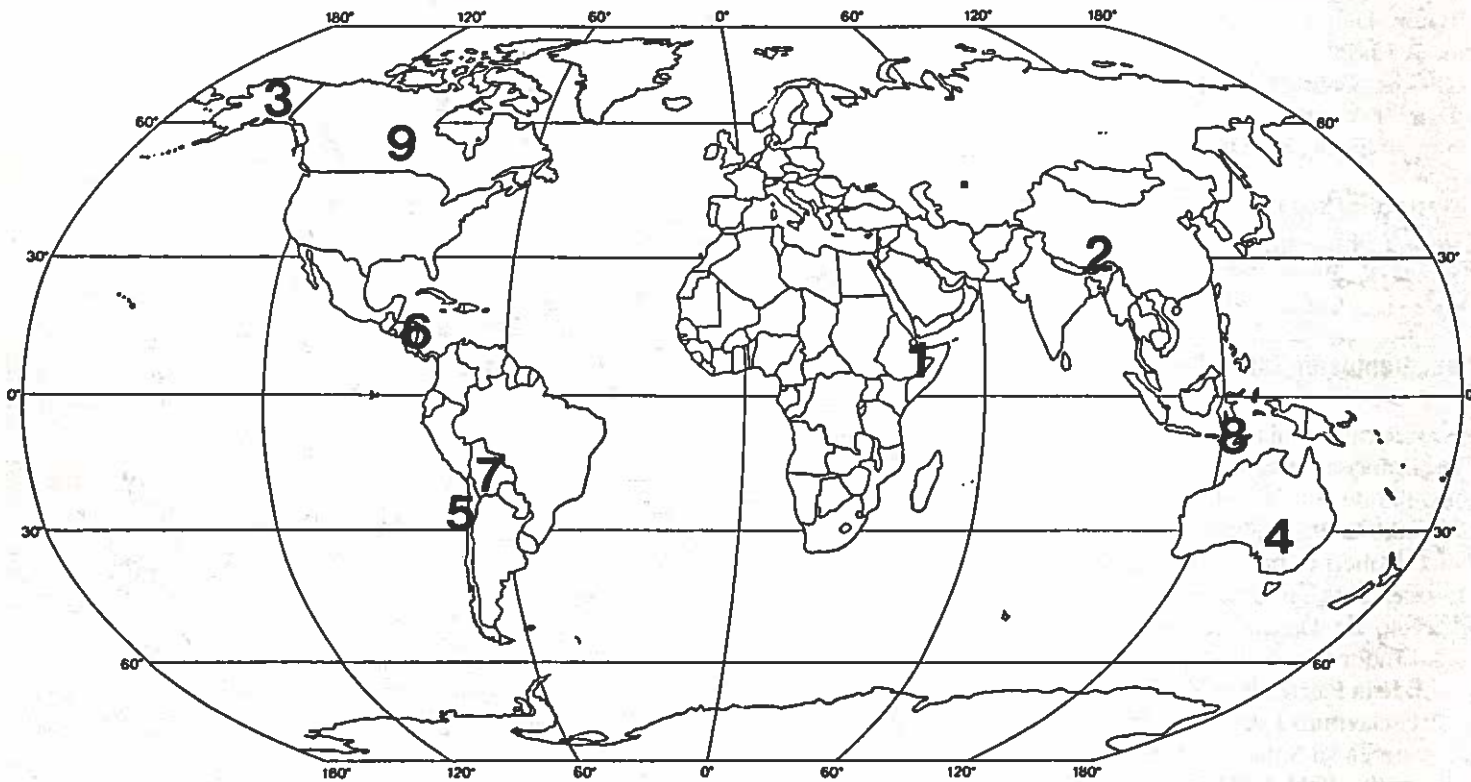


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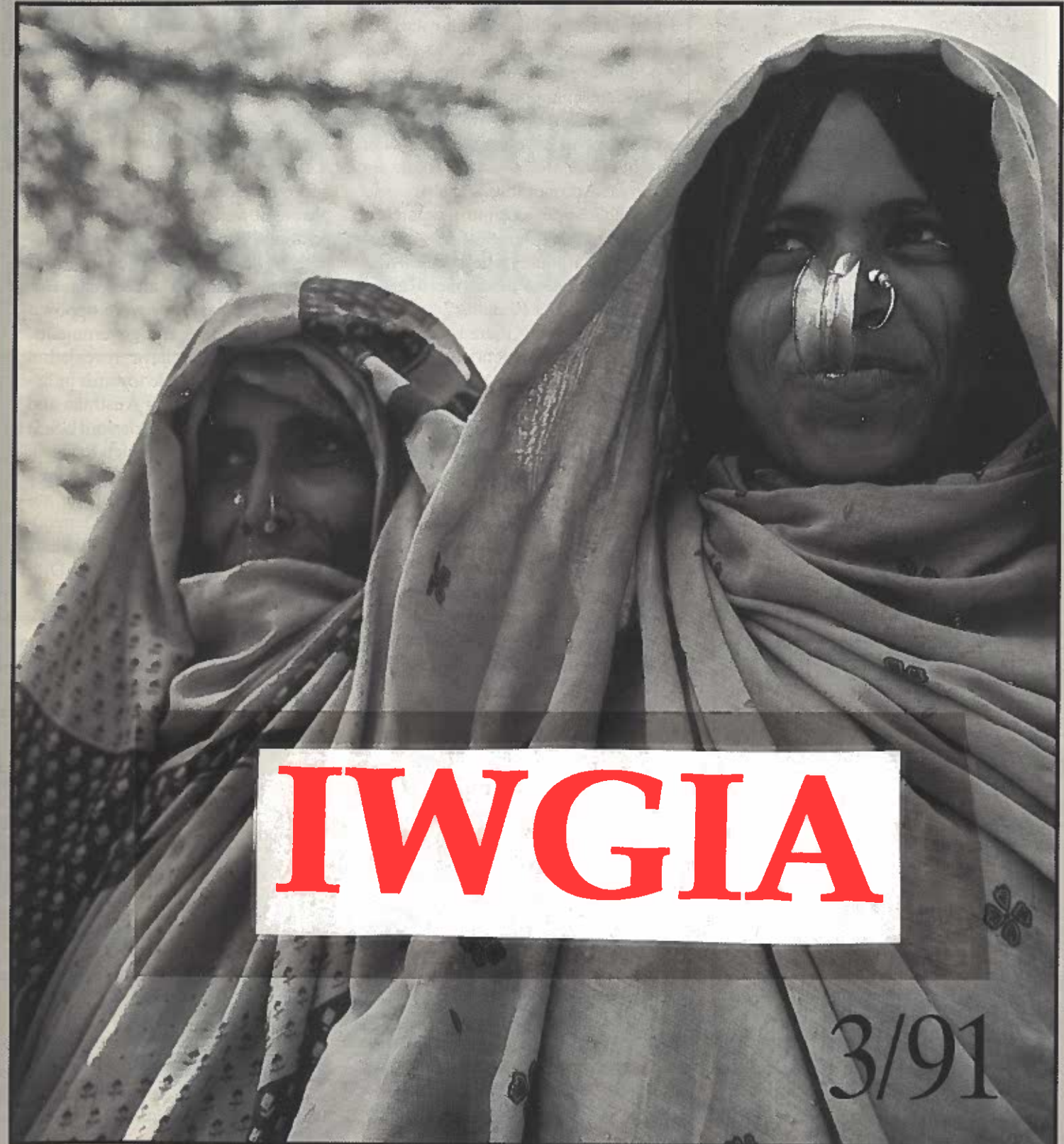
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# NEWSLETTER

No. 3 · November / December · 1991

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs



3/91



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## Editorial

The political upheavals which have swept over several continents in recent years have had profound and long-lasting effects on minorities and indigenous peoples. The Soviet Republics are fighting for their right to self-determination. But how will the new Russia treat its own indigenous people who have claimed the same right? Will Boris Yeltsin allow the Buryat Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic to develop into a republic of its own – the same right, forwarded by the same arguments he has used himself on behalf of the former Russian Socialist Soviet Republic?

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that new independent states will give their own minorities and indigenous peoples the same rights they themselves have claimed. On the contrary. Eritrea *might* be the first country in Africa to recognise the rights of pastoral nomads, as indicated in a lengthy interview with the Eritrean researcher, Zeremariam Fre.

For decades the Horn of Africa has suffered from conflicts and civil wars. The new Eritrea and the Somaliland Republic grew out of the suppression of ethnic minorities like, for example, the case of the Isaq people in Somalia. We bring a background article and an eyewitness report from the newly-formed republic of Somaliland.

In 1987 an autonomy law, affecting the land of the Miskito Indians on the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast was passed in the National Assembly in Managua, and in February 1990 the regional council elections gave the ethnic minorities a majority of seats. However, the autonomy law still remains to be implemented by the post-Sandinista regime. A major obstacle seems to be companies with logging interests in the Atlantic Coast region.

As in Nicaragua, the logging companies are a major obstacle to the

Pehuenche Mapuche in Chile. These Indians still face the threat of being evicted from their homeland.

In an interview with IWGIA, José Mirtenbaum argues for the significant cultural role played by the use of coca as different from the use of cocaine, for the Indians of Latin America.

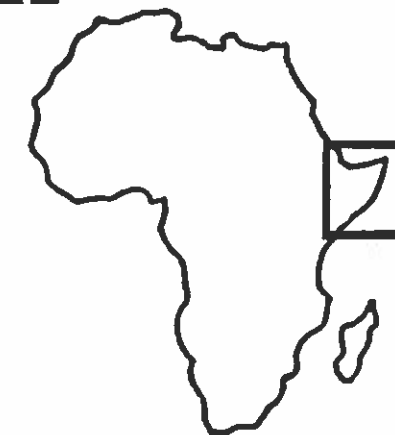
In Australia, Aotearoa, the USA and other countries indigenous people are now demanding returned cultural and skeletal remains which legally or illegally have been removed by anthropologists and archaeologists. In the past they were opposed by both scientists and governments, but recent years have revealed a more positive attitude towards indigenous demands. From Australia and from Kodiak Island, Alaska (USA) we bring two articles which focus on the repatriation of skeletal remains.

A Tibetan monk, one of the authors of a pamphlet for an independent Tibet, was sentenced to 19 years in prison in 1989. The so-called »Drepung group« produced the »Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet,« an original piece of political writing – »perhaps the first to come from the generation of young Tibetans who have grown up under Chinese rule,« writes Ronald Schwartz. We bring his article on this document and its background.

East Timor is not usually hot stuff in the media. That was until November when the Indonesian military slaughtered dozens of innocent civilians at a cemetery in the East Timorese capital of Dili. We bring a major document on this horrible event which ought to force governments, in particular that of Australia, to reconsider their relationship with the imperialist Indonesian regime (see also IWGIA Newsletter 1/91). □

Jens Dahl

# Horn of Africa: Drive for self-determination and independence



*In the last two weeks of May 1991 the political landscape in the Horn of Africa changed dramatically. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) took control over the last cities of Eritrea. The Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF) ousted the regime of Haile Menghistu in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Somali National Movement (SNM) and their allies declared that the Somaliland Republic in the northern part of Somalia had separated from the rest of the country.*

The longstanding conflicts in the Horn of Africa have taken an enormous toll in human lives. On July 31st 1991 the news agency Reuter reported that more than 10 million people in the Horn of Africa were suffering from drought and civil war. The situation was made worse by the high proportion of political and environmental refugees in the region. In September 1991 African Watch published the report »Evil Days« where it was estimated that more than 750,000 people lost their lives, among these at least 150,000 civilians were killed, during the 30 years of war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The more recent civil war in Somalia has left the capital Mogadishu in ruins and between 5,000 and 8,000 are believed to have died since the fierce fighting in the capital started in December 1990. In other parts of Somalia, including the north, thousands and thousands have been killed, wounded and forced to flee to neighbouring countries.

A fragile peace has been established in

some parts of the Horn. Since May Eritrea and Ethiopia have lived in peace with each other. In the Republic of Somaliland the slow process of rehabilitation has started, while the political situation in Somalia is still undecided and fighting continues.

We here present three different reports on the situation which has emerged in the Horn of Africa.

Kitty Warnock of the PANOS institute in London reports on the mood in the devastated town of Hargeisa, the capital of the Somaliland Republic as well on the events leading up to the declaration of the independence of the northern part of Somalia.

In »The re-birth of Somaliland Republic« Yusuf Ali Sheikh Madar, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, presents the view of the newly formed government. The Djibouti conference referred to in the article took place 15 – 12 July 1991.

The potential as well as the need for regional cooperation and trade is well

brought out in the interview with Zeremariam Fre of The Pastoral and Environmental Network for the Horn of Africa (PENHA, for a presentation of PENHA see IWGIA Yearbook 1990). Contrary to common perceptions, the realization of self-determination and thus a fragmentation of the current political set-up, may well form the basis for much needed contact and cooperation in the Horn. Warfare, drought and environmental degradation are shared hazards and part of the complicated conflicts in the Horn. The region also shares crucial resources like water and pasture. Cooperation on a regional level is a prerequisite for lasting peace in the Horn of Africa.

Sources: EIU Country Report No 2 1991 Ethiopia/Somalia, Indian Ocean Newsletter 27 July 1991, Information 1 August 1991, Vårt Land 30 September 1991. □



# Somaliland: The "Bar Hargeisa" opens for business

By Kitty Warnock



Somalia, Eastern Africa

Hargeisa, Northern Somalia: The "Bar Hargeisa" near the centre of the capital of the self-declared republic of Somaliland is surrounded by the rubble of bombed buildings, drifts of rubbish and the skeletons of cannibalised trucks.

But the battered chairs in its courtyard are filled from morning to night with customers chatting, eating and drinking sweet milky tea. After dark, one of the trees in the courtyard sports a string of four coloured lights.

The bar could stand as a symbol of the current mood in Hargeisa: relieved, happily making do, while life returns to something like normal after three years of civil war and exile.

In 1988 Hargeisa was heavily bombed by President Siad Barre's troops, the climax of years of the northern Issaq people and war against their Somali National Movement (SNM).

Most of the population of Hargeisa fled into the hilly hinterland or to refugee camps in Ethiopia. For three years the city was occupied by Barre's soldiers and some Ethiopian refugees, while rural areas remained under the control of the SNM.

Last January, the Barre government fell and the SNM moved into the city and other northern towns. Immediately, the exiles started to return.

The population of Hargeisa in January was about 15,000. By August it had risen an estimated 150,000, nearly half the city's previous population.

It was home, but it was rough. Survival was threatened by lack of water, and by thousands of unexploded mines in the rubble. In parts of the city, 80 per cent of the houses are without roofs.

But the atmosphere is cheerful. Amira Odleh, for example, arrived a few weeks ago after nearly seven months on the move. Fighting and looting had driven her out, first from resettlement village in the south where she had been living since the 1974 drought, and then from Mogadishu. She and her family boarded a truck which was attacked and looted several times on its journey north. Now they are camping in a dry corner of the ruined municipal theatre: "We haven't got any income or any property except a few cooking pots, but we feel very safe. We knew what Hargeisa would be like, but we are pleased to be here."

Those who have been back longer than Amira have set to work reconstructing what they can salvage, trading whatever they can acquire. A pile of tiny car parts is sold from a table in the market; a mechanic under a tree painstakingly sticks the hundredth patch on an old truck tyre; containers are turned into shops selling, biscuits, batteries, and household goods; friends greet each other from backless chairs perched in front of the little corrugated iron tea stalls that line the main roads.

Life here is synonymous with free enterprise. There is food in the market, though nobody is quite sure where it or the money



Consequences of Siad Barre's forces attack on Hargeisa.  
Photo: Dr. Abdirahman Gaileh Mirreh



The troops under the command of Siad Barre caused serious damage to the city of Hargeisa. Photo: Dr. Abdirahman Gaileh Mirreh.

with which it is bought are coming from. The trade in ch'at (a plant chewed as a mild stimulant) from Ethiopia was apparently never interrupted during the harshest days of war. Buses run regularly around the town, though fuel is short.

Non-government organisations are energetically mobilising people to clear up the wreckage. One organisation is already planning a role for itself as a think-tank policy advice to the government.

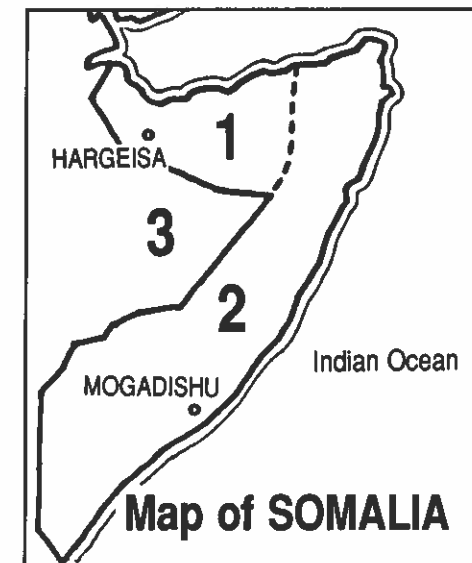
Freedom of speech is a right which is daily exercised: by individuals who put up posters demanding government action to clean the streets; by the self-appointed town crier who walks about with a loud-hailer giving people the benefit of his comments on events and calling them to prayer; by the poets and songwriters who are Somalia's traditional channel of information and debate; by the large crowds who gather at 5.30 every afternoon in cafes and public and public places to listen to the BBC World Service Somali programme beamed from London; and by the six independent newspapers which have sprung up in the three principal towns to challenge the SNN's fortnightly journal.

Paper, equipment, distribution systems and readers with money to spare are all in limited supply, so the publications are small, but they are serious.

They report on the deliberations of the

governing central committee, interview political opposition groups, use sly cartoons as well as articles to educate the public in political reconciliation, civic responsibility and public health. Environmental issues are featured, as is poetry. Some address the psychological aftermath of war, with regular columns on martyrs.

Experience has taught people to be unenthusiastic about governments. But government is being born, led pragmatically by the SNM in partnership with tribal elders. It was apparently pressure the



elders, speaking for their people, that led to the declaration of northern Somalia as an independent state, Somaliland, in June. Independence has not been recognised by the government in Mogadishu or internationally, but for the moment people are confident.

Says Suleiman Nur, Director-General of the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Resettlement: "Independence is the fixed decision of the people. If Europe or America doubt it, they can ask for a referendum. Our people need international recognition certainly, but they will not exchange their independence for any amount of aid. Who has the power to change the people's decision? I think we will be recognised eventually - it is the trend all over the world. It should be regarded as a human right."

If it is not resolved soon, the question of independence will bring problems - internal opposition from some quarters, as well as a lack of international assistance. But such issues are overshadowed by the immediate need to reconstruct the country, revitalise the economy and re-establish essential services.

Security is well on the way to being established, though the demobilisation of the thousands of fighters, many of whom have known nothing but war throughout their adolescence, is acknowledged as a major problem.

Ministries have been established and staffed and are surveying their resources prior to planning how to start work: the Health Ministry making lists of all the staff and facilities it can find, the Forestry Department surveying old forestry project sites and locating personnel.

Lack of transport and communications - there is no telephone system or telecommunications - are one problem, lack of money another.

1. Independent Republic of Somaliland, declared in May 1991.
2. Since the fall of Siad Barre's government in January, the successor government has not yet established itself.
3. Northern Somali refugees in Ethiopia: 400,000.





A major part of Hargeisa was destroyed by Barres forces.  
Photo: Dr. Abdirahman Gaileh Mirreh.

There are no funds with which to pay anyone. Government staff work as volunteers, carried along by the euphoria of the moment - for the moment.

The people themselves are keen to rebuild the economy and clean up the towns. But it is impossible to say how long this spirit will last if government does not ob-

tain the resources to make a contribution.

Longer-term plans are embryonic. Somalis are conscious that their natural environment is fragile: water is short, the land has suffered from erosion and overgrazing; forests, the only local fuel source, have been shorn.

The economy is based on pastoralism and export of sheep, which depends on maintaining the environment.

It is easy, and many people do, to blame the problems on the Barre regime, which certainly exploited and mismanaged the north's resources. But the problems are serious, and demand practical solutions.

Nevertheless, the assets include all the current nostrums for successful development: a government in touch with the people (through the tribal chiefs and elders, if not yet elected), an economy in which private initiative reigns, free speech. The spirit is there, too. In the words of Amira Odleh: "We are happy to be here because we have overthrown the regime. It is a liberated area, and we can build anything we want."

Kitty Warnock is assistant director of the Sahel programme for the Panos Institute in London □

## 5 IWGIA DOCUMENTS



**52.THE MAASAI  
AND THE STATE \$ 4.00**

**58.SELF DETERMINATION  
AND INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES \$ 7.20**

**61.TOURISM:  
MANUFACTURING  
THE EXOTIC \$ 11.60**

**66.INDIGENOUS WOMEN  
ON THE MOVE \$ 10.00**

**67.INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
OF THE SOVIET NORTH \$ 6.00**

# The re-birth of Somaliland Republic

By Yusuf Ali Sheikh Madar

1. The Republic of Somalia came into existence as a result of the unification of British Somaliland Protectorate and Italian Somalia on the 1st of July 1960. The following conditions, set by the politicians of Italian Somaliland, set the stage for the present dissolution of the union:

- A. The flag and the constitution of the South Italian Somaliland to be those of the Union.
- B. Mogadishu to be the capital and the seat of Government.
- C. The President to be from the south.
- D. The Prime Minister to be from the south.
- E. The Commander of the Army to be from the south.
- F. The Commander of the Police to be a southerner.

This great imbalance of political power was further aggravated by the division of seats in the National Assembly (Parliament). 90 of the total seats of 123 did belong to the south. The estimated population of the Republic of Somalia was then about 3 million, the south represented about 60%.

2. As early as 1961, the army officers of the North organized an ill-fated coup against southern domination. It was, of course, quickly crushed, because of the popular belief in national unity. The North was indeed reduced to an inferior region. Its share of the national wealth was always minimal. A deliberate policy of economic starvation and political domination of the North was the order of the day. The ill-feeling and resentment of the North were never redressed by the successive governments of the republic.

3. The rise of Siyad Barre to power in October 1969 unleashed untold horrors. The Somali National Movement (S.N.M.), supported by the Isaq clan (80% of the population of the North), took up

arms against him in 1981. The organisation liberated the North in 1991 and declared on the 18th of May 1991 the separate, independent and sovereign state of Somaliland Republic.

The Declaration of Independence was proclaimed after conducting a lot of consultations with elders, politicians and intellectuals of all groups, including non-Isaq tribes. In fact, the population pressured the S.N.M. to declare independence.

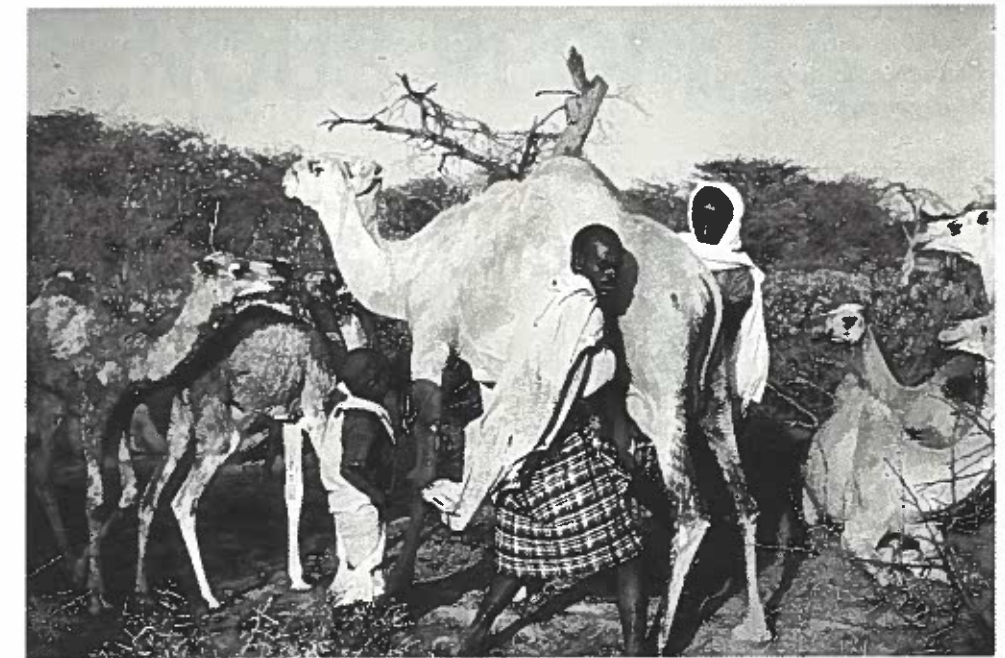
### The state structure

1. Briefly stated, the state organs of the Somaliland Republic are based roughly on those of the Somali National Movement.

- a. President or the Vice-President.
- b. The Central Committee - became the National Assembly or Parliament.
- c. The Judiciary.

2. The Constitution of the S.N.M. gives the organisation a mandate to form a government and hold free elections within two years of the liberation of the country. Multi-party democracy, market economy and highly decentralized administration are planned to be put into practice. A national constitution adopted by a nationwide referendum shall be drafted by a Constituent Assembly (National Assembly).

Non-Isaq communities (Gadabursi,



Shepherds from Somaliland. Photo: Espen Wæhle

These organs are:

- a. The S.N.M. Executive Committee headed by the Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman in the absence of the former, - is now the Government, led by the

Dulbahante and Warsangeli) shall have the opportunity to participate in the Constituent Assembly in a fair and effective manner as a further testimony of the national reconciliation. Central Committee



representatives and members of these groups together with the Somaliland government have played an important role in effecting the close cooperation of all communities in search for and maintenance of permanent peace and stability.

### The djibouti conference

1. The theme of the Djibouti Conference was national reconciliation. Six liberation movements of the South were invited by the host country - Djibouti. The conference was masterminded and financed by the Italian Government. Italy and Djibouti are not neutral partners in this case. They both want a United Somalia, dominated by the South. The conference was not a Somali initiative, but an ill-fated Italian formula. Italy was bent on carrying out a smooth transfer of power to its favorites - the remnants of the Manifesto group.

2. The invitation of older politicians - former president Aden Abdulla Osman and the like - evidenced Italy's disregard of the realities of actual forces in operation. The Somalis lumped by Italy to decide the fate of the Somali nation, were unable to call a ceasefire, let alone create a viable government. The results of the conference were doomed to fail right from the beginning.

3. The Somali National Movement refused to participate in that conference for multiple reasons among which are:

- We had established our separate state and were not concerned with the reconciliation of the Southern Somali liberation fronts. We had and still have good relations with each front, and were not in need to be reconciled with any one.
- We are opposed furthermore, to any mediation by Italy and Djibouti between Northern and Southern Somalis. Italy and Djibouti are not neutral between us and the South. We also prefer to solve our problems alone by ourselves and without any mediation.
- Our declaration of a separate, independent and Sovereign state is irreversible and not negotiable. Our participation in the conference was, therefore, out of the question and meaningless.

### National reconciliation, recognition and regional integration

1. S.N.M. is mandated by its constitution to hold nation-wide elections within two years, beginning from the liberation of the territory. This election should be held round about the middle of 1993. This is a firm commitment which the government of Somaliland Republic should and will carry out.

Multi-party democracy, market economy and a highly decentralized administrative structure are planned to be put in practice. Respect for human rights will be strictly adhered to, so as to bury for ever the shameful practices of Siyad Barre.

2. Peace, stability and national reconciliation are urgent issues which the Somaliland government addressed itself to. Non-Isaq tribes were invited to participate in the national government. At present they hold six of the seventeen portfolios of the government.

A fair representation of the Constituent Assembly should also be »devised« and allocated to these tribes. This is so, in order to enable them to take part in the fundamental decisions which shape the institutions we intend to create. The mechanism by which this representation should effectively be achieved, is entrusted to the government.

### De facto recognition

1. The republic of Somaliland is the effective and unchallenged government of the North. There is peace for the first time after long years of repression. *De jure* recognition will surely be attained at the appropriate time. Time is an important factor. Our state is relatively young, having been reborn four months ago. The dramatic changes of the political map of Europe set precedents that support our case. A new trend in Africa is to get rid of dictators. This new wind of change across Africa requires a fresh approach to be applied with respect to national unity and regional stability.

2. The Republic of Somalia, under Siyad Barre or his predecessors, though homogeneous in many respects, was doomed to break up. It lacked subtle ingredients of cohesion. For the past ten years there was a civil war in which the Isaq people fought

against outright oppression and extermination. The Republic of Somalia did not, in effect, exist during the last decade. The army, consisting mainly of Southern forces, was indeed an army of occupation in the North. National unity was a misnomer and a meaningless slogan. Territorial integrity also lost the sanctity with which it was identified. The reign of terror, unleashed by Siyad Barre, speeded up the dissolution of the Union.

3. The re-drawing of the political map of the Horn of Africa, as that of Europe, is a *fait accompli*. The recognition of the emerging states is the order of the day. The independence of the Republic of Somaliland is not a secession. It is a restoration of a past *status quo*. The choice of the people, as to the state or the government they prefer to adopt, should be respected. The people of Somaliland Republic are determined to safeguard and protect, come what may, their hard-won and costly independence and separate nationhood.

### Regional economic integration

Somaliland Republic and Ethiopia have very good relations. This wonderful achievement is made possible by the mutual pursuit and maintenance of a permanent peace policy approach. This policy requires that political boundaries should not be a hindrance to regional economic integration. With this in mind, the free movement of people, goods and services should be encouraged across borders. The possibility of joint ventures initiatives is both in sight and obviously achievable.

### International aid

1. The Republic of Somaliland is in dire need of international aid. Infrastructures, water supply systems, hospitals, schools, mosques, communication networks and entire cities and villages have been pulled to the ground. Minefields were indiscriminately planted throughout the country. »De-mining« presents a problem that the Somaliland can not cope with. The government and the public are determined to give their maximum efforts to help themselves.

NGO's international organizations etc. are given maximum cooperation and protection of their lives and property.

2. The refugee population in Eastern Ethiopia have no homes to return to. The establishment of refugee camp communities is likely to be the order of the day, as in the case of Burao and Berbera. This could create an aid-dependent attitude we are determined to avoid. Our people are, fortunately, a self-reliant, highly enterprising society. The limited mandate, resources and experience of NGO's are inadequate to cope with the tremendous and urgent needs of Somaliland.

3. A political solution between Hargeisa and Mogadishu appears to be the key to granting developmental aid. The Somaliland Government has recently send a parliamentary delegation, led by the Minister of the Interior, to talk to the leaders of the various groups of the South. It is difficult to realize reasonable progress and understanding with the warring fac-

tions. A political solution is not in sight until the southern factions put their house in order.

### How long should the north wait?

1. The destruction which the southern army of occupation has inflicted is unparalleled. Entire cities and villages are pulled to the ground. Indiscriminate planting of minefields further cripple the possibility of reconstruction. As the former masters of the North, southern politicians, old or new, are unlikely to easily come to terms with the fact-of-life reality that has emerged.

2. Prolonged negotiations are detrimental to the urgent reconstruction efforts the North is in need of. The role of Italy as the contact Government of the EEC is a further disadvantage the North ought to fight

against. As it is openly and aggressively against the newly-born Republic, Italy should no longer be, exclusively, assigned the role of the »expert« in Somali affairs.

3. Aid-donors, NGO's and international organisations are urgently requested: To consider the case of the Republic of Somaliland on its own merit. It should be totally dissociated from its former union with Somalia. There are no Southern Somalis to negotiate with at the moment. Our fate should not therefore, be tied up to them. Our share of developmental aid should also be released to us in the absence of a southern party to deal with.

The Hague, 10th September 1991

Yusuf Ali Sheikh Madar  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Somaliland

## IWGIA PUBLICATIONS ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

- documents
- newsletters (new series)
- yearbooks



The culture and life prospect among indigenous groups varies from those who are facing genocide to those who are living in prosperous industrialised nations.



The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is an independent, international organisation, which supports indigenous peoples in their struggle for self-determination and against oppression

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE WRITE OR PHONE**

Fiolstraede 10, 1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark, phone (45) 33 12 47 24, fax (45) 33 14 77 49



Interview with

Dr. Zeremarian Fre of PENHA

# Reflections on 30 years of the Eritrean fight for independence

Interview by Espen Wæhle

*What does it take to resist Africa's strongest army, an army which was assisted and supplied by the Soviet military? The Eritrean researcher Dr. Zeremarian Fre of PENHA<sup>1</sup> (The Pastoral and Environmental Network for the Horn of Africa) here tells how the Eritreans have fought a 30 year long war for independence from Ethiopia. He also recounts the various ways and strategies the Eritreans developed to cope with the enormous challenges facing them. As the struggle ended in victory in May, Fre stresses the need for peace and regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa.*

I have come across many people who believe that »Eritrean« is an ethnic concept. In Africa there are many current discussions on political development where concepts like »ethnicity« and »tribalism« are much in use, often linked with processes of »fragmentation« of national states. It would be very interesting if you could relate this to the recent developments in the Horn of Africa, specifically to the case of the war of liberation in Eritrea.

- First of all I could clarify this position where Eritreans are seen as one ethnic group, which of course is not the case. I can be very specific and tell you that there are nine ethnic groups in a classical sense, in terms of them having their own language, ethnic identity and also religions and cultures. So Eritrea is a composition of various ethnic groups. These nine ethnic groups are also not the same in number or in level of their own political and social development. We've got two major groups, that is the **Tigrinia** and the **Tigre** speakers. The **Tigrinia** people are predominantly in the plateau parts of Eritrea, what we normally call the highlands of Eritrea. Topographically much of Eritrea is a highland, but highland is more of a cultural definition of a group like the Tigrinia. They are mostly agro-pastoral - and consist of some 45 - 50% of the population of Eritrea.

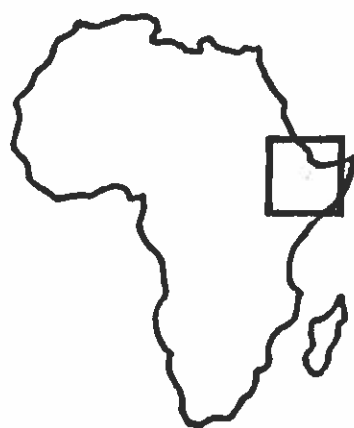
The second major group is the **Tigre** speaking peoples. They are spread out in the west and in the east along the mountains. They speak a language called Tigre. Among them pastoralism is a major activ-

ity, ranging from specialization in camel herding to mixed farming of small goats and agriculture.

The other groups are the **Afar**, who speak a Cushitic language. They are situated towards the coast and Assab. This is an ethnic group that has a fishing culture, but predominantly a pastoral economy. They also live in the Danakil desert which is very hot and very arid.

Then there is the minority group, the **Saho**, another Cushitic speaking group. Another people north of Massawa is called the **Reshaida**, a people of an Arab origin. They are camel herders and are involved in the contraband traffic across the sea with the Arabs in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. These are people who originated in this part of Southern Arabia and about one hundred years ago they came across the sea.

There is another group called the **Belen**, who are also Cushitic. They live in the centre of Eritrea and are very similar to other highland people in terms of economic subsistence, they are agro-pastoral as well. Then we have a group called the



Eritrea, North East Africa

**Kunama** who are much darker in colour. This is a Nilotic group, they are very different from all of us. They do not have Christianity or Islam as main religions. They are animists and a very small number are Christians. And we have another group called the **Hedareb**, which is a **Beja** group in northern Eritrea in the hills. Another group is called the **Denara**, a semi-Nilotic group. They speak a separate language. This completes the whole cycle of ethnic groups in Eritrea.

We have two major religions. Christians (Coptic Orthodox), mainly in the highlands among the Tigrinia speaking groups. The lowland areas are mostly Muslim. Town dwellers however consist of a mixture of the two religions.

The Eritreans are as varied as any other part of Africa, so in a way we don't have one language, we don't have one religion, we don't have one culture. The subsistence base vary from fishing along the sea to the hunting and gathering of the Kunama people in the west. The pastoralism ranges from highly specialized camel herding to cattle pastoralism. The farming systems are types of mixed hill farming, where livestock and crops are combined. I myself come from an agro-pastoral community in the center of Eritrea. I was brought up with four different ethnic groups. Apart from those ethnic groups of Eritrea there are also many other groups of African origin who have come from Tchad and Nigeria, which we call **Tukruri**, meaning dark. We have **Sudanese**, we have **Ethiopians** who have lived here for a long time - not associated with the war. These are ordinary Ethiopians that are living there, who got married and mixed. The number of Ethiopians have increased tenfold in recent years because of the war. We have **Arabs**, from the Yemen.

With the Arab nations next door, we have a great deal of economic and cultural interactions. Over the last thirty years hundreds of thousands of our people went across the sea, to the Middle East, to the Gulf, to Saudi Arabia. And they have been a major source of income for the communities back home. A large number of Eritreans went across to the Sudan, as refugees, half a million of them. There are a lot of Eritreans within Ethiopia itself, an estimate, which can be debated, is well over 200,000. They are very much in the business sector of the economy and in

various sectors of the society. Some Eritreans are intermarried with Ethiopians, others are still Eritreans in terms of their ethnic identity.

Yes, basically we are a micro-cosmos of people. So Eritrea is not one tribe.

Eritreans have developed a sense of identity and statehood since the Italian colonialism, as a modern state. I was one of the children brought up under the federal system where Eritrea had its own political identity and its own cultural heritage. A lot of us, in my generation in the Front<sup>2</sup> and further on have acquired our statehood and nationalism from that federal period. Eritrea had democratic structures, and political parties, whereas Ethiopia had not any of that, they had a kingdom. So the annexation, which I remember vividly, in 1961, when the Eritrean parliament was dissolved, the Eritrean police was dismantled, the Eritrean institutions were all moved to Addis Ababa, the embassies - I remember that very well. In my home town of Keren the Eritrean flag used to fly high up. That's really the name of the game. Once that had been taken away, then the Eritrean struggle started. It took about thirty years to regain that identity.

Yes, basically you see, how myself and my friends got our identity goes back to that time. We had a sense of identity, despite of the ethnic groups, we were Eritreans. That was very strong and it went on and on for thirty years.

The lack of bitterness towards our

## Map of ERITREA



neighbours, particularly the Ethiopians, is simply that Eritreans argued a political case, not a tribal case. It is natural that there is no enmity in a tribal sense. Eritreans just want to get back what was taken from them against their own will. That is very simple. You would want to do that as a Norwegian if the Swedish came and took over your place! It is as simple as that, it is not very complicated. It also meant that over the last thirty years Eritreans have got a bit more of this identity, it has been strengthened.

We have developed our own survival strategy as a people. We have depended a great deal on ourselves, we are very proud of this! We have depended on our own resources - and we have depended on outside resources of course - because of our desperate situation, not because we have chosen it. Time will very soon show that we will be able to cope, as we always have done, by ourselves. Because in our culture it is a shame to depend on others. The worst thing you can be, in most of our societies, is to be a beggar around the village. We have been put in that state because of the conditions. Otherwise we are very independent minded people, and that has contributed to our own survival, the way we cope with things.

The strong sense of identity has its political reasons. The fact that a thirty years war can be settled within three months, that it can be settled in such a rapid way, means that a lot of homework has been done over the last thirty years.

*What does the »homework« constitute?*

- By that I mean that the conflict in a military sense is now over. That was really the homework we started in the beginning, to regain our own identity which was very important to us. That was the political argument and it has now to be strengthened. It is not only that we aspired to be a nation, so destroyed during the thirty years, we are also thinking of our neighbours that our peace should also mean peace to our neighbours. Because we are living in a situation where there is so much coexistence. I think we have a lot of experience in the process of the struggle which can be useful to our neighbours because of the infrastructure developed in the rural Eritrea. Nothing of it is actually happening in any other African country



that I know of, particularly in our own neighbourhood.

*Are you thinking of the guerilla bases in the north?*

- Yes, and the infrastructure<sup>3</sup> It is quite unique. And it is unique in the sense that it was not built by outside resources. It was mostly built by people's own capacity and the ability to do just that. The situation we were in was so desperate, so difficult that we also had to depend on outside support, humanitarian support particularly, development support, but that was really kind of short term. To be able to cope with our problems – that's very important to us as a culture.

*You once mentioned «the untold story», referring to that out of approximately four million Eritreans altogether, maybe one million have been spread out all over the world, both in Africa and in Western Europe, Australia and so forth.*

- What I mean about the untold story is that the societies we come from, specially when we are educated or when we are working or becoming productive members of the society, the same society expects a lot more from us. So in that sense a lot of the people who have been in the diaspora have been giving so much back to their own people. Starting from their own villages, like myself, I can give you one example. My family lived in the rural areas, my commitment was to make sure that they remain in the villages, despite all the difficulties. With my older brother who is educated, who worked in Saudi Arabia for ten years, we had worked out a budget for the family. Which has meant that we contributed so much money every month, he in his particular case contributed up to 300 USD every month and then sent that money back home into the village to our parents. And everyone else was doing a very similar effort over 20 years. That has meant that we have helped in the survival of our own people and of course this was an untold story because it is part of our duty to do that. We tried to maintain at least a minimal level of helping the families to feed themselves, helping them to buy animals for their farms, helping them to maintain their small farms, buy water-pumps or clothes or food or whatever.

They managed, in a lot of cases a lot of our people stayed in their settlements. The majority of the Eritreans are actually still within Eritrea, I would say 65% are still within Eritrea, maybe displaced but... The contribution is considerable, a lot of Eritreans are very wealthy now, so they contribute to a great deal financially to the survival of their own families, friends and kin.

I have seen our fundraising activities, our cultural evenings where hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised. Individuals would raise up to 5000 USD in one go. The Front has gained a great deal of material support from its own people abroad – in the Gulf, in Europe, in America, everywhere people have contributed. In fact there are even projects in Eritrea which were financed by Eritreans living abroad, for example the sanitary towel factory which was established 15 years ago. The towels were made for the women fighters. For that particular project money was raised by Eritrean women living abroad who had an obligation to ensure that the women fighters get sanitary towels. So that was one example of how much the people have done for themselves. Every year we had specific themes, on education, health, etc., – we have what I call campaign points where a certain amount of money is raised for a certain purpose. We even raised money for clothes for the fighters. You don't get this in a kind of official report in the same ways as with NGO or relief assistance.

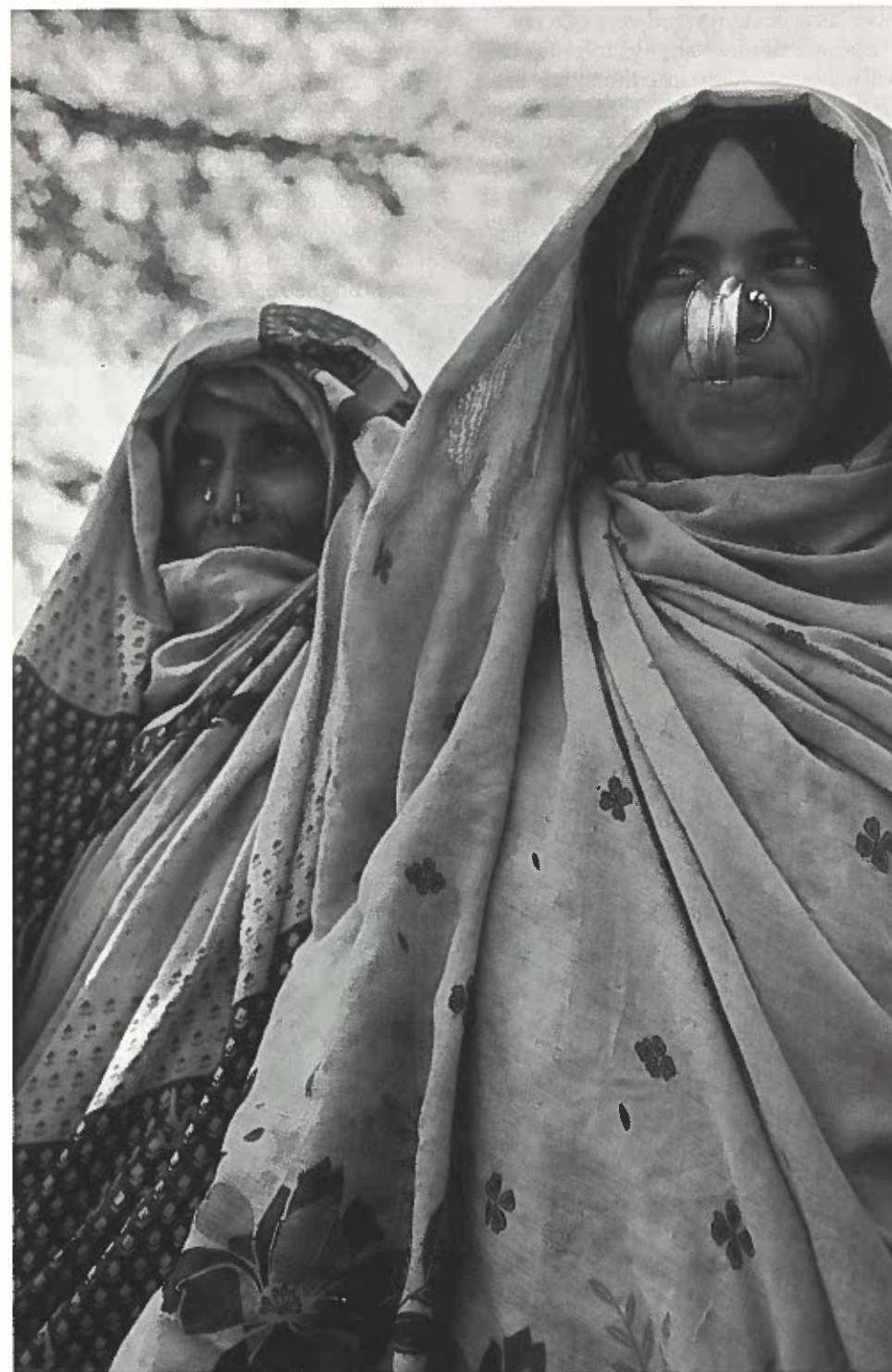
*If you look to how the Eritrean question has been handled in the Western European context, you will realize that there has been a very active solidarity movement. Compared to other regions of the world Eritrea has received quite some attention. The solidarity groups have assisted in raising funds and in publicising what has been happening in Eritrea.*

- I think that is very true. I have actually not handled it as a topic in itself, because that to us is seen as a solidarity support, which is quite additional to us. I think the support we got from our friends internationally, either through their influence or through their material funding has been quite considerable, but that is always seen as a contribution to the overall input which the people of Eritrea has been providing

themselves. One attraction for our supporters perhaps, is how much we are doing for ourselves. That has certainly been an incentive for our supporters. And also the fact that Eritreans argued more along political lines and not on ethnic or tribal sentiments, has meant that they had gained the necessary respect as a political movement.

Within Africa Eritrea had a lot of problems in the beginning regarding its status. A lot of African states saw this as a »Biafra« type or »Katanga« type movement, where one ethnic group tries to break away from a nation. Of course, that was not the case. And by any accounts the recent developments show very clearly that there has been no ethnic argument here. It was a clearcut political argument. If I give you the example of prisoners of war, which I saw myself in 1985 and 1988 when I went to Eritrea, the way the prisoners of war were treated indicated how long we had gone along the line of identifying our own selves and in identifying and respecting our neighbours. That's a very strong culture, it has fact a lot to do with our own culture: the way you treat your neighbour when they're in difficulties.

They were fed, they were trained, because of our attitude. These were mostly peasants from Oromia, from Ogaden, from Gondar – from the various parts of Ethiopia. In a sense our culture was developed and sophisticated enough to be able to understand why these people came, why they were forced to come. There was a political understanding as to why they were there in the first place, because these were innocent Ethiopians who were forcefully conscripted, – and that was clearly understood. They were not a regular army. And obviously you treat them in the same way as you treat your people, because these were people in need. I think they were productive members of the society in a way. They helped in building roads, all these beautiful roads you saw in Sahel<sup>4</sup>. The Ethiopian prisoners have contributed to that because they were a work force. They were not locked up all day, they had activities like sports, education, cultural activities. They grew their own food to a certain extent. They were really treated like anybody else in those hills. And that certainly gives one a great sense of pride. To me the process of reconciliation and



*Women from the province of Sahel, Eritrea. Photo: Espen Wæhle*

peace has started a long time ago, at that stage, and not a few weeks ago. And this has been a long process of understanding this conflict in a proper context. The former government of Ethiopia, in Addis, wanted to put a different picture. Once the relationship between the fronts were so well established<sup>5</sup>, in fact they coordinated activities, including military activities, in

taking over the capital cities of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

*The process of taking over the power has been reported to have been very orderly?*

- Particularly the takeover of Eritrea was far more orderly than the takeover in

Addis. I think in Addis Ababa part of the problem was because of the ethnicity within Ethiopia, the contradictions within the various ethnic groups, the various elements in it and then the EPDRF<sup>6</sup> being slightly more northerly dominated. Initially there were slight problems in taking over, as you probably know there were small skirmishes. But for Asmara there was a different case. Asmara was homecoming for the EPLF. These were your own children coming back to Asmara. So of course the mood was jubilant and the celebrations were ecstatic. The mood was that of complete celebrations and I also think that of tolerance towards your former enemies. Ethiopia I think has Africa's biggest army, the most organized one. In Eritrea we had 250,000 armed and non-armed Ethiopians – the 2nd Division, the strongest in Ethiopia, had the best weapons. They have not really surrendered in a soldierly manner, they ran away all over the place, the surrender was very disorganized. That was very sad, because if they had surrendered in a proper way, in a soldierly fashion, there would have been far fewer deaths. Because a lot of Ethiopians tried to run towards the Sudan or they were rushing to get to Ethiopia.

*Have you seen any figures on the number of deaths and casualties during the days of the takeover?*

- In Asmara there is even a joke now that the only shots that were fired, were fired by young Eritrean children who picked up some of the guns dropped by the Ethiopian soldiers as they ran away. So there were no casualties whatsoever in Asmara. The takeover was very orderly. I think the other beauty of it also, which will contribute to our coexistence is the fact that there has been no bloodshed in Asmara is very important. Although the soldiers were disorganized, they were dispersed in a very disorderly fashion, but actually there was no heavy fighting as such between the Eritrean people, the Eritrean army and the Ethiopian army. If I give you the example that everything was taken intact, the offices, the government offices in Asmara, the hospitals – even the telephones and every facility was taken intact. That is really wonderful news, because its good for Eritrea that it has acquired an infrastructure, it can also bring



in its own infrastructure from the bush, which it has. Eritreans are very lucky in a way that the infrastructure has been left intact. There are of course now major challenges for the EPLF as a new government, it is not very easy. If I could give some examples of those challenges. Firstly they have to heal these war-wounds very quickly, the psychology of war within Eritrea and also with its neighbours. That is a process that will probably take a bit longer in reality. Although we are prepared to except this as a reality, I think it will take some more time to release all this bitterness in a slow process. Secondly the environmental challenges. Eritrea has been at war for thirty years. The economy is devastated, people have not farmed for a long time. Rains have been failing for consecutive years. Eritrea is desperately trying now to increase the food production which is very important because we feel so humiliated from the relief aid we get from the outside.

*Could that possibly mean that you will expand your food production at the expense of environmental considerations? Is there a danger of starting non-sustainable development processes?*

- No, that is really not the issue. You know the simple reason is that Eritrea is very hilly and mountainous. We have a very limited amount of land anyway. So the question is now how productive can we make our own valleys that have been so devastated by the war. And if we are given peace we can make those pieces of land more productive. In the same way as we always used we will introduce limited technology, irrigation - we have the capacity. And we will improve food production because this is an area which is already degraded in most cases. It has gone beyond the levels of classical degradation.

*What about soil conservation, agroforestry?*

- Yes, there is a strong tradition already in the mountain areas of terracing. On my own farm we used to build terraces with stones to stop the soil erosion. So there are a lot of traditional skills of hill farming which are already in place which one, in a peace situation, could very easily revive to conserve the water and the soil. And I see

those now being revived very quickly.

Because of this war pastoralism, which is a major economy in Eritrea, has been diverted to the Sudan and Ethiopia. So our biggest markets, like in Asmara are going to be revived again.

*Are there any estimates for the part of the population being mainly pastoral, mainly agro-pastoral and then those relying mainly on farming?*

- I think I can be very misleading if I give you any figures whatsoever, because I am one of those researchers who are involved in that. So basically - there is very little reliable information. The important thing is that Eritrea traditionally has been very self-sufficient in livestock production. In FAO statistics in the 1960's and 50's we exported livestock to the neighbouring countries: hides and skins and live animals. So Eritrea was very well known for livestock products. In terms of who are pastoral and who is agropastoral I am not very confident about that. We have a very developed tradition for using oxen for ploughing, draught animals. Our lives are tied to livestock one way or the other, either through pure nomadism or through mixed farming. The pastoral groups are a major economy in Eritrea, they are very productive.

*What you just said here is not a common way of recognizing and acknowledging the important role of the pastoral sector in national economies of the drylands in Africa.*

- I think the realities of Eritrea also in a way is that, although in terms of nation building and the struggle, every Eritrean has taken part and they have contributed. Within Eritrea there is also a disparity in the sense that the pastoral groups deserve a lot better than in the past. They have contributed to the struggle of course. But, now it is time that we have to think about policies which are more in favour of pastoralists in the predominant pastoralist areas. So that we wouldn't impose agropastoralist's or sedentarist's modes of production on the pastoralists.

*But that has happened in the past. It has been a policy of the nation states in Africa. For some time it was even the policy of the EPLF.*

- The EPLF had at a time, when it was growing, a concept - I wouldn't call it a policy actually, it was an attitude that it would be nice to have our people settled and provide them with all the modern facilities: health, education, etc. This was an aspiration. Even the people that came from pastoralist areas had those aspirations for their own people in a positive sense. But the realities of Eritrea, and we are learning that now, is that pastoralist's movements are very strategic, they are environmentally sound. These people have adjusted the modes of use of the range resources in ways that suit them. So we are actually now questioning ourselves in a way: how we can better develop the pastoral sector in a pastoralist way. PENHA's commitment is that we as a regional group, and I am very proud to be a member of this group, can look at these pastoralist issues from a more global and regional aspect. So the experience of Eritrea, if it is a positive one, could contribute to the other overall development in the Horn.

Particularly the health delivery system which the EPLF has developed among the pastoralists is very worthwhile to our neighbours. And if we could repeat those kind of successful experiences in other areas: in education, range management and in institution building - and also in the whole way of how we orient education and training in pastoral areas.

We have got very different pastoral production systems in Eritrea, which I think PENHA will contribute to, in studying a lot and contributing to the knowledge. I think there is a knowledge within the EPLF regarding these communities, but it is really not formulated into a policy. There is concern, of course there is, but we are thinking more of the general debate and kind of effective response to pastoral areas. But you know basically the difference in Eritrea is that these pastoral groups have been crucial in the liberation struggle - all the way from the 60's. They are a part of it. They were the best fighters. So they have actually a share in this cake, whether we like it or not, by right, by the fact that they fought this war and the fact that they were a political party to it. They actually have a major clout in this. By that I mean whether we can convert the political commitment they have into action, into policy, so that we are more responsive

to the needs of these people, will be able to make pastoralism more productive. Rather than impose other modes of production which may be too alien to these people.

As a matter of fact a lot of the pastoralists have adopted anyway. A lot of them are now highly educated, they have sent their children to Khartoum, Sudan

to the university. A lot of the liberation movement of the past has done a great deal in education. So in terms of literacy, the pastoralists in Eritrea now are quite considerably advanced. You find a lot of educated pastoralists and they will speak for themselves. There will not be someone from a sedentarist background that will come and tell them what to do. They

will themselves be able to demand it, because they have taken part in the process of a long struggle for Eritrea.

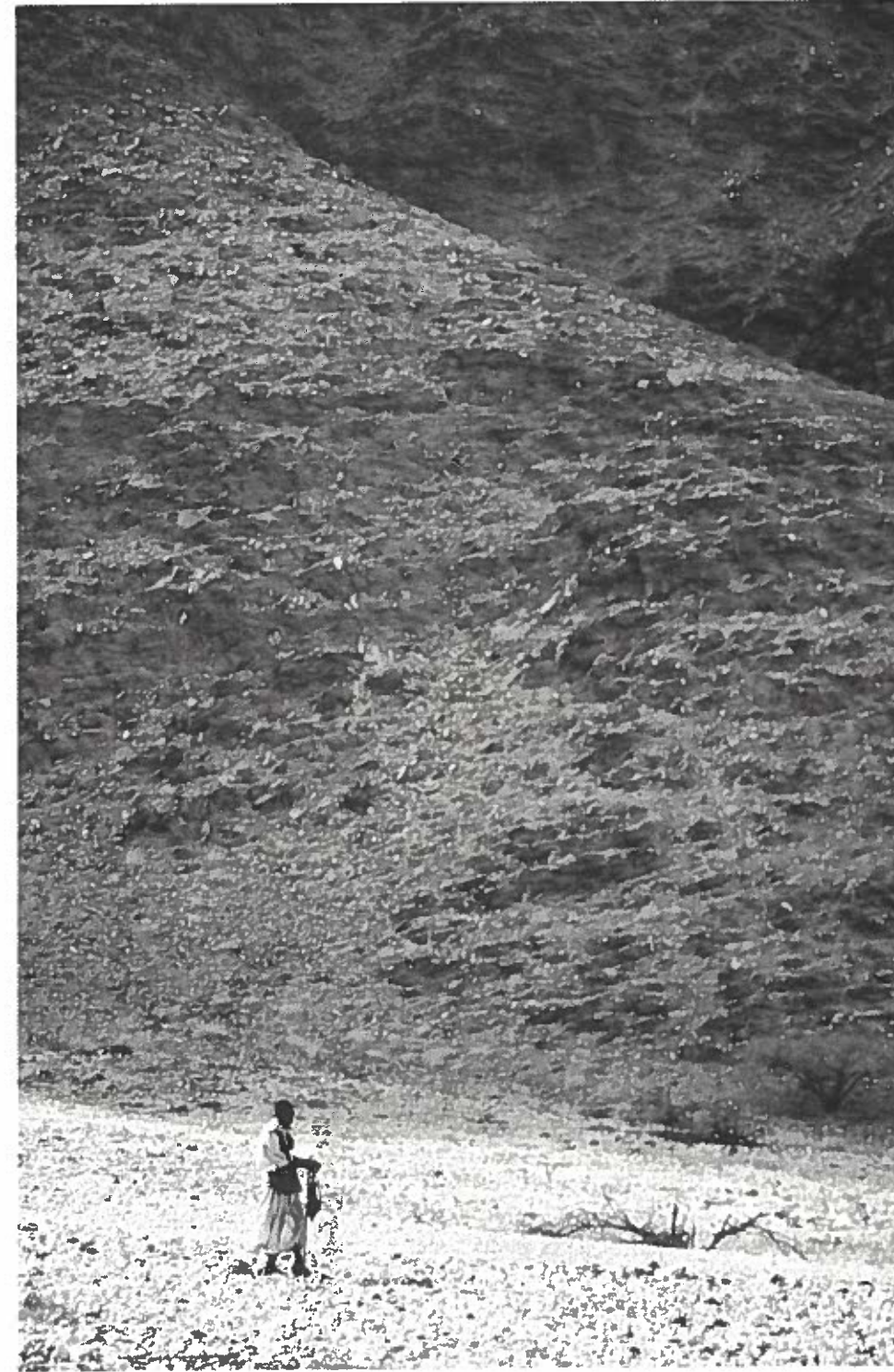
*When I had the pleasure of discussing these issues in May 1991 with Mr. Isaias Afwerki, the Secretary General of the EPLF, he pointed to the the past pastoralist settlement projects was, in the experience of the EPLF, something that the pastoralists did not want. The argument he used very much was that if a people have a desire for a certain type of lifestyle, and that seen as a kind of total package, it would be a violation of their basic rights and their dignity if you force them to do something against their own will. In that respect I saw a shift in policy from the side of the EPLF.*

- Our role as educated Eritreans, with a bit of a kind of wider perspective on issues, has always been to contribute to this ongoing debate. And I think Afwerki's remarks were very much a contribution to the ongoing debates. Forced sedentarization of pastoral groups is against human rights, of course. We are now in the process of working on how and what we are going to do, that is really the stage the debate is at.

*I also raised another related issue with Mr. Afwerki. There are now many eyes on Eritrea. The outer world is aware of what happened to other guerilla movements as they took power after liberation wars and turned into a new sort of exploitive and suppressive elite themselves. Not only Afwerki, but other people I met, stressed that the Eritreans have studied and learnt from other liberation movements' mistakes in Africa and elsewhere.*

- In Eritrea I hope very much, and this is my personal opinion that, because of the scale of the suffering we had and also the experience we gained, the capacity we accumulated over the many, many years, and the attitude that we have developed and also the survival strategy which has been built within us to cope with situations as they came, that we will be able to show another type of development.

*What has the war and the liberation process meant for the gender relation issue?*



View from the province of Sahel, Eritrea. Photo: Espen Wæhle



- The role of the women in our society is now completely changed beyond return. To us now we have seen what the women can do for themselves. And this had such a positive impact in our society. Marriage alliances, the whole question of dowry, the whole concept of buying women by material means – this has completely and radically changed.

*It is not only a type of rhetoric then?*

- There has been so many changes in our society, including the question of women, the way we look at ourselves, the way we have built our own survival – the untold stories. And I think a lot of the changes will stay in Eritrea. I don't think we've been in the position where the war is just over and then everything that has been built up over many years will just collapse. It has been such an experience, which you can't give away.

*Will you Eritreans continue on the same level of self sacrifice?*

- My personal opinion is that I doubt this very much. The fighters have come back home. They will have their own responsibilities, their own aspirations. The fighters commitment and the sacrifice in the bush<sup>7</sup> was very extreme, obviously! I sympathize with a lot of my country people who have given up half of their lives doing this, fighting, dying for what they believe in. It would be unrealistic to expect them to continue with the same level of commitment. This would be asking too much in a way, but I can see perhaps the general attitude will continue, that you have to build your own country and play a role within the region. The fighters are human beings, they have needs now. When you go to Asmara it is a cold place, it is a big city. If you are a medic there you are going to need a house, your life is becoming more expensive. Whereas the life in the field is very straightforward, very simple and communal.

A lot of people are returning back now with money, ideas and expertise. This trend has now started. We were worried about our people being outside for such a long time. Realistically you cannot expect all of them back, nor is it necessary. But I think the people with the capital, with the skills and the resources who can contribute

to the immediate viability of this nation, will play a crucial role. Our boys are everywhere, in various corners and there are various ways to contribute to Eritrea.

*And your girls also I think!*

- Yes of course, it is chauvinistic of me. Our girls have done a lot better in the last thirty years because of the war. They have really changed our mentality in many ways. We are traditionally a very male dominated society. The boys for example always had a better chance in education. We will see a new Eritrea in fact in terms of gender relationships. I don't mean it in a kind of European (women's lib), in a romantic way. The changes which have taken place are fundamental as has been reported by various researchers.

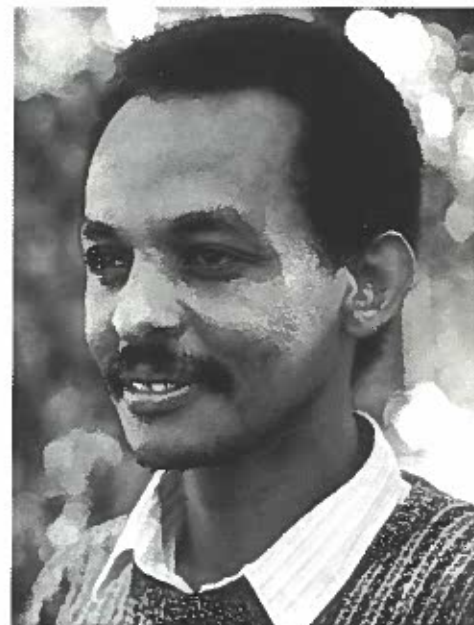
*The women have been fighters as well in the liberation front?*

- Yes, they constitute something like 35 % of the EPLF forces, in all sectors from civil administration to the front. My generation of course have developed a completely different attitude regarding women, our attitudes towards our own children has changed. Of course this is a very radical change. Some of our neighbours, eg. the conservative Arab countries don't like it, so there is some kind of a problem there.

*The EPLF is now heading an interim government. What is now lying ahead of you in respect of political development?*

- Well the new government has now established its priorities very clearly, first the rehabilitation of the country, morally, psychologically – we need to settle down a bit, to think for ourselves. Because we have been through a trauma for a long time. This is very difficult to explain to outsiders who have not been through the process. That is what the EPLF is doing now. So in terms of priorities, the rehabilitation of the people, and by that I mean people in the diaspora, in the Sudan - half a million of them. That's their prime priority to bring these people home to Eritrea. To ensure that these displaced people, who have contributed so much, return back to their own settlements. And secondly, to run an effective government, by that I mean to run the infrastructure of the government,

to run the schools, to run the hospitals – to run the machinery. That's very important, to form a strong administration in Eritrea to be sure that the referendum also becomes a success. What I feel is that if this referendum is going to be successful, Eritrea needs to show the world that we are capable of running our affairs. That's very critical for us as a people. So in a sense stabilization and security is important. The EPLF will maintain a very strong security until after the referendum.



*Dr. Zeremarian Fre, from PENHA.  
Photo: Espen Wæhle*

*When is the referendum going to take place?*

- I think in about two years. The ordinary Eritrean is now not very concerned about the referendum. This is the general attitude. The war is over, it is over in a less bloody fashion, the blue Eritrean flag which has given people a sense of identity is back. Now is the difficult business of really building the nation.

*All the people I met in Eritrea and in Sudan were very confident that the referendum will only be a democratic exercise, they were confident that there would be a solid majority for independence for Eritrea.*

- That is very true I think. I don't have any doubts. I share that confidence that there will be no problem. It is a foregone conclusion. But I think more importantly, a lot of

us are really concerned about the viability of Eritrea, it's own confidence as a nation. Not only its own flag, its own parliament, but to be a viable country. We want to do it for ourselves – with all the problems that we still have, in terms of the ecological, social and political challenges.

*This question links into international politics, especially the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Some political forces outside Africa, like the superpowers, seem to be less negative towards a possible independence for Eritrea compared to African governments.*

- If I can be very cynical about this, there doesn't seem to be any other choice really – frankly speaking. Because the Eritreans have achieved what they have done in their own way, because they are able to negotiate with an enemy that they had yesterday. I think this has contributed so much to the change of attitudes internationally.

*I constantly heard in Eritrea people saying »we did not fight thirty years for some ministerial posts«, implying that Eritreans did not fight for influence within Ethiopia, but for independence. That attitude was also reflected very clearly when the Eritrean delegation came to Addis Ababa after the EPDRF takeover, they presented themselves as observers in the negotiations on a future government in Ethiopia, and not as the other representatives that were delegates.*

- This is true, yes.

*The Eritreans also offered the Ethiopians access to the sea through the port of Assab.*

- This is very crucial. This is the whole idea of regional cooperation in a practical sense. It is already happening in a small scale. I think the general understanding, which the populace has understood, we cannot just live in peace with Ethiopia if Ethiopia is blocked out.

*Do you mean that as Eritrea is already a de facto independent state, though not recognized internationally in a legal fashion, implies that your neighbours already act as if you were an independent state?*

- Yes, if I can give you an example. When the leader of the new government of Eritrea gathered in with well over 200,000 in the Asmara stadium for the celebrations after liberation, he was flanked by the foreign ministers of the Sudan and the foreign minister of Ethiopia. And that's psychologically very important, politically it means those to major neighbours are now de facto recognizing the government of Eritrea. Officially Eritrea now has a high commissioner, catering for areas of joint interest, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Psychologically for the ordinary Ethiopian who has been told for so many years, that those are the bandits in the hills, they are going to take your country. It must be quite a drastic change to see the enemies that you have been fighting for a long time, to see them at your doorstep, you know, it is really very dramatic. The best guarantee for Eritrean independence is for it to be able to live with its neighbours in peace and cooperation.

*Is the EPLF the only political force within the interim government or are other political groupings included?*

- The EPLF has actually become the interim government for this two-year period. I don't know what is going to happen in the process. The ELF, the former movement which was the political organization for quite a long time, has disintegrated into so many bits. It has become difficult really for EPLF to integrate ELF in this new government as ELF. The ELF was quite a movement a few years back. A lot of the fighters of ELF now are returning back to Eritrea, while some do not want to go back and remain as refugees, to make up some bad stories on what is going on in Eritrea.

In terms of political parties the choice now is between making the EPLF a very weak movement or let it administer the country in this interim period. Once you have guaranteed the full independence of the country, there was always a tradition of multi-party politics. In the fifties we had four or five different political parties in Eritrea ruling and competing for power. So I can see that once this period is over there are going to be many political parties in Eritrea. I don't think the EPLF would be a monolithic one-party state, that is out of the question and that would not be acceptable. We have so much political tra-

dition of the past that Eritrea cannot be ruled by one political party or one ethnic group. We now need a strong administration which will reduce some of our physical suffering, and the EPLF has much of the infrastructure already, but needs a great deal of moral, material and institutional support to address the challenge.

*Please come with some kind of concluding remark, what is in your heart, what is in your mind?*

- Firstly, I am very glad that this is over, as a major war in our region. It will have a very positive impact on our neighbours. My own vision is that the Eritrean leaders would become mediators in the other regional conflicts. This is maybe a bit ambitious, but that is what I would like to aspire to. I think infrastructurally and economically Eritrea is going to be a model state and to show its capacity now that peace is there. Eritrea should set up a model for regional cooperation, which has already started. Because realistically we know that we need each other, politically and economically, in the region. This Eritrean – Ethiopian relationship could actually have a positive impact on our neighbours. Eritrea and Ethiopia are major countries in the region, they are very powerful in terms of manpower etc. In fact I am very optimistic. I was very pessimistic a few years ago, that this war was going to continue, that this war was going to drain all of our resources leading to mutual destruction of both countries. The language, however, has now changed from war to peace, and peace should be given a chance.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed here are intended to inform the public and provoke debate on the subject. They do not necessarily reflect PENHA's views on the matter.

<sup>2</sup> Fre is here referring to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, EPLF.

<sup>3</sup> In the north the Eritreans built underground schools, hospitals, factories, workshops and laboratories. Roads and other forms of communication were also constructed.

<sup>4</sup> Zeremariam Fre is here referring to the Eritrean province called Sahel,



which the interviewer visited in May 1991.

<sup>5</sup> (note on EPLF, TPLF, EPDRF etc) They coordinated activities, including military activities, in taking over the capital cities of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

<sup>6</sup> Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front – the front that led the war against the regime of Menghistu, within this front the TPLF, Tigray People's Liberation Front, have been the dominating political fact

<sup>7</sup> When Eritreans refer to the field or the bush they are thinking about the former guerilla bases and strongholds in the hilly, northern parts of Eritrea.

□

## 5 IWGIA DOCUMENTS ON BRASIL

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# The World Bank Operational Manual

## Operational Directive Indigenous Peoples

### Introduction

1. This directive describes Bank policies and processing procedures for projects that affect indigenous peoples. It sets out basic definitions, policy objectives, guidelines for the design and implementation of project provisions or components for indigenous peoples, and processing and documentation requirements.

2. The directive provides policy guidance (a) ensure that indigenous people benefit from developments projects, and (b) avoid or mitigate potentially adverse effects on indigenous people caused by Bank-assisted activities. Special action is required where Bank investments affect indigenous peoples, tribes, ethnic minorities, or other groups whose social and economic status restricts their capacity to assert their interests and rights in land and other productive resources.

### Definitions

3. The terms »indigenous peoples,« »indigenous ethnic minorities,« »tribal groups,« and »scheduled tribes« describe social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process. For the purposes of this directive, »indigenous peoples« is the term that will be used to refer to these groups.

4. Within their national constitutions, statutes, and relevant legislation, many of the Bank's borrower countries include specific definitional clauses and legal frame-

works that provide a preliminary basis for identifying indigenous peoples.

5. Because of the varied and changing contexts in which indigenous peoples are found, no single definition can capture their diversity. Indigenous people are commonly among the poorest segments of a population. They engage in economic activities that range from shifting agriculture in or near forests to wage labor or even small-scale market-oriented activities. Indigenous peoples can be identified in particular geographical areas by the presence in varying degrees of the following characteristics:

- (a) a close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;
- (b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;
- (c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language;
- (d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and
- (e) primarily subsistence-oriented production.

Task managers (TMs) must exercise judgment in determining the populations to which directive applies and should make use of specialized anthropological and sociological experts throughout the project cycle.

### Objective and Policy

6. The Bank's broad objective towards indigenous people, as for all the people in its member countries, is to ensure that the development process fosters full respect for their dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness. More specifically, the

objective at the center of this directive is to ensure that indigenous peoples do not suffer adverse effects during the development process, particularly from Bank-financed projects, and that they receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits.

7. How to approach indigenous peoples affected by development projects is a controversial issue. Debate is often phrased as a choice between two opposed positions. One pole is to insulate indigenous populations whose cultural and economic practices make it difficult for them to deal with powerful outside groups. The advantages of this approach are the special protections that are provided and the preservation of cultural distinctiveness; the costs are the benefits foregone from development programs. The other pole argues that indigenous people must be acculturated to dominant society values and economic activities so that they can participate in national development. Here the benefits can include improved social and economic opportunities, but the cost is often the gradual loss of cultural differences.

8. The Bank's policy is that the strategy for addressing the issues pertaining to indigenous peoples must be based on the informed participation of the indigenous people themselves. Thus, identifying local preferences through direct consultation, incorporation of indigenous knowledge into project approaches, and appropriate early use of experienced specialists are core activities for any project that affects indigenous peoples and their rights to natural and economic resources.

9. Cases will occur, especially when dealing with the most isolated groups, where adverse impacts are unavoidable and ad-



equate mitigation plans have not been developed. In such situations, the Bank will not appraise projects until suitable plans are developed by the borrower and reviewed by the Bank. In other cases, indigenous people may wish to be and can be incorporated into the development process. In sum, a full range of positive actions by the borrower must ensure that indigenous people benefit from development investments.

### Bank Role

10. The Bank addresses issues on indigenous peoples through (a) country economic and sector work, (b) technical assistance, and (c) investment project components or provisions. Issues concerning indigenous peoples can arise in a variety of sectors that concern the Bank; those involving, for example, agriculture, road construction, forestry, hydropower, mining, tourism, education and the environment should be carefully screened. (Displacement of indigenous people can be particularly damaging, and special efforts should be made to avoid it. See OD 4.30, **Involuntary resettlement**, for additional policy guidance on resettlement issues involving indigenous people). Issues related to indigenous peoples are commonly identified through the environmental assessment or social impact assessment processes, and appropriate measures should be taken under environmental mitigation actions (see OD 4.01, **Environmental Assessment**, to be issued).

11. **Country Economic and Sector Work.** Country departments should maintain information on trends in government policies and institutions that deal with indigenous peoples. Issues concerning indigenous peoples should be addressed explicitly in sector and subsector work and brought into the Bank-country dialogue. National development policy frameworks and institutions for indigenous peoples often need to be strengthened in order to create a stronger basis for designing and processing projects with components dealing with indigenous peoples.

12. **Technical assistance.** Technical assistance to develop the borrower's abilities to address issues on indigenous peoples can be provided by the Bank. Technical assist-

ance is normally given within the context of project preparation, but technical assistance may also be needed to strengthen the relevant government institutions or to support development initiatives taken by indigenous people themselves.

13. **Investment Projects.** For an investment project that affects indigenous peoples, the borrower should prepare an indigenous peoples development plan that it consist with the Bank's policy. Any project that affects indigenous peoples is expected to include components or provisions that incorporate such a plan. When the bulk of the direct project beneficiaries are indigenous people, the Bank's concerns would be addressed by the project itself and the provisions of this OD would thus apply to the project in its entirety.

### Indigenous Peoples Development Plan

(Regionally specific technical guidelines for preparing indigenous peoples components, and case studies of best practices, are available from the Regional environment divisions (REDs)).

14. Prerequisites of a successful development plan for indigenous peoples are as follows:

- (a) The key step in project design is the preparation of a culturally appropriate development plan based on full consideration of the options preferred by the indigenous people affected by the project.
- (b) Studies should make all efforts to **anticipate adverse trends** likely to be induced by the project and develop the means to avoid or mitigate harm. (For guidance on indigenous peoples and environmental assessment procedures, see OD 4.01, **Environmental Assessment**, and Chapter 7 of World Bank, **Environmental Sourcebook**, Technical Paper No. 139 (Washington, D.C., 1991)).
- (c) The institutions responsible for government interaction with indigenous peoples should possess the social, technical, and legal skills needed for carrying out the proposed development activities. Implementation arrangements should be kept simple.

They should normally involve appropriate existing institutions, local organisations, and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) with expertise in matters relating to indigenous peoples.

- (d) Local patterns of social organisation, religious beliefs, and resource use should be taken into account in the plan's design.
- (e) Development activities should support production systems that are well adapted to the needs and environment of indigenous peoples, and should help production systems under stress to attain sustainable levels.
- (f) The plan should avoid creating or aggravating the dependency of indigenous people on project entities. Planning should encourage early handover of project management to local people. As needed, the plan should include general education and training in management skills for indigenous people from the onset of the projects.
- (g) Successful planning for indigenous peoples frequently requires long lead times, as well as arrangements for extended follow-up. Remote or neglected areas where little previous experience is available often require additional research and pilot programs to fine-tune development proposals.
- (h) Where effective programs are already functioning, Bank support can take the form of incremental funding to strengthen them rather than the development of entirely new programs.

### Contents

15. The development plan should be prepared in tandem with the preparation of the main investment. In many cases, proper protection of the rights of indigenous people will require the implementation of special project components that may lie outside the primary project's objectives. These components can include activities related to health and nutrition, productive infrastructure, linguistic and cultural preservation, entitlement to natural resources, and education. The project component for indigenous peoples development should include the following elements, as needed:

### (a) Legal Framework.

The plan should contain an assessment of (i) the legal status of the groups covered by this OD, as reflected in the country's constitution, legislation, and subsidiary legislation (regulations, administrative orders, etc.); and (ii) the ability of such groups to obtain access to and effectively use the legal system to defend their rights. Particular attention should be given to the rights of indigenous peoples to use and develop the lands that they occupy, to be protected against illegal intruders, and to have access to natural resources (such as forests, wildlife, and water) vital to their subsistence and reproduction.

### (b) Baseline Data.

Baseline data should include:

- (i) accurate, up-to-date maps and aerial photographs of the area of project influence and the areas inhabited by indigenous peoples;
- (ii) analysis of the social structure and income sources of the population;
- (iii) inventories of the resources that indigenous people use and technical data on their production systems; and
- (iv) relationship of indigenous peoples to other local and national groups. It is particularly important that baseline studies capture the full range of production and marketing activities in which indigenous people are engaged. Site visits by qualified social and technical experts should verify and update secondary sources.

### (c) Land Tenure.

When local legislation needs strengthening, the Bank should offer to advise and assist the borrower in establishing legal recognition of the customary or traditional land tenure systems of indigenous peoples. Where the traditional lands of indigenous peoples have been brought by law into the domain of the state and where it is inappropriate to convert traditional rights into those of legal ownership, alternative arrangements should be implemented to grant long-term, renewable rights of custodianship and use to indigenous peoples. These steps should be taken before the initiation of other planning steps that may be contingent on recognized land titles.

### (d) Strategy for Local Participation.

Mechanisms should be devised and main-

tained for participation by indigenous people in decision making throughout project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Many of the larger groups of indigenous people have their own representative organisations that provide effective channels for communicating local preferences. Traditional leaders occupy pivotal positions for mobilizing people and should be brought into the planning process, with due concern for ensuring genuine representation of the indigenous population. (See also »Community Involvement and the Role of Nongovernmental Organisations in Environmental Assessment« in World Bank, **Environmental Sourcebook**, Technical paper No. 139 (Washington, D.C., 1991)) No foolproof methods exist, however, to guarantee full local-level participation. Sociological and technical advice provided through the Regional environment divisions (REDs) is often needed to develop mechanisms appropriate for the project area.

(e) **Technical Identification of Development or Mitigation Activities.** Technical proposals should proceed from on-site research by qualified professionals acceptable to the Bank. Detailed descriptions should be prepared and appraised for such proposed services as education, training, health, credit, and legal assistance. Technical descriptions should be included for the planned investments in productive infrastructure. Plans that draw upon indigenous knowledge are often more successful than those introducing entirely new principles and institutions. For example, the potential contribution of traditional health providers should be considered in planning delivery systems for health care.

### (f) Institutional Capacity.

The government institutions assigned responsibility for indigenous peoples are often weak. Assessing the track record, capabilities, and needs of those institutions is a fundamental requirements. Organizational issues that need to be addressed through Bank assistance are the (i) availability of funds for investments and field operations; (ii) adequacy of experienced professional staff; (iii) ability of indigenous peoples' own organisations, local administration authorities, and local-NGOs to interact with specialized government institutions; (iv) ability of the execut-

ing agency to mobilize other agencies involved in the plan's implementation; and (v) adequacy of field presence.

### (g) Implementation Schedule.

Components should include an implementation schedule with benchmarks by which progress can be measured at appropriate intervals. Pilot programs are often needed to provide planning information for phasing the project component for indigenous peoples with the main investment. The plan should pursue the long-term sustainability of project activities subsequent to completion of disbursement.

### (h) Monitoring and Evaluation.

(See OD 10.70, Project Monitoring and Evaluation). Independent monitoring capacities are usually needed when the institutions responsible for indigenous populations have weak management histories. Monitoring by representatives of indigenous peoples own organisations can be an efficient way for the project management to absorb the perspective of indigenous beneficiaries and is encouraged by the Bank. Monitoring units should be staffed by experienced social science professionals, and reporting formats and schedules appropriate to the project's needs should be established. Monitoring and evaluation reports should be reviewed jointly by the senior management of the implementing agency and by the Bank. The evaluation reports should be made available to the public.

### (i) Cost Estimates and Financing Plan.

The plan should include detailed cost estimates for planned activities and investments. The estimates should be broken down into unit costs by project year and linked to a financing plan. Such programs as revolving credit funds that provide indigenous people with investment pools should indicate their accounting procedures and mechanisms for financial transfer and replenishment. It is usually helpful to have as high a share as possible of direct financial participation by the Bank in project components dealing with indigenous peoples.

### Project Processing and Documentation Identification

16. During project identification, the borrower should be informed of the Bank's



policy for indigenous peoples. The approximate number of potentially affected people and their location should be determined and shown on maps of the project area. The legal status of any affected groups should also be discussed. TMs should ascertain the relevant government agencies, and their policies, procedures, programs, and plans for indigenous people affected by the proposed project (see paras. 11 and 15(a)). TMs should also initiate anthropological studies necessary to identify local needs and preferences (see para. 15(b)). TMs, in consultation with the REDs, should signal indigenous peoples issues and the overall project strategy in the Initial Executive Project Summary (IEPS).

#### Preparation

17. If it is agreed in the IEPS meeting that special action is needed, the indigenous peoples development plan or project component should be developed during project preparation. As necessary, the Bank should assist the borrower in preparing terms of reference and should provide specialized technical assistance (see para. 12). Early involvement of anthropologists

and local NGOs with expertise in matters related to indigenous peoples is a useful way to identify mechanisms for effective participation and local development opportunities. In a project that involves the land rights of indigenous peoples, the Bank should work with the borrower to clarify the steps needed for putting land tenure on a regular footing as early as possible, since land disputes frequently lead to delays in executing measures that are contingent on proper land titles (see para. 15(c)).

#### Appraisal

18. The plan for the development component for indigenous peoples should be submitted to the Bank along with the project's overall feasibility report, prior to project appraisal. Appraisal should assess the adequacy of the plan, the suitability of policies and legal frameworks, the capabilities of the agencies charged with implementing the plan, and the adequacy of the allocated technical, financial, and social resources. Appraisal teams should be satisfied that indigenous people have participated meaningfully in the development of the plan as described in para. 14(a) (also

see para. 15(d)). It is particularly important to appraise proposals for regularizing land access and use.

#### Implementation and Supervision

19. Supervision planning should make provisions for including the appropriate anthropological, legal, and technical skills in Bank supervision missions during project implementation (see para. 15(g) and (h), and OD 13.05, **Project Supervision**). Site visits by TMs and specialists are essential. Midterm and final evaluations should assess progress and recommend corrective actions when necessary.

#### Documentation

20. The borrower's commitments for implementing the indigenous peoples development plan should be reflected in the loan documents; legal provisions should provide Bank staff with clear benchmarks that can be monitored during supervision. The Staff Appraisal Report and the Memorandum and Recommendation of the President should summarize the plan or project provisions.

September 1991

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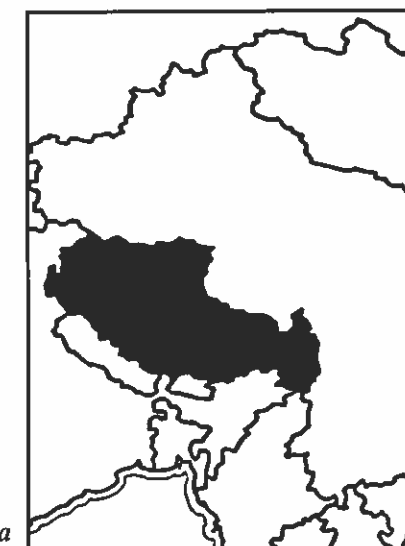
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# The Drepung Manifesto or Democracy in Tibet

By Ronald Schwartz

Tibet, Central Asia



On November 30, 1989, Ngawang Phulchung, a 30 year-old mong from Drepung monastery, was sentenced at a mass rally in Lhasa to 19 years in prison for »organizing and joining a counter-revolutionary clique and spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda.« He and three other Drepung monks -Ngawang Osel, Jamphel Changchup and Kelsang Dondrup - were accused of producing »counter-revolutionary literature« which attacked the Chinese government and »venomously slandered our socialist system characterized by the People's democratic dictatorship.« The other monks all received sentences longer than ten years. These are the longest sentences handed out for the political offence of writing leaflets and pamphlets since the resurgence of protest in Tibet in 1987 (much longer than recent sentences of democracy activists in denunciations of the »crimes« of the monks, and the public spectacle of a mass sentencing rally indicate how seriously the Chinese perceive the threat posed by the ideas of the Drepung monks.

Two years earlier, on September 27, 1987, the four monks were among 21 monks from Drepung monastery who staged the first in a continuing series of peaceful demonstrations led by monks and nuns. The demonstrators were beaten by police, arrested, and imprisoned without charges for four months. They were released in January, 1988, reportedly on the advice of the Panchen Lama, who argued for »leniency« and dismissed the demonstrations as the result of »lingering wounds created in the minds of people« from 20 years of

»erroneous leftist ideology.« Reform-minded government officials insisted that a policy of economic prosperity for Tibetans combined with a measure of religious tolerance would quell nationalist discontent.

Within a few months of their release the Drepung group began publishing political leaflets using primitive stencils. From the outset the group described its aims as »political education« rather than propaganda. One of their first projects was to distribute a Tibetan translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. From rural backgrounds themselves, their literature was meant to be taken back to villages to counter the arguments of Party officials that Tibetan independence is to equated with »feudalism« and that only Chinese rule offers progress and modernization to Tibet. The real threat posed by the Drepung monks, who have given a voice to a widespread indigenous democracy movement among young Tibetans, is their identification of Tibetan independence with democracy and human rights, and their refusal to be drawn into a debate about the merits of the »old society.«

In the summer of 1988 the Drepung group produced the »Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet,« an original piece of political writing, perhaps the first to come from the generation of young Tibetans who have grown up under Chinese rule. The eleven-page pamphlet is a manifesto for an independent democratic Tibet. In response to the continuing demonstrations since 1987, monks in monasteries - along with ordinary Tibetans in neighborhood-committees and work-units - have been subjected to a campaign of

political meetings to »root out and suppress splittism.« The Drepung manifesto answers the arguments of the political cadres in these meetings. Much of the political vocabulary of the Drepung manifesto is borrowed from the communist lexicon (words for »democracy« and »human rights« were in fact introduced into the Tibetan language to translate Chinese communist material). Thus, outlining the conditions necessary for a »people's government,« the term »people« is explained as referring to the »broad masses,« and democracy is defined as »a popular system which fundamentally accords with the needs, wishes and choices of the broad masses.« The Drepung manifesto emphasizes the limited and representative character of government:

*»As for the means for progress in the future, it is necessary to build political and social organisation on the basis of the cooperation and consent of the broad masses of Tibet. This kind of organisation must be constructed by the broad masses or by their representatives whose powers are limited by the people. Apart from that, an organization built on the rule of force and coercion can never be justified. With regard to the representatives, both the nomination of the representatives and their election must be decided according to the wishes of the masses. Such a system of government is a democratic system.«*

Chinese rule in Tibet is understood throughout not merely as foreign occupation, which Tibetans do not need to be convinced of, but as undemocratic and





unrepresentative. The Drepung Manifesto provides an appraisal of the 1963 constitution for an independent Tibet drawn up by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile, emphasizing all of the obligatory rights and freedoms of Western societies – political equality, freedom of thought, assembly, religion:

*«Under the broad framework provided by the democratic constitution, people with different individual views of what course of action to follow, by exercising their democratic prerogatives, will also be able to practice what they think without need of fear, hypocrisy, or concealment.»*

But the Drepung manifesto does not suggest a political role either for the Dalai Lama or for his traditionally-appointed cabinet, the Kashag. This is a major departure both from the 1963 constitution and from the actual operation of the government-in-exile.

The Drepung manifesto explicitly re-

jects the «old society,» and insists that an independent Tibet will be a break, historically and politically, with the past:

*«Having completely eradicated the practices of the old society with all its faults,*



Nomadic Tibetans. Photo: Anders Højmark Andersen

*the future Tibet will not resemble our former condition and be a restoration of serfdom or be like the so-called «old system» of rule by succession of feudal masters or monastic estates. A principle line of argument of the political cadres has been that the splittists want to restore «feudalism.» The undesirability of the old society is a point the monks willingly concede. As they see it, the Chinese system is now the main obstacle to social progress. Thus the Drepung monks focus on the political rights and freedoms that they understand to be characteristic of contemporary democratic societies, but which China denies.»*

Another accusation made in political meetings is that the monks aim to restore the political privileges of the monasteries («lamaism» in the Chinese lexicon). Significantly, the Drepung manifesto excludes any special political role for the monks or the monasteries. The Drepung manifesto is religiously undogmatic, and Buddhism is characterized as a set of moral principles compatible with democracy and human rights. The Buddhism of the young monks and nuns in Tibet is a religion that has been stripped to its essentials. The elaborate ritual of the traditional religion largely has been lost. But Buddhism offers an intellectual alternative to Marxist ideology that is identified with the Tibetan national cause. From Buddhism also comes a commitment to non-violence and respect for the integrity of the individual. Thus the Drepung manifesto

counters Chinese claims by insisting that it is Buddhism which is consistent «with the general practice of the contemporary world,» not communism.

Ngawang Phulchung and the other three Drepung monks were arrested in April, 1989, one month after the declaration of martial law in Lhasa. There is no evidence that they participated in the demonstrations and riots that led up to martial law. An official statement broadcast on Radio Lhasa on the day of the

### The Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet

Although it is difficult to describe what our future situation will be, it is the responsibility of everyone to prepare for the future. If Tibetans continue to struggle with a courageous determination based on the force of established truth, we will not always have to remain under the foreign Chinese invaders; possessing the right to self-determination in accordance with in-

authority to exercise the right to self-determination.

In this constitution there is equality without discrimination between clergy and laypersons, or on the basis of sex, language, religion, social origin, race, wealth, region, or any other status (Article 8). The inhumane treatment of subjects will cease; slavery, exploitative labour, and child labour are not permitted (Article 17). Furthermore, the constitution clearly proclaims that each Tibetan has an



Chinese troops during the invasion of Tibet. Photo. Archive IWGIA

sentencing denounced the ideas of the Drepung monks, declaring that the «crimes committed by Ngawang Phulchung and other criminals demonstrate that the so-called human rights, freedoms, and democracy played up by the separatists both at home and abroad are nothing but a pack of deceitful lies.» The monks were described as the «scum of the religious circles» who have «thoroughly betrayed the religious doctrines and canons of Buddhism by their actions.» The Chinese have no choice but to restrict Buddhism to a collection of vestigial superstitions. Ultimately, the threat posed by the development of a politically-active form of Buddhism is that it will focus Tibetan discontent on the system of communist rule and that the demand for independence will become synonymous with demands for democracy in Tibet.

ternational law, there is no doubt that we will be able to enjoy the splendour of all religious and political freedoms. Having completely eradicated the practices of the old society with all its faults, the future Tibet will not resemble our former condition and be a restoration of serfdom or be like the so-called 'old system' of rule by a succession of feudal masters or monastic estates. Understanding that a democratic embodying both religious and secular principles is necessary, and for the purpose of demonstrating the future way forward for the Tibetan people, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has bestowed a national law for a future Tibet that accords with the general practice of the contemporary world. This constitution is based on the sacred teachings elegantly spoken by the Buddha, as well as the United Nations declaration of human rights, the right to self-determination, and the proclaimed

equal right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (Article 17), freedom of assembly, the right to life, to vote, freedom of movement, freedom of employment, freedom of expression, and the right to form associations (Article 18, 20). A broad and democratic path for developing society through the freedom and free choice of the people has been settled on.

In order to practice democracy embodying religious and secular principles, it is necessary to understand well the meaning of the term 'democracy' (dmangs gtso). For example, the first syllable, 'people' (dmangs), refers to the broad masses, not to a few people, and does not differentiate on the basis of heredity, power, or wealth. Their thoughts are paramount; or, in other words, the broad masses are held to be the final authority. Also, speaking from another point of view, if we take the case of our Tibetan people, the term 'peo-





Tibetan monk. Photo: Anders Højmark Andersen

ple' (dmangs) refers to the broad masses of the three provinces of Tibet. As for the second syllable (gtso), it should be understood to mean regarding the thoughts and wishes of the people as paramount. Reasoning thusly, 'democracy' (dmangs gtso) refers to a popular system which fundamentally accords with the needs, wishes, and choices of the broad masses. Under

the broad framework provided by the democratic constitution, people with different individual views of what course of action to follow, by exercising their democratic prerogatives, will also be able to practise what they think and speak without need of fear, hypocrisy and concealment.

As for the means for progress in the future, it is necessary to build political and

social organisation on the basis of the cooperation and consent of the broad masses of Tibet. This kind of organisation must be constructed by the broad masses or by their representatives whose powers are limited by people. Apart from that, an organisation built on the rule of force and coercion can never be justified. With regard to the representatives, both the nomination of the representatives and their election must be decided according to the wishes of the masses. Such a system of government is a democratic system. Thus the Assembly of People's Deputies plays the leading role in the conduct of the National Assembly for the purpose of the Tibetan government deciding vital important decisions. Likewise, if we take the example of the cooperative settlement societies, the representatives elected by the people of that area decide important decisions on a majority basis.

Not only is this democratic system in accordance with contemporary conditions, it is also in accordance with the philosophy of Buddhism. Only if the future government of Tibet is a government formed by the people, embodying religious and secular principles, then can such a government be accepted as being a people's government. A constitution for a future Tibet should be based on the contemporary system of democracy and should also accord with the actual situation in Tibet.

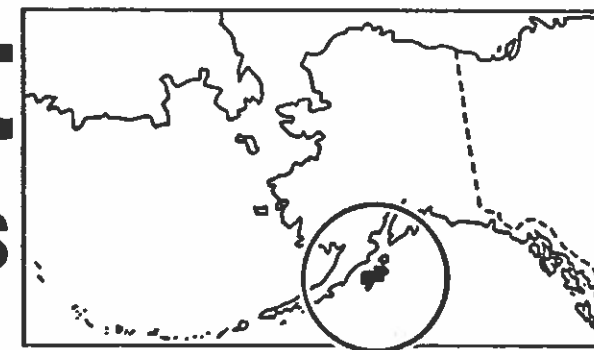
In order to exercise equality, freedom, and democratic rights, it is necessary to clearly understand the fundamental nature of democracy. Democracy does not mean being allowed to do whatever one feels like doing without any respect for order. Neither do democratic rights excuse pursuing selfish interests without the need to fulfill corresponding democratic responsibilities.

In summary, in order for Tibet to be administered in the future by Tibetans, and for Tibetans to decide Tibetan affairs, and in order for Tibetans to be able to exercise for themselves the rights intended by the precious constitution, we must remind ourselves that everyone, young and old, must steadfastly do whatever they can in every way, directly and indirectly, for the movement to restore Tibetan freedom.

(translated by Ronald Schwartz) □

# At last, at rest

## 756 Konyag ancestors being returned



Kodiak Islands, Alaska (USA)

*The Kodiak Island community of Larsen Bay held a simple Russian Orthodox Ceremony and reburied the remains of 756 of their ancestors in a mass grave on October 5. The remains had been unearthed by scientists from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington some 50 years ago.*

This story actually begins in the 1930s when anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka, director of Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, journeyed to Larsen Bay, a small Aleut fishing village on the west coast of Kodiak Island, with a team of seven college students and began digging up graves. He was working for the Smithsonian museum and his mission was to collect ancient Aleut remains for later study.

The people of Larsen Bay, who until recently called themselves Uyakslamiut, say they are not against the idea of their ancestors being studied, but they are bitter about the way the study took place.

Hrdlicka and his men did not ask villagers' permission before beginning their work and by the time they were finished, nearly 800 unmarked graves had been unearthed and emptied.

Some of the villagers present at the ceremony said they were deeply scared by this and getting the skeletal remains back is a relief.

The remains reportedly dated back 500 to 2000 years, although some were possibly victims of the more recent 1918 flu epidemic. Today, thanks to the 1990 Native American Grave and Burial Protection Act., federal museums are required to return remains to tribes that request them.

The Konyag remains were reburied near the crest of the two-mile stretch of road that threads through the village overlooking Uyak Bay and the nearly century-old salmon cannery. About 100 yards to

the west is an area villagers call the »boneyard,« where the artifacts were excavated between 1931 and 1938.

Still sitting at the Smithsonian are 144 artifacts, including carved wooden eyes that have been buried with the bones years ago. Museum officials said the artifacts will be shipped in two months so they can be kept in the museum. Vice-president of the tribal council, Frank Carlson said they were wrong. »We are going to bury them.«

The remains arrived by barge, packed in numbered cardboard boxes. Dozens of small boxes held one skull each, said Tribal Council President Roy Jones and most of the boxes were buried unopened. Archaeologist with the Kodiak Area Native Association, Rick Knecht, suggested the remains be buried in sealed coolers in case they are needed later, but the Larsen Bay Tribal Council rejected that idea.

The Larsen Bay remains were the largest single collection of a Native group the Smithsonian Museum held. Before October 5, the Smithsonian had returned five sets of remains to the Medoc Indians in Oregon, 15 sets to the Blackfeet of Montana, 197 to the Hui Malana I Na Kutna o Hawai'i Nei in Hawaii and 20 to the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux in South Dakota. The Museum has 30 requests pending, including four from Alaska Natives.

### The Native request

The Larsen Bay Tribal Council which initiated the repatriation reportedly battled for nearly six years with the Smithsonian before the bones were finally returned to the village at the end of September.

Larsen Bay's battle began long before the repatriation law was passed and the Smithsonian was apparently reluctant to return what they believed was theirs, Al-

though the bulk of the human remains taken were returned, five sets of remains were missing when the Smithsonian boxed the bones in September.

Several of the village's 150 residents remember Hrdlicka's disrespectful excavation techniques, but few elders were willing to talk about it. The Consensus was that they just want the fanfare ever with and the bones put to rest where they belonged.

Frank Carlson, vice president of the village tribal council, and the driving force behind the repatriation effort, is elderly enough to remember the 1930s excavation. He was 10 years old at the time. He recalls how the archeological team just came into their village and took what they pleased. Carlson, now 60, said Hrdlicka and his men did not bother to ask before digging up the beach and graves at the »bone yard«, they just did it. The mass graveyard was, and is, referred to as the »bone yard« by village elders. »They had no permission from the government, from nobody«, he said.

Carlson said in earlier days, the village only had chiefs to represent them, and those Native Chiefs did not have the power to control »White man's« action in their village. »Only five families lived here. We had one school and one teacher. The teacher was the ruler. He was the law«, Carlson said, explaining how non-Natives treated the villagers in those times. »Villagers back then were just starting to get organised (politically),« he said.

The elder said Hrdlicka forbid his crewmen to associate with the villagers or give them any information about what they were actually doing. The entire village was ordered to stay away from the excavation site and never ask questions, he said.



Dorothy (Dora) Aga, who seemed rather annoyed about the big deal being made of the repatriation, said she remembers the archeologist and his crew. Aga, 74, a Native of Ouzinkie, was in her 20s at the time of the mass excavation. »They dug up my garden. They had no permission...« Aga said while eating oatmeal at her kitchen table the morning of the burial.

She said she remembered Hrdlicka prohibiting his crew from talking to any of them and Hrdlicka never spoke to any of the Natives himself, either. »Their attitude was rotten,« she recalled.

She said the tribal council has spent many years trying to retrieve the bones and now that they are back it should not be such a big deal. »I just want to see them get buried and get rid of them,« she said. She said she also did not like being interviewed, because she was not paying that close attention to the excavation when it took place. She did not consider herself an expert. »The reporters come in here and ask me a million and a half question, I do not know about these bones,« she said.

The vice-president of the tribal council Frank Carlson has a different opinion. He said since this is the nation's biggest repatriation of Native remains, all of Alaska and the entire nation should be aware of it.

Carlson said he did not know what he was getting into when he wrote the Smithsonian and asked for the village's ancestors back. »... they wrote some pretty strong letters back. They kept making excuses that they were still studying them. Still, after 50 years?«, he asked and laughed.

He said the council ended up calling Gordon Pullar, who at the time was president of the Kodiak Area Native Association for help. But the Smithsonian Institution would not budge even after the regional corporation joined in the battle, he said. »We were not making any headway, so we called the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), « Carlson said. The NARF, a nationwide non-profit law firm which protects the right of Native Americans, did not hesitate to add their aggressive legal tactics, and NARF lawyer, Henry Sockbeson, an Indian from the Penobscot tribe in Maine, worked on the Larsen Bay case for the last four years.

Sockbeson said the Larsen Bay case was a hard legal battle, because it took place

before the repatriation act came into being. The Act makes it much easier to retrieve remains, he said. He said at one point the Smithsonian tried to use a variety of laws to maintain possession of the bones. But, after the repatriation law passed, the Smithsonian basically had no case, Sockbeson explained.

»The people at Larsen Bay have set a precedent for other Native groups, and the museum now realized they have to return the remains. And we encourage others to also,« he said. Sockbeson said with a case of this magnitude he does not think the tribe would have gotten the bones back without NARF's help. »The skids have been greased now. Other tribes do not even need NARF, « he said.

Frank Talbot, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and thus a late successor of Hrdlicka, said the Larsen Bay repatriation was a long time coming. He said the excavation techniques used in the 30s are totally unacceptable by today's standards. »The scientists – back then – had different values. They were insensitive to the Natives. The return of the bones is a loss of information – because the museum no longer has possession of them to study – but returning them also is relieving an emotional and spiritual need of the people,« he said. »I feel the depth of emotions of the people with this symbolic new friendship,« Talbot said. »With this return I feel friendship and understanding.«



The cannery in Larsen Bay. Photo: Jens Dahl

### The orthodox ceremony

From 1784 until 1867 when Alaska was sold to United States, Kodiak Island was ruled by czarish Russia. The Native people, called Aleuts by the Russians, were christinized and the Russian Orthodox church is today considered as a Native institution on Kodiak Island and in other parts of Southern Alaska.

About 50 villagers gathered for the Russian Orthodox burial ceremony. The women sang and father Peter Kreta walked along the trench swinging a censer over the remains of Natives excavated in the 1930s. The night before the ceremony, five village women held choir practice, sitting around a table trying to remember the appropriate songs in Russian, English and Alutiiq (the Native language) as father Peter Kreta has requested. Fred Katelnikoff, a Native of Larsen Bay, stayed up until 3 a.m. the morning of the ceremony, constructing a Russian Orthodox cross to be erected at the burial site.

Prior to the ceremony, a 45-foot-long trench awaited the 370 numbered and labelled cardboard boxes containing skeletal remains; it would be the final resting place for the village ancestors. Marina Waselie, 79, said she was sad and relieved at the same time. »We do not even know who they are. It could be our aunts, uncles or cousins,« she said.

»You can not fulfill your dreams if you have offended your ancestors,« said

Gordon Pullar, quoting an indigenous Nigerian philosopher.

Father Peter of Kodiak planned the service in this mostly Russian Orthodox village. The memorial service was traditional Russian Orthodox in all respects but one – the voices that sang out over the mass grave spoke in three languages. »We figure all three languages are there – those who spoke Russian, those who spoke Alutiiq and those who spoke English,« Kreta said before the service.

Most of the skeletal remains date before the days of Russian occupation of what is today Southern Alaska and thus before the introduction of Russian Orthodoxy. However, because Hrdlicka reportedly excavated some Natives who died in the early 1900s along with bodies several hun-

dred years old, Kreta wanted the service to speak to all of them.

Clyda Christensen, 71, an elder who sees the village children speaking only English, was one of the five women who sang in native tongue as part of the service. Their chorus translated to »Memory Eternal.« »I feel the same for them as for anybody that we lose, because they were human beings too – they have got to be put to rest,« she said. »All these years maybe their souls are not resting and now we will put them to rest and have a real good funeral for them.«

The general ethic that everyone deserves a decent burial guided some villagers who said they do not feel personally linked to the long-absent bones. Fred Katelnikoff said he and four of his small

children, helped carry the small boxes of bones to the gravesite because »we try to keep all the kids involved.«

How did he feel about the service for anonymous Natives, most who died hundreds of years ago?

»It is no biggie to me, it is just a bunch of bones,« he said. Bud Katelnikoff added, »all in all it is a good thing they are being buried, rather than in a museum someplace.«

After the ceremony the participants throw a handful of dirt onto the boxes. Within an hour after the brief ceremony ended, officials has boarded planes for home and a small bulldozer moved in to fill the trench. The 12-foot-tall, white orthodox cross now marks the grave.

(Sources: *Tundra Times*; *Anchorage Daily News*). □

IWGIA DOCUMENT 70 by Andrew Gray

# *Between the spice of life and the melting pot: Biodiversity conservation and its impact on indigenous peoples*

\$ 7.50



# Australia: After 100 years, Dick Cubadgee comes back to his country

**Last month the remains of an Aboriginal man, whose body was held in the South Australian museum for over one hundred years, were returned to his descendants and buried in his traditional country near Tennant Creek.**

The remains of Dick Cubadgee, a Warumungu man who acted as a guide, interpreter and go-between for explorer David Lindsay in the 1880s, were returned by the South Australian Museum after consultation with the Central Land Council and the Warumungu people. It is believed to be the first time a whole skeleton has been returned for burial.

»You're back home now. This is your home. You've been gone from here - now you have come back and you're resting in your own land. The whole family came up to you, so you can rest in peace in your own land.«

These words from Brian Tennyson welcomed Cubadgee back to his own country.

Standing beside the grave, Cubadgee's descendants spoke in Warumungu, Warlpiri and English about the importance of his homecoming.

As Jimmy Frank explained: »This is his dreaming country, his father's country, before the whitefella got into this land, and we still believe in our dreaming country today.«

»It's an important thing, because he went away from here, this is his traditional place, this is his dreaming country, which is his father's country.«

And as another Warumungu man said: »See that rock there, that's his body, see that tree there, that's his body.«

At the same time as Cubadgee returned to become part of his country, his descendants were re-affirming the continuing links of their living culture with the land.

The funeral ceremony was timed to coincide with initiation ceremonies involving two young men thought to be descended from Cubadgee.

Dick Cubadgee was a giant of a man, in

anyone's terms. He stood more than six foot six high. His father and brother were even bigger. His father was described as »the king of the Warramungas« by the explorer, inaccurate to apply to Aboriginal society, but one which indicates the importance of Cubadgee's family.

David Lindsay made several expeditions through the Tennant Creek region during the 1880s and Dick Cubadgee became his guide and interpreter, contributing greatly to the success of Lindsay's expeditions, particularly in travelling without conflict with local Aboriginal people.

In 1887, 1888 and 1889 Lindsay took Cubadgee to the Adelaide and Melbourne International Exhibitions. He also presented him at Adelaide's Government House and to the Royal Geographical Society in both cities.

The trips were a great success for Lindsay. Little was known about Aboriginal culture and the outback at that time and there was a great interest in it.

Cubadgee was a charismatic personality, and his boomerang-throwing and firelighting displays made him an extremely exotic attraction.

The two returned to Central Australia for one further expedition after the 1889 trip but during the expedition Cubadgee became ill with a cancerous tumour on his neck.

Lindsay sent him to the Royal Adelaide Hospital to have the tumour removed, but while the operation appears to have been successful, Cubadgee became seriously ill during his convalescence. He contracted tuberculosis, one of the many European diseases which ravaged the Aboriginal population during the early years of colonisation and one which still kills many

Aboriginal people today, despite being virtually eradicated in the non-Aboriginal population in Australia.

Cubadgee made many friends during his stay in hospital. Nurses and members of the hospital's Women's Auxiliary read him stories from the Bible and in return he told them stories of Warumungu culture and life in the bush.

As he became increasingly ill he talked with greater and greater emphasis of the importance of the land to Aboriginal people. He spoke of the damage Europeans were doing. According to records of the South Australian Museum, he said »The whites were intruders in my country and should leave my people alone.«

He asked to be allowed to return to his country but was kept in hospital where he died on 15 September, 1889. He was nineteen years old.

Up to this point Cubadgee's life had been quite unusual, but after his death he found a fate which was shared by thousands of Aboriginal people over the years.

Somehow, although a funeral service was held for him, Dick Cubadgee's remains ended up in the South Australian Museum.

The museum's present head of anthropology, Dr Christopher Anderson, says precisely what happened remains a mystery.

»I doubt very much whether there was any grave-robbing,« Dr Anderson said. »But it seems the surgeon was a good friend of the head of the museum.«

So the remains of Dick Cubadgee stayed in Adelaide, a thousand miles from the clear blue skies and red sands of the Warumungu country.

The remains were on display until 1912

but in more recent times were held in the museum's »secret-sacred room« which houses much of the museum's largest collection of sacred objects and Aboriginal remains.

The SA museum has a policy of returning remains and sacred objects to their rightful places and owners wherever possible. It is a lengthy process, often involving years of work to identify their origins by finding (and consulting with) the right people.

In Cubadgee's case there was a great deal of information available in the diaries of David Lindsay.

Last year Dr Anderson mentioned the Cubadgee remains to Central Land Council staff, and a series of meetings were organised to talk to the Warumungu people. Eventually his place in Warumungu society was worked out and plans were made to have his remains returned.

In May, eight senior men drove to Adelaide to carry out the first ceremonies in preparation for the return.

Jimmy Frank, who's mother shared the

same dreaming site as Cubadgee, went into the secret-sacred room with Dr Anderson to receive the remains.

»We couldn't touch the box with our hands,« Mr Frank said.

»We got down on our knees and rolled our chest on it. We all did the same thing and we told them it would be good to see these remains come back to his home ground and buried there.«

A few weeks later the SA Museum's Director, Mr Lester Russell, flew to Tennant Creek, 500 km North of Alice Springs, with the small casket.

It was taken to the land known as Jurnkurakurr, Cubadgee's dreaming site, and reburied in a quiet and moving ceremony on 4 June.

The ceremony was a mixture of traditional and modern funeral practices. The small casket was buried in a grave but only after men, women and children from the area had paid their last respects to »the old man« in the traditional way.

Each of them kneeled before the casket, and performed the same ritual as done

earlier at the museum - rubbing the chest against the casket. It's a gesture which symbolises the touching of spirits.

»That's how it's been, years ago, before the whites ever got here,« Jimmy Franks said.

»People used to die in their own camps, and they'd gather them up and people used to roll on each other, chest to chest, and then take the body away.

»We still remember who's his grandgrandchildren today,« said Jimmy Frank.

»We know which dreaming site he came from. His father was called a king, the king of Jurnkurakurr - that's Tennant Creek, the one rock hole there is Jurnkurakurr.«

»Cubadgee's father was the king of Jurnkurakurr, and Cubadgee's grandchildren are still the kings of Jurnkurakurr today.«

Source:  
*Land Rights News, July 1991.* □

## "LIFE IS NOT OURS"

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## LATE NEWS · LATE NEWS · LATE NEWS · LATE NEWS

### Ecuador: The Government rules on land for indigenous communities

On October 24 the government of Ecuador handed over to indigenous communities of the Amazon and a group of black inhabitants from the coastal region, property titles legalizing ownership of land covering an area of 146,639 hectares.

The titles were handed over to several indigenous families belonging to the Shuaras and Quichuas tribes and to a group of African descendants from the coastal province of Esmeraldas.

By means of this ruling the government concluded the handing over of 2 million hectares to various ethnic groups in Ecuador since Rodrigo Borja assumed the Presidency in August 1988. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationals stated that the handing over of territories was minimal when compared with actual demands of the ethnic populations.

The indigenous populations of Ecuador which includes nine ethnic groups settled in the sierra, the coast and the Amazon, represents between 30 and 40 per cent of the 10 million Ecuadorians.

Source: IPS

### Central African Republic: New threats to forest peoples

The Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve and Dzanga-Ndoki National Park in south-western Central African Republic (CAR) is the home of the BaAka Pygmies and other forest peoples. The reserve and the park also protects CAR's last remaining intact dense forest ecosystems which contain among the highest population densities of forest elephants, lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, bongo and the realm of African dense forest fauna and flora. Three recently pro-

posed or approved development and forestry exploitation projects are now threatening the forest peoples and the unique forest ecosystem.

The African Development bank funds a Rural Development Project in the Coffee Growing Areas of Mbaiki and Berberati-Phase II. These efforts include opening and improvements in forest roads and rehabilitation of existing plantations and previously cultivated areas. The result may well be an influx of outside poachers and settlers.

Forest exploitation and timber export is facilitated by the road system. The logging company SESAM (Société Exploitation Forestière Sangha Mbaïre) is permitted to log within the reserve.

The Lebanese firm Wilshire Corporation has requested to be granted the rights to log in the heart of the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve in exchange for establishing a cement factory near the capital of Bangui.

Such projects are ecologically, economically and legally non-compatible with the aims of protecting important parts of Central African rainforests and pose threats to the viability of the traditional forest peoples.

#### African rainforests campaign

An African rainforests campaign has been launched by the African NGO's Environment Network (ANEN). The aim is to promote community based action to save Africa's rainforests. Please contact Simon Muchiru, ANEN, P.O. Box 53844, Nairobi, KENYA, Fax: 2542 335108.

### Brazil: Threats facing the Enawenê-Nawê

Prior to 1974 the Enawenê-Nawê people were completely unknown to the Brazilian society. At that time the Jesuit priest Thomaz de Aquino Lisboa, leader of the so-called "Anchieta Mission" (OPAN), made contact with them, erroneously calling them "salumã".

The Enawenê-Nawê are settled in the north-eastern region of the State of Mato Grosso and belong to the Aruak linguistic family. With a population of some 200 inhabitants, their traditional territory includes the sources of the Jururena, Camararé, Doze de Outubro and Ique rivers in the transitional zone between the Brazilian savannah and the Amazon forest.

Since making first contact, the "Anchieta Mission" (OPAN) has established a relationship based on respect towards the traditional culture of the Enawenê-Nawê, introducing only a few new tools and medicines. At the same time, the Jesuits have tried to determine the extent of their lands in order to develop a proposal for the delineation of the Enawenê-Nawê habitat.

In 1979 the National Foundation of Indians (FUNAI) created the first Working Group (WG) to define the indigenous region. The WG is the first step in the administrative process for the demarcation of indigenous lands, with a view to establishing legal guarantees for their physical and juridical recognition. Through the proposal put forward down by the Working Group, an interministerial body is to approve the demarcation so that the President of the Republic can proceed to the homologation of the territory. The first Working Group, followed by others in 1981 and 1984, recognized the Enawenê-Nawê habitat, identifying a total area of 750 thousand hectares considered indispensable to their survival. But the demarcation process remains paralyzed.

#### The problems begin

There have been several conflicts reported in the area, including invasion attempts which have been vehemently defeated by the Indians themselves. In 1984 a team of surveyors who were setting up measuring stakes in the northern region of the indigenous territory were ambushed by the Indians, who killed two of the surveyors and injured two others. In July 1986 a family of agriculturists who had settled in the Western part of the indigenous territory was attacked by the Enawenê-Nawê. One year later the Jesuit, Vicente Cañas, of OPAN was murdered. Up to now the Courts have not thrown light on the crime

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in spite of evidence pointing to the latifundistas (estate owners) who covet the indigenous lands.

After the murder of Vicente Cañas, the area was sealed off as a preventive measure, but invasion attempts continue to occur.

#### Self-delimitation

The Enawenê-Nawê have started the demarcation of their own lands because of the serious problems of invasion that they face. The borders of the area are sometimes rivers or streams, but they are also lines over land, frequently through forest or dense vegetation. This has caused great displacements in the posting of border placards and the opening of new paths. OPAN has played an important role in this, acquiring the necessary financial assistance to realize self-delimitation.

Recently, on the 13th of September 1991, the Declaration of the indigenous Enawenê-Nawê territory was finally signed, awaiting the definitive homologation of the territory.

Source:

Luis Fernandez, 10/91

Claudio Conte, 11/91

### Canada: Erasmus appointed to co-chair Commission

The federal government has appointed former leader of the Assembly of First Nations, Georges Erasmus, to head a royal commission that will examine issues affecting Canada's aboriginal peoples. Co-chairing the commission with Erasmus is René Dussault a Quebec Court of Appeal judge.

National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, said he is optimistic that this commission will "have a strong influence in changing government policy." However, Grand Chief of Quebec, Matthew Coon-Come, is not so optimistic.

"I don't necessarily believe that the gov-

ernment will take whatever recommendations are made," said Coon-Come, "I'm afraid it will again just be put in a drawer to collect dust."

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has promised the commission will make a difference. "The primary objective is to deal with literally centuries of injustice. This may turn out to be the instrument to change the lives of a lot of people," the Prime Minister said.

Five other commissioners have been appointed to the royal commission. They are Bertha Wilson, retired Supreme Court justice; Allan Blakeney, former NDP premier of Saskatchewan; Paul Chartrand, a Metis and University of Manitoba Native Studies Professor; Mary Sillett, president of the Inuit Women's Association and Viola Robinson, president of the Native Council of Canada.

Aboriginal self-determination, land claims, the status of treaties and Native justice are just some of the issues that will be looked at by this commission. No date has been set for the final report but it is expected that it could take up to two years.

### Tanzania: Pastoralists to be evicted from Mkomazi

Despite a growing awareness of the advantages that can be reaped from involving local people in wildlife conservation (see Issues Papers nos. 17 & 26), conservationists are calling for the eviction of Maasai pastoralists from Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania.

Mkomazi Game Reserve is a 1,000 square kilometre area in Kilimanjaro region, in the north east of the country. It supports a wide variety of vegetation types and wildlife. Mkomazi's drylands are famous for providing a suitable habitat for some of Tanzania's less common animal species. It is also home for 400 pastoralists. Conservationists believe that the reserve is threatened by neglect and degradation, due to human activity and livestock grazing.

Residents of the reserve were allowed to remain when it was first gazetted in 1951. Since then, permits to live in the reserve have also been issued to others. By 1981, there were 41 households with 30,000 domestic animals. They are accused of destroying the natural habitat and consequently wildlife, through overgrazing, lighting fires and poaching.

This position is a reflection of the conventional view that sees people as enemies of wildlife and demands their exclusion from conservation areas. This not only causes hardship, but takes no account of people's customary rights to the land they traditionally have occupied. Maasai occupation of Mkomazi dates back more than 100 years. This view also fails to exploit the opportunity for more community-based approaches that can restore local support for wildlife preservation by offering benefits to local people for conserving the natural environment.

### Brazil: The Yanomami have gained recognition for their territory

At long last, on the 15th of November, the President of Brazil, Fernando Collor de Mello, announced that the Yanomami Indians had secured their territory of 9.42 million hectares in the north of the country, along the Venezuelan border.

The demarcation of the lands for the 10,000 Yanomami who live in Brazil should have been signed on the 29th of October, but on that day Collor signed rulings on 71 other delimitation trials, delaying the Yanomami issue.

It is thought that this delay was due to pressure from the military, the Ministry of Education and corporations in the Amazon and Roraima, Brazilian states where the Yanomami live.

The army believes that the creation of a permanent region for the Yanomami, close to the border between Brazil and Venezuela, could put national sovereignty at risk. The military theory is that the Yanomami of Brazil and those from



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Venezuela could unite at some time in the future, creating a "Yanomami nation", independent of the Brazilian government. It is also worth noting that the security zone proposed by the army certifies the largest mineral reserves in the State of Roraima.

In his November 15 speech, President Collor addressed the army's concerns saying that the demarcation left "national sovereignty intact and reinforced."

The Commission for the Creation of the Yanomami Park (CCPY) has stated that in spite of the decree, the military and mining sectors continue to exert pressure to change the presidential decision. On the other hand, the demarcation of the area does not guarantee its integrity. Many indigenous areas in Brazil which have already been delineated are being invaded by gold prospectors and Brazilian companies. The CCPY believes it is necessary to demand from the Brazilian Government the creation of a permanent infrastructure for the creation and maintenance of an adequate system which does not jeopardize the Yanomami territory.

Source:  
CCPY  
IPS

### Colombia: Indigenous protest against violations and detentions.

On November 18 some 2,000 natives of the Pijao ethnic group who live in the Department of Tolima in Central Colombia staged a peaceful demonstration, blocking the highway leading to the capital to protest against the violations and detentions inflicted on its members.

Among the demands made were that 78 natives detained on the 12th of November should be freed that a political and non-military solution be found the social economic and political conflicts affecting the aborigines of the region.

The confrontation between the departmental authorities and the Pijaos stems

from the plan to recuperate 45,000 hectares of land claimed as indigenous territory. The tensions had reached a climax one week before when the police evicted the natives, physically assaulting them and using tear-gas. Fifty natives from the municipality of Coyaima were detained and imprisoned.

Edgar Alape, the indigenous spokesman in Tolima, strongly criticized the conditions under which the detainees were being held. He also added that "even though the aggression against the indigenous people of Colombia dated back 500 years, violence against them has sharply increased in the last year." Since the beginning of the year 15 natives have been killed.

Source:IPS

### Latin America: Indigenous Groups Reclaim Territories and Right to Political Participation

In Bolivia, on the 4th of December, indigenous representatives of 17 Latin American countries demanded the administration of the territories they occupy and the right to participate in political decisions.

The natives, meeting at the Second Inter-American Congress of Natural Resources and Environment in the Bolivian city of San Ignacio de Moxos, said that it was up to each ethnic group to resolve its own problems.

The Panamanian, Nicanor Gonzales, coordinator of the continent's indigenous groupings, affirmed that the meeting signified a basic step towards the achievement of unity among the aboriginal peoples of America.

Gonzales said that the historic right to the possession of territories and political participation belonged to the indigenous people. Thus he criticized the appearance of non-governmental organizations which, disregarding the rights of the natives, captured resources in the name of the communities, but without these communities de-

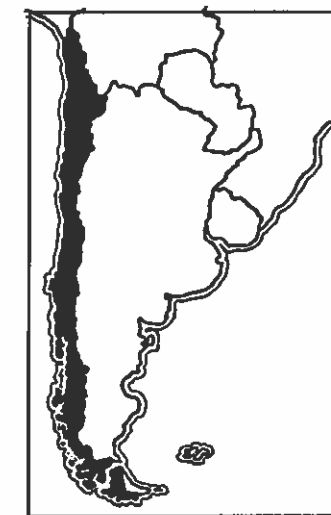
ceiving any benefits from the resources. Nicanor Gonzales estimated that only 20 percent of these resources had been available to native populations over the last ten years.

Finally Gonzales criticized government's lack of support towards the ethnic organization and, in this respect, he stated that the national parks and protected areas should be administered by the indigenous peoples.

Source: IPS

# Chile: Supreme Court orders expulsion of Pehuenche

By Vicente Mariqueo Q.



Chile, South America

*At the beginning of last year the Pehuen (Pino Araucaria) or Monkey Puzzle tree, was declared a Natural Monument by means of a Presidential decree. Thus a significant step was taken towards solving a problem which affects our Pehuenche brothers (the Andean Mapuche); it means as well, that a wide area of the Andes will be protected by a Supreme Decree. Behind all this there is a long and painful history.*

In 1880, during the war known as the »Pacificacion de la Araucaria«? some of the Mapuche were forced to leave the fertile valleys of Malleco and Cautin and make their homes in the mountains; this is how the community of Quinquen was established, along with many others. Twenty eight years later Guillermo Schweitzer set up a large estate called »El Porvenir de Lolen« twenty miles away from the Quinquen Valley. Schweitzer asked chief Manuel Melinir permission to pasture his animals in the Quinquen Valley during the summer time, in exchange for a yearly payment. This arrangement continued for ten years. But then he refused to carry on paying, letting it be known to the Quinquen Community that he owned the valley, having bought it from the Chilean Government. He added that the Pehuenche could go on living here in peace and that he would pasture his animals there only in the summer months. In 1920 Guillermo Schweitzer mortgaged the Quinquen

Valley to the Agrarian Credit Bank (la Caja Agraria) in exchange for a loan which he never repayed. Later in 1936 the bank went to sell the confiscated properties. The Quinquen Estate was sold to Augustin Lamoliatt, who also assured the Pehuenche living in the valley that they could go on living there in peace.

In 1946 the Lamoliatt and Lledo group installed two sawmills in the area, thus beginning the felling of the rich forests which have covered enormous areas of the Andes for millions of years. The felling of the Pehuen created an agonising situation for the Indian communities of Quinquen. It is a tree which provides them with much of their food. The fruit of the Pehuen, the »ngillio« or pine nut has a variety of uses in the diet of the Pehuenche. The poor quality of the soil, the harsh climate, the poor roads and the enormous distances which separate them from the centres of population make our brothers' situation even worse. Nevertheless, this was the beginning of a period of heroic struggle in defense of the natural environment. Years afterwards I myself visited these mountains. On two occasions I went to collect »ngillio« along with 4 families from Cancan, a Mapuche community in the Andean foothills. On the first occasion we went to the shores of Lake Icalma. There we asked permission of the Pitriqueo family. I was only a boy then, but I remember these journeys as something very important. Contemplating such beauty, I realized the strong link between the Mapuche and Nature. This was a discovery of huge im-

portance. To harvest the »ngillio« a lot of hands are needed; children are the most enthusiastic and skilful at climbing the trees and collecting the »ngillio«. So the children from the Central valley got together with the Pehuenche from the high mountains. For us it was a miracle to see how quickly the Pehuenche youngsters climbed the trees. They threw a rope to the top of the tree which then spiralled down to the ground; with the help of this device they clambered up the tree, carrying a hook, and just touched the ripe heads of the fruit, whereupon the ngillio rained down onto the ground. Our job was to gather up the pine-nuts and fill the sacks. Each tree provided us with two hundred kilos of nuts, so that we filled three carts before we had to prepare to return to our communities. It was also an opportunity to get to know the hard life of these brothers. For example, we went to visit the beautiful lake Galletue. Here were a lot of cattle - more than I had ever imagined before. I talked in Mapuche to some Pehuenche children whose surname was Romero. I told them I was surprised to see so many cattle, and one of them told me »we only look after these cattle they belong to Lamoliatt, the richman who is owner of all this summer pasture.« A little distance away the Chilean flag was flying above the Liucura police station. Another day, in a place not so far from there, right on the border with Argentina, I met some other Pehuenche, whose name was Huillical. I remember there were a large number of horses, but fortunately these animals be-



longed to the Pehuenche themselves. Later we went to collect nuts again. This time we went to a place that was nearer, a hill called Chene, some 35 kilometers from Cancan. Many more people took part in this expedition than in the previous one: Mapuche people from the regions of Cancan, Trompulo, Lulul Mahuida and a »Lafquenche« as well. I took note of all the most important events during this trip. The most disagreeable was that as we approached the heights of Chene we ran into the hateful power of the white man: a business man, the owner of the sawmill, whose permission we had to ask in order to go on. Apart from that bad moment every thing was very joyful - especially for the children.

That stage in my life was fresh in my memory, when in the middle of the 50s the regional papers reported that there was a conflict in the cordillera between the great logging companies and the Pehuenche. Tree-felling had stretched to the area where the Pehuenche live. Of course at that time, business interests were all powerful, the timber merchants were the Gods of this vast regions of the Andes. Nevertheless, their ambitions were frustrated thanks to the stubborn opposition of the Pehuenche who organised the defence of the natural forests, especially the defence of the pehuen, the ancient tree that provides them with one of their basic foods. The news caused a great deal of sadness in Lulul Mahuida, my childhood home, there was a widespread sense of unease through the whole region. Yet the Mapuche stood firm and united. They managed to put pressure on all sectors of the State administration. There were, perhaps, certain vital factors which helped our Pehuenche brothers to turn events in their favour. The Araucana Corporation, at that time a powerful Mapuche organisation, won important electoral victories; they elected 2 deputies in 1953 and a large number of councillors. General Carlos Ibanez del Campo, President of Chile (1952/58) made don Venancio Conuepan, president of Araucana Corporation, a member of his Cabinet as Minister of State.

In the end the conflict was temporarily resolved in favour of the Pehuenche, thanks to the direct involvement of don Venancio Conuepan. However with reference to this, the popular saying »nothing is free« fits very well. In one of his accounts

don Carlos Huaquinir writes: »The logging companies didn't take their defeat lying down. They turned to the political sphere and very soon afterwards that don Venancio Conuepan was stripped of his high office as Minister of Land and Colonisation.« Such was the end of this famous historical episode. It was the first time that I had heard about the problem, and I believed that it had been solved for ever. However, things are not that simple, as everyone knows, there was a lot of backstage wheeling and dealing, and the problem still exists, even today.

In recent years more evidence has become known about the prolonged and silent struggle of our Pehuenche brothers. Cruel and inhuman deeds, until now completely hidden, have been brought into the light of day. Community members from the Valley of Quinquen reveal them themselves:

»In 1964 The Quinquen Community suffered violent repression because of the pressure of a timber merchant called Fahrenkrog Butendiek. This man sent a large group of police to subdue the Indians, get rid of us completely. They tied us up in chains and took us to Lake Galletue, where they kicked us into the lake and held our heads under almost drowning us. Others, they chained to the high branches of the trees leaving them hanging there. Many of the Pehuenche were seriously injured and one was permanently paralysed. This was the account of one of the Melinir.« (Apsi, 310, 26.07.1989)

Sadly cases as serious as this were not known about. I myself never heard about them. At this time, for us there were unfortunate factors at work: The Mapuche people found themselves fragmented in various organisations, many of which were dependent on political parties of the time. It was a disastrous situation, which had existed for many years.

In 1987, the minister of Agriculture during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-90) issued decree 141 which authorized the felling of the monkey puzzle tree, thus reopening the conflict with the Pehuenche, the true lords of these natural forests - with the additional difficulty that Chile was now under an authoritarian regime, which would be

unlikely to respond to Indian protest. The Pehuen is a tree which reaches a great age, it needs more than 500 years to fully evolve and produce pine nuts. However the people who have taken on its defence have been strengthened by the solidarity of many people today: ecologists and important social and political groups support our brothers' just struggle. If the Pehuen were to be destroyed, their whole way of life would be taken away from them. This tree is present in the Indian's prayers, in the same way as the volcanic mountains and lakes - every thing that best represents nature is an altar for the Andean Mapuche. The pehuen is a tree so closely associated with the people who populate these regions that even their name itself underlines the link: Pehuen - che means the people of the pehuen.

If the Pehuen were wiped out the Pehuenche people would be forced to abandon all this immense mountain region, which has tremendous economic and tourist potential. It is a policy similar to that carried out by the English invaders of North America who killed the buffalo, the basic source of food for our Indian brothers who inhabited these rich regions. However, we are now on the brink of the 21st Century - it is too late for those who want to impose their will at the cost of sacrificing entire peoples. Despite the repression during the dictatorship, our Pehuenche brothers were able to make themselves heard. They made innumerable trips to Temuco and Santiago; the amount of money needed to pay for the fees and all the paperwork was enormous compared with their small incomes. Nevertheless, they have been able to achieve something very important in these early stages of their campaign: the solidarity of all Mapuche organisations and other political and social organisations in Chile; the Transitional Democratic Government has drawn up a decree which protects the pehuen, declaring it a Natural Monument. The issue is far from being solved, and our brothers still live in uncertainty. It is not clear what the courts will decide about this important issue, crucial as it is to the whole way of life of our people. With regard to the cases which are aired in the courts of justice there is a constantly repeated theme: the main losers are always the Indians. It is what happened to our Pehuenche brothers.

»After a case that lasted five years, the Supreme Court made a judgement against the Pehuenche and ordered the return of the Quinquen estate to those who owned the title deeds. They immediately obtained an expulsion order against the community of Melinir, one of the last Indian peoples from the Southern Cordillera.« (Fortin Mapocho, 19.10.1990)

It is too sad to have to go on witnessing so many injustices all well protected and defended by laws created by those in control, the situation is made worse by the fact that the out-going military dictatorship did away with the Institute for Indian Development (Instituto de Desarrollo Indígena) created in 1972 under Indian law 17.729. This was a Government organisation which gave free legal assistance to the Mapuche community. At the National Congress of Indigenous People of Chile which took place in Temuco last January, I had the honour of representing the European Committee of Mapuche people living abroad. (Comite Exterior Mapuche de Europa). The event was very important because we got to know at close hand the grave situation in which our brothers are living. In relation to this the Minister Enrique Correa proclaimed that the

Pehuenche would not be evicted from the Valley of Quinquen and that the Government would take the appropriate administrative and political measures in order to solve the problem in the Pehuenches favour. Meanwhile the leaders of the congress denounced the fact that the Governor of Cautin Province had sent in 150 policemen to drive the Pehuenche off their legitimate lands. The threat is constant. The problem has still not been solved and there is every likelihood that the court's decision in favour of expulsion will in fact be carried out. Asked about it, the leaders of various Mapuche organisations all insisted that the only reason the eviction had not been carried out, was because the mountains were still covered in snow.

The just struggle of our Pehuenche brothers has been widely publicised and supported by many groups. Marches have taken place in Santiago and Temuco, but the findings of the supreme court is still valid. However, the case has been evolving, although very slowly, and now signs of a solution can be seen. The Government has drawn up a draft bill in order to expropriate the Valley of Quinquen, it doesn't have a majority in the National Congress - but at least there is a hope. Last March at a meeting with the Chilean community in London, Patricio Aylwin said that vari-

ous of his reforms are being favourably received in the National Congress. It remains to be seen what attitude the various parties represented in the Congress will take to this particular problem. Historically, the National Congress of Chile like the other institutions of the State, has always legislated in favour of the dominant culture, without concerning themselves at all about the sacred right to the land of the Indians who descend from pre-Columbian peoples. Large sectors of the Chilean people, our brother Indians and friends who support us throughout the world, are anxiously awaiting the outcome.

#### Some Mapuche words:

Pehuen	=	Monkey puzzle tree
Pehuenche	=	Andean Mapuche
Ngillio	=	Pine nuts
Lafquenche	=	Mapuche from the Pacific's coast
Huinca	=	White people or Chileans

□

## INDIGENOUS WOMEN ON THE MOVE

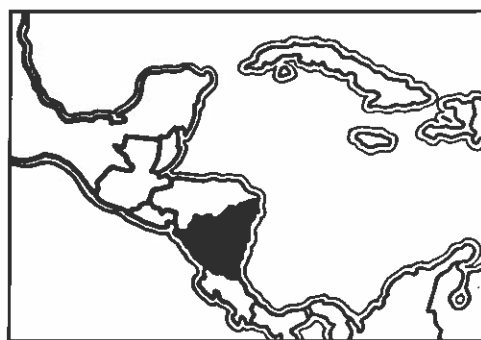


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# Miskito Indians in Nicaragua

- The first ethnic group to obtain  
autonomy in Central America?



Nicaragua, Central America

By Hanne Bach

## Introduction

A thorough demographic and statistical survey on The Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua has never been made and existing statistics are vitiated with errors. The population of the Atlantic Coast is estimated to be 300.000, which is less than 10% of the total population in Nicaragua. The migration to towns has increased in the last decade and approx. 50% live in town areas. Official records state that approx. 54.000 or 18% are Miskito Indians, while other sources estimate the Miskito population to number at least 120.000 or 40%. The area is divided in two regions. RAAN (Región Autónoma Atlántico Norte, formerly called Zelaya Norte or Zona Especial I) and RAAS, (Región Autónoma Atlántico Sur, previously Zelaya Sur or Zona Especial II).

The Miskito Indians are an ethnic minority in Nicaragua, populating large areas on the Atlantic Coast. Historically the Atlantic Coast has gone through a colonial and capitalist development, that differs widely from the Pacific Coast in economic, political, social and cultural aspects. The contact between the two parts of Nicaragua has been very scarce until the Sandinist Revolution in 1979 brought great changes to the Atlantic Coast. This article will focus on the Miskito Indians, both their history and the impact of Sandinist presence after 1979. The autonomy process and its importance for the Miskitos is discussed in relation to the present UNO government within the context of Nicaraguan economic difficulties and structural adjustment programs.

## Historical background of the Miskito Indians

The Miskito Indians originally populated the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras. Both in the pre-colonial era and especially after the arrival of the British in the 16th century they exercised a cultural domination over the Sumu and Rama Indians, leading to the near extinction of the latter two groups. During the 16th century pirates and English traders raided the Atlantic Coast, and the first English settlement was established in 1633. The Miskito culture is traditionally open and trade-oriented and they quickly formed an alliance with the English in order to extend their trade and obtain access to firearms. From 1648 and nearly 200 years forward the Miskitos sided with the English in their war against the Spaniards. The Miskito people were mixed with Europeans and African slaves, and assimilated various elements of their culture.

Another large group on the Atlantic Coast are the Creoles, who are descendants of the African slaves brought to the Caribbean by the English settlers. After 1833 when England abolished slavery, the British on the Atlantic Coast tended to employ the English-speaking Creoles in higher status jobs as administrators and servants, while the Miskitos saw themselves reduced to labour force in the mines and on the plantations. This division of labour started the social differentiation process of the two ethnic groups; a differentiation which still today is a very real part of the Miskito problem on the East Coast of Nicaragua.

In 1895 the Atlantic coast was incorporated into Nicaragua thanks to General Zelaya, but the culturally determined gap between east and west continued to exist. The true integration of the Atlantic Coast with the western part of Nicaragua was not to be initiated for nearly another 100 years. In the early 20th century the British left it to US transnational companies to exploit the natural resources of the Atlantic Coast through plantation, forestry and mining. That the US put Somoza in power in 1933 changed nothing. The Somoza regime did not interfere with the American companies on the East Coast. The economy was dominated by a few large corporations, while the local population continued to live on subsistence agriculture and small trade. Wage labour

was introduced to a higher degree than earlier, but most of the Miskito Indians still had to survive on traditional farming and fishing.

Today the Miskito population is divided into different groups. Most Miskitos live in the rain-forests along rivers in the north-eastern region. A smaller group has settled in an area further south around the mouths of the Rio Grande de Matagalpa, and in some villages around Pearl Lagoon. The third group is the coastal Miskitos, who mostly survive on trade and sea-fishing.

## The Sandinists come to the Atlantic coast

After the 19th of July 1979, when the FSLN won the revolution and overthrew the Somoza regime, everything changed for the Miskito Indians. Up until this date there had never been much contact between West- and East Nicaragua, but now the Sandinists came to the East Coast with their revolutionary ideology and predefined solutions to the social and economic problems. The Sandinist ideology of anti-imperialism did not mean anything to a population that had never experienced the Somoza repression and that did not consider the presence of US corporations as an evil. Quite the contrary, most people on the Atlantic Coast actually regarded the Americans as responsible for the relative welfare they had enjoyed over the years, because living conditions had seemingly improved due to the US consumer goods available.

The Sandinists saw Nicaragua's problems as class-based and considered racial discrimination as economically determined. The sandinist policy of changing class relations failed on the East Coast because it ignored the fact that the population looked upon themselves as ethnic groups and not as classes in the Marxist sense of the word. To the Miskitos the essential problem was the mestizo-dominated government in Managua, that suddenly interfered in their lives.

Also in other areas the Sandinists failed to recognize the different cultural context on the East Coast. They disregarded the Miskito organizations that already existed and tried to replace them with the Sandinist mass organizations. This attempt was a large mistake, because for the Miskito Indians, whose traditional forms of organization consisted of separate vil-

lage councils of older men, the Sandinist mass organizations were completely irrelevant, and it only deepened the Miskitos' long-felt mistrust of mestizos. Finally an indigenous people's organization was set up. MISURASATA consisted of Miskitos, Sumas, Ramas and »sandinistas united« and was initially formed to represent the Atlantic Coast in the central government.

## Map of Nicaragua showing the Area populated by the Miskito Indians



Neither did the Catholic west Nicaraguans recognize the importance of the Protestant Moravian Church on the Atlantic Coast. The first missionaries had arrived in 1849 and had steadily increased their influence both through the religion, but also through social development programs, such as health care and schools. Many church leaders were members of the village councils and thus had great influence.

## Conflict was unavoidable

In September 1981 the first confrontation between demonstrators and the Sandinist police force took place and several people were killed. The educated Creoles had not been involved in the first phase of restructuring after the revolution, and demonstrated against the presence of Cuban advisers, technicians, doctors etc., The demonstration was probably initiated by the Moravian Church, which with ample

help from US anti-communist propaganda lead many Creoles to believe that the Cubans had taken over the revolution.

Under the leadership of Steadman Fagoth and Brooklyn Riviera MISURASATA became an independent organization for the opposition and it represented the local population in the dispute over land-rights. The Sandinistas claimed that the land belonged to a united Nicaragua, whereas MISURASATA demanded that traditional forms of land rights should be respected. Especially the Miskito Indians had a vital interest in the land dispute, because for the Miskitos land and their traditional rights to it is inseparable from Miskito culture. Steadman Fagoth started to claim land for an indigenous nation, and MISURASATA was soon regarded as a subversive movement by the Sandinists. In February 1981 the local leaders were imprisoned, amongst them was Steadman Fagoth and Brooklyn Riviera. All of them were released after 14 days, except Fagoth who was accused of having connections to Somoza's intelligence office. After his release in May 1981 he fled to Honduras where he formed the counter-revolutionary organization MISURA. He was joined in Honduras by some MISURASATA leaders and a large number of Miskito Indians and they carried out several attacks on the north-eastern region of Nicaragua.

The Miskito Indians in the area got caught in the cross-fire and after the Sandinists had declared a state of emergency on the 14th of December 10.000 Miskito Indians were transferred to an area approx. 60 km further south. The Miskitos were reluctant to leave their homes, and compensations in the form of social benefits like electricity, running water, health facilities, and education in the new settlement did not stop the protests. Thus, what started as a culturally determined ethnic conflict ended up being mixed together with the armed conflict with the Contras. It created large political problems for the Sandinistas since the Contras quickly used the relocations to accuse them of genocide and it caused the Miskito Indians a lot of suffering through the long process of resettlement.

During the first years of Sandinist rule a few positive changes took place. After pressure from ethnic groups bi-lingual teaching in schools was permitted and the



indigenous people given the right to education and information in their own language. Spanish has been obligatory in schools since Zelaya reunited Nicaragua in 1895, and considering that language is an important characteristic of ethnicity there is no doubt that the government's consent to this claim has made the locals a little less dubious about Sandinist policy.

### Miskito organizations after 1981

MISURASATA was dissolved by the Sandinists shortly after Fagoth and Riviera fled to Honduras, but in 1984 a new organization called MISATAN was formed. MISATAN was like MISURASATA in the beginning a more or less pro-sandinist organization, which should represent the indigenous people's rights within the revolutionary concept. Fagoth and Riviera formed the organization MISURA in Honduras in 1981, but already in 1982 Brooklyn Riviera broke away from his former friend and established his own organization and called it MISURASATA. MISURASATA was considered to be a moderate counter-revolutionary organization and FSLN finally accepted it as an ethnic resistance group that represented a large part of the Miskito Indians. In 1984 Riviera and FSLN agreed to an unofficial cease-fire, and they started preliminary negotiations on autonomy for the East Coast. These negotiations broke down in May 1985, because the Sandinist government would not accept Riviera as the sole representative for all indigenous groups. 1985 was a turningpoint in Nicaraguan Government policy toward the Miskitos. The Sandinists had started to realize their political mistakes, and they were in desperate need to bring an end to the war. Also the Miskito organizations in Honduras realized that the war was probably more destructive for the Miskito ethnicity than Sandinist policy. Internal political disagreement and the war had split up many Miskito families and as the family is the foundation for identity, social networks and economical survival in the Miskito culture, the situation was grave. In May 1985 a cease-fire was signed between MISURA and the Sandinist Government and as MISATAN was becoming increasingly independent of Sandinist policy it demanded recognition of both MISURASATA and MISURA urging the Sandinists to accept all Miskito

organizations including the ones in Honduras as parties in the autonomy discussions.

### The autonomy law

The extensive discussions about autonomy showed two contradictory viewpoints. Radical Miskitos have argued for a nearly total severance from West-Nicaragua, a position very close to Fagoth's earlier plans for an indigenous nation. The opposite point is taken mostly by dogmatic Sandinists and are in favour of a full social and economic integration between east and west and political centralisation.

Between 1985 and 1987 a commission with representatives from different organizations and from all the ethnic groups discussed and negotiated the principles for the autonomy law, and finally in September 1987 the law was passed by the National Assembly. The main points of the autonomy law are:

1. The authorities must show unconditional respect for the ethnic languages and the local culture.
2. The law guarantees local control over and priority to the use of natural resources like land, forestry, mining and fishing.
3. Development projects must benefit the local population to »a just degree« through agreements made between the regional council and central government in Managua.
4. Local authorities are to be elected directly. Two regional councils in north and south, respectively, consist of 45 members for periods of 4 years. Each regional council elect a leader of the local government.

The election to the regional councils was held in February 1990 and representatives for the ethnic minorities got the majority of the seats.

The autonomy law seemingly fulfills the demands of the ethnic groups for self-administration within the territory, and the right to govern themselves within the Nicaraguan state. In reality however the law does not give specific rights to the population on the Atlantic coast, but rather the same constitutional rights as the rest of the people in Nicaragua. In October 1987 the different Miskito organizations joined up in YATAMA with Brooklyn Riviera as the leader and negotiations between YATAMA and the Sandinist

government about the implementation of the autonomy law continued until the 1990 election. The Miskitos consider the law as a framework for a process towards true independence for the ethnic communities. As Renaldo Reyes put it: »It is not a question of approving or disapproving of the particulars of the law itself. The law is general and simply formalizes our right to self-determination. Autonomy will be what we make of it.« (Ortiz, 1988)

Of the flaws in the autonomy law one of the most important is the absence of a jurisdictional system to settle disagreements. The regional councils are independent politically and economically, but the different budgets must be worked out in cooperation with the national ministries concerned. This means that even though areas like health services, education and production are controlled locally, there is no guarantee at all for financial assistance from the central government.

The Sandinist government took the initiative to the autonomy law in order to secure and strengthen national unity around the revolution and sandinism. Reaching this goal might stop the marginalisation of the ethnic groups and undermine ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism. Cultural characteristics like language and traditions will be respected, but ethnicity as a form of resistance will disappear. Still, inherent in the law of autonomy is a potential for regional autonomy that far exceeds what ethnic groups in other parts of the world have achieved.

### After the 1990 elections

With support from the US, Violeta Chamorro has been presented as the »democratic alternative« to the Sandinistas. The rightwing-coalition UNO (Union Nacional Opositora) covers widely different forces from the extreme right wing to liberal and socialist parties. So far it seems to be the moderate wing in UNO that is in control and Chamorro is seeking to reach a national reconciliation with the Sandinists, whom she cannot afford to ignore because FSLN still represent 40% of the population. In their election-program UNO promised full support to the autonomy-process and full economic and social integration for the Atlantic Coast as well as a guarantee of respect for its culture, traditions and political rights. Even



Miskito home on Nicaraguas West Coast. Photo: Svend Hansen

so, the change of government has meant a somewhat different start to the autonomy process than was expected because the Sandinists who have been a driving force in the process are now in opposition and have to await UNO's lead.

The political and administrative structure on the Atlantic Coast has been characterized by a long list of contradictions during the first year after the election in '90. Even though the regional autonomy councils have extensive political authority, they have very limited possibilities for action, because they lack economic resources and thus nobody can take any vital decisions. An effective system of tax collection has not yet been created and they receive very little economic support from the central government. The result is that the public activities that do take place happen through the single ministry (for health, transport, education etc.) which receives its resources directly from the central government and reports back only

to the central government, leaving the regional councils in the dark. The contact to and coordination with the local mayors or the regional councils are virtually non-existent and local communal elections have still not been held, leaving the local population without real influence. The central government has established INDERA, an institute for development of the autonomous regions, which is supposed to start projects in the region with the help of national and international donors. So far the investments that have been made in the region comes from international donor organizations without the involvement of the regional councils, who naturally consider INDERA as a controlling organ for the central government.

Most capitalist projects have been financed externally by Americans through the Moravian Church and historically the local population have not been directly involved in the economic activities causing a tendency towards a lesser social differen-

tiation within the villages. Socio-economic differences exist between villages and ethnic groups, and the Miskito Indians traditionally occupy the lowest status groups in a society where the most realistic way to strengthen one's economic status has been to rely on money sent from relatives in the US. The historically conditioned paternalism and dependency exercised by the Moravian Church through the social development organization IDSIM and later years' donation of international aid have made it difficult to convince the locals of the importance of initiating economic activities outside a subsistence economy. Furthermore, the war and the ensuing relocations caused many traditionally organized villages to be destroyed. As the repatriation of the Miskito refugees and the ex-contras continues it will hopefully be possible to reconstruct Miskito villages, but traditional separate village councils have little potential for being heard in the discussions of the au-



tonomy process, and it is vital that other forms of organization are initiated.

### Structural adjustment programs

The government plan for stabilising the Nicaraguan economy does not differ radically from FSLN's policy up until the election. Large cut-backs in the military budget, new loans through US-AID and the reopening of trade with the US was not sufficient to solve the Nicaraguan economic crisis and in order to obtain new loans from the IMF, the government has had to initiate structural adjustment programs. The government's plan for structural reforms are quick liberalisation and privatisation of the economic activities. This involves stimulating the export sector with an expected negative effect on peasant production of subsistence goods; reduction of the state budget through savings on health and education and removal of subsidies and credit programs; devaluation in order to stop the inflation and drastic price rises in public services like water, electricity, telephone and transport. The stabilisation and normalisation of the Nicaraguan economy is seen as a precondition for any rebuilding and development of the country, but the successful implementation of this policy depends on whether the unavoidable negative social consequences can be lessened to a degree that does not endanger the process of reconciliation and create social unrest.

In order to ease the social consequences of the structural adjustment program UNO has recently presented two documents on government planning for future social policies. One document is a social emergency program based on an emergency fund in order to soften the worst consequences of the stabilisation program. Through short-term but extensive projects the fund is to cover financial aid and training for the unemployed, emergency food programs and a credit system for small commodity producers and dealers. The second document is a national program for social development and the prevention of poverty. It draws up guidelines for longterm efforts on the social area including extensive education, housing, health and culture. The actual economic conditions give no possibilities for financing intensive projects in these sectors through the state budget, but the plan is seen in a wider context of a detailed program for

decentralisation and communal self-administration in these areas, placing large importance on participation.

### An autonomous future for the miskitos?

The Sandinist rule and the ensuing contra war brought great social, economic and political changes to the Miskitos on the Atlantic Coast. Their villages have been destroyed and families uprooted, a lot of land has laid barren for years and the foundation for a traditional subsistence economy has been ruined, and they have had to change their way of conducting politics from almost non-involvement through armed fighting to taking part in a representative democracy.

The law on autonomy which the ethnic groups fought for is so far just words on a piece of paper. The two regional councils was elected in 1990, but local elections have still not taken place and the guidelines for the actual implementation of autonomy has not been made. They have had little say in the latest negotiations between the central government and international corporations about the logging rights for large forest areas on the Atlantic Coast. No economic resources of importance have been transferred to the regional councils and the government institute for regional development INDERA have only started limited projects. Development projects and investments are largely financed and carried out by US-AID which leaves the local population little room to determine and actively participate in their own development.

The members of the regional councils have had no educational or administrative training and do not have the political capacity or economic means to govern the regions effectively.

They are left in a political and financial void, where they are forced to seek economic aid from international donor agencies that usually have specific organizational and administrative demands, that will severely influence the possibilities for independent development. In RAAN where the majority of the regional council is held by YATAMA the situation is no better. Brooklyn Riviera has accepted an offer from the central government to become Minister for the Atlantic Coast, a decision critically considered by many. YATAMA is split up in at least three

fractions and MISATAN is virtually non-existent. In Puerto Cabeza, which is the main town in the Northern region, violence, crimes, strikes and general social unrest is on the verge of becoming uncontrollable for the local government.

The disagreement within the Miskito organization YATAMA is unfortunate at a time where the framework for the autonomy process should be determined and it will severely limit their political impact on central government policy and which is even more important, it reduces their strength as an ethnic group with an ethnic identity. The last twelve years of West Nicaraguan and Sandinist political influence has politicised the ethnic groups but also left them in a vacuum between their traditional forms of organization and party-political disagreements. The autonomy law has an important potential to increase ethnic self-determination and participation in local development, but it is probably only within an autonomous framework, where the Miskitos number a large part of the population that a development process that takes into consideration their ethnic identity and culture will come into being.

In view of the general economic crisis in Nicaragua and UNO's plans for revival of the economy through decentralisation and privatisation, it is unlikely that the autonomy process will, if initiated, benefit the ethnic groups to any large degree. So far UNO's actual policy has not given reasons to hope for a quick and painless restructuring and development of the Atlantic Coast, - on the contrary it is going to be a long hard fight for economic resources in order to implement the autonomy and start an ethnic independent process of development. At a recent symposium on the autonomy process in Managua, which was attended by all members of the regional councils and representatives from the central government no conclusive results were reached. There seems to be, however, a growing understanding and cooperation between FSLN, UNO and YATAMA on the regional level against the central government. In spite of the many mistakes the Sandinists made during the first years of the revolution, at least they put high priority on the development of the Atlantic Coast during the last 5 or 6 years. A regional alliance between FSLN, YATAMA and local

UNO-members might bridge the gap between the different fractions in YATAMA, and bring ethnic demands and identity back on the political agenda. I sincerely doubt that the Miskitos have the political experience and momentum to achieve this on their own and a broad alliance is probably a prerequisite for effective pressure on the central government, in order to assure that serious discussions of the framework for autonomy are initiated. Maybe the Miskitos' best prospect of success is the victory of FSLN at the next election since it seems that the Sandinists have achieved an understanding of ethnic rights and identity on the Atlantic Coast and they will certainly not repeat past failures.

The historically determined cultural and ethnic gap between east and west will not to be closed for years to come - if ever, but there is no doubt that the ethnic question and the Miskito Indians will play their role in the future. Until then the development of Nicaraguas' Atlantic Coast is left to international aid-organizations, while the population in general and the Miskitos especially try to survive and reorganize, I hope, a concerted action for true autonomy.

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# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET NORTH

IWGIA  
DOCUMENT

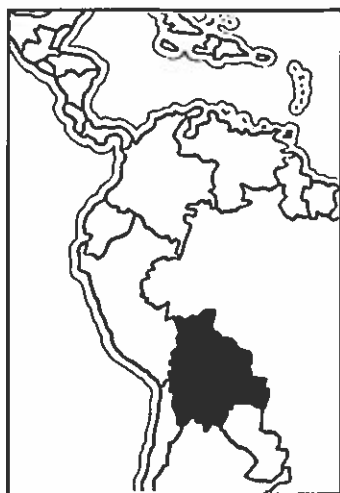
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# Interview with José Mirtenbaum

## "The suppression of coca would mean the end of the Andean culture"



Bolivia, South America

By Alejandro Parellada

In recent years, José Mirtenbaum, a Bolivian anthropologist, has worked on the subject of coca. On November 28, in an interview with IWGIA in Copenhagen, José Mirtenbaum spoke to us about the importance of coca in Andean culture, and the risks presented by the current plan to eradicate the crop.

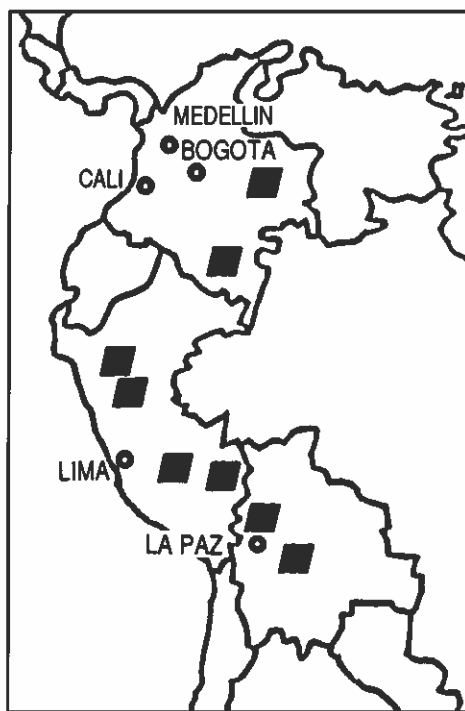
There is a widely held belief that the coca leaf is used exclusively for the production of cocaine, to the extent that one often hears coca being used as a synonym for cocaine. Could you tell us the difference between the two?

The coca plant has been cultivated in the Andes, for about two thousand years before the birth of Christ and since then it has been used in its natural state, that is to say, as a plant for human consumption and without any chemical processing. Cocaine, on the other hand, is simply an alkaloid of coca. From the Andean perspective, coca cannot be destroyed; it is simply absurd to suggest this because coca serves a cultural, social and a nutritional function.

Coca is linked to farm work. Work which has to do, not only with the raising of the coca, but also with the form in which the leaf is consumed and the effect it produces.

One can understand that in an agriculturally based society such as the Andes, agricultural work is tedious and routine and it is precisely the coca which prevents the work being too boring. As a light

### Areas of Coca-raising in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia



stimulant it diminishes physical fatigue.

This whole concept has been translated to the mines. Coca and the mines have a post-colonial association. The miner of Andean origin, have also managed to duplicate his own Andean identity through the use of coca. The miner uses coca before starting his work in the mines which are more than a thousand meters deep. He who does not «p'jchar» (chew) coca cannot start working that day because he would be considered as attracting bad luck.

There are however gender differences: women are not allowed to p'jchar as much as men. Women chew coca only on particular occasions, such as on their honeymoon, during childbirth (it is considered an aid to childbearing) and when she becomes a widow. It is also used to induce death. Here coca plays the role of mediation.

Mediation is perhaps the most important role played by coca. Mediation between extremes such as life and death or heaven and earth. The Andean world is decisively dual in nature. That is to say that we are dealing with a social «lubricant», a substance which is a facilitator between dual perceptions. Therefore coca is highly ritualized. The ritual tries to generate a concrete form for the ambiguities of contradictions, of life and death, and coca works like that. When a man dies, his



Aymará Women from Bolivia. Photo: Hanne Jørgensen (IMPRESS)

transcendental being has to be transported on a breath of coca. Coca has access to both the heavenly and terrestrial spheres.

Coca is transformed into a facilitating social medium, in terms of friendships, between couples, even between enemies. Once again, the role of mediation is an important one. In this sense we also have to look at the medicinal role of coca. Placed on a wound it is also a mediator between pain and pleasure.

Coca acts as a kind of an organic instrument which has a lot to do with the way one plans one's time: planting, reaping, all the activities related to agriculture. That is one aspect. The other is that the consumption of coca in the Andean world has a lot to do with cultural reproduction itself in the sense that there are adages and poems saying that when a man dies his soul is carried to the «beyond» on a waft of coca. Or that coca gives him the necessary energy to transcend to the other form of life, of existence. Therefore coca has a definite productive value, a magical, religious

value and a reproductive value to the culture.

Coca is also used by the shamans of the Andes who make a reading of it. Many of the aspects of Andean life, such as marriages and harvest depend on how the coca is read. No one will plant without first reading the signs of the coca.

From the point of view of chemistry, coca has 14 alkaloids, Vitamins A,B,C, riboflavin, carbohydrates and some caffeine. There have been studies which demonstrate that coca is a supplement to the diet and not a substitute to it as had been previously thought. One of the justifications for eradicating it was that Andeans consumed coca because they had nothing else to eat, but this is not true. Coca has an important function in the body, especially for those who live at great altitudes. On the other hand, the Andeans, for reasons which have still not been well researched, are not good users of lactose. By chewing coca with «lejilla» and other substances a chemical reaction is produced which per-

mits the absorption of calcium.

### Cocaine

The stimulating effect of cocaine is due to the chemical function of the alkaloids. Thus, when speaking about cocaine, we reduce the coca leaf to one single alkaloid. The whole chemistry of coca has not been thoroughly studied and the only thing that has been extracted industrially has been cocaine. but cocaine undermines the importance of coca. In the sense that it concentrates the impact of the coca at very high levels. Cocaine is a very efficient anaesthetic, for example it has been used in surgery since the 19th century and even today it is used by orthodontists. The effect, therefore, in very small doses is anaesthetic, but inhaled in certain amounts it becomes a strong stimulant to the central nervous system. It is now clear that the excessive use of cocaine is extremely dangerous.

I hope to have clarified the difference between the coca leaf and cocaine. I would



like to emphasize that their supporters are clearly culturally diverse.

When one talks today of suppressing coca, we are talking about wiping out the Andean culture because the collective representation of Andean culture is in the use and the symbolism of coca. Likewise the Andean culture has a vested right to use coca.

*You state that the eradication of the cultivation of coca endangers the survival of the Andean culture. I have heard, however, that in Ecuador they destroyed the coca plantations without its meaning the extermination of the indigenous culture of that region.*

That is partly true. But at the same time it is surprising that coca is again being cultivated in Ecuador, clearly not always for cultural reasons, but because in fact, Ecuador is linked to the political economy of cocaine.

In any case, the collective memory on the pan-Andean level maintains a very clear role for coca. It represents its virtues and – in accordance with Western culture – its vices, but on the whole coca is one of the most important manifestations of the culture.

*In any event, there is talk about – and today more than ever of the substitution of coca farming. How is substitution possible?*

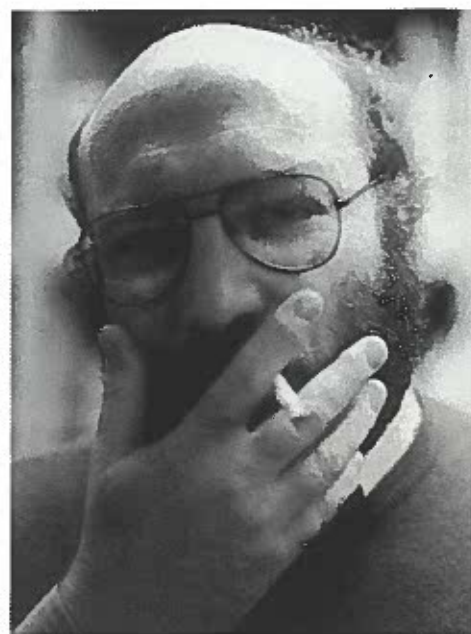
Substitution as such is impossible. Economically speaking under the current economic circumstances the peasant cannot substitute coca. Under the current market conditions there is absolutely no alternative to coca.

*In recent years a basic element in the North American policy has been the war against coca growing and the production of coca. At the same time the government of the United States established a plan of economic assistance for the development of an alternative to coca. Could you comment on this?*

In effect, coca and cocaine has been transformed into the new North American enemies. This is partly due to the fact that with the drastic weakening of communism, coca is the new threat, the new enemy. They have created false associations

between subversive movements and the coca growers, I am referring to the famous concept of »narco-terrorism« which emerged more than ten years ago. The excessive American economic machinery linked to armaments makes it necessary to allocate these arms to a kind of war and today it is called the »war against drugs.« The problem is that the big traffickers are almost never caught because they are within the circles of power, but the indigent peasant is caught and punished by the occupying North American forces.

With regard to the programme of economic assistance you mentioned, I can say that in 1990 an agreement was signed in Cartagena which established that up to



*José Mirtenbaum at IWGIA's office*

1994 President Bush would try to get 2.2 billion dollars for the prohibition, substitution and other types of activities related to the war against drugs. If we divide this amount among three countries, over five fiscal years, it turns out that each country would receive some 133 million dollars annually. In the case of Bolivia, this 133 million dollars has to fight an economy which is producing between 600 and 650 million dollars annually. Alternative development requires an enormous investment of capital which no one is prepared to make, and which does not at all guarantee that coca and cocaine would disappear from the face of the earth. Therefore I believe that the American gesture is sym-

bolic and I do not think that they are really interested in solving the problem. Many people, even in the United States, consider this strategy a total fiasco. On the other hand, influenced by the laws of supply and demand, coca is incapable of being substituted in the present situation of inequality between the North and South.

The Bolivian Government has been systematically pressured to introduce a structural exercise beyond its means to repress an economy of considerable size with an insignificant amount of resources. The Government has submitted to North American pressure to impose a solution of general prohibition. Consequently the militarization of the civilian society in its entirety is gradually and dangerously taking shape.

*Since you consider it impossible to eradicate coca, to what extent do you think it possible to supplant the current usage of the coca production?*

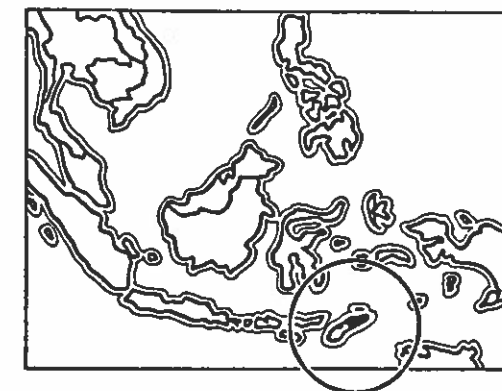
I think it is possible to substitute the use of coca. Part of this 80–90% which is today converted into cocaine could be put to more useful purposes, for example, in medicine. Of course, this is not going to solve the cocaine problem, but I will say, that it will take the North American soldiers out of the countryside.

The substitution of the use of coca and the opening for legal markets for coca, on the part of the Europeans for example, would not conclusively solve the cocaine problem on the consumption level.

Let us take the example of the United States. If the level of consumption of cocaine were reduced from the 20 million addicts which exist today to only about 5 million consumers, the cocaine market would still be sufficiently profitable to attract the attention of many people. Also if the United States forced the eradication of coca in Chapare, under the current economic circumstances, this cultivation would transfer itself elsewhere of less risk or the Bolivian Government would simply have to confront a situation of increased violence, such as occurred in the Alto Huallaga valley in Peru.

I think that the European countries and mainly the United States should discuss this subject deeply and begin to reconsider a more socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural vision, not only towards the Andean societies but also towards the consumption of cocaine. □

# East Timor: Massacre at Santa Cruz Cemetery



*East Timor, South East Asia*

On Tuesday morning, 12 November, troops opened fire on three thousand Timorese, mainly youths, who had gone to Santa Cruz cemetery, Dili, to lay flowers on the grave of Sebastiao Gomes, the Timorese who was shot dead at Motael Church on 28 October. Many were killed; one source puts the dead at 180 although Indonesian estimates were initially 50 and later revised to 19. The dead were all removed and the area was cleaned. The wounded and the survivors were also taken away on trucks and between 40 and 300 were subsequently detained and there were reports of torture and beatings.

Some Timorese went to the Hotel Turismo where Professor Kooijmans, UN Special Reporter on Torture, was staying but the hotel had been surrounded by troops and they were unable to contact him.

It was later reported that between 60 and 80 detainees, witnesses of the massacre, were shot and buried in mass graves outside the city.

Foreign eye-witnesses, some of whom were beaten, state categorically that, contrary to Indonesian assertions, there was no provocation on the part of the Timorese.

## Events on Tuesday 12 November

According to Timorese tradition, 7 days after death, a mass is celebrated and homage is paid at the cemetery where the deceased is are buried. This tradition was altered slightly in the case of the young

man, Sebastiao Gomes, who was killed in Motael church on 28th October by Indonesian military, in that the ceremony of homage was held on the 14th day. A number of foreigners were also present.

The mass was celebrated by the Vicar General of the Diocese, and the film shot by the British journalist, Chris Wenner, shows that the majority of those present were young people, many of whom are seen solemnly receiving Communion.

Bob Muntz recounted later that at 6.00 am he attended the church service. »Mass was conducted with all the dignity and decorum one would expect – attended by 2,000 people. They then went into the street and unfurled banners in both Portuguese and English calling for George Bush to help East Timor«. At first he was behind the main rally but for the last half of the procession to the cemetery he was close in and »could confidently say there were no provocative actions. A handful of guards outside a military post approximately 30 meters from the road were the only military seen during the progress of the procession to the cemetery. People in the procession walked by them without saying anything to them. Likewise the guards said nothing to them. The people continued down past the school and stopped at the gates of the cemetery«. (Bob Muntz, *The Age* 16/11).

## Procession

Russel Anderson said the marchers had left the Motael church after an hour-long

service and had intended to walk four kilometres past the residence of the East Timorese Governor, Mr. Mario Carrascalao, to the Santa Cruz cemetery, and then to the Hotel New Resende, where Mr. Peter Kooijmans, a delegate from the United Nation Human Rights Commission, was staying. (Sunday Territorian, 17/11).

Steve Cox accompanied the procession, taking photographs along the route. »As we started down the street, banners and flags began to appear on all sides. They took them out from under their T-shirts and I don't know where else. It all happened in a completely spontaneous and peaceful manner. Nobody was armed. You could hear the ceaseless shouts of »viva Xanana«, »viva independence« as they waved their flags and banners calling for international assistance«.

»Whenever the multitude passed a military or police post they waved the flags more vigorously and shouted louder. The atmosphere was getting more and more intense. Almost electric. And, although there was no obvious troop movement (apart from some soldiers inside the barracks or those who came out to watch what was happening), there was one moment when I was surprised by how much hate I saw in the loaded gaze of the one soldier who accompanied us. I remember seeing his finger almost squeezing the trigger and imagining, for an instant, the tragedy which could happen if he opened fire«.

»But the procession had already passed



in front of the Governor's Palace and euphoria was making the crowd break into a run. I ran also, trying to keep up always with the front line of the procession. In all, I would say that there must have been about 6,000 people. Along the way, more people joined in the procession. Young children and youths for the most part (Independente, 22/11). Cox recalls that as the procession passed a school, a number of younger children in the playground, rushed out and joined in with the marchers. (Norte e Sul, December 1991).

## Shooting

### Arrival

According to Russel Anderson, when the marchers reached the cemetery, the military cut them off from the rear and started unloading troops from lorries. »At eight o'clock they formed a line and started jogging towards us«.

»People started moving away from them, and then the soldiers opened fire. There was a rain of bullets, rapid automatic fire for two or three minutes as they chased demonstrators. As people were fleeing, a lot would have been shot in the back«.

Mr. Anderson said he had seen two American journalists, Allan Nair and Amy Goodman, just south of the group of demonstrators, huddled against a wall. He

said they had urged a New Zealand student, Kamal Bamadhaj, to stay with them, but he had moved back into the crowd. »He was in the front line of demonstrators and didn't stand a chance... I fled down the street with Bob Muntz«. — Russell Anderson. Mr. Anderson said that he had made a statement to Prof. Koojimans. (Pegasus, E. Mail, 17/11; Sunday Territorian, 17/11).

Bob Muntz said that »when several hundred mourners were inside and several hundred more were pressing to get in, the army opened fire for two or three minutes, reloading their weapons when they were empty. Perhaps a thousand rounds were fired.

Muntz, his left arm in a sling from a flesh wound sustained as he fled, said thousands of shots were fired into the unarmed crowd. »I can say it was very intense fire... I began running as fast as I could to get out of the line of fire«, he said. (Reuters 15/11).

The accounts given by the two US reporters, Allan Nair and Amy Goodman, were consistent with those of the Australian and British witnesses. »These marchers were totally unprotected« Goodman said. »There was absolutely no warning. Until the last minute I couldn't believe they would fire on this crowd — kids who were five years old«, she said. Young girls clung to her for safety when the firing started.



Children from East Timor showing flags of FRETILIN. PHOTO: Archive IWGIA

As described by Nair, who was at the front of the group, troops marching in formation with American-made M-16s in firing position approached the crowd in the cemetery. »As the people saw this they tried to shrink back. There was a small collective gasp in the crowd. As the soldiers turned the corner they raised their M-16s and began all at once firing into the crowd«, Nair said. »Amy and I went and stood between the soldiers and the crowd because if they saw foreigners there with cameras and tape recorders they wouldn't shoot. That didn't work«. (Reuter 15/11).

The English photographer, Stephan Cox, who had already entered the cemetery and was inside the crypt taking pictures of the people praying when the shooting started, told of being trapped for 30 minutes in a crypt in the Santa Cruz Cemetery as Indonesian troops mowed down East Timorese outside. »I was in the crypt with dozens of people, with children as young as six or seven piled on top of each other, cowering and reciting prayers over and over again«. Mr Cox said. »As the military moved around the cemetery firing, people dragged themselves into the crypt bleeding and dying. I was just crouched in the middle. I couldn't take in what was happening, just seeing blood and flesh hanging off people mortally wounded. It still hasn't sunk in«.

»An Indonesian soldier wearing plain clothes saw me and yelled at me, saying: »What are you doing here, what are you doing here? You've seen everything! I tried to reply but he yelled: Shut your mouth. I saved you«. As I was being frog-marched out to a truck. I can confirm from the limited view I had that I saw at least 60 bodies. The military were dragging them by the feet with their heads bouncing on the ground and piling them on to trucks. I was beaten in the truck and then thrown out at a police station on the outskirts of Dili«.

(Pegasus, E-Mail; Sunday Territorian 17/11).

### Detentions

It is reported that 249 prisoners were rounded up and taken to Dili general barracks immediately after the shooting. Some of these were later released but many are known to be still imprisoned. (Público 25/11)

## Later events in the city of Dili and in other areas

### Relatives refused access

There were scuffles outside Dili General Hospital on Thursday morning, 14 November, when relatives of dozens of Timorese wounded at the Santa Cruz Cemetery on Tuesday, were refused entry by two platoons of troops surrounding the building.

A number of wounded have died — one source says as many as 14 but nothing can be confirmed by our source in Dili as relatives are not allowed to visit the living or take home for burial the bodies of the dead. It is thought that the bodies of all those killed are being buried in Taci Tolu, some five kms north of Dili, a place often used since the start of the Indonesian occupation, to bury the victims of Indonesian atrocities.

From 7 pm each evening there is a strict curfew, but even during the day, few people venture out. Most children are not going to school because reports are circulating that troops are preparing to raid several Catholic schools.

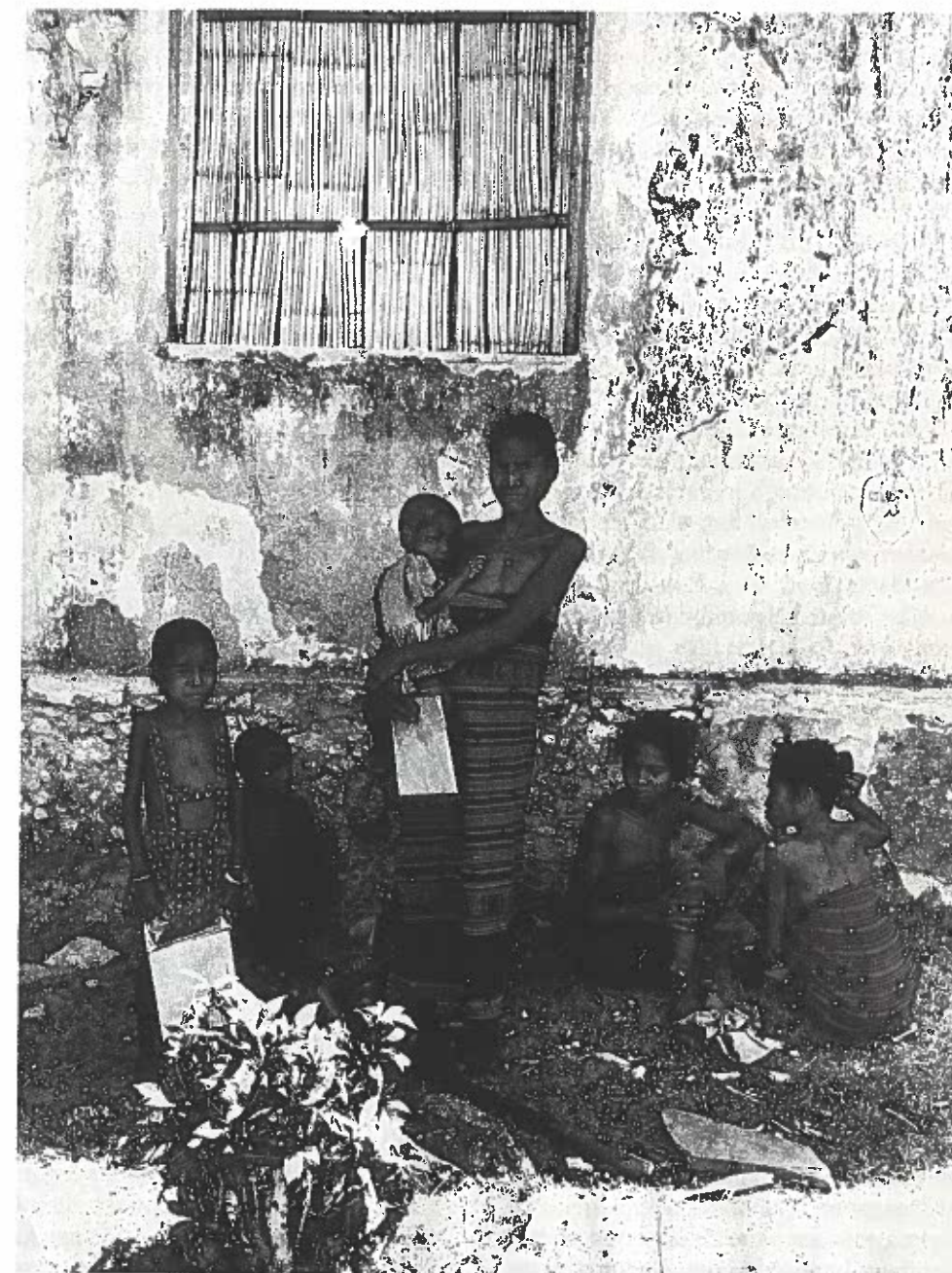
Fear pervades the city. Timorese agents working for the army are believed to be preparing to raid the residence of Bishop Belo, head of the Catholic Church. According to Church sources in Lisbon, a large number of people sought refuge in the Bishop's residence after the massacre on Tuesday.

The Bishop has strongly denied, in an interview with one journalist, the army's accusations that the Church has been organising demonstrations. He is virtually incommunicado, his phone is cut off and he has not received any letters, even from Jakarta, for several months. (Tapol 14/11)

### Tension throughout East Timor — Arrests in Ainaro

A number of youths were arrested in Ainaro on 12 November, the day the Santa Cruz massacre occurred in Dili. So far, the names of only two of the persons arrested are available: Cesar Araujo, 24 years old, and Hendriki da Costa, 20 years old. They are still being held in Ainaro kodim (district military command) where they have been tortured.

Our sources in East Timor report that the atmosphere in many districts is extremely tense because of high-level army



Family from Santa Cruz City, East Timor. Photo: Lena Hellkvist

activity and clampdowns. Communications difficulties make it extremely hard to obtain detailed information about arrests and atrocities outside Dili.

Our contact in Dili said today that soldiers in the town are arresting people in the streets who bear signs of having been wounded. Many of those injured during the massacre fled from the scene and avoided going to hospital, for fear of being taken into custody.

Reports circulating in Australia that Bishop Belo has been arrested are not true, but his residence is under constant

surveillance and he is continually being threatened. It is not clear how many people are still taking refuge in his home. After the massacre, no fewer than 257 came to his home for protection.

Meanwhile, East Timorese students in Bali have been privately informed that the local army command intends to clamp down on them over the weekend. They fear that many of them will be arrested. (Tapol 15/11)

Dili airport was closed on 20 November and all communications with the city have been almost cut off. The Catholic St. José



High School is reported to be still closed and the city is living in a climate of »fear and total isolation« with nobody walking freely in the street. (*Expresso 30/11*)

#### Bishop Belo

Dili, Nov 14 (AFP) – East Timor's Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo said on Thursday that 257 young East Timorese were given refuge by his episcopate office shortly after Indonesian troops fired on a crowd of mourners here on Tuesday.

The shootings, in which up to 50 people were killed, occurred at the Santa Cruz Cemetery during a memorial service for one of the two young Timorese killed under mysterious circumstances here on October 28.

»On Tuesday morning, 257 young men came here to seek refuge, arriving from the cemetery in different ways,« Belo, a native of East Timor, told AFP. He said he had personally accompanied some of the them back to their own homes later the same day and on Wednesday.

Belo said he went to the local military hospital on Wednesday and counted 89 young men with either bullet or stab wounds, or both. »As to the exact death toll, I don't know,« Belo said, adding that while the military maintained there were 13 dead other sources, including witnesses, had told him between 50 and 80 people died in the shooting.

He said an army major had been stabbed during the clashes on Tuesday and he believed that could have sparked of the soldiers' fury. (AFP Nov 14)

In a pastoral note released on 14 November the Bishop said that when the procession was entering the cemetery, shooting began »against the students and young people« and he added that »no warning shots either in the air or the ground« had been heard beforehand. He was at pains to emphasise that no clergy had accompanied the procession to the cemetery.

With regard to the dead he quoted a »reliable source« as having seen 80 bodies piled in two lorries and »others were in sacks«. He added that »the young people who had not succeeded in escaping were the target of ferocious beatings: beatings, kicks, blows from gun-buds and bayonets and some were stabbed in cold blood or in the chest, in the belly« (*Expresso 30/11*)

#### Governor Carrascalao

Lusa reported that the Indonesian governor of East Timor, Mario Carrascalao, had protested at the massacre and threatened to resign unless Jakarta took drastic measures to restore the confidence of local people.

Carrascalao, who is from East Timor, told a Lusa correspondent in Macau by telephone that he saw the funeral procession pass by his office before it was fired on.

»There were no strong reasons to open fire,« he said. »The authorities in Jakarta must find out who was behind the shooting.« Carrascalao said he would not continue as governor unless the Indonesian government »makes up for this bad deed and takes drastic measures to restore the confidence of the population.«

He said the streets of Dili were deserted on Wednesday night because, »there is a generalised situation of fear.«

Carrascalao said the authorities in Jakarta told him 13 people were killed and 30 seriously wounded in Tuesday's massacre, but he was aware that church sources gave a much higher death toll.

He said an unknown number of dead were loaded into a covered truck after the massacre and taken to Dili hospital. (Lisbon, Lusa, 13/11)

»We are all in mourning because they are innocent people who died,« he said. Actual demonstrators only numbered about 1,000, he added. Troops should have controlled the crowd long before it reached the cemetery, said the governor. He accused military commander Brigadier-General Rudolf Warouw of failing to assess the threat and condemned his year-old strategy for putting down the insurgency against Indonesia's rule over East Timor's 750,000 people. The governor attacked employment by the security forces of »rightists« whom he said often made use of their weapons and their training to settle old scores. »They are bandits and terrorists, the extreme right« (*Dili, Reuters, 13/11*)

#### Arrests in Jakarta

Large numbers of East Timorese demonstrating peacefully in Jakarta on 19 November, were detained by security forces. The protesters were trying to present a statement to the United Nations Information Office and the Japanese and Austral-

ian embassies. (Amnesty International 21/11)

Tri Sutrisno later announced that of the 70 Timorese detained 49 had been released. Col Wajman is reported to have stated that some of the detained were likely to be tried for crimes against state security and subversion, the latter carrying the death penalty: (*Público 25/11*) Indonesian television later showed pictures of these prisoners for the first time. (*Público 30/11*)

#### Arrests in Bali

Thirty three Timorese students are reported to be detained on the island of Bali and a further five are said to have disappeared. (*Expresso 30/11*)

#### Fresh shootings

80 prisoners shot dead on 15 November. Eighty prisoners, most of them youths, were shot dead in the district of Be-Mussi on 15 November 1991. According to reliable sources whose identity must be protected for their own security, the 80 prisoners were loaded into four trucks, from the Dili Korem (military headquarters), from Taibesse, and from Manleuana (where a new detention centre has been set up since the Santa Cruz massacre) and taken to Be-Mussi.

The troops first forced the prisoners to strip naked. Their hands and feet were bound and they were blindfolded. After being loaded onto the trucks, they were covered with a huge canvass so that no-one could see what was inside the trucks.

After arriving in Be-Mussi, the prisoners were taken from the trucks to the edge of a newly-dug ditches and shot dead with several volleys of machine-gun fire.

The troops who carried out this premeditated slaughter, just three days after the massacre in Santa Cruz, Dili, were hooded but it is known that they are from the 700th and 744th battalions. These battalions are from the Hasanuddin Division, in South Sulawesi. The occupiers have now transferred many prisoners to Kupang (Indonesian Timor) to hide them from foreign missions that are visiting the territory at present and to prevent them from getting International Red Cross protection.

It has been confirmed that many of the Timorese who were murdered in Santa Cruz were children, primary school pupils who were going to an early morning shift

when they joined the procession as it left Motael Church, on their way to school. Unprepared and confused by the ferocity of the army's attack, they had much greater difficulty than the adults in escaping from the gunfire. (*Tapol, 17/11, Daily Telegraph 19/11*)

#### 17 executions on Sunday 17 and Tuesday 19 November.

Journalist Anthony Balmain reported that a further 10 Timorese were executed at midnight on Sunday 17 November, apparently because they were witnesses of the Be-Mussi killings.

He also reports hearing of the further

#### Witnesses contradict Jakarta's claims.

»I can say categorically that the claims of Indonesian military forces are nothing but lies to cover up the most appalling atrocity that has been perpetrated on the people of East Timor for quite a number of years,« Muntz said. Muntz, who works for the charity Community Aid Abroad, said he accompanied the procession on its way to a cemetery in Dili to mourn the death of an independence sympathiser two weeks earlier. He said Indonesian army reports that mourners fired a shot or threw a grenade at the soldiers were not true. - Bob Muntz (Reuters 15/11)

Allan Nairn, on assignment for The



Inhabitant from East Timor. Photo: Archive IWGIA

execution, on the following Tuesday, of 2 children and 5 women, who had been present at the killings on the Sunday. (*Público 25/11*)

#### Indonesian Statements

Initial statements referred to Xanana Gusmao and armed guerrillas being among the people at the cemetery and quoted a figure of 50 dead. Later statements revised the death toll downwards and referred to an unruly mob which the troops had unsuccessfully tried to restrain, leading to the death of an Indonesian major. The shooting was also described as due to a misunderstanding of an order given by a junior officer.

Gen. Try Sutrisno was unrepentant but Major-General Sintong Panjaitan and Ali Alatas later expressed regrets.

New Yorker magazine, and Amy Goodman, of New York radio station WBAI, disputed the claim by Indonesian officials that the troops were provoked into firing on Tuesday by armed Timorese guerrillas. The two journalists said at a news conference that they saw hundreds of troops fire without provocation on unarmed marchers, including children and elderly people. »It was a case of a planned and systematic massacre... This was a very disciplined operation. This was not a situation where you had some hothead who ran amok« Nairn said. (Reuters 15/11)

#### International reaction

##### East Timor

Ramos-Horta calls for arms embargo Paris, Nov 14, Reuter - The East Timor opposition urged the United States and

the European Community on Thursday to impose an arms embargo on Indonesia following a massacre of mourners at a cemetery in the disputed territory.

Opposition spokesman Jose Ramos Horta told a news conference in Paris that his Fretilin alliance of guerrillas and clandestine civilian groups, opposed to Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, wanted the U.N. Security Council to meet immediately.

He said Indonesian troops killed at least 100 people in Dili on Tuesday and the death toll could rise to between 120 and 150 because some of the wounded were in a critical condition.

The army has said 19 people were killed and 91 injured at the Santa Cruz cemetery during the funeral of an independence activist. Witnesses put the number of dead at more than 50.

»I would hope that the EC and the United States would show solidarity with the Portuguese stance and ask for an immediate meeting of the U.N. Security Council... and ask for an arms embargo,« Ramos Horta said. »Without armaments from Western countries, Indonesia will not be able to pursue its war against East Timor.«

#### EEC: Declaration by the twelve

The following is the full text of the Declaration on East Timor adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the 12 members of the European Community in Noordsvijk, Holland, on 13 November 1991.

»The European Community and its Member States are gravely concerned over reports on 12 November that members of the Indonesian armed forces in Dili opened fire on a group of demonstrators, killing and wounding a considerable number.

The European Community and its member states vehemently condemn such violence, which is in clear contravention of the most fundamental human rights.

The European Community and its Member States will obtain further information about the circumstances surrounding this incident at the earliest possible opportunity, if possible from independent sources.

The European Community and its Member States urge the Indonesian Government to ensure that members of the Indonesian armed forces and police in East Timor refrain immediately from using vio-



lence and that the members of the armed forces and police who were responsible for the tragic outcome of this incident are brought to trial.»

#### Call for arms embargo – Strasbourg

The European Parliament in Strasbourg urged the EC and the UN to ban arms sales to Indonesia and called for an international investigation into the killings. (*Daily Telegraph*, 22/11)

#### United Nations

Nov 14, Reuter – An investigation which Indonesia plans to conduct into the shooting of civilians in East Timor by Indonesian troops must be thorough and credible, a spokesman for Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, said on Thursday.

This was the third time in three days the U.N. spokesman had referred to Tuesday's incident. »The Secretary-General has seen press reports from Jakarta indicating that the Indonesian government intends to conduct an investigation into the events which occurred in Dili.« the U.N. spokesman said. »The Secretary-General feels that such an investigation must be thorough and credible,« he added. An official of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission, Peter Kooijmans of the Netherlands, who happened to be in Dili when the shooting occurred, will give the Secretary-General a report on information that has come to his attention, even though he was not an eyewitness.

Kooijmans has conveyed his concern to the authorities in Jakarta and received assurances that the »physical integrity of those taken into custody by the Indonesian authorities is preserved,« the U.N. spokesman added.

Kooijmans was to meet Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alataas, on Friday and return to Geneva on Monday.

Perez de Cuellar said in a statement issued through his spokesman on Wednesday that he »profoundly regrets the events that have taken place in East Timor and the loss of innocent lives and he is profoundly disturbed by what happened.«

After first learning of the shooting on Tuesday he said he »deplores the loss of innocent lives« and hoped effective measures would be taken to avoid any recurrence. (Reuter 14/11)

Talks on UN mission visit Oporto, 30

November – Perez de Cuellar told reporters that he intended sending the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, a Kenyan, to Jakarta because of the events in Dili on Nov. 12 but he was still awaiting confirmation from Jakarta. Diplomatic sources in the Indonesian capital said they knew nothing of such a visit. (RTP Portuguese TV, 30/11)

The UN Secretary-General also confirmed that talks were under way with a view to sending a mission of observers to East Timor and that at present he was awaiting a response from the Indonesian Government. (*Público* 30/11)

#### Portugal

According to a plan leaked by »Expresso« Portugal intends to press the Twelve, at their coming meeting in Maastricht, to support a Portuguese proposal to the UN, which would oblige Indonesia to sit at a negotiating table with Timorese representatives without preconditions. It will also endeavour to get the EC to take more interest in the East Timor question. (*Expresso* 30/11)

#### Holland

The Hague, Nov 14 (AFP) – Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek called in the Indonesian ambassador to the Netherlands on Thursday and expressed the government's deep concern over Tuesday's massacre by Indonesian troops in East Timor, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said. Indonesia was formerly a Dutch colony.

On a separate note, the Dutch Ministry for Cooperation and Development announced a grant of 250,000 florins (130,000 dollars) to East Timor, a former Portuguese territory annexed by Indonesia in 1975. A spokesman said Van den Broek, in a 30-minute meeting with Ambassador Bintoro Jjokroamidjojo, called on the Indonesian Government to treat humanely those detainees held in barracks and police stations following the shooting of mourners by the army during the funeral of a resistance sympathiser in the East Timor capital Dili.

He also asked that Indonesian authorities leave alone people who were hospitalised and those who fled to offices belonging to international aid organizations. He pledged to shed light on the massacre which, according to Indonesia, left 19 peo-

ple dead, but as many as 151 according to other sources. (*AFP* 14/11)

#### Aid suspended

It was announced on 22 November that all future aid to Indonesia had been suspended until the events in Dili on 12 November had been clarified.

In a letter to the Dutch Parliament, a senior diplomat stated that he had arrived at the conclusion that the massacre was a deliberate action on the part of the Indonesian military and not the impulse of the moment. (*Público* 22/11)

#### Britain

In Britain, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has played down its reaction. A spokesman admitted that Britain joined its European Community partners in condemnation, but said that when the Indonesian ambassador was called in last week, Britain had expressed concern which did not amount to a protest. (*Observer* 17/11)

An editorial in »The Times« drew attention to the UK's recent arms sales to Indonesia and urged Britain to press for a UN-sponsored referendum in East Timor. (*The Times* 22/11)

#### USA

Washington, Nov 14 (AFP) – The U.S. administration defended its military aid to Indonesia Thursday, which has been threatened by Congress after protesters in East Timor were killed in a confrontation with the army.

»We think that a continued and well focused military assistance program for Indonesia can contribute to the professionalisation of the Indonesian military,« said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. A total of 2.3 million dollars has been budgeted in the form of military aid for the 1991–1992 fiscal year, which began October 1. The money is only for training and education. »These kinds of programs expose the trainee to democratic ideas and humanitarian standards« he said.

Washington, Nov 14, Reuter – The U.S. State Department called in Indonesia's ambassador on Thursday to urge that those responsible for a massacre of civilians in East Timor this week be punished. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said ambassador Abdul Rach-

man Ramly was summoned so that Washington could voice deep concern at the deaths, reported variously to number up to 180, on Tuesday during the funeral of a Timorese separatist.

»We're urging a prompt and complete investigation, followed by the appropriate disciplining of those determined to have excessive force,« said Boucher.

»We believe that nothing that may have taken place could justify a military reaction of this magnitude resulting in such a large loss of life by unarmed civilians.«

#### Call for suspension of military aid

Washington (Nov. 15), DPA – The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Clairborne Pell, called Friday for a suspension of all U.S. military aid to Indonesia in the wake of the killing of as many as 100 people by troops in East Timor. Meanwhile, 223 members of the House of Representatives called for the U.S. government to use its influence to support human rights in East Timor, a territory that was seized by Indonesia in 1975. (*Indonesia Publications* 17/11)

#### Australia

Hawke shifts East Timor policy  
ABC: Prime Minister, you have called for the Indonesians to sit down and talk with the East Timorese including the resistance. I take it you are signalling here a shift in policy. Previously we have of course said these things are an internal matter. Hawke: Well, in the end obviously they will be. The world is not going to invade Indonesia and impose the world's will on Indonesia. It is in the end ultimately a matter for Indonesia but what I tried to do in a constructive and friendly spirit at the time of tragedy is to say, in as a friendly and positive fashion as I can that the Indonesians must sit and reflect upon where they are in regard to East Timor. (*Transcript of an interview with Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke by ABC reporter Maxine McHugh on »AM«, 15.11.91:*)

#### Demonstrations

Sydney, Nov 16 (AFP) – Hundreds of people gathered in central Sydney on Saturday for a protest march and memorial ceremony for victims of the massacre by Indonesian troops in Dili, East Timor's capital. Some 700 marchers shouted »Stop

the Killing« and »Suharto is a butcher« – a reference to the Indonesian president – as they made their way through light drizzle towards Sydney's Hyde Park. Here they lit candles and placed them before portraits of some of those who died in the shootings in Dili, among them Sydney university student Kamal Bamadhaj. In Adelaide about 150 people took part in a rally at the office of the Indonesian national airline Garuda.

#### Indonesia

##### Human rights organizations react

Three human rights organizations in Jakarta, Infight (the Indonesian Front for Human Rights), LPHAM (Institute for the Defence of Human Rights) and the League to Uphold Justice have expressed their profound disquiet at the shootings which occurred in Dili, East Timor on 12 November 1991.

Representatives of the three organisations went to the People's Legislative Assembly (DPR) where they met four MPs from the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).

They urged the DPR to set up a fact-finding commission composed of DPR members, human rights organisations and individuals with a known commitment to the principles of human rights.

The three organisations also urged the DPR to do everything possible to have the persons responsible for the shootings brought to justice. The DPR should, they said, call on the armed forces commander-in-chief, General Try Sutrisno, to publicise the names of the fifty persons who, he admits, have been killed.

The three organisations today met Professor Kooijmans in Jakarta. He told them he would be submitting a report about this incident to the Indonesian Government and the UN Secretary-General by January next year. He estimates that between 50 and 60 people were killed when troops opened fire at the Santa Cruz Cemetery, but said the death toll could well rise because so many people were seriously wounded. He said he thought that about sixty people are still in detention. He was not able to confirm reports that some detainees, who were on the army's blacklist, had been executed while in custody.

The human rights delegation said it was essential for the armed forces comman-

der-in-chief to allow relatives of the casualties to collect the bodies of those killed in the massacre for burial. Relatives of those in hospital should be allowed to visit them.

The delegation also reminded the DPR members that there have been many such acts of violence perpetrated by the armed forces, referring in particular to the massacres at Tanjung Priok in September 1984, in Lampung in February 1987, and the killings in Aceh in the past few years. (*TAPOL report*, 14/11)

##### Investigation team in Dili

Timorese resistance sources say that they refuse to participate in the Indonesian Commission of Inquiry currently taking place in Dili. The Commission is comprised of six Indonesian MPs and one Timorese.

José Ramos-Horta said that the reported demonstration outside the team's hotel was organized by the Indonesian security forces in an attempt to show that freedom of expression existed. (*Expresso* 30/11)

It is also reported that one of the two battalions implicated in the massacre, (no./nr. 303) departed for Jakarta on 29 November, while the other (no. 700) had left for Sulawesi the previous week. (*Expresso* 30/11)

##### Conference of Bishops contest official version

The Indonesian Conference of Bishops, which hitherto had restricted itself to regretting the killings at Santa Cruz, has now openly contested the official version of the massacre and accused the military of being responsible. (*Público* 30/11)

Source:  
*East Timor News*, No. 2, 2/12/91





## IWGIA on EAST TIMOR

2 documents edited by Torben Retbøll:

East Timor, Indonesia  
and the Western Democracies ( doc. 40 )

East Timor:  
The struggle continues ( doc. 50 )

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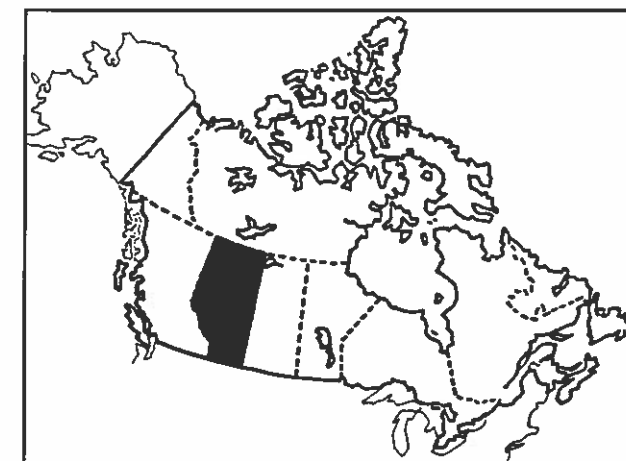
East Timor: UN Sub-commission  
adopts resolution on Human Rights  
in East Timor ( news. 51/52 )

East Timor: "No Improvement in  
Human Rights" says Copenhagen  
Conference ( news. 57 )

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# Lubicon Cree still need help

By Karin Sonne-Jensen and  
Claus Oreskov



Alberta, Canada

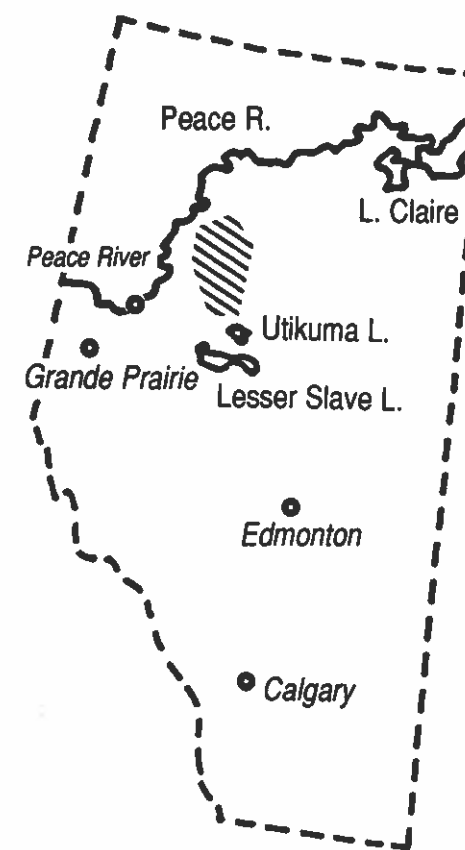
» Of course Daishowa wants to cut trees... they're getting those trees for next to nothing... but the fact of the matter is while they are doing that, they're fulfilling the wish of the Government, and that's to kill the Lubicon people.«  
(Chief Bernard Ominayak, Lubicon Lake Indian Nation)

The Japanese forestry giant, Daishowa plans to undertake logging in a huge area on the traditional territory of the Lubicon Cree in Boreal Forest Region in Northern Alberta.

For more than 50 years, the Lubicon Cree have been fighting for their aboriginal landrights. In 1988 an agreement was reached with the Province of Alberta, according to which the Province was supposed to transfer 95 square miles of reservation area to the Lubicon Cree plus a compensation of 170 million dollars for the billions of dollars that the oil and gas companies have appropriated from the Lubicon Cree traditional land which measures about 4000 square miles. The federal government put an end to this agreement by not being willing to fulfill their responsibility ie. to pay the compensation. Since then (1988), the federal government has ignored the demands of the Lubicon Cree to start serious renegotiations to solve the question of landclaims and compensations. In the meantime, the government of Alberta has leased an area as large as Great Britain to a dozen multinational corporations. Two Japanese controlled forestry companies alone, Daishowa and Mitsubishi, have been granted leases to clearcut 15% of the prov-

ince, and hereby ALL of the traditional Lubicon Territory, except the future reserve of 95 square miles mentioned above. The Lubicon Cree were never consulted in this matter by the Government of Alberta, even though the Royal Proclamation of 1763 gives Aboriginal nations the right to exercise jurisdiction over their traditional

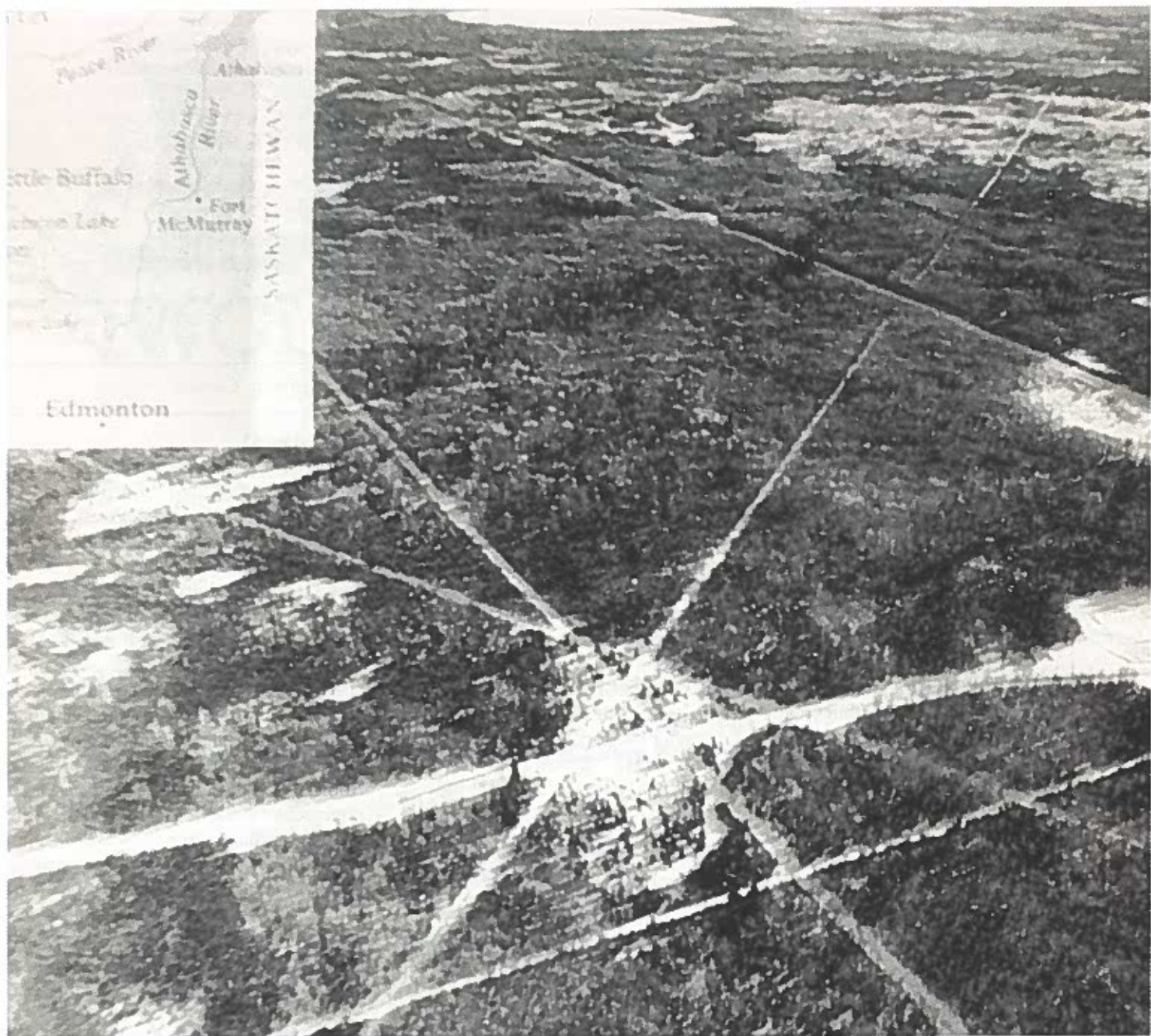
### Map of Lubicon Cree Hunting and Trapping Territory, Alberta



land areas until a treaty is negotiated between the Indians and the British Crown (later Canada). The Boreal Forest Region which covers 34% of Canada is part of the largest natural ecological zone on Earth, and is home to more than 25000 animal and plant species. Obviously, the clearing of such a vast area has disastrous effects on the eco-system. Furthermore, 65 miles north of the Lubicon Cree's traditional territory Daishowa has built the largest hardwood pulp mill in Canada which consumes 4 million trees a year and which uses chlorine compounds and produces toxic organochlorines,- a potential threat to human health.

At first, Daishowa promised to postpone the logging activities until the Lubicon Cree had entered into a treaty agreement with Alberta and the federal government. In spite of this, Daishowa, began together with other companies, extensive logging activities, at the end of 1990. The Lubicon Cree have been and still are trying with all means to stop these logging activities; they even went to Japan to speak with the Daishowa president, Kiminori Saito, who nevertheless refused to meet the delegation. They succeeded, however, in alerting environmentalist groups in Japan and made these groups' protest along with European, Canadian native and non-native groups. The Daishowa enterprise is not unaffected by this international pressure; to maintain an outwardly honorable image, the Canadian Vice President and general manager, Tom Hamaoka has given his word that no logging will be undertaken on the Territory of the Lubicon Cree this winter, but the





*Destruction caused by the oil industry in the Lubicon territory*

Lubicon Cree have good reason not to have faith in this promise. It is therefore absolutely essential that the pressure be kept on this time until there is a clear, firm, and public commitment by Daishowa to stay out of the entire unceded Lubicon Territory pending a settlement of Lubicon landrights and negotiation of a harvesting agreement with the Lubicon people taking into account Lubicon wildlife and environmental concerns.

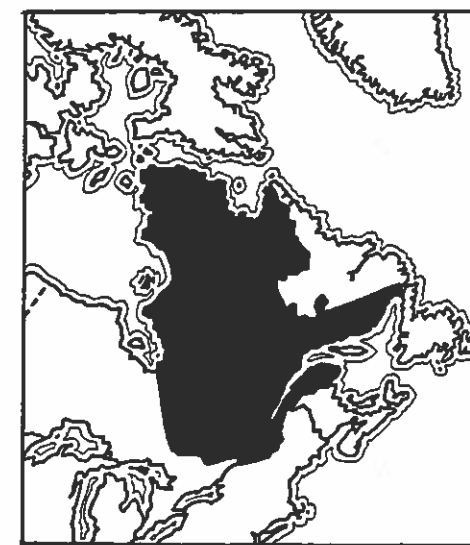
**Please send protest letters to:**  
Mr Tom Hamaoka  
Vice President  
Daishowa Company, Canada Ltd.  
3500 Park Place  
666 Burrard Street  
Vancouver B.C.V6C 2X8  
Canada  
FAX: +1-604-689-2853

- and please write to the Prime Minister of Canada, urging him to take up serious negotiations with the Lubicon Cree:

The Honorable Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa, K1A-OA6  
Canada  
FAX: +1-613-957-5632

Copies of letters should be sent to:  
Lubicon Lake Indian Nation  
c/o Mr. Fred Lennarson  
3536 - 106 street  
Edmonton, AB T6J 1A4  
Canada  
Phone: +1-403-436-5652  
FAX: +1-403-437-0719

# Canada: Full environmental review delays hydro project



*Quebec, Canada*

The summer of 1991 may be remembered as the summer native groups delayed construction of the Great Whale Hydro Project. Hydro Quebec had hoped to start building roads and airports this fall. A comprehensive environmental assessment would have prevented such a scenario. Quebec's solution, which was to speed up the environmental assessment, would have presented such a scenario. Quebec's solution was to speed up the environmental assessment by segmenting it into two parts: first the access infrastructure, and secondly the complex itself.

The fast track approach angered native groups, made environmentalists lobby harder, gave New Yorkers second thoughts on buying from Hydro Quebec, and prompted the Canadian government to join the fray with its own review panel. In the end, Premier Bourassa delayed the project for a year.

## Quebec Under Pressure

The Quebec government came under pressure early in the process because of their decision to break up the environmental assessment. Critics of the project called this strategy »illogical.« Nevertheless, Quebec's Environment Minister, Pierre Paradis, pursued the strategy by conducting an assessment of the access infrastructure. This was done by means of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEOC) process.

Summer newspaper editorials argued that Bourassa's »hydro-electric economics« were outdated, and out of tune with a more environmentally-conscious public. It was argued that the project would not be profitable since Quebec would be selling electricity to magnesium and aluminium smelting companies substantially below market price. Laval University professors Gérard Bélanger and Jean-Thomas Bernard maintained that Quebec would lose \$300 million per year by selling power to aluminium smelters. The province of Quebec would thus be subsidizing the smelters on a large scale.

Utility companies in the U.S., such as the New York Power Authority, have also been reconsidering the consequences of buying electricity at the cost of the northern environment. Although they have not cancelled any contracts, they have requested that the proper environmental review processes be carried out. In addition, potential U.S. buyers of Hydro Quebec electricity have been pressured by voters to do their own environmental assessments, and reviews of future power requirements.

Furthermore, the Crees took Hydro Quebec to court, and won. Makivik was an intervenor in the case, which called on the federal government to honour certain sections of the JBNQA. Federal Court Judge, Paul Rouleau, ruled on September 10th that the environmental assessment provi-

sions of the JBNQA must be adhered to. The ruling means Inuit and Cree will have representatives on the assessment panel as required in the JBNQA. Quebec has not announced if it will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Due to these pressures, the Quebec Environment Minister has repeatedly postponed the assessment deadline as well as announcing a one year delay in construction.

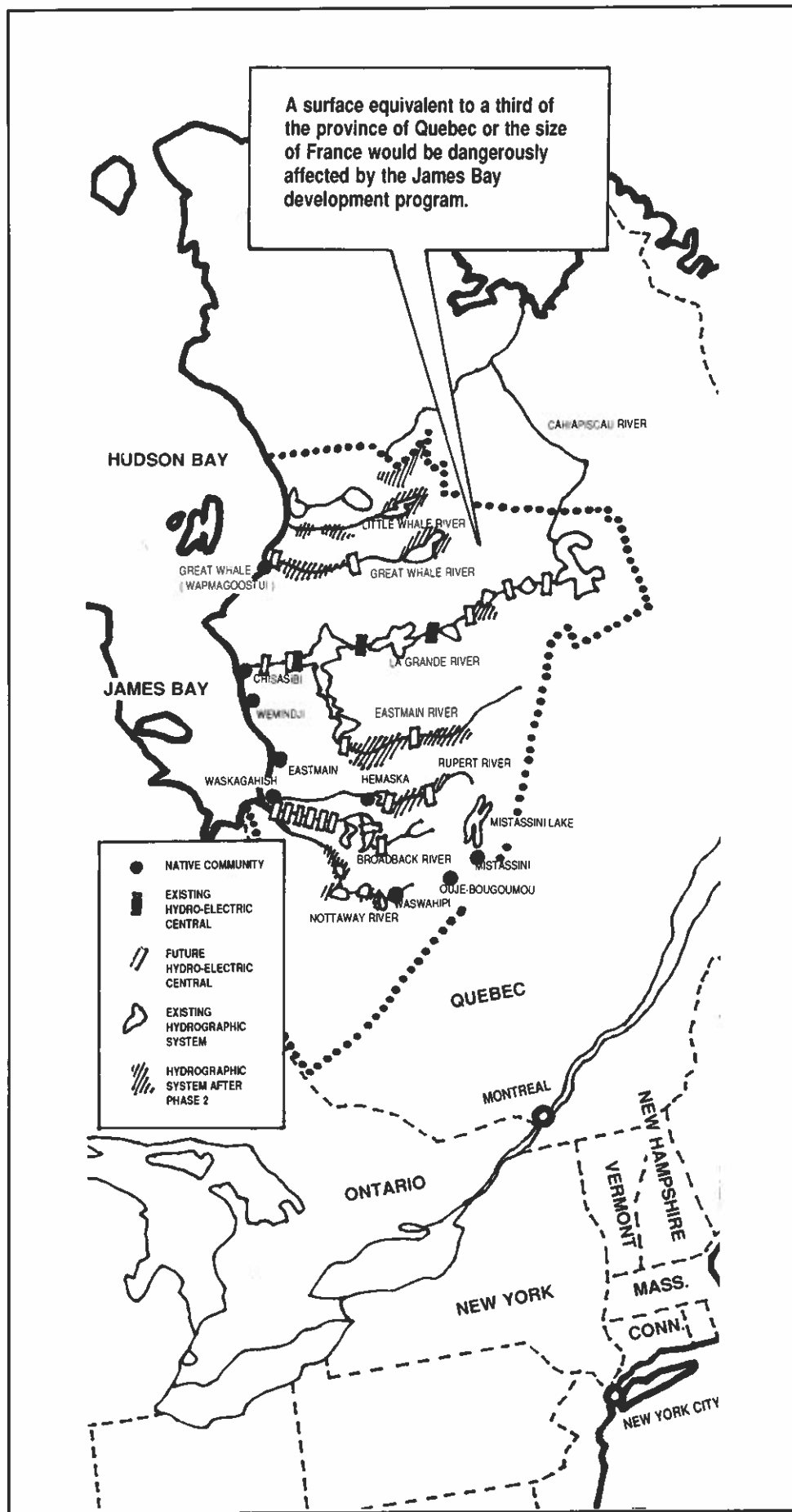
## Events during the Summer of 1991

In late June, the arrival of KEQC officials was loudly protested in Kuujjuaraapik. Cree and Inuit residents wouldn't let them out of the airport, though some Inuit wanted to talk to the commissioners. The hearings were re-scheduled. The KEQC report deadline was extended from August 9th to September 12th, and now indefinitely.

In July, federal Environment Minister Jean Charest announced an Environmental Impact and Review Panel (EARP) that would hold public hearings on the proposed Great Whale project. It would review the overall impact of not only the two phases of the James Bay II project, but also other possible, future mega-projects bordering Hudson Bay.

Makivik President, Charlie Watt, responded to Charest's announcement by saying, »We favour the assessment of the combined effects of these mega-projects





on the ecology of Hudson Bay and James Bay where the Inuit of Nunavik have unsettled claims to the offshore area.« Such claims are under the jurisdiction of Canada, hence the need for federal participation.

The EARP process will review the cumulative effects that cover matters under federal jurisdiction. These include navigable waters, migratory birds, and marine mammals.

The EARP mandate also states that interim reports may be issued. Makivik President, Charlie Watt, was disappointed about this, saying, »This opens the door to sectorial authorizations of, for example, the access infrastructure. Such a segmented approach would necessarily fail to consider the cumulative impact of the various elements of the Project. The authorization for constructing the road before the entire review is completed would, in all likelihood, prejudice the assessment of the hydro-electric complex itself. These are precisely the sort of problems which a single comprehensive review was intended to avoid.«

**KEQC Hearings move to Umiujaq and Inukjuak**

When Pierre Paradis announced the delay of the project on August 22nd, the KEQC was just starting an afternoon session in Inukjuak. Most of the hearing was reserved for Inuit from Kuujuaaraapik who were flown in to speak to the commission. As the purpose of the KEQC is to listen to the concerns of residents, the resulting testimony was characteristically negative towards the project.

Luke Inukpuk, one of the Inuit flown in, said, »Although there has been a decision to hold simultaneous hearings on the proposed access infrastructures and dam facilities, we are still against both phases of the project. The decision changes nothing, we still maintain our opposition.«

Johnny Inukpuk, a local elder, said »The road will bring more availability of alcohol, which is a threat to Inuit culture. But my main concern is the release of mercury from the land into Hudson Bay if the project goes ahead. The mercury-laden effluent will contaminate marine animals and could mean an end to the Inuit way of life.«

Lucassie Echalook was concerned about »the possibility that animals, espe-

cially caribou, could contract respiratory problems from the dust thrown up by an unpaved road. Animals cannot seek shelter from the clouds of dust as humans can.«

Sanikiluaq Mayor, Peter Kattuq, was also in Inukjuak. He told the commissioners, »The discharge of several rivers contaminating Hudson Bay will infringe upon our right and responsibility to maintain a clean environment for the animals we have been entrusted to take care of. We cannot afford to have other people rearranging our relationship to the land and sea.«

Inuit and Cree from Chisasibi were also there to give hard testimony about the effects the »La Grande Project« were having on them. Pauloosie Angutiguluk and his wife testified that »the effects from the road and hydro project were very bad. Young people are abusing drugs because the road connecting the south to Chisasibi makes alcohol and drugs easy available. There are also road accidents resulting from such availability. We have also seen young, unwed mothers whose children are left abandoned and fatherless by itinerant

hydro workers.« Pauloosie added, »The fish near the project were rendered inedible by the mercury contamination from the reservoir. We now have to travel about an hour by plane before we can fish for fish that are not poisoned.«

Inuit from Kuujuaaraapik are worried about the possibility of not being provided with access to clean water if the project diverts the river. Their problem could be quite serious since their only close source of water is the Great Whale River.

Sappa Fleming, Mayor of Kuujuaaraapik, voiced his concerns as well: »Hydro Quebec study teams have been, and are abandoning whole camps of tents, buildings, oil drums and trash at the end of their studies.«

Overall, the contamination of the Hudson Bay food chain was of greatest concern for the Inuit at the hearings. KEQC chairman Peter Jacobs assured the Inuit that they would be coming to the communities again to hold more hearings. They also assured them that the project will not go ahead until the Inuit have had their say. The KEQC has the power to authorize the

project. Inuit concerns heard in Umiujaq and Inukjuak will be likely translate into a long list of conditions the KEQC will impose on Hydro Quebec before it can proceed in building the Great Whale Project. The conditions would mitigate the impact of the project on the lives of the Inuit.

Mitigating the effects on Inuit lives, should the project go ahead, is also the main concern of Makivik Corporation. There are positive developments to report from the negotiations with Hydro Quebec in an effort to reach an Agreement-In-Principle (AIP). An AIP would bind Hydro Quebec contractually to provide compensation for the Inuit. Hydro's initial plans included the diversion of the Nastapoka River. Makivik negotiators have managed to exclude the Nastapoka from the project. Negotiations also dealt with the type of monitoring that would take place during, and after construction, and the type of funds that could be set up.

It's hoped that an AIP will be signed in late fall with Hydro Quebec.

Source: Makivik News, 1991



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**Video cassettes**

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- No. 2:** Peter Elsass, director and anthropologist - Earth is our Mother: Arhuaco

- in Colombia and Bari in Venezuela (50 min. Denmark, 1987).
- No. 3:** Lode Cafmeyer, director (anthropologist: Gustaaf Verswijver) - Green Puzzle of Altamira: Kayapo in Brazil and Yaminahua in Peru (50 min. Belgium, 1989).
- No. 4:** IWGIA-ACACIA Prods., - Bangladesh, Chittagong Hill Tracts - what future? (UK, 1989).

**Documentos en Castellano**

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