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IWGIA
INTERNATIONAL
WORK GROUP FOR
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

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International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is an independent, international organisation which supports indigenous peoples in their struggle against oppression. IWGIA publishes the IWGIA Documentation Series in English and Spanish. The IWGIA Newsletter in English and the IWGIA Boletín in Spanish are published four times annually. The Documentation and Research Department welcomes suggestions and contributions to the Newsletters, Boletines and Documentation Series.

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Cover photo:
Tuareg man with camel, the beast of burden. Photo: IWGIA archives.

Newsletter

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WORK GROUP FOR
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Introduction

At the outset, IWGIA would like to make a couple of observations for the benefit of our readers and subscribers about this issue of the Newsletter/Boletin. This is our last Newsletter for 1990, the year that we began simultaneous English and Spanish editions. Our next Newsletter/Boletin which will be in a new (and hopefully improved) format will first be published in June 1991 meaning we will have only 3 issues in 1991; we revert to 4 issues a year in 1992.

Material pile up somehow when issues get irregular. This has certainly been the case with this number, which could easily qualify as a double issue. Like the last one - nos.60/61 - it has way over 20 articles, a few of them quite long.

We open the issue with 2 articles on Alaska dealing with the topic of subsistence while tackling animal rights. Both articles are from the 6th Annual Assembly of the Indigenous Survival International in Anchorage this summer, one of them specifically dealing with Pribilof Islands.

The indigenous land question in Argentina is on focus while a short report from Bolivia covers the march in September to La Paz by the indigenous in order to dialogue with government officials on ecological issues.

More on the South American continent, we publish a paper on the *Mapuche* ethnic communal defense system in Chile, while we reproduce a critical article on development plans in the Colombian Pacific coast called PLAIDECOP. We also present a statement before the WGIP on the situation of indigenous human rights in Venezuela by a representative from CONIVE, the Indigenous National Council of Venezuela.

From Central America, we have two articles on Guatemala: a statement by a representative from the Guatemalan Committee for Peasant Unity and a paper at the 2nd Indigenous Intl. Women's Conference in Karasjok (Samiland) this summer, on women's participation in Mayan history.

This year, we print the WGIP statement by the spokesman for the Democratic Alliance of Burma on the situation of the indigenous and the environment in Burma, followed by an IWGIA interview with him during his visit to Denmark in the spring.

On the Mohawk controversy which hugged Canadian as well as

world headlines for weeks on end in summer, we have chosen to publish the WGIP statement by Kenneth Deer during the 42nd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. Claus Oreskov who, from Copenhagen, monitored and was in close contact with the Mohawks during the entire crisis, has written an article about the tense eleven weeks.

In this issue we print a statement – the first ever – in Geneva on the human rights situation of the *Bedouin* people in the Negev desert of Israel. Also a first, is a presentation of the situation of Taiwan indigenous – the *Yami, Bunun, Ami and Sao* – before the WGIP.

Still on Southeast Asia, we reprint a situationer from KAMP, a Philippine indigenous umbrella organization, on development in the country vis-a-vis the indigenous, in this context dubbed “development aggression.”

Indigenous cultural rights in terms of repatriation of human remains and artifacts is the gist of a contribution from Prof Rory Snowarrow Fausett, who can be contacted at his academic address by those interested in the repatriation issue. NIYC, the National Indian Youth Council, will in 1991 present before the WGIP a formal report on human remains and cultural patrimony.

We reproduce an *Izvestia* interview with Vladimir Sanghi, the newly-elected President of the Association of the Small Peoples of the Soviet North and Far East, the founding of which in Moscow this spring (March) is covered by IWGIA Document, Vol.67.

There are 2 items on West Papua, one is a statement from OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) before the WGIP calling for U.N. recognition of their rights to self-determination. The situation of the *Hupla* after the earthquake of August 1989 raises controversial aspects of Indonesian resettlement programmes.

Last but not least, we present a dossier on the *Tuaregs*. When accounts of Tuareg massacres came to the attention of IWGIA in late autumn, we addressed the issue promptly by among others, sending telegrams to President Ali Saibou of Niger and President Moussa Traore of Mali. We also oriented the U.N. Center for Human Rights who promised to prepare a summary for the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Translated from the French are 1) a Document entitled “We the Tuaregs”, written by the Tuaregs themselves, and 2) a *Le Monde* interview with the Tuareg leader, M.Iyad ag Ghali; these are about the only material in circulation on the Tuareg at the moment. Explanatory notes as well as a chronology of events are included to give the readers basic material on the current situation of the Blue People of the Sahara.

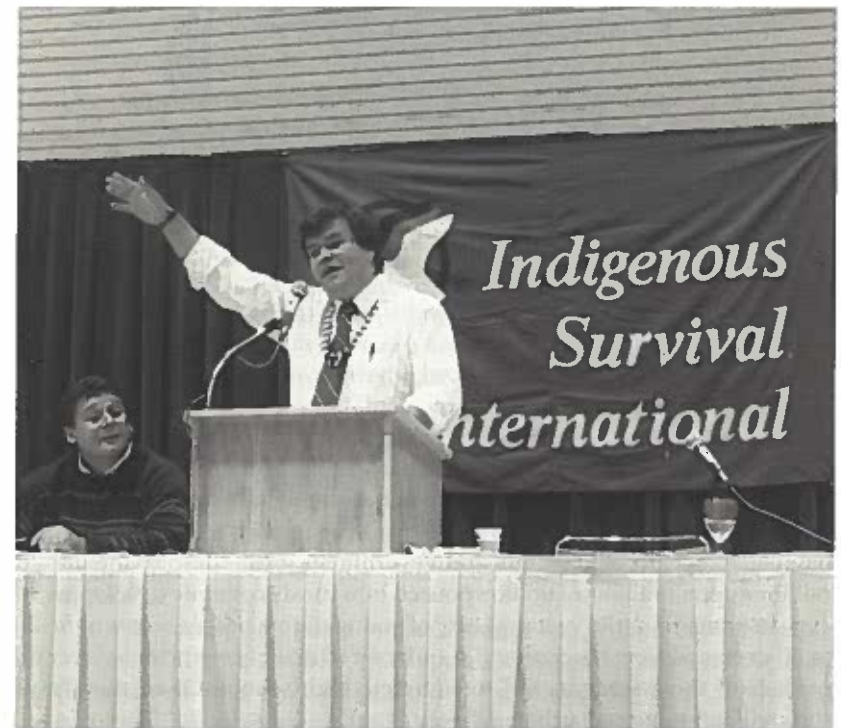
Alaska

Pribilof Islands

by Larry Mercurieff

This speech was delivered by the Commissioner of the Sea Otter Commission, Larry Mercurieffs during the Indigenous Survival International Sixth Annual Assembly, Anchorage during August 1990.

Good afternoon. I have three things I want to talk about this afternoon that might be of use to you. One is an overview of Alaska's rural economy as I see it. Two is the Alaska fur industry. There is the Pribilof Experience and the Animal Rights Movement. Those who are not so diplomatic might call them *humaniacs*.



*Larry Mercurieff delivering his speech at the ISI Annual Meeting, in Anchorage 1990.
(Photo: Jens Dahl)*



Map of Pribiloff Islands.

Earlier this year, in testimony on behalf of the Sea Otter Commission, I described the state of affairs in rural Alaska. I said Alaska is experiencing major failures in working with Alaska natives in the areas of education, economic development, law enforcement, governmental process, social services, environmental and wildlife management and subsistence.

The results speak louder than words. In economic development, the vast majority of Alaskan villages are not economically self-sufficient and, indeed, have become increasingly dependent upon government transfer payments, government grants and government jobs – despite the untold millions upon millions of dollars poured into rural economic development.

In education, the vast majority of young native people score in the 20 to 30 percentile level in national standardized achievement tests. Over 60 percent of these students fail to complete high school. Often they leave their village to attend urban schools.

In law enforcement, over 30 percent of all the inmates in state jails are Alaska native – in great disproportion to the non-native population.

In governmental processes, there is a growing sense of disenfranchisement and distrust of Federal and State actions, with a consequent growth of legal and civil confrontation.

In providing social services, despite heroic efforts by committed people, suicides, alcohol abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome and child neglect or abuse is at crisis levels and far beyond averages of mainstream America.

In short, the institutional failures are across the board, and without some very fundamental rethinking about how we approach native issues, the prognosis is very bleak considering that rural Alaska's population is projected to double in the next 26 years.

These failures are identical in many ways to those in the lower 48, Canada and even in many third world countries. I believe that the root of many of these failures is in the processes that are used, where there is a lack of appreciation and understanding for cultural differences, the value of using cultural strengths to solve problems, and the handicaps imposed by inflexible bureaucratic systems.

In economic developments the challenges in Alaska are even more formidable when we add to the institutional failures the fact that villages are far from regional economic centers, there is a limited infrastructure, cost of living is high, the labor pool is small, capital for development is almost impossible to get, local markets are small, transportation is costly and private sector opportunities are supremely scarce.

So, what can we do? First, local people must decide for themselves what they want to do. There must be total acceptance of the fact that answers cannot be imported through outside consultants or simply with government dollars. We must accept full responsibility for our future and understand that we have the answers – we need to work on the process. The first step in this process is to audit all our strengths and weaknesses as realistically as possible. Programs must be based on, first, our cultural strengths. If a community starts a project based on something where we are culturally or economically weak, the project will probably fail.

The fur industry is an example of where there are cultural and economic strengths. It is based on a lifestyle we are familiar with, and where knowledge for success is passed down from generation to generation. It is based on a renewable resource in our backyard which does not destroy the environment. This is why it is one of the few things which actually work in rural Alaska.

It is important to understand this simple but seldom used principle. On coasts, fishing and marine transportation is a major economic activity. In the midwest, they grow crops. In the west they grow cattle. They work because it is compatible with available resources, climate and lifestyles. In Alaska, one of the very few practical economic activities for villages is trapping.

According to the Department of Fish and Game, there are between 4 000 and 7 000 active trappers in Alaska who sell commercially between five and ten million dollars worth of raw pelts annually. Of course, their estimates are based upon sealing tags placed upon beaver, lynx, river otter, wolf and wolverine, and the return of fur buyer forms and fur export slips. These do not include unmarked pelts or those used in local production of other goods. This undocumented component of Alaska's fur industry is probably as significant as what is documented. More than 50 percent and sometimes up to 80 percent of raw pelts are taken by people who live north of the Alaska range and south of the Brooks range between the Canadian border and the Bering Sea coast.

During the 1989-90 season, over 30 000 marten were harvested and sold for an average price of \$80 a pelt. This market alone brought in over 2 million dollars into local economies considered the most economically distressed in Alaska. Cash from trapping comes during the winter when cash alternatives are virtually non-existent.

Most of Alaska's wild fur pelts leave Alaska and enter a world market where they compete with rancher fur. There are a very few auction houses around the world. However, these facilities serve as the major recipient of the raw fur and the almost exclusive distributor to the brokers of garment manufacturers. It should be noted that, at its peak, wild fur represented only 5 - 10 percent of a market glutted with rancher fur.

Auction houses are controlled by 4 or 5 buyers who purchase furs for all fur garment retailers who sell to individual consumers. Mink and fox are the most desired products. Most fur products in the world are sold to Japan. People in the U.S. are the second highest consumers, West Germany or Switzerland is third. From markets as far away as the Scandinavian countries and Europe, consumers have come to favor the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta mink because of its unique and uniform color and quality. However, the land otter of Alaska's coastal areas, Southeast and Kodiak are also greatly desired as are the mink, marten and lynx of the Yukon Flats region.

In short, trapping is an important and one of the few variable economic activities in rural Alaska and indeed, across the north. This activity is directly threatened by the "animal first" activists who are playing on the emotions of the world's urban public. It is a dangerous movement not only for people who depend on animals but for everyone. These groups apply moral principles out of ignorance and the results are disastrous.

A classic example of this is what happened to the Pribilof Aleuts - a story which many of you are familiar with. Pribilof Aleuts were employed by the U.S. Government to harvest northern fur seals. This harvest was conducted under the auspices of an international treaty signed in 1911 between Japan, Canada, the USSR and the United States. The treaty re-



*Flensing a seal. The photo is taken from Greenland.
(Photo: Søren Førchhammer).*

quired multinational scientific research and cooperative management, which results in bringing the northern fur seal from near extinction to a sustainable level of productivity.

Beginning in 1969, a coalition of "animal first" groups marshalled an unparalleled anti-sealing public relations campaign in the U.S., Canada and Europe which linked the Canadian harp seal hunt and the U.S. fur seal harvest, resulting in termination of both.

I call these groups "animal first groups" and some call them "humaniac" because, despite their rhetoric which claim they care about aboriginal peoples, it is clear that animals come first. By making humans second in their misapplication of moral principles, brutality to people results.

In the Pribilofs, for example, the U.S. Government declared that it would withdraw from the Pribilofs and Congress would not renew the international treaty, even when the Aleuts, the World Wildlife Fund and the National Audubon Society, and all marine scientists from four nations urged its continuance with an amendment to eliminate the harvest.

Since the managed harvest was the only economic base in the Pribilofs, when the U.S. Government pulled out, it eliminated 80 percent of the wage base and all government subsidies at a time of great economic uncertainty. Cost of living skyrocketed. The toll, in human terms, was great indeed. Community anxiety was extreme, causing things we never experienced before – 4 suicides, over 100 documented suicide attempts in a village of 590 people, dramatic increase in domestic violence and alcohol abuse all within a year's period of time.

During the traumatic period, these groups launched an unprecedented propaganda campaign which labeled our people brutal, bloodthirsty, greedy killers of animals in massive mail-outs and full page ads in national and international newspapers. We received hate mail from all over the world. Sick people who sent us death threats and expressions of hope that all Aleuts would die of some terrible disease. Mattel Toy Company manufactured a human-like seal doll called Snuggles. For every Snuggles doll purchased, a dollar went to the Save the Seal Fund. A feature length movie called a golden seal was produced which portrayed a young Aleut as a greedy, selfish individual bent on killing this golden seal for a large cash reward. The two hour movies used a common tactic of Animal First groups – that of anthropomorphism. A young white child befriended the golden seal and they communicated by thought. Anthropomorphism is giving human-like characteristics to animals. Animal First groups use this tactic in order to get people to relate to the animal so that they felt pity, guilt, or some other emotion. This film can be found in just about any video store in North America.

To add to these severe injuries, these groups fought against our need for seal for food. We had to argue with Senate staffers who wanted to

know: why it was necessary to take seal for food. Why not go to the store and buy fish, chicken, or hamburger? This year, six years after the seal harvest was stopped, Aleut leaders had to go to Washington to attend hearings brought about by political pressure of these groups to defend the take of seal for food.

The subsistence regulations include the typical language regarding waste which has always been an insult to native peoples. One would think all this was enough, but not the *animal first mentality*. Since the Pribilof economies were destroyed in one fell swoop, the Aleuts decided to pursue development of boat harbors to service the Bering Sea fishing fleet. We concluded that this is the only economic activity of great enough size to make our villages economically self sufficient. And wouldn't you know it, the Animal First Groups went to court in attempts to stop us. The goal of several of these groups was not only to eliminate the seal harvest but to make it impossible for us to survive economically on the islands so that the islands could be left to the seals.

They knew the level of human suffering they caused and they would not lift a finger to help us. In fact, some of their publicly announced responses are quite revealing. The President of the Friends of Animals couldn't imagine why anyone would want to live on "this artificial cold, cold, rock." The head of the Fund for Animals said "If they're broke, why don't they open up a gas station. These people have skills they can apply anywhere they choose to live." The founder of Greenpeace maintained that we don't belong on the islands and that we should go back to where we came from. Other groups suggested that we become Park Rangers. I can see it now – 150 heads of households as Park Rangers on an island 12 miles long and five miles wide. That would be about four rangers per square mile!

I have some advice for you here today – and I want you to take it back to your people. When these groups say they care about the Aboriginal people, remember what they did to the Aleuts. They destroyed our economic base in a very cold-blooded way. They tried to get us off our homeland. They tried to destroy our economic alternatives. They put out worldwide propaganda that demeaned our people. And none of these groups who were involved lifted a finger to help us. That includes the Humane Society of the United States, Center for Environmental Education, Fund for Animal, Friends of Animals, and International Friends of Animals – to name some of the key groups.

Some other bits of advice. These groups attacked the seal harvest despite the fact that it was scientifically managed by close cooperation of four countries. All scientists from these countries supported continuation of the treaty which allowed the harvest and were adamant that the harvest did not hurt the seal population. The Animal First groups do not care about

science and in fact, ignore it. We won the battles in Congress on the facts, but we could not win the battle of the emotions.

Today I see history repeating itself and we better wake up. The Animal First groups are attacking use of the leghold trap as causing unnecessary suffering of animals. We should find a more humane method of getting fur. I'm here to tell you that it is these exact same groups who are telling you this today, who ignored comprehensive studies by six national and international (euthanasia and veterinary) organizations which concluded that the way Aleuts killed seals was the most humane method possible. They use this issue of humaneness solely to capture the interest of the general public. Once captured, their real agenda comes out, which is to convince people that animals have rights not to suffer or die at human hands, regardless of justification. I agree that we should strive to be as humane as possible in our treatment of animals, but humaneness is a totally subjective term which can mean anything to anybody. Despite that, we should work towards more humane traps through whatever humane means but understand that when Animal First Groups call for a more humane trap, it is a trojan horse. While you work to get a more humane trap, they are out there trying to destroy all the worlds fur markets.

Despite all these things, Animal First extremists are doing, I would suggest that the greatest danger the philosophy of such groups pose is the concerted effort to separate humans, wildlife, and environment. They do not understand that in their desire to protect animals, they are destroying culture, economic and spiritual systems which have allowed humans and wildlife to be sustained over thousands of years. The western concept of protecting wildlife is only a hundred or so years old and the Animal First concept is only decades old. Theirs is based upon a belief that animals and humans are separate and they project human values unto animals. Ours is based upon the knowledge from hundreds of generations which allows us to understand that humans are part of all living things – and all living things are part of us. As such, it is spiritually possible to touch the animal spirit. In order to understand them. Our relationship with animals is incorporated into our cultural systems, language and daily lifestyles. Theirs is based upon laws and human compassion.

Because we are intricately tied to all living things, when our relationship with any part of such life is severed by force, our spiritual, economic, and cultural systems are destroyed. Deep knowledge about wildlife and environment is destroyed, knowledge which western science will *never* replace. We know that western and human compassion for life alone cannot sustain the earth and all her creatures. It needs our contribution if human beings as a species hopes to survive.

I leave you with this last thought – we have an obligation to teach the

world what we know about the proper relationship between humans and other living things.

If we have any bitterness or hatred towards any group or individual who may intentionally or unintentionally try to hurt us, we will not be able to teach. Our people have always known that such teaching takes love. Our elders also teach us that bitterness and hatred destroy our souls. If we destroy our souls, we contribute to destruction of our own people. We cannot dwell on the last injustices because we need to provide answers, not tears.

I strongly advise all native groups and concerned non-native to unite to pool resources to help educate the public. Unless we act to do so, we can count on more and more people following the Animal First Movement Ethics, applying moral principles out of ignorance. This will have disastrous consequences.

Thank You.

Alaska

Presentation to the 6th ISI Assembly

by Vernita Cassidy

I want to thank the Steering Committee of ISI for inviting me to speak to this, the 6th ISI Assembly. I am especially gratified that the subject is *subsistence*, because of all Native issues, that one continues to carry the most significance for me. It is because of subsistence that I am who I am, in spite of where I have lived for most of my adult life.

That sentence would have to be explained just about everywhere else in the world (sometimes I feel like I *have* attempted to explain it everywhere in the world!) – but to this gathering, no explanation is needed. Even though ISI's members come from a broad spectrum of arctic climates and locations, I think the one topic that will never fail to unite us is subsistence. I have eaten caribou pommican in Old Crow and Fort McPhoroon in Canada. I have eaten dried halibut and fried whale in Sisimiut and Nuuk in Greenland. I have eaten fried moose meat and boiled goose stew in several places in Alaska. In the end, it all tastes the same: like home, and love, and serenity, and family.

But we've heard all that before. In Alaska, especially, the issue of subsistence is and will be a perennial one. I will never forget coming to work for Rural CAP as a secretary in their Subsistence Department, and eventually being asked to be Director of Subsistence. That was only six years ago, but I was politically naive. I thought, at that time, that "subsistence" was an issue that one could go out and win! Now I realize that, as long as the clock keeps moving forward instead of backward, Natives not just of Alaska, but across the Arctic, will have subsistence as a sort of cross to bear.

So let's talk about something else. Actually, after listening to our various speakers yesterday, I am dying to talk about animal rights and the anti-fur movement and the psychology of matching wits with that "other side". It is not that big a jump from subsistence to Native rights. I have come to believe, after a year on the sideline, that all the debate and all the rhetoric over who gets to hunt and fish where, is a smokescreen. The issue is this: Do Natives have the right to do what they have done for centuries, according to *their* beliefs, *their* traditions, and *their* values?

The answer wants to come out resoundingly, but when we go to meetings where Sam McDowell and Dale Bondurant and Bud Burris and Wayne Anthony Ross are waving their arms and yelling about "equal

access" and "common use" and the constitution and ANILCA – why, I tend to answer the question with a silent little baby "yes..." – and not out loud.

At least, however, when we hear the Alaska Outdoor Council say it in their bombastic, self-righteous and indignant tones, we can recognize the stances they are taking. We know they feel that Natives have no rights – even when they get all statesmanlike and try to say that they don't want to "take" subsistence away from us, no, they just want to "share" it with us.

Yesterday I heard some assumptions about Native rights being made – and they were made in quite a different way than the AOC puts things. These assumptions were charmingly put, even eloquently presented, they were made in a *reasonable and sane* – sounding manner. People smiled at us even as they *assumed* that Natives *do not* have the right anymore to do what they have done for centuries, according to Native beliefs, Native values.

Let me put this question before this assembly, not to be answered now, but to be thought about for a long time: "Do animal rights matter to Native people?" That is for native people to answer for themselves, not for non-Natives to decide or assume.

Now let me put another question forward, this time to our non Non-Native: "Do Native rights take precedence over animal rights?" and if they do not, at what point exactly do the animals come out ahead?"

You see, whenever I hear the issue of animal rights being discussed at ISI assemblies, I look around at our elders and at some crucial point, the speakers who are letting them know what the animal rights groups are doing – well, they LOSE the elders. And I think I know why. When our mothers and grandparents were busy butchering a walrus or seal or caribou, the last thing they ever had in their mind was, "Oh I wonder if this poor thing suffered when I shot it?"

Subsistence is killing. I haven't strayed from our panel topic at all! If Native people want to continue to subsist and survive in the Arctic, they will continue to kill and eat animal. If they shoot and miss (and not one but Superman hits the moose every singel time) then sometimes they will *maim* an animal. *There is no trap* that will satisfy Mr. Muntingh or Ms. Vinet one hundred percent. And there is no trapper who could survive keeping a one hundred percent watch on each and every trap to avoid the pain and suffering of the wolves, beavers, otters, minks, lynx, wolverine, marten, foxes, all the beautiful creatures. And damn few trappers can survive without subsistence and in the Yukon – Kuskokwin Delta on the Yukon Flats, in many villages there can be no subsistence without the supplemental income that trapping provides.

So I would urge you to ponder the two questions I have put forward. I

know the other panel members will bring you all up to date on the latest debate over subsistence in the legislature and what may be upcoming in Congress on ANILCA and how that may effect our ability to subsist and be legal at the same time. That's good. You need to know that.

But some time, Native people are also going to have to make up their individual minds as to what place subsistence will have in their lives, and how far will they go outside the law to keep subsistence a part of their lives and whether subsistence is worth overcoming bland assumptions made by bland bureaucrats. I want to conclude by saying that, at least for my immediate family (my parents are champion subsisters) the idea of sharing resources to the point where there *are no more*, is unacceptable. To live without dried humpback, king salmon strips, moose and caribou stewed or roasted or dried, and the berries and the seal oil and the *muktuk* – is unacceptable. I believe the majority of the people in this room share that feeling.

That being the case, I believe the time is rapidly approaching when Native people must simply *assert* our values in the same way that the encroaching society has done: that is, do what you want and do it first – and leave it to them to challenge and question your rights in the matter. Set the right precedents for the future. Establish your rights. *Take* stewardship of the land and its resources. You will be challenged – but you will start out with an edge.

Argentina

The indigenous land question in the Province of Buenos Aires

By Jorge H.Fava

Introduction

The question of land is a priority for indigenous Argentineans because it is directly related to their future as an ethnic group. The situation is such that the struggle for the recuperation of their ecological space has become vitally important and its success or failure is irremediably linked with their existence or complete eradication from the national ethnic map.

A large part of the indigenous population was, and in many cases still is, organised socio-economically into peasant communities. These comprise "...the ownership of a territory which its members use in an individual and collective form, based upon family units and social and political organisation based in relations of kinship, inheritance, reciprocity and mutual help..." (1).

For the indigenous peoples, the loss of their ancestral lands means their near-destruction as peoples, due to the particular conception and relation of the Indian with the land. In the tribal vision of the universe, land represents a cultural space in which myths, rites, history and a special integration transcend its mere productive utility (2). Therefore, Indians today see their future and their children's future committed to an effective and definitive recuperation of their communal territories.

In the Province of Buenos Aires, there are still descendants, a few survivors of the ancient *Mapuche* peoples who live in nuclear families without any organisation, or as isolated individuals. Some of them are phenotypically pure, but the majority are interbred and all are acculturated. They live in urban areas and/or rural parts. Such is the situation of the descendants of the chiefs of the *Pincén* people (the *Pincenes* and the *Nahuelpan*) in the Campo de la Cruz Alta, Junín (3); descendants of *Melinao* in Barrancosa, Bragado; of the *Rondeau* in 25 de Mayo; of the Cacique Catriel in the Azul area and in Pincén in Trenque Lauquén.

The situation is somewhat different for the descendants of Cacique Ignacio Coliqueo in General Viamonte (Los Toldos) whose community has a degree of organisation as well as being numerically in the majority. The 540 families from Los Toldos number approximately 2 500 inhabi-

tants (4), comprising 14.7 per cent of the total population of that area which numbers 16 971 people according to the 1980 National Population Census (5).

Of these communities (some of which are limited to only a few groups of families) in the Province of Buenos Aires, we will look in particular at the question of the lands of General Viamonte, 25 de Mayo and Trenque Lauquén, given that some traditional land still exists there and that there are plans to recover it.

The land question in General Viamonte

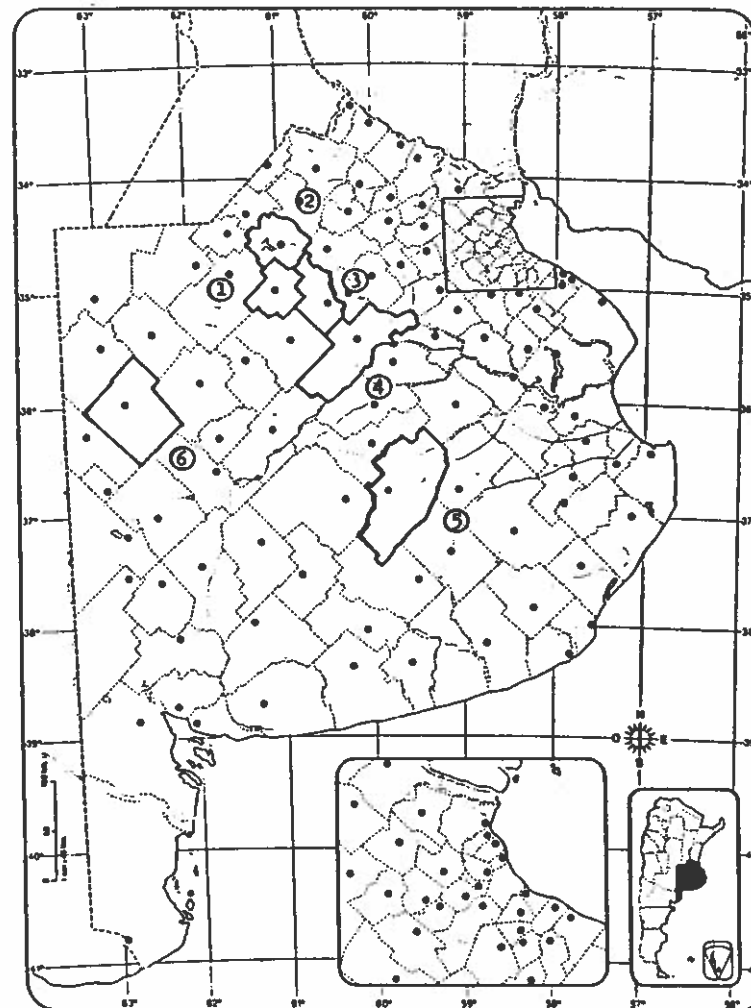
After repeated petitions by Cacique Ignacio Coliqueo in 1866, the government of General Mites, governor of the Province of Adolfo Alsina, granted 10 000 hectares of land through law No. 747, and then in 1968 (law No. 552) 6 000 hectares more, with the proviso that it could not be sold for ten years and only then with authorisation from the government (6). Today, some 121 years later (four generations), we find that only 30 per cent of the original 16 000 hectares is in the hands of direct descendants of the indigenous people. Furthermore, regarding its economic use for agriculture and cattle herding, there is not enough land for the establishment of small farms *minifundios*. The increase in size of the original family one hundred years ago and its subdivisions through inheritance have reduced the size of the plots to areas which produce below the level of subsistence.

Map showing the location of indigenous descendants of the Mapuche people in the Province of Buenos Aires by Provincial Areas (Partidos Provinciales) (Jorge H. Fava, 1988).

1. General Viamonte: Los Toldos. Aboriginal community 'Ignacio Coliqueo'. Descendants of this ancient Chilean Cacique are members of the only indigenous community with a certain measure of organisation in the Province.
2. Junin: Campo de la Cruz Alta. Descendants of the chiefs of the Pincén tribe (of the Pincenes and Nahuelpan)*.
3. Bragado: Olascoaga (La Barrancosa). Descendants of Cacique Melinao.*
4. 25 de Mayo: Descendants of Cacique Rondeau.*
5. Azul: Descendants of Cacique Catriel.*
6. Trenque Lauquén: Descendants of Cacique Pincén.

**) Isolated family units without any organisation. Source: Dr. Haroldo Coliqueo, pers. comm. 1986. Padre Meinrado Hux, letter of the 24/10/88 and communication of the 19/4/89.*

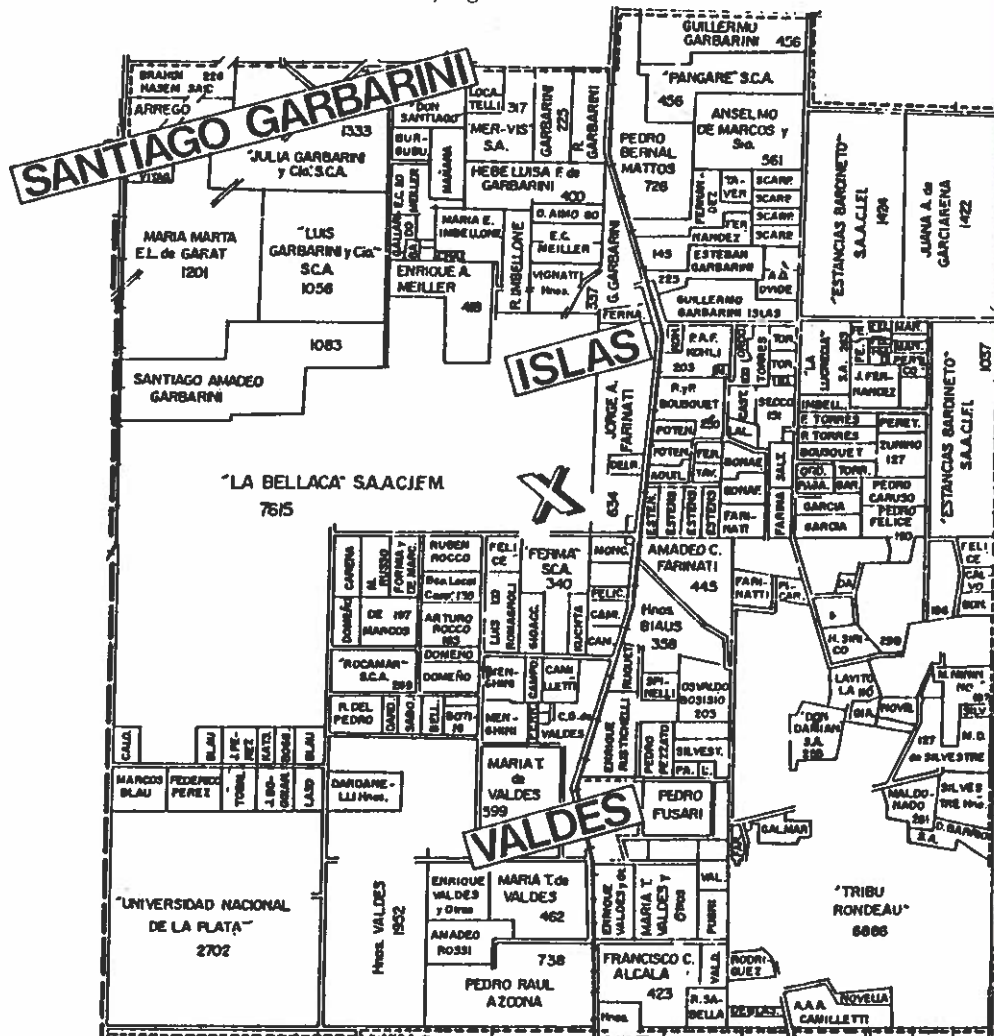
In terms of their ecology, these lands in the Northwest of the Province, are considered to be 70 to 80 per cent suitable for agricultural use and cattle herding. The tenure of these lands, the right of eminent domain, is an unsolved problem in that while the indigenous people occupy the land, only 50 per cent of them have land titles for them. Inconclusive successions and spurious management of land titles by unscrupulous professionals have led to the loss of some of them. However, since 1978, in accordance with law No. 9.231, property titles were granted and this continued in



could create employment and wealth, and also could decrease the rate of emigration of young people and provide new horizons for the future.

The land question in 25 de Mayo

Known locally as the "tribal camp" the 6 886 hectares which comprise "Rondeau Tribe" is still populated by descendants of the above-mentioned Buenos Aires Cacique. The plots are located on fiscal lands which are poor for agriculture and cattle production. Furthermore, a large part of the small farms contain low-lying marshlands covered in rushes.



White penetration onto lands belonging to the indigenous community can be seen by simply looking at the map showing the location of Indian plots.

The migration of young people to urban centres in search of work means that the present "tribal" (9) population is made up of predominantly old people who live precariously in houses and huts scattered throughout the countryside.

The land question in Trenque Lauquén

The "Comunidad Indígena Cacique Pincén" situated in this area is an association presided over by Sr. Lorenzo Cejas Pincén. In 1988 he petitioned the municipal authorities to grant land to the families of the community. Once the legal procedure was completed, Decree No. 88 of October 1988 granted them free use for one year of 200 hectares of municipal land of which 80 per cent was under water and only 20 hectares were fit for the kind of exploitation traditional to the area, that is, cattle raising.

We quote:

The Honorable Deliberating Council of Trenque Lauquén grants and sanctions with the force of law: Decree:

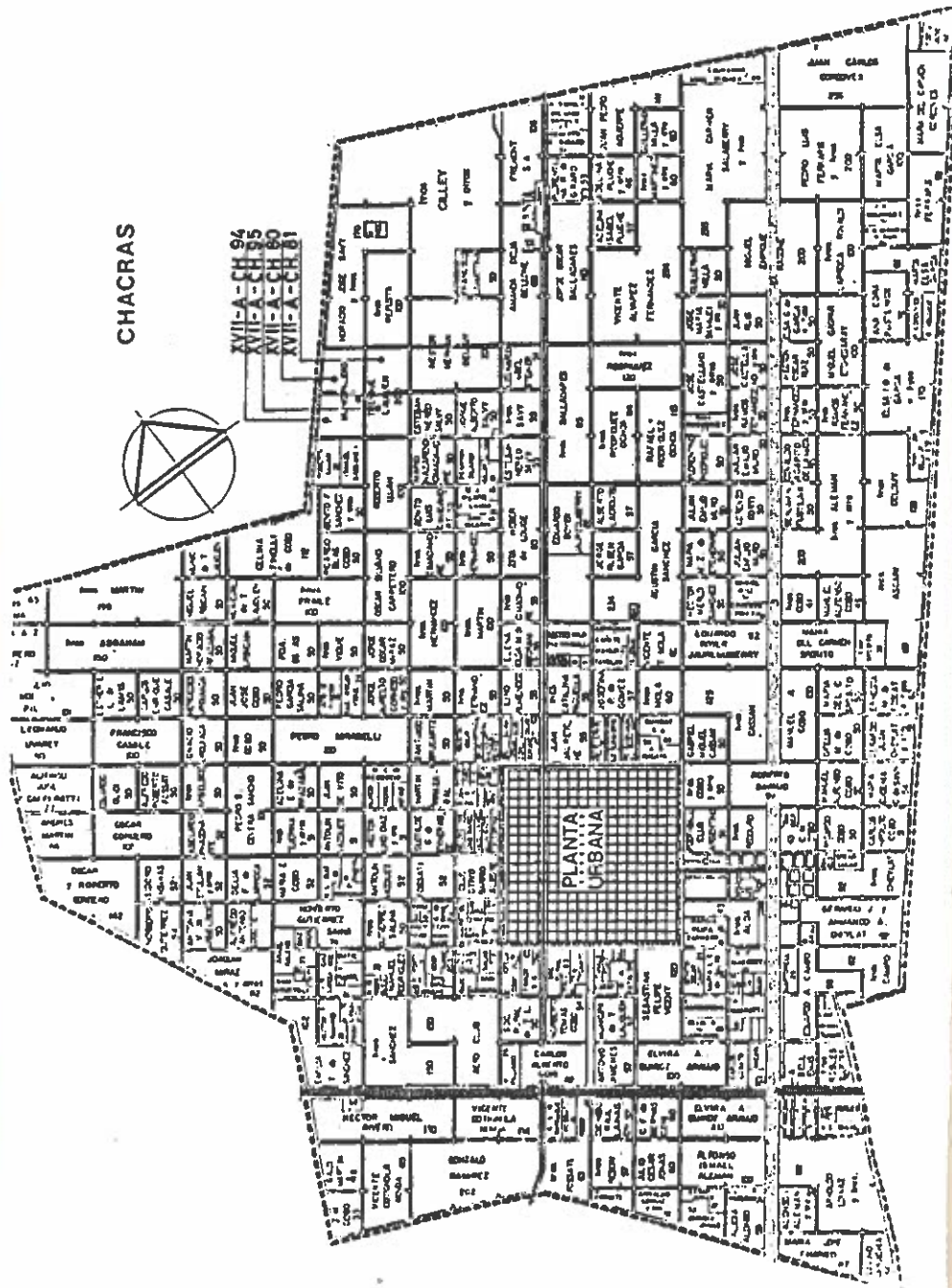
Article 1. Authorising the Free Concession for the period of one (1) year to the Indigenous Community of "Cacique Pincén" of Trenque Lauquén, the real estate pertaining to the Municipality, designated and registered as Subdivision XVII, Section A, Plots 80, 81, 94 and 95, being underwritten in the respective Contract with the period Clauses.

Article 2. In accordance (Decree No. 88).

Three families moved onto this land and carried out intensive exploitation of fish, pigs and tile making, etc.

The case of Trenque Lauquén is symptomatic of the indigenous struggle for the recuperation of land, but it is quantitatively and qualitatively insufficient as an "act of reversion by the descendants of those who lived on and defended these lands...", to quote from the text of the *Considerations of Municipal Decree No. 88*.

Map of the Property Rights Boundary X of the Buenos Aires area of the 25 de Mayo where lands belonging to the 'Rondeau Tribe' are shown in the bottom right corner (Mapa Rural).



Location of the municipal plots (200 hectares) in the Property Rights Boundary XVII, Section A of the Trenque Lauquén Rural Map (Mapa Rural).



Details of the plots granted by the municipality to the indigenous community 'Cacique Pincén' of Trenque Lauquén.

Final considerations

The phenomenon of urban migration, especially the migration of youth as we have seen, is a response to different factors such as the disintegration of tribal identity through continual forces of acculturation, promoted by imposed economic, educational and religious contacts etc., and the ethnocidal/acculturation influence of social means of communication, especially the radio (10). But, without a doubt, the loss of communal lands fundamental for this type of agrarian settlement or the possession of insufficient lands (too small to survive from) constitutes one, if not the principal, motive for the disintegration; it throws the members of the indigenous community off their lands towards the urban centres like a centrifugal force. The people then come together again on the periphery of the cities in a process of forced *suburbanisation* in the "deprived areas" where a new socio-cultural code is born characterised by marginality and material poverty. The communal migrants who have been alienated from, or lost, their lands for the reasons we have discussed have concentrated themselves in the district of Los Eucaliptos in Los Toldos.

As Isabel Hernández says:

While the analysis of the specific situation of economic over-exploitation of the indigenous people is determined by the phenomenon of ethnic discrimination, which affects many other aspect of indigenous life, it is expressed first and foremost in the problem of the poverty and the poor yields of Indian lands, and by the influences which have historically dragged this situation of subjugation right up to the present...(11)

Today, just as in the period of the great Caciques, the theme of the now-disappeared Pampa Confederation (when Mapuche leaders organised themselves against the onslaught of colonialism), though under other conditions of domination, acquires a rigorous timeliness in a struggle which is continuing through the ages: Mapuche ñi Mapuche – Indian land for the Indian.

Notes

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3. Hux, Meinrado, 1989 *Los Toldos*, letter of 24/10/88 and personal communication of 19/4/89.
4. According to Dr. Haroldo Coliqueo, personal communication, 1986.
5. INDEC (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censo): 1980 Censo Nacional de Personas 1980 Ministry of National Economy, Buenos Aires.
6. Hux, Meinrado, 1972 Coliqueo, *El Indio Amigo de Los Toldos* Buenos Aires, p.98-101.
7. Newspaper, *Clarín*, Buenos Aires, 30/3/89, and the weekly *Tribunal* Year XI, No. 283, Los Toldos, Tuesday 21st March 1989.
8. Published in the *Boletín Oficial*, 12/11/85.
9. A term in general use in the province of Buenos Aires and still used today for settlements of indigenous descendants but without any strict anthropological significance.
10. Fava, Jorge 1988 "El Impacto de los Medios de Comunicación Sobre los Grupos Etnicos Nativos. La Radio como Herramienta de la Cultura" *IWGIA Boletín* Vol 8. Nos. 3/4, pp. 71-80, Copenhagen.
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Bolivia

Indigenous continued to march towards La Paz and still receives support

The 850 indigenous from various ethnic groups in Northeast Bolivia who have already walked 500 kilometres, began today their march to La Paz where each time manifestations of support were ever wider.

The Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora, accompanied by 14 of his ministers, the President of the Chambers of Deputies and Senators, aside from other officials, travelled this Wednesday to meet the marchers in Yolosa, where they held meetings with the indigenous peoples.

After the negotiations, the marchers decided to continue their march towards La Paz, where they will continue their talks, supported by an integral Commission of Representatives of the government, the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia and its Parliamentarians.

In the meantime, the Central Bolivian Workers Organization summoned the labour unions to organize a march to receive the indigenous peoples.

The meeting will properly take place at a place called "La Cumbre" some 4 800 metres above sea level, the highest point crossed by the marchers who left the plains of Eastern Bolivia on 15 August.

During the meeting on Wednesday, the Government presented a proposal for 3 projects on official decree by the "Assembly of the Marchers".

The two proposals which practically are accepted by the indigenous, refer to the recognition of the Isibero-Secure National Park and the Territory of the *Siriono* in Ibiato, in the Northeastern regions.

Nevertheless, the third official decree announced by the President referred to the Forest of the Chimanes in the Department of Beni, the impossibility of which was raised over the fact that the government should concede such a territory in favour of the ethnics.

The problem originates from the presence of industrial loggers who are situated in the region, who without taking the legal concessions into consideration, carry out an irrational exploitation of the forest resources.

This exploitation will give rise to serious ecological problems in the region, complained indigenous leaders.

The meeting, which was extended by approximately 10 hours, ended



*An indigenous family in Sucre, Bolivia.
(Photo: Susanne Ejdesgaard Jeppesen).*

with the marchers questioning the last proposal, and their decision to continue with their march to the seat of government.

"We are seeking the recognition of the traditional authorities and indigenous organizations, as well as the restoration of our territories", said Tomas Ticuazu, Chief of the Sironio ethnic community.

The so called "March for Dignity and Territory" started 15 aug in the city of Trinidad, and up till this moment, has covered some 500 kilometres.

The indigenous issue has not yet been resolved; it has nevertheless resulted in the endowment of 170 000 hectares in the central zone of the Chimane forest, and an extension of the territory in the lower slopes of the mountainous ridge of Eva Eva, to include the region of protected hydro-graphic basins.

According to the explanation of the Indian leaders Ernesto Noe and Tomas Ticuazu, the central area of the Chimane Forests, which is inhabited by various indigenous communities is indispensable to their economic and cultural life.

Well-aware of the observations made by the indigenous, the President, Paz Zamora, proposed new zonification and changes without affecting the foresters, whose concessions have to be determined through legislation.

Many civic, popular and labour organizations announced in La Paz that they are preparing a reception of solidarity for the marchers.

The Secretary of the Central Bolivian Workers Newspaper, Ursula Goyzueta explained that the "March of Reception" will constitute a moral and material support on the part of the workers and farmers of La Paz to the people whose rights as citizens have been neglected.

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Workers and Farmers (CSUTCB) announced the mobilization of some 3 000 members in order to give a welcome to "the indigenous brothers." This will indicate "a real meeting of the cultures of the *Aymarás, Quechuas, Chimanés, Mojenos* and other ethnics groups", the labour leaders pointed out.

Sources: IPS reports, 13 September 1990.

Burma

The war of annihilation against Burma indigenous populations and the rape of their heritage forests by the military regime

by Dr E M Marta

Madame Chairman,

My deep respect to you, and on behalf of the indigenous populations I thank you for the privilege of speaking on behalf of them. I also extend our gratitude to the Human Rights Fund for Indigenous Peoples and IWGIA for the kind arrangements in bringing Burma's indigenous populations' representatives to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Madame Chairman,

In 1988, Burma came to international attention because of the massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators by the military during which 5 000 children, students, nurses and monks were shot dead in Rangoon another cities.

The massacres that took place in 1988 and known to the world were but the city versions of killings and atrocities committed by the military against the indigenous populations these past 42 years, all unknown by the world. More than half a million indigenous populations of Burma were annihilated by the soldiers in the 42- year civil war which broke out right after the country gained independence in 1948. Human rights violations and atrocities suffered by these people at the hands of the military dictator were countless.

The killings, atrocities and human rights violations against these indigenous populations continue with much more intensity today. Looting, killing, torture, rape and putting to torch the villages of the indigenous populations are the common practices of the Burmese army. Last year, thousands of people were forced to leave their villages and move to concentration camps. Many were accused as rebels or collaborators or sympathizers, and were arrested, tortured and primarily executed. Civilians, including pregnant women, children and elderly people were forced into working as porters by soldiers. They were forced to march before the soldiers in mine fields. They were ruthlessly treated by soldiers. There were numerous first-hand eyewitness accounts where these people were shot by the soldiers. More than 1 000 porters lost their lives from land mi-



Map showing frontiers of Thailand and Burma.

nes, crossfire, diseases, exhaustion and murder at the hands of the soldiers during the 1989-90 dry season offensive. An additional 1 000 were rendered handicapped for the rest of their lives. Because of these atrocities against them, more than 50 000 civilians are now taking temporary refuge in neighbouring Thailand, China and India. These people are not categorized as refugees by the UNHCR.

Burma is a country of diverse multi-ethnic composition. National chauvinism and militarization have forced most of the country's indigenous populations to resort to armed resistance movements for their national survival. All these indigenous organizations had at one time or another tried to attain their indigenous rights through peaceful means. However, they were not only ignored but severely persecuted and oppressed, leaving them with no other alternative but unwillingly to take up arms in defence. These indigenous populations still hold fast to their belief that the country's civil war and the inter-racial conflicts should be solved by peaceful political means and not in the battlefield. However, the Rangoon military regime has vowed the war of annihilation against them, rather than a negotiated settlement.

On 7 November 1988, at his speech in Pa-an, the capital of the so-called "Karen state", to the foreign military attaches and journalists, General Khin Nyunt, secretary of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, the name adopted by the Rangoon military regime declared that the military would wipe out the Karen National Union within two years. He also vowed the annihilation of the Kachin Independence Organization at another speech delivered two months later at Myitkina, the capital of "Kachin State". This vow of annihilation of the indigenous populations was repeated by many other military officers on many other occasions.

General Bo Mya, President of the Karen National Union, who also concurrently serves as Chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Burma, had on 30 November 1989 sent a letter to General Saw Maung, Chairman of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council, mentioning that the civil war should be solved politically and that it could not be solved by military means. The Chairman of the Karenni National Progressive Party wrote a similar letter as well. The Democratic Alliance of Burma which represents Buddhist monks, students, Burmese at home and abroad, as well as the national organizations, believes that the civil war should be solved by peaceful political means. At the same time, the people within Burma, including the political party which won a landslide victory in last May's general elections, have the identical view that the civil war should be solved through negotiated means and that the inter-racial conflicts solved through the building of a unified federated country. However, the military ignores the desire of the people, and is constantly stepping up the war of annihilation against indigenous populations.

We are encouraged to notice that the world at last is paying some attention on the crimes committed by the military regime against the people. But at the same time we also notice that the attention is centred mainly in urban areas, while indigenous populations' questions are still being ignored.

Madame Chairman,

We appeal to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations to also remember the question of Burma's Indigenous Populations. Without solving the problems of the indigenous populations, there can be no peace in Burma.

Madame Chairman,

Our most valuable heritage from our forefathers, our teak and other precious wood forests are in immediate danger of being destroyed forever by the military regime. When in September 1988, Burmese generals staged a pseudo-coup, and took over state power, Burma's foreign exchange reserves was less than US \$10 million. In search of fast currency, the military saw the precious forests of the indigenous populations. The heritage forests of the *Karen, Mon, Karreni and Shan* were sold to 33 Thai timber companies. The military regime has sold logging concessions to Thai companies with multiple aims and objectives. First and most important to them is to get the much-needed foreign exchange for buying arms and ammunitions for the escalation of their war of annihilation against indigenous populations; secondly, to have a system of roads built by the Thai companies which will later facilitate logistics in military operations against the indigenous populations; and thirdly, to make life difficult for the indigenous local inhabitants by destroying the forests they depend on and hide in; fourthly, to receive the assistance from Thai authorities in its war of annihilation against the indigenous; and finally, to create conflicts between Thai businessmen and ethnic nationals. In short, the military regime made logging concessions in order to facilitate its war of annihilation against the indigenous populations.

Using modern machinery and logging methods, Thai companies are raping our forests at a very dangerously fast pace. If left unchecked, our forests will be gone forever within the next five years. If our forests are gone, we the indigenous populations will also fade away along with them.

Madame Chairman,

On behalf of the indigenous *Karen, Mon, Karreni and Shan*, I appeal to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations to please help save our forests from being forever wiped out by the Rangoon military regime and Thai companies.

Madame Chairman,

Burma held its first multi-party general elections in thirty years last May. Although hundreds of opposition leaders were either in jail or under house arrest, with no right to run for office as well as no freedom to campaign, and many other restrictions, the people of Burma including some of the rank-and-file in the military, voted for the opposition party which won 396 seats out of the 485 available seats while the military-backed party won only ten. This clearly reveals the disgust of the people over the military dictatorship, and their desire for peace and democracy. However, thus far, there is no indication yet that the military regime would transfer state power to representatives elected by the people. Worse, the leaders of the National League for Democracy are still detained by the military.

The people of Burma, including the National League for Democracy which won the last elections, as well as the Democratic Alliance of Burma, have the common belief that the civil war of Burma can be ended, and it should be solved through peaceful negotiations. They also believe that a united federal union of national states is the solution to the conflicts of Burma. Only the military rejects a peaceful settlement. The country's problems can be solved if the military will give the people a chance.

Madame Chairman,

We appeal to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations to persuade the Rangoon military to immediately and unreservedly transfer the state power to representatives elected by the people at the last general elections so that indigenous populations question and the country's 42-year civil war could be settled through negotiations between the civilian government and the indigenous populations and followed by the collective reconstruction of the country.

Thank You Madame Chairman...

Dr Em Marta is the official Political Spokesman for DAB, the Democratic Alliance of Burma.

Interview with Dr Em Marta, Political Spokesman for DAB (Democratic Alliance of Burma)

By Frank Ringsted

Background

The present civil war in Burma dates back to the immediate postwar period, when the British colonial powers decided to leave Burma before any firm agreement had been made between the Burman nationalists and the ethnic, non-Burman peoples as to what was the meaning of nationalism and national unity.

Burma is a multi-ethnic country, collectively inhabited by ethnic nationals such as *Arakan, Burman, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Lahu, Mon, Naga, Pa-O, Shan, and Wa*, as well as Chinese and Indian minority groups. Of the estimated population of the country of 40 mill., 55% are Burman, 13% Karen, 11% Shan and 5% Arakan, 4% Chin, 4% Kachin 4% Mon, 3% Karenni, and 1% belongs to the other remaining ethnic groups. Historically these have all lived as different groups, in association with each other, but with their own leaders and ruling system, till the coming of the British in 1826, who after 3 wars annexed Burma in 1885-86, unifying the Mon and Burman homelands, which were put under direct rule, while indigenous peoples inhabiting the mountainous frontier area were under indirect rule, keeping racial problems at a minimum.

During British rule, the Salween Special Area, was mainly reserved as the special Karen territory where they could govern themselves. But the problem at the time was that the area was too limited, accommodating only 1.6 million Karens out of 6 mill. total population, the rest remaining intermingled with the Burmans at the eroded delta areas in the lowlands. So there was disagreement as to whether they should have a broader state, or be satisfied with a state in the Salween Special Administrative Area. Later on, in the period of Burmese nation-building, Burman nationalists would refuse to recognize the demands of a separate state by the Karen, on the grounds that the Karen were not considered a hill tribe people and no clear-cut boundaries could be made as to the extent of their homelands.

After the Second World War, the British decided to grant Burma independence. Prior to that, in 1948, 2 agreements were signed between the British and Burmese politicians: 1) the "Aung San-Attlee" and the 2)



A member of the Karen National Union with the flag of their organization, KNU, Burma. (Photo: Mikael Gravers).

“Nu-Attlee” agreement. Neither mentioned the rights of the Karen to form a special state within the union of Burma, so from the beginning the Karens objected to these two agreements in which the British in fact indicated that the cooperation of the indigenous peoples of the country was a prerequisite for Burmese independence. In 1947, Aung San who was leading the Burmese nationalist movement AFPFL (Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League) had a meeting in the northern Shan city of Panlong and signed the Panlong agreement on 12 February 1947 with the Burmese, the Chin, the Kachin, and the Shan as signatories, but not by the Karen, the Mon, the Karenni and the Arakanese. The day before the signing, more than 400 000 Karen in Rangoon demonstrated for a Karen state but the ruling party at the time refused to give them an autonomous state. With no mention of a Karen state either, this Panlong agreement was not acceptable to the Karen National Union.

The Interview

FR: Dr Marta, can you say something on the formation of the KNU and later the political organizations of the other ethnic groups in Burma?

EM: The KNU has been existing since 1921 or 1922 but at that time it was an above-ground organization, working peacefully. But in January 1949, Burmese politicians, tried to practice discrimination and create racial hatred between the Burmese and the Karen. The government started arresting our Karen leaders, looted and committed atrocities against the Karen people, until finally in 1949 the KNU had no other choice but to take up arms to protect ourselves from Burman chauvinism. From that time on we have been fighting for a federated country based on national equality.

Kawthoolei – Liberated areas in a war zone

FR: As for yourself, you joined the KNU in 1978. Could you describe your life at that period?

EM: At first, before I joined the KNU, I was working in the country as a medical doctor. I found out that there was a lot of discrimination, atrocities and human rights violations against indigenous peoples. Serving in the Karen area, I found out that the Karen people were maltreated by the military so finally I decided that I should quit serving under the Burmese military, and I joined the Karen armed resistance in 1978. At first I served as a medical doctor, and later on I found out that I should be involved more politically, and seek solutions to the problems between the army and the people, between the majority Burmans and the other ethnic groups.

When I joined the Karen armed movement in 1978, there were no hospitals, and no clinics within our liberated areas so I started building the

clinics myself, and I started training nurses and medics. For some years our situation was quite peaceful, but since 1984 things have changed because of this present Burman military offensive. We have been shifting from one place to another, to escape the atrocities committed by the Burmese army. Most of the time medicines and other medical facilities were always short in the jungle.

FR: Did the army ever attack your hospital?

EM: In fact my hospital was not attacked, because we are located on the border. But the hospitals of my staff that are deep inside Burma, they have been attacked and burned on several occasions.

FR: So you joined the KNU as a civil member, or did you join the army?

EM: I joined the KNU as an army officer, because most of our patients were wounded soldiers, as well as some civilians who suffer from the medical diseases. So when I joined the KNU, I enrolled as army personnel and I ran a military hospital all the time. On many occasions I also went to the frontlines to visit the villages in our liberated areas, and I found out that a large number of people there had never seen a doctor before in their life. In case of illness, they rely on traditional medicines or on worship of spirits to cure them. I tried my best at the time, and I also trained many staff for basic medicines to take care of the villagers who live in constant fear of being invaded and persecuted by Burman soldiers.

So life I would say, has been quite interesting all those years, and also very sad. Although the war is progressing a lot, of my own people the Karen – some born and grew up during the civil war – have never known aspirins or vitamins, or had had any medical treatment in their lives.

FR: Have you received some help from the French group, *Mediciens Sans Frontiers*?

EM: Yes, but unfortunately the MSF team is only helping the Karen refugees who cross the border into Thailand, and who stay at some refugee centers. These are displaced people who cross the border and seek temporary refuge and shelter in some refugee camps inside Thailand and receive medical care from the MSF but the majority of the Karen displaced inside Burma have nobody to care for them or give them medical service except us, the KNU.

The Military Offensive

FR: When you speak about a war of annihilation, what is the declared aim of the Burmese army?

EM: We at the KNU consider the conflict between the military, or between the Burman majority and us, as a political conflict so it should be solved politically by means of talking and discussions and give-and-take at the tables. But on many occasions the Burmese generals and the Burmese co-

lonels have said that they will never negotiate with the ethnic Karen. They are going to destroy us, and that's what they are doing now.

In this Burmese army war of annihilation against the Karen, they are using this campaign they call "the four cuts" which means the cutting of the communications between the people and the Karen armed movement, cutting of our economy, cutting of our foods, and the last thing is cutting off our heads.

The first one, in cutting off the relations between the public, or our Karen people and us, what they are doing is that whenever they come to a village, they commit lots of atrocities against the villagers, this is their strategy. They may burn the villages, or they may loot property, they may destroy the paddy fields, their orchards, and they may even molest the women, and kill some of them as well.

FR: During the dry season this year, the Burmese launched a major military offensive against the Karen positions on the Thai-Burmese border, and was able to take parts of the border for the first time in the 42 year-history of the civil war. What is the recent military situation of the Karen?

EM: The KNU has a military wing, known as the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and we have some 12 000 armed personnel compared to the 200 000 armed personnel of the army. Recently the Burmese launched a military offensive against our area, the first since 1984. As the military generals of Burma, they are of a large number and are well equipped with lots of arms and ammunition, while we have had some military setbacks in our territory, following the dry season offensive from December to April this year. More than six of our bases on the borders have been overrun by the Burmese, which means that presently, we have only five bases remaining on the Thai-Burmese border.

One very alarming thing also, is that the Burmese army has started using the helicopters and light planes intended for the eradication of opium further north, against our areas. Before the 1988 popular uprising in Burma, U.S. aid on drugs eradication has been supplied to Burma at 4 mill US\$ yearly in the form of Bell helicopters and other necessities for this light plane used in spraying opium fields. But what we found out is that these helicopters and light planes, instead of being used farther north, are being used down south in the Karen areas to transport arms, ammunition and all the wounded too. So in fact these helicopters and planes supplied by the Americans for the purpose of narcotics eradication are being used against the Karen people in this civil war.

Refugees

FR: So what has happened to the civil population living in the areas where you have lost your bases? There must have been an enormous influx of re-

fugees following the dry season offensive this year. Can you manage to re-settle them in other areas?

EM: These people – people in surrounding villages – they suffer heavily because of increased military activity by the Burmese army who drive the whole village to either move into concentration camps where they will be fenced in by bamboo, and all their movements restricted, or they have to escape for their life, because the Burmese army will be shooting, killing, looting and raping women when they come to the villages. Scared of these atrocities, thousands of civilians are trying to escape the army, and a large number have managed to cross the border, where there are now some 30 000 Karen who have sought temporary refuge inside Thailand. In addition, there are also some Mon, Karenni and students, so altogether the total number of Burmese refugees inside Thailand are around 40 000. Unfortunately these people are not entitled to receive assistance from UNHCR as they are not given the status of refugees but as temporarily displaced persons by the Thai authorities.

FR: Hundreds of villages will now remain unprotected by your KNU forces, some of them suspected of supporting your organization. What will happen to them? The Burmese army has not been able to drive away all the villagers, have they?

EM: Yes, they are doing that, there are some 30 000 refugees inside Thailand, but these are only a small portion. A large portion do not want to cross into Thailand; they are hiding in the deep jungles and high mountains, where they are living in constant fear. Whenever the Burmese army find them, they face the risk of being killed, tortured or at best they will be enrolled into forced labour to carry all the heavy weapons for the Burmese army in their march around Karen territory.

FR: The situation on the Kachin front, is it similar to that on the Karen front?

EM: I will say Yes, generally speaking, there are two major fronts, but at the same time we have to take into consideration also the Mon front, because the Mon, they have lost their headquarters in March also, the Three Pagoda Pass. The Mon are living in the same lands as the Karens, and most of the time we are operating in the same area.

FR: Among the Mon at the Three Pagoda Pass, there was a large number of student refugees, what has happened to them?

EM: Most of the students have moved to the Karen area, to Marneplaw, the headquarters of the KNU, where the dissident students now also have their headquarters.

FR: Last year, after heavy international pressure, Thailand stopped repatriating Burmese student refugees. Have they kept that promise?

EM: There are now some 300 students in the Thai immigration prison, where they have to serve three months. After this, what the immigration

officials usually do is send all these “illegal entrances” as they call the students, to the border and then send them back into Burma.

FR: In 1990?

EM: That is in 1990, and in fact recently, in June, when the Thais arrested more than a thousand people of illegal entry at Mae Sot, one of the cities at the border between Burma and Thailand, they sent these people to the Burmese authorities.

FR: Do you know what happened to them there?

EM: When they got back to Burma, some of them were put in jail and some of them were interrogated, and some of them in fact escaped back into Thailand. But there was a sad story that among the thousand, there were four Karen ladies raped by Burmese soldiers.

FR: We have also received reports that the Thai authorities have closed Karen refugee camps on the Thai side of the border to new arrivals, and that they have prohibited Karen people from crossing the border, stopping them, – is that correct?

EM: Actually no, that is not correct; because for humanitarian reasons, if there is some heavy fighting, and civilians cross into Thailand, the Thais will still close their eyes.

Model Villages

FR: So maybe we should return to the military situation a little. You have mentioned the controlled model villages, concentration camps, cluster villages, whatever they are called. Maybe you could say something more about that.

EM: In order to control the village populations, the army before destroying and burning down villages, will demarcate some area, a big village, which will be far from the Karen armed movements, and then they will order all the villagers to move to these specific concentration camps. There they will order them to fence the villages, the concentration camps, with bamboo. From now on, the villagers are told to go out from the village to their fields and then to be back before sunset, and when they go back they are not allowed to carry rice to eat for more than one day. So their old villages having been destroyed, they have to move to these concentration camps. This is the method that has been used by the military for these past ten years on the civilians, to cut off the connections between us and them.

FR: So the people are living at gunpoint every time of the night?

EM: Yes, because the first thing they will do, is that there will be a Burmese army camp there for a time, and during that time they will train some of the people, some of the lackeys, to take over the guarding of the village. After that, they will then leave, and build another place like that. By these means, I will say, they are quite successful in isolating us from the villages

but at the same time the villagers suffer heavily.

FR: What is the word used for these paramilitary forces?

EM: Peoples Militia.

FR: Speaking about these militias, what are the motivations for those people to join the militia?

EM: Well, in every organization, in every village, there are people who want to be popular, want to be heroes, want to carry arms. So, in a village, if there are two or three such people, they will be enough, because they have the guns, and other people don't have it. It is not difficult for the Burmese to find such people.

FR: They don't have to pay them in any kind?

EM: They don't have to pay them, they are all volunteers.

FR: Are there other reasons for their participation?

EM: Well, I don't know, people have different characters, some of them we arrested said “we are forced by the army to do this, you are far away, you cannot protect us, so we are forced by them, either we take it, this duty, or if we don't take it, they are going to cause us trouble, so we have to obey them.” That's the reason they give us.

FR: Is this true?

EM: In some cases, I believe it is true.

FR: Do they serve also as informants, spying on the village populations?

EM: Yes, one of their main jobs is to do this, to report to the army about the village activities.

FR: So you wouldn't have a situation where there is a military camp at every village?

EM: Yes, the situation is, that the civilian population has either to settle in these concentration camps under strict restrictions, or they cross the border to seek temporary refuge inside Thailand, or hide in the deep jungles.

FR: Are these “peoples militias” of trained civilians used in military actions against the Karens?

EM: Actually these people, they are used as guides most of the time, but their main duty is to guard the people, in their own words, to “guard the people against the insurgents”. But in fact they are guarding these people not to go out of the villages or concentration camps. Beside that, they are also responsible for gathering forced labour for the army whenever they come for the military campaign against us.

Forced Labour

FR: Maybe you should proceed, talking more about the forced labour then, as this has been very well documented by Amnesty International, who in their 1988 report on extrajudicial execution and torture of members of ethnic minorities concluded that “So numerous and similar are the

accounts of human rights violations given by the refugees that in A I's view they show a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights." You have described this kind of disposal of suspected political opponents, as "mobile death camps in hidden jungle areas"?

EM: In Burma this forced labour has been going on for 42 years now or since the civil war began. Whenever the Burmese army enters a village in the area of the guerilla movement, what they routinely do is to loot property and burn down the village. At first, they seize strong male villagers enrolling these civilians as porters for the army. Most of the time these porters are driven at gunpoint in front of the advancing Burmese army, so that they can act as some sort of human minesweepers. On many occasions, these civilians have stepped on the landmines of the guerillas, and have been killed, so that the military, by these means can detect where the landmines are laid.

Besides this, the army sometimes use torture against the porters. When they get sick, and are too weak to go on, the army would say that these people, they are only lazy, and pretending to be sick. Some of them have been killed, also according to some of the porters that have managed to escape to our side.

This has been happening since the early parts of the civil war. Later, the male population of the villages knew that if they stayed in the village when the Burmese soldiers came, they would be taken away as forced labourers. So whenever they got the news that the army was coming, they would hide or escape, leaving only women and old men in the villages. So what happened later was that since the Burmese army could not get the men, they would use the women as forced labourers instead and these women are facing the same fates as the men before them.

So finally, nowadays, when villagers hear that the Burmese army is arriving, the whole village will just disappear, hiding in the forests. Recently, what the army has started to do instead is to round up people in the cities; when the cinema hall finishes, they will then detain these people and send them to the jungle as forced labourers in the army attacks on the indigenous resistance movements. Among these people who are not used to the jungle life, many have died. In fact this summer, when the army came to fight the Karen guerilla bases, some 1 000 forced labourers came with them. Many of them have been killed, and their bodies thrown into the river. Some of them managed to escape death, and came over to our side and brought with them very horrible stories, how they saw with their own eyes their friends being left in the mountains or killed by the soldiers. So such things have been happening, and is still happening; in fact, nowadays it is even escalating.

FR: How many, how big a proportion will return alive?

EM: Well, we will never have exact or correct lists on this, but it also depends where these people, are being sent. If they are sent into the battle-

fields, I will say that, well, maybe as much as 25 percent will be killed, and another fifty percent who are being sent back, will escape to us, and another 25 percent can return to their villages.

The Teak War

FR: Recently, the Burmese military have included the logging business in their military strategies, to ensure the amount of money needed for a continuation of the civil war, and to ensure the support of Thai logging companies, with whose aid, timber roads have been constructed deep into Karen territory. Could you describe this phase of the civil war known as the "Teak War" of Burma?

EM: First and foremost I want to mention here that our most precious rainforests are in immediate danger of being wiped out. In 1988 when the present military generals staged a pseudo-coup, the state of Burma was in great need of money; at that time the foreign reserve funds was something a little less than 10 mill. US \$, a small amount of money for a country to survive. At the same, the military generals wanted to escalate the war of annihilation against the ethnic peoples, especially the Karen. So, in search of easy money, quick money, fast money, they became aware that the forests would be the best source of income; Burmese teak is very popular in the world today. Besides that, they know that if they cut down and destroy our Karen teak forests, then we will lose our sanctuaries and the Karen resistance will have no hiding place. Even more, they know that if some foreign companies are going to operate inside this teak forest, they will have to construct roads, and these roads today are being used by the Burmese army.

So, when they came to power in 1988, the military generals found this forest at the same time that Thailand had banned all logging inside Thailand because of the big flood that year. So the Thai generals went to Burma, where they agreed that the Burmese sell concession areas along the borders to the Thai timber companies. In fact they sold 43 concession areas to 33 Thai companies.

All these concession areas are in the territories of the indigenous peoples: Karen, Mon, Karenni and Shan – with 75% in the Karen territories. So, what happens now, is that these Thai business companies are pouring into Burma, bringing in their own Thai labourers with all modern machinery for logging, and they are destroying our rainforests very fast. If left unchecked, it is estimated that our rainforests will not last another five years; they will be completely raped by that time by the Thai companies in cooperation with the Burma military regime. We are very worried because if these forests go, we the indigenous inhabitants will also be losing our means of existence and of survival.

FR: So, apart from this ecologically devastating way of making quick money, and ensuring new understanding economic partners, teak logging, in the minds of the Burman military, is mostly a military strategy?

EM: I think that is what they have in mind, because once they have destroyed our forests, they believe that we could not survive anymore. That is their theory and they are doing that and in fact they have many benefits on their side, they have the money, they can carry on their war of annihilation by buying arms and ammunitions, for our forest. So I will say that the logging business, we can call it a "teak war", as it is a military strategy against us.

FR: In what way do you resist this logging? Traditionally you have had the control of all cross border trade, the KNU has even mentioned the figure of a 5 percentage-taxation of all goods passing the Thai-Burmese border, so you should have the power to control the roads?

EM: I have forgotten to mention that that was also in the past, because now that the relations between Thailand and Burma have improved, they have opened legal routes for all these trades to pass through. In fact they opened three routes between Burma and Thailand. So these goods will go through these legal routes or through the cities where the Burmese authorities tax them. So the traffic on all these, I will say the black market, to and from Burma, is almost zero now in our area.

FR: Losing the possibility of cross-border taxation, means that the KNU has lost a major source of revenue, I take it?

EM: That's right, yes.

FR: And also the valuable income from the Karen teak trade, you have had that in the past too, haven't you?

EM: Yes, in the past we operated in the forests in a very careful way, using elephants and human labour instead of bulldozers. We would extract only the very mature trees, and always in combination with reforestation. We were never exporting the logs, but were having small sawmills, exporting only the planks and the finished products. In this way, we could have our own means, not much, but enough to manage on a day-to-day basis. Also, since we used the British forestry system, with large areas of reserved forests, felling only small areas, circulating in all the areas of our Karen state, our teak forests could survive as well, without any danger of deforestation.

Since these Burmese military operations, and the agreements signed between the Burmese military generals and the Thai timber companies, our income has been cut severely.

FR: What can you do about this logging then?

EM: The problem with us here is that these past years, we have been relying too much upon the Thais, for our basic essential needs such as food, clothing, and medicines. If the Thai are going to stop all these things, stop

selling all these things to us, this will mean that our children will starve, and be without medicine.

The problem we are facing now, is that we are not having only one front, the Burmese military. If that was the case, it would be very easy for us to resist it, they would not be able to touch our forests. But we are facing problems also with Thailand and they have threatened us that unless we cooperate, or unless we allow them to bring in the teak and to work in the rainforests, they will stop all medicine, all the necessities that we are getting from Thailand. So we are in a dilemma.

Actually we are trying to protect our forests with the use of arms also, but I will admit that this is not very effective. The most effective way is for the international world to devote some attention over our problems, over the destruction of the forests, because once these forests have been destroyed, not only will the Karen suffer but also the world, because of the ecological changes we will be facing sooner or later. It is important that the world put some pressure on the Burmese as well as the Thai companies to stop this destruction of the world's remaining forests, demanding that they will not be involving themselves in this teak war, in the war of annihilation against our people. The best thing to do for the international community to help us restore democracy in Burma, and at the same time stop the civil war, is to isolate the military regime, and then deal only with the civilian government, now that the people of Burma have elected their representatives. So it is important that the Burmese military be persuaded, or be pressured so that they will hand over state power to the elected representatives as soon as possible.

The military regime of Burma is now in a very hard position economically, so if a trade embargo can be enforced by the EEC countries, from all democratic countries, then although the military regime say that they don't care, in fact deep down, they care very much. Thus, when the United States Senate unanimously passed its legislation SB822 to prohibit the importation of all products from Burma, this has been very helpful to us, and very effective also, not only to pressure the military regime, but also to help saving Burma's remaining rain forests.

The Future

FR: So, I would like to thank you for this interview, and as a final remark ask you, what you expect in the nearest future of the DAB movement?

EM: Well, the conflicts, the problems in Burma, are very complicated. But at the same time it does not mean that there are no solutions. Personally I think that if we are sincere enough, especially if the situation comes completely under the control of the second generation of this civil war, I believe that we can find a solution. To give an example: Two years ago, or three

years ago, if you mentioned the word "federation" to the majority Burman, they would turn their back. They would look upon you as a separatist, they would not want to talk to you anymore. However, most recently, after the change of events, the students that came to our area, whose friends had been killed or seized by the army, they admit that in the past, because of propoganda by the older generations, of the military, of the BSPP (the ruling Burma Socialist Program Party), they had in their mind that federation means separation, that federations will cause fragmentation of the country, so they did not want to hear about it. But now that they have been with us for almost two years, they understand what federations mean. It is also their accepted term now. More encouraging is that when I recently studied the election manifestoes of the different political parties inside most of the parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) the opposition party that won a landslide victory at the recent Burmese election in May this year, they mentioned that only some sort of federation could solve the problems of Burma. So if this can be the accepted thinking, then a federation based on equality of nationalities can be discussed among the Burmans inside the country, and the ethnic people around the country. It may take 2 years, 3 years, maybe 10 years, it does not matter. The first step is for us to sit together at a table to discuss the form of federation that we want. This will mean the end of the civil war, and people will be talking to each other as brothers and as equals on the formation of this federated union.

I hope that I am not too optimistic, but I hope and believe that if the military regime would allow the party that won the recent elections to sit at a table and talk, discuss federations with the DAB, then solutions can be found. But we still have this problem with the military regime. We are not sure yet whether they are keen enough to let the opposition parties or anybody else to discuss federations. So the only obstacle now, is the military.

Canada

Statement made before the WGIP on the Situation of the Mohawk

by Kenneth Deer

Mr. Chairman:

Food is the most vital essential to the right to life, an essential that is plentiful in the affluent country of Canada, an essential that was not lacking in the communities of Kanesatake and Kahnawake until 11 July 1990. On that date, the Mohawks of Kanesatake took a firm stand to protect their traditional lands from being developed into something as frivolous as a golf course.. This land is the means of survival for the Mohawks and their way of life.

Since 11 July 1990, food has been deprived from the communities of Kanesatake and Kahwanake in varying degrees, as a means of coercing the Mohawks to give up their stand and to submit to the government.

While the deprivation of food applied to adults and children, it is of special note that infants were being denied their formula and other essential necessities. Food that the Mohawks were able to get in had to be rationed, and malnutrition was a great concern. The food that arrived at the beginning of the confrontation had to be smuggled in by boat or by backpack through the woods. Once it was discovered that food was being brought in by motorboat, police started harassing the Mohawks in their motorboats and requested owners of *marinas* not to sell gasoline to Mohawks. Some owners stopped selling gasoline to anyone so as not to discriminate against the Mohawks.

When people came through the police barricades with food, the police would completely search the food, to the extent that they opened all boxes and stabbed meat, bread and other items to check for arms. Most times, the food that got through to the communities was inedible.

As support for the Mohawks spread across the country, food was sent from all sectors. This food was not allowed entry into the communities and sat rotting at the barricades, while people inside went hungry. The leader of one of the political parties tried to get food through, but she also was denied entry. At one time, at Kanesatake, when food shortage was at its peak, the Red Cross was finally allowed in and was only permitted to distribute sixty loaves of bread, sixty liters of milk, one crate of bananas and

one crate of oranges for eighty families. At another instance, donated food was held up, while wholesalers who wanted money for their food were allowed in, and money by that time was a scarce commodity in the communities. Food was flown in on one occasion to Kahnawake, and after that the air space above both communities was closed, so that food could no longer be flown in.

Mr. Chairman, if food was being allowed into Kanesatake and Kahnawake, as the Canadian Government claims, why was it necessary that the Mohawks' first pre-condition to begin negotiations was that there were unimpeded access to food, clothing, medical supplies, health care and other basic necessities of life to and from both communities.

The Mohawks are guaranteed their right to food under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care." Thus very basic human right to food has been violated by Canada with regard to the Mohawks.

Concerning medical care, Mr. Chairman, the medicines and other related necessities had to be smuggled into Kanesatake and Kahnawake. What is most disturbing is that ambulances were delayed at the police barricades without regard for the seriousness of patients' condition. Patients were subjected to having guns pointed at them while police searched the



IWGIA's 24-hour protest-action in front of the Canadian Ambassador's residence in Copenhagen, Denmark. (Photo: Claus Oreskov).

ambulances, which did nothing to improve the patients' condition.

Police were also strip-searching Mohawks entering Kanesatake and Kahnawake. Male police officers were bodysearching Mohawk women, and men were left standing in their undershorts, while police laughed at them. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that no one shall be subject to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, yet this was happening on a daily basis.

At the barricades, Mohawks were harassed, detained and searched. They were called "savages" and other derogatory terms in order to provoke an incident. Even the legally constituted police officers (the peace keepers instituted under the authority of the Indian Act) were held at gunpoint and were told by the Provincial Police to leave their "illegal" sidearms at home.

Due to the incidents at the barricades, Mohawks were forced to remain at home, because once you left the community you could not return. Many Mohawks have lost their jobs, due to their inability to attend work, businesses have been lost, and the overall economic picture for Kanesatake and Kahnawake is grim. These police barricades have restricted the movement of Mohawks to and from the community, so at times parents who found themselves outside the barricades could not join their children who were inside the community.

Mail was not delivered for two weeks, and has since then only been delivered sporadically. For 35 days, all deliveries of gasoline, diesel fuel and propane was stopped. On one occasion in Kanestake, life-giving water was also shut off.

Articles 13 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right of movement and the right of work. These rights have also been violated. We hope that the Mohawk delegation attending this session of the Sub-Commission shall be able to return to their territory without any repercussions for their actions.

During this period of time, all inherent dignity and respect for the Mohawks by the police have been abandoned. On 14 July 1990, the body of a three-year old infant was brought to Kahnawake for a traditional burial. The Quebec Provincial Police saw fit to open the coffin, lifted the baby out and searched the coffin, while the stricken parents and grandparents looked on. Only then were they allowed entry into Kahnawake. Even the Mohawks' dead are denied respect to dignity.

Mr. Chairman, we have signed affidavits of these incidents that we have illustrated here, and they are available for consultation by the Sub-Commission. We have further evidence that these same human rights violations are continuing despite the agreement signed on 12 August 1990 between the Federal Government and the Mohawks.

It is not right nor is it acceptable that human rights and fundamental

freedoms guaranteed by international and national laws can be suspended at the whim of the Canadian Government. Can so little respect for human rights be permitted?

In view of the above-mentioned developments, the International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs strongly urges the Sub-Commission to appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate the human rights situation at Kahnawake and Kanesatake. For we have few reasons to believe that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Mohawks will be observed now and in the future.

Kenneth Deer delivered this statement on 20 August 1990 before the Commission on Human Rights Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its 42nd session held in Geneva.

Canada

Eleven weeks that shook Canada

by Claus Oreskov

“As is the case with aboriginal nations across the country, the Mohawk of Kanesatake have been given no choice but to exercise the internationally recognised right of self-defense.” *Chief Bernard Ominayak, Lubicon Lake Indian Nation*

On 27 September, 11 weeks of armed confrontation between *Mohawks* and the Canadian army and police came to an end. That, which in the beginning had only been a mere episode in a long string of repression and emasculation of Canada's indigenous peoples, was the turning point that made visible the very same repression, and forced all the involved parties to take a position. It was a conflict that reached far beyond the Canadian frontiers, opening thereby a debate on an international level on issues that until that time were concealed under the label “internal affairs”.

In April, the Mohawks of Kanesatake in southern Quebec barricaded themselves in order to protect their traditional land against expropriation. The city council in nearby Oka had plans to extend the golf course over the Mohawks' old and sacred burial places.

On 11 July, the Quebec city police stormed the barricades with several hundred heavily armed troops. The police opened fire on a group of women who were in the process of performing a religious ceremony. This led to a shooting match between police and the armed members from the Warrior Society, who were ensconced behind the barricades. A police officer was killed and the police then encircled Kanesatake.

On 12 July, the Mohawks from the Kahnawake reservation staged a blockade of one of the main arteries leading into the city of Montreal in sympathy with their brothers in Kanesatake. There were many different negotiations between the authorities and representatives for the Mohawk, but these ran into a deadlock. On 23 August, the Canadian army unleashed the police, and the reservations were surrounded by more than 4 000 soldiers. The army brought in hundreds of armed personnel carriers, tanks, grenade launchers, machine guns, fighter jets, etc.

A huge group of white racists demonstrated just outside the barricades and prevented food and medicine from reaching those under siege. There were several instances when ambulances got delayed by both police and the white racists. For example, the white crowd stopped an ambulance



An indigenous woman clutches her child after having surrendered herself to the Canadian military, Wednesday night. (Photo: GP).

which brought a woman from the reservation who was bleeding heavily after childbirth. The ambulance was first searched for weapons, after which the woman was ordered to spread her legs so the mob could confirm that she was indeed bleeding. The racist disturbances culminated on 28 August when a convoy of 60 vehicles transporting the elderly and children, which departed Kahnawake were stoned while the police looked on passively. An old man died later at the hospital because of shock.

In the meantime, the Federal government offered to buy the contested land area and gave it back to the Mohawks. This was naturally an indirect recognition that the land belongs to the Mohawk. But at the same time, it was also a disavowal of Mohawk rights that they should be receiving their own land as a gift from the Federal Government. Neither the Federal government nor Quebec province recognizes Kanasatake as a reservation.

The Mohawks made it clear towards the Canadian authorities that the main problem was the issue of sovereignty. Like the other Indian nations in Canada, the Mohawks have never given up their sovereignty. They have worked out a program, where the sovereignty question could be settled over a period of 3 years. Further, they also expressed the wish that the Mohawk warriors would naturally be free from prosecution, if they were to lay down their arms.

These suggestions were considered by Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney as "bizarre" and on 27 August, Quebec's Prime Minister Bourassa ordered the army to move in and clear the barricades. On 29 August, the Mohawks brought down the barricades at Kahnawake together with the army, and the main road to Montreal was thereby cleared. After this, the army occupied Kahnawake with soldiers going from house to house to look for weapons. There were incidences of doors of houses being kicked in, and several people were maimed when hit by riflebutts.

On the 1st of September, the army forced its way in to Kanasatake. A small group of warriors ensconced themselves together with some women and children in a building in the area. After the army encircled the building and set up barbed wire all around, a real war of nerves began. During the night, very strong projector lights prevented the Mohawks from getting some sleep, and sometimes the supply of goods and necessities, as well as their communication with the outside world, was cut off. On 27 September, the last of the Mohawk warriors destroyed their weapons in a special ceremony. When they came out without their weapons from their hiding places, they were promptly arrested by the Canadian army, after which they were brought to Farnham Military Base for custody.

In the 11 weeks that the confrontation continued, a lot of things happened within Canada and in the outside world. First of all, a wave of declarations of sympathy came from Indians all over Canada. Likewise, in all

the federal states, a lot of road blockades were set up in sympathy for the Mohawks.

Several Indian nations declared that an attack on the Mohawks will be regarded as an attack on them as well, and that they will thereafter act accordingly. At some time, it looked like a civil war was about to break. But as a Mohawk warrior explained to me, it won't be a civil war since the Indian nations are not "under" Canada. He was really on to something very central to what was happening. Because at the same time that Indians all over Canada went into sympathy actions for the Mohawks, they also utilised the same occasion to call attention to their own situation. The claim towards sovereignty was to be heard all over the place. Even groups that for a long time have gone about quietly, began to talk openly about repression, neglect and racism.

More and more Indian nations wished to have the sovereignty which they have never relinquished, recognized. This is not only a Canadian phenomenon but a matter that affects all free nations. During the 11-week conflict, a number of European politicians and support groups sent letters of protest to the Canadian government over the way they have treated the Mohawks. Among these was a letter from the European Parliament and it is interesting to note that the European Parliament calls the Mohawks a nation and not as a minority, a group or something similar.

There is not a single solution with which one can solve the sovereignty problem for Canada's indigenous peoples. There are precisely many historical, ecological, economical and political variables to take into account. On the other hand, the sovereignty question is probably the problem which, when solved, will solve a host of other problems.

Chile

Analysis Document for the establishment of a communal ethnic defence strategy for Mapuche organisations

By Jaime G. Huenchuñir

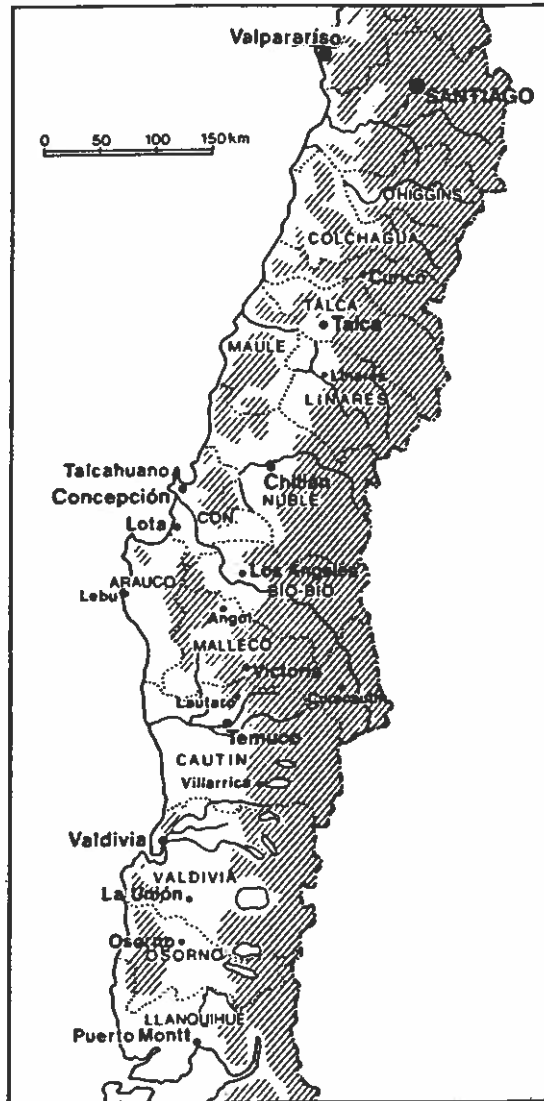
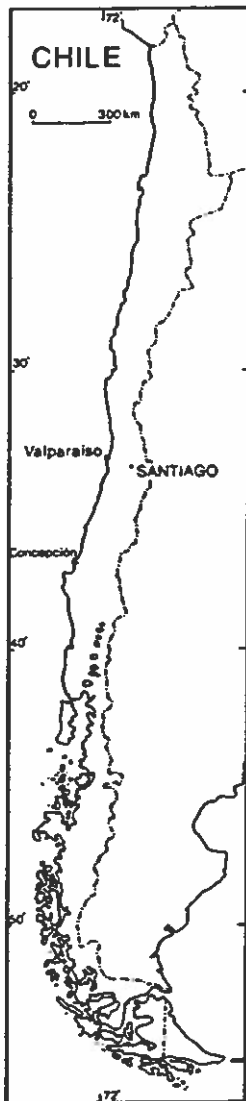
Introduction

In this paper, we will outline an ideological plan which aims to serve as a theoretical base for establishing a communal ethnic defence strategy for Mapuche organisations and which reflects to a certain extent the indigenous context of the Mapuche universe. However, we cannot do this without first looking at the work of groups or individuals whose Indian-Mapuche activities are complementary to the traditional ideologies and which are foreign to the Mapuche world. They satisfy neither the interests nor the objectives of self-direction and liberation of Mapuche society.

Criteria influencing the direction taken by Mapuche organisations

In general, all the activities carried out by groups or individuals are intended to fulfill a social, cultural or economic function. Depending on the criteria used to analyse them, they will be seen as positive or negative. If they are intended to serve the interests of the Chilean plurality, then they will be Chilean in character and on the whole, negative; if they are intended to serve the specific interests of Mapuche society so that it can conserve its ethnic character and structure and its geographic territoriality as it develops, then this is something positive. If its strategies for ethnic defence are based on an ideological stance foreign to our conception of the world, then there is no doubt that it will not meet Mapuche aspirations. In the same way, if its ethnic defence is planned in terms of integration into the Chilean plurality, this is a clear message that it is heading openly towards the extinction of Mapuche society in the short or long term.

This is logical and true if we look at the historical trajectory of Chilean legislation which defines ethnic differences in terms of subjugation and racial justice in terms of integration. But we have to ask when in the history of man's existence have the human and Christian sentiments which permit the flowering of a real ethnic social justice towards the indigenous peoples of America prevailed? Or are human rights also a privilege of the dominant



Map of Chile.

racial elites in an exaggeratedly Christian and extremely egoistical world? Is it by chance that adversaries control an ethnic society?

According to this, our great weakness is not knowing how to recognise or differentiate between our enemies and our friends because when it comes to final decision-making it is very likely that the ally we elected to the ethnic cause will become our worst enemy. This indicates that we need to understand the entire conformation of the two conflicting societies and their relation of co-existence, so that we can generate the theoretical and practical bases of ethnic defence that are needed for the establishment of a modern indigenous society supported by contemporary scientific and technological knowledge.

However, it still remains to consider all the ethnic social conflict which confronts Mapuche society, especially the young and the Mapuche leaders. They do not know the depth of the problem and the real options which would allow the continuity of Mapuche society as such. Instead, they recommend Chilean and foreign policies which are no more than alternatives aimed at integration into the global society or designed to dissociate themselves from Mapuche society.

However, though Mapuche organisations are certainly carrying out work with, on the whole, healthy intentions, we must not ignore the fact that the strategy, the actions and the ideological vocabulary employed do not accord with the interests of Mapuche society. Nevertheless, if we look objectively at the Mapuche situation we find that not all the mistakes are due just to errors of leadership. To a certain extent everyone is learning as they go along, taking up and abandoning objectives without following a principal direction and without a defined and stable platform for the struggle. This does not mean that all the errors are justified because everyone has a responsibility for the promotion of analysis and serious self-analysis with the objective of creating real theoretical tools for ethnic defence which the vast majority of Mapuche peasants and students hope for and demand. Why is Mapuche society deluded into so often becoming part of organisations which only serve the interests of foreign ideologies and are far removed from the aims of the ethnic people? Why are we encouraging agents of non-indigenous ideological policies if it costs us nothing to structure our own organisation which openly defines an Indian-Mapuche political line which does not frustrate or betray Mapuche society? Why are we insisting that the old and the familiar ways of fighting are unsatisfactory if we are, in fact, content to judge and practice the contrary and our so-called friends are more like our enemies.

Normally we criticise the methods and errors of the dominant Europeans but we ourselves act as multiplying agents for their errors and vices, which makes us more dangerous than ever because we constrict the normal historical development of our people, and in doing so can be called traitors of our own cause.

Conflict of Ambiguities

First of all it has to be said that unclear ideas constitute ambiguities which generate a lot of confusion and worry among people and lead to indeterminacy and the stagnation of their own development.

Looking at the Mapuche situation, it worries us to see the general ethnic-socio-cultural ideological confusion which stems the development of Mapuche organisations, which holds back community development and which destroys Mapuche society for the most part. In general, this confusion can be inferred at many levels of Mapuche leadership. The students, the peasants and, what is worse, the professionals are in much the same position too. In fact we are facing a conflict of worrying ambiguities. Yet the situation should alert us to profound changes being generated within the structures of Mapuche society. For example, every time the final objectives or the strategy of the struggle lack clarity, we ought to overcome these ambiguities. There is confusion every time autonomy means integration; every time Mapuche ethnicity is defended by Chilean; every time an Indian-Mapuche ideology is proposed but a Chilean ideology is chosen. All these ambiguities and contradictions lead us to suppose that we are confronting a clear act of collective irresponsibility. We all think in a very pessimistic way due to the fact that we are influenced by national public opinion which believes that Mapuche society certainly cannot overcome its present state of socio-economic and cultural poverty while it is not totally integrated into global Chilean society. Those who sustain and defend this integrationist position are simply allied to a Mapuche cause which will not benefit them. Its followers apparently defend Mapuche society but they defend positions which lead to the extinction of this society and an autonomy which is defended by their enemies.

The Origin of the Conflict of Ambiguities

We have to look for the origin of these ambiguities in the lack of analysis and self-analysis and very probably also in the deterioration of the scant ethnic consciousness which has prevented Mapuche youths and adults from finding their own development strategy. Parallel to this situation is a prolonged crisis of thinkers which hinders the free flowering of ideas, while around about there is a whole gamut of ideologies foreign to the Mapuche world. We are pushed into accepting some of these ideas in exchange for improved social status or simply for a respectable position in the leadership of a political party with interests alien to our own. And so we forget the interests of our ethnic society, which is our cause, and at the same time forget our cultural differentiation, which is our motive for the struggle.

These assertions rest on the basis that the Mapuche leadership is per-

manently searching for alternatives which will satisfy demands against socio-ethnic injustice without greatly prejudicing all which provoke this injustice. It does this without changing the structure of global society and at the same time permitting the continuity of the leadership, a leadership which is always marked by unconditional support from some political party, and by a demagogy primed by comprehensive pluralism. However, neither the unconditionality nor the pluralism are free of partisan objectives and, as long as the leaders are not completely free from the principles and prejudices of Chilean society, they can never be capable of rising above them and leading the process and development of an Indian-Mapuche strategy.

There is no Indian-Mapuche strategy in practice and, on the contrary, Chileanised Mapuche practice prevails because we believe, or are mistaken in believing, confused or simply because we have rejected the indigenous option. This puts us at the mercy of global society.

Options within present Mapuche Society

Due to the speed with which current knowledge spreads, Mapuche leaders are occasionally influenced by ideologies which gravitate from outside the indigenous world and are forced into making rush decisions by different policies which are not adjusted to either the aspirations or the idiosyncracies of Mapuche society. These policies probably serve the development of other established human societies where sovereignty is guaranteed. On the other hand, Mapuche society exists in the geographical and social context of nations, though today it is struggling to establish and assure its dominion. Adopting the ideological position of the oppressor at this moment signifies that the historical stages of ideological and social development have been forgotten. Indeed these ought to excel in Mapuche society through education directed towards Mapuche youth and leaders. Moreover, the adoption of an ideological position alien to our interests signifies the denial of the right of Mapuche society to continue to be maintained in these times, a valid right which is defended by all peoples and all nations among whom the Mapuche are no exception. To renounce this ethnic principle of group and territorial rights is to reject the ideals of our historical leaders and their strategies, it is to block the path for new generations and to accept the most ruthless social conditions under which the great majority of Mapuche families in the rural communities subsist today.

In summary, we will be able to find a fitting ideological stance when we are really aware that we belong to a society which is ethnically different, with interests and a historical past distinct from the rest of Chilean society. Expounding the contrary is to continue using the ambiguities and confusion, intentional or otherwise, which has been maintained for decades in

Mapuche communities in an egoistical fashion. Under these conditions our main task is to look for political and ideological alternatives of our own supported by our interests and our culture which conform to an Indian-Mapuche conception of our ethnicity which is adequate enough to be passed on to new generations. This attitude forced us to create and choose our own political path with the aim of strengthening our ideological principles without becoming isolated from other ideological conceptions in such a way that we can guarantee commitments, alliances and conditions as a Mapuche administrative and political entity and not as a politically dependant Mapuche organisation.

We have often had to go into long explanations in order to defend our Indian-Mapuche principles because the political hatred, the lies and cheating have dug deep into the feelings of peasants. They have been used as political pawns by confused leaders who themselves are servile agents of alien causes which have eroded the principles of self-defence which every society possesses intrinsically.

Because of these experiences many Mapuche peasants have dared to say that the Mapuche leader or the Mapuche in public service is Mapuche society's worst enemy. No doubt this is sometimes true because those Mapuche leaders who are servile agents of the ideology of the oppressor have to resort to unethical subterfuge in order to achieve their purpose.

Therefore, in order to rid ourselves of the ambiguities and confusion which is annihilating our ethnic society, we can consider three real options which exist in Mapuche society at present, for deciding its destiny and outlining its decisive path:

Option No. 1

The first of these options is the integration of Mapuche society into the global Chilean society with all the accompanying disastrous effects of loss of identity and subsequent disappearance as a distinct society. This option is characterised by providing no opportunities for Mapuche society because as long as Mapuche groups live in potentially productive farming areas new integrationist laws will continue to be passed until the Mapuche are finally extinguished. Thus, what many social scientists have called "the Mapuche Problem in Chile" but which for ourselves is no other than the "the Huinca Problem in Mapu" will be removed. Consequently, every time a Mapuche leader participates and acts for the benefit of oppressor's political position he is being subject to the rules of the integration game, even though he uses the purest indigenous language.

When the final objectives of indigenous theorisation for defence are for the direct benefit of the dominators, and the total frustration of the Mapuche people, it is clear that such theorising is no more than words.

Option No. 2

A second option is the implementation of integration with shared participation in the politico-administrative life of the country in such a way that its development will generate the elements of support which permit economic and social take-off for Mapuche society.

This involves an agreement between Chileans and Mapuche with the objective of establishing the rights of the participation without obstructing the paths of progress for both peoples. The benefit of this option is the real equality of opportunities which the Mapuche population will have once it has overcome the inequality of work opportunities. The disequilibrium, however, will depend fundamentally on the Mapuche administration in power. This option will, moreover, maximise the benefits of Mapuche creativity which up until now has remained marginalised because of the racial and social inequality which distances every hope of development.

The big disadvantage is the slow and gradual disappearance of the Mapuche until they become completely extinct because the fundamental concern is not their prolongation. On the contrary, the greatest preoccupation will be with the Mapuche as Chileans and continually improving their quality of life, which is very positive, but at the expense of all interest in their identity as a people, a situation which is clearly alarming.

Option No. 3

The third option is the adoption of an Indian-Mapuche ideological position arising from theorising ordered by Mapuche philosophy and focussed exclusively on the interests of the ethnic Indo-American society and supported by the scientific and technological understanding of the day. The goal of this option will be to build the foundations and structure of a stable Mapuche society which is proud of its past history and which values its cultural patrimony. A strategy based in these elemental principles we allow us to face our own socio-cultural reality with dignity by taking the path which our history prepared us for today.

In order to choose this option, being Mapuche or looking Mapuche is not a sufficient condition. But moreover one has to feel Mapuche, to feel it vibrate through all one's cultural being and participate actively in the Mapuche social movement which shows increasing unity and, consequently, a positive margin of growth in the establishment of a common ethnic defence strategy in Mapuche organisations and in Mapuche society.

It is the responsibility of all Mapuche to work for the permanent development of all socio-cultural aspects of Mapuche ethnicity and to give it a dynamism which marks its existence at all levels.

Our projections indicate that it will be necessary to introduce it into

the hidden world of computers and biogenetics where there promise to be endless surprises and benefits for the people and for Mapuche agriculture.

There are many paths towards the development of man but there are few opportunities for Mapuche society to achieve development because of its imposed incorporation into Chilean society. This has frustrated its development because final decisions have always been subject to the interests and caprices of the dominators.

Enough, then, of hoping to be maintained by gifts which do not arrive. In this generation we shall begin the improvement and development of Mapuche patrimony with the capacity we have ourselves because under the modern dominators progress will never come for the indigenous people.

General Considerations and Strengthening the Proposed Options

We have to understand that our present enemies are to be found everywhere in the political life of the country. There are some groups which, in their treatment of our difficulties as a dominated ethnic group, appear to be more aware than others. However, this does not mean that they have continually rejected the fundamental pillars which sustain the social and economic policies of the country because they too are an integrated and insoluble part of the inheritance of European colonisation. We will not forget that it is their culture, their civilisation and their principle of survival which dominates everything, including even transgressing their own norms of social existence, such as fundamental human rights. For example, all governments have made the proposals of the United Nations' Basic Charter their own, nevertheless, in their treatment of indigenous minorities they all periodically transgress these rights. There is not a single country which at governmental level takes note of and reproaches such behaviour towards minorities. If we look for a fair response to this situation, we have to conclude that all countries which accommodate ethnic minorities within their territory have had, or maintain, situations of conflict with these minorities. Others simply silence them and are protected by a policy of non-intervention on the internal matters of other countries.

Over and above the highlighted and permanent participation of the Mapuche population in the social movement of the life of the nation the history of Mapuche society with its great deeds shows us that this ethnic society has not passed unnoticed through time. But the present generation will not pass unnoticed either, the generation which is responsible for obstructing the path and the orientation which our knowledge provides us.

In all societies, people are compromised in their socio-cultural reality and under these conditions continually struggles to improve their reality. As a result they receive all the benefits of modern life which are adequate,

of course, for their lifestyle and without interference from alien cultures unless these are adopted deliberately or are consequences of imposed politico-administrative measures.

We are aware that the present social reality of the Mapuche is that of extreme marginality, of poverty, hunger and racial injustices with a few exceptions. In the same way our culture is rejected because it does not adjust to the idiosyncracies of the *huinca* dominator who continually tries to force us to adopt his Westernisation. Therefore, our struggle is to change the social marginalisation by developing our organisations as well as diffusing and developing our cultural legacy for the benefit of future generations.

Our struggle is not to try to be more like our *huinca* dominators but, on the contrary, to differentiate ourselves increasingly and identify with each of the elements which comprise our culture. This should be done in such a manner that our relations with the exterior world reflect a defensive position for indigenous societies without having to hide or hold back our indignation at the racial and social injustice which we encounter daily. Such injustice forces us to join together with indigenous people worldwide and fight for our cause in a way which is particular to the Mapuche society in Chile.

Request for Mapuche Participation

The traditional political sectors boast their power over Mapuche society. Their zeal to operate as the champions of Mapuche society is such that they all compete in their apparent support for the ethnic society and in this way impede any Mapuche initiative for participation in the political and administrative control of the country. On the one side, the economic right wing, which forgets its Christian human principles and legislates for more land, has given Mapuche land a market value through the renowned laws of supply and demand and has had the effect of rationalising Mapuche territorial property through Decree Law 2568. This has not been a surprise for the Mapuche because we know, without having to point to individuals, that the dominant society will never be able to exercise justice because their very act of deciding is unjust unless devolution of authority over occupied territories is given to the Mapuche society. In the same way, in Chile there can be no real approach to democracy while Mapuche society as a distinct ethnic group does not participate in the political and administrative power structure of the state according to a right which belongs to it over and above all laws, elections, agreements, party alliances or arrangements.

On the other side, in their ancient struggle to maintain some political influence in Mapuche society, the political groups from the left and centre, carry out a confused defence. They maintain their traditional attacks on

opposing groups and in doing so lose without even having achieved a level of serious social denunciation. Mapuche sectors and leaders involve themselves in all this without exactly understanding their real role as a distinct ethnic group with different interests. They end up defending alien interests and in the last analysis these good Mapuche leaders detract from those Mapuche sectors which dare to set up and defend their own political paths which lead first and foremost to an equitable participation in the political and administrative leadership of the country as a right prior to any law or mandate issuing from the *huinca* state.

However, by outlining briefly some of the directions the traditional political sectors are taking and which, in order to maintain their position, obscure and avoid clarifying the inter-ethnic problem, does not mean that the Mapuche society is looking to these sectors for a just alternative for our ethnic aspirations. On the contrary, we feel that they, comprising the majority dominant group, could never set their interests alongside ours because they conform to, represent and defend the interests of Chilean society which, whether they want it or not, are very different to the interests of Mapuche society. Our struggle fails to accommodate the rigid traditional scheme of *huinca* party politics because our position is outside of a classist division of society, the class struggle and capitalism. Indigenous societies' struggles, and that of the Mapuche in particular, crosses the frontiers of Western political thinking. We do not forget that the people who today hold all the power have mixed us up in an alien process which does not satisfy our ethnic aspirations. Crossing the frontiers of Western thinking means that we can look for and attack the foundations of the inter-ethnic conflict which exists between the Mapuche and the *huinca* because this is a conflict which does not exclusively obey the classist divisions of global or universal society. On the contrary it rises above them and obeys a fundamentally ethnic conception. We defend an ethnic conception of the conflict because between Mapuche society and *huinca* society there are interests of wideranging importance which consequently involve a conflict of interests. On the one side the powerful political and business *huinca* groups function to legitimise the dominator's state and therefore defend above all its political and business interests in its territorial occupation. Viewing the conflict from another angle, the Mapuche are supported by ancestral right or by custom which is prior to all Western laws and therefore have always rejected the legitimacy of the dominator's state to occupy its territories. For this reason, the Mapuche today have a right to defend their ethnic society and it is the privilege of indigenous ethnic societies to defend their territorial rights in Indo-America.

Colombia

PLAIDECOP: Plan of Destruction for the Pacific Coast

We want to tell you about the way in which the second largest tropical rainforest in Colombia is being destroyed by President Barco and his nebulous talk.

This tropical rainforest is situated in the Department of Chocó covering an area of 47 205 square kilometres. It is an area of different mining riches, varied vegetation, fish of all kinds and a large number of rivers which form the routes of communication and transport between the headwaters of the municipalities and the rest of the population.

The *Emberá-Waunaa*, *Katio* and *Kuna* indigenous peoples have lived here for hundreds of years and today some 35 000 of them live in the headwaters of the main rivers and their affluents where they maintain their native languages, cultures and forms of social organisation.

The Black population was brought from Africa as slaves by the Spanish invader so that they could work in the mining centres and on the plantations. In search of their freedom, they moved up the many rivers which cut through this territory and where now they are maintaining and developing their culture and forms of social organisation. Today the State does not recognise them as ethnic minorities, they are deprived of public services and the Incora does not recognise their land rights.

The second invasion

The Indigenous people and the Black population have managed to survive over the centuries but the pressures they face today from the modern invaders threaten their existence.

Over the last few years they have been pushed off their lands by large mining and lumbering companies who have government approval and who use their position to disregard our right to the land and its natural resources.

This situation has resulted in many deaths, such as that of the Indigenous Governor of Guayaba, Gerardo Quintana, and the deaths in Alto Andaqueda instigated by political schemers who want to get hold of the rich gold mines in the region. And to cap it all, the government has created the Pacific Coast Development Plan, PLAIDECOP, with the objective of



securing profits through the exploitation of the national resources by national and foreign companies without taking the indigenous people, the Black population or the forest into account.

The beneficiaries of this deal worth millions will be Colombian companies and big foreign firms from the U.K., France, Japan, Switzerland, U.S., Italy and Holland. The government has given the investors all the guarantees it can so that they will come out with huge profits:

- They will recover all the costs of the work they have carried out in the region.
- They will get a special tax rate for the importation of equipment.

Government politicians and officials from multi-national companies are aiming to realize the following:

1. an inter-ocean wharf for the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
2. two maritime ports, one along Cupica Bay, and the other along the Gulf of Uraba.
3. An extension of the Pan-American Highway and a rail line that connects both ports, a pipeline and a carbon waste outlet.
4. Roads from Medellin-Urrao to the port of Bahia Cupica.
5. Industrial and agro-industrial complexes.
6. A line on the Pan-american highway with branch line Nuqui-Bahia Solano.
7. The military base on Malaga Bay.
8. The fluvial port of Malaguita.
9. The waterways to link the estuaries of the coastal regions.
10. The traffic connection between the Alaguira river with the road to Malaga Bay.
11. The hydroelectric plant in Boroboro and Calima 4.
12. The industrial city of Malaga.

Legends:

- ||||| A line on the inter-ocean wharf
- - - A highway wharf
- Th route of the pipeline
- ☐ Terminal ports
- △ The Utria National Park
- The hydroelectric plant in Boroboro and Calima 4
- ▣ Pan-American Highway
- ○ ○ Urrao Bahia Cupica Highway
- ☐ Waterway
- ▤ The industrial city of Malaga
- ▥ The dam of Calima
- ▧ Military base in Bahia Malaga

They will not be taxed for the first seven years and in the following eight years they will only pay half. - The foreign companies will be able to remit all profits outside of the country. - Credit is guaranteed. - The government promises to establish the large Pacific forestry reserve. What more need we say? The destruction is guaranteed.

Organising the defense

All these projects, many of which are already in progress, are being carried out in indigenous reserves and territory belonging to the Black communi-

ties. Their forms of social organisation are being violated and traditional authorities are being disregarded with no compensation or native involvement in the plans.

In different congresses, meetings and other fora, the indigenous people and the Black population have stated that the government must guarantee their rights, that they must have clear policies and that they must consult the indigenous and Black communities about their needs and necessities. In the same way they stated that the government must suspend permission for timber exploitation within communities and that the indigenous and Black peoples be compensated for the infrastructure which has affected them without their consent.

With regard to Bajo San Juan, it was stated that the government must agree to an area of special management through the creation of a large Waunaan-Negro territory. But we know that these petitions just disappear into a void if they are not accompanied by organised and unified action by all the sectors affected. In the case of Bajo San Juan there have already been several meetings of the indigenous and Black communities, and some of these with State bodies, in order to draw up preliminary agreements over the establishment of a large black *Waunaan* territory.

There are advances in other sectors too. From 16 to 18 June 1990, the First Meeting for the Defense of Our Traditional Pacific Territory took place in Quibdó. This event was held by the Indigenous Regional Organisation of Chocó (OREWA), the Organisation of Popular Districts of Chocó (ABAPO) and the Integral Peasant Association of Atrato (ACIA).

But it is not only the inhabitants of the region who are concerned about the future of the Pacific Coast, but all Colombians who have themselves experienced and who understand the significance of the government's development plans: the misery and destruction of the natural resources. But for the investors and the dominant classes within Colombia, the plans represent more wealth and more power.

And, meanwhile, President Virgilio Barco tours Europe as the saviour and great protector of the Amazon and with his nebulous talk obscure the plans which he has for the Colombian Pacific.

Source: Unidad Indigena, June 1990.

Guatemala

Presentation by the Guatemalan Committee for Peasant Unity to the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations

My name is Maria del Rosario Toj, a leading member of the Guatemalan Committee for Peasant Unity, CUC. My organisation has been present at sessions of the Working Group for the last eight years where we have voiced the demands of the indigenous people of Guatemala and expressed our solidarity with the struggle of our indigenous brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

Today we are continuing the struggle which our forefathers maintained. We value the basic right which we have as indigenous people to be heard in order to begin to bring to an end the 500 years of silence, marginalisation and repression which we have suffered. Our freedom of expression must be valued so that we can use it to say what we think of our past, of the situation in which we live today, of the future we want, and strive for our children and people to be without fear of being persecuted, slandered and condemned to death, as many governments have done to us to silence our peoples over centuries.

It has been much easier for us to find the opportunity to expose the reality in which our people live at international events than in our own countries. In Guatemala, where genocidal and ethnocidal practices have been committed, the military and civilian governments carry out repression on a daily basis. They have never listened to us; on the contrary, they have responded to us with terror, intimidation and death. But it is right and necessary that our struggle for the conservation and development of our culture against the marginalisation, destruction and undermining are known.

Our communities and peoples continue to be subject to civil self-defence patrols, paramilitary organisations which, although legalised in Transitory Articles in the Constitution of the Republic in 1985, are anti-democratic. More than a million people between the ages of 18 and 55 years are forced into the military vigilante service which represses our communities with the object of breaking the unity, cooperation and confidence which has always existed among indigenous peoples. These civil self-defence patrols have aided the Guatemalan army in its contra-insurgency activities throughout the Coast – the Altiplano – and in the north of

the country. Moreover, they have played an extremely important role in facilitating the illegal appropriation of plots of land belonging to indigenous people and peasants in general. The latter have been victims of persecution and a policy of repression which the army has launched as part of the process of social destruction which accompanies the increasing militarisation. In this way, the military high command has allowed some civil patrol leaders to become local *caciques* who rob and kill with impunity for personal ambition.

The model villages set up in some of our communities are the show pieces of military control in so-called *areas of conflict*. Through them the military can form a clear understanding of the life, mobility and production patterns of men, women and children. They are an example of how civil authority has been substituted by military power in large regions of the country without any constitutional validation. In Guatemala, military authority overrides civil authority in law and in the Constitution, which is why the military have impunity. In fact, Guatemala has lost all semblance of being a democratic society.

At present, the country is divided into 23 military zones, most of which are distributed through the rural regions. From these the activities of the self-defence patrols are controlled as well as the model villages, the centres of development, the military detachments and general policy. Therefore the military is directly responsible for the blood spilled, the intimidation, the forced disappearances and the hundreds of attempts on our lives which our people experience daily. The increase in violence throughout the country and in particular in El Quiché, Huehuetenango and Sololá are not new or by chance; on the contrary, they are part of the mechanisms of a militarised society.

The general militarisation of our communities has been aggravated by the increased inequality and exploitation to which we are subject. This can be seen in the unjust distribution of land, the worst in Latin America with 72% of cultivable land in the hands of 2.1% of landowners. This situation aggravates the cycle of migration from smallholding to large agricultural estates, and continues to force thousands of men, women and children to move to the Pacific coast where coffee, cotton, sugar cane, cardamom and rubber are grown. The majority of the workers on the farming estates (*latifundios*) are indigenous peoples.

It is no secret that the wages on the large export-oriented farms are wretched, equivalent to a maximum of \$1.50 for a ten-hour day. This miserable wage has imposed a life of malnutrition, subsistence, illness and slow death on our indigenous peasant families. Many thousands of children die in the first years of life, and those who survive are faced with the prospects of a very low standard of living, without education and afflicted by institutional violence.



Two indigenous women from Guatemala playing the marimba.
(Photo: Internationalt Forum).

The poverty and lack of education, health and other facilities are problems not only on the large estates but they are general and related to conditions to which the indigenous peasants have been subject for many years.

The history, culture and life of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala have been subject to this situation of exploitation and impunity from the Spanish conquest to the present day, a history of limitless depredation and violence. Our forefathers – members of confraternities, shamans, leaders – who have guarded the historical record of the *Mayan* priests, have suffered more than anyone from the repression, the threats and the extermination. The archaeological monuments, our authentic historical inheritance from our Mayan predecessors the *Tika, Quirigua, Iximché, Zaculeu*, etc., have been sacked, and the object of an illegal trade and destruction by groups which had, and still have the support of the government and the dominant classes. The cultural wealth of the indigenous peoples has only been valued as tourist attractions, commercial folklore and networks for profit.

We demand our right to possess and work upon our Mother Earth because we depend on her for our lives, our historical record and the future development of our culture in that in our daily work we draw material sustenance from the land for our families and communities. Therefore the different ways in which we fight for the right to control and cultivate our lands ought to be legitimised. We are fighting so that our fields and valleys can be fertile again. As indigenous peoples we are fighting for access to the development, science and technology to which we have been denied by those in power so that our fields will produce and flourish and they can take their rightful place in Nature. Our earth and Mother Nature, like our cultures, have suffered over the last decades from systematic and criminal destruction by an ambitious few. Never before have our forests, oceans, sky and land been destroyed, as is happening today. And only those committed to the conservation and defence of nature struggle to check this destruction.

As indigenous peoples we have defended our lives and our cultures in many different ways and triumphed over isolation, marginalisation, being cast aside, massacred and laid waste. It is this vast experience which we have to use to ensure a dignified future for our peoples, joining together our ideas and strengths against the great powers that have overwhelmed the world from the beginnings of the earth and brought the underdeveloped peoples and our African, Asian brothers and sisters etc. to a situation of hunger and death. We have a contribution to make to the elimination of colonialism which has caused our blood to flow and has destroyed our lives over these 500 years.

We are fighting so that our peoples and countries can exercise their right to decide their own destiny and their right to national sovereignty.

We demand the recognition of the right to a heroic resistance for our peoples who in these 500 years have been beaten, mutilated, falsified and demented but remain active, dignified and with deep roots.

The different ways in which our peoples have struggled to defend their lives and cultures are legitimate. Moreover, the international community as well as governments ought to recognise them before condemning them. In Guatemala thousands of indigenous peasant families are again leaving the highlands, escaping the cold and hunger which is the only way to survive the bombardments and the destruction of their farms and crops. Once again, the focus of the world is on the heroism and the historical resistance of the indigenous peoples.

It is becoming more and more urgent for the international community and solidarity groups to join the struggle of the indigenous and first people of our continent, to turn their eyes to our resistance, to the future of our indigenous peoples and to development, democracy and peace in our country, the region and our continent.

We are concerned for indigenous peoples today and in the future. The analysis of the effects of the conquest and colonisation ought to serve to re-establish relations between women and men with nature, with the land and with the culture of the people. At the end of the 20th century, America demands that our place be established among the just societies of the world.

Maria Toj of CUC (Comite de Unidad Campesina) delivered this statement before the UNWGIP (Geneva) last July 31, 1990.

Guatemala

Women's Participation in the History of the Mayan People

by Caly Domitila Canek

Introduction

This article presents the situation of *Mayan* women in Guatemala. Guatemala is part of the territory of Central America which today is divided into the Central American countries and Mexico but which did not exist prior to the Spanish invasion. In order to understand the situation of Mayan women today it is necessary to understand their philosophy of life, their relation with the cosmos and with society. However, it is also necessary to understand the way in which society is part of nature and is ordered by powerful forces which are known as the Heart of the Sky, the Land and creatures such as the elements (Uk'ux Kaj, Uk'ux Ulew, Uwach Ulew).

The history of Mayan women has developed over different epochs: Mayan, Spanish colonisation and present circumstances.

Mayan Philosophy concerning Women

According to Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the K'iches, and the religious practices which are carried out in all Mesoamerican Mayan villages, Mayan philosophy reflects a concept of equality between women and men.

At the beginning of creation there was dual participation: *Gucumataz* who represented woman and *Tepou* who represented man. They came together and consulted with each other in order to initiate the creation. This principle of consultation can be observed in the second creation of man when the creator and the maker decided to consult the grandfathers, Ixpiyacoc and Ixmucané, in order to divine the future of the new generation. Here too, we can see the equality of woman and man.

Another principle which is reflected in the act of divination is collective work. This is preserved to a large extent in Mayan religious practices. The following extract from Popol Vuh illustrates this principle: "...You must join together and find the means whereby the man that we form, the man which we are going to create, will feed and sustain us, will call us and harmonise with us..."

The gods and the collective forces made successive attempts to achieve a greater degree of perfection in the man and woman they made:

1. They created the animals but they could not talk and thank their creators, so they decided to make another creature which looked like themselves and could thank them.
2. They created a man of clay but he did not have any fibre so he was dissolved in water and destroyed.
3. They then created a man of wood. Here they achieved a certain measure of perfection because he could speak, walk and procreate but, still, he could not thank his maker because he had no emotions. And so he was destroyed.
4. They created a man of maize. Four women and four men were made and with them they achieved a higher degree of perfection because the man had qualities similar to those of his creator and could see all that there was in the world, everything hidden as well as everything apparent. This time man was as perfect as they were but, because of this, they decided to reduce man's intellectual capacity.

This process reflects the philosophical concepts of the Mayan people towards all things and tells us that all evolution is the search for perfection and truth. This principle is the same as scientific theory whereby everything is subject to an evolutionary process which aims for higher and higher levels of development.

In ceremonial orations, the four men and four women who were the last creations are equated with the four directions of the world (the cardinal points): Balam Quitzé and his partner Cahá-Paluna; Balam Acab and his partner Chimihá; Mahucatah and his partner Tzununihá; and Iqui-Balam and his partner Caquixaná.

Mayan civilisation began to develop 25 000 to 30 000 years BC and found its maximum expression between the years 2 500 B.C. to 1 500 A.D. The extent of Mayan civilisation can be seen in the archaeological remains, paintings, ceramics, sculptures on steles, etc. All of these exalt the specific functions of women within the society: in religious ceremonies, in acts of government, processions, participation in musical groups, spinning cotton, making weavings for different uses such as sleeping blankets, napkins for cooking, articles of women's clothing (guilipes, wraps, belts etc.), men's articles of clothing, designs on ceramics, food preparation etc.

According to the sacred book, Popol Vuh, women discovered agriculture and domesticated maize, beans, amaranth and calabash. The book goes on to state that men hunt, fish and collect edible plants. The development of agriculture impinged on other aspects of technology and used astronomical observations which were related to atmospheric phenomena

which directly influenced the crops. In this period, men directed the development of agriculture and women took control of the needs of the household assuming an important role in the education of children, a role which they carried out and defended during the process of Spanish colonisation.

Within the Mayan community, women and men are equals and have the same leadership roles (without discrimination). This is expressed through the duality of the deities of the sacred calendar (masculine and feminine). For example, if a female child is born on the day of Tijax or any other deity, she receives the prefix Ix (mother of the land) and she is called Ixtijax and if it is a boy, he receives the name of the day.

This same philosophical principle is reflected in the god Ixchel, whose symbol is a loom fixed to a ceiba tree (silk-cotton tree). This symbolises the intimate relationship between women and mother nature as man's provider. For the Maya, the ceiba tree is sacred and called the 'Tree of Life' in which the secrets of the people are kept and which signifies life and death, light and darkness. Ceremonies are carried out under the ceiba tree because it is believed that the spirits of the dead rest in its trunk.

In order to understand this great philosophy of the Mayan woman, it is necessary to study the symbolism in the archaeology and the oral knowledge which has passed down through generations of Mayan people. The god, Ixchel, is the symbol of femininity and carries the emblem of Gucumatz (Kuk'umatz) on her head. This symbolises the inheritance of knowledge, power and strength. That is to say, women's power comes down the generations. It is this power which reinforces the participation of women at important points in Mayan society, such as women's role as ceremonial priests as well as their role as midwives, for which they receive a specific religious training so that they can explain the characteristics of a newborn child to its parents according to Mayan astrology and the type of education they ought to give it, according to their means.

Twenty days after birth, that is, one Mayan month, a special ceremony is carried out for a newborn, whether it be a boy or a girl, to thank the creator and maker for the gift of life and to the nahuales (forces or spirits). If it is a girl, 60 days after birth there is a ceremony called the "presentation at the altar" where she is officially presented to her nahuales (individual virtues) so that they will ensure her a balanced life and respond to the destiny which the gods want her to fulfill. A woman's number is three, reflecting the three angles of the symbol of women, the triangle of the grindstone, and this is multiplied by 20 (one month) to reach 60. If the child is a boy, then the ceremony takes place 80 days after his birth and the same presentation to the altar and the forces is made. A man's number is four which represents the four angles of a square, the masculine figure which is related to the cornfield, house construction and the four cardinal points. The num-

ber four is multiplied by 20 to make 80. This rite is more profound than baptism carried out by other religions, for example, the Christian (Catholic or evangelical) Church. The ancient rites of the European continent are similar to those of Central America.

The unity which exists between man and woman since ancient times can also be seen in the symbol of the millstone. The three bases symbolise woman and the four corners symbolise man. The making of the millstone symbolises the duality of creation.

The responsibility of educating children is shared between men, who educate their sons in agricultural tasks, and women who educate their daughters in household duties such as weaving, artisan work and medicine. Concerning medicine, women have played an important role as pioneers in the use of medicinal plants. At first they used them on their children but over time they put them at the service of the community, in the same way as midwives have done in the course of attending their patients. This knowledge is transmitted orally, always with respect for nature, the plants are asked their permission for their use, and always looking for maximum effectivity and praying to and calling upon the creator.

Spanish Colonialism

In this period, domination took different forms, which were implemented and developed from the religious to the economic, from the family structure to social organisation. The system of values and cohesion responded to the needs and interests of the Spanish crown, those who served it and its allies.

Women carried out a rear guard action to maintain their culture without which it would have been crushed by colonialism. The colonisers introduced a disguised slavery through the *encomienda* system of large estates and protectionism which had the approval of the monarchy. Women as well as men were subject to slavery, mistreated and forced to pay tribute. In this period a passive political resistance was developed which prompted the belief by the Spanish that the Mayan people were idle and useless. Since then this belief has become part of the ideology of domination of those who control the economic power (the King, the "feudal" *encomienda* lords, the hacienda owners and the missionaries). The conquistadors' aim was to empower themselves through the acquisition of material wealth, especially gold, using mechanisms of oppression, exploitation, discrimination, abduction and rape. Women were violated on the beaches and by the rivers, because the Spanish colonists never married the Mayan woman, only used them as servants.

Machismo was created through the new economic and political system which divided activities by sex, but unlike the previous sexual division of

labour, girls were forced to work as domestics in the towns. As a reflection of the system, women were subject to a double discrimination which led to



*A Maya woman from Chichicastenango, Guatemala.
(Photo: Solveig Lindenström).*

a process of cultural plunder. Thus began a life of misery. Part of their values were lost through the imposition of a formal and systematic education system in which the Castellan language, economic, social and religious systems were imposed which limited Mayan participation as rational beings in a system of exploitation and oppression. Women were forced to migrate to large plantations on the south coast where the climate was adverse. There they were subject to forced labour which led to disease and malnutrition, which affected pregnant women most of all.

The plundering of the land, of cultural values and the disintegration of the family, which was provoked by the wealthy landlords of coffee, sugar cane, cotton etc. plantations on the south coast, amounted to conditions of slavery.

On the spiritual side, Mayan women learned to prostrate themselves in front of the White man, which they supposed brought them closer to god; they learned to worship Christian images – the martyrs and the naked, bleeding Christs. Mayan women never became the wives of the Spaniards or Creoles who occasionally or regularly possessed them, but only their concubines (they were called Indians or concubines according to the legal terminology of the period). Whatever the context, they were no more than extramarital servants.

Spanish domination was not limited only to sexual use of Mayan women but spinning was among the many forms of exploitation to which they were subject in this period. This consisted of spinning a large quantity of thread without being paid for the labour. The women worked in fear of the lashings they would receive if they did not complete their quota. The worst affected were pregnant women.

There were three basic types of tribute which the Mayan people paid to the Spanish Crown: maize, cloth and chickens. The last two seriously affected the daily lives of women because women looked after the poultry and did the weaving. The enormous physical exertion which women made affected them psychologically, spiritually and physically, which in turn contributed negatively to the education, development and growth of their children.

The conditions in which men and women lived throughout the whole colonial period are illustrated by the insufficiency and arbitrary distribution of communal lands; the pressures, blackmail and imprisonment dealt out to the Mayans; exhausting tasks paid in adulterated money; the tribute payments demanded by the judges, “feudal” lords, mayors/Justices of the Peace, stewards and overseers of every type; the robberies and frauds in the name of tribute exacted through the tyranny of the magistrates; the endless indebtedness through the forced purchase of useless and expensive merchandise; and the weeding and the spinning of cotton for the three-monthly deliveries.

The reality of this was prison and lashings for men and women for no reason, the abandonment of lands and children in order to fulfill the demands of forced work in the haciendas, and the tolerance and impunity of a network of authorities which allowed the population to be kept in a state of terror for 300 years by official colonialism. Nevertheless, the exploitation continued just the same for the Maya after 1821, to the extent that we can say that the colonial ideology continues today and has now achieved almost 500 years of exploitation and oppression.

The Present Situation

The Mayan people are estimated to number some 6 million inhabitants in Guatemala, that is to say, they are the majority despite the high rate of infant mortality, which has reached the figure of 62 children out of every thousand live births. The female population has reached 49 per cent and female heads of households comprise 14 per cent. These statistics have risen over the last decades as a consequence of the socio-political violence which is affecting the country.

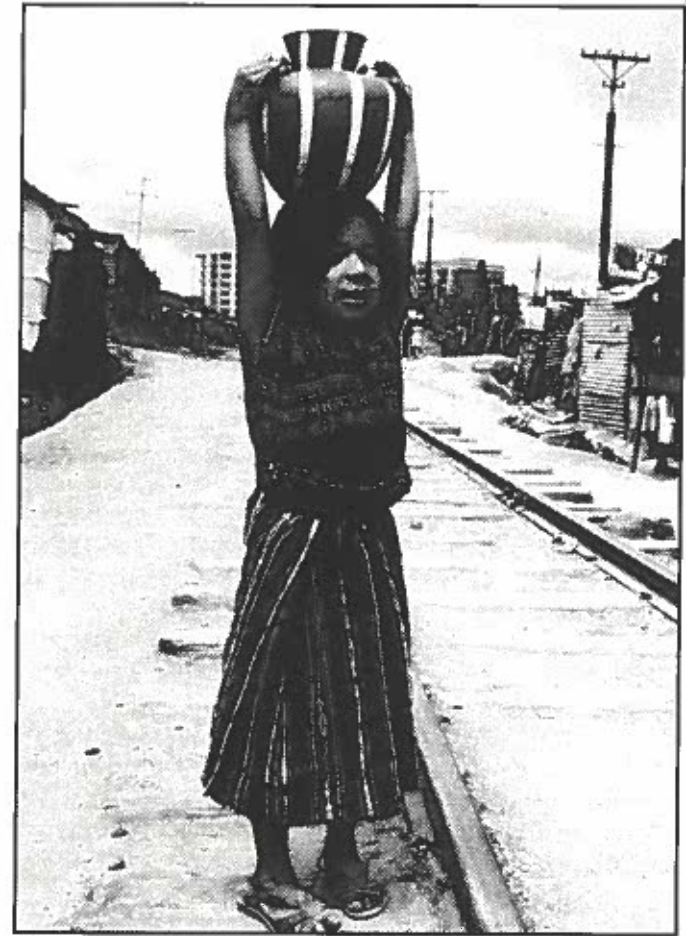
Guatemala is made up of 22 departments and 331 municipalities, where three cultures live together: Maya, Ladino (mixed race) and a minority of *Garifone* people, each of whom have regional variations.

With respect to linguistic composition, Guatemala possess a wealth of 21 languages of Mayan origin and 3 of non-Mayan origin (Xinca, Garifone and Spanish), however, only Spanish is recognised as an official language at the national level. The percentage of monolinguals among Mayan speakers has reached 50 per cent and the bilingual Mayan-Spanish speaking population does not have sufficient fluency in Spanish to use it in all aspects of their life. So, the Mayan population uses Spanish in commercial, religious and other such activities.

Among women, illiteracy is around 80 per cent, a figure which is in fact duplicated because they are illiterate in both Mayan and Spanish.

The colonial Ladino conception of the Mayan woman is: timid, silent, submissive, incapable etc. but only because she has not been able to develop adequately in the Ladino environment which dominates the class-ridden Guatemalan society. Consequently, it includes no appreciation of their symbolism, their historical value, their art, dress, artisan products, their health, their educational problems etc. that is to say their situation as Mayan women.

The present-day conception of the development of the ancient Mayas (men and women) is based in the cosmological principles which sustain the culture and its historical development and which are based in spiritual principles in accordance with the laws of nature. These principles are completely opposite to those of the West which try to dominate nature, to



Girl from a barrio in Guatemala City. (Photo: International Forum).

the extent that the West has adopted much of its material aspects but little at the spiritual level.

With respect to education, women play an important role as the producers and educators of new generations.

Women's decisive contribution to the present economic situation at the national level is recognised neither qualitatively nor quantitatively. For example: there is the work of 53 000 Mayan women, children and girls from the Altiplano (high plains region) who are employed as domestic servants and who do not even receive minimum salaries, labour loans (cannot count upon help from others) or medical services. And, in many cases, they

are sexually abused by the men in the house in which they serve. This is a clear consequence of Spanish colonialism and present-day neocolonialism. The ethnic rights of these Mayan women are not respected: they are forced to change their own dress for uniforms; much of their salary is paid in Ladinio clothes which, because they are obliged to wear them, begins little by little to destroy their culture and leaves them ill-adapted to the extent that they do not want to return home and prefer to continue working in the capital. All this is a consequence of the disorientation which they suffer because they are far from their families and their communities.

The repression of the Mayan population began 1 524 years ago and has taken different forms throughout the course of its long history. But in recent decades the mechanisms of repression have increased and consequently the women and children who survive it suffer psychological traumas. The people have responded by forming popular movements and organisations which permit them to fight for their rights as a people. The present military political system (for example, the government of Rios Mont) is carrying out counter-insurgency measures using scorched-earth and self-destruction policies carried out by self-defence Patrols, which are causing genocide and ethnocide for the Mayan communities.

The socio-political repression has forced many Mayas to abandon their places of origin and take refuge in neighbouring countries. This situation has reached the alarming number of 70 000 persons, of which almost 95 per cent are Mayan. Within the country the number of displaced persons has reached 1 500 000 of which the percentage of children is high. The numbers of disappeared, assassinated and kidnapped people has reached 100 000 persons, of which many were heads of families, which has consequently produced a large number of widows and orphans. According to local, regional and national statistics, this in turn has led to a drastic change in the family economy.

More than 50 000 widows have lost their husbands who have been kidnapped, disappeared and massacred. However, another cause of loss of life is the illnesses contracted through work in coffee, sugar cane, cardamom and cotton plantations where there is no medical assistance and the poor wages do not cover the costs of medical care. The workers do not earn enough to provide an adequate diet nor to provide Mayan clothing. This means that they have to buy other kinds of clothes which, in turn, aggravates acculturation. In extreme cases people have to sell the few possessions they have in order to survive, thus creating extreme poverty.

The widows have organised themselves in order to look for solutions to their problems and to try to offer their children a dignified life. However, they are persecuted by the local authorities, such as the Civil Self-defence Patrols and military commissions, which arrest them merely for meeting together. They are mistrusted when they leave their communities to find

temporary work on estates. On the whole, they do not offer any real and effective help in surviving when the cost of living is so high or in overcoming the problems which they and their children face.

Conclusions

1. Mayan philosophy recognises that men and women have the same decision-making powers, each assuming responsibilities according to their abilities and, with regard to the domestic economy, both working complementarily.
2. Women transmit traditions from one generation to the next for all aspects of Mayan culture and because of this they are considered the heart of the culture, that which gives it life. Men are more susceptible to changes which come about through means of communication.
3. In colonial times a woman was degraded, she was exploited, oppressed and subject to discrimination, not only materially but also spiritually. But in spite of all this, women have survived in order to maintain the philosophical principles which are transmitted from generation to generation. So much so that they have formed the most active resistance to the process of acculturation of the Mayan people in which the colonial apparatus has excelled.
4. Today, Mayan women do not have the means to promote their own development as women because of the system in which they live. For example, in programmes and projects directed towards the development of Mayan women their participation is limited to carrying out the project while they play no role in its design. In the majority of cases these programmes and projects are initiated within the Western patriarchal culture with no respect for Mayan culture.
5. Mayan women are used by dominant sectors for touristic and folkloric ends (such as the reigns of Rabin Ajau, etc.) and undignified employment such as domestic work in the urban centres.
6. Today, with regard to their economic level, socio-political repression, human rights etc., Mayan women have to live in inhuman conditions. They are beginning to organise themselves into cooperatives, associations, artisan groups, solidarity groups such as CONAVIGUA, GAM and grassroots groups, etc.
7. In the last decade, Mayan women have begun to participate in the leadership of different organisations (political parties, popular movements, etc.).

Recommendations

1. That international women's groups provide financial support so that they can carry out consciencisation work with Guatemalan Mayan wo-

men, such as seminars, education projects, development programmes and programmes carried out by Mayan women themselves, for themselves as experts on their own reality.

2. That local and international women's groups do not participate in the 500 years celebrations of the invasion of the Americas by Spain and that they unite in word and thought in order to extend their efforts for the liberation of American women.
3. That "integral development" programmes with a humanitarian emphasis be promoted and geared towards women affected by the socio-political and economic situation.
4. That the participation of Mayan women in national and international events and exchange of experiences at different levels be promoted: political, economic, social etc. with the aim of motivating their development.
5. That instruments for research and evaluation of the obstacles which impede the complete development of Guatemalan (Mayan and Ladin) women be created so that Mayan women can achieve a development within their own historical context.
6. That all types of exploitative activities concerned with the acculturation and violation of ethnic Mayan rights through international institutions be condemned.

Sources of Information

- Consultations with priests and Mayan priests in the Guatemalan Altiplano.
- Consultations with Mayan people, especially Mayan women.
- Popol Vuh, Las Antiguas Historias del Quiché, translation and notes by Adrian Recinos.
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- Second Seminar of Mayan Women "La Mujer Maya y el Quinto Centenario de la Invasión a América" 1989. Editors: Vilma Poz Pérez, Adela Ajquijay, Margarita López Paquec.
- The situation of Women in Guatemala.
- Second Ecumenical Consultation of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America.

Indonesia

Statement before the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Peoples

by O.P.M., the West Papuan Peoples Front

Madame Chairperson,

Together with the other Indigenous Peoples present today, we sincerely hope that the work of the UN Working Group will lead to instruments which will effectively defend justice, peace and security, and that the justified rights of the Indigenous Peoples may be really endorsed through a strong and determined Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

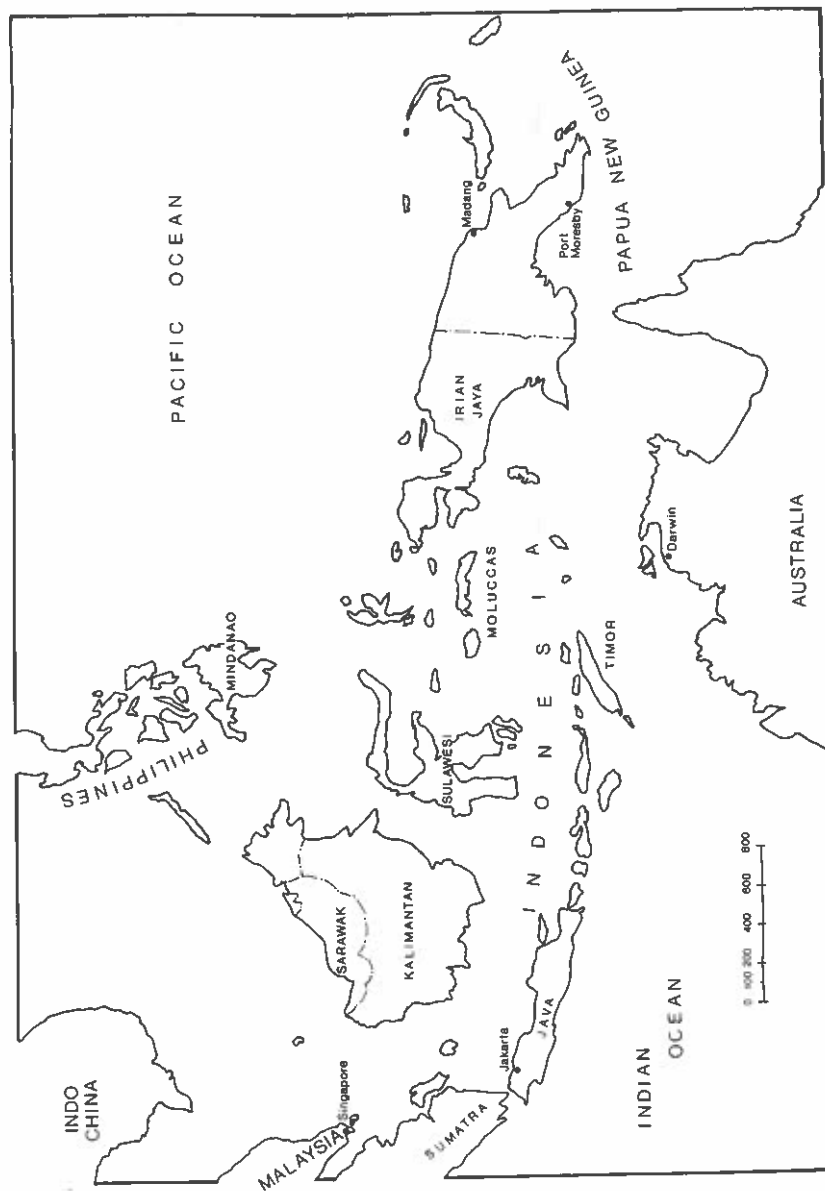
In our view it is urgent that a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be adopted, so that the existence of Indigenous Peoples and their rights will be recognized as a common ideal for all nations and peoples to achieve.

Madame Chairperson,

Ever since 1962, when our land, West Papua, was handed over from the former colonial power, the Netherlands, to the present colonial power, Indonesia, our people have faced discrimination, forced relocations and military harassment. The Melanesian culture of the Indigenous peoples, the Papuas, is an obstacle to the Indonesian view on "development." Jakarta's homogenising approach to development, i.e. the creation of a centralised state, poses a threat to the lifestyle and culture of the Papuas and therefore creates antagonism and social unrest. The situation in West Papua is deteriorating.

Last year we reported on the happening and the consequences of the 1988 uprising in our capital Jayapura: In December that year about 80 Papuans attended a ceremony where independence was proclaimed; the participants to this peaceful demonstration were severely punished, the leader Tom Wainggai has been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and he has been deported to the Kalisoso prison in Java where he cannot be visited by his relatives.

Last December Papuans all over West Papua again came to the streets to show their nationalistic feelings, carrying the national flag which was democratically adopted by the peoples of West Papua in 1961, but

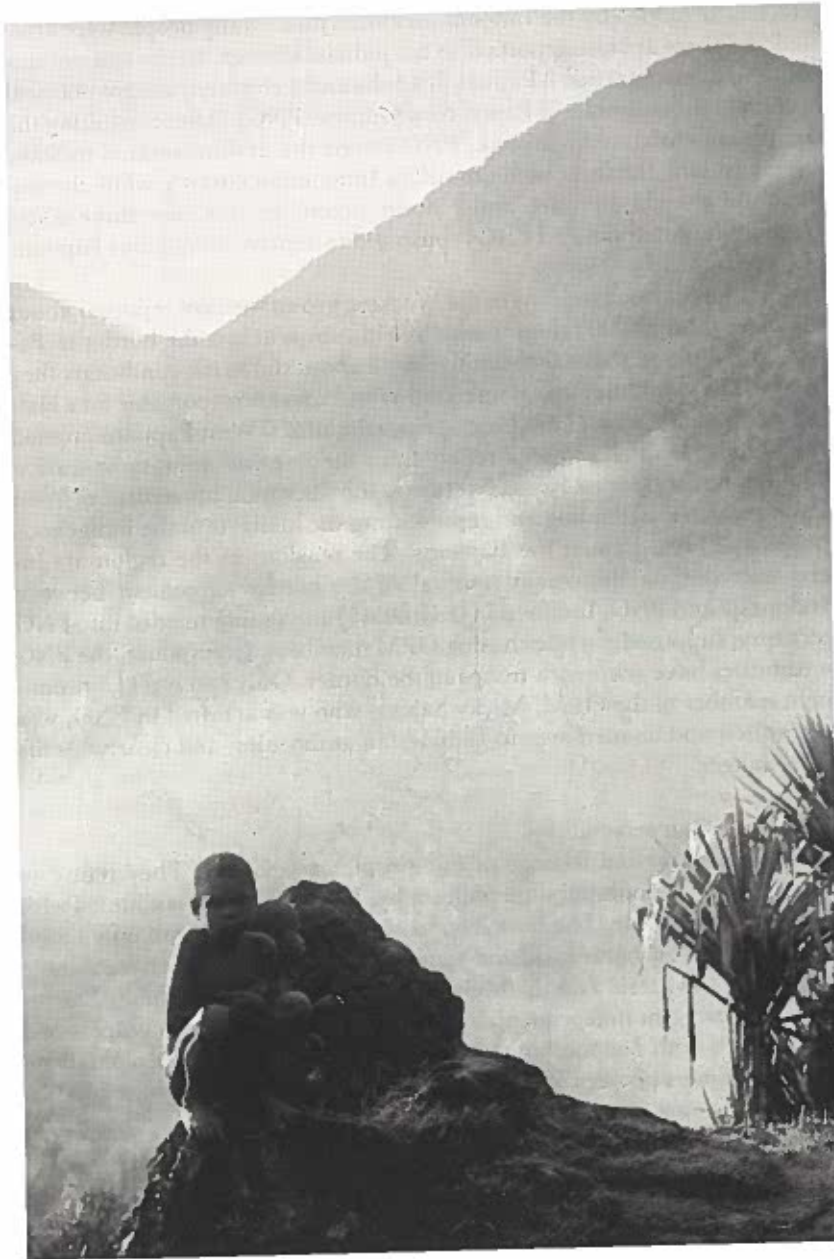


Map of Indonesia.

which is forbidden by the Indonesian authorities. Many people were arrested and there are also reports of extra-judicial killings. In the wake of this peaceful demonstration 8 Papuas (4 adults and 4 children) sought political asylum in the consulate of Papua New Guinea (PNG). After consulting the Australian embassy in Jakarta, PNG forced the asylum-seekers to leave the Consulate; the three men are still in Indonesian custody while the women and the children are under house arrest. In this case three states (Indonesia, Australia and PNG) conspired to deprive indigenous Papuans of their right to safety.

In the previous sessions of the Working group we have reported about the more than 10 000 refugees who live in camps across the border in Papua New Guinea about their motives and about the harsh conditions they live in. The continuing social unrest in West Papua is responsible for a lasting stream of refugees. Last June again, around 200 West Papuans crossed the border into PNG to seek refuge from the sizeable military operation against the Organisasi Papua Merdeka, the liberation movement of West Papua which is defending and representing the interests of the indigenous peoples of West Papua: the Papuans. The tensions in the region are increasing; despite the recent renewal of the border agreement between Indonesia and PNG, Indonesian troops last June again intruded into PNG territory, supposedly while chasing OPM members. In response, the PNG authorities have sent extra troops to the border. Only last week, a prominent member of the OPM, Micky Salosa, who was arrested in PNG, was extradited and handed over to Indonesian authorities; and clearly his life is in danger.

Madame Chairperson,
 The anti-Indonesian feelings of our people are evident. They refuse to submit to the Indonesian state philosophy, *Pancasila*, which is coupled with a militaristic regime. The background of these feelings are not only based on the cultural, geographical and historical differences between the Asiatic peoples of Indonesia and the Melanesian peoples of West Papua. The increasing outcry for independence is also based on more than 25 years of bad experiences with Indonesian rule, more than 25 years of neocolonialism. The indigenous peoples of West Papua are deprived of their own cultural identity, they are not even allowed to call themselves by their proper name, the word "Papua" is forbidden. The Indonesian authorities show great contempt for the Papuan cultures and the Papuas are forced to adapt to a new lifestyle, and a new society is imposed in their own country. Since the Indonesian takeover, more than half a million newcomers have settled in our country. Through this so-called transmigration programme, the 800 000 indigenous inhabitants of West Papua will be a minority in their own country by the year 2000.



*Hupla boy and girl from West Papua.
(Photo: TAPOL, Owen Jelpke).*

The greatest threat to the Papuas is posed by the dispossession of traditional lands. It is because of the transmigration projects and the activities of transnational corporations that Papuans are forced to leave their ancestral homelands. It is true that the Indonesian Government, since the downfall in oil revenues, has less to spend on the official transmigration programme; the newcomers are now lured to our country as labourers for the activities of transnational corporations. These activities include large-scale commercial logging, mining, fishing and cashcrop plantations. The corporations prefer not to employ Papuans because the Papuan cultural and philosophical background doesn't guarantee the labour discipline necessary for wage-earners.

Madame Chairperson,

The sellout of our lands is being accelerated:

- 850 000 hectares in the Merauke region are to be made into a eucalyptus plantation;
- 600 000 hectares along the Mamberano river are being made into a logging concession for the Australian Asmus-McLean company;
- 137 000 hectares of mangrove forest in Bintun Bay is being logged by the Japanese Marubeni company;
- 45 000 hectares of sago estates have been set up in the Manokwari regency, its sago starch will be exported to Japan...

Mining and oil companies are encouraged to exploit the mineral resources in our soils. The Papuans are not benefiting from the large revenues from the exploitation of our natural resources. The indigenous peoples of West Papua will be left with a ruined environment.

Even organisations engaged in the conservation of nature are denying the land claims and the cultural rights of the indigenous peoples of West Papua. The World Wildlife Fund is worried about the destructive impacts of commercial logging, mining and new settlements in West Papua. However, according to the management plans for a nature reserve of approximately 31 600 hectares in the north-east of West Papua, not only the commercial enterprises and the newcomers are to be curtailed, but also the indigenous peoples are obliged to comply with the views of Western conservationists. The Papuans will need permits for almost every aspect of their traditional ways of living: to live in or to enter the reserve, to collect firewood, to hunt pigs or to cut a tree for the construction of dug-out canoes. 102 Papuan families who had been replaced from their traditional area into the reserve, to be displaced again. The indigenous peoples of West Papua who have developed a system of co-existence between nature and people, who have been able to preserve the rich flora and fauna for

uncounted generations, experience now that conservationists of WWF are not their allies but their enemies. To the indigenous peoples of West Papua, WWF behaves as henchman of the Indonesian authorities.

Madame Chairperson,

We have often heard the United Nations condemning European colonialism and South African racism; however in West Papua, we as Melanesians are being colonised and discriminated against by an Asian state: Indonesia.

Last May the UN Decolonisation Committee arranged a special regional seminar in Vanuatu, primarily to discuss what needs to be done to support the decolonisation process in the remaining non self-governing territories. The Seminar recommended among other things that the Special Committee re-examine the list of territories, with a view to ascertaining whether it included all territories to which the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples" applies. Furthermore the Seminar recommended that the Special Committee take note of the concerns of indigenous peoples in its work, and send an observer to the meetings of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.

For several years we have requested the Working Group to consider our demand for External Self-Determination by putting it forward into the UN Decolonisation Committee: we feel encouraged by the attention the Decolonisation Committee wants to give to the work of the Working Group, since this is the only UN body where we are allowed to represent our people, the people of West Papua. Since the recent and ongoing turbulent developments in Eastern Europe, the right to self-determination is again an issue in the political arena. The unfinished decolonisation process may gain speed again; state boundaries based on imperialism and colonialism may be renegotiated, based on the historical and cultural rights of peoples.

The recent developments on the global level should encourage the member states of the UN to settle international and so-called national disputes on the diplomatic level. As a member organisation of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka, we prefer a diplomatic solution to the present tensions in our region; already too many people have been killed in the Indonesian military operations, and also our movement seems to be forced to increase their military activities.

In the spirit of the Universal Declaration we the peoples of West Papua sincerely call on to the UN to:

1. take clear note of the present situation and the recent developments regarding the indigenous peoples of West Papua and of its historical background;

2. acknowledge that the people of West Papua up till now have denied their right to self-determination.
3. resume its responsibility from which it withdrew twenty years ago on 19 November 1969, regarding the peoples of West Papua;
4. mandate a Special Rapporteur or a member of the Working Group to witness and investigate human rights abuses to the indigenous peoples of West Papua;
5. put pressure on the Indonesian Government to adopt legislation to prevent immigration which is undermining the position of the indigenous peoples of West Papua;
6. prohibit the exploitation of the natural resources of West Papua until the moment that the Papuans may determine their national heritage;
7. consider our demand for External Self-Determination by putting it forward into the UN Decolonisation Committee.

Concerning the promotion of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in the light of the imminent termination of the mandate of the Working Group, we appeal to the Working Group to secure some instruments for the indigenous peoples by:

- Speaking out for the creation of more opportunities for colonised peoples and indigenous peoples to speak for themselves at UN functions;
- Advocating UN assistance for conferences and seminars to be held by indigenous peoples locally, regionally and worldwide.

Thank you for your attention.

Papua Merdeka

This statement before the UNWGIP was delivered on 1 August 1990 and was accompanied by an Urgent Appeal to the UN Secretary General which was dated 9 February 1990.

Indonesia

Operation Hupla: exacerbating a tribal tragedy

by Carolyn Marr

In August 1989 the lives of the *Hupla* people of West Papua were devastated by a major earthquake. Now, as if they had not already suffered enough, the Indonesian government is imposing a resettlement programme on the victims which will exacerbate their tragedy. For a people whose life and identity is intimately bound to their ancestral land, resettlement will threaten the very existence of the tribe, both culturally and physically. Already, the resettlement programme has claimed the lives of at least fifteen people and in the long run could well cause more suffering than the earthquake itself.

August's earthquake, which struck the Hupla lands in the Woso valley, high in the remote mountains of West Papua, was the worst in their living memory. Around 120 people died – mostly Hupla, but also including some neighbouring *Yali* and *Kurima Dani* people – and many were badly injured. Some homes and gardens were destroyed in the mudslides triggered by the earthquake.

It was not long before the Indonesian government-appointed district head Lt-Col. J.B. Wenas, started talking of resettlement, and "Operation Hupla" (Wenas is a military man) was launched. Indonesian seismologists dutifully announced that the region was unsafe and that more powerful quakes could be expected in the near future. The immediate objective was to resettle the 3 500-strong Hupla tribe who live in the worst hit area and then, in the longer term, to relocate tens of thousands of people from surrounding valleys. A resettlement site outside the danger zone was located at Elelim, to the north of the central mountain range, and troops were drafted in to fell the forest and build new Indonesian-style homes for the resettlers. One or two Hupla men were won over by government officials with promises of the modern world, its "cargo" available at the new site. Then, with no regard for the traditional decision-making procedure of community consensus, military helicopters started ferrying in families from the disaster area.

No consultation, no choice

As a classic "top-down" decision – the kind that tolerates no dissent – resettlement is not so much an option for the Hupla to take or leave, but a

command which must be obeyed. They were left in no doubt of this soon after the earthquake: people who declined the government's "offer" to relocate were told they would receive no further relief from the government. In the weeks after the earthquake when relief supplies were necessary to sustain life, this meant, in plain language: "resettle or die" – and, had there not been an alternative organised by local churches and missionaries, this may well have been the result.

Lt.Col. Wenas refused to consider any alternative to resettlement at the new site, including a proposal to re-establish themselves in the Woso valley put forward by the Hupla. Neither did he have any time for the suggestion that there should be a trial period for the resettlement.

It was clear from the fact that coercion was needed to move them, that the supposed beneficiaries of the plan, the Hupla themselves, were far from convinced about the benefits of resettling immediately after the earthquake. They are even less convinced now: it was not long before the resettlers began abandoning the new site to return home. Tropical diseases including malaria, to which the highland Hupla have no resistance, are rife at lower altitude Elelim. Within the first few months of arrival, 15 people had died and many others were reported to be suffering from dysentery or malaria or both, resulting in severe debilitation and malnutrition. Rather than face this uncertain future, the majority of those resettled decided to set out on the long trek home. According to the most recent report, about 335 of the 500 initially resettled have returned to their true home.

Donations from the international community: questionable aid

Once news of the earthquake reached the rest of the country, donations for the relief effort started pouring in, including US \$25 000 each from the Japanese and US embassies, \$50 000 from the UNDP and \$25 000 from mining company Freeport Indonesia. Large amounts of money, clothing and other relief was donated by the Indonesian public but, except for donations channelled through church organisations, none of this appears to have reached the Hupla in the earthquake zone.

The fact that so-called disaster relief, as channelled through the Indonesian government, was used in an attempt to coerce the Hupla into resettlement, inevitably raises questions about the integrity of the donors. In April TAPOL wrote to the major donors, informing them of the serious situation at the scene of the earthquake and urging them to check how their funds had been used. Until now there has been only one reply. TAPOL was assured by UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III, that the \$50 000 was granted for "immediate relief needs". An Indonesian newspaper report which said that UNDP funds were destined for the resettlement programme, contradicts this. However, since the disaster relief was

manipulated as part of the resettlement programme, there is in effect little difference between giving money for “immediate relief needs” and channelling it directly into the resettlement programme.

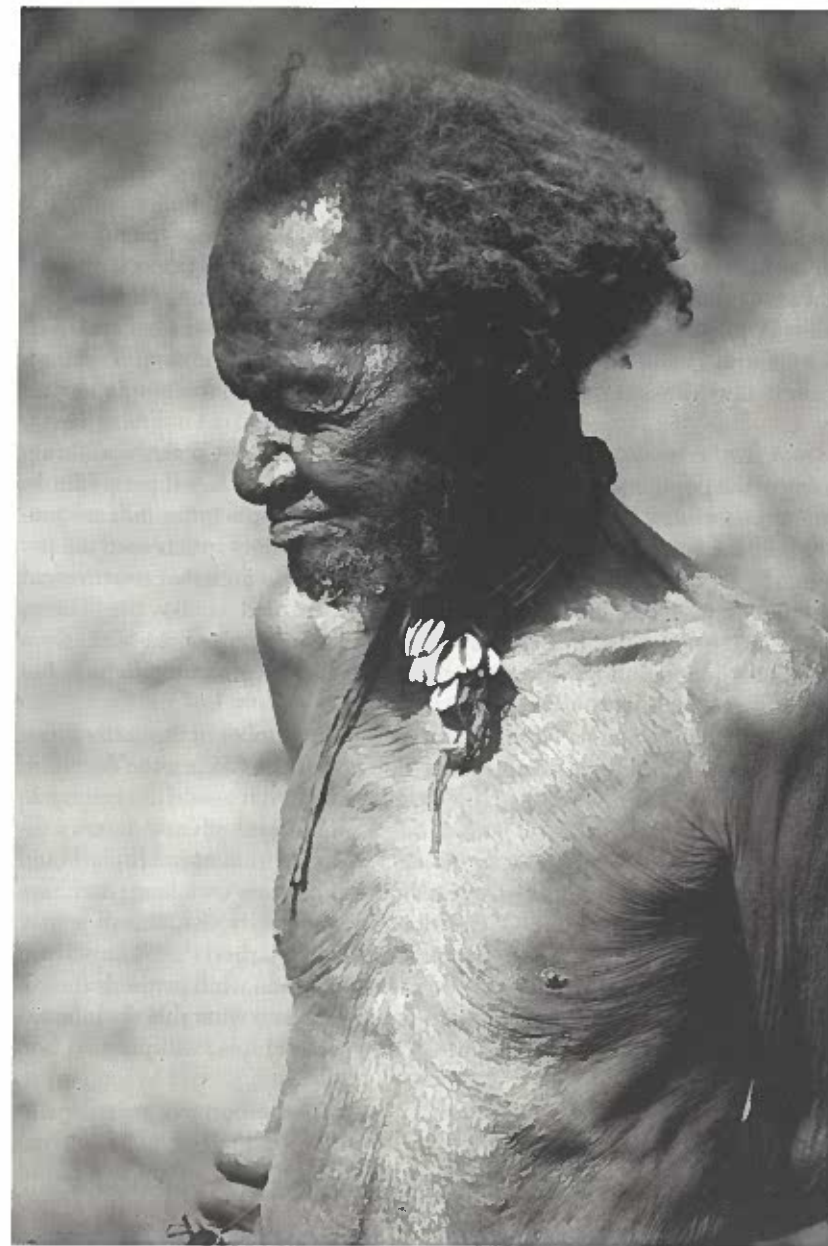
Questions also surround the motive behind Freeport Indonesia’s donation. This subsidiary of the U.S. mining giant Freeport McMoRan is certainly no friend of tribal people, indeed the company’s mining activities at the western end of the Central Highlands of West Papua caused such resentment among local *Amungme* tribespeople who lost their gardens and hunting grounds to the mine that, in 1977, they blew up the company’s pipeline which conducts copper concentrate to the coast. The Indonesian armed forces retaliated by launching air and ground attacks on Amungme Villages. Finally the government and Freeport opted for forcible resettlement of the Amungme. Like the Hupla, they were resettled in a malaria-infested lowland area to which they were not accustomed. In the light of this, it seems in bad taste, to say the least, for Freeport now to offer money to resettle the Hupla.

Significant too, is Freeport’s recently won right to explore a huge 25 000 square kilometre area covering almost all of West Papua’s mountainous backbone, an area that almost certainly includes Hupla land.

The importance of land

Apart from the malaria and the malnutrition, there are plenty of other important reasons why the resettlement cannot succeed. The plan ignores the incalculable importance for the Hupla of their land – which, according to tribal law cannot be alienated from its rightful owner and cannot be bought or sold. The land provides nourishment, including the much-favoured mountain *pandanus* nut (this cannot be grown at lower altitudes). It is at the root of the very identity of the Hupla, who define themselves in relation to surrounding tribal groups. Uproot them from their land and their identity is destroyed. And the importance the Hupla attribute to their own land also decides their attitude to other people’s land. The fact that the resettlement site is on land which they do not and, in their terms, cannot ever own (it already belongs to another tribe), is thus a further major disincentive to resettle. Recent attempts by the government to make resettlement more palatable – promising clean water and doling out anti-malarials – will not change this fact.

Why then, is the government so keen to move the Hupla and, in the long term, neighbouring tribes, when there are so many clear arguments against? It is not as if the government has no experience of resettlement in the region. Attempts to resettle earthquake victims from nearby Bime and Solo areas in 1976 and 1982, have failed abysmally (and with loss of life).



*An Hupla elder from West Papua.
(Photo: TAPOL, Owen Jelpke).*

One important reason is that the resettlement of the Hupla fits into the more general framework of tribal resettlement in Indonesia. The official view of tribal people is that they are “primitive” and “backward” and need to be brought up to an “Indonesian” standard of living. Tribal policy in Indonesia is thus a “civilizing mission”: under government “development” projects, tribal people must wear “proper” clothes, become sedentary farmers, live in approved housing and they are obliged to sign up for one of the major world religions. However, this civilizing mission is not the full story; alongside tribal resettlement come “national development” projects such as forestry, mining, plantations, dams, transmigration. All these centrally controlled projects deprive indigenous groups of their land and resources. Given the Central Highland’s rich mineral wealth, it is possible that access to resources underlines the government’s civilizing mission to the Hupla territory.

A further reason for Indonesian’s tribal resettlement policy is to bring parts of the population living in isolated regions under closer supervision. In such territories as West Papua where there is a vigorous independence movement, the Indonesian government’s concern to gain easy access to the population is especially great. Officially, the explanation for tribal resettlement in more easily accessible areas is to allow those resettled to enjoy the benefits of the modern world. Thus Elelim has been promoted as an area of development and population growth along the Wamema-Jayapura road (which, however, has yet to be constructed).

Despite the trauma of losing so many of their number in the earthquake, the majority of the Hupla do not want to move to Elelim. When the dust from the earthquake had settled, the Hupla people saw that it would not be impossible to stay on their ancestral land. Houses could be rebuilt and gardens replanted. Now, ten months after the disaster, it is clear that most Hupla would rather live with the familiar risk of earthquakes on their own land, than face an uncertain future on land which belongs to somebody else. But they may not be allowed this choice. The current resettlement target is 2 064 families in Elelim – 10 000 people – by 1993. It remains to be seen what methods the government officials will employ to reach that target, and what role the international donors, whose professed aim is to help the Hupla, will play.

For further information on a campaign against the coercive resettlement please contact:

TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign. 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HW, UK.
Survival International, 310 Edgware Road, London W2 1DY, UK.

In April, Survival International wrote to the Indonesian Minister for Social Affairs calling for a halt to the resettlement. No reply has been received.

Israel

The Bedouins of Israel

by Fiona McKay

Madame Chair, I am especially grateful for this opportunity to speak today because I believe that it is the first time that the case of the *Bedouin* Arabs of the Negev has been raised in this forum. Because it is the first time, and because this is a little known issue, I believe it will be helpful to give a brief background.

The Bedouin Arabs of the Negev number amongst the world’s indigenous peoples. They share many of the characteristics of indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, while also having unique characteristics and problems. Descendants of Bedouin tribes who have inhabited the Negev desert since the Byzantine period, they remain a tribal society who proudly maintain a distinct identity based on traditional culture and customs. In addition, they form an integral part of the Palestinian people, being among the pre-1948 inhabitants of those parts of Palestine which became the state of Israel, and have suffered a similar fate. During the 1948 war a vast majority fled or were expelled, and have never been allowed to return. Today those who remained number some 75 000, and form approximately 10% of the Palestinian Arab population of Israel, which in turn constitutes per cent of Israeli citizens.

In common with other indigenous peoples, the relationship with the land has special significance in Bedouin society. Originally nomadic, the Negev Bedouin were largely sedentarised before the state of Israel came into being. They had a well-established system of land ownership and use, including agriculture, herding, water access and seasonal movement. But Israeli law fails to protect their land rights, traditional economy, culture and religious sites, all of which have been destroyed or threatened by acts of successive Israeli governments.

Having given this overview, I will turn now to the most urgent threat currently facing the Bedouin tribes of the Negev; their forcible relocation into government-planned urban townships, which is already well under way. During 1951 and 1952, the Israelis had concentrated the whole of the Negev Bedouin in one “closed security area”. This involved the forcible removal of eleven tribes from their ancestral lands and their relocation on land belonging to other tribes. The move was stated to be temporary, but when military rule over Arab areas ended in 1966, they were prohibited



*An old Bedouin Arab of Negev, Israel.
(Photo: Association for Support and Defense of
Bedouin Rights in Israel).*

from returning to their land, on the basis that its owners were absent. The reason for their absence, of course, had been their forced evacuation. All attempts to claim ownership through the courts have failed.

Current Israeli policy is to relocate the Bedouin who inhabit the Negev once more, this time into seven planned urban townships. This forces them into an alien urban environment which is completely foreign to their chosen way of life. Furthermore these townships lack an independent economic base; the 1976 regional plan for the Northern Negev designates the Bedouin Arabs solely as a wage labour pool for Jewish industry. The same regional plan includes 100 new Jewish rural agricultural settlements, but the Bedouins are denied this option.

In order to pressure the Bedouin into moving into the townships, the Israeli authorities use a variety of coercive measures, including actual demolition of homes. All building outside approved settlements is classified as illegal. Most Bedouin homes are therefore "illegal", and a 1987 government report recommended the demolition of 6 600 such dwellings over a 4-year period, during which the inhabitants are scheduled to move into the townships. Demolitions take place regularly – for example during 1988 some 90 homes were destroyed – and are carried out in military style, the bulldozers accompanied by scores of police and soldiers. Only the week before last, a further 10 homes were destroyed. Other measures include harassment and brutality by police-like unit, inaptly named the "Green Patrol", whose activities include destroying crops, seizing herds and uprooting fruit and olive trees.

I have focused here on the forced relocation which is the burning issue now facing the Bedouin of the Negev. It appears that this is a problem common to indigenous peoples in many parts of the world, even though in breach of developing international standards as reflected by the ILO Convention and the draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is therefore an issue which the Association would recommend as one deserving the particular and urgent attention of the Working Group.

Forced relocation is not the only way in which basic rights of the Bedouin of the Negev are under attack. In common with the rest of the Arab citizens of Israel, they also face gross discrimination in the allocation of all resources including the provision of health, education and other basic services. The majority, both inside and outside the townships, live in poverty, and per capita income is less than half that of the Israeli average. Most importantly, the Bedouin Arabs of the Negev are denied an opportunity to control or participate in matters affecting their lives, a right which is central to developing international standards regarding the rights of indigenous peoples. The Bedouin are almost completely unrepresented in state bodies, and the vast majority cannot elect their own local councillors or control their budgets, or economic or other development.

The Bedouin have proposed their own solution. Civil engineers and urban planners have just completed, and will shortly submit to the authorities, an alternative regional plan which reflects the Bedouin community's aspirations, including the recognition of existing settlements and their development as agricultural villages. The plan challenges the Israeli government claim that Bedouin demands are not viable from a planning point of view.

I would like to finish, Madame Chair, by listing 7 demands reflecting fundamental human rights which the Association for the Support and Defence of Bedouin Rights is making of the Israeli government:

1. Full and equal rights as citizens of Israel for the Bedouin of the Negev;
2. An equitable settlement of Bedouin Arab land claims;
3. Recognition of existing Bedouin settlements, and the option of rural agricultural, not only urban, settlements;
4. A freeze on house demolitions, uprooting of trees and other such practices;
5. Concerted government efforts to improve education;
6. The return of the Beersheba mosque – which is now being used as a museum – and other sacred places to the control and use of the Muslim community;
7. The adoption of the alternative regional plan, which may save these communities from destruction.

Philippines

Indigenous peoples of the Philippines versus Development Aggression

by KAMP (Katipunan ng mga
Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas)

It is happening again. Not exactly under a different set-up. Just a little change in the bureaucratic tone.

"The projects are necessary because they would provide us with alternative and cheaper sources of energy," so goes the rationale.

Old scrap.

The old regime has used the same line not too long ago. And the people sunk deeper into the pit of poverty. Those who complained got their prizes: prison or death.

The Aquino administration didn't intend to change basic policies. It toes the line. And its bureaucrats are happy. More development projects means more aid. More aid means chances of personal enrichment.

In the Philippines, most development projects are found in the area where indigenous peoples live. The reason is obvious: the land best suited for these projects are the ancestral domains of the Indigenous Peoples – handed over by generations past.

One thing is certain: Indigenous Peoples would never benefit from these projects. As in the former regime's development programs, their welfare will be the last consideration for "national interest". Ecological destruction would again befall the areas chosen as project sites. Foreign debt will be bloated anew. The remaining resource base will be depleted. And communities will be displaced.

Campaign Against Development Aggression: The Struggle Continues

When governments, past and present, discovered the commercial value of the land, development projects became a government by word. As in probably all other third world countries governed by elite bureaucracies whose only interest is to maintain their hold to power, the Philippines follow an economic orientation based heavily on foreign debt.

The phenomena of development projects depletes the country's ca-



Map of Philippines.

capacity to genuinely develop. It is a legacy which President Corazon Aquino has graciously accepted with outstretched arms. All the mechanisms of the government used in the past to keep this system securely intact have been preserved by the very same people who made plundering legal in this country.

The Indigenous Peoples are not anti-development. They would, in fact, be the first to rally behind any genuine development initiative because they have long been deprived of its fruits.

But genuine development should ensure the liberation of the masses of the people from poverty and oppression.

Unfortunately, the government's present development strategy does not work towards this end. It is, in reality, anti-people, anti-democratic and oppressive.

The development strategy being pursued by the Aquino administration does not veer away from what was handed her over by the past regime. Essentially, it is one that attracts foreign investors into the economy, ensuring them unhampered access to the country's resources. Unfair competition to the small Filipino entrepreneurs, of course, but their presence is a plus to the projection of the government's stability. And Mrs. Aquino desperately needs just this. Badly.

Various projects undertaken in the name of national development often have tragic effects to the communities directly involved. Oftentimes, their cultural, political and economic rights are disregarded.

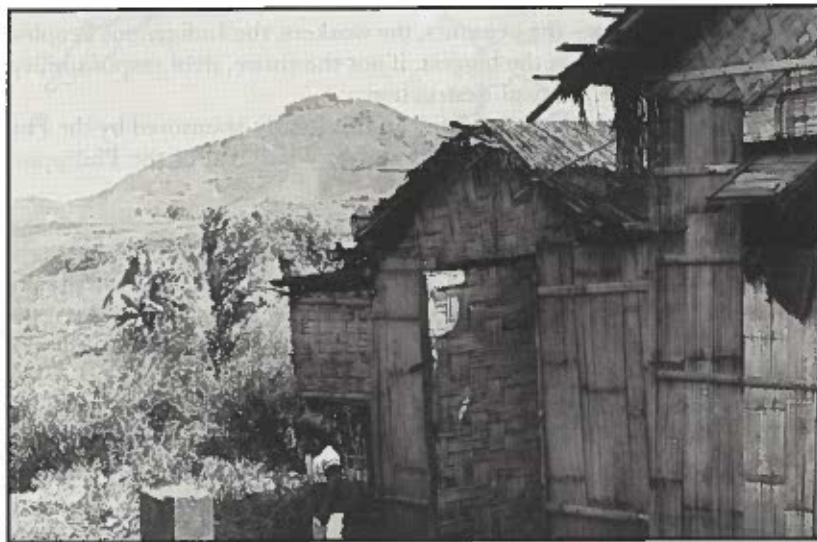
The benefits of development remains at the top. Nothing ever trickles down to the majority – the peasants, the workers, the Indigenous Peoples. What is handed down is the biggest, if not the entire, debt responsibility. And the legacy of ecological destruction.

The following projects, initiated and/or jointly-sponsored by the Philippine government, are threatening the very survival of the Philippine Indigenous Peoples:

1. Geothermal Power Plant in Mt. Apo (Mindanao island). The government-owned National Power Corporation plans to build four (4) power-generating plants on a 450-hectare project area in Mt. Apo, the Philippines' highest peak. The project requires 43 production wells and 12 re-injection wells, and is expected to provide 220 megawatts of electricity (about 23.78% of the total energy requirements of the island). Mt. Apo, the site of the project, is home to the six (6) non-Muslim indigenous groups namely *Bagobo*, *K'lagan*, *Kaulo*, *Manobo*, *Ubo* and *Ata* tribes in southern Mindanao. The people claim there was no real consultation made but the company states otherwise. Obviously, (and customarily), consultations were made with wrong people, usually those belonging to the government-favored indigenous organizations.

2. Geothermal Power Plant in Mt. Pinatubo (mountain boundary of Zambales, Bataan and Pampanga provinces in Central Luzon). The same company, PNOC, has started exploratory digging operations in Mt. Pinatubo where it plans to construct another Geomothermal Power Plant for “cheaper electricity” on the ancestral homelands of the *Aeta* tribes;
3. F.F. Cruz Mining Corporation Inc. (Bulalacao, Mindoro island). Aproximately one third (1/3) of the project site is occupied by *Hanunuo-Mangyan* communities. An estimated 5 000 – 7 000 Hanunuo-Mangyan living inside the concession area will be potentially affected by the company’s operations. No notification was ever given to the Mangyans. Meanwhile, the company has prohibited people from pursuing their economic activities within the concession;
4. The Bukidnon Industrial Plantation Project (Bukidnon, Mindanao island).

The Bukidnon Industrial Plantation project is a joint initiative of the New Zealand and Philippine governments to go on a “reforestation” of denuded parts of the Bukidnon provinces. Behind the scheme, however, the local organizations see nothing but a commercial undertaking. The types of trees identified for planting are those which mature within a relatively short period of time. Local and national indigenous organizations raise their protest over this.



*Evacuees makeshift shack on Mindanao Island, Philippines.
(Photo: IPRCM, Ire. Lumad Mindanaw).*

Campaign Against Development Aggression: The Struggle Continues

The Indigenous Peoples are alarmed. Their experiences made them wary of the unannounced visits and sudden focus of government attention to their areas. The word “development” rings negatively. For them, it means “destruction”.

In January 1990, KAMP, the national federation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines, together with various support groups and institutions, launched the “Campaign Against Development Aggression”. The objective is to protect the few remaining parts of ancestral lands from the threat of destruction posed by various development projects.

It also aims to bring to the attention of the Filipino populace the environmental hazard brought by the so-called “development projects” and the additional debt burden they are sure to cause to the country.

A strong, united opposition is necessary. The proponents of these projects exert influence inside the Legislative, and even in the Executive, branch of the Philippine government.

Now, more than ever, Indigenous Peoples will not just sit down and watch their ancestral homelands brought into destruction. They will fight to defend their lands. To the end, if need be.

Already, local initiatives are gaining small victories against big and moneyed groups which want them out. And soon.

Across the country, Indigenous Peoples are taking actions to prevent the interest groups from taking over their ancestral lands. They are gaining headway in education and projection work. In the town and urban centers, advocates are organizing support actions to help sustain local efforts.

Everything is on the work. The enemies are, no doubt, strong and powerful. But with a united strength, nothing is impossible.

The government refuses to learn from history. Or does it easily forget?

Taiwan

Statement on the Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan

by Howard R. Berman

Thank you, Madame Chair and Members of the Working Group.

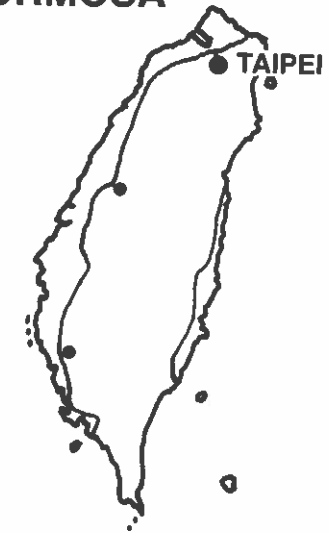
Last April, I traveled to Taiwan at the joint invitation of the the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and the Taiwan Aboriginal Alliance. The purpose of my visit was to observe the situation of the indigenous peoples of the island and to discuss with them recent international developments affecting their rights. While in Taiwan, I met with indigenous leaders, human rights advocates, opposition members of the Legislature, Kuomintang government officials, scholars, and knowledgeable journalists. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to visit seven indigenous communities located throughout the country – communities of the *Yami*, *Bunun*, *Ami*, and *Sao* peoples.

Madame Chair, there are currently ten surviving distinct indigenous peoples on Taiwan and adjacent islands that are in varying states of crisis as the result of laws, policies, and practices of government. Government control on the island extends to fundamental aspects of indigenous identity. For example, there is no formal recognition at all of distinct indigenous peoples as such. Rather, the government identifies all indigenous individuals and communities, wherever located, as “mountain people” – a terminology carried over from the period of Japanese colonial rule. The identification “mountain people” is subdivided by one additional category termed “plains-mountain people.” The two terms have nothing whatever to do with topography or geography, however. They relate solely to the degree of cultural assimilation of indigenous communities as defined by the Kuomintang government, with so-called “plains mountain people” receiving less consideration than the others.

Government control also extends to the legal status of indigenous individuals. Individuals marrying into non-indigenous families and assuming the family name lose their legal status as indigenous for themselves and their children. An additional mechanism for loss of identity occurs when individuals travel to urban areas seeking employment. All persons in Taiwan are required to re-register with the government when changing their residence. If a local official neglects to register a person as indigenous,

Map of Taiwan.

TAIWAN FORMOSA



legal status is again lost. Through these methods, thousands of indigenous persons, as a matter of law, have been assimilated into the national society, causing a corresponding incremental de-population of indigenous communities – again as a matter of law.

Government assimilation programs directly interfere with the cultural integrity of the indigenous peoples as well. Individuals have had to assume Han Chinese names at birth because the government will only record birth names that can be written in Chinese ideograms. Moreover, the use of indigenous languages is not permitted in the schools. Education is conducted exclusively in Mandarin and children have been routinely punished for any manifestation of their mother tongue. Numerous young adults told me of physical punishment and public ridicule they had received in the schools, causing them mental anguish and a confused sense of identity during childhood.

Madame Chair, all aspects of government policy are oriented toward assimilation – for the clearly-expressed purpose of integrating indigenous lands, resources, and labor into the national economy. There is, for example, no secure recognition of indigenous land rights in Taiwan. The ancestral territories of the indigenous peoples have been declared government

lands, and are, in effect, leased back to indigenous communities. In the case of the so-called “plains-mountain people”, village lands and small agricultural holdings have been allotted to individuals.

In most villages, remaining land are insufficient for economic support. Young adults, and sometimes whole families have been forced into the cities to earn their living at the lowest and most exploited levels of the national economic system. I visited one Ami “squatter” community located on the bank of a polluted river on the outskirts of Taipei. Ami laborers had gathered there in an effort to preserve social cohesion and cultural life in the urban environment. The elders described how economic scarcity on their remaining lands had caused this separation of families and cultural dislocation. They now faced the additional insecurity of government hostility toward their “unofficial” community in Taipei. Their homes had been torn down several times in the recent past, and they were again facing an eviction order.

Most of the remaining ancestral indigenous territories are located in “mountain reserves.” Since 1945, the reserves have been and remain under direct military jurisdiction and control. Officers at military checkpoints determine who may enter or leave these areas. Although the situation has become considerably more open, for a long period after 1945, Christian missionaries were the only outsiders permitted into the territories.

Although by law the reserves are formally inalienable, recognized indigenous land holdings are being progressively limited to village sites and gardens. Under government regulations and decrees, reserve areas are being rapidly opened to Chinese economic development. Huge areas have been declared national parks or government resource extraction zones. Scenic areas and hot springs have been granted to Chinese entrepreneurs, agricultural lands have been granted for tea and other cash crop plantations, and forest areas have been opened for timbering. Numerous indigenous communities have been cut off from territories that formerly supported traditional hunting and fishing subsistence economies. Dispossession has also occurred through hydroelectric development and government relocation programmes, which moved communities to areas that the government considers more agriculturally productive for the national economy. All of these processes have had serious effects on the social and cultural cohesion of indigenous peoples. In an interview with the two Ministry of Interior officials responsible for indigenous affairs in the country, I was told quite bluntly that the 80 million Chinese on Taiwan needed to expand into indigenous territories for reasons of national economic development.

Before closing, Madame Chair, I want to refer to a situation that I found most egregious. Lanyu Island, located just off the southern coast of Taiwan, is the ancestral territory of the Yami people. The Yami are a very

traditional people who support themselves by coastal fishing in boats of their own design and by small-scale cultivation. Since 1945, over half of the island has been seized by the state – initially to provide cattle farms for retired Kuomintang military personnel from the Chinese mainland, and later for an airport and military prison. The most deadly threat to Yami existence, however, began in 1981 when the government began secretly constructing a nuclear waste dump on the coast of Lanyu Island within a few kilometers of several Yami villages. By 1987, 40 000 barrels and by 1990, 70 000 barrels of highly toxic nuclear waste have been shipped to Lanyu and placed in the dump. The Yami people are terrified at the prospect of nuclear contamination. Elders told me that the people are afraid to eat their crops. In addition to their health fears, they know that any serious leak of radioactive materials will destroy their coastal fishery and cause removal from their island with the loss of their way of life.

The Yami people are currently fighting against a government plan to take additional lands in order to double the capacity of the nuclear dump. The existence of this plan has been confirmed by officials in charge of the nuclear waste program in Taipei. The Yami people have asked for international support in their efforts to preserve their way of life and the environmental health of their island.

Finally, Madame Chair, the situation in Taiwan offers a clear lesson on the need for developing strong and effective international standards on indigenous rights. The unfortunate overall human rights situation in Taiwan is well known. Indigenous individuals have suffered from many of the same human rights violations that afflict individual members of the national society. However, in addition, the indigenous peoples of Taiwan also suffer serious violations of their rights as peoples – that is, rights to territorial integrity, self-determination, and cultural continuity – that go directly to their survival and which, quite obviously, are not adequately addressed by existing instruments.

Thank you.

Howard R. Berman is Professor of International law at the California Western School of Law.

U.S.A.

Indigenous cultural rights as human rights: repatriation of human skeletal remains, burial artifacts and cultural objects and properties

by Rory Snowarrow Fausett

Thank you, Madame Chair:

Good afternoon all of my relations. I am happy to see that some of our North American elders have joined us for this week of plenary sessions of the Working Group. Your voices, wisdom, spirit, and counsel were missed last week during our difficult deliberations.* If we now had also the voices of our animal relations – the animal peoples – how much wiser might our discussions be today.

As is customary among my people, the *Siksikau* (whom you refer to as “Blackfoot”) when visiting other peoples in their homelands, I wish to thank the people of Geneva for permitting me to come into their territory to address this plenary session of the United Nations Working Group.

Madame Chair, I wish to bring to the attention of the Working Group a continuing and consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights of indigenous peoples – the internment of indigenous peoples’ skeletal remains, burial artifacts, and cultural objects and properties.

The UN working Group of Indigenous Populations met for two weeks rather than a single week this year for the first time. Work during the initial week was conducted in three concurrent sessions from which emerged a proposed draft language on 1) indigenous land and resource rights, 2) indigenous political rights, and 3) cultural and all other rights and preambular language. The lack of Spanish translation during these formative and conceptual deliberations, however, prevented full participation by the Spanish-speaking indigenous peoples, and hampered greatly the efforts at cohesive intra-indigenous dialogue and the drafting of declarati-on language. After much internal debate, and protest to the UN Secretariat, the Institutional failure to provide full translation services led to a three-day boycott of the drafting groups by most of the indigenous peoples present.

In the United States today, an estimated 300 000 to 2 million human remains of indigenous peoples, including many remains of our South and

Central American and South Pacific relatives, are housed and put on display in the federal, state, and private museums of the United States. Throughout the country, these museums, and universities and colleges, both private and public, assert, in the interest of “higher” learning, their possession and ownership of indigenous peoples’ ancestral remains.

It is well known, for example, that the United States’ national museum – Smithsonian Institution – warehouses the remains of some 18 000 of our peoples. Despite repeated requests over many years, only 21 remains, to date – those for which there is full documentation of blatant theft – have been returned to their peoples for proper reburial.

At my own institution, the University of California at Berkeley, we just last year learned that the university museum retains and claims to own nearly 10 000 human remains of indigenous peoples from the western United States and Peru. We have worked incessantly this past year to obtain the return of these peoples to their Mother Earth in accordance with their peoples’ traditional beliefs. We have yet to meet with any success.

We continue a dialogue with the museums and universities for the return of our relatives who have passed on. A very few universities and museums across the United States have heard our requests and have begun voluntarily to return ancestral remains. But in the context of the numbers of remains held captive, we have made pitifully slow progress.

Beyond the issue of the remains of our ancestors, literally millions of our cultural objects – many of great spiritual importance and critical cultural significance to the traditional lives and values of our peoples – lie in boxes or vaults within these institutions. The theft and unconsented collection, cataloguing, and warehousing of our cultural patrimony continues unabated. Many sacred items, too, routinely are defiled by open and public exposure and display in the purported interest of educating the majority population.

Many, many requests by scores of tribal sacred societies for the return of spiritual and cultural materials essential to the continuance and vitality of their societies go unacknowledged. Long-standing requests of the *Haude-nosaunee* peoples for return of sacred *wampum* belts, and by the *Zuni* people for return of their sacred war gods are only beginning to be heard and to be realized.

The continued cultural incarceration pits many indigenous peoples against not only institutions of government, but also against an extensive and elaborate network of international antiquities dealers. The lucrative traffic in indigenous collectibles and *objets d’art* is attested to, for instance, by the prolonged legal battle in the United States, of the *Aymara* Indians of Bolivia who are seeking the return from private collectors of that tribe’s communally-owned, centuries-old weavings.

Our indigenous relations from Australia and Aotearoa (the country you call New Zealand) tell us of similar ethnocidal practices visited upon their peoples. We are told that there are thousands of *Maori* spiritual and cultural objects, as well as human remains, in overseas museums. While the British Museum holds the greatest number of *Maori* objects outside Aotearoa, other major collections are housed in museums in Chicago, New York, Salem; at Harvard and the Bishop Museum of Hawaii; and in museums in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. The patterns of abuse include, as well, the private collections of individuals who consider human remains, such as the preserved, tattooed heads of *Maori* warriors, as objets d'art and novelties.

We also are told that during the heyday of "social darwinism", many museums in European countries, including England, France, and Germany, maintained in formaldehyde sizeable numbers of Aborigine adults and children. Incredibly, the great majority of these people remain in the museums to this day. Further, Pemumbray, the first Aborigine resistance leader, shot and killed last century by British troops during peace negotiations outside Sydney, Australia, was decapitated and his head remains to this day in the British Royal College of Surgeons.

And perhaps, Madame Chair, within this collective tragedy that I recite to you today, lies an ultimate irony: That right here in Geneva, as we discuss with resplendent civility on this beautiful campus, the denial of indigenous human rights across the globe, the pickled remains of Aborigine peoples are kept at a museum in this very city, a short distance from where I address you now.

Due to the tireless efforts of indigenous peoples, Madame Chair, we fortunately can report that some remains and cultural objects are being returned. For example, I am pleased to report that in the United States a recently-enacted Federal law provides for the return of at least a small percentage of the indigenous remains presently captive in the nation's Smithsonian Institution. A very few other universities and museums across the United States, such as Stanford University and the University of Minnesota, have heard our requests and have begun voluntarily to return our ancestral remains. Further, we are told that Austria recently has come forward and has begun the voluntary repatriation of *Maori* skeletal remains. Moreover, Aborigine remains were returned to Australia this year for the very first time. We were gratified to hear that the Australian government has taken the repatriation issue under consideration, and announced earlier in the plenary session this year that it will be issuing a formal policy statement of the return of Aborigine remains in the next few weeks. We encourage the continuance of these policies of cooperation between indigenous peoples and institutions that presently hold our cultural patrimony. But in the context of the numbers of remains and objects held in captivity, we are making unacceptably slow progress.

Madame Chair, my prepared comments can provide but a brief accounting of some of the major abuses in this area. I cannot begin here, today, to catalogue fully the examples of ethnocidal abuses perpetuated upon indigenous peoples in the name of western museum science and anthropology. It seems to us a preserving of our societies, and exposing our ancient and beautiful heritages and cultures to the world-at-large, at the same time defile us and continue to subject us to such outrageous exploitive practices. State and private institutions that perpetuate these moral outrages appear settled upon a policy of "mind over matter", simply stated: "We do not mind what we do to you, because you simply do not matter."

Madame Chair, over the next year a preliminary study on this issue – the rightful return to us of our ancestors, and our cultural heritage as embodied in physical artifacts – will be completed for presentation in 1991 to the Working Group. I invite my indigenous relatives present today to come forward with any information they may have concerning their circumstances, so that this report can reflect fully the global range of abuses attendant to this topic.

Finally, Madame Chair, because it is imperative that the continuance of these ethnocidal practices and policies receive international scrutiny, priority, and exposure, the National Indian Youth Council, the National Aboriginal and Islander Legal Services Secretariat, and the people of Ngati Te Ata and Ngati Awa of Aotearoa, collectively invite the Working Group to consider our request today for a recommendation to the Subcommittee on Discrimination for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to investigate and make recommendations concerning the issue of the incarceration of indigenous peoples human remains and associated burial artifacts, and the recovery of indigenous cultural and spiritual objects so necessary to the continued vitalization of our peoples.

Thank you all for your attention, and thank you Madame Chair for permitting me the floor.

Rory Snowarrow Fausett is Professor of Native American Studies Visiting Professor of Law at the University of California-Berkeley and was at Geneva as Delegate of the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC).

But the reaction of the bureaucratic apparatus was only formal, as usual. The Council of Ministers of The Russian Federation adopted a resolution on additional measures for the economic and social advancement of the northern regions. The resolution provided for the strengthening of collective and state farms and cooperative and state-run hunting societies and organizations. An outsider could imagine that the government finally decided to do something for the needy. Local people nodded their heads bitterly, however. Over the past 20 years Nivkhi have been actually ousted by newcomers from collective farms, which were created for them in the Sakhalin region, by the decision of local party and government authorities. They have been resettled to towns, townships and ports where there were neither jobs nor homes for them.

The same has happened to cooperative sea-hunting societies: the Nivkhi have been deprived of their traditional occupation hunting in favour of newcomers. There is not a single Nivkhi left on the staff of any farm in the traditionally Nivkhi territory. Today, a Nivkhi welcome measures which provide for the further consolidation of businesses in which there are no Nivkhi left?

This is nothing but deception. In these circumstances, wordings like "to ensure the development of the regions populated by northern peoples" actually prevent the native ethnics from becoming the masters of their land again. The pain for the plight of our peoples and the responsibility which we are assuming at this difficult time can be considered a guarantee that the association will not be turned into another bureaucratic office separated from the people. We are looking for a structure of our own like hunters who sense that they are on the right track.

Izvestia: The difficulties and hardships of northern peoples have become pretty clear, thanks to the latest discussions. But don't you think that we don't yet have a clear idea about the specific mechanisms which could change the situation?

VS: I must say that many people are in a hurry to call me a Nivkhi chauvinist when I try to explain that in times immemorial there were two civilizations – a European and a northern – in the North, Siberia and the Far East. It has so happened that for centuries Europeans had to wage wars, winning new lands and enslaving others. That made them energetic and enterprising. The northern natives, in the meantime, tried to develop their relationship with nature to perfection. A civilization of harmonious unity thereby emerged, with man supporting his natural environment and the natural environment supporting man's life. Come to think of it, this is probably the highest goal of humankind.

And suddenly, a different civilization bursts violently into this fragile world, trampling underfoot, like a heavy tank, a northern culture it doesn't understand. And if we continue to repeat how many hospitals have been

built in the North over the past seventy years, what peoples have acquired their written language and how many natives have become doctors, teachers and writers but fail to admit what has actually happened to whole peoples, we won't find the way out of this historic impasse.

Just look how the bodies of power are formed in the *tundra*. In a democratic way, by the will of the majority. But the matter is that outsiders, most of whom are not here to stay, make up the majority of the local population nowadays. In the 1960s, 10 per cent of the population of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area were local ethnics. Today – one per cent. The ethnics practically have no chance to be worthily and fairly represented in the structures of administration. I agree with the scientists who demand that the disparity between the existing structures and the swiftly changing realities should be finally admitted. The rights of peoples, rather than administrative units should be the top priority in the expansion of the independence of regions, consolidation of cultural autonomy and implementation of other principles designed to harmonize ethnic relations.

Frankly speaking, I can't understand why in a democratic state, which proclaims the equality of all peoples, fifteen republics named after the basic ethnic groups should enjoy special rights which are different from those enjoyed by the other peoples which form autonomous republics and even more different from those who have been granted the status of just autonomous areas and regions. And what about those who have no statehoods of their own, among them 19 northern people? The election law of the Russian Federation does not enable all the peoples to send their representatives to the Russian Supreme Soviet. There is not a single *Orochi*, *Nivkhi*, *Selkup*, *Nganasan*, *Nanai*, *Ulchi*, *Itelmen* or *Udege* among the parliamentary deputies, although these peoples proposed their candidates.

I am convinced that we must have a community of equal peoples regardless of their numerical strength. The consistent protection of the interests of each personality and each ethnic community is the main way to democratize society.

Izvestia: To what degree can cooperative, lease, contract and other forms of economic activity be used by northern peoples to overcome their economic difficulties?

VS: I would remove the word "lease" from the list. What kind of "lease" can there be if the *Chukchee*, *Evenks* and other peoples are the real masters of land? It is from them that pasturelands, forests, rivers, beaches and seas can be leased by ministries. I think that a minister should ask the permission of the local people – either through their elected representatives or directly, through referendums, the right to lease part of their territory on a temporary basis to develop an industry or carry out other work on clear-cut conditions. In that case, the local people will not only help but also control how reasonably their land is used. The priority of land use should belong to the native population.

The main thing is that people should be treated with respect. One must ask for permission to walk on their land and to enter their homes, and if one comes with good intentions, one will be welcomed in.

The still existing collective farms in the tundra – a product of the old bureaucratic economic system – remain a form of shameful exploitation of the indigenous population. The state paid *Nivkh and Nanai* fisherman for their salmon 26 kopecks per kilo, selling it for dozens of times more on the home market and for hundreds times more on the foreign market. The level of self-awareness of the northern peoples and for their economic knowledge is sufficient for deciding what they should do with their territories and their natural resources.



Vladimir Sangi, newly elected president of the organization "Small Peoples of the North", Moscow 1990. (Photo: Jens Dahl).

Two years ago I came to Sakhalin to visit my fellow-tribesmen who had no jobs and were wandering around the town without any sense of purpose. I suggested forming a hunting and fishing cooperative. Forty men volunteered at first, then others... In a year and a half we put an end to unemployment in the Nogliki district and our people started earning good money (up to 1 500 rubles a month). We set up new branches. The people cheered up, for cooperatives and other modern forms of economic management well match the character of work of the northern peoples. You know that to produce offspring salmon roaming in the sea, one must return to the sources of the river where they once hatched. My philosophy is the same: if we want to save the northern peoples, they must be brought back to their sources, to their traditional way of life and their habitual trades and crafts.

Izvestia: While travelling around the traditional places of northern peoples' residence one can often hear voices of discontent with the discriminatory laws passed long ago and existing to this day, like the state monopoly of fur trading. Hunters complain that the authorities use even tougher measures to take away the the furs procured by them than did the collectors of quit-rent during the rule of Ivan the Terrible. How does the NPA intend to defend the interest of the indigenous population?

VS: The state monopoly on the use of renewable natural resources in the areas of northern peoples' habitation must be resolutely abolished. This problem is broader than it may seem at first glance. The network of game wardens and hunting inspectors who are not accountable to anyone has turned into the biggest state-sponsored poacher. In some areas game wardens harass hunters from local tribes so that they should not interfere with their illegal fur hunting.

In our opinion, this plunder in the forests will stop when the people themselves become the owners of their hunting grounds. The state must negotiate with them and conclude mutually beneficial agreements. And, of course, local hunters must themselves deal at international fur auctions through their organizations. Let representatives of the Nenets, Evenk or Chukchee hunters come to the same auction in Leningrad and compete for the best bargains.

So far, local hunters do not have modern equipment for fur dressing, but when we become members of joint ventures we will agree with our partners on the acquisition of such equipment. Which will benefit the state, too.

It will be easier to tackle these and other problems if all northern peoples gain state autonomy within the framework of the federation. Although there are bureaucrats in the administrative system who are fiercely resisting this and refusing to give up the old ways, they will have to reckon with the will of the northern nations supported by people's deputies of the

USSR and of the Russian Federation. There are representatives of the indigenous northern population among them who are people of new thinking and proponents of radical democratic reforms. The NPA intends to work in close cooperation with them.

We hope that by joint efforts we will resolve the pressing legislative problems. First of all, there must be a law on the priority in land use for the northern ethnic minorities in their historical homelands on the basis of the land law. In addition to this, each ethnic minority must have a state structure represented in the supreme bodies of power.

Izvestia: Many northerners are insisting on the restoration of the national districts, village councils and tribal boundaries eliminated in the 1930s. Are you not worried that this may cause territorial disputes between neighbouring nomadic groups?

VS: Some people think that if the 180 000 aborigines secure the adoption of law on priority land use, they will immediately rush into the tundra to peg out choice lands. Some will run faster, others slower while still others may only be able to crawl. So those who have strong legs and iron hearts will seize the best hunting and fishing grounds, they say.

As it is, the northern peoples have a different world outlook and a different morality. If kin A, for example, sees that the neighbouring kin B has worse hunting and fishing grounds and catches just five to ten fishes whereas kin A gets 250 to 300, the luckier kin will voluntarily help the other one. We have three good grounds, they will say, so take one of them and feed your children. This is the kind of relations that existed among kins. We representatives of the peoples of the North never did and simply cannot go by the Klondyke spirit. We will recall our historical tribal boundaries by the names of hills and rivers people keep in their memories. I stalked my native land barefoot, so how can I forget it? We will convene an elders council, recall everything and pass fair decisions. If it turns out that someone does not have enough resources on his territory, we will share ours with them as we have always done.

I would not like anyone to interpret my words as if I am speaking of the restoration and conservation of outdated forms of economic management. We intended to restore tribal relations with due regard for the achievements of science and technology of the 1990s and adapt them to the northern peoples' needs.

Izvestia: Does the NPA intend to insist on the ratification of the international documents concerning the northern peoples?

VS: It is a bitter fact, but it was our country that suggested Convention 107 "On the Protection and Integration of the Indigenous and Other Population Leading Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic life in Independent Countries" which was adopted by the International Labour Organization in 1957. Then came the Convention "On the Indigenous and Nomadic

Peoples of Independent Countries" adopted in 1989 which endorsed the following principled provision: "The respective peoples shall have the rights of property and ownership of the lands which they traditionally occupy." There are bureaucrats, however, who are resisting to this day ratification of the legal acts protecting the interests of the aborigines of all countries. They have done everything they could to prevent the indigenous population of the Soviet North from knowing anything about these documents. I hope that by the joint efforts of the NPA and of our MPs we will not only secure the ratification of these crucial international documents concerning the indigenous northerners, but will also see to the compliance of internal legislative acts with these documents.

Source: Izvestia, 12 July 1990. Abridged.

Venezuela

Statement from the Commission of the National Indian Council of Venezuela

by Dr Jesus Gonzalez

This statement before the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations by the Representative of the Commission of the National Indian Council of Venezuela is in connection with an examination of the events in relation to the promotion and protection of the fundamentals freedoms and human rights of the Indigenous population in Venezuela.

Owing to the recent incorporation of the Indigenous representatives of Venezuela into the sessions of the Working Group of Indigenous Populations, I'm going to begin my intervention by giving a general view of the situation in Venezuela. There are 27 culturally and linguistically distinct indigenous peoples in Venezuela who are distributed into eight Federal Entities and located particularly in frontier areas.

Generally it has been considered that Venezuela, being a country with a solid democratic system, the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the indigenous population were guaranteed. Article 61 of the National Constitution which guarantees every citizen juridical and social equality without any kind of discrimination, ought to provide equal treatment through the whole gamut of social relations, and the benefit of equal opportunities. For us, the indigenous, such equality doesn't exist. They consider us as second and third class citizens, and the most fundamental human rights are denied us.

They deny us the ownership of our lands, 83% percent of the indigenous communities lack title deed to their own lands and the ones they possess are lacking in quality and quantity and are at the same time provisional, and are therefore revocable through administrative procedures. In this sense the State is the first supervisor of indigenous territories, as the majority of indigenous villages are situated in zones under the Special Administrative Régime (National Parks, Forest Reserves, Hydraulics Reserves, Historical Monuments), which creates restrictions in the use of the land and the exploitation of natural resources, solely for the indigenous peoples, because on the one hand, the government grants large expanses of indigenous territories for timbering and mining.

The health situation is very critical; up till now the health programs in

the indigenous zones have not been very effective as reflected in the high levels of mortality caused by contagious diseases and parasites, which threaten to wipe out the indigenous population. Among the main causes of illness and death in indigenous populations are gastroenteritis and dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, measles, malnutrition, hepatitis from virus B and Delta, oncocercosis and recently also diseases caused by mercury, which affect especially the populations in mining areas.

As regards education, the indigenous have been subjected to education programmes designed for the Creole population and principally urbanites which have caused the loss of language and indigenous cultures. Generally the content of these programmes express a contempt towards the indigenous cultures; besides, methods are used across which are not adapted to the indigenous way of life and provoke ethnic humiliation, which contribute to cultural eradication. Since 1979, a Bilingual Régime for Intercultural Education was decreed, which until now hasn't been satisfactorily implemented.

In spite of Venezuela's tradition of being a rich country, 43 percent of the national population is in a critical state of poverty at present, a socio-economic situation which keeps the indigenous populations extremely pre-occupied. They have a high index of social marginalisation, are generally in a critical level of poverty, with serious problems of nutrition and grave environmental and sanitary deterioration. Besides there is a considerable proportion of the indigenous population in urban areas, situated in indigenous districts which present all the problems of marginalisation in Venezuela, aggravated because of a discrimination which is not always concealed.

On the promotion and protection of Human Rights

The Venezuelan indigenous movement has met great obstacles, on the one hand the Venezuelan legislation on indigenous matters, which is very ambiguous and contradictory. On the other hand, the Venezuelan government position on the revision of Convention 107, and the current project of a universal declaration of human rights of the indigenous peoples has been anti-indigenous, which is not very suitable at present to assert our rights as specific peoples and cultures.

Regarding last year's legislation, a bill on Ethnicity has been introduced in the National Congress, which we have rejected because it has been made without consulting the supervisor and the indigenous grassroots. And we encountered many insufficiencies in its philosophical as well as conceptual aspects ; the majority of matters contemplated in the government bill introduced in Congress – actions and procedures – refer to lega-



Venezuela Yanomami shaman with assistants carrying out a cure during a feast. (Photo: Catherine Ales).

lities which achieve only judicial redundancy and which by definition cannot contribute to solve real problems, more than that achieved by normal legal force.

In this sense the Venezuelan indigenous movement has taken up the challenge to draft their own version of the Law which take into account the feelings and aspirations of indigenous people. We expect to introduce this bill at the end of the year and in 1992 we will do everything possible to achieve its approval.



Map of West Africa.

West Africa

Documentation on the Tuareg

Massacres on Tuaregs in Mali and Niger*

The following is a presentation of how governmental troops recently have massacred, as well as severely repressed and persecuted the *Tuareg* people in north-eastern Mali and in Niger, West-Africa. While the incidents have included Tuareg attacks on the police or military forces, the response has been retaliations against innocent civilians including many children, women and old people. In Niger the estimate of dead Tuaregs vary between 600 to 1700, in Mali one source tells that 277 Tuaregs have been killed.

The massacres followed a more or less forced relocation of thousands of Tuaregs who had been illegal residents in Algeria and Libya early in 1990. According to various sources, the situation in Mali is still alarming as killings and persecution continue. However, there are reports of preliminary contacts and negotiations between Tuaregs and the authorities. In Niger, there are no further killings or armed confrontations and the contacts between the Tuaregs and the authorities have developed further than in Mali.

This presentation falls into five parts:

- 1) The historic and more immediate background to the incidents in Niger and Mali from May 1990 to October 1990 which serves as a contextualization for the two succeeding Tuareg documents. This part also outlines three different political positions among the Malian Tuaregs on possible solutions of the conflicts.
- 2) A translation of the Tuareg document "We, the Tuaregs".
- 3) A translation of an interview with the Tuareg rebel leader M. Iyad Ag Ghali of the Tuareg Liberation Movement.
- 4) Explanatory notes to the two Tuareg documents.
- 5) A chronological list of events in Mali and in Niger January 1990 – October 1990, including a reference to source materials. We have prepared the list in order to create a better overview of a series of complex and intertwined events.

* The identity of the authors is known to IWGIA.

We also present "Tilalt", a newly formed Tuareg solidarity organization based in Paris, France.

Finally, IWGIA has included copies of protest cables which have been sent to the heads of states in Mali and Niger. IWGIA presents its involvement in the case up to the present.

A Background to the situation of the Tuaregs in Niger and Mali

The Tuareg people

The Tuaregs are also known as the *Kel Tamacheq* – the people who speak *tamacheq*. They are further commonly referred to as the Blue People of Sahara and Sahel, due to the indigo blue turbans worn by the men. Today the Tuareg number about 1 million people and they live in the following North- and West-African states: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria. The Tuareg people are divided in different regional groups (the Tuaregs of the bend of the Niger and the Gourma, the *Qudalan*, the *Kel Adrar* of the Ifoghas, the *Kel Gress*, the Tuaregs of Damergou, the *Kel Aïr*, the *Kel Ajjer*, the *Kel Ahaggar* and the Iullemeden which are divided into the *Kel Ataram* and the *Kel Denneg*).

Historic roots of the events in Mali and Niger

The present situation is best understood with a short retrospective look at the changes that have taken place in the Tuareg societies since the colonization.

At the beginning of this century the Tuaregs reigned in the Sahara and the adjacent regions. Until then, and for most of this century, the Tuaregs have been nomadic pastoralists. Their main means of subsistence has been to breed camels, goats, cattle and sheep. Besides keeping livestock, the Tuaregs had other sources of livelihood. Up to the colonization around the turn of the century, the Tuaregs controlled the caravans crossing the Sahara. They took part in the trading, as well as gained an income by either plundering or protecting the caravans from other raiders. Raids on livestock belonging to nearby groups or other Tuareg equally contributed to (or threatened) their survival. To a certain extent, Tuareg nomads controlled groups of neighbouring sedentary agriculturalists. Like most nomadic groups in the area, the Tuaregs also raided their neighbours for slaves.

The colonization and pacification at the beginning of this century stopped the raiding and plundering. An important way of distributing



Tuaregs in northern Mali. (Photo: IWGIA archives).

wealth for the Tuaregs thus became illegal. Besides, the Saharan caravans have become rare. Today trans-Sahara lorries are used for the transport, or goods are shipped around the coast. Slavery has become illegal. Colonization led to a cementation of an arbitrary pattern of power relations in Mali and Niger. Today, sedentary agriculturalists, the opponents and enemies of the Tuaregs throughout history, are now the dominant groups governing the countries of both Niger and Mali.

By the turn of the century most of the ways in which the Tuaregs complemented their nomadic way of life, have become illegal or outdated. Nomadic pastoralism is the only traditional surviving way of life.

In Sahara and Sahel, the areas where the Tuareg live with their livestock, rain is the limiting factor for pasture. The region is marked by substantial variations in rainfall from one place to another, from one season to the next, and from year to year. The big advantage of livestock keeping in such an area, compared to agriculture, is that the nomads can bring the animals to available pastures. Thus nomadic pastoralism is well adapted to the harsh and variable Saharan and Sahelian climate.

During colonization, the Sahara and Sahel were divided between different countries. The Tuaregs now find themselves divided as citizens of the six countries mentioned above. Today, the Tuaregs have severe problems when crossing international borders in search of water and pasture, trade or work. At a meeting between the Ministers of the Interior for Mali, Niger and Algeria on 12 July this year, the movements of the Tuareg no-

mads between these three neighbouring countries were considered as creating "serious security problems".

It was a people with many of their traditional survival strategies illegalized or outdated, and with the one remaining strategy, nomadism, severely hampered, that was hit by the severe droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. After having lost most of their animals in these recent droughts, thousands of Tuaregs left for Algeria and Libya on labour migration. As they did not have entry permits, they have been regarded as illegal immigrants. Many left "their countries" – countries to which they feel no attachment, and the authorities of which they traditionally have had strained relations. This is the background for the hopelessness and despair the Tuaregs felt when they had to return – to nothing. It is against this background that the rebellions in Niger and Mali must be understood.

In 1963/64 there was a Tuareg uprising, originating in the village of Kidal in north-eastern Mali against the central government. Army planes bombed the areas. Armed fighting continued for two years and the military suppression of the Tuaregs was extremely strong. A number of Tuareg leaders fled to Algeria. They were later extradited to Mali and subsequently executed.

Following the uprising the region was ruled by military administration and closed to foreigners for years. The brutal way the uprising was quelled is currently mentioned as an important explanation for the hatred



Tuareg camp in Mali. It is civilians who live in camps like this that has been the major victims of the Malian army's retaliations after armed conflicts with rebels.

(Photo: IWGIA archives).

Tuaregs have harboured and still harbours against the Malian government.

The expulsion of Tuaregs from Algeria and Libya

The repatriation of Tuaregs from Algeria and Libya started in 1986. In January 1990 these refugees/labour migrants had to return to areas only slowly recovering from the last droughts. In these vulnerable areas local authorities, mostly belonging to sedentary populations from farther south, rule without proper regard to the wishes and aspirations of the local people. In the months before the massacres, some 18 000 Tuaregs were expelled from Libya and Algeria to Niger, as well as an unknown number to Mali (see the document "We, the Tuaregs ..." gives the figure of 300 families). Lack of food and other basic provisions led to starvation, death (especially among children) and suffering. The foreign aid destined to facilitate the Tuaregs' rehabilitation and reintegration, for the most part, never reached them. The tents sent by France, for instance, are to be found for sale on the market in Niamey, the capital of Niger, some hundreds of kilometres to the south.

Additional notes on the situation for the Tuaregs in Niger and Mali

The document "We, the Tuaregs..." as well as the chronological list of events spell out the events that have taken place in Mali and Niger from January to September 1990. What follows are some additional notes on the current situation and an analysis of the differences between Mali and Niger.

Lastly, we present some major differences among the Tuaregs and on the possible outcome of the situation in Mali.

In Mali, Tuareg nomads have been denied access to wells and their animals have been slaughtered. Unconfirmed rumours tell that most wells in north-eastern Mali have been poisoned by the military in order to make them unusable to people and animals. The rebel center of Boughessa is an exception as the town is held by rebels. Following clashes in June and July, Malian authorities declared a state of emergency and a curfew in the north-eastern districts (the 6th and 7th region) of Gao, Kidal, Ménaka and Timbuktu (Tombouctou). In the beginning of September, the authorities have announced that anyone encountered after nightfall risk being shot immediately. The Malian military forces have declared a "red line" in the north-eastern and northern part of Mali. Anyone discovered beyond this red line (towards the border to Algeria) will be shot at sight – the same will apply to domestic animals.

More Tuaregs have been killed in Niger than in Mali. Nevertheless,

the fighting in Niger has not escalated to the level we have seen in Mali. There is currently no regular fighting in Niger, while there are still several reports on armed clashes north of Kidal in Mali. A number of Tuaregs have fled the country to avoid arrest and possible torture, and are currently in exile in neighbouring countries and in France. A probable explanation for this contrast is that the Tuaregs of Niger have better access to and more available channels of communications with the central government than those in Mali. An additional explanation may be the hatred caused by the Malian army's quelling of the 1963 Tuareg uprising in Kidal. The *Le Monde* interview with the rebel leader M. Iyad Ag Ghali is the first official statement from the Tuareg rebels.

In Mali there is still widespread uncertainty as to why the fighting in Ménaka started, why and how it could spread to large parts of the north-eastern and northern regions of the country, and lastly: what do the rebels want and what are their claims?

While this uncertainty still prevails, there have been two days of preliminary negotiations between traditional Tuareg leaders and high-level representatives of the Malian government, including the President and the Minister of Defence. Seemingly, the army has admitted having killed innocent civilians. The Tuareg leaders have presented both short-term and long-term demands. The willingness, on the part of the government, to meet and listen to the demands and accusations, can be explained by their fear of further escalation of the fighting. Social discontent is widespread in Mali and the uprising may not necessarily be regarded as an ethnic conflict. In Mali there are deep cleavages and economic differences between the richer and more densely populated southern part of the country, and the northern part in the Sahel and the Sahara.

According to our sources, the short-term demands of the Tuaregs in the negotiations with the Malian government are as follows: 1) release of all who have been imprisoned on the grounds of their ethnic affiliation only; 2) an immediate halt to the killings of civilians; 3) the number and the identity of killed persons in the incidents must be published; 4) the government must offer an apology for the deeds of the Malian army; 5) the institutionalized system of governmental informers must be abolished; 6) the Tuaregs should be provided with grain; 7) the government must send out representatives in order to explain the situation to the population in the north; 8) schools have to reopen; 9) the red line must be annulled; and 10) a Tuareg delegation must be sent to Algeria to communicate with the leadership of the Tuareg rebels.

Long-term demands include issues like an acceleration and rethinking of development programmes in the northern regions, new administrative staff in schools, and local governments that have an appreciation of the circumstances of the region and who can bridge the cleavages between the northern and southern parts of the country.

The readiness to negotiate represents only one of three current positions among the Tuareg of Mali. Another position maintains that the government has had a number of chances to treat the Tuaregs on an equal basis with the rest of the citizens of Mali. Representatives of this position declare that the Tuareg leaders have compromised themselves for a long time and that they are not to be trusted. The third position is represented by those who find that an independent Tuareg state is the only long-term solution to the problems of the Tuareg people.

“We, the Tuaregs”

This part is a translation of a Tuareg document, “Nous, Touareg...”, which is currently being circulated by Tuareg individuals. The identity of those that have written the document is known to the authors of this article.

We, the Tuareg call the attention of France and the international community to the situation of our people. We want to address not only the President of the France but all politicians as well as French citizens, whatever their sensibility or their affiliation because our history and our circumstances are closely linked with France's recent past. Our traditions do not particularly predispose us to call for help but we are forced to now, at a time when our people are in agony.

Historical landmarks

When Africa was being carved up at the beginning of this century, the Sahara was the last region to be colonised. In fact, for more than a quarter of a century there were French troops in the ports of this immense territory, stationed there in the continued hope of uniting the territory from coast to coast. But ignorance of the region, its hostile nature and lack of means of transport largely prevented this from being accomplished.

Even when the difficulties were removed, the Sahara was only first penetrated tentatively by unsuccessful forays such as the ill-fated Flatters mission. The colonial army gradually recognised that a major obstacle, the human factor, had not been taken into account. The apparently empty desert was shelter to people who, over time, had adapted to it, had made it their land and knew how to defend it. Since time immemorial we have written in the Tifinagh about its caves, its rocks and its wells.

The French military had to admit that they had come up against an army of courageous and well-organised warriors. Nevertheless, the superiority of their firearms against our lances and sabres, outnumbered by the coalition of colonial troops with our neighbours, and many other reasons combined to bring about our defeat after bloody combat at Tit in the

Hoggar, Tombouctou, Anderamboukane in Azawagh and Tadjmout in the Air. Though peace was established, some of us continued the struggle preferring death to submission (for example, Fihroun ag Alinsar in the Azawagh, Allah ag Albacher in the Adrar des Ifoghas, Attisi in the Hoggar, Kawsen in the Air and many other whom history has forgotten). This was the conquest of our country, the Central Sahara.

In order to ensure that we had been defeated once and for all, we were disarmed and our land divided. The place where the troops from the North of Africa meet those of the A.O.F. has become a frontier dividing our territory. The border between the two armies is very tense; French African troops stand face to face with troops from Algeria. For us, this chance border was a manifestation of the colonial order and, even if it only separated three different administrations of the same French Republic, it still permitted our nomadism.

After the 1920s the colonial administration bestowed upon us a period of relative prosperity. Our people were treated well and respected by the French military authorities. The myth of the "blue men" was born out of the immensity of the desert, of mistrust mixed with a certain admiration for its inhabitants and was very largely maintained and developed by anthropologists and writers. Perhaps it began in the understanding that we were the repositories of a mode of life, of a culture and values whose disappearance would cut humanity off from a part of its frame of reference. And so our society was attentively studied without undergoing alteration because of the low density of the colonisers.

This also explains why the scholarisation of our children, which was envisaged from the beginning of the conquest, only commenced in 1947. But while it permitted us to maintain our traditional system intact, this situation hindered our mental adaptation to the novelties brought about by the modern world. Thus, we were not concerned with the Second World War or by the independence movements immediately afterwards which rocked Africa.

Since 1958 we have witnessed the progressive departure of French troops for Algeria without understanding its significance; instead it has taken their total retreat from our territory and their replacement by others, of whose existence we knew nothing, before we learned to pronounce the word independence.

Alas, we quickly understood that this independence was not for us, and we bitterly demand to know why France gave the peoples of West Africa their liberty, but allowed our land to be confiscated so that we now live under a new colonisation. For what historical, political or humane reasons did France make such a decision? Why did it have our destiny at its disposal with all the tragic consequences that we experience today?

On Independence, the ex-French Sudan became the Republic of

Mali. Its frontiers trace those of the first colonisation illustrating that the new Mali state achieved its sovereignty over our territory through the simple logic of the colonial system. The young Mali Republic, quarrelled with the old French colonial power from the first days of its existence and dispatched its troops to its northern frontiers in order to assure the effective evacuation of the French army. Since their arrival, Malian soldiers have distinguished themselves from their French counterparts by their hostile attitude, comparable to that of an army in enemy land. They have committed odious acts and violations against the population, requisitioned camels, forbidden caravan trading, imposed heavy taxes on herds, publicly humiliated customary chiefs, etc. This continual atrocious treatment engendered dissatisfaction, the outcome of which was the uprising of 1962 in the Adrar des Ifoghas. Equipped with Soviet weapons and commanded by officers who had taken part in French, Indo-Chinese and Algerian campaigns, the Mali army went into action against us.

In the same period the president of Mali, Modibo Keita, strengthened by his diplomatic success in reconciling Algeria and Morocco after frontier incidents, obtained the support of these countries in a common anti-Tuareg front which described us as left-overs from the colonial era.

This agreement cut off our retreat towards the north and gave the Malian army free rein to crush us with a merciless repression. We faced daily summary and public executions, our camps were razed, our water holes mined and poisoned, and our herds machine-gunned. No one tried to stop the massacres or even claimed the honour of renouncing the genocide of a people who were struggling for survival. France remained silent.

That war drove many of us towards the Algerian border where we became sedentary. Similarly, since 1960 the different civil or military regimes which have held power in Niger have distanced the Tuareg from the political and socio-economic life of the country. When the military came to power in April 1974 nothing changed. On the contrary, they have aggravated the already dramatic situation.

And so a ferocious repression has been organised against the Tuareg, principally amongst intellectuals (assassinations, disappearances, tortures, arbitrary arrests, etc.). At the same time, many hundreds of Niger Tuaregs have left the country, among them: Hamed Moussa Amadou, former deputy condemned to death by general Seyni Kountché, the then President of Niger; Mohamed Ahmadou, special councillor to the same president; Abdoulaye Mohamed, high functionary in the Ministry of Commerce; professors and officials. The majority of these people have sought refuge in Algeria and Libya.

The widespread droughts of 1970 and 1980 have decimated our herds, and accentuated the process. Moreover, these natural calamities were used as a sly political weapon by the governments to try to put an end



*Tuareg men and children slaughtering an animal.
(Photo: IWGIA archives).*

to us. And so the terrible drought of 1973-74 was used as a means of finally obliterating the Tuareg: water and provisions poisoned, international aid redirected, the population displaced and abandoned, etc. The drought of 1984 gave the authorities of Niger another chance to continue the extermination of the Tuareg. This repression has been led by Tanja Mamadou, the then Prefect of Tahoua and present Minister of the Interior.

Many thousands of people have fled towards Algeria where they have been welcomed and settled at In Guezzam, a post on the Algerian-Niger border. They numbered some 18 000 Tuaregs, victims of both the political repression and the drought.

The migrants in fact, benefited from the change of government in Algeria in 1964. Algeria would not respond to demands made by the Malian government for repatriation in order to obtain international aid and exploit our situation. After the droughts of the 1980s, Libya also took this attitude. A number of us, thanks only to salaried employment, earned enough money to partially reconstruct our herds and return to a decent life. Unfortunately, this period of respite was short-lived.

The Malians and the Niger of Kountché have always looked unfavorably upon our expatriation in the north and especially in Libya. We have been accused of being agents manipulated by Colonel Qadhafi with the aim to try to destabilise the Sahel; the border war with Chad was used as an argument precisely for assimilating us into the Toubous and as a clever

way of duping the West into thinking we are a threat. On the one hand this allowed economic aid to be used to equip armies and, on the other hand, to justify all the demands made on us in each country.

To Malians we are second class citizens, good only for heavy taxation and to be made to live exclusively outside of towns and villages. Our function has become to attract tourists and international aid, which constitute the largest part of Mali's resources. Time has shown that there is no desire to integrate us. Since Independence there has been no interest in our region and positions of responsibility are always closed to us (for example, no Tuareg has access to cadet school). Mali, like Niger, has chosen to fight us because of our cultural difference. Every day we are becoming more like strangers in our own land, at the mercy of all kinds of abuse, a people who are dying.

We no longer have the right to speak our own language and our children are forced to learn the language of others, our traditions are ridiculed, our youth are encouraged to become wayward and our daughters are at the mercy of Malian soldiers. Many are mothers before they reach fifteen years of age and face a life of poverty. Our goods and our animals are seized and their owners imprisoned for crossing unmarked borders. Our pasture lands are trampled and destroyed to increase our poverty.

But we have a culture, a history, a language, a writing system and we had, formerly, a country. Must we disappear in order to impress upon the world the scandalous injustice which we are suffering? Are we wrong to want to continue living according to our own customs and culture? Is it a crime to live a nomadic life?

The thirty years of independence from 1960-1990 have been a nightmare for us. During this period we have known only military administration, the law of the gun, contempt, injustice and hatred.

The Present Situation in Niger and Mali

This is the context in which events in Niger and Mali are taking place today. After the death of general Seyni Kountché at the end of 1987, the new president, general Ali Saibou made overtures towards the Niger Tuaregs, notably a general amnesty for all exiles. The Tuaregs and their chiefs who want to return to their country have accepted the offer with the assurance that they will be able to live alongside all the other people of Niger.

So at the end of 1989, 800 people arrived at Niamey in three special flights direct from Tripoli. At the end of December 1989 and the beginning of January 1990, 18 000 refugees who had been at In Guezzam since 1984-85 arrived at Tchén Tabaraden in accordance with agreements signed in Tamanrasset between Niger, Algeria and FIDA (International Fund for Agricultural Development). Since the return of these refugees, the Niger

authorities have changed their attitude. The majority of the refugees have been billeted in camps around Tchén Tabaraden.

On 13 March 1990, more than a hundred people were arrested in the region of Air, at Iférouane, at Arlit and Agades. The international press, using official communiqués, reported the arrest of only 27 people. On 22 April, 15 young people attending a wedding at Tofaminir, 45 kilometres north of Alabak, were arrested simply because they were denounced. On 4 and 5 May, several dozen people were arrested at Tchén Tabaraden for daring to demand explanations from the authorities for the interruption of international aid and the surveillance of new arrivals in the regrouping camps (they are prohibited to travel, to send their children to school, to carry out commercial activities, they lack basic facilities, etc.).

On 7 May a group of young unarmed people tried to occupy the prison in Tchén Tabaraden to protest at the arrest of some of their people three days previously and to focus national and international attention on the precariousness of their living conditions. A fight ensued between the youths and the prison officers, during which a prison officer was killed with his own weapon when trying to use it against the Tuaregs. When the young people found out that their relatives were not in the prison at Tchén Tabaraden but in Tahoua, they left the village. Some hours later soldiers armed with automatic machine guns were sent from Tahoua, the main town in the Department. The soldiers bombarded Tchén Tabaraden for several



*Tuareg man with camel, the beast of burden.
(Photo: IWGIA archives).*

hours before realising that there was no counter-attack from the village. A further several hundred soldiers and parachutists were sent from Niamey to Tchén Tabaraden.

In the same week, Ibra Galadima, member of the Superior Council for National Orientation, the highest power in the region, was congratulated by the President of the Republic, Ali Saïdou, and by members of the government for declaring in the Council of Ministers that: "All the Tuareg must be counted and exterminated."

Thus, the Niger government has begun a witch-hunt for Tuaregs throughout the whole country. The same government has left the job to the infamous Minister of the Interior, Tanja Mamadou, who was Prefect of Tahoua from 1984-1988 and, as such, was primarily responsible for the repression against the Tuareg in 1985.

This, then, is how six to eight hundred Tuareg men, women and children were massacred. Some sources talk of one thousand seven hundred dead.

The military occupied the oases again. In the dry season the Tuaregs have to go to wells almost every day in search of water for their herds. The soldiers wait for them there and for no reason at all shoot at anyone who approaches. Certain camps have been totally destroyed, others have lost all their men. The latter have been beaten to death, cut to pieces, hung, burnt alive or buried alive. There have been public executions and public rapes. More than a thousand Tuaregs have been taken from all over the country and sent to the penal colonies of Tillabéry, Dirkou and Bilma, where they still are today.

At Tahoua, several hundreds of Tuaregs have been arrested, executed or tortured because of the colour of their skin. In the same village, the wounded have been murdered on orders of doctors who believe that it costs too much to tend to them. At Dosse, Roni Issoufou, a Tuareg Deputy, escaped hanging because his skin was light. In Maradi, a dozen Tuaregs have been arrested and one has died following torture. In Ablak, 15 officials have been arrested, two died after torture and thirteen have been imprisoned at Tillabéry. In Tassara, a group of 25 people were arrested, of whom 24 were hung and one was imprisoned at Tillabéry. At Dakoro, the Sub-prefect, who is a Tuareg, and his relatives have been arrested. The Sub-prefect's nephew has been killed and the others are still in prison. At Tillia, adolescents have been publicly executed in the presence of the chief of the administrative post. At Ouest de Kao, camps comprising several families have been destroyed including men, women, children and animals. In the valleys of Tchén Zigaren, Tchén Fessaouten, at the oases of Amazazedar and Tchén Talabaouen many massacres have taken place.

Since April 1990, the tension has been mounting in Mali. This is because in this period 300 families were willingly repatriated from Algeria in

the hope of returning to a decent life, a hope nourished by sweet promises. The Tuaregs had been promised houses and animals for re-establishing the herds and schools and sanitary posts through the FIDA. Reassured by promises of an amnesty, the Malian nomads, just like the Niger Tuaregs, are returning with confidence.

Sadly, they quickly become disenchanted. Camped by streams at Tin Zaouaten, Boughessa, Tedjerert and Kidal where they are controlled and surrounded by the army, they have no chance of following a nomadic lifestyle any more. With no assured food supplies, they are subsisting on meagre provisions brought with them from exile and they wait in vain for hypothetical international aid. Their poverty is absolute. What is more, the men and the youth in the camps are harassed, arrested and most of them tortured to confess a deeper reason and alternative circumstances of their stay in Algeria and Libya. A number of them have died from the treatment they have received.

This situation parallels that in Niger in the region of Tchénoua where the army carried out massacres. The Malian Tuaregs despair of what is happening. Moreover, the Mali police are interning peaceful Tuareg refugee caravans from Niger which are fleeing the troubles and the massacres there. The threat of extradition, which would bring the promise of death, was the spark that set off their revolt.

Since the Tuaregs carried out some attacks against isolated military posts and ambushed patrols of soldiers on reconnaissance, the Malian army has been regrouped in three villages, Tessalit, Aguelhok and Kidal, so as to avoid sending out its forces in small units vulnerable to surprise attacks.

But since the Tuareg attacks began, the army, exasperated by an unassailable enemy, has been searching for information at all costs and is carrying out a reign of terror over the whole Tuareg population. They are carrying out reprisals, some of them massive, against the civilian population under the protection of a state of emergency and a curfew in the whole Northern region (Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal and Ménaka). The number of arrests is multiplying. In most of the towns, villages or camps the men are in hiding or have fled, some of them joining the partisans. Malian officials of Tuareg origin still holding their positions are arrested or live in a situation of unease. Arrests take place according to different motives: for "being red" (that is being white in Mali), for not possessing an identity paper (though it is recognised that the nomads living in the bush have never had any and a receipt for the payment of taxes, which provides identity, is not sufficient), for harbouring other Tuaregs, wearing the traditional hat, and even wearing short trousers, which indicate that the wearer has come from abroad.

The conditions in detention are deplorable: the prisons suffer from

shortage of space, the prisoners are left handcuffed under the burning sun and they are given neither food nor water. For this reason a large number of them die. Among others, the following are in prison at present: Since the 12th of August – Ibrahim ag Daggar, Secretary General of the UNJM (National Union of Mali Youth) of Kidal; – Wadossan ag Simitala, Joint Secretary of the UDPM of Kidal, former member of the UDPM National Council and former director of Kidal school.

Since 20 August – Ouefane ag Soliman, contractor for public works and transport.

Since 22 August – Baba Ben Wahab, broadcaster for the Post of Gao.

Since 25 August – Sikaye ag Ekawel, director of FIDA, former Consul General of Mali in Tamanrasset; Ambery ag Rhissa, in charge of the regional bureau for functional literacy; Iswaden ag Saghid, coordinator of FIDA, in charge of the programme for rehabilitation of displaced people.

Even in Bamako the Tuaregs are worried and in hiding. But, though reprisals are followed by arrests and torture, they continue. Thus, when an army company left Gao in search of Tuareg partisans after the events of Ménaka and had to retrace their steps because of a shortage of fuel, on their return journey they searched the small settlement of Tarkint. The people there were rounded up, ordered to undress (the supreme humiliation for a Tuareg) and abused. However, they were not further victimised, which is not always the case. A reconnaissance patrol which had previously been ambushed carried out a bloody campaign: 14 people killed in In Abalen, as well as an entire camp (80 persons: women, children and elderly). On 7 July, 12 elderly people and a woman were shot at the FIDA camp for disaster victims, near Tedjerert. In the same week at Tawardé, 22 people were shot including two women. On 25 July, 200 people were arrested and imprisoned in Kidal and Gao. Up till now nothing is known of their condition.

On 29 July in Kidal, the chief of Idnane and advisor to the Attaher ag Bissaada Section, and many other worthies were arrested, stripped and publicly beaten. They owe their safety today to the intervention of a Malian army commander. The arrests happened because the section chief was carrying a carbine rifle, a 1936 model classic parade weapon which chiefs carry and for which they have a permit. But the persecution of this chief and his group did not stop there. Alerted to the affair, International Radio France related it in its news flashes after which the reprisals began again against the Idnanes. On 17 August a company of Commando parachutists, led by Captain Siaka Koné, appointed after Gao for special missions, searched the camp of old Attaher at Alkit, 25 kilometres to the south of Kidal on the Gao road. The soldiers began by looting the tents, but finding nothing, turned on the people. Two soldiers were ordered to take the women's costumes and jewelry (rings, bracelets of gold or silver, necklaces

etc.). Then 10 nomads were forced to dig a huge ditch and lie down in it. The soldiers threw two grenades into the ditch and seven Tuaregs died: – Assiltan ag Moussa, – his son, – Akhouneyni ag Moussa, his brother, – Attaher ag Abag, – Makhmud ag Abag, his brother, – Kaya ag Akh-moudanm – Lamine ag Bissaada. The remaining three were seriously wounded and taken to hospital in Kidal. One has already died there from his injuries.

On 2 August, in the pastures of Zakar, a caravan of 10 people was machine-gunned. The bodies of the Tuaregs shot by the soldiers were burned. On the same day, an encampment was machine gunned by a passing BRDM (an armoured vehicle). The many wounded were ferried to hospitals in Algeria where they are being tended at present.

On 4 August in Gao, after being tortured, 10 men and a woman were publicly executed. Their bodies were then run over by an armoured vehicle. On the same day the village of Tin Aouker was searched by the army. There too, the population was rounded up and stripped, beaten and threatened with being burnt alive if they did not give information.

On 6 August in Ménaka, 5 Tuaregs were executed including Ahmed, the 80-year old chief of the Ishedenharen Section and Ayni administration secretary.

On 14 August, 24 people were publicly executed in Gao. The following day a young camel herder was killed for no reason outside his tent.

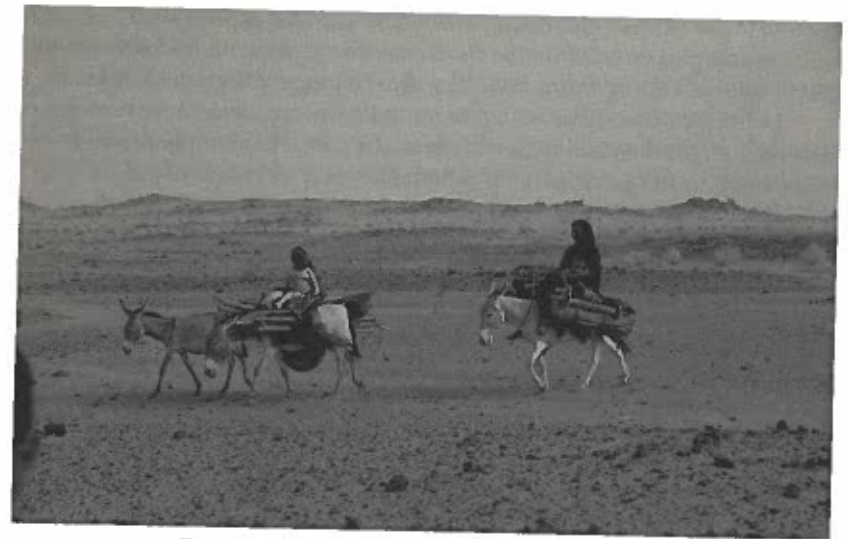
On 17 August in Kidal, 7 people were found dead after torture.

In the second week of September, three camps were burnt at Taghlit and another at Tawarde in reprisals for the fighting at Boughessa and Toukcemen. Furthermore, many herds were massacred in the surroundings of Tessalit.

This list is certainly not exhaustive. But are these acts justified by orders from above? Thus, telegramme number C10/Cem/GA of 13.7.90 sent to Gao read as follows:

Withdraw protection from innocent civilian populations which do not want to admit their complicity – consequently you are ordered to eliminate without mercy all elements suspected of complicity and who refuse to give information – make arrangements for encircling the repatriates' camp and proceed with a rigorous control inside the said camp.

At the end of August, the tally was 305 dead in the regular army and 277 Touaregs killed including more than 80 women, some 50 children and more than 20 people over 60 years of age. Again, this list comprises only those people whose identity is known. With information received in the past days, their tally will be much greater (500 to 600) because of the extermination of camps of “suspicious” Tuaregs repatriated from Algeria. We should add to this the French doctor, Pierre Roudat and his wife and son,



Tuaregs on the move. (Photo: IWGIA archives).

who were killed some 40 kilometres from Gao; two unidentified travellers killed at Tessalit; and one French woman killed at Tin Aouker. Contrary to statements by the Mali government, witnesses saw the army kill them.....

Our demands

We are making a desperate appeal to ask you to use your influence outside of the countries which are persecuting us and make them stop.

The principle of non-interference into the internal affairs of states finds its limitations when these states daily violate the basic recognised rights of all peoples.

The events that are taking place today reveal the real policies which the Malian government has always used with regard to us: we are identified by the colour of our skin; we are prohibited from a nomadic way of life; the action taken by our desperate people are disguised as violent crimes and the work of mercenaries in the pay of one or other international plot; the truth about the situation and information about the extermination innocent populations is hushed up; and racial and tribal hatred is inflamed.

We refuse to be considered a white minority in our own country. We claim the same rights for our people as exist for the many minorities which comprise the social fabric of these countries.

We reject the image of slavers and looters which is perpetuated and

used to incite Malian citizens against us. In the past when slavery existed, other ethnic groups in Mali, the *Bambaras*, *Songhai* and others, had as many slaves as the Tuareg but today, like the Tuareg, no longer have them.

In the face of oppression by states today whose memories are so short that they forget the claims they made in the past, we charge France, to remain loyal to the principles for which she spilt so much blood.

But the countries of Europe and the West ought to know that you will not solve our difficulties by providing food aid. Mali is vegetating under this kind of assistance and therefore we reject it. We have sufficient means of our own on which to live and a perfect understanding of our environment but more than that, we have the desire, energy and determination to take control ourselves. We demand nothing more than to benefit from guarantees recognised by all other peoples. What we lack and what we demand is the liberty to be able to take control of our own destiny.

This cannot happen without a territory which is internationally recognised, and consequently inalienable, where we can carry out our nomadic way of life and raise our children according to our own culture. In this territory we want to be able to build villages when the need to become sedentary arises, villages with schools where our language and our history are taught like those of other peoples.

We have no desire to attack the sovereignty of neighbouring states, nor even less to injure France's interests in this region. We call upon France, the first protagonist, to witness our drama and recognise our inflexible determination to regain our liberty and dignity, for we have nothing more to lose.

Faced with the present situation in Mali, we demand:

- an immediate halt to massacres of civilians by the Malian army;
- that the Mali state recognises the state of war and consequently respects international conventions;
- a neutral intervening force, which will examine and settle the Tuareg question at the United Nations and in the context of concerned international authorities;
- the rapid intervention of humanitarian organisations for the civilian people deprived of all help by the Malian army since the hostilities began;
- the suspension of all aid from France, the European Community and other partners to the Republic of Mali, which at present it uses to buy arms which it employs against its own people.

Harassed by threats, bruised with indignation and injustices, our people have chosen to defend themselves even at the price of collective suicide. We

do not know how to change our honour for a life of dependency. If we must choose between the two, we will, as always choose the most dignified.

While there still is time, we beg France and the international community to use its influence so that our right to exist is recognised.

We hope that France and the international community will weigh up the consequences which a long conflict has for both sides, that they will take our despair seriously and help to ensure that reason and peace prevail over hatred and war.

Interview with the leader of the Tuareg rebels M. Iyad Ag Ghali**

The Troubles in the North of Mali

In a message to the nation on the 30th anniversary of Independence, President Moussa Traoré denounced the "subtle disinformation campaign" being run by foreigners about the Tuareg problem in Mali. The troubles in the north of Mali have led to the question of the existence of a foreign interference which observers say could only be Libyan.

Correspondence from Boughessa, Northern Mali

"We are not following any ideological line" affirmed M. Iyad Ag Ghali, secretary general of the Tuareg Liberation Movement. "Our problem is not political. It is principally that of a community which, after decolonisation, was not in agreement with the new influential officials in charge." Iyad ag Ghali returned to Mali after being forced to leave because of the drought and to take refuge in Algeria and then in Libya. For him, it is a question of no longer just accepting the authority of the people in power in Bamako.

"For the moment, our objective is to hold back the Malian army and force southwards, and to install bases at strategic locations", Ag Ghali explained. The young military chief believes that "the Tuareg Liberation Movement comprises one thousand five hundred men and receives no external aid while the Mali occupying army numbers some three thousand soldiers, among whom are some "goumiers" forced into service as guides." All the arms they possess "have been taken from the enemy or had been brought to Libya by deserters."

** This interview was published in *Le Monde* (30 Sep-1 Oct p.7). It is the first statement published from the side of the Tuareg rebels.

Reprisals

The determination has been mounting again since 1963. "We have been held in check by the military but our determination has remained intact", noted Ag Ghali. Forced by circumstances, including drought, many Tuaregs have turned to the Syrians and Libyans. "Colonel Qadhafi was interested in getting us to settle in his desert and to use us in Chad and in Lebanon and Palestine", affirmed the military chief. "But we don't owe him anything and we have not asked for any support. Those of us who he has enlisted have not had any arms training."

The Tuaregs re-entered the country last year but none of the aid which had been promised on their return "has ever arrived", said Ag Ghali. Their anger began to grow and the revolt followed. The military chief recounted the attack on the Sub-Prefecture of Ménaka on the 28th June which aimed to "liberate the Niger Tuareg prisoners". They also "took munitions and vehicles and headed for our headquarters at Tedjeret" south-east of Kidal.

"More and more young Tuareg are joining our movement", stressed Ag Ghali. And to illustrate the communications problems, he added, "We do not use radio transmitters" which makes coordinated military action particularly difficult. In spite of all this, "each week we push back the Mali army forces. These soldiers are not motivated for war", stressed the military chief. "For the defeats they suffer they carry out reprisals on Tuareg camps and livestock. The government soldiers fire at anything that is not black." Ag Ghali insists categorically that his men have never ambushed any Europeans. He made particular reference to the mysterious circumstances of the assassination last July in the desert near Gao of a French medical assistant and his wife and son. Since then, the north-eastern region of Mali has become a sort of prohibited zone. Almost a war zone?

Le Monde 30 September-1 October 1990.

Explanatory notes to the two Tuareg Documents

The notes explain some of the concepts used in the two Tuareg documents which may not be known by the general reader:

From "We, Tuaregs"

Flatters: a French army officer. In 1881 Colonel Flatters commanded an expedition of 92 men which were to survey a route through the Ahaggar

(the Hoggar mountains in southern Algeria). In spite of what the Tuareg leader (*amenokal*) Aiterel communicated: that they would not be allowed through Ahaggar, the expedition headed southwards. The Tuaregs killed or poisoned most of the members of the expedition in a series of combats and episodes.

A.O.F.: "L'Afrique Occidentale Française" French West-Africa, a colonial entity, comprised the following territories: Mauretania, Senegal, Soudan Français (Mali), Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Niger, Dahomey (Benin), Guinée (Guinea Conakry), Ivory Coast and parts of Togo.

Kountché, Gen. Seyni: President of the Republic of Niger 1974-1987.

Toubous, or the *Gorane*: a group of pastoral people in the middle of Sahara.

F.I.D.A. or IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development, a fund associated with FAO – Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. U.D.P.M., "Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien" The Democratic Union of the Malian People: the sole legal political party in Mali.

fraction: an administrative unit among the Tuareg, created during French colonial rule. This unit has some correspondence to Tuareg lineages. Each "fraction" has a leader who is related to, and still relates, to the central government in cases like taxation and other administrative matters. In early colonial times the "fraction" used to be a localised entity, but this is no longer necessarily the case.

Bambara: the dominant ethnic group in Mali living in the southern part of the country.

Songhai: one of the neighbouring ethnic groups of the Tuareg, mainly occupying the borders of the Niger river.

From the interview with M. Iyad Ag Ghali

Traoré, Moussa: President of the Republic of Mali.

Bamako: the capital of Mali.

Bouhessa: a small town in northern Mali, close to the border of Algeria, currently the headquarters of the Liberation Movement of the Tuaregs. 1963: this refers to a Tuareg uprising in Kidal (which is described above).

Chronology of events in Niger and Mali

The chronology of events is not necessarily complete. As this text is being edited, additional material is still arriving. We intend to write and update and a fuller version at a later stage.

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
From January on	About 18.000 Tuaregs, who have left on illegal labour migration to Algeria and Libya after the big droughts in the 1980's, return/are sent back to Niger. They claim that they were promised help to resettle, while the Nigerian president Ali Saïbou, denies this.	1,2,7,9, 44,45
April	About 300 families similarly return from Algeria to Mali. The time of the year is the dry and hot season, the hardest of all seasons on people and animals. The families are interned in camps in the Gao region for the resettlement of these "returnees" with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The camps are encircled and controlled by the Malian army, and are not allowed to travel.	46,44,45
April 11	Amnesty International (AI) reports that at least 30 Tuaregs are arrested and tortured in Agadez (Niger).	6
early in May	40 Tuaregs are surrounded and killed by government troops in Gal, about 110 km. west of Agadez.	6
early in May	Some Tuaregs are killed while building a house about 50 km. north of Tchin Tabaraden in Niger.	6
6, 7 or 8 May	A violent clash between Tuaregs and guards take place at a police station with a prison in Tchin Tabaraden in northern Niger. The Nigerian government claims that attacked the post. Tuaregs say they	1,2,7,8,9, 18,38

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
	brought food to Tuareg prisoners, were bullied, and reacted. A deep dissatisfaction with the situation, a protest against the fact that the international help destined for the labour migrants never reached them, and a hope to get hold of arms have been mentioned as reasons for the Tuareg action.	
May continued	The Nigerien government reacts by sending the army, parachute troops with heavy machine guns and armed vehicles to the area. The population flees, and the army takes control of wells in the area. Officially, between 31 and 70 Tuaregs are massacred, and 9 soldiers killed. Unofficially, from 200 to "many hundred" men, women and children are massacred by the Nigerien army, others are arrested and tortured.	1,3,6,9
May continued	A former minister, the Tuareg Mohammed Abdoullahi, is imprisoned. He is brought to the capital Niamey, where he is accused of being responsible for the attack, together with Mophamed Ahmoundou, a former councillor to the president, and a teacher, Mohamed Abdoulmounin. The last one is killed when trying to take a gun from his guards.	2,7,8,9
May continued	In the small nomadic camp Tilla, close to the Malian border and about 50 km. from Tchin Tabaraden, the inhabitants are shot by soldiers when trying to escape.	1,9
In the following days	AI reports that Tuaregs have been arrested and sent to prison camps in Tillabéry and Dirkou (north east of Niamey) where they have been tortured. Another group of Tuaregs are sent to the barracks in Tahoua, where torture is known to be common.	9

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
May/June	Some Tuaregs flee from Niger to Menaka in Mali, where they are arrested by the Malian authorities.	5,45
June 28	About 60 Tuaregs, some of them possessing light weapons, stop a convoy of 4 tout-terrain cars belonging to the NGO World Vision. They leave those driving in the cars, 4 Malians and 2 Americans, in one of the NGO's store houses at Ika-dewan.	45
June 29	The following morning, the same group of Tuaregs attack the police station and prison in Menaka, in order to liberate Tuareg prisoners arrived from Niger, as well as to get hold of weapons and ammunition. A number of persons (the sources give varying numbers from 13-35) are killed. 8 cars belonging to the Italian NGO Zooconsult, as well as petrol and food, are also taken by the Tuaregs. The foreigners working in Menaka are repatriated.	4,5,8,15,16,17,31,38,44,45
June 29	Some Malian researchers happen to be in Menaka during the Tuareg attack. Two are killed, one wounded, and Mohammed Ag Bendeche, a Tuareg doctor, kidnapped, their car is taken by the Tuaregs.	15,45
The same day	Tuaregs attack a small post at Tidarmen. The "chef d'arrondissement", his wife and two soldiers are killed, while one Tuareg is seriously injured. The attackers get hold of some weapons and a radio transmitter ("RAC").	45
	Malian authorities, who have some troops stationed in Anderaboukan, have problems getting these to the area quickly. That day, they only have one truck, and no diesel. In the following days however, the countryside is filled with Malian troops.	15
July 2	Tuaregs attack the military post ("poste") of Tin Essako, east of Kidal in the Adrar des Ifoghas. 3 soldiers and one Tuareg die in the assault.	45

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
July 7	12 old men and a women are beaten in a camp for disinherited people near Tedjerert, led by IFAD.	45
The same week	22 people are shot at Tawardé.	45
July 12	The Ministers of the Interior from Algeria, Mali and Niger meet to discuss the "serious security problems" caused by Tuaregs moving with their camps and animals between the three countries.	4,8
July 16, 18 or 19	The Tuaregs attack the military post ("gendarmerie") at Tarkint, 14 km. from Almoustarat in the Tilemsi valley. Two gendarmes are killed, and the attackers retreat with weapons and a radio transmitter.	5,13,38,45
July 25	200 people are arrested and brought to the prisons in Kidal and Gao. Nothing is known about their destinies. In the following days other people are arrested.	45
July 28	Early in the morning the Tuaregs attack the military station in Abeybara in the north of the circle of Kidal, where they also get hold of weapons. 14 soldiers are killed, while 3-4 manage to escape. The Tuaregs get hold of weapons.	45
July 28	Tarkint is attacked by Tuaregs again. A guard and a nurse are killed.	5
July 28	The Malian army starts bombarding the mountainous area of In Taykaren, near Tedjerert between Menaka and Kidal, with missiles. The attack lasts one week. Noone seems to have been killed during the bombardment.	45
July 29	The leader of the Idnan fraction, his councillor and many other important men belonging to the same fraction are imprisoned, undressed and beaten in public.	45

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
End July or beginning of August	105 soldiers are killed in an ambush by the Tuaregs, while 8 are taken hostage. The Tuaregs get hold of many weapons.	5,45
In the following days	The Malian army loses control of itself. In Talatayt (Ansongo in Mali) the army is said to have burnt families alive. A camp of 80 men, women and children is reported killed.	5,39,42,44
August 2	10 people are killed by army forces while grazing their animals. Their bodies are burnt. The same day, a nomadic camp is shot at with machine guns.	45
August 4	10 Tuaregs are summarily executed in Gao, after having been arrested and tortured. Gao is the capital of Mali's 7. region. Their bodies are crushed by tanks.	12,14,20,45
August 4	The army launched its ("operation ratisage"). The population of the village Tin Aouker north of Gao is assembled, stripped, beaten and threatened to be burnt by the army.	23,45
August 6	5 Tuaregs are executed in Menaka.	45
About August 8	A French doctor, his wife and son are found killed 40-60 km. north of Gao. Both sides accuse each other of having killed the family.	27,31,32,44,45
August 9-10 or 11	The military post at Boughessa in the extreme north of Mali, close to the Algerian border, is attacked by Tuaregs. They conquer the post. One Tuareg and 15 soldiers are killed in the attack. Again, the Tuaregs get hold of many weapons. The government is said to have sent reinforcements to the area, and to have regained the post 15. or 16. of August.	23,45

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
August 11	Tuaregs attack Tin Zaouaten-Achebrich. All military personnel escape. It is unclear whether the Tuaregs manage to take control of the post or not.	23,45
The following days	The army concentrates its forces in three villages in the north, Tessalit near Algeria, Aguelhok and Kidal, in order to become less vulnerable.	45
August 14	19-24 persons are summarily executed in Gao.	20,45
August 15 or 16	15 Tuaregs are arrested by the government.	23
August 17	Parachute-soldiers force 9-10 Tuaregs from the Idnan fraction, living in Alkit, 25 km. south of Kidal, to dig a grave. The men are buried to their shoulders, and the soldiers throw shells at them. 7 die, the 3 others are gravely wounded.	42,45
August 17	7 persons are found in Kidal, dead from torture.	45
August 17	The organisation "TILALT" (which means "solidarity" in the Tuareg language) is founded in Paris. Among its main goals are to raise money for food to destitute Tuaregs, to spread information about the atrocities committed towards the population by the army, and to get acceptance for an international investigation of the massacres of Tuaregs.	29,34
August 17	The French Socialist Party protests against the massacres carried out by the Malian Army in northeastern Mali.	33
September 3	The Nigerian government denies that Tuaregs were summarily executed after the attack in Tchén Tabaraden in May. The government invites AI to make an investigation.	43

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
September	According to the Malian government, the rebels are a group of 2000 Tuareg "bandits", that have been trained in Libya. The Tuaregs insist that they are a "patriotic" movement called Movement for the Liberation of Mali (MLM), and that they do not in any way receive support from Libya. According to other sources their goal is an independent or semi-independent state northeast of the Niger river.	41,44,46
September 8-9	The leaders of Mali, Niger, Algeria and Libya meet in Djanet, Algeria, to discuss the Tuareg issue. During the meeting, President Moussa Traoré of Mali accuses Libya of supporting the Tuareg uprising and running training camps for Tuareg fighters. Libya protested against the accusations.	41,44
September 13	The European Parliament pass a resolution saying that "if the killings, uprisings and bloody repressions continue, an entire people will be threatened with annihilation".	44
September 19	President Moussa Traore, together with his Defense Minister and other members of the Malian government meet Tuareg leaders in Bamako to discuss the Tuareg issue and try to find solutions. The amnokal de Kidal, Menaka and Dire are among the Tuareg leaders attending the meeting.	Malian television
End September	The leader of the rebellion, Iyad Ag Ghali, claims that that the present goal of the about 1500 Tuareg rebels is to force the government troops to withdraw towards the south, and to install bases in strategic places.	46

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TILALT: A newly formed solidarity organization for the Tuaregs.

In a letter dated 2 August 1990 it is announced that there has been formed an organization called **Tilalt** (Solidarité Touarègue) with the objectives to help and promote the Tuareg world. **Tilalt** means solidarity in the Tuareg language (tamacheq). The organization wants to defend and promote human rights questions for the Tuaregs as well as organizing and advancing self-help initiatives in both the short- and long-term perspective. Tilalt will spread information and appeal to international bodies and the media, and inform Western governments on the conditions of the Tuaregs. The organization will further encourage studies and research, spread knowledge and appreciation of Tuareg culture and establish links to other organizations working along similar lines.

The organization asks for moral and financial support. The founder members and the administration consists of Tuaregs as well as French citizens. The organization can be contacted at the following address:

Tilalt (Solidarité Touarègue) 6, rue Saint Sabin, F-75011 Paris, France
telephone: 40 21 28 55, fax: 48 06 68 68.

IWGIA And the Tuareg Case

IWGIA asks you to circulate this information to media and concerned organizations and individuals.

On 15 August 1990, Amnesty International (AI) called for an immediate and independent investigation into the killings and the publication of the findings of the inquiry as soon as possible. AI also urged that any persons arrested solely on account of their ethnic origin be released immediately and that anyone accused of a criminal offence be guaranteed a fair trial and safeguarded from torture or other ill-treatment.

IWGIA supports the plea of Amnesty International. We further call for negotiations between the Tuaregs and the governments of Mali and Niger in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards leading to solutions of the present crisis.

Early in September 1990, IWGIA circulated an appeal and information package to a number of human rights and solidarity groups. The documentation was also sent to the United Nations Office in Geneva, the Centre for Human Rights. The communication will thus be forwarded to the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, as well as to the authorities of the countries concerned.

The following IWGIA cable was sent to the presidents of the Republics Mali and Niger:

YOUR EXCELLENCY,
THE INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS (IWGIA) URGENTLY REQUESTS THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER TO IMMEDIATELY END MASSACRES AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS ON ETHNIC TUAREGS AND THAT SUCH KILLINGS BE INVESTIGATED STOP FURTHER THAT PERSONS ARRESTED SOLELY ON BASIS OF ETHNIC ORIGIN BE RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY WHILE THOSE ACCUSED OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES BE GUARANTEED FAIR TRIAL WITHOUT FEAR OF TORTURE UNDER CUSTODY STOP TODAY WE ARE ADVISING THE UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN GENEVA STOP ANY INFORMATION UPDATE HIGHLY APPRECIATED STOP LASTLY WE URGE YOUR GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH TUAREGS FOR PROPER REHABILITATION OF THEIR RETURNING MIGRANTS INSURING THEM HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND THAT FOREIGN AID REACH THEM AS INTENDED STOP WE BELIEVE THAT ONLY BY DOING THE ABOVE CAN YOUR GOVERNMENT ACHIEVE PEACE WITH THE PASTORALISTS STOP SINCERELY YOURS

TERESA APARICIO
I W G I A DIRECTOR

Letters of protest may be sent to:

President Moussa Traoré, Bamako, the Republic of Mali.
President Ali Saïbou, Niamey, the Republic of Niger.

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