



DOCUMENT 66



IWGIA

INTERNATIONAL  
WORKING GROUP FOR  
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

## Indigenous Women on the Move

International Workgroup 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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Please make your cheque payable to:

International Secretariat of IWGIA

Fiolstræde 10 DK-1171 Copenhagen K

Denmark

Phone: + 45 33 124724

Telefax: 45 33 147749

#### **International Board of IWGIA:**

René Fuerst (President), Georg Henriksen (Vice-President),

Karen Bundgaard Andersen, Teresa Aparicio, Jens Dahl, Andrew Gray,

Aud Talle, Espen Wæhle and Representatives of the National Groups.

#### **Secretariat of IWGIA:**

Executive Directors:

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Publications:

Mario Di Lucci, Filomenita Mongaya Høgsholm

Staff:

Sheila Aikman, Ann Fenger Benwell, Karen Degnsbøl,

Susanne Ejdesgaard Jeppesen, Bodil Prieme, Diana Vinding

Compilation and Editing:

Inese Andersen, Teresa Aparicio, Patricia Jorquera

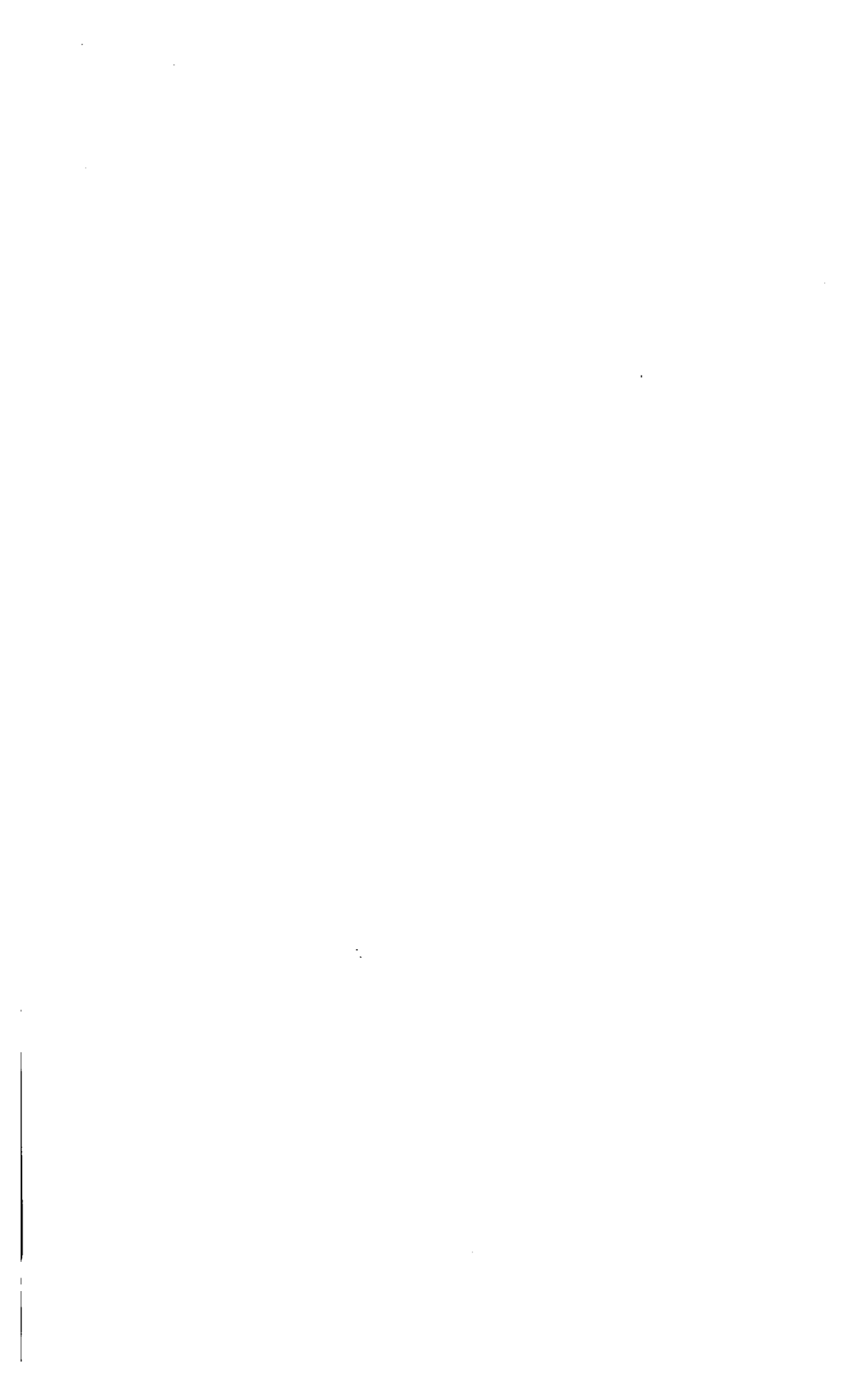
Cover photo: *Huge grin from Inuit woman from the Ikerasak  
Umanak District, Greenland.*

*Photo: Palle Kjærulff-Schmidt.*

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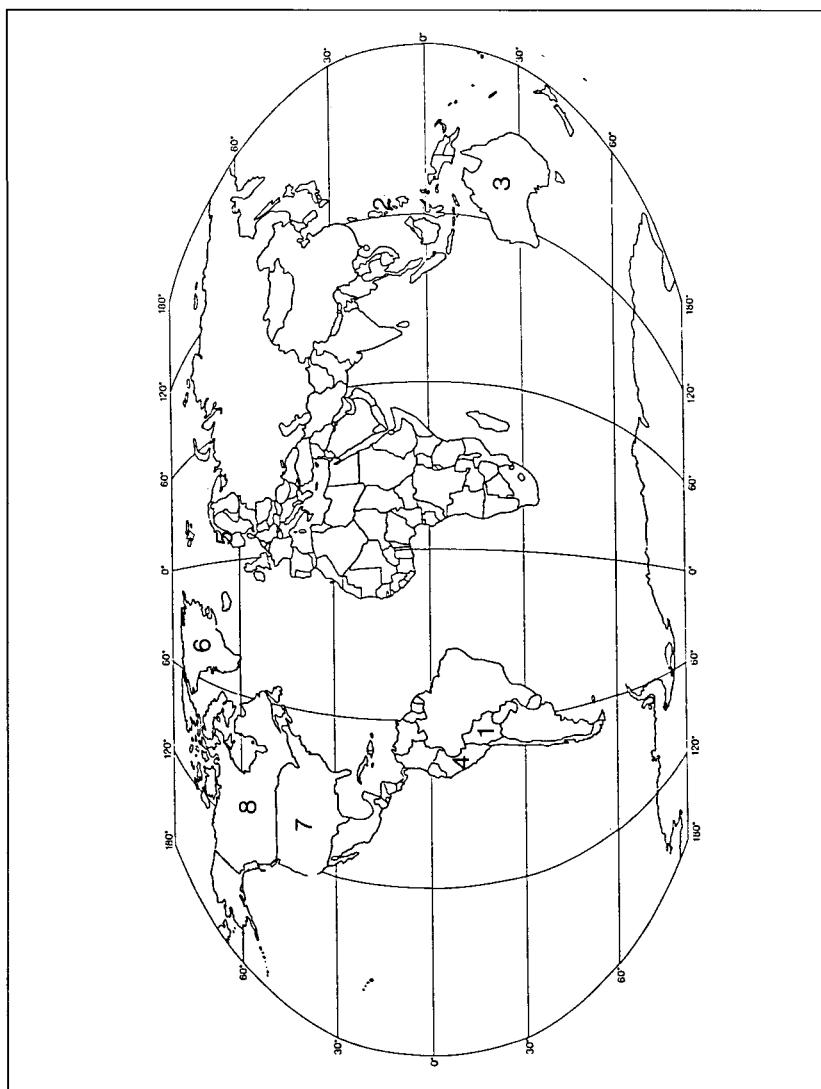
**Indigenous Women  
on the Move**

**Copenhagen  
July 1990**



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*World map indicating the different parts of the world where indigenous reality for women are described by the contributors.*

# Introduction

This first document on indigenous women – Women on the Move – appears at the same time as the Second International Conference of Indigenous Women is being held in Karasjok, Norway, on 5-9 August 1990.

IWGIA (the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs) intends with this volume, to give the indigenous women a platform from where they can express themselves. Therefore it is only women's voices that are being heard in this document.

This document has not been without problems, and from the moment it was merely an idea and up to its materialisation today, we have worked at getting in touch with indigenous women and their organisations in different parts of the world in order to get their contributions. Many contacts have been established, but it has been more difficult to get the manuscripts than we expected, no doubt precisely because indigenous women are "on the move", in the middle of a long and hard struggle for their people's and their own survival.

Therefore for this, as well as for other reasons, this Document has been under way for a long time. It also has great shortcomings as for instance, the absence of articles by African women. Missing are also articles by women from Aotearoa and from the Pacific Islands, and the two articles by the Andean women from Bolivia have already previously been published in our Newsletter No. 48, December 1986.

However we hope that the second volume on "Indigenous Women on the Move", soon to be compiled and edited by Winona La Duke Kapashesit, President of the Indigenous Women's Network, will be able to put this right and will cover these parts of the world not represented in this Document.

During the sixties and the seventies the indigenous organisations experienced a fast development at international level. However it is only within the last two decades that indigenous women have started organising themselves. They have done so with increasing success and thereby been able to put forward their own problems and preoccupations as women, as well as their aspirations for the future.

Indigenous women confront problems not only because they live in countries with class-divided societies. As members of indigenous societies, they are also the butt of national oppression and racism. Furthermore they have to carry the burden of being oppressed as women.

This threefold problematique is expressed with varying emphasis in the different articles of this Document, showing that indigenous women have different concerns, different priorities although their situation in many respects is very similar.

Thus, for the group of *Aymara* women from **OMAK, Bolivia**, composed by Andrea Flores, Felipa Gutierrez and Arminda Velasco "organising ourselves does not mean antagonising the *Aymara* man" but rather "re-equilibrating the women's side, this is the reason for our organisation". From the Philippines, the women from the Cordillera show us through the article written by Geraldine Fiagoy that "the struggle for self-determination has become a necessary component in the liberative process". Today many Cordillera women take an active part within the New People's Army (NPA) in their people's resistance against the military oppression and the multinational company's intrusion on their territory.

Jackie Huggins from **Australia** also evokes the role of the woman in the struggle against national oppression and racism: Aboriginal women, according to her, consider "black liberation for men and women (...) a more important goal to many black women than women's liberation..." and quoting Hilary Saunders, she asserts "We are a race of people who have suffered many injustices, we are fighting for self-determination. Women must play an important part in this, yet we can hope to achieve this as one people, not as a race of men, nor as a race of women but of Black United People."

The indigenous women also describe their own situation, as women, in societies that have become dominated by men as a result of the influence of colonisation, religion, capitalist development. Rebeca Detén from Peru puts it this way: "The machismo, the abuse, the lack of respect and the marginalisation of the indigenous women is a new cultural invasion.... The machismo, has like religion and culture been imposed from outside. It divides us, it makes us weak and it humiliates us". And Vigdis Stordahl from Norway says: "Whether or not female discrimination is something new in *Saami* society, it is there today", and she points out that "the only way we can hope to change the more or less subtle barriers which women encounter is through further research into the question of whether belonging to a particular sex is used as a power factor".

Therefore an important preoccupation is to organise. But often this is not enough since women still experience difficulties in being acknowledged, in being listened to. And, as Rebeca Detén asks: "How many women leaders are there in the indigenous organisations? In my organisation there are none, and nevertheless they treat very important problems, about which women have a lot to say". Nevertheless, as Lise Lennert from **Greenland** justly remarks: "Women have to show that they are willing to take shared responsibilities because no one is going to give it to us on a plate... It is absolutely clear that political awareness among Greenlandic women has come to stay". A first necessary step might be, as Charon Asetoyer from **South Dakota, USA**, stresses, for the indigenous women to organise their own networks.

Other preoccupations are health, the high birth rate, alcoholism.



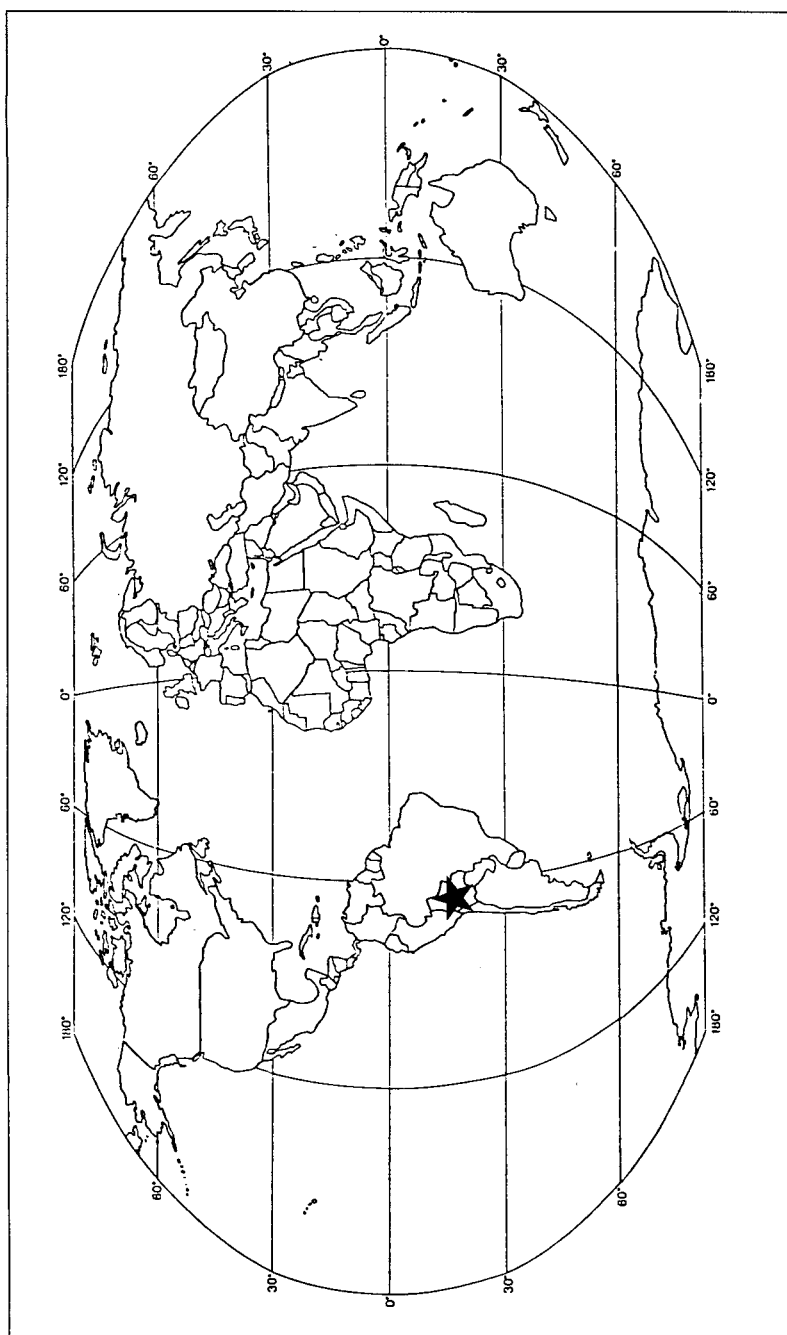
For Charon Asetoyer, alcohol is a fundamental problem because “to-day alcohol consumption is having the most negative and devastating effect on the most innocent and defenseless part of all our Native American people, the unborn”, thereby posing a real threat to the survival of indigenous communities.

However and despite the very difficult situation that these indigenous women experience and tell us about, the articles also reflect their strength, their courage and their trust in their people and their culture. For as Mary Ellen Tempel from Canada explains: “(The women) view the responsibility as “keepers of the culture” as paramount to any other. A formidable but nevertheless fundamental responsibility in the struggle to re-establish indigenous governments and strengthen Indigenous cultures: a task in which women are, by history and necessity, the conscience”.

Keepers of the traditional culture but at the same time looking towards the future: Rebeca Detén underlines the importance of “revindicating our culture” but adds that it is also important “to look for new alternatives, not to be bound by the past’s, “women were like that”, “it was like that in the old days”, but instead between ourselves, men and women, to form our own new people, our own new history”.

And it is this future, this CHANGE that one way or another all the articles point at. As Carmen Beatriz Ruiz from Bolivia puts it: “The fact that women reflect on, and connect their small and individual stories, is part of recognising their own situation, their subordination within the family and society, and their own multiple possibilities to struggle for change”.

IWGIA hopes that this first document, hopefully to be followed by many others, may be a small contribution to this struggle.



World map indicating location of Bolivia.

# Bolivia: Women in the Andean World

*On the 24th and 25th of January 1986, the Centro Chitacolla held a meeting in La Paz (Bolivia) on women in the Andean world. We reproduce below two articles that were presented during this meeting.*

## We Aymaran Women

by Andrea Flores T., Felipa Gutierrez M. and  
Arminda Velasco T.

The organization of the *Aymara* women of the Kollasuyu is a recent event, but its history rests on several initiatives taken by its members in the field of community help and action. O.M.A.K. was organized because we saw the need for a woman's organization. In the cities there is real discrimination against women. In reality we suffer from several types of discrimination: as members of the Aymara nation and as women wherein we are ignored economically. In the communities, the existing educational system, the churches and the media mean that our traditional ways are more and more on the defensive and that the traditional role of women is being attacked.

Before, within our culture and when our society was free, we Aymara men and women enjoyed equal rights. Women had authority. They still have authority in the majority of communities, albeit somewhat under attack by the present system which is trying to impose the system of "men as superior to women". In the traditional system our men and women participate and decide.

In view of the fact that this system has been attacked for more than four centuries, our aim is to defend it and fight for it. But the concrete situation which we live in obliges us to fight for our community structure with a type of organization which is strictly female.

From our point of view, it is necessary to repair each part of the community in order to restructure it in its entirety. The colonialism, the social, economic and cultural domination which we suffer has created conditions which have meant that even in a struggle for liberation only the masculine half is privileged.

It is our lot to appraise and organize the female half in order to stimulate the transformation of our society as a whole. This reality becomes clearer if we can understand what is happening in the cities, where the situation of women is dramatic. In the capital city of La Paz, Aymara women are most active and suffer most. The markets are full of Aymara women trying to sell at least something each day so that their children can have something to eat; and for that reason they have to suffer the discrimination and insults of those who think themselves their superiors.

In the "luxurious" districts of the towns exist the so-called "servants" who are our mothers and sisters. The "servants" are women who work all day long, doing domestic chores in the bosses' houses. They are treated almost like slaves and their reward is a minimum wage. Women who work 24 hours a day in the service of their exploiters are paid between 15 and 20 million Bolivian pesos, which is a pittance equal to a minimum of US\$ 10. This is not a job, it is servitude done by women as a tribute from the invaded people. The exploitation is so great that there are even women who have been maids from girlhood without any economic rewards. There are families which go to distant communities to "fetch themselves" a little maid, that is, a little girl, whilst offering the girl's parents that they will take care of her education, when in reality they take her away so that she will serve them as a virtual slave girl.

In the towns, in particular, there exists strong discrimination against women of native origin. In view of the fact that Indian women have retained their essentially distinctive costumes or way of dressing, they can easily suffer from discrimination. There are cafes where they do not serve Aymara women, and some sisters have had bitter experiences of this. This has meant that there exists different areas for the two populations making up the country: the descendants of the native nations and those who think themselves descendants of the western invaders.

Aymara women in the city gather together in the marginal districts, in cooperatives, associations and in unions, while their oppressors also gather themselves into parties and organizations. When contact exists between these two worlds, it is lamentably negative, either one of oppression and open exploitation, or of manipulation and paternalism. We therefore believe that Aymara women should have every right to organize themselves... The right and also the obligation, since we believe that only in this way will the cause of liberating our people be furthered.

O.M.A.K. is made up a hundred percent (100%) of Aymara women. We have no tutors or outside directors. The promoters who wait for O.M.A.K. are 100% of native origin. We believe this is important, not because we are practicing discrimination inversely, but because we believe it is natural and legitimate. We have seen that when a native organization is created, there are many outsiders who present themselves, who impose even



*Indigenous Bolivian woman and child in the urban setting.  
Photo: Barbara Simon.*

without being invited. Slowly these outsiders reach leadership levels, or remain like leaders in the shadow, waiting in the wings. We believe that there can be positive elements which are not native to our people, and which we can identify with, but it should be us who will invite them to join us when we judge them to be positive and constructive for our cause.

For this reason we wish to construct an organization which will fulfill the expectations of Aymara woman in such a way that it will be the Aymara woman herself who will decide, who knows when to enter an egalitarian

relationship with any other organization, whether Bolivian or not, by breaking the bonds of dependency and manipulation which have existed up to now. We believe that there are standards which must be taken into account. We have organized ourselves into a group of Aymaran women because we are conscious at the same time of belonging to a concrete entity of people, to the Aymara nation, of which we are the female half. We do not believe that "woman" can exist as an abstraction that eliminate cultural contexts and social characteristics. We have seen many women from the culture and society which oppress us, who even belong to the powerful social classes, who talk to us as if they hold the answers to our problems; they speak of liberation, of justice for all, etc., when in reality we are dealing with liberation and justice within their own concepts, within their own limits of nation, class, and culture. Therefore we believe it is the duty of Aymara women to organize ourselves, according to our own customs, culture and interests.

The fact that we ourselves are organizing us does not mean that we are antagonizing the Aymara men. We believe the conditions of domination and of attack on our society have brought about this response, because we have also seen that our people's most combative forms of struggle have come mainly from the men. Colonization has upset the traditional balance, and from the perspective of a united struggle, it is necessary to establish the balance from the women's side; hence the rationale for our organization.



*Aymara Indian mother and daughter tilling the land  
in the Bolivian Highlands. Photo: ILO.*

In reality, O.M.A.K. is not an organization that is completely finished but rather, it is building itself up through practice. We are a young organization and we lack many things. At the moment the most important part of our work is in the Aymara communities. We work in the 18 provinces of the Department of La Paz, but we also are working in Oruro and in some Aymaran parts of Cochabamba. We are trying to develop the potential of Aymara women, strengthening the social system, and labour systems which are ours, such as *ayni* (1), *menk'a* (2), *yana pana* (3), etc. We are trying to strengthen the *ayllu* or community, since we believe that the Aymara will create more just forms of organization and labour solely based on the experiences of our forebears. At the same time we want to contribute to Aymaran participation on all cultural, social, and political aspects of life as a condition for the survival of our nation and from the perspective of self-determination.

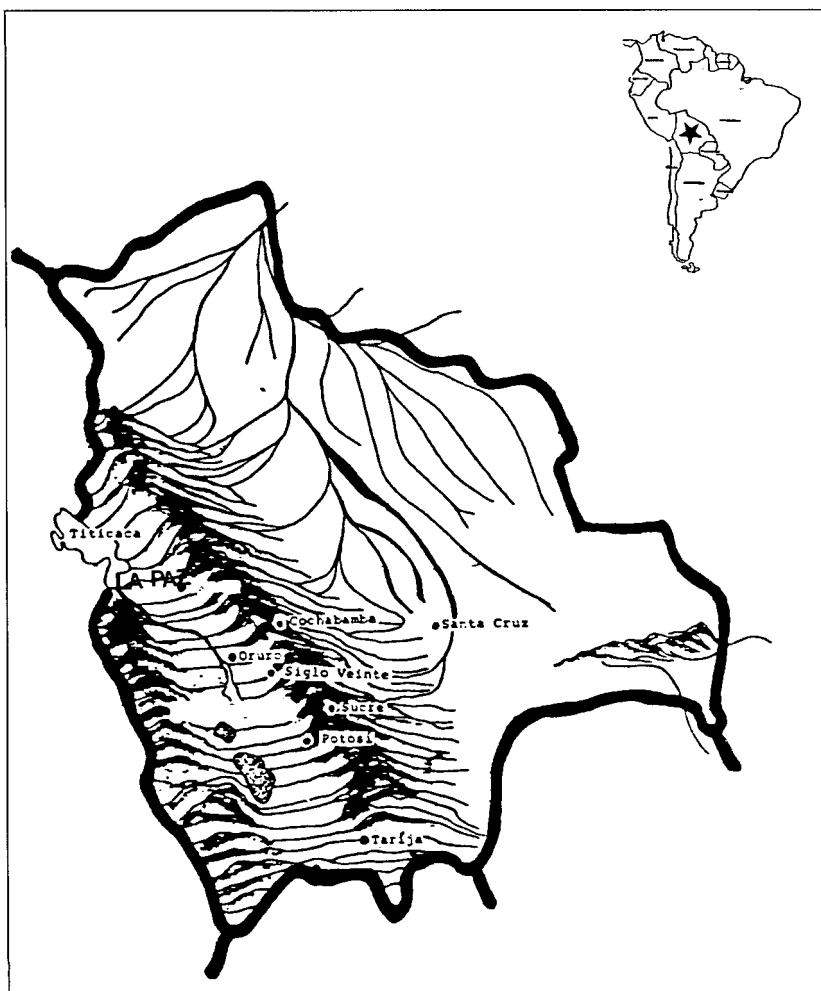
On a concrete level we have already carried out several activities. We now have short courses in several communities in order to try and eradicate the causes of alienation and to generate an awareness of our own cultural values. On the level of education, we have worked towards the creation of informal education in order to eliminate the problems of illiteracy. We have collaborated in bringing about literacy in native languages and we have proposed a teaching project which will reassess our ancestors from *Kollasuyu*.

We have also carried out short courses to try and re-value local handicrafts as sources of income which might help the economy of Aymara families. In the towns we have also organized short courses aimed at raising consciousness concerning the reality of Aymara women.

The expectations held towards our organization are great within our people, precisely because we still lack various types of organization. We want to fulfill our pledge and, above all, to continue because the concrete experience we have makes us continually see the sadness of the situation of the Aymara woman: discrimination and exploitation in the towns; the poverty to which the communities have been reduced; the children's hunger; the low morale. Our work is totally voluntary; we work because we have seen the suffering of our people. What motivates us is the confidence in the liberation in our *Kollasuyu* and the fact that more and more sisters and brothers will be involving themselves in this struggle - freeing themselves from the pressures and the manipulation which are stopping this conscience from developing further.

*Andrea Flores, Felipa Guiterrez and Arminda Velasco are from a group of Aymaran women belonging to the organization OMAK (Organization of Aymaran Women in Kollasuyu).*

- (1) unpaid reciprocal labour based on kinship and affinal ties.
- (2) paid reciprocal labour based on kin, affinal and other ties.
- (3) Quechua for 'help' (translator's note).



*Contoured map of Bolivia in South America.*



# Bolivia: The Thousand and One Voices

by Carmen Beatriz Ruiz

The Gregoria Apaza Center for the Advancement of Women was born out of the worries of a group of women, who felt the necessity for reflecting, discussing and organizing their experiences of social work linked to different popular sectors of the female population.

These experiences, which until now, were isolated and scattered, needed a common and mutual focus in which the “specific problems” of the country’s women could be tackled methodologically and systematically. They likewise needed room to allow them to carry out effective and organized work. Women make up more than 50% of Bolivia’s population. They are oppressed, discriminated against, and exploited by the very same objective conditions as the rest of the society.

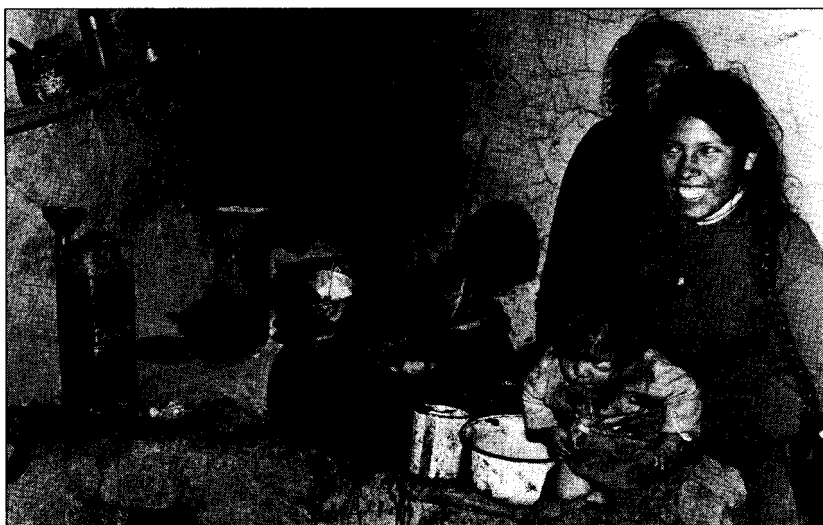
At present, the institution works with several groups of migrant *Aymara* women, putting into effect projects in production, services training and communications.

## **A women’s programme: being a woman**

It might seem that when one says “woman”, when one tackles women’s problems, one is referring to a very specific theme, the solution of which will only involve aspects which strictly concern women. One of our first experiences with a radio experiment has been that the dialogue with, and between women transcends those themes which are considered women’s traditional issues: cooking recipes, bringing up children, etc., and touched a whole complex system of social, economic, political and ideological relations and factors.

Being a woman is therefore related not only to those aspects which are considered to be linked directly to domestic life, but also to the so-called “public” field. In this field, different characteristics and elements mix together according to the ethnic and social groups people belong to. Thus when we speak about migrant *Aymara* women living in La Paz’s working class districts (a sector in which we have been carrying out the radio experiment), we meet groups of women with a special identity, formed on the one hand by their being *Aymara* and on the other by being migrants.

When we started the experiment, our first intention was simply to create short programmes for communicating individual and collective ex-



*Aymaran migrant women reality in the densely populated urban areas.  
Photo: Lisbeth Overgård.*

periences by radio, by means of which migrant Aymara women would be able to communicate with each other. We did not imagine that it would open such a rich floodgate of reflection, discussion and motivation on a wide spectrum of themes ranging from the analysis of living conditions to the claims of gender, that is to say, of being women themselves.

### **The radio: an everyday companion**

We chose the medium of radio because the medium of radio has been incorporated into the homes as a daily object. Radios seem to have overcome many social barriers in working-class sectors. Using this very same yardstick we chose the time for the programme to be at 11.30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Basically the programme functions with the aid of two media: that of dramatisations and interviews. Drama is a medium which seems to attract greatly the attention of any kind of listener. Everybody likes to look through her neighbour's window and catch up on a story and to follow some characters. Supposing that as a general rule working class women carry out their housework in the morning, and that while they do it they listen to the radio, it is almost natural to provide them company with programmes that directly address them; and supposing that what they listen to does not only have a direct relationship with their lives, but that, furthermore, it is enjoyable.

The interviews and the debate complete the information or the discussion of the theme on hand. After or before doing the dramatisation, the women give their opinions and comments and they recount experiences relating to the theme chosen beforehand (based on a guideline of at least 7 programmes). Later on, dramatisations as well as interviews figure in the study, with music and narration, making up the final product: a 30-minute programme.

### **The radio: a far-reaching medium**

We understand that the radio, as a medium of information or communication, has a wide scope. It can reach an enormous amount of people which may include probable listeners to whom the programmes are directed, as well as another sector which had not been considered as likely listeners. From the start therefore, we proposed using the programmes in a double dimension. On the one side, to transmit the programmes to a large open set of listeners (the San Gabriel radio listeners) and, on the other side, to use the same programmes, recorded on cassette tape, for limited groups (with which our and other institutions work) in planned debate sessions.

In this way we are gradually building up an archive of the taped programmes which can be used by our centre or any other organization or institution at any moment.

### **Participation and access**

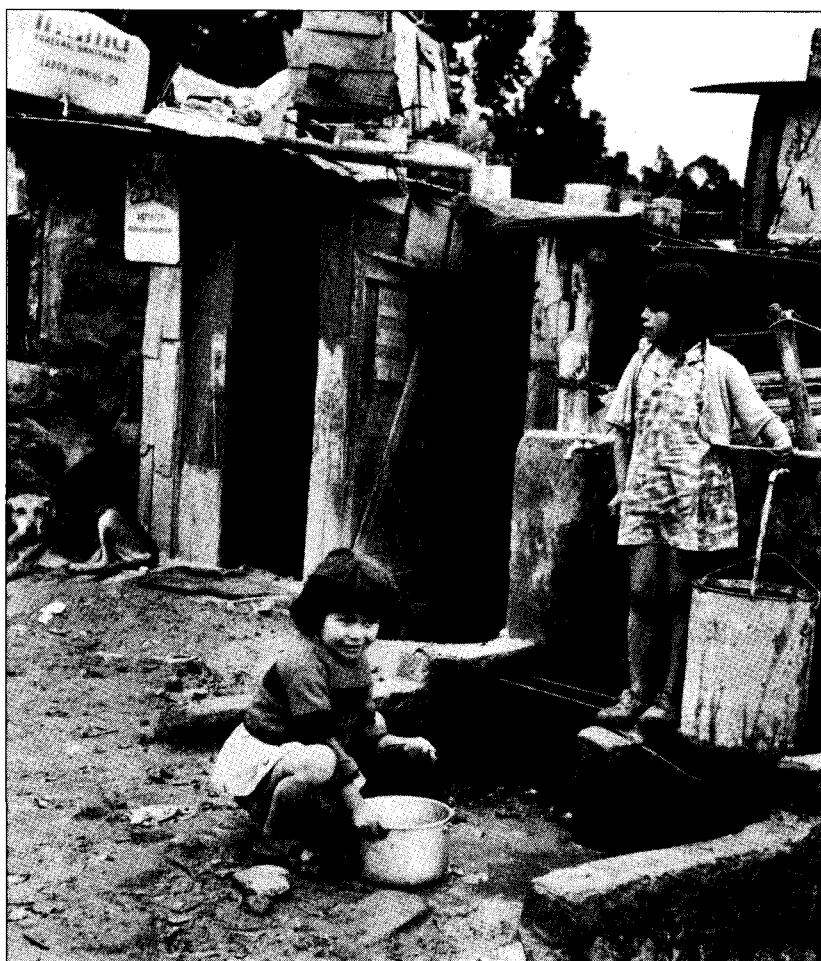
There are two elements that we consider fundamental, as basis for the experiment: systematic and constant participation of the groups in the programme and the technical training of the groups so they can take over the programme when the time comes. We understand participation to mean not only the possibility of using the medium of radio to express opinions or experiences (on the part of the groups), but as the global means of *expressing themselves*, in the terms in which they live out their reality, and the terms in which they understand and recognise it. We are involved in a kind of technical training in which the groups might be able to make use of this tool which is being shaped.

By bringing both things together, we believe we can obtain the basic objective of letting the groups express themselves, as well as recognise themselves as important subjects of the broadcasts (equal to a minister or a pop singer) and furthermore, to do it using the rules of the game in such a way that the outcome and impact of the contents of the individual programmes being beamed are assured.

This is like saying we are going beyond handicraft production in order to appropriate, both in quality and quantity, the instrument being ap-

proached (in this case radio). Training takes place in small workshops, which are open almost every day and whose settings are provided by the groups' daily activities. A few basic resources are used: dramatisation, the use of the tape recorder, the forms of conducting as well as responding to an interview.

We believe these resources will help women to be really the mistresses of their own words, from the perspective of their own interests, of their own special manifestation of personal expressions and of their own vision of reality.



*With the radio, Bolivian women can really express in their own words, the reality they are living in. Here, little girls fetch water from the public faucet. Photo: Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke archives.*

## Affection and daily life

We try and make each programme, whatever its theme, achieve the following reactions among listeners: capture people's interest, convoke identification, provoke reflection, guide their collective and individual actions.

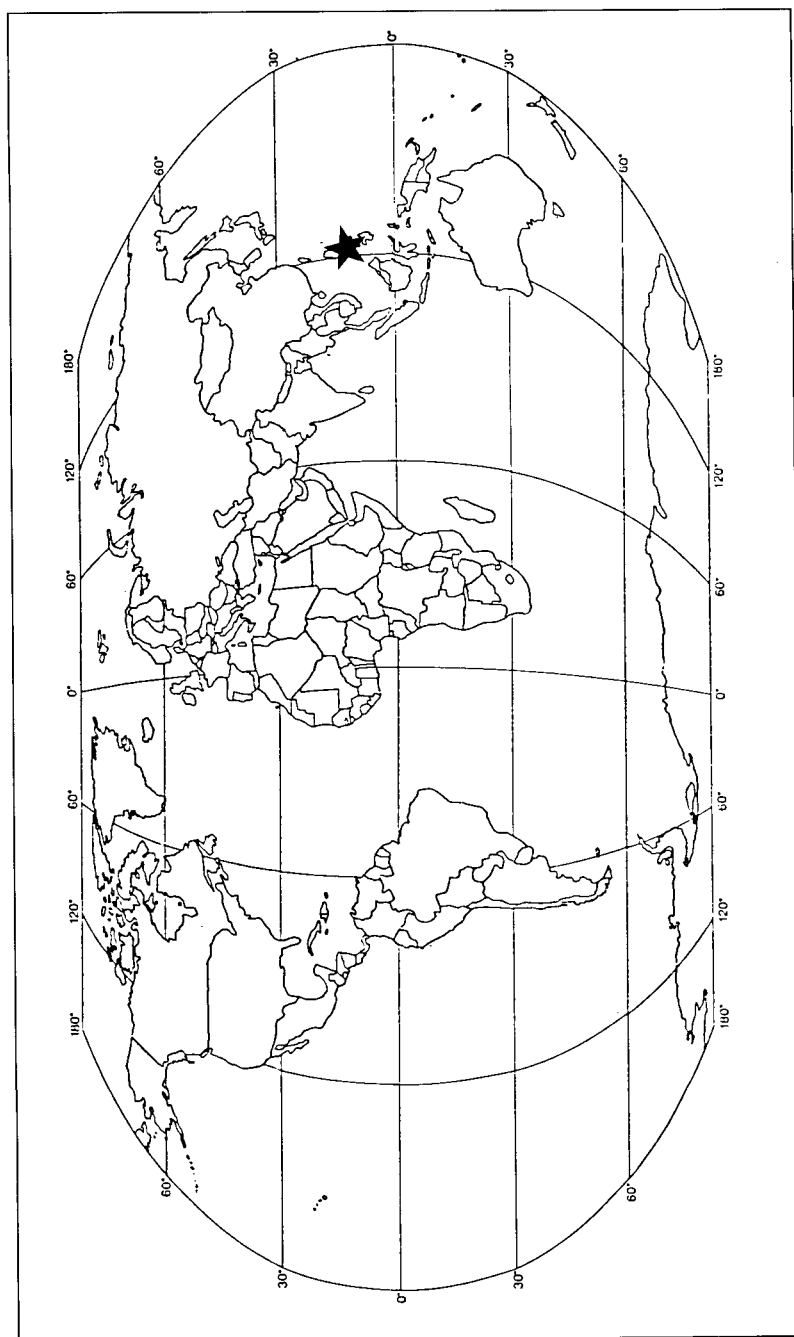
We believe that, amongst many other resources, there is a valid mechanism to obtain these ends, namely to embrace those themes dealing with feelings and occurrences which are an everyday reality.

The show, as an expression of sentiments, gets to the bottom of a dimension of reality which usually remains hidden in the kind of programme commonly called "educational" or "formative". Affections and the passions are reserved for novels, but are, however, the bases and motivation of human relationships. We think that by using the format of drama and by not underrating the world of feelings, we are linking ourselves (more naturally) with women, who are traditionally bound to the private world of intuition and feeling. Within this language and this perception it would seem more logical to obtain a direct and horizontal communication, a recognition separate from legitimisation, and an appraisal intrinsic to a language and a perception "of women".

Daily life, or even better, the dimension of daily life, is a part of a whole process of reappraisal of the private world in order to project it henceforth towards an analysis which is more global and reflective of reality. In truth, for a greater and better perception of reality.

The exclusiveness of these items (affection and daily life), does not present them as fixed or unchanging resources, but that, on the contrary, these resources are presented as an initial resource of growing close, reflection and appraisal. It is important to point out that in all analyses that have been undertaken, it is the women who are the protagonists. This forms part of yet another aspect that we wish to stress: that women should reflect upon themselves, by linking their little, individual stories. This is a part of the process of recognizing their role and their oppression within the family and in society, and of recognizing the many possibilities of struggling for change.

*Carmen Beatriz Ruiz is an Aymaran woman active in the Center for the Advancement of Women "Gregoria Apaza", who has been working on a radio program for women.*



*World map indicating location of the Philippines.*

# The Indigenous Women of the Cordillera Region, Northern Philippines: A Situationer

by Geraldine L. Fiagoy

## Introduction

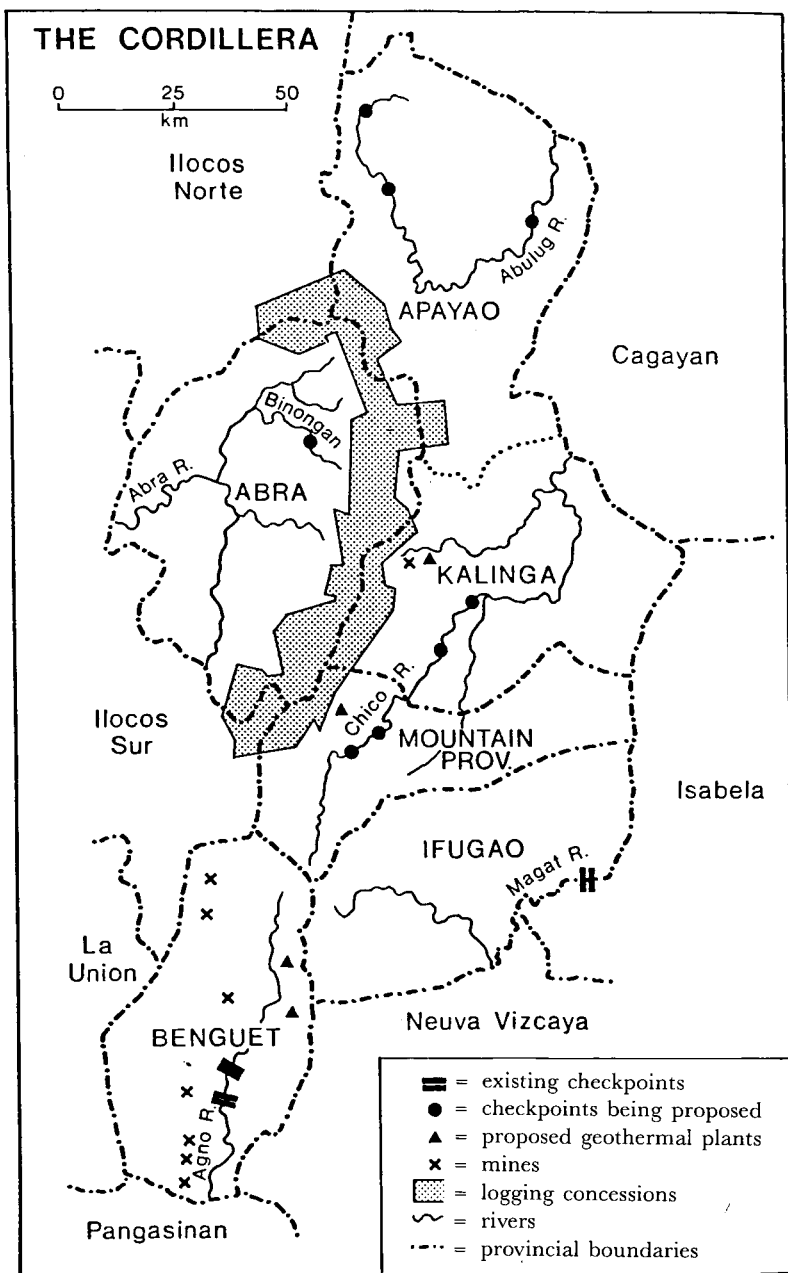
The history of the women's movement in the northern highlands of the Philippines has been closely associated with the struggle for the assertion of the socio-political and economic rights of the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera.

This upland region is composed of the provinces Abra, Benguet, Mountain Province, Ifugao and Kalinga-Apayao. It covers an area of about 1 750 000 hectares, most of which are mountainous. Its population is estimated to be over a million (1985).

Seven major ethno-linguistic groups comprise the greater part of the area while six smaller groups inhabit pockets and boundary areas of the Cordillera mountain range. These major groups are the *Bontok*, *Kankanaey*, *Ibaloy*, *Ifugao*, *Kalinga*, *Tinggian* and *Isneg*. The generic term for all of the groups is *Igorot*, meaning people of the mountains.

At present the majority of the *Igorots* survive on subsistence agriculture. Both swidden and wet-rice cultivation serve as subsistence activity. In some places the trend is towards cash-cropping. Since the Cordillera is rich in mineral resources, many of the indigenous peoples are engaged in small-scale mining. They also engage in handicraft-making, like woodcarving, basketry and weaving to meet the demands of the tourist industry.

Many people in the countryside have gradually migrated to the urban centers. The seasonal nature of agricultural production enabled the farmers to bring home cash after a few months' work in the urban centers as contractual laborers or market vendors. Many preferred to stay permanently. Meanwhile, the majority of the professionals stay in the few urban centers of the region where employment for their skills is available.



*Map of the Cordillera in the island of Luzon. Shows the different provinces and indicates different types of development projects.*



## Historical background

For three hundred years beginning 1521, the Philippines was under Spanish rule. After the revolution in 1896 the Americans took over. Both colonizers considered the Cordillera as a resource base. The Spaniards conducted numerous expeditions into the highlands in their attempts to subjugate the people and appropriate their gold. The American strategy of educating the inhabitants, on the other hand, made them more acceptable than the Spaniards. Unfortunately, this also led to the alienation of the indigenous peoples from their lands because the colonial government enacted laws allowing foreigners and others to exploit the resources in the Cordillera. At the same time, land laws required the indigenous inhabitants to apply for paper titles as proof of ownership. Since the majority was illiterate and the process for applying for titles tedious, only the educated few were able to retain ownership of their lands, and in the process acquired some more. This policy of privatisation led to the eroding of the traditional communal concept of land.

The policy of the succeeding Philippine government towards the indigenous peoples was no different. The Cordillera was still considered a resource base, and extraction of its resources was its main concern. While Cordillera wealth in terms of minerals and forest resources were being extracted, the region remained neglected in terms of social services and infrastructure. This discriminatory policy resulted in the marginalisation of the area and its uneven economic development.

## Cultural History of Women

Filipino women in pre-colonial times held a position equal to that of the men. Historical records reveal that in early Filipino history, women rulers existed in communities along the Pasig.

But it is in ritual life that the Filipino woman held supremacy. Female religious practitioners officiated in rituals which had to be performed for the survival of the community. The *Tagbanua* call them *babaylan* and among the *Kalinga*, *manjajakawak*. They still exist among the indigenous peoples in the country.

In the Cordillera the women ritual practitioners are still recognised despite the intrusion of western culture. In Western Mountain Province, when there is a sick person an old woman is called to look at the internal organs of a chicken butchered for the occasion. Similarly, in Kalinga, the *manjajakawak* is called upon to perform the rituals for the sick and the deceased.

In agriculture an old woman is called upon to perform the ritual planting before the planting season community starts. She also starts the harvest season.

Women in the Cordillera have always played a major role in food production. In the past when villages were constantly at war with each other, the men had to guard the territorial boundaries of their villages, leaving the women to work in the fields. This affected the role of women in the indigenous political institutions which became dominated by the men.

## **Situation of the indigenous women**

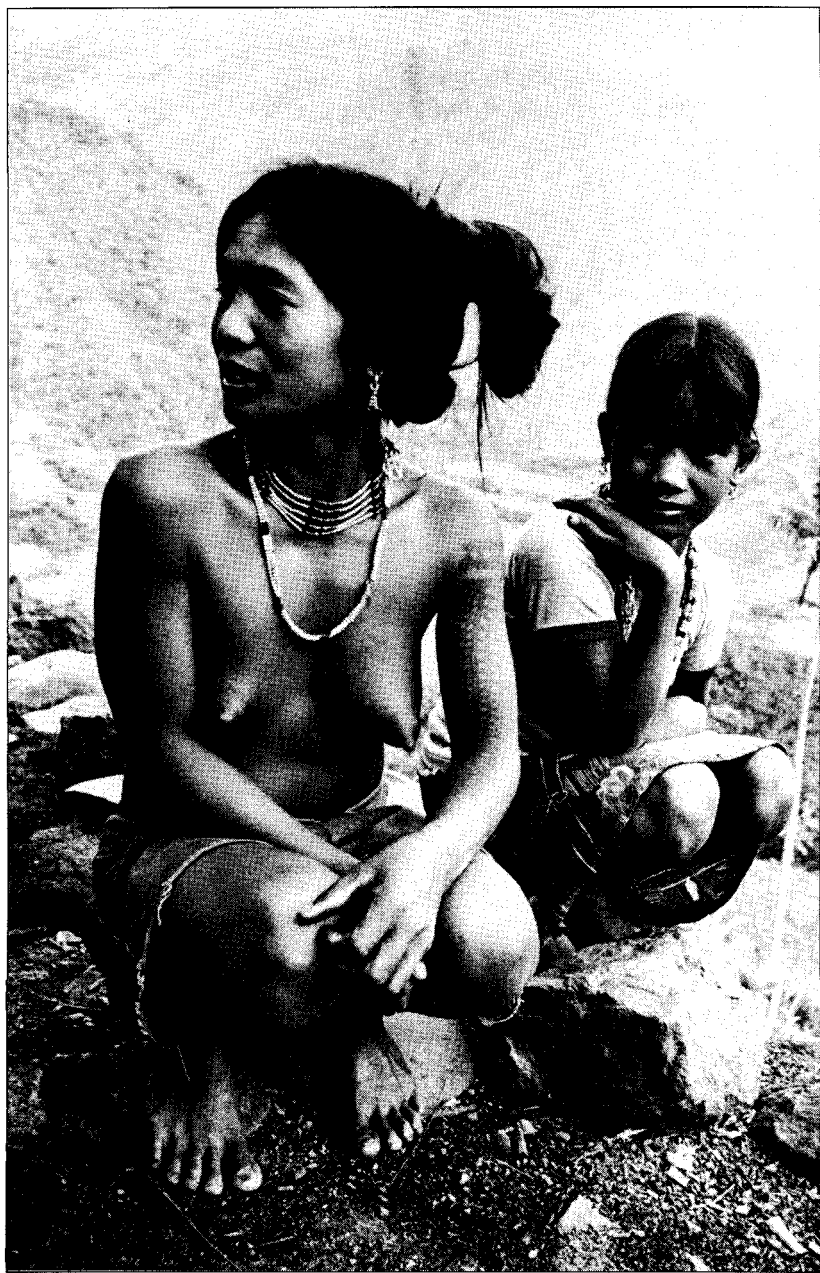
### **Gender oppression**

Aside from the external factors which brought conditions of inequality to the lowland Filipinos and also to the indigenous peoples, internal factors in the form of acceptable cultural practices also account for the problem of gender oppression. In the Cordillera, for instance, women are placed in a minor position because of cultural biases. Male siblings have always been preferred over females. In the past, among the Kalinga people, a newborn female could be eliminated by its parents or relatives.

Meanwhile, in the indigenous political structures like the *bodong* (peace pact) or *ator* (council of elders), the women have no active voice in decision-making. These political institutions have long been dominated by men. In village discussions regarding intra- and inter-village problems, women are excluded. Their participation is confined to fetching water, cooking rice and serving the food. In addition, women are forbidden in the *ator* or the structure where the council of elders pass the time and hold their meetings.

However, in many community problems, the women's opinions are solicited within the confines of the home or outside the formal *bodong* or *ator* discussion. Among the Kalinga, before the men can go on a headhunting expedition they have to ask the women. The exclusion of the women from the formal discussions is a misrepresentation of males as the *only one* capable of planning for the community.

The prominence of men in these political institutions and other forms of leadership stems from the fact that men were traditionally responsible for defending the territory while the women were relegated to caring for children and producing food. Cordillera history reveals that women have been active participants in the defense of this territory. Despite their exclusion from political discussions, they have transcended the cultural limitations imposed by society and show their capability to defend home and village.



*Kalinga woman and daughter in finery of beads and tattoo.*  
*Photo: IWGIA archive.*

A case in point is the concerted action of the *Bontok* women of Mountain Province. In the seventies, a mining concern, Benguet Corporation, wanted to set up operations in the area. The people were concerned that large-scale mining would lead to the destruction of their rice fields. Tunneling would also result in the lowering of the water table. At the same time, they feared the loss of a lucrative source of cash, which was indigenous mining.

When the workers of Benguet Corporation started digging tunnels in the mountain, the women met them with bared breasts and taunted them. To the women this act was a sign of contempt for the intruders. The women also escorted the workers to the military barracks where they left the men and their equipment.

Similarly in the mid-70's the government started to implement the Chico River Dam Development Project. This ambitious plan would have displaced over 100 000 Bontok and Kalinga villagers and inundated hundreds of hectares of residential and agricultural lands. Initially, the people expressed their opposition by sending petitions and delegations to the president. When this failed, other meta-legal processes were undertaken wherein women played a major role.

When the workers of the National Power Corporation in charge of setting up the equipment for the dam camped at Tomiangan, Tabuk, Kalinga-Apayao, the Kalinga men and women arrived at the camp and dismantled the workers' tents. Then they walked for miles to the NPC central office to deliver the tents which they had dismantled in the workers' camp as a sign of opposition to the construction of the dam.

Although women are not involved in the discussion regarding inter-village conflicts, they are known to have participated in the physical confrontation. An example is the inter-village war between the Kalinga people of Lubo and the *Balabgao* people of Parasilis in 1983. While the Lubo men were engaged in the gunfight, the women were trekking to the battlefield to keep their warriors well-supplied with food and water.

## **Women in agriculture**

### *Owners – cultivators*

In the past, when the men had to protect the village from intruders and had to spend much time patrolling the territory, the burden of food production and child care fell on the women. The eroding of warrior society did not lead to change in the women's responsibilities. In paddy rice production, the men are charged with field preparation. However, planting, weeding and other field care activities fall on the women, although in many areas the cultural practice of making only the women do the planting to ensure a fruitful harvest is slowly disappearing.

Even in wet-rice producing areas, the people also cultivate swiddens. Again, the bulk of the work falls on the woman, who regularly has to walk distances to her swidden for the family's daily supply of root crops and vegetables. At the same time she is involved in other activities like swine and poultry raising. The males in the family usually take care of larger animals like cows and caraboes (water buffalo).

Cash crops in the Cordillera include coffee, corn, beans, and fruits. Marketing of these crops may be done by both sexes who also decide when and where to sell the produce. Sale of fruits within the community is undertaken by women who either bring these to the market place or peddle the goods around.

### *Wage laborers*

As semi-feudal structures are existent in the Cordillera especially in the rice-producing plains of Ifugao and Apayao, gender and class oppression of women are both evident. Landless peasant women or those who work for the landlords to augment their meagre production are paid lower wages, as compared to the male workers. At the same time tenants of both sexes are heavily burdened by existing tenancy conditions where part of the produce must go to the landlord regardless of whether the tenant was able to pay his previous debts or make ends meet.

In addition, tenants and small cultivators usually sell part of their rice and seed stock supply in order to purchase other goods. A few months before the next harvest, they are hungry. The females in the household have to take on menial jobs like washing and cleaning for the landlord and doing other odd jobs in exchange for food and sometimes used clothes.

Gender oppression is also evident in cash cropping areas like the province of Benguet where the raising of temperate vegetables for cash has been established more than 25 years ago. While both men and women are given similar tasks like fields preparation, care and harvesting, the women workers or *oblantes* are paid lower rates. Presently a male oblante is paid 30 pesos (\$1.50) a day, the female worker is given 25 pesos (\$1.25) (1987).

Both sexes, however, suffer the same oppressive conditions like cramped quarters built by the vegetable garden operator, long working hours and inadequate food. Both are also exposed to the hazards of chemical poisoning when they spray the gardens with pesticides because garden operators do not provide them with protective clothing nor do they advise the oblantes regarding the proper use of these chemicals. Numerous cases of poisoning and illnesses caused by the chemicals have been documented in the hospitals along the vegetable-producing belt.

## Women workers

Indigenous women also seek employment in the urban centers. In the Baguio Export Processing Zone, although both sexes work under oppressive conditions, the female workers suffer more. Female workers are preferred because they are more patient and more tolerant of the conditions imposed on them by the foreign companies. At the same time single applicants are preferred over the married ones in an apparent move to evade spending for maternity leaves.

Women in the labour force suffer both gender and class oppression. Discriminated against by some employers because of their sex, they are also oppressed because of stringent policies imposed, and because of the manner by which they are treated. In the Export Processing Zone the foreign corporations overwork their workers who are mostly women. There have been instances when the women were locked up in the factories beyond their eight-hour job so they could produce the desired quota.

The weaving industry, which is a lucrative export-oriented enterprise, involve women from the *Bontok*, *Kankana-ey* and *Ifugao* ethnic groups. However, because of the lack of capital, the majority of weavers cannot produce their own goods to ensure self-sufficiency. They resort to producing a few woven materials which they sell, after which they use the money to purchase thread. Others prefer to work for cottage industry operators.



*Igorot woman weaving at loom for touristic consumption?*

*Photo: IWGIA archive.*

This export-oriented industry is a dollar earner; however, the benefits go to the owners of capital while the women weavers remain poor. One such concern is Narda's, a multi-million concern engaged in exporting woven goods to Bloomingdale's in the United States and other countries. This company is known to circumvent labor laws by keeping the majority of its workers on a contractual basis. This means the workers cannot claim benefits as provided by law. At the same time compensation for the tedious job they do is inadequate. The daily wage is 29 pesos (\$1.45) which is still below the minimum wage of 36 pesos (\$1.80). The management also discourages unionism. In 1986 a Bontok woman named Mary Benito, who attempted to organize the workers, was dismissed when management learned of her activities.

### **The women professionals**

Statistics reveal that female children have less chances of obtaining a college education. However, in the past 15 years more people from the Cordillera have been able to finish college degrees. At the same time, more women finished courses other than the traditional teaching degree and went into the natural and social sciences, medicine and law. The conservative educational system propagated in both private and public institutions has produced a majority of professionals whose objective is geared towards material gains or professional success. The few politicized women are constrained by the fact that they face enormous tasks in the struggle for national liberation. At the same time contradictions arise when the women are not liberated from chauvinistic husbands who expect them to manage home and family whether or not they are involved in politics.

### **Urban poor women**

The intrusion of the cash economy and the growing need for services involving cash resulted in the migration of people from the agricultural communities to the town centers especially Baguio City. Today the urban poor make up sixty per cent of the city's population.

The urban poor women from the highlands survive by being water sellers and fruit and vegetable hawkers. Some buy and sell used newspapers and bottles. Others engage in weaving although they do not earn much due to lack of capital.

In Baguio several urban poor communities composed of indigenous peoples have organized themselves to enable them to confront problems like dislocation as they are considered squatters. The women in these communities have also organized consumer groups. A non-government agency working with the urban poor gives services like functional literacy and education on the rights of the urban poor.

Many of the politicised women in this sector are also saddled with gender oppression. They are either tolerated or expected by their husbands to attend mass actions, but by 5 p.m., they must go home to prepare the man's food.

## **Women and militarisation**

### **The development factor**

The indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination and genuine development, the upsurge of insurgency and the government's attempt to develop the Cordillera for the benefit of the few at the expense of the majority who are land-based, led to heightened militarisation in the mid-70's. The military was a necessary component in big development projects. In the Cordillera, as in the rest of the country, development has been forced on the people through intimidation which oftentimes resulted in the death of the inhabitants who opposed dislocation or the destruction of their lands.

### **Effects of militarisation**

Militarisation therefore did not only lead to human rights violations but also to the breakdown of the existing social order. Families were uprooted from their lands. Other families had to disperse as members left for other places to find work. Militarisation also caused other problems affecting women.

In the mid-70's the Kalinga strongly opposed the construction of the Chico Dam. In the 80's, logging in the Apayao increased, causing the inhabitants to protest. The government responded by sending the military. The town center of Tabuk became a haven for the soldiers. Prostitutes appeared in response to the needs of the military. At first the women were brought in from the town centers in the adjoining Cagayan Valley area. Later the Cordillera women themselves engaged in this business.

In Abra province, the village of Mataragan in Malibcong municipality was placed under hamletting conditions in 1982. A curfew was imposed wherein the people had to be inside the village from six in the morning to six in the night. This adversely affected their agricultural production because time spent in the fields was limited.

Mataragan is also the site of an agricultural high school. In 1985, a student was raped by a soldier of the 41st Infantry Battalion. Other parents have also complained that the presence of the soldiers was a distraction to the female students, some of whom have had relations with the former.



Others complained that they could not prevent the soldiers from molesting girls they met along the mountain trails.

Because the Cordillera is primarily considered as a resource base, attention given to the people in the area is only secondary. This was apparent in the attempted construction of the World Bank-funded Chico River Dam Project in Kalinga-Apayao in the 70's. More so in the rainforests of Apayao which has been appropriated by logging concessionaires especially the cronies of the deposed Ferdinand Marcos.

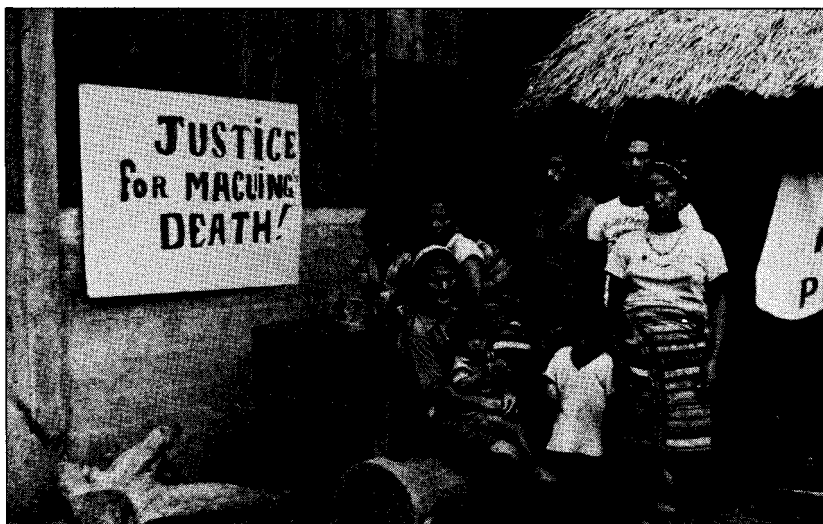
When the Marcos government allowed large-scale logging in Apayao, this led to the displacement of the indigenous inhabitants like the *Aggay* (Negrito) and the *Isnég* who are traditionally forest dwellers and shifting cultivators.

The early 80's also saw the expansion of the rebel New People's Army (NPA) in Apayao from the Cagayan Valley. The government deployed more troops into the area allegedly to eliminate the NPA. Later, it became known that soldiers have been deployed in Apayao to protect the logging enclaves from both the NPA and the inhabitants who opposed the destruction of their forests.

In the past two years the Apayao forests and villages were heavily bombed and strafed by military who used the airstrip of Taggat Industries as a launching pad. Taggat Industries is a big logging firm owned by Alfonso Lim, a businessman with strong political connections during the Marcos era and even at present. The Isnég have been moving from one place to another to avoid the military who considered them NPA sympathizers. Others were forced to stay in cramped evacuation quarters in the town centers to avoid suspicion that they were rebel sympathizers. Last 1986 about 15 000 people in the Cagayan Valley area which includes Apayao were displaced. The displacement of the village folk, in some cases, paved the way for the entry of logging concerns. For example, in 1985 also the residents of Lydia in Pudtol municipality were told by the military to evacuate so that they could get rid of the rebels. When the people returned after a few months, they saw the loggers of Taggat Industries at work.

In militarised zones the women and children become the innocent victims. Cases of rape committed by the soldiers on the Isnég people have been documented. Children died as a result of chemical bombing. A baby who was accidentally dropped by her mother during an evacuation suffered for nine months before dying from infection. No medical services were available in the forest area. In November 1986 Gallib Langa, an *Ibaloy* mother, died from bullet wounds when soldiers of the 48th Infantry Battalion in Conner, Kalinga-Apayao, sprayed the houses in her village. Gallib left three children, the youngest of whom was two months old when she was killed.

At the same time women whose husbands are detained or killed by the military have to work double time in order to survive. They not only care for the children but also become the sole food producers.



*Militarisation affects indigenous women all over the world. The women of the Philippine Cordillera have from time to time shown their resistance. Here they demonstrate against the assassination of a tribal leader. Some indigenous women also were active as NPA soldiers.*

*Photo: IWGIA archives.*

### **Women in the active struggle**

In the Philippines today, the struggle against the structure of dominance are being fought both in the legal arena and the underground. The indigenous peoples, being part of the bigger Philippine society and also affected by these structures, are active participants.

The first Cordillera woman to join the New Peoples' Army and who underwent military training in the lowlands was from Benguet Province. However, the problems brought about by the attempted construction of the Chico River Dam resulted in the recruitment of more women, especially the Kalinga, into the rebel army. By 1979 the first women's squad was formed.

Meanwhile, in Apayao where militarisation was intensified during the past few years, membership of women in the rebel army also increased. While the political work of the New People's Army led to an increase in membership, the violence spawned by militarization helped in increasing the rebel population. Women and children whose innocent relatives were tortured and summarily executed by the military saw no hope in civilian life and joined the NPA. Lone survivors of vicious village attacks looked for the rebels as they had nowhere to go. In addition, the intrusion of logging

operations into Isneg territory and the ongoing construction of the huge Abulog-Gened Dam in the Apayao River highly politicised the native inhabitants, including the women.

## **The state of women organizing in the Cordillera**

Interest in women issues is a recent phenomena especially with regard to indigenous women. The first to organize have been those in the labour sector as there is a strong and militant national labor organization in the country. The women in the export processing zone saw the need to organize in response to the oppressive situation they were forced into.

The majority in the women's organizations in the Cordillera are conservative and bourgeois in orientation and are involved in civic activities like raising funds for Igorot scholars and donating to the poor. Women's organizations connected with the church have not gone beyond the monthly post-service coffee talk activities.

Meanwhile, a church-based women's programme has attempted to organize workers and market vendors but discouraged critical analysis of society of which women are part and parcel. This intentional omission of a substantive theoretical basis for organizing resulted in a weak organization as shown in the dismissal of a female worker in the Chinese-owned department store which this programme tried to assist. In addition, the failure of this women's program to contextualize women's problems in relation to the structures of dominance affecting the whole country renders itself weak in confronting women's issues.

## **The directions of a genuine program for women organizing in the Cordillera**

The struggle of the indigenous women in the Cordillera is multi-directional and ideally, must be simultaneous. First, the women have to liberate themselves from the cultural impositions which have long relegated them to the position of silent and invisible partner in the community. Throughout history they have shown their capability in defending home and territory and producing food for the society. There is a need therefore to visibly participate in the male-dominated indigenous political structures like the *bodong* and *ator*.

Liberation from class oppression is an essential objective of a genuine woman's organizing program. As more and more women are absorbed by

labour whether in agriculture or industry, there is a need for them to be aware and assertive of their rights.

As indigenous women, they have suffered discrimination through unjust laws which alienated them from their ancestral lands. Also, they are discriminated against by Filipinos who belong to the so-called majority who, in colonial history, adapted the western culture of their colonizers and forgot their own indigenous systems. They also have to grapple with disinformation which makes them appear different from and inferior to the rest of the Filipinos.

The struggle for self-determination has become a necessary component in the liberative process. As peasants, workers and professionals the indigenous women must work with the rest of society to dismantle the structures of dominance which have long oppressed the peoples of the Third World, and they are slowly strengthening their position and extending their tentacles in the Cordillera. This they may manage to do with the cooperation of the elitist government and the cooperation of other indigenous peoples whose vision does not extend beyond the boundaries of Cordillera society and whose romantic view of the indigenous peoples inhibit them from addressing the root causes of society's problems.

A genuine women's organization must look beyond this in its struggle for liberation as this region is part and parcel of a bigger nation. The realization of the linkages between the movement against national oppression and gender oppression on one hand and the struggle for national liberation on the other gives the Cordillera women's movement a significant direction.

## **The Cordillera women's role in self-determination**

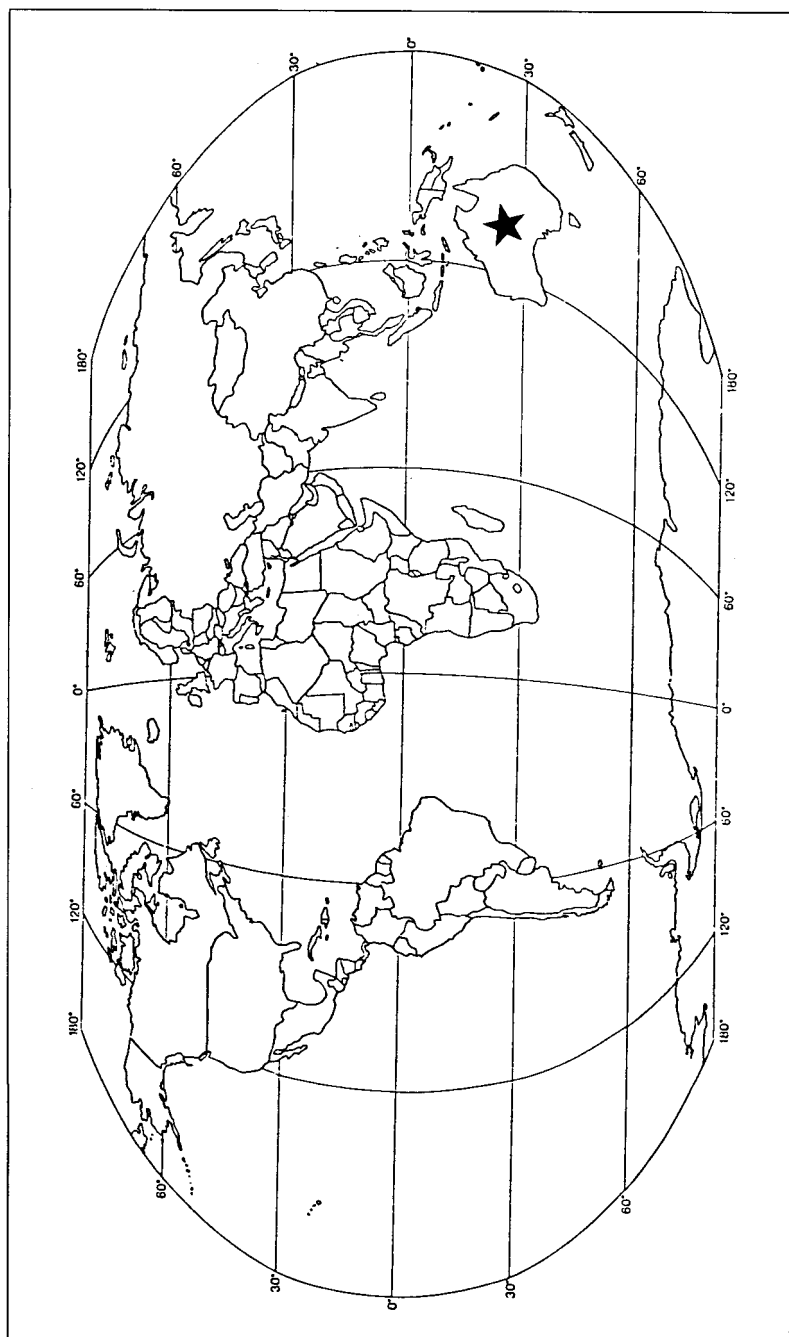
The Cordillera people's struggle for self-determination is a response to years of oppression and neglect. The people demand the right to self-government and to benefit from their natural resources. At the same time they want respect for, and recognition of their culture which has been used to earn dollars through the tourism industry. The indigenous peoples' right to ancestral land is also central to the struggle for self-determination.

In this endeavour women from the urban centers to the countryside are actively involved. Cordillera issues have been studied by the men and women who wanted change. Self-determination therefore is the outcome of years of studying history and analyzing the root causes of the problems.

Today the women in the highlands are active participants in the education campaign regarding indigenous peoples' rights. In these campaigns the gender issue is contextualized within the question of class domination and policies that oppress the people.

The women are also addressing themselves to issues concerning the indigenous woman as a gender, as members of a class, and as members of distinct groups who have remained land-based and retained their cultures. Thus, they are also confronted with problems like discrimination as a consequence of their being indigenous peoples.

*Geraldine L. Fiagoy is Executive Director of the Cordillera Resource Center for Indigenous People's Rights.*



*World map indicating Australia.*

# Aboriginal Women and the Women's Liberation Movement of Australia

by Jackie Huggins

*This paper was given at the First International Indigenous Women's Conference held in Adelaide from 7-12 July 1989.*

This essay will focus on the Women's Liberation Movement and its proven irrelevance to Aboriginal women. Secondly, the role of Aboriginal women and men in traditional and contemporary society will be explored with a strong theme of women's "independence" prevailing. Thirdly, the loss of status of Aboriginal men as spawned from colonisation. And finally, statistical information regarding a multitude of social problems faced by Aborigines which demonstrates that Aboriginal men and women at both fighting for the same things regardless of gender differences. The over-all scenario is that in such a deprived and oppressed culture it would seem ludicrous to suggest that either sex could be a victor.

Although the Women's Liberation Movement was first activated in the 1960's from such movements as the anti-war and civil rights groups in America, the contemporary women's movement has a much longer history. It dates back to at least the nineteenth century with struggles and universal suffrage, the exploitation of women's labour, unionisation of women and the temperance movements. However, several black American critics have made the following analogy: They insist: "Women's Liberation won't be any different. White women won the right to vote but black people, including black women, didn't get it for another hundred years." Blacks, they say, are always left to fight their own battles. There is a commonly voiced suspicion that the Women's Liberation Movement "attached" itself to the black movement in order to take advantage, for its own interests, of the momentum and attention that the blacks have only recently achieved.

Historically the Women's Liberation Movement in Australia began some 18 years ago, and in that time it has developed a size and diversity which has made it a nebulous and rather elusive body. It is almost a truism that women's needs have concerned all women's movements and it is some-



*Aborigine woman doing chores by the riverside. Photo: Benny Mills.*

thing they have shared in common. A need, however, is not self-defining, and feminists have had different priorities in their agendas for change. These divergences had led also to different tactics, strategies, competing ideologies and world views of feminists. And as the movement grew, feminists saw that class and race difference meant that women experienced different forms and degrees of oppression.

If the white women who organized the contemporary movement toward feminism were at all remotely aware of racial politics in Australian history, they would have known that overcoming barriers that separate women from one another would entail confronting the reality of racism, and not just racism as a general evil in society but the race hatred they might harbour in their own psyches. Despite the predominance of patriarchal rule in Australian society, Australia was colonised on a racially imperialistic base, and not on a sexually imperialistic base. No degree of patriarchal bonding between white male colonisers and Aboriginal men overshadowed white racial imperialism. In fact, white racial imperialism granted all white women, however victimised by sexist oppression, the right to assume the role of oppressor in relationships with black women and black men.

White liberation leaders are also fond of pointing to the analogy between blacks and women as second-class citizens in a white male chauvinist



society. One of the clearest points of similarity between society's treatment of blacks and women is that they have both been brainwashed into the "same low self-image"; they are not supposed to use their minds; they are incapable of making decisions. They are both second-class members of society who should be kept in their place. However, by making such analogies white women are in fact saying to black women that they do not acknowledge their presence as women in society.

If white women in the women's movement needed to make use of a black experience to emphasize women's oppression, it would only seem logical that they focus on the black female experience - but they have not. They chose to deny the existence of black women and to participate in the women's movement. Had white women decided to bond with black women on the basis of common oppression, they could have done so by demonstrating any awareness or knowledge of the impact of sexism on the status of black women. Unfortunately, despite all the rhetoric about sisterhood and bonding, white women are not sincerely committed to bonding with black women to fight sexism. They are primarily interested in drawing attention to their lot as white upper and middle class women.

The further notion that all women as a gender have more in common than do members of the same class with one another is false. Upper-class women are not simply bedmates of their wealthy husbands. As a rule they have more compelling ties which bind them together. They are economic, social, and political bedmates united in defense of private property, profiteering, militarism, racism -and the exploitation of other women. It would be quite another matter to expect any large number of wealthy women to endorse or support a revolutionary struggle which threatens their capitalist interests and privileges. Will the wives of bankers, generals, corporation lawyers and big industrialists be firmer allies of women fighting for liberation than working class men, black and white, who are fighting for theirs? The ruling powers breed and benefit from all forms of discrimination and oppression. Therefore, for a middle-class white woman to compare her environmental situation with that of a black seems criminally naive. While white women are fighting to get out of the kitchen, black women are fighting to get into it.

For these reasons, many black women do not see the women's movement as relevant to their own situation. Black women who have worked from necessity are apt to view women's liberation as a white middle class battle irrelevant to their own often bitter struggle for survival. As Ida Lewis commented, "The women's liberation movement is basically a family quarrel between white women and white men". Similarly Aboriginal women are aware of the divisiveness of feminism in terms of their own black movement. Therefore women's liberation has meant very little to both black American women and Aboriginal women who believe that the black woman has always been placed in a position of asserting herself from the beginning.

Traditionally, throughout the continent, Aboriginal women were the chief "breadwinners" for their families. They contributed the bulk of their ordinary food supply, the most reliable part of the day-to-day diet. Mostly this was in the form of vegetable foods. In domestic life, in family living around the campfire, the influence of men and women was fairly evenly balanced. With regard to everyday economic tasks centering on food, women could act independently to a large extent. They did not need to be told where to go, what to do or how to do it, except by members of their own sex: older women helping and advising the younger.

Some people would like to believe that Aboriginal society was not "classless" – that it was built on the basis of male dominance and female submissiveness, that it was a two-class society of "bosses" and workers, masters and slaves – the bosses and the masters being men. And so the story continues, Aboriginal women were disadvantaged also in comparison with women in most other societies. In his cross-cultural compilations of ethnographic materials, Dr. Steven Goldberg is said to have demonstrated the universality of male dominance with the same conclusiveness as the universality of patriarchy. However, there are exceptions to male dominance, these being the people of Modjokuto (Java), the Berbers, the Jivaro, the Nama Hottentot. I believe the Aborigine fall into this category also.

The notable anthropologists Berndts believe that Aboriginal society worked on a two-sex model where people had equal opportunities not blacked by considerations of social rank or class. Under the clan system of the sisterhood of women and the brotherhood of men there was no more possibility for one sex to dominate the other than there was for one class to exploit another. Women occupied the most eminent positions because they were the chief producers of the necessities of life as well as the procreators of new life. But this did not make them oppressors of men. Their communal society excluded class, racial or sexual tyranny.

It was in the wider sphere of decisions and actions outside the family group, and especially in the area of religion, that men had formally and informally the greater authority. However, Aboriginal women were solidly involved, traditionally, in the religion of their particular communities. They were not on the fringes of it. The fact that men controlled certain sections of it – parts of its ritual and verbal and material expression – did not exclude women from the realm of religion. Their cooperation was crucial, and acknowledged as such. They had an active and positive role in the sacred life of their community, as a vital obligation resulting from their membership and also helping to define it. C.D. Rowley wrote of the Aboriginal woman,

Her position may be traced back to Aboriginal culture, and the effects on it of the loss of the spiritual role of the man.

It is also too often overlooked that the patriarchal class system shattered its male counterpart, the fratriarchy or tribal brotherhood of men.

Women's overthrow went hand in hand with the subjugation of the mass of toiling men to the master class of men. In the colonial context the black man had virtually lost his bargaining powers, and the coloniser assumed almost total control, so the interaction between white man and black woman was one marked by compulsion. The young Aboriginal woman often lived almost simultaneously with her Aboriginal husband and a white man, who in practice had more rights over her than her husband because of the great discrepancy in the status between them.

The patriarchal nature of contemporary society meant that Aboriginal women were subject to further specific oppression by both Aboriginal and white men. They have been typecast as capable only of roles, and deserving only of treatment deemed unworthy or undesirable for that more highly valued, rarer "commodity": the white woman. Male dominance was, and is, a major ingredient in the culture Europeans brought with them to Australia. The message came through to Aborigines, directly and indirectly, in words and deeds, in almost all their contacts with Europeans.

It is not likely that Aboriginal women today will adopt the line, "we had control first, and therefore we should have it now". Traditionally, they were not in the habit of consistently co-ordinating their activities on a group basis against men. And they are certainly not likely to do so when they and their men are under pressure from outside – from non-Aborigines. Also,



*Aboriginal woman and child in the urban setting. In a very rich nation, the aborigines are the poorest and the least educated. Photo: Rikki Shields.*

many women of Aboriginal descent are themselves finding fresh interests in the outside world.

Black women have never been interested in being jockeyed into the position of fighting their own men. Women must support their every effort for equality and to emerge as a valuable force in this society: it is a time for uniting, not dividing. "We should stand behind our men, not against them", is a popular militant battle cry. But there are black women who question just how far behind that is. The black militants' idea of a submissive female, walking silently five paces to the rear, is a little more than many independent black women can stomach. It smacks too much of the subservient role that white women have occupied and are now trying to overthrow.

However, today black men are not necessarily innocent of the chauvinist attitudes charged against white men by the white women liberationists. Black male chauvinism is creeping into Aboriginal society particularly with the advent of more visible and vocal Aboriginal and Islander women groups. Where once Aboriginal women were encouraged to enter the workforce, they are now being pulled down by their own black males. Pat O'Shane exemplifies:

It's not easy being a black woman at the top of a white bureaucracy. The hardest part has been dealing with chauvinist males (mostly black) who are threatened by a woman having this much power.

Black men may perhaps be more inclined to be comfortable with men in power rather than women. Today black men as well as white men are finding a complete woman a threat. It takes an unusually secure man – sexually, socially, emotionally and intellectually – these days to deal comfortably with a total woman.

In some ways Aboriginal women have suffered less trauma than their menfolk. It is often observed in culture contact situations that the men of the culture which is disrupted by a more dominant culture, have in a sense further to fall, and hence suffer worse shock and dislocation in terms of identity than the women. The men had controlled the society, had been the chief sacred and political figures. Now men of an alien culture control the parameters of their existence. Women were accustomed to taking direction in some areas, and could transfer autonomy less painfully. Their roles in the family did at least continue, even if carried out under drastically changed circumstances, which gave their lives greater continuity.

Today women's status has been changing, their prestige and opportunities increasing more rapidly than men's. Aboriginal women have continued important work-roles. But, of course, to add to the disadvantage of sex and class, black women carried the additional burden of racism. Women have been prominent as workers, office-bearers, and spokespersons in

Aboriginal lobby groups and pressure groups arousing public awareness of Aboriginal needs. Women have also participated in various State and Commonwealth bodies. It is important to note that men have equally done so.

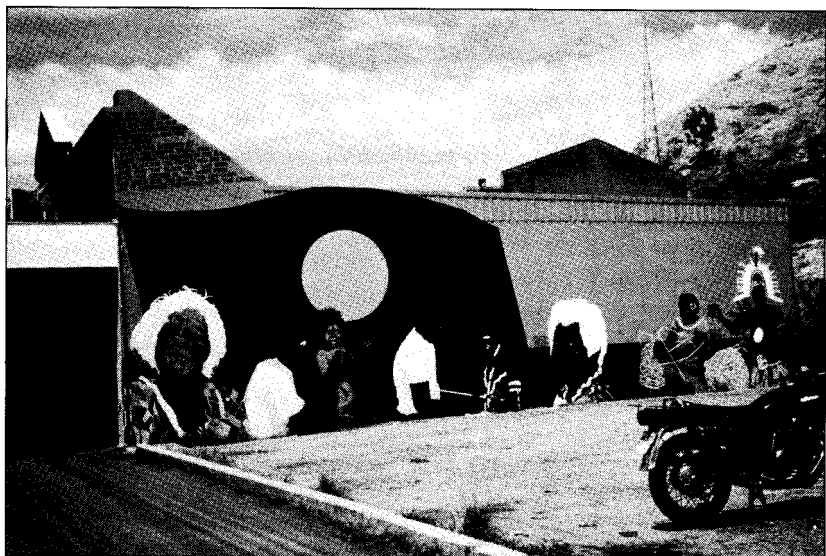
Black liberation for men and women seem a more important goal to many black women than women's liberation. Black women already are independent. Black men have not been able to make inroads into white society. What is holding black men back is the same thing that holds back their black mates: the white power structure. In other words, the main oppressor is a class society.

For instance the occupational distribution of Australian males shows the Aborigines are virtually absent from the white collar world. Only 2 per cent of Aboriginal males occupy the top seven occupation groups, which are the most responsible, least onerous physically, and best rewarded materially, compared with 35 per cent of non-Aboriginal workers. A large percentage of the Aboriginal work force is locked into the least rewarded and least promising occupational spheres and experienced in jobs with little or no transfer value to dynamic parts of the economy. Aborigines are not only highly concentrated in the poorest paid jobs, in some areas they monopolise them.

Aborigines have also been easy to ignore till now because they have been geographical, political, and social outcasts. They are non-European, with few technologically useful skills; they are often unemployed; they suffer from malnutrition and sickness to such a degree that by the age 40 many are unemployable; they figure prominently in crime statistics and have a low reputation in the larger society.

The position of black Australians compared with white Australians is eroding daily, in relative and absolute terms - relative because the life chances for the majority improve at a faster rate, and absolute because the rate of population growth is much higher among black Australians; any change in the position of Aborigines, for better or worse, affects a continuously expanding population. While the formal legal and political barriers to full citizenship have been removed the barriers that remain are social, the legacy of generations of training in dependency, poverty and isolation from the mainstream of the national life. In a highly urbanised nation, Aborigines are the least urban element, in a rich nation they are the poorest, in a well-educated nation they are the least educated. In full-employment economy they participate as an under-class, moving from unemployment into unskilled labouring jobs or into invalidity.

Aborigines do not have the training to take advantage of opportunities in expanding industries and there is every evidence that as a consequence of their weak educational backgrounds, their occupational disadvantages will persist. At age 45 and above, one-half to three-quarters of the Aboriginal population report no formal education and are presumptively illiterate.



*Aboriginal Health service in Townsville, Queensland. Poor health affects and retards development. Photo: Beate Zimmerman.*

As young as ages 25-29, nearly one-quarter of Aborigines have not been to school, and at ages 15-19 the fraction is one-tenth. But at those ages virtually all of the rest of the population has some education. Indeed in the non-Aboriginal population, even in the cohorts aged 50 or older, only one or two per cent have no formal schooling.

Health, housing, and education make up a complex of inter-related factors that mutually reinforce one another. Poor health is often caused by poor housing, and poor health retards future growth. Moreover, whatever happens in the schools is likely to be wasted unless a parallel effort is directed to improving the home environment. It is a well-established fact among white populations that educational performance is a function not only of innate intelligence and educational exposure, but also of the reinforcement that a child gets from the home. To make effective gains in health, housing or education inputs are needed in all three areas simultaneously.

Like health, decent housing is recognised as an elementary right. Aborigines are among the worst housed people in the world. The poor housing conditions of Aboriginal Australians reflect their past low earning power and their status in Australian society as economic dropouts and cast-offs. The structures in which they live are made of the most fragile materials. They are the most segregated group, they have least access to communi-

ty facilities such as schools, sewerage, rubbish removal, reticulated water or adequate or clean water of any kind.

Jobs and income come last in the chain of causation that maintains Aborigines in a depressed status. In the absence of good health, jobs are uncertain. In the absence of education, unskilled and poorly paid work is the only realistic expectation. In the absence of a living wage, housing will be poor, overcrowded and insanitary. Poorer health follows as a consequence. And so the chain of causation continues.

If enough effort is applied, the vicious circle of poor education, poor jobs, low income and poverty can be broken at any one of several points or several points simultaneously. But no instant change can be expected. What can be quickly altered are the conditions for future change by way of stimulating public interest and engender an informed public opinion that will appreciate how deeply entrenched and recalcitrant Aboriginal problems are.

Unless Aborigines are to remain social and political outcasts, they must be able to participate on an equal footing in the central institutions of the society. To do that, they must be able to achieve educational levels which permit them to manipulate the symbol-system and the legal-bureaucratic system. Aboriginal women particularly are aware of this factor and are striving to instill the importance of education to their young children.

Without question it is an easier adjustment for a black woman to consider herself firstly a human being; secondly an Aborigine, and only thirdly a member of the female sex. As Hilary Saunders eloquently sums up the feelings of many black women:

We must not let this awareness as women go too far. We are a race of people who have suffered many injustices, we are fighting for self-determination. Women must play a large part of this yet we can only hope to achieve this as one people not a race of men, nor a race of women but of black united people.

*Jackie Huggins is a researcher on aboriginal issues and is an active member of the Aboriginal Women's Working Party, AWWP.*

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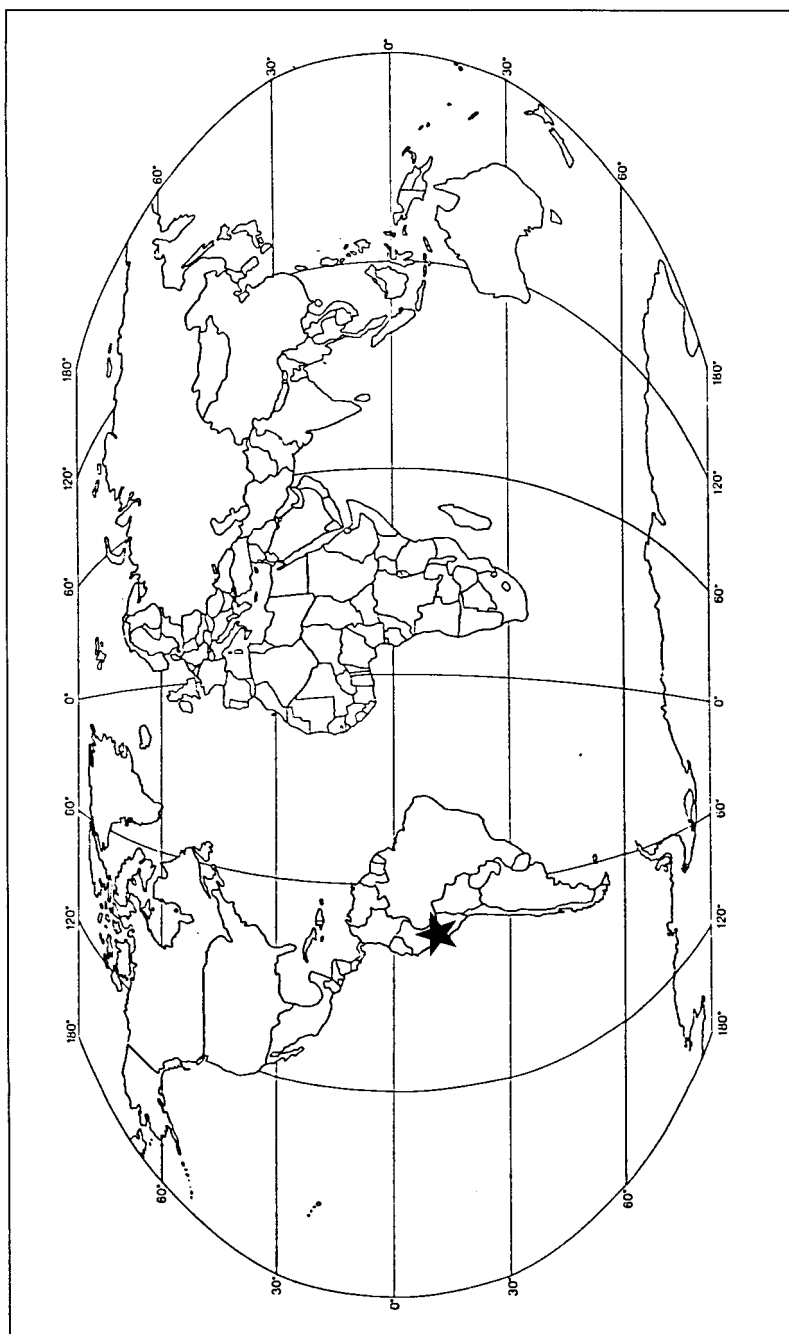


# YEARBOOK

## 1989

IWGIA





*World map showing Peru.*

# The experience of indigenous women in the Peruvian Amazon

by Rebeca Detén

## The situation of the women in indigenous organizations

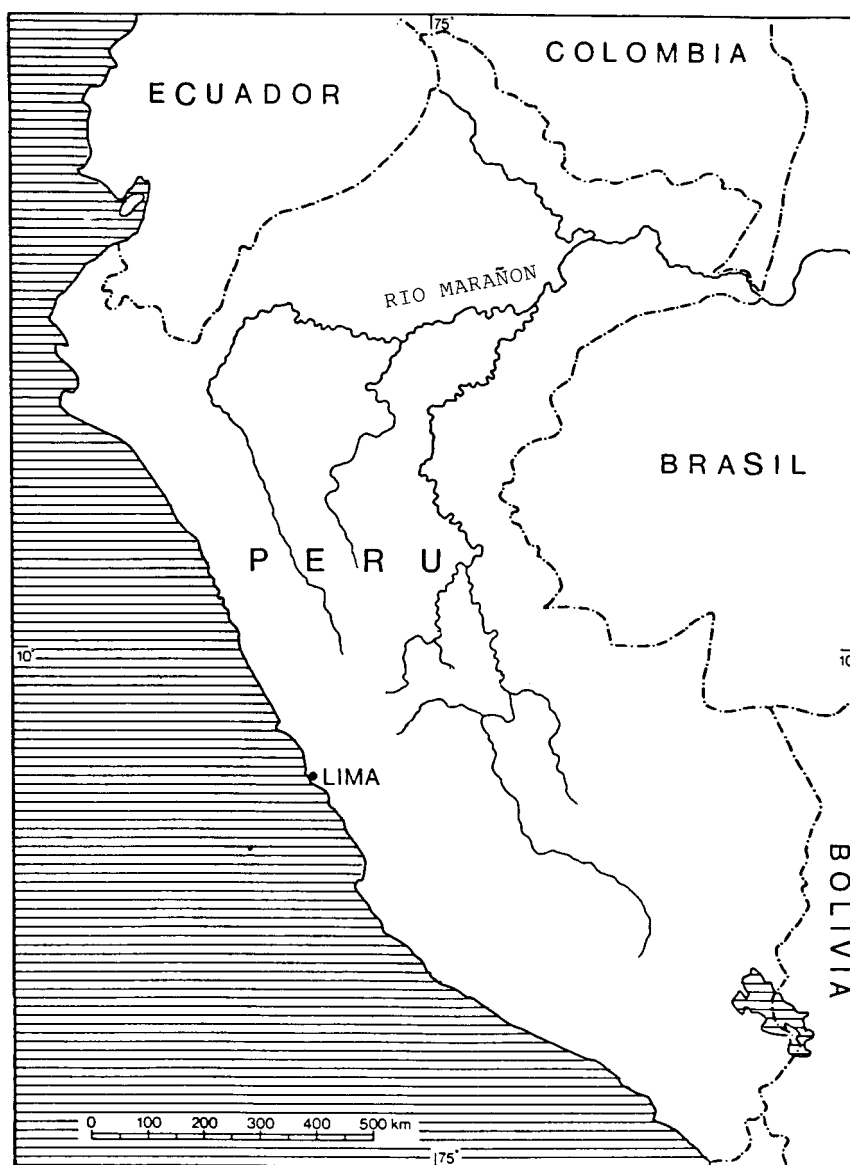
Any indigenous person knows how important the women always have been; without them the men would not be able to do anything. In our indigenous communities there has always been a respectful division of labour.

There has always been collaboration and mutual agreement on everything. We have always been able to count on men as they always have counted on us for whatever kind of activity. Even war, we made it together. As we the women knew our rights, we were respected (because who else would cook the meals or look after the children?) and we helped the men in their struggle. We knew the traces, the arrival of the enemy, we knew how to make the warning signals, we prepared the “masato” – our traditional beverage – to give courage to our men. In order to succeed, women and men always stood together.

But this does not mean that in our communities today there exists the same maltreatment that exists elsewhere in Peru. Today we do hear things like: I am the man, you go off to the kitchen, etc.

But this is not our way and it is dangerous. Now thanks to our organizations and our experiences we realise how we have been humiliated and deceived by so many things that have come from the outside. Now that we are beginning to take pride in what is ours, we cannot let ourselves be deceived once more. The *machismo*, the abuse, the lack of respect and the marginalisation of indigenous women is a new cultural invasion that affects us today and that our men accept because they are petty-minded and ashamed to show our reality which is much more dignified. Machismo has, just like religion and culture, been imposed upon us from outside. It divides us, it makes us weak and it humiliates us.

We cannot be so blind as to lose by imitation 50% of the indigenous strength. If we were together before, we should be so even more today, when the problems are more serious and our enemies more powerful.



*Map showing Peru in relation to neighbouring countries.*

Our organisations are very new, very young. The relations with the authorities force us to speak Spanish and to move more freely than women normally are able to. But now that we are getting stronger, we see that it is not everything; that in order to struggle as indigenous women, it is not enough to speak Spanish. Do the "Apus", our community leaders, perhaps speak Spanish? They are elected because of their knowledge, their experience. They are leaders because they have had experience. And the women, don't we have experience?

Today, those who are the most cultivated – I refer to our own culture – are the indigenous women. And besides who says that the indigenous women cannot learn Spanish.

This is why we, the women, ask the indigenous organisations not to curtail us, not to make us feel ashamed. They have to find alternatives so that we can participate in our common struggle and so that we are not deceived by those who come from outside.

How many women leaders are there in the indigenous organisations? In my organisation there still aren't any, and nevertheless they treat important issues on which we women have a lot to say.

We say that one important problem is the defence of the land. And nevertheless there has been no effort to invite women to the law courses. In fact who can defend the land better than those who are most in contact with it? We, the women, go everyday out to our "chacra" (small plots), we know all about the traditional agricultural science, we know where the "camote" (a kind of sweet potato) grows, when we have to find a new plot, how to protect a plant. Now that they are reducing our land and we see our land getting poorer, who is suffering the most? The land gives us women more pain. In my community we have shown that the women know how to resist, there are many examples of women fighting to defend the land of the communities against the American mine owners. We are not afraid and we have to know What is happening? How are things? How should we defend our and?

## Health

There is another issue of great importance that I want to refer to, and which is my field of work within my organisation, and that is the health problem. Within health, the main problems are children's health, domestic hygiene, traditional medicine. We don't have to emphasize how important women are to the solution of these problems.

In the beginning, we did not, in our organisation, envisage to work with women but it was life itself that made us see clear. It is the women that



*Indian woman brings her baby for vaccination.*

*Photo: ILO.*

are with the infant babies all the time and in our customs it is difficult for a woman to have to deal with a man.

This was why we in the organisation saw the necessity to establish a mother-child programme within the Aguaruna and Huambisa Council (CAH), and why we trained 16 women. In the beginning, it was difficult but now we have been working for four years and we participated in the last general assembly. This had not been planned but arose out of necessity, as the area that has developed most within our organisation, has precisely been that of the women.

The CAH has a mother-child programme within its general health programme. The programme started in 1986. The nearest hospital is three days away from Napuruka, and therefore the CAH initiated health training courses for indigenous women in 1985.

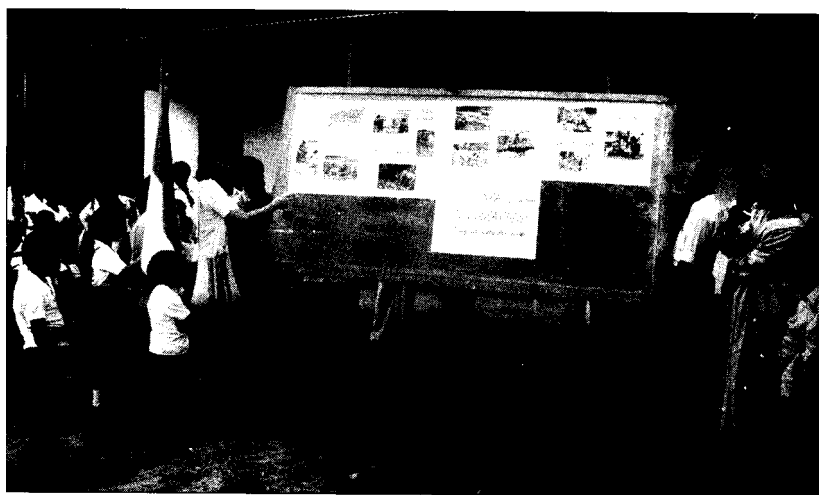
Presently there are 36 women working as health workers within the programme. Lately, however, some have quit because they did not have enough time to look after their homes, their small children and their husbands.

Traditional medicine is also used; when there is a shortage of modern medicine, people use the traditional way, or vice versa. Traditional medicine is used more in relation to giving birth, to relax the pain and to push. Medical plants are also used to protect the newly born to be immunised against insects, and to give resistance against diseases.

Another problem now is the number of children being born. In the old days, the women knew the secret about traditional plants that could be used as contraception. For instance when the men went away at war, the women used their plants, profiting that the men were away for a month or so, but today with the influence of religion and the church many men say that the plants should not be used because it is a sin, it is a thing of the devil, and thus, little by little, the use of these plants is being given up but I ask myself if it is the church that is going to take care of the children, and what happens when the husband goes away with someone else?

## Education

Another question is education. Nowadays we all see the necessity of once more giving importance to our own culture, to our own knowledge.



*Education is propagated among indigenous peoples at the initiative of the indigenous people themselves.*

*Photo is from the Educational Center in Bocacheni.*

AIDSESEP, our national organisation, is already working to change things. Now we know that we are proposing a new school curriculum that includes our own knowledge. This is a very important step forward. But how do we understand this change when they tell us that we women cannot participate because we cannot read or because we don't know the city and the *mestizo* customs? Fortunately the creation of the new curriculum is still possible in part because we, the women, exist and we maintain the culture alive.

In education, the women have a great importance. The children are more with us and if our culture regains importance, we can teach them a lot. If there were an indigenous curriculum, we could tell them "So it is, so it was, this is true, this is how to do it..." But if the knowledge comes from outside, from the city, we cannot say much. "You don't know anything," they tell us. And this is how corruption comes about. The child has no respect, and gets accustomed to having no respect, and even less of the woman who does not know what they teach him at school. Therefore the initiative of AIDSESEP is important and for it to be all right we must include the women as the main elements of this new form of education. We cannot at the same time vindicate our culture and reject the women because they don't know the imposed culture.

Another thing about education... We must find a way to participate in all kinds of education in order to handle the tasks that are in front of us, and the leaders will have to find ways of doing this.

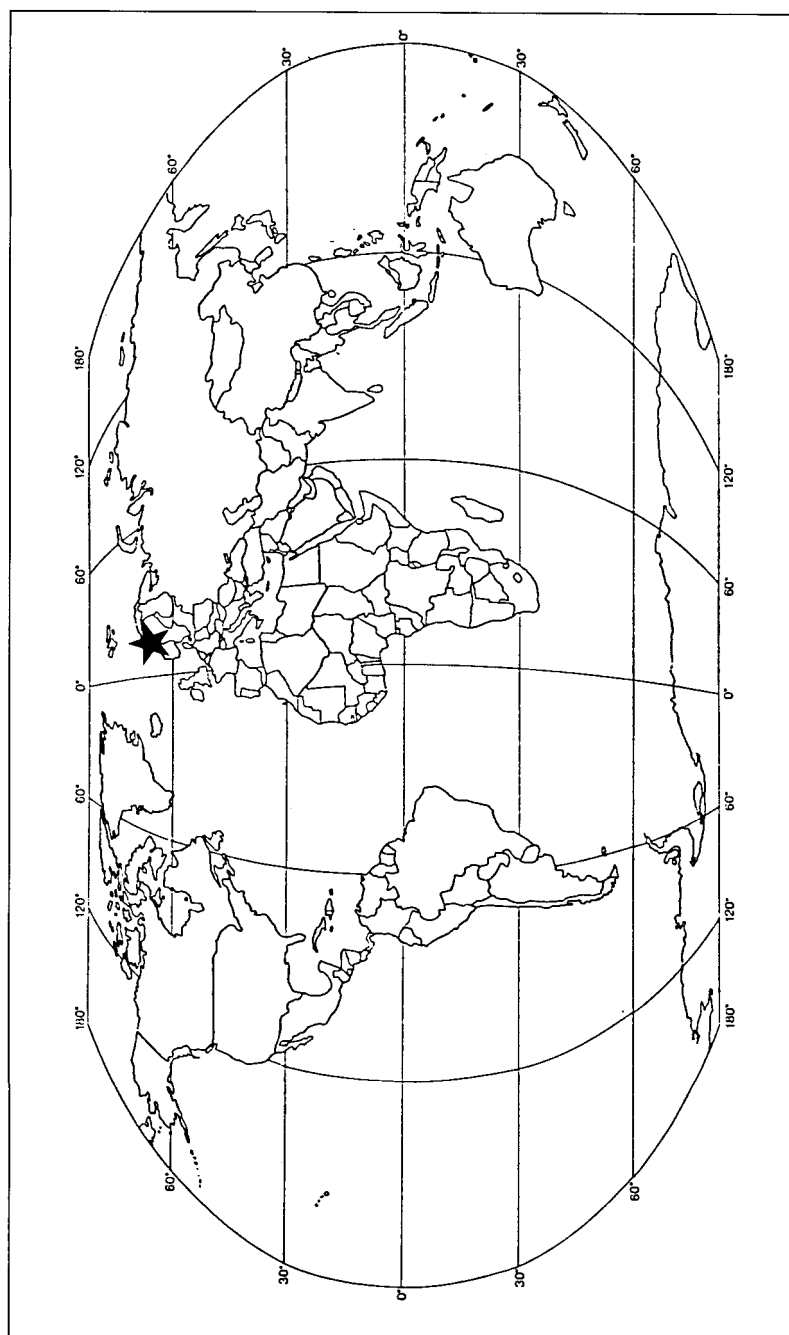
It is important to look for new alternatives, not to be stuck in the past like so "the women were like this, they were like this before". Between us, women and men, we must make our new people, our new history.

*Rebeca Deten, a native Aguaruna, is a member of the Aguaruna and Huambisa Council (CAH) and Director of the Mother-and-Child health programme. The CAH comprises 92 indigenous communities along the river Marañon Santiago and its affluents.*





*Aguarana girl from the Peruvian Amazon.  
Photo: Palle Kjørulff-Schmidt.*



*World map showing location of Saamiland in northern Scandinavia.*

# Why are they so few in Numbers?: Women leaders in a sample of Saami institutions

By Vigdis Stordahl

## Foreword

Women's conditions and careers have become the subject of considerable research in Norway. However, we still know far too little about Saami women. This survey is a contribution to the large jigsaw puzzle we face.

Asking people if we may interview them is often difficult – a huge barrier for us researchers to overcome; we try to avoid being turned down, while at the same time we do not wish to pressurize anyone, even if it is important for us to obtain the interview. However, my experiences were all positive and everyone I asked, agreed to be interviewed. I am extremely grateful to everyone who took part in the study. I hope I have been able to communicate what was entrusted to me, even where I have placed it in a different context.



*Saami women addressing the 13th Nordic Saami Council Conference  
commemorating its 30 years of existence in 1986*

*Photo: Jørgen Brøchner Jørgensen.*

## Introduction

In connection with the Saami Women's Conference in Heatta in May 1985, I was asked to give a talk on the position of Saami women in Saami organisations. At that time I chose to examine the proportion of men and women in the governing bodies. I found that Saami women were far from holding prominent positions in political life that we had previously supposed. This discrepancy between rhetoric and reality prompted me to look further at the question of Saami women's representation. It occurred to me that we ought to investigate the relative numbers of women and men in the many Saami institutions which had been formed during the 1970s. What was the ratio between women and men? Were there as few women leaders here as there were in the organisations?

I selected 16 institutions and asked for information concerning the various job categories: whether the jobs were held by men or women, and the ethnic affinity of each individual. The reason for including the last question was that several institutions employ non-Saami(\*) people, and I wanted to exclude them from the material, since my primary interest was the distribution of Saami women and men.

The survey shows that there is no particular discrepancy in distribution according to gender, as regards the total number of jobs in the institutions. However, when we examine the positions held by women and men respectively, the picture immediately changes. It is quite clear that it is Saami men who sit in the executives' chairs in Saami institutions. The same is true for middle management. In positions such as senior consultant, inspector and chief editor, men are clearly overrepresented.

My material includes four Saami women who are directors of institutions. Of these, two are permanently employed, one is under contract and the other one is on a temporary basis.

It is one thing to report that Saami men occupy the managerial chairs, but it is quite another to find out why it is bad. The question I wanted to know was why there were so few Saami women in management, either as directors of institutions or in other managerial positions. I regarded women's own reasons for not holding managerial positions as very important and decided to interview a sample of them.

It was obvious that those who had managerial positions should be interviewed. Apart from them, I chose women whose jobs I considered as offering some possibility for advancement. In order to determine whether the female managers perceived their jobs differently from men, I also inter-

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\* I specifically use the term "non-Sami" and not "Norwegian" because these jobs may be held not only by Norwegians but by people of other nationalities.

viewed three male managers. I felt it was important to also have men's views of their own situations as well as why they thought there were so few women in managerial positions. I interviewed a total of 13 people, ranging in age from mid-twenties to mid-sixties. I also thought it important that the interviewees be selected from different types of institutions.

The information from the institutions was gathered during the second half of February 1986. The interviews were carried out between April and July 1986.

I drew up a guide to the questions which I intended to ask during interviews. The guide was sent to those who wished to see the questions prior to the interview. It was clear that some people found it reassuring to know the type of questions I would be asking beforehand. Not many of us are willing to volunteer for an interview when we are not sure whether our innermost thoughts may be analysed by a total stranger. The guide to the questions was, however, not allowed to dominate the interviews. If a particular theme was touched upon sooner than I had intended, then it was simply skipped over later on. The guide functioned more as a pointer than a tight framework, and so the interviews largely took the form of conversations.

Since Saami society is, small as it is, rather "transparent", confidentiality was important. Quotes from the interviews have been reworked and all statements relating to place of work, age, background, etc. have been omitted. Furthermore, a colleague of mine with a thorough knowledge of Saami society has gone through the draft material to see whether she could identify individual people. She was unable to do so. This, of course, does not constitute an absolute guarantee, but I believe that it should allay speculation about who might have said what. I myself do not always remember the origins of a quote because several people touched upon the same issues.

While I was doing the interviews, one of the subjects asked me if I believed what they told me. I was surprised by the question because I had been in no doubt that the women had given me their experiences and their understanding of why there were so few women in management. I replied that I did believe what they told me, and I still do. The question nevertheless made me reflect on the importance of emphasizing that what I am presenting as my findings, are my own interpretations of what the women and men in the sample told me. It is my understanding of their explanations of their situations. That is not to say that my understanding is either right or wrong. But it may differ from their own. It may differ because researchers and informants may have different frames of reference (Holtedahl and Haugen, 1984). My task is to find relationships between individual women and men's situations and these can be relationships that they do not see themselves. Even though I may see different relationships, I still believe in the interpretations they communicated to me.



*Maret Sara, Saami woman leader will be at the helm of the Second International Indigenous Women's Conference which will be held in Karasjokka, northern Norway. Photo: Claus Oreskov in August 1989.*

### **Why are there so Few Saami Women in Management?**

I asked all my interviewees why they thought there were so few Saami women in management jobs. The explanations offered by the men did not differ from those offered by the women, and there was no difference between explanations from the women who were in managerial jobs and those who were not.

The explanations offered by practically everyone included upbringing, family circumstances and lack of confidence and motivation in women. Some also stressed that few women had the necessary education and training, especially when the institutions were being established.

A couple of women touched upon the long debate as to whether or not Saami society has taken on the discrimination against women which exists in Norwegian society. One of them believed that the reason so few women applied for managerial posts was to be found in the discrimination against women, and that it was a discrimination which we had adopted from Norwegian society; Saami traditions had been forgotten. However, another woman believed that Saami society was more conservative, with regard to gender roles, than Norwegian society. It was not a question of Saami society having borrowed the concept of discrimination from Norwegian society, but rather that it was inherent in Saami society. I shall deal with each of these explanations below.

## *Upbringing*

According to Asta Balto (1986), it is characteristic of Saami society that children have a free and unrestrained upbringing and close contact with their parents' work. This applies to both sexes. At the same time, there is a difference between the skills boys and girls learn, the reason for which can be found in the division of labour between the sexes in Saami society. Certain skills are learned by boys, other skills by girls. As far as the girls are concerned, Balto states that "it is obvious that girls are taught to take their mothers' work, the work around the house..." (1986:57). This is confirmed in the conversations I have had. Girls are tied to the house to a far greater extent than boys. As one person commented:

At home, the girls would tidy and wash up while the boys were out.

That the division of labour is divided like this between the sexes within society is not very remarkable. Division of labour by sex is universal. Which tasks constitute men's work and which tasks constitute women's work does, however, vary from one society to the next. As Susan Whyte expresses it:

The role which women are allocated in our society is merely one possibility, and if we had been born in another time and another place, we would have been different (1978:53).

The problem only arises when the sexually-determined division of labour no longer serves a particular function, when the roles into which boys and girls are being socialised are no longer viable. Therefore, when my informants said that "it was the fault of their upbringing" they meant that the skills which girls learned, are skills which today cannot serve to help them realise their full potential. Cooking and housework are clearly insufficient skills for the Saami society women live in today. This was expressed by one person who was educated as an adult:

My brother was encouraged to study, since he was to become a provider. I was steered towards cooking and housework since I was to marry and have children, which I did at an early age.

Every society has ways of controlling its members. What is considered proper for a woman and a man is part of the control we are subject to, even though we don't consider the way we think and behave as a form of control (Whyte, op. cit.). The sanctions related to women's gender roles only come into force when a woman takes up new challenges (Waage, 1983). This is illustrated by one of my interviewees:

It has to do with upbringing. I have experienced this myself, even though I am quite young. My brother was allowed to drive a tractor when he was 17 years old, but when I turned 17 I was not allowed to do this. It was not because he was a better driver but because I was a girl. He was shown how to do it.

As far as further education was concerned, only a few people experienced any discrimination at home. For some, further education was something that was encouraged neither for boys nor for girls. As one man reported:

None of us were encouraged to study. My father thought that was quite out of the question.

While the women do not feel that boys were encouraged to study more than themselves, it is still evident that there were different expectations from boys and from girls.

Although my parents have consistently encouraged me to gain a qualification, there is still a strong pressure for me to marry and have children.

At home there was no difference regarding the encouragement given to boys and girls to study. But I don't recall my brother ever having to wash the dishes.

If they were not faced with these "extra" expectations at home they would meet them when they left home.

At home I never found that the boys were encouraged to study more than the girls. After compulsory schooling was finished there was to be no more talk of studying. But when I got married it was natural for my husband to study and for me to work so that we could manage, financially. And no one encouraged me to study, even though I wanted to."

### *Family situation*

An underlying reason for women not applying for top management jobs will often be family considerations. Women who have a family know that they risk having double the amount of work.

Despite all the talk about equality, women have the main responsibility for the home. A managerial job would be still more demanding, and they cannot cope with this.

Everyone wants to do a good job, and if you have heavy family responsibilities you are not going to take the job.

Women are reluctant to take managerial jobs because of the extra pressure involved.

It is this risk of doing two jobs that both the men and the women I interviewed gave as one of the reasons why so few women apply for positions in management. It is clear that here they speak from their own experience. Combining home life and work is a dilemma experienced by all. Single parents find this most problematic. They are dependent upon the wider family circle, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters, to help out. Even the women who state that they have no family responsibilities say that they experience a conflict between work and home. The only women who do not experience this dilemma were those who were unmarried or living alone.



However, they felt that they would encounter the problem once they got married.

### *Women lack self-confidence and motivation*

The main reason is the lack of motivation; they lack self-confidence. For secretarial jobs you get 20 to 30 applicants, mostly women. For jobs that are more demanding the majority of the applicants are male.

This quote, from a male, stresses both the lack of motivation and of self-confidence in women as reasons for women not applying for jobs which are "more demanding". Many others who were interviewed touched upon the same issues. They spoke of women nursing more fear when applying for managerial jobs. Women were more unsure of themselves. They did not dare take on the responsibility and were quick to say that they didn't dare.

Motivation and lack of self-confidence are really two different things. Obviously, lack of self-confidence, which many felt was a problem for women, will reduce the motivation to apply for a job, but factors other than self-confidence can lead to reduced motivation. The certainty of the strain of two jobs clearly reduces a woman's motivation to apply for a demanding job. If we are to lay down strategies for change it is important to sort out what is owing to lack of self-confidence and what is owing to other limiting factors.

### **Would you apply for a managerial position?**

One way of finding out why so few women apply for jobs in management is to ask the women if they themselves would think of applying.

Three of the women asked expressed that they would like to. Two of them were administrative secretaries who envisaged a more responsible job within the secretarial sector but the job of director for the institution was out of the question. The third woman had had a managerial job previously. In spite of having had family responsibilities and occasionally feeling stressed because of such, she was not afraid of applying for a managerial position once more. But meanwhile, she believed that better child care facilities were a prerequisite for coping with a managerial position.

Two of the women had applied for jobs in management. Both felt that they had been bypassed because they were women; there was nothing in their qualifications to explain it. One of them said that during the job interview she had not been asked at all about how she was going to shape the job. Instead she was asked how she would organise the care of her children as she would have to do a lot of travelling. Otherwise, she was asked how she felt about being an executive over men. Afterwards she had asked the



*Saami woman and child in confrontation with police officer during a demonstration. Photo: IWGIA archive.*

other men who had been interviewed whether they had been asked the same, but they had not. She did not get the job.

What are the reasons women give for not applying for managerial positions? Too much administration and too little time for one's own professional interests, were some of the reasons.

Managerial position, no, I'll have even less time to do my own job. Then I'll be just be a bureaucrat.

I've been encouraged to apply, but I would rather go on with my own field rather than take on bureaucratic work.

Family responsibilities was another reason. A third reason was that they did not think they could cope with the job or were not the managerial type.

I don't think I'd be happy with it. I'm not the managerial type.

I'd have to delegate jobs and make decisions about others and I really wouldn't like that.

To be a manager means taking unpleasant decisions, suggested one woman. And it is especially unpleasant if there are difficult members of the staff. But as one man saw it, "once you have a managerial position you have to deal with difficult personal issues, like for example, firing people." Does

this mean that women shrink from this kind of duty more than men? In some cases yes, but why? The question was left unanswered.

As we mentioned previously, at the time the Saami institutions were established, there was only a small number of women with the relevant education. Could this be an explanation for the small number of women in managerial positions? I have not had the opportunity to determine to what extent this was the case. On the contrary, a lack of education should not be the greatest barrier today. None of the women I interviewed questioned their own qualifications. They all considered that they were qualified for the jobs they had. Many of them believed that, from a professional perspective, they could do a managerial job. I asked them all about education and relevant experience and my impression is that the women were not less qualified than men for the jobs they had.

That only few or no women apply for managerial posts does not mean that it has not been discussed at work.

We have discussed it at work but no one has shown much interest. Perhaps it would have been different if even one woman had said, yes, I am applying for the job! Then maybe the others would have applied.

One woman told me that the lack of interest from women has led to the situation where, if there is a managerial position free, they try to guess which man will get it. Even though there is an obvious desire to have more Saami women in managerial posts, a future with more women in managerial positions does not look hopeful.

### **Are women different as leaders?**

Since most people want more women managers, I was interested to know why. Here are some of the answers I received:

Women have a different way of going about things in managerial jobs. They have a more untraditional way of doing things which gets them further. Women and men have two different ways of finding solutions. (male respondent)

With women managers it will be a change of direction. (male respondent)

Women's lot has always been to work, they have worked like horses. They are practical, and used to facing up to problems and solving them. Saami men are too rash and too authoritarian.

Many women see things differently, they don't raise their voices. Men swear more.

Women are more colourful and have more nuances than men. Women are perhaps more understanding.

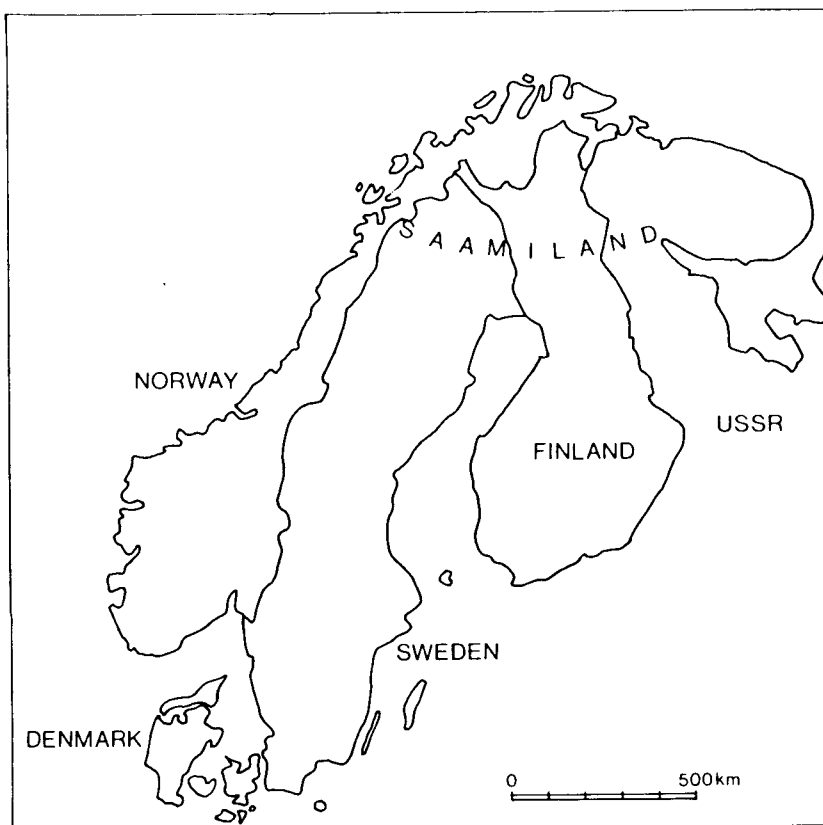
Society will be richer if women were involved in the decision-making process. They are not so square-headed and bureaucratic; they are smoother, rounder and understand better.

We can see that positive qualities have been brought out. Women have other norms and values and are more considerate to their employees. They

see a situation from another side and solve problems more effectively than men.

While only a few people have had experience of women managers, it is natural to ask where people have this picture from. Is this the picture they have painted of women managers because of all the debate there has been on this subject?

Is it a picture of how ideal women managers ought to be? Or are these characteristics which are normally attributed to women which are brought out as positive characteristics for female managers? The reason I am asking these questions is because it is my experience that individual women say that women have a different managerial style from men, while at the same time they feel that it is not important whether managers are men or women. Nevertheless, during interviews, I chose not to point this out because I was unsure whether they would see the contradiction (or in any case, what I per-



*Map of Saamiland in northernmost Scandinavia and the Soviet Union.*

ceived to be a contradiction). It could be exciting to present them with the positive statements about women as managers and then see if they were in agreement. I hope I will get some response to the issues I have taken up and discussed.

### **Being a woman – and an executive**

So what is it like to be a female boss? As we noted, there are not so many of them in my material, only four altogether. Two have more than 10 years experience in the manager's chair.

Why did they apply for managerial jobs? The answer I got here was that they were interested in the job and the work it involved. Through the job they saw a possibility of working with something they wanted. Also some of them were motivated to apply because they felt it was important that Saami applied for managerial positions in Saami institutions. On the question of whether they felt themselves to be qualified for the job, they all answered in the affirmative. At the same time, they all emphasized the need for more professionals in the institutions and the offer of further training. In the same breath they spoke about their own qualifications but I did not take this to mean that they questioned their own competence. I believe it was more a reflection of a real felt need after having had the job so long with little professional backup.

Yes to profession and no to administration, was the answer which Norwegian academic women chose to explain why few had applied for managerial posts (Rorslett and Stiver Lie, 1984). As we mentioned earlier, this is the same reason that women in this study gave as to why they refused to apply for managerial jobs.

Saami women managers have also found administration as a millstone but at the same time it is clear some believe that both women and men learn through experience.

In the beginning I felt quite "green" about administration. But I got used to it. I had no experience apart from some union work. But then, how many academics have administrative experience? I just thought that if others can master it, so can I. Professionally, I considered myself well qualified.

Experience has given me the best grounding for this job.

### **How do women experience managerial jobs?**

I look forward to my work every day.

One doesn't resign lightly from a managerial job. My plans for the day are easily ruined by the many practical things that have to be done which do not directly lead anywhere.

These two quotations show that Saami women experience managerial positions as both negative and positive. On the positive side are enumerated: working for their own (Saami) people, new tasks all the time which keep one from "falling into the same old routine"; further that one meets interesting people and experience their continuing idealism for the Saami cause. Not everyone experienced even the extra meetings and business seminars as negative:

You can say what you like in all the seminars and meetings, you can always learn something.

The most negative side of the jobs is the perceived lack of understanding on the part of the authorities. The resources allocated to the institutions are far from adequate in relation to the work there is. This is expressed as follows:

Much of the time is spent arguing over things which ought to be clear..

Lack of understanding from colleagues, the larger professional environment and lack of understanding from Saami society of our goals, together with the need to work overtime, are other negative sides of the job. Only one of the women considered resigning, while the woman who had the temporary managerial job thought she would like a managerial position again. She liked being the boss; she found it satisfying to know that her signature was important.

On the question of whether they had met with negative attitudes from colleagues or the feeling that they were doing a man's job, they all answered "no". One woman thought that had she been supervised in the beginning by her male colleagues. Furthermore she received flippant remarks from her surroundings as to whether she was capable of coping with a managerial job. In the course of the conversation it became clear that other women likewise experienced reactions to the fact that they were women and held the jobs they had.

I felt that as a woman I was not being respected; that women don't have any bearings. I was annoyed.

One of them had been the only woman at meetings but she didn't connect this with being a woman in a male-dominated field.

Combining job and family is something that managerial women had difficulty with. The most problematic part is clearly having to care for a child. Even noting that not one of the women managers whom I interviewed had much family responsibility. They were either childless, or their children were grown up.

Even though it can be difficult to combine both job and family life, and the job can still be experienced as a burden, no one could imagine being

without a job. During difficult periods, they might dream of being free and, for example, being at home, but it soon proved not to be the answer.

Without my work where would I have been? Even though I am tired and would willingly take time off, after a few days holiday it is clear that housework is not for me.

I tried to be at home for one year. I thought I'd have more time for the children. In fact, I had less time. You know, when you're at home you find more dirt.

Six months ago I thought it would be nice not to have the main responsibility. And if it had lasted longer I would have gone to the wall. But I've always liked to work. As a young girl, I was desperate to be a nanny....."

My impression of these two groups of women that I interviewed is that both have experienced and still experience dissimilar dilemmas with their jobs. Managerial women are not superwomen who have never had problems with either their jobs or their families. On the contrary, it seems that they have solved this dilemma by finding out whether being at home is a real alternative.

### **Being a man – and a boss**

As I mentioned earlier, I also wanted to know something about men's experience being managers. A man's reasons for applying for a managerial post, are not essentially different from a woman's.

I saw the job as being interesting and challenging. I felt I had something to give.

I saw the job as a challenge.



*Offering a very special kind of bread to commemorate the historic first meeting between Nordic and Soviet Saamis. Kola, 1989.*

If there is anything notable, it is that men answered more spontaneously and it seemed to me as though they were more outspoken about why they had applied for a managerial post. They used different words from women and they all spoke of the job as “challenging”, a word which the women did not use.

Men’s experience of being a manager was similar to that of women. They were attracted to it because they felt that they were getting something out of what they did, and of what was going on, and with their contacts with other people. Like the women, the men pinpointed the lack of understanding from the authorities as the most negative aspect of the job. Similarly they mentioned Saami society’s lack of understanding of the “jantelov” (the propensity in Norwegian society to put down anyone who shows initiative, dares to be different, etc....red.)

A managerial position can also be stressful for a man, in fact so stressful that he might consider resigning:

When things are at their worst, when it is bad economically and you have toiled from dawn to dusk, you ask yourself whether this is a sensible use of one’s resources.

However, none of the men have experienced negative reactions in their job because of their gender. Men clearly found the question unexpected and it was met with some surprise and a little mirth, and it seemed rather comical for them as well as for me, which in itself says something about gender role patterns.

How do male managers experience the aspect of job and family life? All the three men I interviewed said it was difficult and sometimes conflict-generating.

Yes, I have found it difficult. The problem is that I am too involved in the job and take it home with me and can’t switch off. As the manager I have to be prepared to step in no matter what happened because I am responsible.

Yes, because there are only 24 hours in a day and the job is demanding. I’d like to spend more time with my family and I’ve got other interests too. While the children were small I would have liked to have been with them more. Your children are only small once.

One man explained how, to ease his bad conscience, he used to take his children with him when he had to work evenings. They became very involved with paper and coloured pens.

Men also mentioned the heavy workload involved in coping with two jobs as the reason so few women were managers. Are the men I interviewed really exceptions to the rule, men who have noticed the double amount of work their wives have and therefore take their share? Should we believe them, do they take their share of the responsibility? We need to ask their wives to get the full picture, and not least, see how it works in practice. None of the three interviewees have wives in equivalent jobs to their own. If they



had, we could have carried out exciting research into whether family responsibilities were shared equally between both partners.

But I don't mean to say that family responsibilities are not likely to be shared at home by these three male managers. The point is that the organisation of the many day-to-day tasks, within the framework of a marriage is not always so equally and clearly addressed as one is led to believe. Here, as in all other aspects of society, gender plays a role. As we can see in an article by Hanne Haavind (1982), marriage involves not only love, but also power. We shall not discuss this any further here, however, because it will be going beyond the limits of this paper.

### **Is a boss a boss?**

Saami women and men seem not to experience managerial jobs differently. At the same time, it is clear that women react to the fact that they are in such positions, even though they do not always interpret this as a matter of sex discrimination.

From my interviews it also appears that Saami women encounter sex discrimination in their work places and in society.

I often get the feeling that I am just a woman! Especially at seminars and meetings, men don't hold serious discussions with me. Norwegian men have more respect for women than Saami men. Saami men are more scurrilous, more sex-oriented. I have lost my respect for them and have begun to appreciate Norwegian men.

Why don't women attribute conditions that maintain that they are women in unfeminine jobs as sexual discrimination? Studies show that women prefer to attribute sexual discriminatory attitudes to personal or individual characteristics and do not interpret these as sexually discriminatory mechanisms that hold for women in general (Rorslett and Stiver Lie, op.cit.).

To what extent "my" female managers would agree with this, I cannot say unequivocally. They see discrimination against women in society, they react when they are themselves subjected to it but they answer, almost unanimously, in the negative to concrete questions as to whether they have been subject to such.

This is not just something that managerial women do. Most of the other women also denied that they have had negative experiences. On the contrary, many of them stated that they had received positive reactions to their professions.

Rather the opposite. My job is seen as something positive. You are almost admired for being a public person. It is something respected. It gives you power.

Discriminatory attitudes against gender are difficult to pin down. As with all other kinds of discrimination, you learn to sort out reactions which

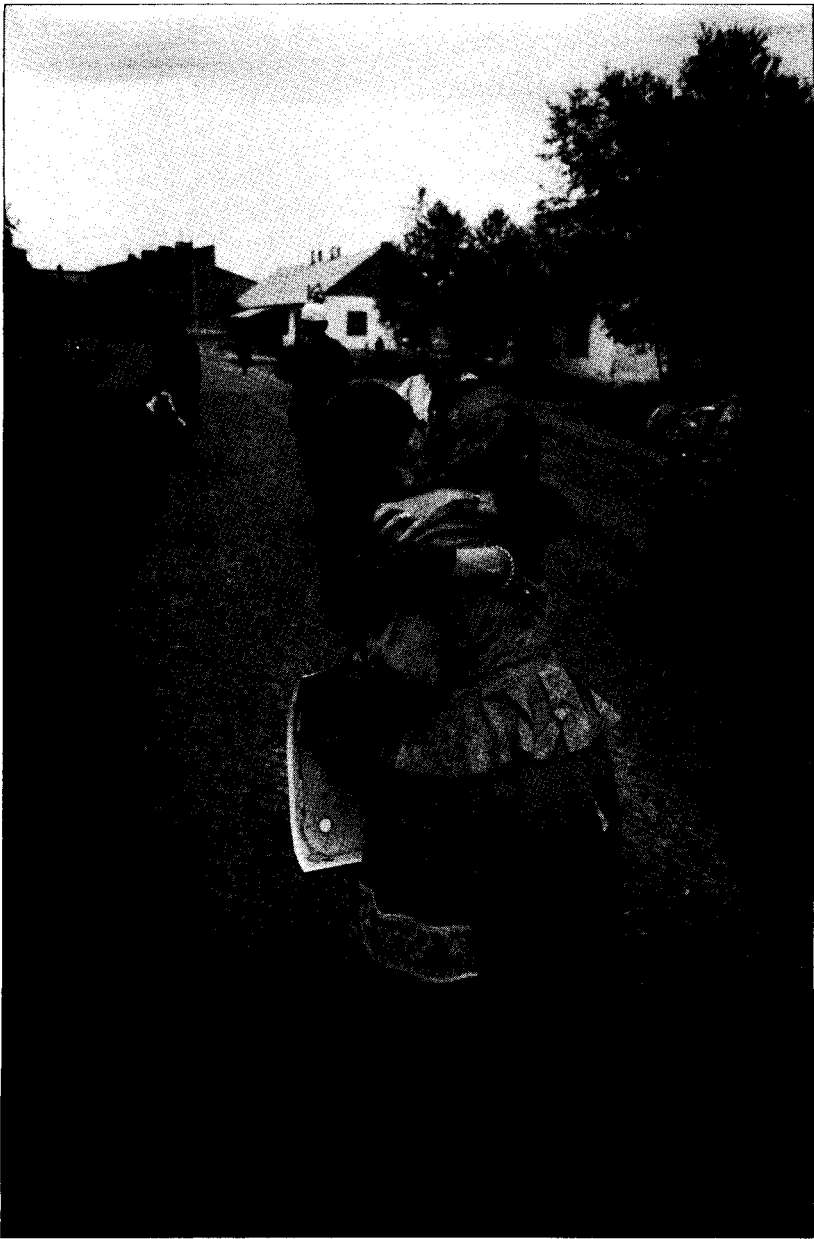
are based on sex or race, from reactions based on personal qualities. Positive reactions, such as have been referred to here, can be a way of expressing surprise that a woman has a position that is associated with power. But we should not treat every reaction like this as if it were an indirect expression of sex discrimination. It is clear that sex discrimination exists in Saami society as it does in Norwegian society. And it is as difficult to define here as anywhere else. One sees it this way:

It is so difficult to point a finger to it, it is so intangible, something which you feel indirectly. If you complain, it doesn't get you anywhere, because it will be considered petty. And we abhor saying things so directly.

In spite of the fact that they have experienced different dilemmas, "my" female managers have found solutions and remained in their jobs. "How these recurring dilemmas will be solved," asked Kjellaug Waage, "will differ, both because of the resources each person has at her disposal, and the different types of external possibilities and limitations obtaining" (1983:256). Waage asks whether women who overstep the traditionally accepted bounds for self-realisation are especially resilient. The answer she gives is that instead of making the distinction between strong and weak we should look for the factor, or factors "which can say more about what gives each woman the opportunity for creativity and greater overview where others react by withdrawing and greater conformity" (1983:256). Her experience from studies on women teachers and school managers is that women in managerial positions experience the same conflict and ambivalence about their situation as others but that they are more explicit when they describe their experiences. What is different is that managerial women have a clearly defined awareness of themselves and a very clear ability to distance themselves. And they have had this since their youth. Therefore it is important to delve deeper into the processes which lead to this awareness. One approach would be to study the socialization of girls and boys.

Is a girl's socialisation, and learning environment characterised by forms of control, screening and conformity which make the transformation to new and unknown contexts difficult? Or on the contrary, are there features in the boys' learning situations which precisely encourage this kind of competence, linked with elements such as competition, disparities, challenging behaviour, etc.? (1983:256).

To get back to my material, I ask whether there is anything about the Saami female managers' socialisation which has put them in a better position to solve the dilemmas which often arise in connection with their managerial responsibilities? I have no answers because my interviews did not explore this question at length. I believe there is something to be said for Waage's perspective and I detect something in "my" managerial women that is also found among "her" school managers.



*For the very first time in recent history, Saami women from Soviet Union are reunited with their sisters from the Nordic areas when the latter were allowed into Lovozero and Kola areas. Photo: Bjarne Store Jakobsen, 1989.*

## The Next Step

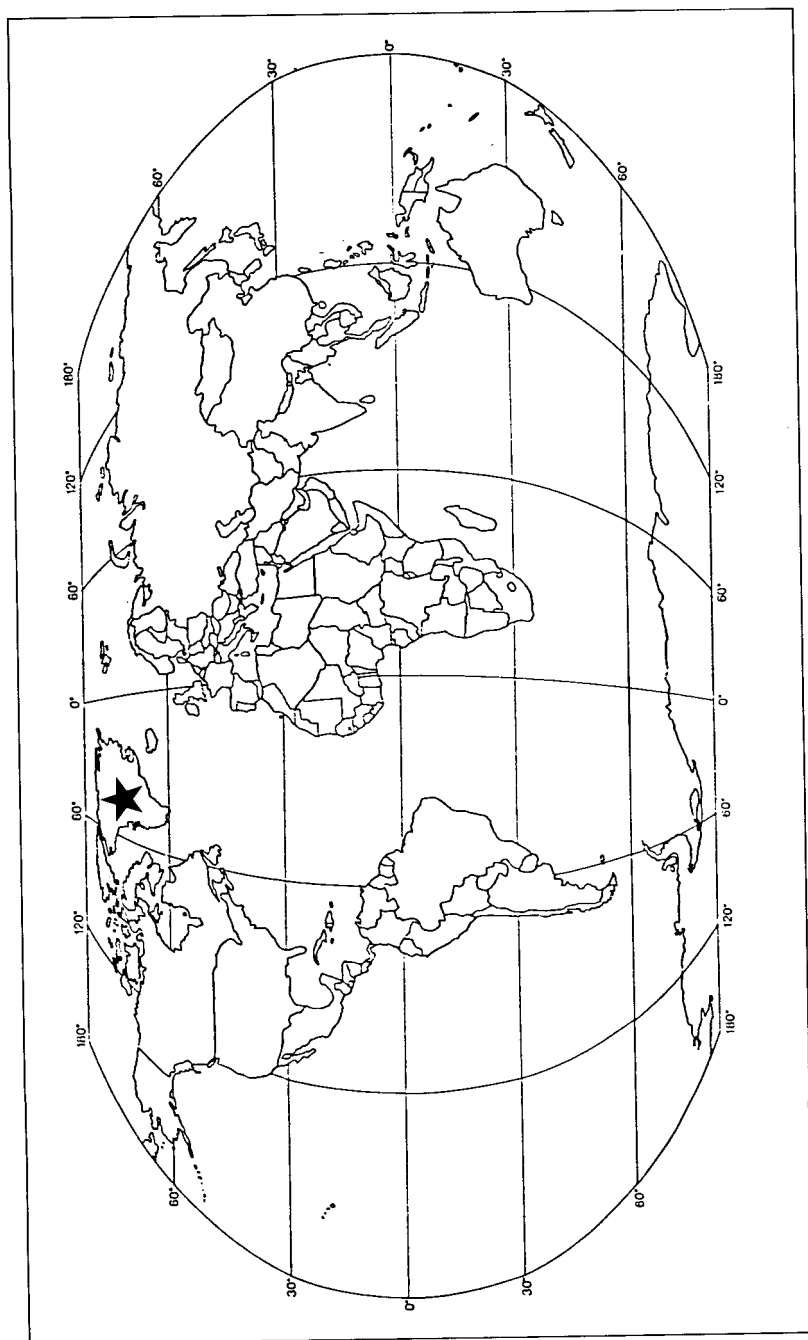
Managers are models and bearers of culture (Wistrand, 1986). Therefore it is important that women managers have female models but if the situation is as the Saami women perceive it, then things are in an adverse way in the Saami society. The reason is not the women's lack of qualifications. There are many well-educated women in our institutions today. It is quite clear that there are other barriers than educational qualifications that women are up against and find difficult to surmount. These barriers have to do with cultural and social conditions, with attitudes and value preferences (Waage, 1983). When boys in their twenties begin to believe they will experience a job-family dilemma, then we must stop and ask ourselves if we want a society where it is so difficult to combine the two.

We still know far too little about the relationship between the sexes in Saami society, both past and present. And when one does not have sufficient knowledge, then one is in danger of generalising. Whether or not female discrimination is something new in Saami society, it is certainly there today. Women experience it and we can not ignore them by saying they have become too Norwegian. The next step must be to take up this question and look at the situations which women find sexually discriminatory. The only way we can hope to change the more or less subtle barriers which women encounter is through further research into the question of whether gender is used as a power factor.

*Vigdis Stordahl, a Saami, is a legal researcher at the Nordic Saami Institute.*

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*World map indicating the Arctic area where Greenland is located..*

# Perspectives on Greenlandic Women's Position and Concerns

by Lise Lennert

The first of April 1990 was the 42nd anniversary of Greenlandic women's suffrage.

On 1 May 1979, Greenland got Home Rule. The 11th anniversary of Greenlandic Home Rule has come and gone, and in May 1987, we had the fourth election to the highest parliamentary assembly in Greenland, the Landsting, where 2 women were elected out of 27 possible mandates. One was from the right-wing party, Atassut, and one from the left-wing party, Inuit Atagatiit, and none from the centre party, Siumut.

A coalition Government was formed with five members from the Siumut party, which until then had been in power, and 2 members from Inuit Atagatiit. But the fragile cooperation broke down, and now the Siumut party is governing alone with the Atassut party as support, so we, who work with Greenlandic women's concerns will have to ask, Can we in the name of equal rights, be content to be led by a government comprising exclusively of men? How much political influence can two recently elected women have in the parliamentary assembly? In what way can we achieve political influence?

But we can also turn the question around and ask why we have not achieved better results after 42 years. Part of the answer must lie in the fact that Greenland has a small and very dispersed population. The population today numbers some 50 000 people scattered from north to south over 24 degrees latitude, and some 2 700 km.

Until recently, communication throughout Greenland has been underdeveloped until the Telecommunications Services began to build a net in the 1970's which is as yet unfinished. Greenlandic television is still in its initial phases and most of the viewing time is accorded Danish TV. There are two national weekly newspapers and most towns have a local paper but no daily. The radio is the only daily source of news throughout the whole of Greenland.

It is clear that these factors must have played a role in women's attempts to get more political influence in modern Greenland.

This is not to say that women involved with women's rights have been sitting twiddling their thumbs. No, in spite of the difficulties, we have accomplished a lot in Greenlandic society.

## **Multifarious Women's organisations**

Up until the middle of the 1970s there was only one kind of women's organisation and an Association which was established in 1960. The primary concerns of these organisations have been family planning and the discussion on and determining the abortion law of 1973; informational activities on the fight against cancer; the foundation of the women's college, Arnat Ilinniarfiat, in Holsteinsborg; the arranging of nationwide seminars on housing; wide-ranging initiatives for the preservation of traditional handicrafts and artisan work; initiatives concerning better utilisation of Greenlandic sheep and lambswool which also aims to set up a home industry for woollen products; and last but not least, the running of politically-oriented courses that have resulted in more and more Greenlandic women standing up for local and national elections.

The Association's more recent success has been the proposed bill for the formation of an Equal Opportunities Committee under Greenlandic Home Rule. The bill was debated and passed in November 1985.

In 1976 a new kind of women's organisation was established. It was called "Kilut" and consisted of nine local organisations but had no Association. The organisation is not hierarchical in structure and is run more on a group basis. Its main objective is to have more women voted into political bodies, and to work towards providing more information concerning equality of treatment in the bringing up of girls and boys. Furthermore, it also works towards achieving circumpolar cooperation for improving conditions for Arctic women.

In April 1981, an all-party working group was set up with a mandate to look into the problem of rape among cohabiting couples. In November 1982, Nuuk City Council put a house at its disposal. The house was to serve several purposes: as a refuge, a meeting place and as an advisory centre.

In February 1983, women's groups in Nuuk formed an organisation called Arnat Suleqatigiit. On 16 April 1983, the house was opened as a week end refuge and crisis centre for women and children. In the course of that summer, the possibility of appointing a director to take on the centre's administrative duties in and around the House, was discussed. On 1 September 1983, a part-time director was appointed and this investment has provided internal strength and secured a continuity which is important for work of this nature. More active members are steadily joining the centre,





*Inuit mother and child clad in the Amaat which is the Greenlandic pelt jacket that has an inset in the back for babies.*

*Photo: Mads Fægteborg, 1986.*

of which the largest number are in the watch/duty group. The organisation is structured such that the highest decision-making body is the bi-monthly general assembly. A magazine is printed and circulated in the alternate months when there is no general meeting. The formal leadership is overseen by a board, which attends to the functioning of the working groups.

As a refuge, the house is open from Friday to Sunday, 24 hours a day. Registration is anonymous. Counselling work began in 1982 and links with lawyers and the social services were established in the first year. In connection with women's political work, regular talks and debate evenings are held on subjects related to the association's work such as upbringing and language, women's diseases, Sct. Nicolai Service (a service manned by volunteers who advise those who are distraught and desperate, red.), health and well being, and Greenlandic mythology.

In September 1984, the Knud Rasmussens College arranged a conference for Arctic women. Most of the participants were from Greenland, and they organised themselves into two work groups of which, one worked to support the elected women members of parliament, while the other worked towards establishing a women's newspaper.

The work has been progressing slowly for many different reasons, but



*Inuit boy all dressed to play on the ice garbed in suit made of different kinds of animal fur. Photo: Mads Fægteborg, 1985.*

the groups agree about one thing – that they should try to be a catalyst for women's participation in the public debate.

## **The main problems that beset Greenlandic women**

1. Alcohol abuse
2. Assault
3. Lack of housing
4. Upbringing and discipline problems
5. Lack of political influence

### **Alcohol abuse – upbringing and discipline problems**

This problem has been discussed ever since alcohol was legalised in 1953 and, despite the fact that the debate is now nearly 40 years old, the problems are still far from being resolved. All kinds of solutions have been tried and even alcohol rationing was introduced but has been abolished again.

The only thing that has not been tried is a total ban on alcohol but this would be impossible to enforce without isolating Greenland from the rest of the world. There have been, and will continue to be, many human tragedies because of alcohol abuse. Children, who are our most precious resource, are still witnesses to tragic scenes from family life, scenes which are later impossible to eradicate from a child's mind. These lead to problems in growing up and then it is not long before there is a discipline problem at home, at school, in institutions and everywhere in society where children are concerned. Politicians try to solve the problem through campaigns, conferences, seminars and media debates but these all seem to have short-term effects. The problem seems to be related to crises of identity and many women believe it will take generations before the problem will be so minute that it can be considered as having natural human causes. There are many women today who claim that there are no families in Greenland which have not been hit by the problem of alcohol. Everyone is afflicted one way or another by abuse or its effects and who pay dearest in the end? The children do!

### **Assault – housing shortage**

Almost all the women who come to the crisis centre have serious grounds for doing so. They fear either for what may happen to them or have been victims of assault, rape or threats.

In the majority of cases, alcohol abuse has been the direct cause, but there are often deeper and more serious grounds to the violence. For example:

1. Lack of economic means brought about by unemployment or uncertain earning possibilities.
2. Insecure adolescence which has bred lack of trust in other people.
3. Disagreement over division of labour in the home.
4. Lack of housing or poor, cramped housing conditions.

Many of the older women who come to the crisis centre have lived with violence and fear of assault for many years. They come merely to get a bed. This group of women are not seeking help in order to escape this terrible pattern of abuse but have accepted the situation as it is and seek a refuge when they know that there is violence in the air.

Young women with small children form another group. The young hope for better times and better conditions. Problems within families with small children are extremely delicate because the pattern of married life changes considerably when a child is born. In such a situation the crisis centre will try to maintain contact so that the young women can come to understand their situation.

Psychological violence is also well known. The more a man can break a woman's self-confidence, the more he can threaten her with violence and often with death.

There are many reasons why a woman will return time after time to such a man or keep silent and try to survive: fear from earlier beatings, fear of death or retaliation against the children; unawareness of possibilities for help from public sources; moral or religious pressures, often from the family; the desire not to deprive the children of their father; and not least, a paralysing feeling of not having control over themselves.

Children who regularly experience violence or arguments ought to be mentioned in a category of their own. There should be possibilities for supporting children so that they can work out such experiences. These children are either aggressive or unexplicably passive when they arrive or during their stay at the crisis centre. The problem is vast because many of these children will adopt their parents habits and patterns when they are adults.

There are huge housing shortages, especially so among people in poor social conditions. Again, the problems are mirrored among children of school age and the young through their insecure behaviour and aggression. Young women with small children have very limited opportunities for education because of housing shortages related to education. There are many other examples of problems arising from lack of housing. Women involved in women's issues find that opportunities for working towards a solution to housing problems does not look very promising until women have more political influence.



*Polar Eskimo children (siblings). Photo: Mads Fægteborg, 1978.*

## **Women and politics**

During the last three terms of local and national government (?) more and more women stood for election but very few have been elected, even though their campaigns have been co-ordinated. Many well suited women have maintained a low profile or have preferred to be substitutes because of responsibilities such as small children, teenage children or problems in holding their family or marriage together.

Yet others refuse to put up candidacies before they are sure they have backing from other women who can support them in their political work.

The Equal Opportunities Committee is now a reality under Greenland's Home Rule. Among its first tasks, the committee has decided to try new methods ways of getting more women elected into decision-making processes. This in itself is ambitious but can we now in 1990, be content to be mere spectators while the Parliament has women representation from only 8%, and a cross section of local government reveals that only one out of every 17 Greenlandic council members is a woman?

No. I believe that there are enough of us who will not be content to remain spectators in the political arena. Greenlandic women can learn much from their Nordic sisters' model on solidarity, which in all its simplic-

ity goes all out to get women to vote for women during elections. However, this demands that women put aside feelings such as hate, envy and small-mindedness about the election process, and they must believe first and foremost that women who have decided to stand as candidates have resources from within and the energy since they dared to run for office. Women have to show that they are willing to share responsibility because no one is going to give it to us on a silver platter. It is our duty to Greenlandic society to show that we are at least just as competent as men to take part in the building of a modern Greenlandic society, and that we are aware of our responsibility. It is absolutely clear that political awareness among Greenlandic women has come to stay. And there is no one that can take it from us. We will and we shall take part in deciding over our children's future.

NB: On the subject of crisis centres, the author has quoted from the Annual Report from April 1983 to March 1984.

*Lise Lennert, an Inuk(plural:Inuit) has been trained as a teacher. She was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Equal Opportunities under the Greenlandic Home Rule government.*



*Many Greenlandic women are employed in the export-orientated fishing industry. Photo shows women processing shrimp at Ilulissat. Photo: Mads Fægteborg, 1985.*

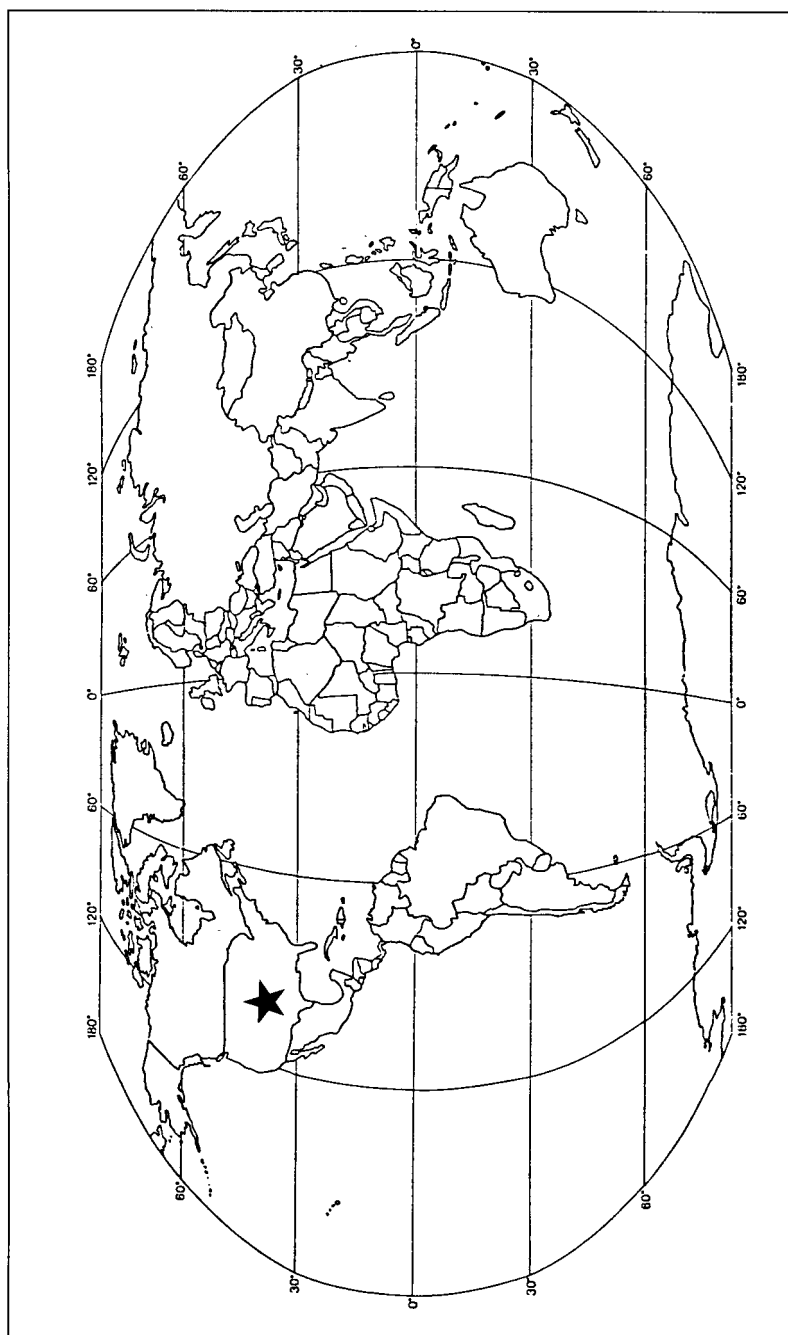


**Indigenous  
Peoples  
of the  
Soviet  
North**



DOCUMENT 67

IWGIA



*World map indicating the IIS A in the North American continent*



# Fetal Alcohol Syndrome “Chemical Genocide”

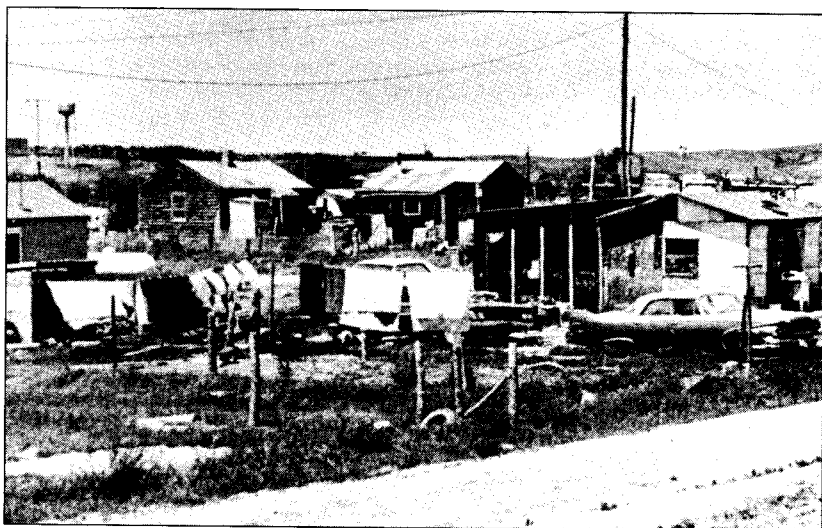
by Charon Asetoyer

Along with the many negative things such as the introduction of venereal disease that came to the Western Hemisphere with Columbus and his many followers, we can also credit the Europeans with the introduction of alcohol to our native people.

Alcohol has had a long and devastating history among the native Americans of the Western Hemisphere. Alcohol was used to intimidate, threaten, bereave, bluff, swindle and manipulate Native Americans, into relinquishing their lands, their culture and most of all to disintegrate a strong healthy nation. It has preyed on the vulnerability and innocence of the strongest people in all existence. Alcohol was used by the Europeans as a strategy to perpetuate genocide on an unsuspecting nation, and the U.S. Government has used alcohol against Native Americans to control and manipulate; it has been legal, illegal and then legalized again at the whim of Presidents. The Native American people are now experiencing alcohol's most devastating threat to their culture, more than ever before. It is being used to perpetuate a form of covert genocide, while the United States Government turns its head and chooses to ignore the destruction it is doing to the future generations of Native Americans.

In the Northern Plains, 100% of the Native American reservations are affected by alcohol and problems related to alcoholic use and abuse. Approximately 90% of the adult population are currently users, abusers, or recovering alcohol. As a result of the high alcohol use and abuse, there is also a high incidence of emotional, physical and sexual abuse as well as physical abuse of children and a high incidence of family violence. Often children grow up in violent surroundings, are neglected, are poorly nourished, and as a result grow up with many handicaps because of these experiences. Foster care is often a reality for these children of alcoholised environments, and many times it is the children from these alcoholic homes who are left without parents because of alcohol-related illness or accidents.

The issue of alcohol among Native Americans is not romantic or sensational, and only too often it is left out of the international scene as an issue of importance. Yet, alcohol consumption is having the most negative and



*Typical sight at Indian reservation. Photo: Echoes at Wounded Knee.*

devastating effect on the most innocent and defenceless of all our Native American people, the unborn!

I am referring to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is an irreversible birth defect which occurs when, and only when, a pregnant woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. FAS is broken into two (2) categories;

The first category is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome where the effects are mental retardation, deformed facial features (such as a flat facial appearance, posterior rotation of the ears, small head circumference, absence of the vermillion groove between the nose and lips and a carp-shaped mouth) and physical deformation such as stiff joints in the hands, arms, hips and legs. FAS is detected at birth. FAS affects about 1 in every 100 Native Americans born in the Northern Plains.

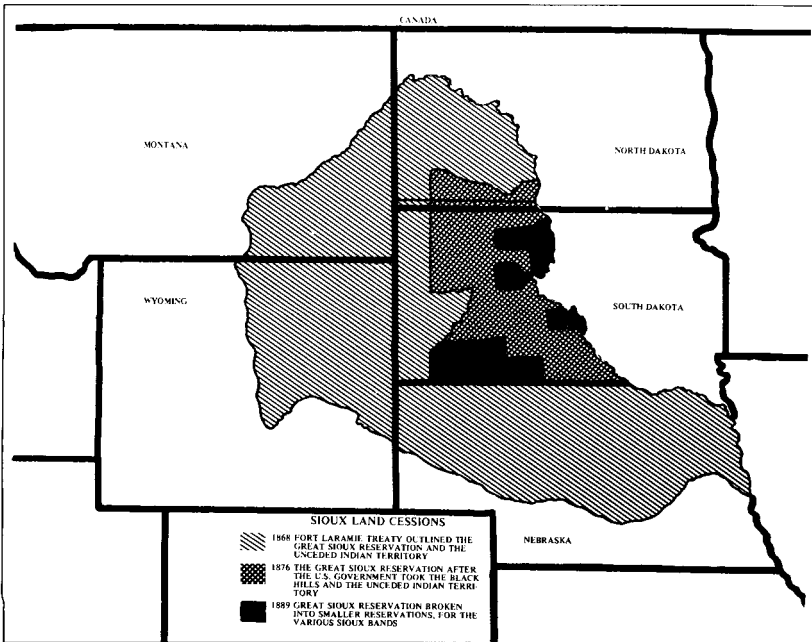
The other category is called Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) and affects 1 in every 50 Native Americans born in the Northern Plains. FAE is a lesser degree of birth defect than FAS. But do not underestimate it. The effects of FAE is a below-average range IQ(intelligence quotient), learning disabilities, hyperactivity, short attention span and may be accompanied by some of the same physical defects that the FAS child suffers from. FAE children are usually not detected until they enter school and are often seen as children with disciplinary problems, with no motivation and are treated as behavioural problems before they are even diagnosed as suffering from FAE.

Both Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) is an indicator of a community and/or Nation in distress. Forty (40%) percent of all women drink alcohol during pregnancy, and give birth to children suffering from either FAS or FAE. Often times these children will end up in foster care homes or other facilities due to the incapacitation or death of the mother owing to alcoholism. It is indicated that within 2 1/2 to 3 generations, every Native American household in the Northern Plains area will have one spouse being a descendant of a fetal alcohol birth.

What does this mean for the future of a Nation (tribe)? For the existence of a culture? The quality of a Nation's (tribe's) leadership is derived from its people, and the vulnerability of a Nation (tribe) lies in its leadership.

Fetal Alcohol births are not limited to Native Americans, it can and does occur in every race. In fact, most Third World countries where women drink alcohol have a high rate of alcohol births.

As women of Indigenous populations it is time for us to deal with this situation, not only at a local level but at an international level. Coming together at an international conference or meeting would definitely be a step towards a solution. To complicate the issue even more, there are inter-



*Map showing Sioux Land Concessions in the Northern Plains.*

national agencies and foundations that fund alcohol production projects as a means of economic development. These projects are usually headed by women who have no knowledge of the effects of alcohol drinking during pregnancy, nor have access to this information. It is time to come together as Indigenous women to discuss this issue, and to set moral conduct policies for international agencies and foundations that perpetuate such conduct. These international agencies and foundations need to evaluate the effects of funding alcohol production projects on the cultures they are involved with. This is an international issue which needs our input as Indigenous women in order to bring out a solution. We need to bring forth the true intentions of their actions, and define to them their limitations on our cultures.

History has made some strong statements on the issue of alcohol drinking among women during pregnancy: In 322 BC, Aristoteles was quoted as saying: "Foolish, drunken hair-brained women most often bring forth children like themselves: morose and languid". In the Book of Judges (13:7) in the Bible, an Angel visits the wife of Manoah, to tell her she will bear a child but warns, "Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and now drink no wine or strong drink". These historical quotes definitely lead us to regard Europeans as suspect, playing a part in the history of alcoholism among indigenous people.

Whenever a group of colonialist endeavors are about to be launched, you can rest assured there have been, and will continue to be, alcohol present in large quantities. Usually justified as medicinal, for purposes of breaking the ice with the natives... In reality it is used to penetrate a culture and apply the first modes of control.

However, there are a few groups and organizations of Native American Women in the United States, who are working for bringing awareness of FAS into their communities. One of these organizations is the Native American Community Board (NACB), located on the Yankton Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. Through their efforts, members of the NACB were able to get Bill 1310 introduced into State Legislation. Bill 1310 is the mandatory posting of the dangers of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, wherever alcohol beverages are sold or served in South Dakota. Through the efforts of Donna Haukaas, Jackie Rouse, and Charon Asetoyer, a legislative strategy was put into motion, testimony was presented, and Bill 1310 became reality in 1986.

The same group of women were able to bring awareness over the importance of better-prepared future educators (teachers) on (FAS). Through their efforts, the curriculum of FAS was incorporated into a cross-cultural education class at the University of South Dakota. This course on Cross Cultural Education is mandatory for all students preparing to go into the teaching field. Members of the NACB attended the U.N. Decade of Women Conference in Nairobi, and were invited by the Kakombo (Lou Tribe)



*Native American children at play.*

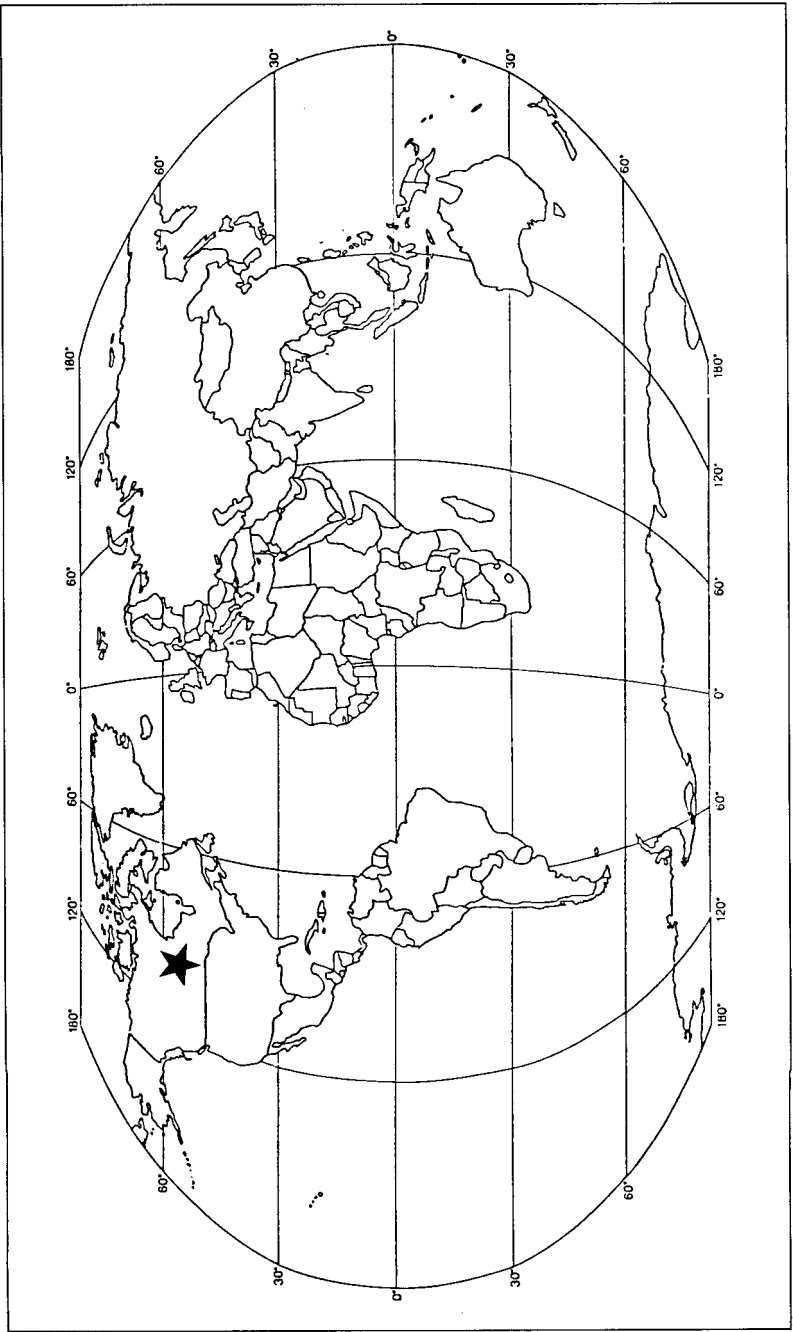
group to visit their village. It was during their first visit to the village that they became aware of the high usage of alcohol and suspected incidents of FAS.

They were invited to assist the Kakombo (Lou Tribe) women in developing a health project, and an agricultural economic development project. Three members of the Kakombo Women's group were later able to visit the United States, to receive educational awareness on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, family planning, natural medicine, and networking, in order to take this information back to Kenya.

Two of the Kakombo women who came for the FAS education are midwives in their villages. During the education sessions they told us stories about how they had delivered babies that smelled of *Chaneg* (their local home brew), which is about 150 proof corn liquor (we told them). That is what we refer to as being "Born drunk".

It is through networking endeavours like this one that bring Indigenous women information to better help their communities.

*Charon Asetoyer is a Member of the Board of the Native American Community, NACB.*



*World map indicating Canada in the North American continent.*

# The women of many nations in Canada

by Mary Ellen Turpel

We are women of many nations here ... We have to learn what that means to each of us. We have to pass that on and we have to demonstrate it. It means sacrifice and it means controversy and it means being unpopular. But it means standing up for rights all the time every day. Not just when there's an issue at hand... Every single day because we are borne of many nations, we are special.

The non-indigenous person might think the preceding quotation to be from an international gathering of women, perhaps the 1985 United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Kenya, Nairobi. Rather, these are the opening words of the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) to the Association's Twelfth Assembly in 1986 held at Whiterhorse, Yucon. It aptly captures the focus of the NWAC, and increasingly of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada - a First Nations or "nationhood" approach to domestic and international politics.

Marilyn Kane, the President of the NWAC, describes herself not as a Canadian, an "Indian" nor a "Native" person: "I am a citizen of the *Mohawk* Nation at Kahnawake in the territory now known as Quebec", she admonishes. As president, she represents many nations from which the membership of the NWAC is drawn: *MicMac*, *Objiway*, *Cree*, *Shuswap*, *Maliseet* are but a few of these. The women in the NWAC are from all parts of what is now known as Canada, representing distinct Peoples. They have united together with the common objective of promoting the re-establishment and strengthening of their governments, based on original teaching while ensuring that women occupy their rightful historical and cultural positions in those governments. This is a lofty objective for an organization which, for the most part, is considered non-political by the "male-dominated" national indigenous organizations in Canada. It is of little concern to NWAC that the organization is considered non-political by other organizations because "political" is too narrow a term for this movement. Many of the members of NAWC hold that "spirituality is the highest form of political consciousness" and it is from a spiritual viewpoint that the Association aims to address legal and political disputes.

The NWAC, along with the Inuit Women's Association (IWA or "Pauktuuit"), embodies an organized movement in Canada which differs



*Marilyn Kane, President of Native Women's Association  
of Canada. Photo: NWAC.*



fundamentally from the mainstream Canadian women's movement. The objectives of the NWAC and IWA are not feministic in nature, and they do not strive for complete "equality of men and women" in all areas. NWAC, at least, appears to accept genuine cultural role distinctions. IWA has not yet fully developed its organizational personality.

The indigenous Women's movement in Canada, not surprisingly, is unpopular with the predominantly male indigenous organizations because they have maintained strong positions often contrary to those put forth by the main organizations. Although, the NWAC and IWA are composed of only women, they view their mandate as much broader than simply "women's needs". As Marilyn Kane describes it to her membership:

I'm always emphatic that while we are recognized as a women's organization, we're more than that. We represent our families and we represent our communities and we represent our Nations... When I speak on your behalf, I'm concerned about the issues in all of our communities... We still know amongst ourselves that we have a responsibility to put them (the men) back on track regardless of the system of the nation that we come from.

The impetus for a national indigenous women's organization in Canada was generated at an International Native Women's Conference held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1971. The Indigenous women at the Conference from Canada took time to meet and discuss the prospects of creating a national organization. Extensive networking and organizing of women regionally and in communities, had already been underway in Canada since the late 1960's. In March of 1971, a Canadian indigenous women's conference was held in Edmonton, Alberta. Two other conferences followed in 1972 and 1973.

In 1974, the first official annual meeting of the federally incorporated NWAC was held in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The organization represented First Nations (often called Indian) women, *Metis* women (of mixed ancestry or descendants of the historic *Metis* people of the Red River Settlement) and some *Inuit* women. *Inuit* women were under-represented from the outset. Several factors account for the sparsity of *Inuit* participation. Language was a greater barrier for *Inuit* women than for other women. As well, the geographic remoteness and unique nature of *Inuit* life posed difficulty in integrating *Inuit* women's interests into the larger national platform. It seemed more appropriate that a separate organization be formed for the specific needs of *Inuit* Women.

In 1980, a national office for the NWAC was opened in Ottawa, Ontario and has consistently acted as a clearinghouse for information of indigenous policy and legal reform issues. The NWAC is organized to meet Canadian legal requirements for non-profit organizations in order for it to access governmental funding for its core operation. There is an elected Executive Committee and a non-elected Board of Directors composed of

representatives from the twelve Provincial and Territorial member organizations. By internal policy, at least one Elder (spiritual advisor) attends each NWAC function. In the organization, there is a definite desire to be structured in a more traditional fashion (for example, by a council of representatives from each Nation), and to operate relying upon the traditional principles with less focus on record-keeping, paperwork, etc. The political leaders have reconciled this by retaining the necessary "legal" structure and all that is associated with it, while at the same time utilising the organization to promote traditional values and customs at every possible juncture.

In 1985, the Inuit Women's Association (IWA) was incorporated. It now acts as the national spokesperson on the concerns of Inuit Women. The most recent meeting of the Inuit Women's Association, held in Spence Bay, Northwest Territories focused on health and social issues in the north. The Association works closely with the other main national Inuit organization—the Inuit Tapiristat of Canada. Mary Sillet is the incumbent president of the Inuit Women's Association.

Given the infancy of the IWA, its organizational mandate is still emerging. Recently, it has dedicated its efforts toward changing family names from English back to Inuit languages. Community-based economic development, midwifery and child care have also been areas of concern.



*The 7th Annual Convention Of the Native Women's Association of Canada. Photo: NWAC.*

The Association tends to focus on one or two key issues annually, and to direct their energies accordingly.

While the IWA concentrates on one or two issues annually, the NWAC tackles a spectrum of issues of concern to First Nations and Metis women. These include: health, social services, treatment under the *Indian Act* (the main piece of federal legislation regulating the lives of a large group of Indigenous peoples defined by the Canadian government as “indian”); family issues (matrimonial property); prison and criminal justice; constitutional reform; international human rights; and last but certainly not least, traditional and spiritual education, awareness and understanding.

To provide an understanding of the position of the NWAC, three main areas of activity or concern will be discussed below:

- (i) *Indian Act*
- (ii) Constitutional discussions, and
- (iii) International interests.

### **The *Indian Act***

The extensive organization of Indigenous Women in Canada can be attributed largely to the influence of and responses to, the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* was drafted and passed in the late 1880's by the colonial Dominion government. One provision in the early Act may be viewed as the most important catalyst for the formation of a strong and independent Indigenous women's movement in Canada: Section 12 (1)(b). This section stipulated that Indian women who marry non-Indian men (this would include a man of indigenous ancestry who is simply not recognized by the Canadian government's definitions) would lose her Indian status, band membership, and concomitant rights to participate in community life. Indian men who married non-Indian women were not similarly disentitled.

The objective of this provision was clearly stated by Parliamentarians in the late 1800's as that of assimilation; the integration of Aboriginal peoples into mainstream Canadian culture and society. However, the drafters of the provision were unaware of an important factor as they framed their objective into section 12(1)(b) – the role of Aboriginal women in their respective Nations. Aboriginal women are central (at the centre of the circle of life) in passing on the culture, the languages and customs of their peoples.

This historical reality could not be reversed through the imposition of foreign legislation. Although Indigenous women married out, they were not, for the most part, assimilated as anticipated but maintained, and in many cases, strengthened, their traditional roles and soon began to organize and oppose sexual discrimination. The result was a highly motivated Indigenous women's movement dedicated to ending discrimination and

restoring the position of women in each Indigenous Nation. Indigenous women challenged the Act unsuccessfully in the highest Canadian courts, but later won a favourable ruling from the United Nations Human Rights Committee (in response to the Sandra Lovelace complaint) in 1981.

The Indian Act dilemma gave rise to the formation of many other Indigenous women's organizations in Canada. Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW) was formed in the 1970s and has been active in lobbying and at other political efforts to eliminate discrimination from the *Indian Act*. IRIW at one time had regional representation. However, much of this has since joined with the NWAC. The current President of the IRIW, Jenny Margetts, continues to be active on Indian Act issues and the organization will be attempting to intervene in a major Canadian court battle over the Indian Act in the upcoming months.

Other Indigenous women's organizations representing specific constituencies also sprung up during the mid-1970s: The Professional Native Women's association, situated in British Columbia; The Indian and Inuit Nurses Association; and the Indian Homemaker's Association of British Columbia. Historically, it is fair to say that NWAC has been the most extensively "organized" and representative Indigenous women's organization, and has proven itself as the most consistently active on a broad spectrum of issues including discrimination and the *Indian Act*.

Nonetheless, after one hundred years of *Indian Act* oppression, the assimilationist system will not be dismantled overnight. Nor will its enormously harmful impact on Indigenous politics be erased by the stroke of a legislator's pen. By the time the discriminatory provisions of the *Indian Act* were ostensibly removed in an amendment in 1985, and those who had wrongfully lost or been denied status were permitted to reapply for it, internal conflict among Aboriginal nations and citizens over the kind of reform needed was inevitable.

Some "Indian Bands" (as they are called in the Act) had grown accustomed to excluding women and expressed concern that cultural linkages in their communities would be weakened by women returning to the community with "non-Indian" husbands and their offspring. More generally, bands began to view the *Indian Act* as the repository of the Federal Government's trust responsibility for Indigenous Peoples, and felt that any amendment, especially in the sensitive area of band membership, would erode this fiduciary relationship. Meanwhile, others welcomed women back and developed citizenship codes based on their inherent jurisdiction as Nations and historically self-determining Peoples\*.

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\* The MWAC produced a handbook entitled "A First Nation Citizenship Code" which included a model citizenship law for an indigenous nation which is based, to a large extent, on customary legal principles.



*Indigenous representatives during the NWAC Convention.*

*Photo: NWAC.*

All communities have been frustrated with the lack of government funds for the expense of returning members (to cover costs of housing, education, and other benefits) and the fact that the pre-existing land shortages on Reserves have possibly been worsened because of the amendment.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government has not developed policies to increase band funding to cover new members; nor have they committed themselves to increasing reserve land allotments. Instead, they have attempted to shift the focus of the situation away from inadequate resources and unto internal Indigenous disputes between Band Councils and women (as well as other reinstated "Indians").

The struggle to end discrimination in the *Indian Act*, as well as its discriminatory results in Indigenous communities, continues today. It is now closely intertwined with the aspirations of First Nations, Metis and Inuit to attain formal recognition of self-government in the Canadian constitution. Nevertheless, in the midst of the larger Indigenous movement in Canada, the women's profile has noticeably fallen to the wayside and the discrimination issue is seen as a lesser priority on a long list of Indigenous political goals. This is worrisome, for, as Ojibway Elder Art Solomon has written in a poem entitled "The Woman's Part":

The women is the foundation on which nations are built. She is the heart of her nation. If that heart is weak, the people are weak.

If her heart is strong and her mind is clear then the nation is strong and knows its purpose. The women is the centre of everything.

The NWAC presses other national Indigenous organizations to recognize women as the foundation of our Nations and, as a top priority, to take steps to stop any abusive treatment of Indigenous women and to respect and promote the women's role in each Nation. Convincing the male-dominated organizations is a difficult task. Too often it is expedient to ignore the role of women and traditional teaching and instead to negotiate with the Canadian government on that government's terms. NWAC questions what can be accomplished by this. The recent experience with constitutional reform negotiations process in Canada has provided a foundation for their skepticism.

### **The Constitutional Discussions**

At the recently concluded Canadian constitutional discussions on Aboriginal rights, Indigenous women adopted a position which was dramatically different from those put forth by other main National Indigenous organizations. The main agenda item at the five-year discussions, which were a bitter failure in the end, was providing formal recognition for Aboriginal self-government (often viewed by the Canadian government as the "granting" self-government) in the Canadian constitution. While organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Metis National Council, the Native Council of Canada, and the Inuit Committee on National Issues proposed specific wordings for amendments and debated the drawbacks of speaking about sovereignty at the constitutional table, the NWAC rejected the process entirely. Earlier on in the process, the NWAC lobbied for the inclusion of a sexual equality guarantee in the Aboriginal rights section of the Canadian Constitution. This was accomplished in 1983. However, the commitment to the forum quickly waned.

The NWAC had adopted two resolutions relating to the constitutional process at their annual meeting prior to the final round of constitutional discussions in 1987. One of the resolutions stipulated that NWAC's involvement in the process be restricted to observer status only and that, in this capacity, the women must ensure that Indigenous spokespersons would not agree to any amendment which would erode the inherent rights of each In-

digenous Nation in Canada (i.e. to land and recognition of self-government)\*\*.

The second resolution was a declaration of the NWAC on self-determination. It read:

We the women of many Nations, are citizens of sovereign government that have never consented to relinquishing our inherent rights. We hereby declare:

- That Mother Earth be respected and honoured as our sacred connection with our Ancestors;

- That we still control our lands and we assert our Aboriginal right to regain control of our land that had been stolen, taken without our full knowledge, or involved in an otherwise unfair way;

- That our Nations be governed by our customary law first and foremost, and not by the laws of a foreign government;

- That we respect the tradition of the extended family and care for our children by regaining control over our education, health and other community needs;

- That we are committed to a co-operative economic base where citizens are not exploited for the financial gain of individuals but where community-based projects are initiated and traditional occupations such as hunting, trapping, and fishing are encouraged and respected.

This declaration led to a rejection of the constitutional discussion process and the Canadian Constitution itself. The women decided that as sovereign Peoples, they should not look to the constitution of a foreign (and often hostile) government for recognition, much less the "granting" of the right to self-government or the realization of self-government. Point 3 of the resolution dictates that communities should not be governed by the laws of a foreign government but to stand by customary law. The women decided that a recognition of Aboriginal rights must flow from international human rights instruments and not from delegated authority empowered by the Canadian federal government.

The NWAC did attend the final round of constitutional discussions as observers, but did not sit at the table nor speak at any point. In fact, some of the leadership of the organization participated (in part) in an Indigenous boycott and demonstration outside of the deliberations.

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\*\* It should be noted that the four Indigenous organizations officially present at the constitutional discussion table were not voting participants either. They were the invited guests of the non-Indigenous governments and were permitted to speak only at the discretion of the Federal Government Chairperson.

## International Activity

The NWAC has become increasingly interested in and dedicated to an international recognition and understanding of Indigenous values and aspiration. The NWAC has had some involvement with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). Unfortunately, this has been minimal as the North American Region of the World Council is composed of three Canadian Indigenous organizations and one American Indian Organization. These Canadian organizations are, once again, very much "male-dominated" and accordingly usually exclude meaningful participation of women. For example, in May 1987, a North American Regional meeting of the WCIP was held in Ottawa, Canada; NWAC was neither notified nor invited to attend.

This reflects as much on the entire WCIP as it does on the North American Region. At two previous meetings of the WCIP (the Third General Assembly in Canberra, Australia, in 1981 and the Fourth General Assembly in Panama City, Panama, in 1984) resolutions were passed calling for an enhanced role for women in the WCIP and directing that a study be undertaken on the international situation of indigenous women. The more recent resolution also calls for mandatory representation of women in each regional delegation and the generation of these resolutions has been acted upon to date. Neither, the NWAC, nor any other Indigenous women's organizations, were able to attend the 5th General Assembly of the WCIP which was held in July, 1987, in Peru. In addition, no women were in attendance as delegates with the North American Region.

Nevertheless, the NWAC has been active internationally. Support has been given to *Hopi* and *Navajo* women facing forced relocation in Big Mountain, Arizona, and to MISURASATA's resistance to both Sandinista and American dominance in Nicaragua and Honduras. NWAC is cognizant of the needs of Indigenous women globally, and is moving in the direction of eventually setting up an international Indigenous women's program to advocate and educate on common issues of concern.

At the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, in Kenya, in 1985, the president of NWAC organized a meeting of Indigenous women present which led to the drafting of a special resolution on indigenous women which was eventually acceded to by 49 states (including Canada, the United States, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and El Salvador). The resolution recognized "that Indigenous women and their families have unique fundamental rights and interests flowing from their occupancy of land in many countries of the world". The resolution documents key areas of human rights abuse against Indigenous women, including forceful relocation, assimilation, poverty, and deprivation. This was a victory of sorts because it is the only international resolution dealing exclusively with the



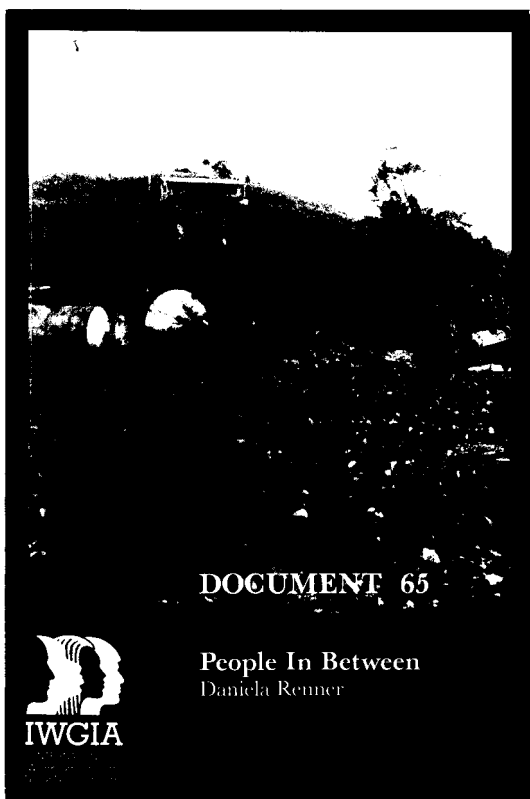


*Canadian indigenous women in rapt attention during workshop at the Convention Photo: NWAC.*

rights of Indigenous women and one of only a few international documents mentioning Indigenous Peoples generally.

At the thirteenth annual general meeting of the NWAC, in Fredericton, New Brunswick, two days were set aside for traditional teaching by women Elders and Spiritual Teachers on the role and responsibilities of women in various Indigenous nations. These two days were prioritized over the pressing “political” concerns of ongoing constitutional reform and possible *Indian Act* revisions as, again, the women see their strength in spirituality and knowing their traditional ways. They view the responsibility as “keepers of the culture” as paramount to any other...a formidable, nevertheless fundamental responsibility, in the struggle to re-establish Indigenous governments and strengthen Indigenous cultures: a task in which women are, by history and necessity, the conscience.

*Mary Ellen Turpel, a Cree, is a lawyer and gives legal assistance to the organization Native Women Association.*



DOCUMENT 65



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#### **Video cassettes**

- No. 1 Volkmar Ziegler and Pierrette Birraux, directors (anthropologist: René Fuerst) - *Indian Summer in Geneva: Indigenous Peoples from the Americas at the United Nations* (50 min. Switzerland, 1985) - Grand Prix of the Indigenous Peoples Film Festival, Caracas 1989.
- No. 2 Peter Elsass, director and anthropologist - *Earth is our mother: Arhuaco in Colombia and Bari in Venezuela* (50 min. Denmark, 1987).
- No. 3 Lode Cafmeyer, director (anthropologist: Gustaaf Verswijver) - *Green Puzzle of Altamira: Kayapo in Brazil and Yaminahua in Peru* (50 min. Belgium, 1989).

#### **Documentos en Castellano**

- No. 1 Ricardo Falla: *Masacre de la Finca San Francisco Huehuetenango, Guatemala* (17 de Julio de 1982). Septiembre 1983.
- No. 2 Robert Barnes: *Pesca de Cachalote en Lembata: Consecuencias de un Proyecto de Desarrollo en una Comunidad Indonesia*. Julio 1984.
- No. 3 Jean Pierre Chaumeil: *Entre el Zoo y la Esclavitud: Los Yagua del Oriente Peruano en su Situación Actual*. Noviembre 1984.
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- No. 7 Pierre Rossel (red.): *Turismo: La Producción de lo Exótico*. Junio 1988.
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### **IWGIA NATIONAL GROUPS:**

Copenhagen: Fiolstraede 10,  
DK-1171 Copenhagen K.  
Denmark

Oslo: pb 20.  
Blindern,  
N-0313 Oslo 3,  
Norway

Göteborg: c/o Institute of Social Anthropology,  
Västra Hamngatan 3,  
S-411 17 Göteborg,  
Sweden

Zürich: c/o Ethnologisches Seminar,  
Freiensteinstrasse 5,  
CH-8032 Zürich,  
Switzerland

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This first volume of “Indigenous Women on the Move” is composed of 9 articles written by indigenous women wherein they have attempted to show their distinct realities in their different areas of the world.

But distinct realities, notwithstanding, and each with their own peculiarities, indigenous women share a common situation, that of being the object of a threefold oppression: the oppression by gender which is shared by all women in a fundamentally patriarchal world, the oppression by class experienced by the rural and urban poor, and finally the ethnic oppression directed at a whole people.

Indigenous women react with differing emphasis against these different types of oppression and in their articles, they explain how they have manifested themselves, how they have interacted, and spearheaded by themselves, how they have organized, have worked actively, how they have fought, how they have established their presence at all levels, in short, how they have been on the move.



**IWGIA**

INTERNATIONAL  
WORK GROUP FOR  
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

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