who live a very traditional way of life in the hunting areas. The poverty in the villages results in urbanisation, which generates crowded towns and even worse misery and alienation. My experiences as a social minister during a 4-year period made me acutely aware of the high number of single parents, child neglect and violence against women, the unemployment and indifference which remain serious problems which can only be solved over a long period of time. We have implemented a policy which appealed to the public of deploying greater care and involvement to solve the social problems. We see a development in the right direction, although it has had its human price.

When the Greenlandic Home Rule is studied by other indigenous peoples of the world, it should be carefully noted that one should not inherit whatever system is used in the 'mother-country' - thus having a system enforced - instead of starting from the people, their situation, their demography, their traditions, and their culture.

Through the Danish delegation, Greenland Home Rule has attended both the Rio Declaration from 1992, the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights in 1993, and the Social Summit in 1995. The

Greenland Home Rule parliament has adopted the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and adjusted its legislation thereafter. An ombudsman system was established and the first ombudsman took office in the spring of 1995.

ILO Convention 169 was adopted by the Danish parliament at the request of the Greenland Home Rule, and, thus, Greenland Home Rule attends all UN-conventions ratified by the Danish Government.

But what will the future bring us?

There are serious threats to our existence - both as a people with our own culture - and as a Home-Ruled area. This is the key to our human rights and to the sustainable use of natural resources. Some countries and animal rights movements have banned our products.

We are wrongly accused of hunting some animal species to extinction - animal rights groups tend to regard these matters in such a sentimental manner - which has made it difficult to enter into a dialogue and to argue on an equal basis. The environmentalist movement has the relative advantages of global mobility, size, accessibility to information and the media. They do not understand the damage done to our culture and economy, and, thus, a violation of our rights to self-government and autonomy in matters relating to our own internal and local affairs - as stated by the Earth-Summit.

The threats to the survival of Inuit culture, to which we belong, come from the industrialized world of advanced technological development. One of these threats is the campaign of the environmental movements against the use of renewable resources.

Another, more serious, threat comes from transfrontier pollution from the industrialized countries in Europe and North America. This pollution often ends up in the Arctic regions, e.g. ozone-depleting substances, environmental poisons and radioactivity. These threats require the attention of the world community - and are threats we must all fight!

We, the indigenous peoples of the world, find it necessary to have influence. We have always been modest and non-imperialistic. Now, the times we live in and the international situation make it necessary for us to join in the shaping of a new world order, where former colonialists and indigenous peoples engage in a constructive dialogue.

We find it very important that the international community reaffirm its commitment to promote sustainable resource use and the continued right of indigenous peoples to make a living from the resources available to them as provided for in the Rio Declaration and the Indigenous People's Earth Charter of May 1992.

It was yet another major step forward when the UN Conference on Human Rights 1993 in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights established the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the indigenous peoples.

We have felt the noose tightening around our necks. We find it crucial that the world community should understand that we ourselves are responsible for the survival of our environment, and that we could, in fact, manage our own affairs, and would also need less help, if our right to sustainable development is respected.

"With few exceptions, indigenous peoples were never a part of State-building. They did not have the opportunity to participate in designing the modern constitution of the States in which they live, or to share, in any meaningful way, in national decision-making. In some countries they have been excluded by law or by force, but in many countries they have been separated by language, poverty, misery, and the prejudices of their non-indigenous neighbours. Whatever the reason, indigenous peoples in most countries have never been, and are not now, full partners in the political process, and lack others' ability to use democratic means to defend their fundamental rights and freedoms," - stated the Greek lawyer Madame Erica Daes in a speech.

In my opinion it is important to stress the right of indigenous peoples to economic development. A better economy, based on the traditions and knowledge of indigenous peoples and sustainable development, is an important condition for a better standard of living for indigenous peoples.

Another important UN conference, namely the Social Summit in Copenhagen in the spring of 1995, aimed to eradicate poverty by allowing the poor countries to develop their own economies, without which they are unable to survive as nations.

We have now entered the UN Decade for Indigenous Peoples. An important goal that we strongly wish to see fulfilled within the decade is the establishment of a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples. The Forum was approved at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and from the beginning it was a joint Denmark-Greenland endeavour.

To us Greenlanders, the decade presents an opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the conditions of the indigenous peoples. To us, the title of the Decade: -Indigenous Peoples - Partnership in Action first and foremost means the right to economic development. In Greenland we have been able to survive for thousands of years by utilizing our resources. Today, our survival depends on the development of the traditional uses of our resources. But our survival both as an indigenous people, even as a Home-ruled nation, has, therefore, reached a crucial point. We need to develop our production and to trade our products.

Our environment is often described as a 'wilderness' by the industrialized community and environmentalists. But to us, the people, it is the 'pinngortitaa', meaning 'creation' - of which we are a part.

Henriette Rasmussen is former Minister of Social Affairs in Greenland. □

by Claus Oreskov

Ultima Thule?

Recent disclosures with regard to the presence of nuclear weapons at the United States' Airforce Base at Thule, Greenland, in violation of Danish-Greenlandic law, have brought new relevance to the debate concerning the justification of the presence of the airbase and of the forced removal of Inughuit people in 1953. For 42 years the small population of Inughuit have waited patiently for compensation. Secrecy, a lost dossier and covert agreements at high levels of government make up central parts of the story.

In the 1950s Greenland was, for administrative purposes, divided into three parts: west, east and north. North-Greenland extended from 75 degrees north in the Melville Bay on the western side of Greenland, to the north-eastern bend in the east. In the northern section the Avanersuaq municipality, or the Thule district, is located, bordering to the south on the Steenstrup Glacier and to the north on the Hombolt Glacier. Since ancient times, this area has belonged to the Inughuit, also known as the Polar Eskimos. The climate of the district is Arctic, with long and severe winters and short, cool summers. In accordance with the light conditions, the year is divided into a dark and a light season. From October to the second half of February the sun does not rise above the horizon, and from about April 20 to August 20 it does not set below the horizon. Avanersuaq municipality has about 880 inhabitants, of whom 550 live in the town of Qaanaaq. As has always been the case in North-Greenland, the main occupation is hunting, mainly of seal, walrus and narwhal.

Kap York Station Thule

On the initiative of Knud Rasmussen, the West-Greenlandic Polar explorer, the Thule Committee was formed early in the century. In 1910 the Committee established the trading station, Kap York Station Thule, near the settlement of Ummannaq. Originally Knud Rasmussen had tried to persuade the Danish state to establish the trading station. How-

ever, at that time North-Greenland was not subject to the authority of the Danish colonial administration, and the Danish government did not wish to provoke American explorers and Scottish whalers with an interest in the area. The outcome was that the trading station Kap York was established as a private enterprise and continued to operate even after, in 1921, Denmark extended its sovereignty to all of present-day Greenland.

It is important to emphasize that the Committee was not granted any juridical, political or territorial rights by the Inughuit, but solely the permission to operate the trading station.

In 1927, the Thule Hunters Council was established with the purpose of defining the rules for a political and judicial authority in the community. Moreover, the Council functioned as an intermediate link between the Inughuit and the trading station, inasmuch as the factor, the doctor and the minister were members of the Council.

On June 7, 1929, following thoroughgoing discussions, the Hunters Council passed the laws of Kap York Station Thule. This body of laws consisted of a number of ordinances intended to secure the preservation of old customs and practices, while at the same time making allowances for problems that had arisen in more recent times, such as the regulation of preservation measures for game animals and rules governing social welfare.

The adoption of the Thule Law was regarded by many members of the colonial administration as a provocation directed against the colonial power's sovereignty over North-Greenland; others considered it to be a vigorous and healthy event. On October 30, 1931, the Danish state ratified the Thule Law.

In 1937, after the death of Knud Rasmussen in 1933, Denmark assumed control over the trading station. In the intervening years the station had been placed under the authority of the Greenland Administration. There was a general feeling on the part of the Administration that the same terms ought to be in force

in Thule as those governing the rest of Greenland. The Thule Hunters Council, however, did not intend to abandon the special privileges granted them by the Thule Law. The minutes of the Council's extraordinary meeting in August 1934 make it clear that the Council members were not against the Kap York Station being taken over by the Danish state, yet at the same time it was emphasized that: "the district was to continue being administered as a separate district, with due consideration to the special circumstances prevailing, and that no changes could be made in the present laws and customary rules without the consent of the Hunters Council."

In a letter addressed to the Hunters Council, dated July 6, 1937, Denmark's Prime Minister Stauning reassured the Council that: "the fact of the trade in Thule having been put under Danish auspices would not effect the existing legislation of the district".

Greenland during World War II

Up until World War II, Greenland was without strategic significance. At the time of the outbreak of the war, fear of a German occupation of Greenland arose in the United States. More specifically, there was apprehension that the Germans might expropriate the cryolite mine in Ivvituuq. Cryolite forms an important ingredient in the manufacture of aluminum, and it was to be expected that the belligerent powers would be interested in assuring access to this mineral.

At the time of Germany's occupation of Denmark on April 9, 1940, Henrik Kaufmann, the Danish ambassador to Washington, took it upon himself to make an agreement with the United States. The agreement granted the US the right to establish military bases in Greenland. After the American entry into the war, the bases served as intermediate fueling stations for airplanes flying between North America and England. The US undertook to guarantee the supply of fuel and food, etc., to Greenland. Furthermore, it was part of the agreement

that Greenland was to export all of its cryolite to the US.

After the war it was assumed on the part of Denmark that the US would close its bases in Greenland. The US, on the other hand, wished to keep the bases and asked for new and extended agreements regarding them. Only when Denmark joined NATO in 1949 did Denmark and the US come to an agreement concerning the defense of Greenland. The Americans were offered three locations for bases in Greenland: Nassarsuaq, Kangerlussuaq and Thule, besides the right to fly everywhere over Greenland. The Thule base was constructed in 1951-52 and was, strategically speaking, the most important of the three. The Americans had already built a weather and radio station and a nearby runway at Thule in 1946. From the base at Thule it was possible for B-36 and B-47 bomber planes to reach the Soviet Union with just one refueling in the air.

With the introduction of the intercontinental B-52 bombers the Thule base lost its importance for the refueling of planes; instead it became an important training site for the B-52s. Between the early 1960s and until 1968 thousands of flights of B-52s passed through Greenland's airspace. In the summer of 1953, the US installed Nike Hercules missile batteries in the immediate vicinity of Uummannaq, the settlement of the local population at Thule (not to be confused with Uummannaq in West-Greenland, located much further to the south than Thule). The missiles could be fitted with conventional weapons as well as with nuclear warheads, but were primarily intended for nuclear weapons. From 1961 on, the Thule airbase became part of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, a chain of missile warning installations.

An illegal base and the forced removal of the Inughuit

Although, according to the Thule Law, the Hunters Council was the legislative and judicial authority of the area, it was not consulted in connection with the accords concluded between Denmark and the US concerning the Thule base. The Inughuit were not allowed to express their opinion and have never given their consent to the airbase. Against that back-

ground the Danish eskimologist Jens Brøsted has concluded that the Danish state authorized the US to undertake an unlawful action by establishing an American military base at Thule (Jens Brøsted 1987.) In 1987 the Danish government appointed a committee to investigate events at and around the Thule base. The resulting report was finished in December of 1994. It states that the establishment of the airbase, and later the forced removal of the Inughuit, in all probability had negative effects on the population's hunting possibilities and, in consequence, on the living conditions of the population. Already in 1952, the author Peter Freuchen had pointed out that the pollution issuing from the base had frightened off a number of game animals from the area. Peter Freuchen had formerly spent about 10 years at Thule as factor for the Kap York Station, and he was very familiar with local conditions. These conditions entailed that the hunters had to travel farther and spend much more time than formerly to maintain their usual living standard. As a response to the scarcity of game, the removal of some of the hunter families had been discussed.

When the United States decided to install the Nike Hercules anti-aircraft batteries, it became clear that the inhabitants of Uummannaq had to be evacuated. This was due to the fact that the missile batteries were to be installed in and around the settlement. In the summer of 1953, the US made an application to the Danish government for permission to expand the base area and for permission to install the Nike Hercules batteries. During the negotiations it was emphasized by the Americans that the installment of the rockets in the town itself would be incompatible with the continued presence of the population. The Americans wanted a quick response, and this they got. On August 18, 1953, it was announced that the base might be expanded to cover all of the peninsula where the town was then located. In return, the Americans were to pay part of the moving and resettlement expenses for the new location, estimated at \$700,000. As was the case at the time of the initial establishment of the base itself, a decision was made without consulting the population and in direct vio-

lation of the Thule Law, which at that time possessed full juridical validity.

The removal of the population was begun in the month of May while the ice was still negotiable by dog sledge. 27 families numbering 116 persons in all were moved from Uummannaq. The greater part of them were rehoused in Qaanaaq, the rest were scattered throughout various settlements in the district.

Arrútak Kristiansen recounts:

I can confirm that we were forced to move. If we did not move voluntarily, we would not receive housing and our children would not be able to attend classes (Sermitsiaq, no. 31, 1995)

Sofie Eipe recounts:

We were given four days to move, otherwise the bulldozer would come and raze our houses (Sermitsiaq, no. 31, 1995)

When, after a few days' journey, the families arrived in their new settlement, they encountered a barren tract of land without any trace of the houses which they had been promised in return for their lost homes.

August Eipe remembers:

We felt like refuse when we saw that there were no new houses to move into. We lived in tents far into the autumn. Here pregnant women gave birth to their children (Sermitsiaq, no. 31, 1995)

The Inughuit sue for compensation

The presence of the Thule base on Inughuit land and the removal of the population from Uummannaq resulted in a deterioration of the quality of life among the Inughuit, caused by a combination of various factors:

- 1) Where the base itself is located, a considerable hunting area was lost.
- 2) The increase in the hunting frequency had a stress effect on the game animals in Qaanaaq and the other places to which the Uummannaq population had been moved. This negative effect was in turn reflected in a decline of life quality among the original inhabitants of those places.
- 3) The possibility of communication between the northern and southern areas of the Thule district was reduced; the district had simply been cut in two by



Nike Hercules Missile in Thule - photo: Hans Minor Møller (1959)

the base. This meant that the sledge routes between north and south became considerably longer than before.

- 4) The new dwellings in Qaanaaq were more expensive to heat than most of those that had been left behind. (The new houses did however represent less of a health hazard than the old peat houses in Uummannaq, so the danger of tuberculosis was greatly reduced.)
- 5) Noise and pollution from the base constitute a severe nuisance to the local fauna.

Upon this basis, the Thule Hunters Council decided to sue for compensation. Because the Council was not familiar with the prescribed procedure for such a suit, no reaction followed their applications in 1954, 1956, 1958, and 1959; only in 1960 was the suit tried before the relevant Danish authorities. The Danish state refused to comply with the demands for compensation put forward by the Inughuit, claiming that the people involved had already received a sort of compensa-

tion in the form of the rehousing which had taken place. In the same vein, it has been emphasized repeatedly that certain groups among the Inughuit had already expressed their wish to move away from Uummannaq because of the decline in hunting conditions in the area. The fact that the reduced hunting is caused by the proximity of the airbase seems to play no role.

The procedure by which the suit for compensation was processed in the Greenland Ministry is not known, nor can it be ascertained whether the case was ever put before the Danish government or the relevant minister, owing to the fact that the Ministry's dossier no. 0440-01: 'The Thule Council's Claim for Compensation for Lost Hunting Grounds' has vanished.

In June 1985, the Greenland Home Rule government put forth a proposal to establish a Thule Fund, the purpose of which would be to finance the construction of new housing in Qaanaaq to replace the houses built in 1953, which are

by now totally worn down. It was thought that the Thule Fund would be financed by the American authorities, and that the balance would not be less than \$300,000. The Home Rule government stressed that the fund should be created as an acknowledgement that people in Greenland ought to have some direct economic benefit from the presence of the base. The scheme to establish a Thule Fund has never been realized.

On June 24, 1985, an important book dealing with the Thule affair, *Thule Hunters and Military Installations*, written by two Danish eskimologists, Jens Brøsted and Mads Fægteborg, was published in Denmark. The very next day, Avanersuaq (Thule) municipality filed new claims for compensation in connection with the 1953 removal of the population. The Danish state rejected the demands, yet made proposals to carry into effect a number of improvements of the present conditions. The proposals included an increase in the construction of housing in Avanersuaq, improved conditions for the sale

of local products, and easier hunting access - especially of fox - near the base. Brøsted and Fægteborg's book had created such a stir that the Danish government, as already mentioned, felt obliged to appoint a committee to investigate and elucidate the events related to the Thule affair.

The B-52 bomber crash in 1968

On January 21, 1968, an American B-52 bomber aircraft carrying four mega hydrogen bombs crashed into the Wolstenholme Fjord, 11 kilometers west of the Thule base. The crash caused plutonium contamination, the degree and extent of which it was not possible to establish immediately. Not until 19 hours after the accident did the news of it reach Denmark. The United States had deliberately kept back the news, fearing that it might cause political complications. The reason for this was that in peacetime nuclear weapons must not be present on Danish territory, and this injunction naturally applies to Greenland as well. The Greenlandic and Danish general public were reassured with guarantees to the effect that this was a question of a unique occurrence.

What remained was the problem of the Greenlandic and Danish workers who, without any form of special protection, had undertaken the cleaning-up job of debris after the crash. To make matters worse, there had been no attempt to inform these workers of the danger of nuclear radiation. One hunter from Thule, Mamarut Qujaukitsoq, who participated in the cleaning up, has recounted how they even made tea using snow from the crash site. The size of an eventual compensation to be paid to the Greenlandic-Danish clean-up crew has not yet been settled.

Parts of one of the four H-bombs have never been retrieved. Local hunters have through the years observed a number of deformities in the seal population, and suspect that the area may be contaminated.

A secret defense deal

In a report published on June 29, 1995, the Danish government made public the fact that it had become aware that the US had kept nuclear weapons in Greenland. Since sometime near the end of

the 1950s and until the fatal crash in 1968, B-52 bombers carrying atomic weapons had made thousands of flights over Greenland. Furthermore, the report stated, atomic weapons had been stored at the Thule base. More specifically, 48 nuclear warheads intended for the controversial Nike Hercules missile batteries were involved. These were the very same batteries that had been the cause of the forced removal of the Inughuit.

The report also revealed that in 1957 the Danish Prime Minister, H.C. Hansen, supposedly gave the Americans his tacit acceptance of their nuclear policy in Greenland. In the report the Danish government makes the claim that, in view of this tacit agreement, the US has acted in good faith. There are several indications, however, that the Danish government wishes to whitewash the US and pin the responsibility on the late Prime Minister H.C. Hansen alone.

The actual events of November 1957 are that the US, in strictest confidence, inquired of the Danish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs whether his government wished to be kept informed in the event that, in carrying out the agreement from 1957 concerning the defense of Greenland, the US stationed nuclear weapons in Greenland. H.C. Hansen replied that, in view of the fact that there were no current plans for such a stationing, he saw no reason why he should venture an opinion on the matter. This was of course an answer which could be used by the Americans to continue their nuclear policy in Greenland. But to refer to it as 'an agreement', or to claim that the Americans acted in good faith, is but an expression of the powerlessness of a small nation vis-à-vis its powerful ally.

A recently established institute called DUPI (the Institute of Danish Foreign Affairs) has been given the task of investigating the events and history behind the placement of atomic weapons in Greenland. The Institute's report is to be finished in the spring of 1996, and the investigation is to cover only the years from 1957 to 1968. The United States has issued guarantees that after 1968 no nuclear weapons were stationed in Greenland. The Danish government has elected to trust these guarantees instead of ex-

panding the investigation to include the period after 1968 as well.

Tourism

The town of Qaanaq and the settlements in the area are accessible to travelers only via the Thule airbase, where the passenger-planes land. The local inhabitants have long wished to develop the potentials for tourism in their area; the hunters hope to gain subsidiary incomes by serving as dog sledge drivers for tourists. Because of the many restrictions put on civilian air traffic by the military airport, it has so far proved impossible to expand tourism. Last spring, after the first visits by small groups, the base authorities put a complete stop to any further group travel.

Ultima Thule?

The recent disclosures with regard to the presence of nuclear weapons at the Thule airbase have provoked renewed interest in the debate concerning the base, the removal of the Inughuit, a possible compensation, and the work of cleaning up after the B-52 crash in 1968.

The people at Thule have hopes that a Thule Fund will now be established, and that more civilian air traffic will be allowed at the base. August Eipe, the mayor of Qaanaq, has expressed the view that the time has come to finish cleaning up the site of the crashed B-52 bomber. The inhabitants of Qaanaq municipality would like to have Greenland's Parliament conduct their claims case before the Danish state - and they are, moreover, hoping for a friendly gesture from Denmark.

The Prime Minister seems well disposed toward a proposal to include a representative from Greenland at the DUPI (Institute of Danish Foreign Affairs).

As regards the removal of the Thule population, the Prime Minister awaits the result of a hearing from the Home Rule government, after which this matter most probably will be considered one final time.

With relation to compensation to the Thule workers who took part in the cleaning-up of contaminated debris in 1968, the result of yet another hearing is expected in the autumn of 1995. Accordingly, the last distance to ULTIMA THULE still remains to be traveled. □



13th Session United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Geneva, 24-28 July 1995

PHILIPPINES

Statement by the Mangyans of Mindoro

Presented by

William Solina
Samahang Pantribo ng mga
Mangyan sa Mindoro
(Mangyan Organization
in Mindoro)

Madam Chair,
Greetings from the Mangyans in Mindoro, Philippines!

Madam Chair, the participants in this session, other NGOs and friends advocating indigenous peoples rights, on behalf of the Organization of the Mangyans in Mindoro Island, good afternoon.

Before anything else, I would like to share with you a brief background of the Mangyans in Mindoro.

The Mangyans were the original people in Mindoro before the coming of the colonizers. They freely and peacefully lived in a land abundant with natural resources from the sea shores and vast flat lands. Like the other indigenous peoples, our economic subsistence is linked to the land.

The Mangyans can be found in the two provinces of Mindoro and comprise seven tribes. We are 14-20 per cent of the total population in the Island.

The Mangyans were driven to the mountainous regions of the Island and left the lands nurtured by our ancestors. It is in these interior islands that we have started to make our livelihood according to the systems we practised since birth. Madam Chair, the reasons for our continued displacements are: (1) land titling policies of the government, (2) mining

laws, and (3) Presidential Decree No. 705 that classifies our lands as part of the public domain being under the 18 per cent slope.

Herein lies the tremendous discrimination compounded with deceit, violence and deception which has intensified the control of the elite and the corporations over our ancestral lands. What is the response of the government? It promotes various land tenurial options, such as the Community Stewardship Contract allowing indigenous peoples to use the land for a period of 25 years, and the Forest Stewardship Agreement. The government promotes these policies while allowing mining concessions, pasture lease agreements, tamaraw (wild buffalo) reservations, commercial tree plantations and others to remain in force in our ancestral lands.

Recently, the government further developed its responsibility to look into the Mangyans' demands. It implemented the Low Income Upland Community Program, funded by the Asian Development Bank, simultaneously with the enactment of the National Integrated Protected Areas System. The Mangyan Heritage Nature Park (MHNP) is one of 10 priority sites. The MHNP comprises 27 per cent of the total land area of Mindoro. Meanwhile, the construction of mini-hydro dams on the Island is being pursued by the government.

To quell the resistance and reactions of the Mangyans the government has passed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Department Administrative Order No. 2 for the Identification, Delineation and Recognition of Ancestral Domain/Land Claims. Madam Chair, this Order does not recognize the ancestral land ownership of the indigenous peoples. Instead it further facilitates the opportunities for landgrab-

bing in view of the fact that the indigenous peoples' right to control, manage, develop and reap the fruits of the ancestral domain are not recognized.

On the whole, Mindoro will become just a resource base for raw materials to supply the needs of the Industrial Zones. In pursuit of the Philippines 2000 Vision, the government is implementing land use conversions while the Total War Policy is continuously enforced displacing the non-indigenous peasants as well as the indigenous peoples.

Madam Chair, the plants and animals fare better than we do because there are designated places for them. The indigenous peoples have no right to own land for their self-determination. Thank you! □

PHILIPPINES

Statement by the Lumad people of Mindanaw

Presented by

Edtami Mansagayan
Lumad Mindanaw
Peoples Federation

Madam Chairperson, considering that the formal task of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations is to review national developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, our organization, the Lumad Mindanaw Peoples Federation, respectfully draws your attention to our continuing struggle for equal opportunity to

survive and pursue our development in our respective ancestral domain.

First and foremost, we want to make it clear to this honourable Working Group that up to this particular point in time, the government of the Republic of the Philippines has no existing specific law that recognizes and protects the collective fundamental rights of the indigenous peoples to their respective ancestral domains. As such, the Philippine legal system does not have the necessary legal instruments to interpret and much less to understand, respect and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the indigenous peoples.

The Lumad peoples of Mindanaw, as well as the other indigenous peoples of Philippines, continue to suffer from the colonial legacy which has reduced our peoples to the status of national minorities and cultural minorities. The present government has referred to us as 'indigenous cultural communities'.

On June 17, 1994, President Ramos issued a Memorandum Order 213, approving and directing the implementation of the Social Reform Agenda. The Social Reform Agenda contains a list of the Ramos government's flagship programmes designed to make the Philippines a newly industrialized country by the year 2000. Concern for the so-called 'indigenous cultural communities' is included in the Social Reform Agenda under this Memorandum Order, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, through the Department Administrative Order Number 02 series of 1993, which concerns the identification and delineation of ancestral land. After undergoing a long process set up by the government, a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims will be issued to certain individuals or a community.

We want to make it clear that the Social Reform Agenda of the Ramos government cannot bring about real reforms and development to indigenous peoples because it does not take the necessary basic step of changing the existing land laws that do not recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to their respective ancestral domains. Our organization firmly believes that the delineation and identification of the respective ancestral domains of each tribe cannot be done by the government alone based on its lim-

ited understanding of the indigenous peoples.

Issuing a certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims cannot help the long standing problems of the Lumad peoples' respective ancestral domains. The protection of the Lumad peoples' right to their respective ancestral domains is through the exercise of self-determination. This cannot be satisfied with the issuance of certificates that cannot even protect our rights to land which had been unjustly taken away from us through the imposition of government so-called development projects. The ancestral domain of our brothers and sisters of the *B-laan* tribes in the southern part of Mindanao is constantly threatened by the Western Mining Corporation, an Australian transnational corporation. The ancestral land of the Aromanon Manobo in Carmen, Cotabato, has been taken by the Philippine Coconut Authority and the Department of Agriculture through a project funded by the World Bank.

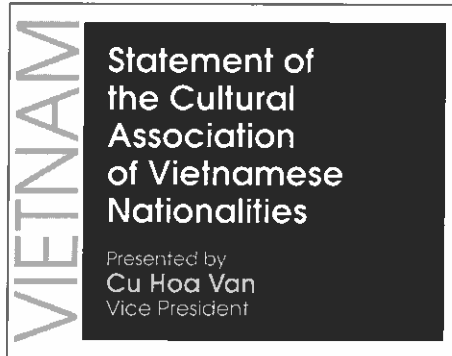
When the government refers to us as indigenous cultural communities, it means that we do not have rights as collective people. With this lack of recognition and understanding, the government continues to impose its own concept of development on us. And development imposed upon our ancestral domain always means the all out exploitation of natural resources, constant dislocation of our people, destruction of our environment and desecration of sacred grounds. As a result it has pushed us to our present day sub-human living conditions.

All we are asking is the recognition of our collective rights as a distinct people to decide our own development. We believe that no amount of external assistance can make our situation better.

We also believe that any hope that our government will form a better understanding of the question of indigenous peoples comes from this honourable body. With sincere appreciation for the work you have been doing, the Lumad Mindanaw Peoples Federation joins other indigenous brothers and sisters of the world to extend our gratitude for the kindness and understanding you are giving to us. Thank you.

Lumad Mindanaw Peoples Federation Mailing
Address: P.O. Box 80905 - 8000 Davao City - Philippines

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Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am a descendent of the Hmong nationality, a Vietnamese ethnic minority. I am very honoured to have been invited to this meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. I would like to express my warmest congratulations to your Excellency and friends.

Madam President,

A document has been circulated within the Working Group which is nothing less than a falsification of the reality in Vietnam and which is, pure and simply, serving political ends.

In reality:

Vietnam is made up of many nationalities. According to scientific investigations carried out by the State, there are at present 54 nationalities within the Vietnamese community, of which 53 ethnic minorities represent 13 per cent of the country's population. The nationalities all have a tradition of union and mutual respect for the construction and defense of the country. All the nationalities, majorities as well as minorities, have contributed together to the writing of history and the construction of the national culture. During the national liberation struggle, President Ho Chi Minh returned from abroad to the area inhabited by ethnic minorities to build the revolutionary base which would serve as the spearhead for the liberation for the whole country. The fact that his close assistants came from the ethnic minorities and were later made generals of the Vietnamese Popular Army is proof of this. The different nationalities together understand, protect and help each other in the construction of villages and communal hamlets. Moreover, each nationality guards its own cul-

tural identity, its knowledge, language, practices and customs. For historical and social reasons the development of all the nationalities has not been even: some are developing faster than others.

The immutable State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's policy of nationalities is clearly articulated in the 1992 Constitution (article 5): "The state of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a state unified by all the ethnic groups living in Vietnamese territory. The state has a policy of equality, union and cooperation between the ethnic groups. It prohibits any act of ostracism and ethnic discrimination. Each ethnic group has the right to use its language, its writing, to conserve its national identity and value its habits and customs, traditions and cultures. The state maintains a policy of integral development in relation to compatriots from the ethnic minorities, gradually improving the conditions of their material and spiritual life".

Working from this position, we endorse and promote the struggle against tribes and ethnic groups for the protection of the legitimate interests of all the nationalities.

The results which have been achieved in implementation of this policy are very satisfactory and forward-looking. The state has initiated various national programmes to build infrastructure for the socioeconomic development of regions inhabited by ethnic minorities: Programme 327, the programme of support for ethnic groups in difficulty, programmes against malaria and goitre, programmes to eliminate illiteracy and for educational development. In a situation characterised by a development guided by market mechanisms, the state has implemented a policy of transport subsidies for basic items to the ethnic minority regions and, as a consequence, the appearance of these regions has changed significantly. Self-sufficient production, including in some places gathering of natural resources, has developed in the sense of having become commercial production. For example, in my birthplace, a region very far away and isolated from the widerworld, where only some 20 years ago the bicycle was unknown, today there are serviceable roads and also nurses to tend to the health of the population.

All the nationalities have the right to, and ought to participate in, the management of the state. They have the right to be elected and to elect state bodies at the local and central levels. In the current legislation deputies from ethnic minorities represent 16 per cent of the whole country. In the areas inhabited by different ethnic minorities the presidents of the popular committees come from the ethnic minorities. At the central level, the ministers, vice ministers, department chiefs, several army generals and the President of the National Assembly are members of ethnic minorities. Thanks to the decision to open up more boarding schools at the district level in the mountainous and backward regions, ethnic minority children have access to general and university education under the care of the state. There are four regions and four universities reserved for the members of nationalities. Of the 32 members of the Council of Nationalities, 31 are from national minorities and the majority of them have university and higher education and are extremely capable of participating in the work of the National Assembly. All the nationalities benefit from state policies. Similarly, they are united as if they have one heart and support each other in the construction and defense of the country.

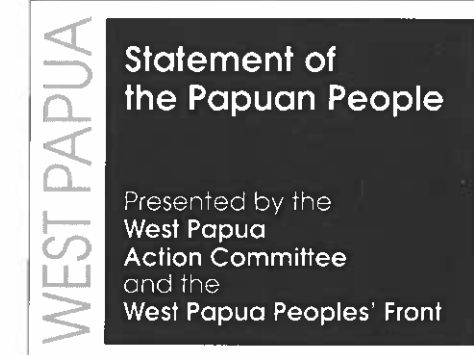
Nevertheless, there are still shortcomings:

- The development of the nationalities is not uniform. In general the ethnic minorities experience many difficulties and need help.
- Infrastructure, especially communication and transport, continues to be weak; the land is on the whole eroded and degraded as a result of forest destruction. In order to return to verdant hills, fertile soils and to regenerate the aquatic resources, capital investment is needed as well as long term perseverance.

The orientations and solutions for the coming period consist of a persistent and determined search for means of carrying out the policy for nationalities detailed in the Constitution. The state will make adequate investments and transfer of technology in order to develop production and raise the quality of life. These

material conditions are the basis for achieving equality between the nationalities. We must also improve the organisational structure of the education system in order to train and produce staff from the ethnic minorities. At the same time, forms of awareness-raising and education must be encouraged to promote a sense of worth and confidence among the peoples of all nationalities so that they can use their own strength to achieve an equal development with the support of their fraternal nationalities and the state.

With a policy of renovation, openness and friendship with all countries and all peoples, we hope that here at this meeting we will be able to share experiences on the question of nationalities. □



Madam Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Working Group, on behalf of a joint delegation of the West Papua Peoples' Front and the West Papua Action Committee I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you and the honourable members of the Working Group. We are here to represent the Papuan peoples in West Papua, the indigenous peoples of the western part of the Melanesian island of New Guinea.

In West Papua, the interventions from outside in the form of extractive enterprises, market economy and immigration are numerous and beyond the control of the indigenous peoples. Any opposition or even questions from the indigenous peoples regarding these developments are branded as subversive and severely punished as we will report to you in this statement.

The word 'papua' was given to our people centuries ago and we have accepted this as a general name for the Melanesian people living in West Papua. In fact there are over 240 different peoples with their own names.

Since 1963, we have been ruled by Indonesia after a so-called Act of Free Choice in which the Papuans were offered the choice between joining Indonesia or becoming independent. Under the eye of the United Nations, which was physically present during this Act, 1,025 Papuans were intimidated and forced to opt for integration into Indonesia. As a result, on the current world map West Papua is referred to as Irian Jaya, the 26th province of Indonesia.

The area of West Papua is 410,660 sq. kilometres (160,500 sq. miles) with a population of 1.6 million according to Indonesian statistics. There is a strong belief that this figure is less than the actual number of inhabitants and that this is one of Indonesia's strategies to stimulate migration to West Papua by claiming that the land is underpopulated. Indonesian statistics do not discern between the newcomers and the indigenous Papuan population. Every person living in West Papua is supposed to be called 'Irianese'; the use of the word Papua is branded as subversive. Nevertheless, the assumption that the Papuans will be a minority in their own country within a short time is not unrealistic, since there are 3,600 immigrants coming to our country every month. This figure doesn't yet include the immigrants who are coming through the Transmigration Program executed by the Indonesian government.

On July 18-19, 1995, the Consultative Group for Indonesia met in Paris under the chairmanship of the World Bank. As a result Indonesia received US\$ 5.36 billion for the next year to support human resource development and poverty reduction, infrastructure, environmental protection and private sector development. The implementation of these objectives will have a national character and therefore will affect West Papua as well. For many years now, Indonesia has received foreign aid to develop the country, first through the InterGovernmental Group for Indonesia and now through the Consultative Group for Indonesia. Unfortunately, the indigenous peoples

of West Papua do not see any prosperity coming from this foreign support for Indonesia and no one has been able to convince us yet or has come with substantial evidence to prove that West Papua is better off as a part of Indonesia. On the contrary, the pressure on the indigenous peoples in West Papua increases day by day and threatens our actual survival as distinct cultures, political and economic structures.

Exploitation of natural resources

In the past years it has become more evident that West Papua is used as an area where quick and easy profits can be obtained. On April 5, 1995, the Human Rights Office of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid published a report based on eyewitness accounts about protests by the Amungme people of West Papua in the vicinity of one of the world's largest copper mines, owned by the American Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold.

Since May 1994, the Amungme, Dani and other indigenous peoples in the area have been protesting against foreign occupation and exploitation of resources. Among these protests were flag raising and peaceful demonstrations. The brutal response of the ABRI, the Indonesian military, left at least 37 people dead between June 1994 and February 1995. Many people were accused of supporting the liberation movement, the OPM, which was held responsible for the uprisings. In April of this year two men were killed in and around Timika in the same region where Freeport is operating. In one of the cases, a large crowd of more than six hundred witnessed the atrocity.

Resettlement

Since the beginning of 1995, there have been reports of the planned resettlement of at least two thousand indigenous people from the Waa valley, the Tsinga valley and the Arwaa valley, away from the vicinity of the Freeport copper mine. They were ordered to move by the company's security personnel. The resettlement has been confirmed in a statement by the regional military commander and was reported in the local media. He later stated that between three hundred and five hundred families will be resettled in a specially designated area.

In 1991 Freeport signed a new contract

with Indonesia adding 2.5 million hectares to its concession area. The chairman of Freeport McMoRan, Mr James R. Moffett, recently told the Australians that the West Papua story was just beginning for the company. "The potential is only limited by the imagination", he said. We can imagine what the effects on the indigenous peoples will be and therefore we ask the honourable members of the Working Group to support our claim for a moratorium on the exploitation of resources in the ancestral homelands of West Papua and to discuss it with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and other international institutions, as a result of a consistent policy in the UN-system.

West Papuans are now suffering from discrimination, population transfer, forced assimilation, aggressive development policies, forced labour, corruption, intimidation, torture, rape and assassination. We know we cannot elaborate on all these issues in this statement but we would like to draw your attention to the health situation.

In short, the health situation of many Papuans is deteriorating and diseases that had already vanished are occurring again. Medical facilities are not enough and traditional medicines can't always cope with the many diseases, especially when they occur on a large scale or are new to the people. On the other hand, the Indonesian government is using medical facilities to implement the Family Planning Program in West Papua using forced sterilisation and birth control by injections for both women and men. We wonder why the Papuans have to take part in a national Family Planning Program when migration to West Papua is stimulated in all possible ways? For the Papuans it is clear who has to make room for who.

We urge the members of the Working Group to recommend to the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to monitor the situation in West Papua, which eventually may result in the stationing of a UN Monitoring Mission to investigate the reported human rights violations against the indigenous peoples of West Papua. PAPUA MERDEKA. Thank you for your attention.

West Papua Action Committee P.O. Box 608 Boroko, NCD Papua New Guinea ph: (675) 258 063 fax:(675) 252 917
West Papua Peoples' Front P.O. Box 75916 1007 AX Amsterdam Netherlands. □



Madam Chair,

I bring greetings from the Enxet people of the Paraguayan Chaco in whose representation I am here. We are 16,000 people and for more than 13 years we have been struggling to recover our territory.

Until the beginning of the century we lived independently. However, although the Paraguayan State had never set foot on our territory, some hundred years ago our land was sold to foreigners. Those who bought the land soon invaded our lands to extract wood and set up cattle ranches. Many indigenous people died because of new diseases and others were killed by the invaders.

This is how we were deprived of our land which today is entirely privately owned. We have been forced to settle in the new cattle ranches and work for the owners as cheap labour. This situation has not changed. Although the minimum wage in the Paraguayan Chaco is 100 dollars very few indigenous people earn this amount. Until recently, the ranch on which I work paid us only 40 dollars a month. We were never given holidays or any other kind of benefits. In other ranches indigenous workers are paid only once a year and on that occasion only receive between 50 and 100 dollars. The situation at the ranch where I work has improved simply because we are suing the owner.

However, the majority of indigenous people in my area do not have work and each community has unemployment of between 70 per cent and 100 per cent. We are only able to survive by practising our traditional activities such as hunting and fishing. Even this is becoming increasingly difficult since many ranch owners have banned us from entering their properties. Additionally, in recent years ranchers are continually felling more

of our forests so as to plant pasture. In this way the areas we use have been reduced and often we have little food.

Furthermore, the health situation of the Enxet people is very difficult. There is much tuberculosis and many children die. The Paraguayan government does not provide health services, and in many communities children have not received vaccinations for over 10 years.

The only solution to our problems is for us to recover our territory. That is why we are requesting that the Paraguayan government secure 163,000 hectares for 14 communities. This is not much land bearing in mind the Chaco's physical conditions and it barely complies with the minimum set by law. In fact, it does not even represent 8 per cent of what we were unjustly deprived of.

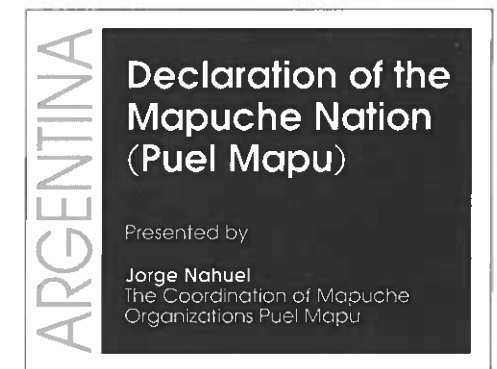
Paraguayan legislation gives us strong support. The National Constitution says: "Indigenous peoples have the right to the communal property of land, of sufficient quality and extension for the preservation and development of their particular ways of living". Additionally, in 1993, Paraguay ratified Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization.

However, the government has done nothing to settle our claims. It was not the indigenous people who passed the laws that acknowledges our rights, but the government itself. Apparently it does not intend to respect its own legislation. The Constitution clearly establishes that the State must provide us with land without cost, but to date no money has been put in the national budgets as compensation for the ranch owners whose land we are claiming. Currently we are requesting that the government of Paraguay increase the 1995 budget and puts the rest of the funds required to settle our claims in the 1996 budget.

The land owners whose land we claim have not displayed the same inefficiency as the government. They have subjected our people to all kinds of pressure. Some have been expelled from their communities and their homes have been burnt down; others have received death threats; we cannot have domestic animals and our free transit and visits by our lawyers have been forbidden. Additionally, some of the claimed land has been felled and is no longer of any use to us. We

have obtained judicial orders to forbid felling but they are not respected. Many ranchers are in contempt of court but nothing has been done to stop them.

Our situation is very serious and it is of utmost importance that the government of Paraguay settle our claims as soon as possible. Land prices in the Chaco are rapidly increasing and forests are disappearing. Unfortunately, it seems that the government has little interest in fulfilling its obligations. In January this year in Davos, Switzerland, President Wasmosy denied that the indigenous peoples of Paraguay want land. Also the Minister of Foreign Affairs described our claims as a fantasy. Consequently we ask the international community to support our claims and find ways to put pressure on Paraguay so that it complies with its own legislation. More specifically, we request that the European Union does not implement the Project for Sustainable Development of the Paraguayan Chaco before we have received our land. □



Distinguished indigenous representatives and state representatives, President of the XIII Session:

In the name of our Mapuche Nation of Argentina, Puel Mapu (which means nation), and in the name of the Coordination of Mapuche Organizations, *Taiñ Kiñegetuam*, we want to inform you about precisely what has happened and how basic indigenous rights have developed in relation to the Argentinean state.

The Argentinean state debated the re-drafting of its Constitution by means of a National Constituent Convention. This has resulted in the suppression of the clause which promoted the conversion of the indigenous people to Catholicism

and has been replaced by complementary rights which hypocritically resolve a conflict which, in fact, still persists in all its dimensions. This situation has taught us that to simply recognise the physical existence of the 'Original Peoples' will not be enough but that we have to move towards territorial recognition with self-determination. And to guarantee that these materialise. To do this there needs to be changes in the nature and the legal and political institution of the Argentinean state.

Madam President, we put it to you and the honourable representatives gathered here that there is a real need for the Argentinean executive to ratify ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous Peoples, which was approved in 1989. Convention 169 has been ratified by National Congress Law 24.071 but it has still delayed in an arbitrary and manifestly unjust way its ratification in Geneva. When Mapuche rights are not recognised it leaves the way open for the penetration and exploitation of Mapuche territory and our natural resources. Our *Wall Mapu* is being invaded and contaminated. With the limited time available here I refer to some specific cases:

Situated in the department of Alumine, in the province of Neuquen is Pulmari, our 11,000 hectare ancestral territory. Pulmari has a very rich environment and history and its prodigious resources include seven lakes and five rivers. Today, however, Pulmari, is administered by an Interstate Corporation which is comprised of representatives of the national and state govern-

ments. Of the eight members of the Corporation's directorate only one represents the communities of Salazar, Aigo, Currumil, Puel and Norquinco, which are the six communities affected.

After six years of existence this Corporation has been denounced by our Co-ordination of Mapuche Organisations of 'corruption and misappropriation of funds by the Directorate'. The indiscriminate allocation of lands to third parties has been uncovered. Suffice to mention the handing over of 11,000 hectares of lands to one individual. It has come to light that forestry and cattle concessions have been granted in secret. We hold the Interstate Corporation responsible for the increasing desertification of our soil due to bad management. We have been forbidden to gather *nguilliw*, the fruit of our *pewen*. However, it has not stopped the depredation of both at the hands of tourists and private invaders.

Madam President, part of this territory was returned only after the communities of Aigo and Salazar took direct action. This action, which was carried out reluctantly, is the clearest illustration of the intolerance which exists between the Mapuche people and the Argentinean state, and which demands that precise steps be taken to establish a new relationship of respect and cultural coexistence.

The corrupt Pulmari Interstate Corporation needs to be reformulated in order to achieve this relationship of respect and justice. This body which is part of the

national and provincial governments and which administers our 11,000 hectares needs to be converted into a body that allows:

-The Mapuche to take a leading role in decisions which concern their future and not the symbolic participation of a Mapuche representative in a directorate of 8 members, as happens at present.

-The fundamental right of the Mapuche to self-determination and to exercise it over these lands as a guarantee for our life and future.

Madam President, in our present conflict with the Argentinean state over the recognition of our existence and our desire for our rights in the future, we have great hopes based in a request for just and egalitarian dialogue with the state. This concerns the province's commitment to recognise the internal autonomy statute for one of the hundreds of Mapuche communities, the community of Calfucura. Today we are exploring the essence of our own culture. We are finding what is original in a new legal language in our cultural heart and in our own history in order to overcome ideas that oppress us and which have persisted over centuries. Perhaps this will be the first step in affirming the validity of our own legal system which is attuned to the maintenance and design of our national Mapuche identity and the first step in the search for peace and a better understanding between the peoples and cultures of the world.

Thank you. □

SHORT NEWS

SHORT NEWS

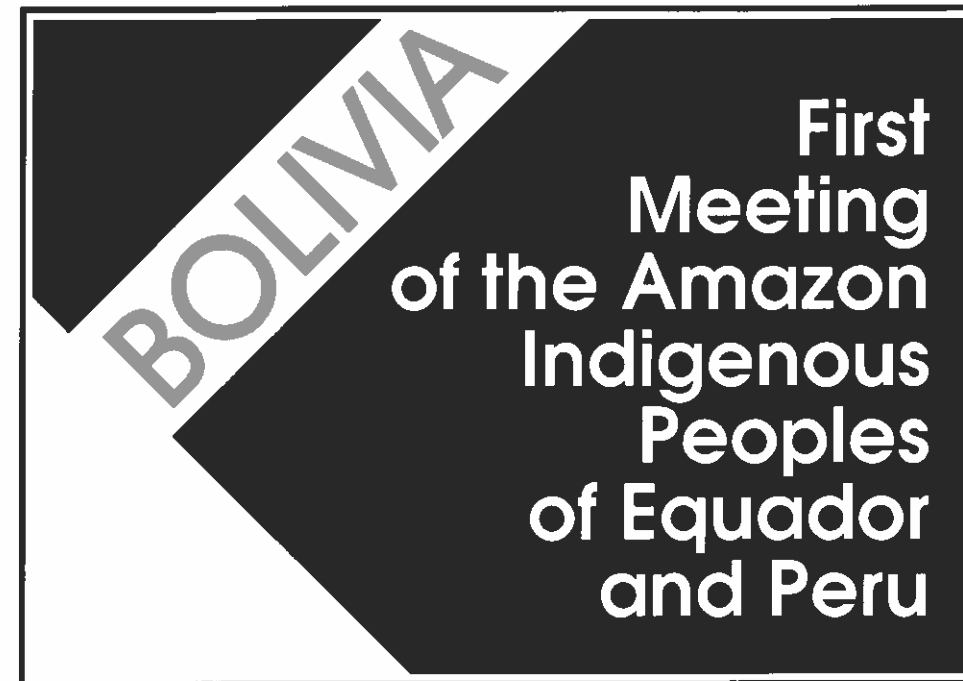
In the armed conflict between the States of Ecuador and Peru in January this year, the indigenous peoples on both sides of the border have been severely affected. With a view to halting the escalation of hostilities and ensuring that dialogue is the only means used to resolve the conflict, a first meeting was held in Bolivia from the 16 to 18 July between the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESP) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE). The following is a transcript of the final declaration from the meeting:

The indigenous peoples of Ecuador and Peru, like the rest of the Amazon original peoples, have historically lived in the territories which we still call our own. First the Spanish conquest and then the formation of States as a result of the struggles for independence established borderlines which divided related peoples.

These borderlines changed according to the interests of both countries who believed and still believe they can resolve their differences through fratricidal wars which have involved the indigenous peoples living near the frontiers against their wills.

The formation of National States forced people to adopt a national identity based on hate and war between sister peoples because of the economic and political interests of the groups in power. True national identity should be built on the basis of the deepest social and cultural roots of each country.

The recent, undeclared war between Ecuador and Peru is tangible proof that the Nation States have not progressed beyond archaic means of solving conflicts between neighbouring peoples.



This has directly affected, and is still affecting, the indigenous peoples of the frontier. The noise of gunfire has ceased, but we are still suffering the consequences: the ecology of the area has been damaged and it will be difficult to restore the relationships between families separated by the borderline, which have become charged with hostility - something which has never occurred before.

This First Bilateral Meeting of the Amazon Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador and Peru aims to restore harmony and peace among our families, which are affected by the undeclared war. To do this, a second Bilateral Reunion will be held from 9 to 12 October 1995 in Colombia.

We ask that the territorial and human rights of the indigenous peoples who have become involved in this conflict against their wills should be respected.

We ask the Governments of both countries to stop the escalation of hostilities and to invest these enormous resources in comprehensive development programmes designed by the indigenous peoples of the frontier zones.

We urge the Governments of Ecuador and Peru to use dialogue as the only means to reach a definitive solution to the problem which the undeclared war has generated. We also ask them to comply with and implement the agreements which they signed in Itamaraty (Brazil) and Uruguay.

We ask that the Government of Ecuador ratifies ILO Convention 169, and that both countries make use of the spirit of the Convention as a new international legal instrument to help find solutions to a conflict which has arisen on the ancestral territory of an indigenous people divided by a borderline.

La Paz, 18 July 1995
Abadio Green, Moderator of the First Bilateral Meeting

Source: COICA - Ecuador □



CHIAPAS

new IWGIA document (No.77)

THE EXPLOSION OF COMMUNITIES

By June Nash, George A. Collier, Kathleen Sullivan, Christine Marie Kovic, Rosalva A. Hernández Castillo, María Eugenia Santana E., Marie-Odile Marion and Hermann Bellinghausen.

US\$ 15

Available Documents

In English

- No. 1:** Declaration of Barbados. (1971) US\$ 2,20
- No. 6:** René Fuerst: Bibliography of the Indigenous Problems and Policy of the Brazilian Amazon Region. 1957-1972. (1972) US\$ 3,60
- No. 7:** Bernard Arcand: The Urgent Situation of the Cuiva Indians of Columbia. (1972) US\$ 3,60
- No. 15:** Alicia Barabas and Miguel Bartolomé: Hydraulic Development and Ethnocide: The Mazatec and Chinotec People of Oaxaca, Mexico. (1973) US\$ 2,90
- No. 16:** Richard Chase Smith: The Amuesha People of Central Peru: Their Struggle to Survive. (1974) US\$ 4,30
- No. 17:** Mark Münzel: The Aché: Genocide Continues in Paraguay. (1974) US\$ 3,60
- No. 18:** Jürgen Riester: Indians of Eastern Bolivia: Aspects of their Present Situation. (1975) US\$ 6,50
- No. 19:** Jean Chiappino: The Brazilian Indigenous Problems and Policy: The Example of the Aripuana Indigenous Park. (1975) US\$ 2,90
- No. 20:** Bernardo Berdichewsky: The Araucanian Indians in Chile. (1975) US\$ 3,60
- No. 21:** Nemesio J. Rodríguez: Oppression in Argentina: The Mataco Case. (1975) US\$ 3,60
- No. 22:** Jacques Lizot: The Yanomani in the Face of Ethnocide. (1976) US\$ 3,60
- No. 23:** Norman E. Whitten: Ecuadorian Ethnocide and Indigenous Ethnogenesis: Amazonian Resurgence Amidst Andean Colonialism. (1976) US\$ 3,60
- No. 24:** Torben Morberg: The Reaction of People of Bellona Islands towards a Mining Project. (1976) US\$ 4,60
- No. 25:** Felix Razon and Richard Hensman: The oppression of the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines. (1976) US\$ 4,60
- No. 27:** Peter Kloos: The Akuriyo of Surinam: A Case of Emergence from Isolation. (1977) US\$ 3,60
- No. 28:** Ernesto Salazar: An Indian Federation in Lowland Ecuador. (1977) US\$ 4,60
- No. 29:** Douglas E. Sanders: The Formation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. (1977) US\$ 2,20
- No. 30:** Julio Tumiri Apaza: The Indian Liberation and Social Rights Movement in Kollasuyu, Bolivia. (1978) US\$ 4,80
- No. 31:** Norman Lewis: Eastern Bolivia: The White Promised Land. (1978) US\$ 2,20
- No. 32:** Ernest G. Migliazza: The Integration of the Indigenous People of the Territory of Roraima, Brazil (1978) US\$ 2,20
- No. 33:** Guatemala 1978: The massacre at Panzos. (1978) US\$ 4,60
- No. 36:** Gerald D. Berreman: Himachal Science, People and «Progress». (1979) US\$ 3,20
- No. 39:** A. Barrie Pittock: Australian Aborigines: The Common Struggle for Humanity. (1979) US\$ 4,30
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International Secretariat, IWGIA

Fiolstraede 10, DK-1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Phone: +45 33 12 47 24; Telefax: +45 33 14 77 49

e-mail: IWGIA@login.dkuug.dk

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