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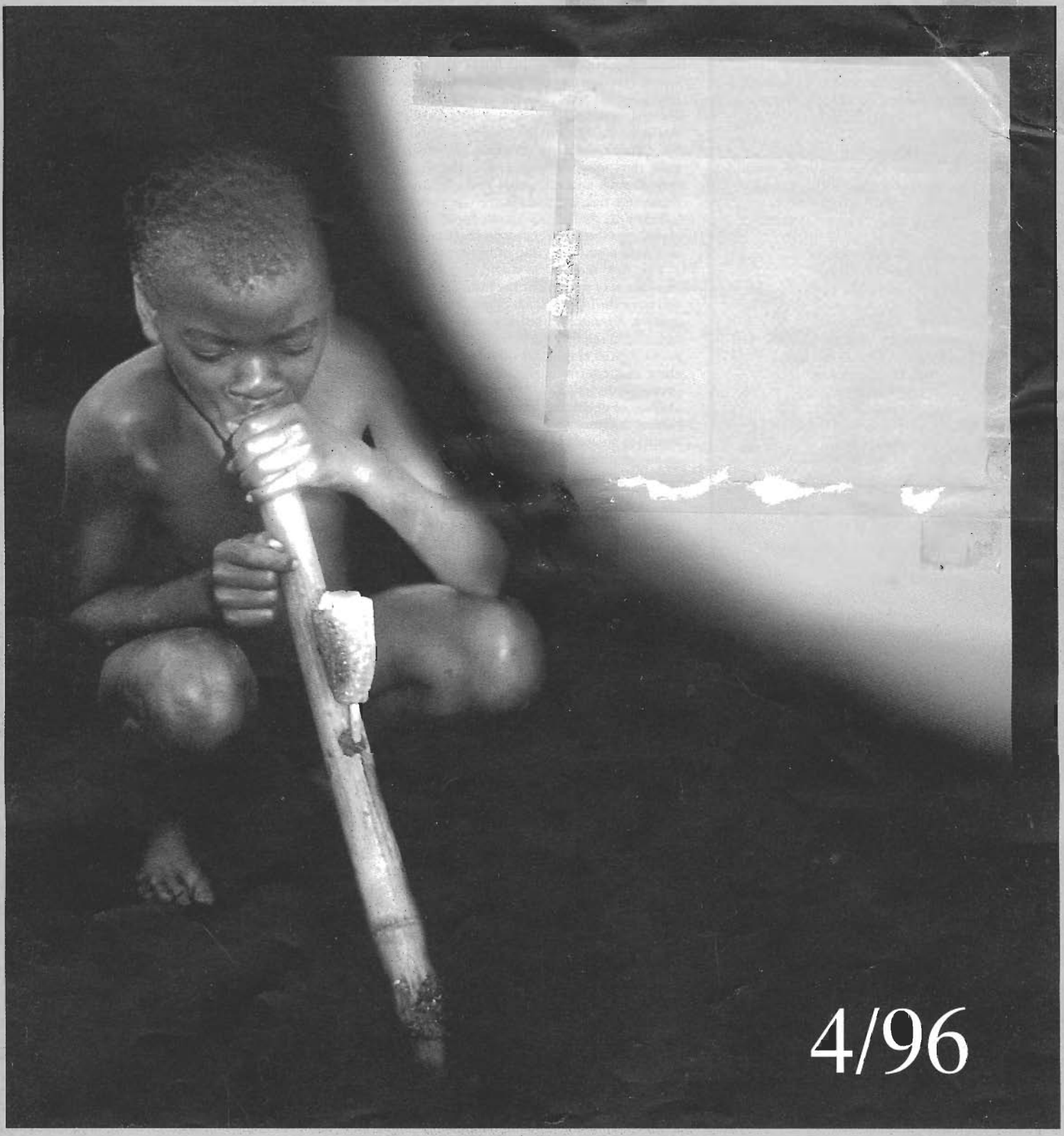

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Cover: *Photo: Justin Kenrick*

Editorial

by Inger Sjørslev

When social scientists theorize about the world of today they often emphasize the aspects of globalization. Not only in, mainly negative, economic terms, but also in terms of cultural hybridity, transculturalism, multiculture and cultural creolization. Emphasis is on the mixture of cultures and the creation of new social forms, the local adaptations to global influences and the different reactions to the overall political and economic forces that rule the world. There is thus nothing new in stating that in this post-colonial world the world is not mapped by isolated, separable and self-sufficient cultures. If ever the world were thus mapped, colonialism transfigured the map to such an extent that quite different paradigms are needed to capture the variety of relationships, the interconnectedness of local and global, and the different forms reactions to mutual interaction and a myriad of influences take.

This new theoretical world map obviously affects the way we look at the indigenous question, and none the least when we look at it in an African context. Admittedly, the images of indigenous Africa found in the three articles in this issue of *Indigenous Affairs* emphasize other aspects of the situation that confronts the peoples concerned: aspects that directly relate to conditions for survival, chances of defending territories, and ways of combatting discrimination on all levels. Yet, in our attempts to create a policy for dealing with the indigenous question in Africa, IWGIA has felt compelled to confront the questions raised by the cultural world situation as it is analysed and described in contemporary social theory. This is not for the sake of the theories, but in order to better understand the situation of the indigenous peoples and to create the best possible strategy for supporting them.

Many good examples of the importance of regarding the indigenous question in Africa in a broad perspective were provided in a seminar held in Copenhagen in November 1996, the purpose of which was to share ideas for the creation of a new regional strategy on Africa. Researchers and experts on Africa were invited, most of them anthropologists, to discuss the issue on the basis of their academic and field work in Africa. The people concerned, the representatives of the indigenous peoples in Africa, did not participate in this meeting although the purpose was also to prepare a conference with indigenous representatives from Africa to discuss the issues.

One of the issues discussed was the role of the state and how it influences processes of indigenisation. Although emphasis was on the state in West Africa, the role and character of the state is of extreme importance for understanding the situation of indigenous peoples all over Africa and indeed in general, and some of the traits that characterize the state in West Africa can be recognized also in other parts of the world. In Africa the state has been characterized as a shadow state, a predatory state, ruled by "the politics of the stomach". State-minority relations are articulated through personal ties, and loyalty to the leader is outside any attachment to regional or other bodies. This type of state is accompanied by a bureaucracy based on corruption. A select few are provided access to the state resources to the exclusion of the majority. Exclusion creates a potential for social violence and the state is too weak to maintain control and prevent disruption of social forms. This is clearly not a pretty picture, and millions of African citizens, indigenous and non-indigenous, suffer from being inhabitants of this type of state. However, in many cases, this is currently the only possible structural form, and the alternative, the dissolution of the state, is a situation that presents an even grimmer picture.

Processes of indigenisation can in an African context be seen in relation to the problems created by this type of state. Processes of indigenisation are understood as a series of claims, processes by which some people choose to create a political strategy to improve their situation, to gain access to resources, or simply to survive, by claiming indigenousness.

The concept of indigenous is thus linked to a dynamic assertion of rights within power relations, rather than a static description of categories. In such cases it can become a powerful and dynamic tool, as was stated at another seminar recently held in Leiden, and at which the paper by Tabapssi F. Timothée included here, was presented. At the same occasion, some criticism was expressed on using the concept of indigenousness to imply groups that live in isolation. The Pygmies, for example, who are the subject of two of the articles in this issue, are engaged in complex relationships with neighbouring groups, both politically, economically and culturally.

Liz Wily writes about a small group of Pygmies: the Abayanda, called the Batwa by outsiders, who are also found in Rwanda, and who in this densely populated area of southwestern Uganda comprise less than two thousand people. They have been forced out of the forest and are now squatters on the lands of others. Being as few as they are, they have come to represent a problem for the Ugandan Forest Park conservation, and this case is a regrettably clear case of an indigenous peoples' clash with the conceptions of nature that imply preservation of wildlife at the expense of the human inhabitants of the forest. Gorillas before Pygmies seems to be the attitude, and Wily states that conservationists or the wider local community are unlikely to accept the allocation of even small plots on the edge of the forest for the use of the Pygmies, as this is seen as a threat to the survival of the gorillas!

Sidsel Saugestad writes about the Khoesan (San and Khoekhoe), called Bushmen by outsiders. In April 1996 they gathered in Cape Town on the occasion of the exhibition *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture*. This exhibition caused much controversy and in many ways exemplified both the complex and problematic relationship between indigenous peoples and the nation state, and between images and reality, history and contemporary representation.

The Bushmen of southern Africa are citizens of six different nation-states: Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with great regional differences that are described in the article, which also reveals how ethnicity is associated with tribalism and seen as an obstacle to national development. The article thus touches upon both the issue of the state in relation to indigenousness and the problem of definition and categorization. As Saugestad writes, "The debate on social categorisation is no abstract academic exercise, but has a bearing on people's place in society and their life chances." She also explicitly discusses the challenges indigenous peoples face in having to learn to master the language and culture of those in power, in order to be able to defend their own ways.

Tabapssi F. Timothée writes about the Pygmies Bakola of Cameroon, whose future is jeopardized by the states' increasing exploitation of the forest areas they inhabit and depend upon. Living as hunters and gatherers, their socio-economic activities

are closely adapted to the forest environment. The present conflict, among other things, arises from the fact that the resources are exploited by other people in the area who maintain a relationship of servitude with the Pygmies. They evidently consider the forest, and even the Pygmies themselves, their property, and whereas the Pygmies have hunted in the forest with the purpose of surviving, and others are now exploiting the resources for commercial purposes.

All these cases clearly show how indigenous people confront basic problems of exploitation of their resources, expulsion from their territories, and exploitation of men and women's bodies as labour supply and women's as sexual objects. However, it also shows how the situation of the indigenous peoples can not be understood in isolation but must be regarded within the total context of relationships with other groups, both in a contemporary and a historical perspective.

When discussing the issue of definition and demarcation of the indigenous, the total picture must thus be kept in mind. There are many cases that show how oppositions and relationships between different groups in Africa are created by historical circumstances, and the ethnic landscape of today must surely be considered in light of its colonial history. At the same time, it must be remembered that although the world of today is often characterized as a post-colonial world, colonialism is not a thing of the past. In many ways it has just found new forms, and when indigenous peoples are concerned, different forms of internal colonization are a central problem affecting their lives.

Indigenous peoples often include a special attachment to land in their self characterization, and there is a lot of reality behind that. However, this does not exclude other groups, who do not call themselves indigenous, and who may not qualify for this term in other respects, from having a special attachment to land, and indigenous groups are not the only ones who may have rightful claims to land and resources that are threatened by commercial interests or state exploitation. The question of which groups have the right to land, forests, and hunting and gathering areas is a question determined by historical circumstances, and indigenous people may sometimes have to, or would be wise to make alliances with other groups in their political strategies for acquiring rights and access to resources.

This relates to the question of how indigenous peoples organise themselves and form networks with other indigenous or marginal groups. At the Copenhagen seminar, one researcher discussed the Twa of Rwanda, who had before the war, which exterminated a large percentage of the Twa population, formed networks with other hunters and gatherers in Central Africa. Their possibilities for organising themselves have after the war become impeded, among other things by the fact that the use of ethnic names is outlawed by the new government. The Twa are, however, struggling to organise themselves and acquire the necessary organisational skills.

Another example of conditions that determine possibilities for and ways of organising is the situation of the Tuaregs, not all of whom, however, chose to define themselves as indigenous. They are internally organised in a hierarchical system, based among other things on the distribution of goods. The fact that they have to a certain extent based their political organisation in relation to the state upon this traditional organisation, plus the fact that they have had to relate to four different states within the last hundred years, have created difficulties for their confrontations with the states. Yet they have by now managed to successfully negotiate with the Mali state, and they have acquired sovereignty in some parts.

In East Africa the picture is characterized by a very large number of NGOs operating in pastoral areas, and in Tanzania alone, twelve different indigenous NGOs are found.

For IWGIA, capacity building with indigenous organisations has always been a major issue, and one of the overall aims of the organisation is to facilitate the creation of networks and co-operation between indigenous groups across state borders and even continents.

The questions of organisation and defining common interests and creating bonds of solidarity among different groups, also relate to the need to analyse processes of indigenisation, and focus more attention on this than on the question of definition and delimitation of indigenousness.

There are many reasons as to why the question of indigenousness is a complicated one. In an African context, indigenous is a term that has different meanings in different contexts. Some people, who qualify as indigenous and who in some circumstances chose to define themselves as such, for example, when taking part in international political work at the UN, identify themselves otherwise in local contexts, and may for instance, as in East Africa, choose to call themselves pastoralists. In some places in East Africa the term indigenous stands for locals in opposition to outsiders. In other contexts it is a derogatory and even prejudicial term. Sometimes warnings are put forward that the term may be misunderstood as implying the kind of essentialist thinking that goes hand in hand with fundamentalist and fascist ideologies.

All these modifications and warnings are important to keep in mind, and in an analytical perspective, it is indeed useful to keep the process of indigenisation as the object of study, instead of operating with pre-defined "authorized" indigenous groups. On the other hand, it is a now well-established fact that the concept of indigenous is in the international political and human rights terminology a political, strategic concept that relates to the need to establish human and cultural rights, to the decolonization process, and to setting right generations of violations of basic individual and collective rights. Who is indigenous and who is not, is not rooted in either genes nor blood nor relationship to land as such. In the analytical conception of indigenousness, the relationship to the nation- state in its present role, to colonial and post-colonial processes, and to the dominant population and non-indigenous groups, are the most important to consider.

The claim to indigenousness by certain groups also has to do with internal characteristics of these, with their subsistence forms, their modes of living, their culture in relation to natural surroundings and, of course, with self-identity. Such groups are considered in the articles in this issue of *Indigenous Affairs*. The Pygmies, the Bushmen and others like the pastoralists of East Africa and the Tuareg nomads of North and West Africa are indigenous, and this is based on self-definition, on modes of subsistence and on the structural relationship with the state.

IWGIA has always had a rather pragmatic approach to the question of definition. First of all, the definitions used in international work, the definition of the ILO, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the definition of the World Bank are sufficient instruments to do the work that is necessary in international and state politics to secure indigenous rights. Secondly, an inflexible and static definition is no advantage and may even be hazardous to the cause. The conception of indigenous as describing a certain type of marginalization is always kept in mind, and also a constant preoccupation that the work for the indigenous cause does not end up supporting ethnic chauvinism. Thus, in the analytical perspective, the term indigenisation and the emphasis on processes that lead to some people defining themselves as indigenous and being thus regarded by others, is to be preferred; and in the political perspective, the fact that indigenous is a term that implies the legitimate struggle for certain rights, is the perspective that must be kept in mind.

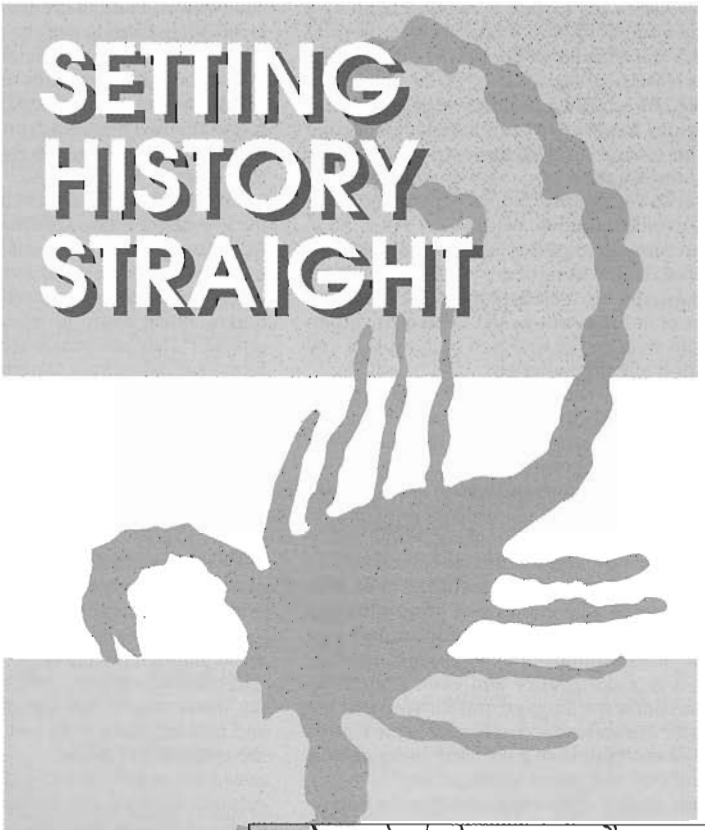
I recently had the opportunity to watch a film about the Pygmies of Zaire, *Les derniers des Babinga* by David-Pierre Fila. In the last image of this moving documentary, the people of the forest sit quietly, attentively and troubled, while the sounds of the all too close bulldozers cutting down the trees are heard in the background. "They are snatching away the sounds of our forest" the Babinga say, and maintain that the forest and the Pygmies are inseparable, and that the forest is the first schooling of the Pygmies.

Cultural hybridity, creolization, multiculture and the local and global in a cultural respect - one may very well argue that all this has nothing to do with the question of indigenousness and the struggle in which indigenous peoples are engaged. And admittedly, the indigenous question is probably a question of capitalism rather than culture, of human rights rather than homogeneity. Yet, when talking about the indigenous peoples' means for defending themselves through organisation, through alliances and international contacts, and through knowledge about the world system that affects their life conditions and futures, there is no escape from talking about the cultural and social world map of today, where questions of self-identification and affirmation of cultural identity are paramount. The collective selfhood must be given back to indigenous peoples, as a contribution to decolonization - a decolonization which also includes the minds of people who have been forced into dependency on missionaries, governments, developers, supporters and a myriad of others who perhaps have good intentions, but who none the less provide a kind of help that has sometimes had very unfortunate consequences for the lives of the people concerned.

In Africa, as elsewhere, indigenous peoples' basic needs are the right to survive, the right to land and resources and the right to fair treatment. The ways of fulfilling these needs can not be found, however, without taking into consideration the whole framework of cultural, social and political dynamics within which indigenous peoples' striving for justice take place. Within this framework, the role of the nation-state, and this should again be strongly emphasized in an African context, is of major importance.

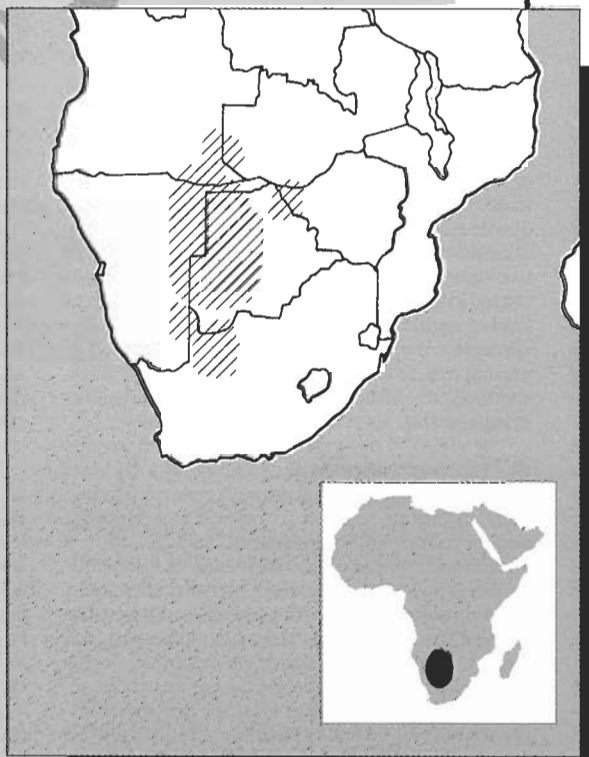
The well-known British expert on African affairs Basil Davidson, in a study of the role of nationalism and the nation-state in Africa, paints a less grim picture of the state than the one presented in the recent IWGIA seminar. He does not conceal the fact, however, that the majority of the population has been excluded from participation in the political processes that formed the African nation-states. On the basis of his analysis, he concludes that "...the ground for hope for those people who can't afford despair, meaning most people as things now stand, lies in one or another mode of the politics of participation. This politics claims to raise a means of defending all those people who live now on the losing side of the existing world system, the poor and the very poor, and offer them a means of survival." This holds for indigenous peoples as well. So far, they have been on the losing side of the world system, but so far, they also represent a cultural and human richness in the world system, a richness which it would be very unwise for the world to ignore. ❑

SETTING HISTORY STRAIGHT



Bushmen Encounters in Cape Town

Southern African Bushmen join in the international debate about indigenous organisations and issues



by Sidsel Saugestad

In 1930 Isaac Schapera, doyen of anthropological research in southern Africa, commented about the Bushmen that "What relentless persecution at the hands of other people have not achieved is being slowly accomplished by disease and racial intermixture." And he concluded: "There seems little doubt that the Bushmen are steadily dying out as a race" (1930: 40).

Schapera should have been in Cape Town in April 1996. One of this century's most representative gatherings of Bushmen took place in and around the South African National Gallery, and proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the Khoisan people (San and Khoekhoe) are still around, and to be reckoned with.[1]

This does not mean that their problems are over. On the contrary, the event that brought them together, and the presentations given at a public forum, provided an overwhelming inventory of these problems: ethnocide and genocide in the past and the less violent but still repressive injustices of the present.

The venue was an exhibition staged at the South African National Gallery entitled *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture*. The exhibition examines the types of relationships that were established between Khoisan communities and the Europeans that came to occupy their land. Using photographs, documents and artifacts, the story is told in appalling detail and summed up in a series of damning adjectives, describing the Bushmen as being "stuffed, flayed, scarred, marked, dispossessed, displayed, exploited, scrutinised, hunted, exposed, measured, and controlled". (Skotnes, ed. 1996: 364-365).

The facts of this history are not very controversial, only extremely sad. The recapitulation of them, however, and the mode of their presentation, causes controversy. While the objective of an event, such as this one, is to raise consciousness and generate new inter-

est in and understanding of the plight of the Khoisan people, it was felt by many that the portrayal of the humiliating past of the Khoisan only serves to perpetuate this humiliation. As one newspaper headline put it, was this "Setting history straight - or another chance to gape?" (Mail & Guardian 19.04.96)

However, irrespective of some serious misgivings concerning this exhibition, the coming together of Bushmen organisations from Namibia, Botswana and South Africa,which was occasioned by this particular event, was part of a process of awareness raising and mobilisation of considerable and more enduring importance.

The type of organisations present on the occasion exemplify an entirely modern concept, addressing not Bushmen issues in isolation, but the complex and problematic *relationship* between indigenous peoples and the nation-state. The first organisation of this kind, the Nyae Nyae Farmer's Cooperative, was started in Namibia some decades ago, while in Botswana the Kuru Development Trust has evolved over the years into a representative development organisation, followed, more recently, by the formation of the First People of the Kalahari (Saugestad 1996a).

However, for South Africa the general impression has been, up to very recently, not very unlike that of Isaac Schapera's. The Bushmen are part of the history, their remnants appear in rock art and in Bleek and Lloyd's recordings, but they are not seen as part of the contemporary scene.

The encounters in Cape Town changed this picture by bringing together a number of groups and issues, showing the diversity in the national contexts and at the same time the similarity of problems experienced. Like many other indigenous peoples, the 100,000 or more Bushmen of southern Africa may - depending on criteria used - be designated one people, but they are citizens of six nations: mainly Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa, with fewer numbers in Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The differences in regional background are important.

Regional differences

***South Africa*:** First encounters between Dutch colonisers and the Khoekhoe (also called Hottentot) semi-nomadic herders of the Cape area, and later encounters with inland hunters and gatherers, called San or Bushmen, rapidly escalated from interaction and exchange into a tenacious appropriation of land, a process of gradual decay, reinforced by disastrous epidemics, diseases and drought. The resulting unequal relationship created a distinct class of people in a position of permanent dependence, cut off from their traditional means of production and livelihood, and equally barred from participating in the emerging, economically dominant, settler society.

The annexation of land was a common feature of all relationships between colonisers and the native peoples of South Africa, but relations with the Khoisan peoples were marked by an attitude of hostility and contempt probably not matched in attitudes to Bantu-speaking peoples, even during the worst periods of apartheid. Records abound of the way they were regarded as ultimate savages, in look and lifestyle. Added to the social, economic and physical onslaught came an extreme linguistic prejudice: from the first contacts, there was apersistent attitude "that the language was utterly bizarre, unpleasant, inarticulate and not human" and further, "that the language was unlearnable". (Traill 1995: 5).

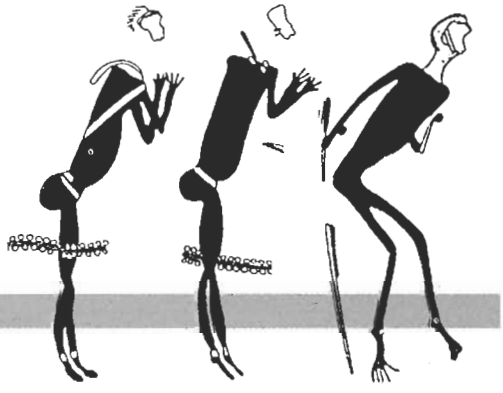
Such attitudes of contempt are documented extensively in the *Miscast* exhibition. Drawing on previously unpublished photographs, documents and exhibits, the systematic extermination of a people is displayed through images of trophy heads, hangings, prison victims and starvation. The excessive European curiosity, seeing the Khoisan as interesting specimens, is a recurring motif.

It may have been a coincidence that the exhibition opened at the same time as the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of South Africa began its hearings, but clearly, the political climate of the new 'Rainbow Nation' invites a reconsideration of previous relationships and, in many ways, the exhibition can be seen as a contribution to such a dialogue. It emerged, however, very much as a white, liberal exercise, displaying and repenting of old misdoings towards 'the other', and as such, a reflection of a particular South African way of reinterpreting the relationship. Whether or not this represents the best way to address the problems of the future will be discussed below.

Namibia: The development in Namibia was in many ways similar to that of South Africa, although luck had it that the apartheid legacy of creating *homelands* led to the identification of some of the traditional land of the Ju/'hoansi as *Bushmanland*. Even if there have been problems after Independence in asserting traditional land rights, and even if this piece of land can only provide a livelihood for a small part of Namibia's estimated 40,000 Bushmen, the symbolic significance of the limited control exercised is considerable.

Another legacy of colonial rule in Namibia is the 4,000 !Xu and Khwe people who worked for the South African Defence force and were flown out of Namibia in the final turmoil of South African occupancy in 1990. Since then, these people have been located in a provisional army tented camp near Kimberley. They make up the largest existing Bushman settlement of any country, most untypical in the way that this settlement was established, but typical indeed in falling outside the regular format of welfare provisions set up by a modern state to care for its inhabitants.

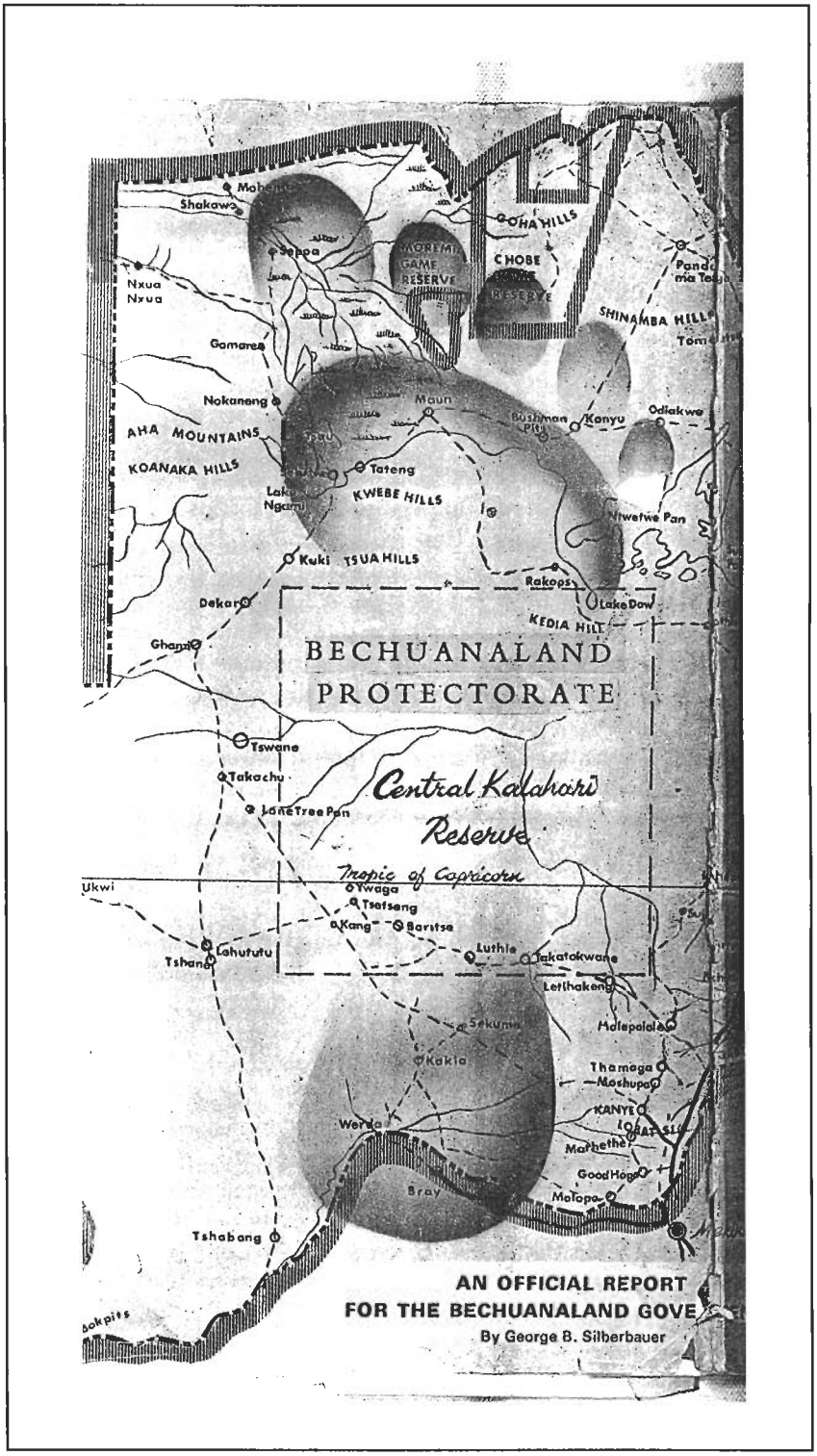
***Botswana*:** Encounters in Botswana were different. Except for some trading expeditions, Botswana never attracted many white colonisers looking for quick



fortunes. In the main, the social structure of Botswana was shaped by the well organised Tswana tribes that moved in from the south and east, most extensively from the early nineteenth century. In the more densely populated southern and eastern parts of the country, the indigenous Bushman population was gradually integrated in a semi-feudal relationship, while the dry savanna expanses of Kgalagadi (the great thirstland) were conquered as late as this century, to a large extent following improved borehole technologies opening up new expanses for cattle ranching.

At Independence in 1966, Botswana, like many other African nations, had to address the problem of nation-building. The major project was to create a unified and unitary, nation-state, trying to realize a western concept of nationalism in a context of new African states with totally artificial boundaries. In this process, ethnicity was associated with tribalism and was seen as an obstacle to national development. The constitution adopted guaranteed the "Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual...whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex", which in the 1960s, as a neighbouring state to apartheid South Africa, was a courageous and visionary statement. It was, however, combined with a political rhetoric overlooking the *de facto* cultural diversity of the nation.

In order to establish a new political entity (the state) and invest it with meaning, some of the the most persuasive cultural symbols available were those associated with precisely those tribal or ethnic contexts that were feared to convey a divisive message. In a situation which was perceived as a choice between unity or diversity, the solution, in Botswana's case, has been to over-communicate an image of a non-racial, non-ethnic homogenous state. In effect, this has meant that the culture and language of the numerically dominant Tswana people have achieved hegemony and become the dominant symbol for Botswana as a nation. In Botswana, the moral force behind this negation of cultural diversity has probably been a major obstacle for any Bushman emancipation. Basarwa does simply not exist as a category in official documents and discourse. And the irony of the situation is that this professed liberal and non-discriminatory negation of the distinct culture of the Basarwa, has a damaging effect on their self-image and their potential for self-realisation, very similar to the blatant discrimination of the apartheid system further south.



Common heritage and diversity in adaptation

There is no such thing as one common and unified 'Bushman culture' (see Barnard 1992), so there are some ontological problems implied in referring to them as 'one people'. Communality was to a large extent *ascribed* to them by white explorers, later by scientists, according to such unifying features as physical type, language and hunting-gathering as mode of adaptation.

We may well ask the relevance of such criteria for the contemporary situation. Modern theories of ethnicity and identity formation recognise the subjective and eclectic nature of selecting criteria for self-ascription: there is almost no limit to the

criteria that may be used to signify (a) communality within a group, and (b) its contrasts to others. Among relevant diacritica may certainly be physical traits, language and mode of adaptation (often a stated 'tradition' only imperfectly reflected in contemporary practices), but there is noobjective way of deciding their relative importance. There is a growing indigenous insistence, globally, that ethnic identity and status should be by self-ascription and no longer be determined by the ascription by others.

However, in the case of the Bushmen it has so far been the characteristics imputed to them, rather than their own preferences, that have tended to define their position in the social landscape. So let us briefly consider their relevance: *Physical type* was an easy yardstick in early encounters, as the typical Bushman and -woman stood out as distinctly smaller and lighter in skin tone than the Bantu, with well-defined facial features. The traits are still there, but intermarriage has blurred the distinctions and their relevance as ethnic markers.

All local *languages* in southern Africa belong to either the Bantu or the Khoisan language groups, and the difference in syntax, grammar and phonetics between these two language groups far exceeds any internal differences between languages in each group. A substantial number of Khoisan languages have disappeared in South Africa, and it is not even known exactly how many languages are left. In many places in Botswana the majority language is taking over, as happened earlier in South Africa. However, because of the abiding importance of identification with a language for a person's feeling of identity and belonging, there are strong indications that language (even a language spoken by parents or grandparents) remains an important criterion for self-ascription. The close links between language groups and social groups is also illustrated by the way language names are used to label communities who may no longer speak that language.

Finally, *hunting and gathering* have commonly been perceived to be a defining feature of 'the Bushmen'. But not all Bushmen are - or were - hunters and gatherers. Recent research into this mode of adaptation has shown the elegance, adaptability and ingenuity of the knowledge system sustaining it. However, a focus on foraging has tended to conceal other modes of adaptation, such as the herding of small stock and cattle among Khoekhoe speaking people (Hottentots), the fishing along the Cape coast in the south and on the Okavango in the north and trade and exchange across the continent. And, more importantly, a concentration on 'traditional' hunting and gathering directs the attention away from the most salient fact of the contemporary situation: that most Bushmen are landless, either farmworkers or unemployed, periodically depending on welfare and handouts (particularly in Botswana), and permanently at the bottom of a stratified society with a developing modern market economy.

A shared experience of being indigenous

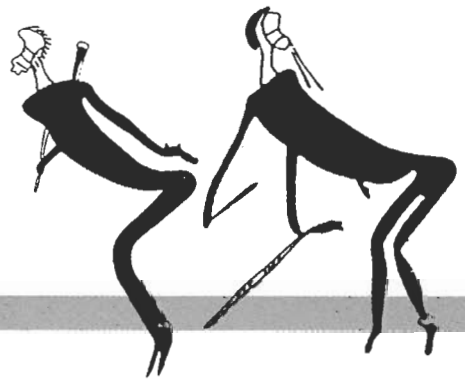
Today, historically based stereotypes merge with contemporary social and economic issues. In the plurality of criteria for categorisation and internal differentiation, some combinationsappear to be more pervasive than others. The debate on social categorisation is no abstract academic exercise, but has a bearing on people's place in society and their life chances.

In Botswana this debate is about *legitimacy*: it is not legitimate to identify people on the basis of race, colour, creed, and so on. In my analysis of the Remote Area Development Programme in Botswana (Saugestad 1996b), I have pointed out the unfortunate effect on the target group of being defined by negative socio-economic criteria, underscoring what they *do not* possess (living *outside* villages, *not* speaking Setswana, *lacking* access to water, land, livestock, and *not having* political organisation), rather than in terms of the cultural qualifications they actually possess (exceptional knowledge of nature, an egalitarian and caring social organisation, rich oral traditions, etc.). Thus, a policy of empowerment is hampered.

In South Africa a similar debate is about *authenticity*. The South African discourse distinguishes between Khoekhoe and San, the latter being perceived as the authentic (but largely extinct) Bushmen, while the descendants of the Khoekhoe speaking hunters and herders, presently known as Nama and Griqua, are considered less typical, since at some period of the past they were in possession of some livestock. Linguistically, however, Nama is close to Naro, one of the most widely used languages in Botswana, and close also to G/wi, spoken by the 'archetypal' Bushmen of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. (Griqua was as well, but this language has now more or less disappeared).

The Griqua make up a well organised and vocal group, members of which went to Geneva to present their case to the Human Rights Commission in 1995. Later that year they handed over a memorandum to Nelson Mandela, calling on the government to implement measures to address Griqua "vulnerability as an indigenous minority" and asking for representation of traditional leadership at central, provincial and local government levels. A recognition as indigenous in terms of The United Nations Human Rights codification raises large and complex questions in the South African context, which can not adequately be dealt with here. The point to note is that the issue is being tabled. Predictably, counter-arguments are that the Griqua are not authentic Bushmen, not even authentic Hottentots, but of mixed origin, having traded with the Boers and taken over their language and religion about two centuries ago.

So, which criteria should be made relevant today? One easy answer is that this is not for the outsider to say. Another answer is to look less to the links to the past and more to the shared expe-



rience of being indigenous in the contemporary situation.

Members of the new indigenous organisations, which are a global phenomenon, have two things in common: the lived experience of being disadvantaged compared to a national majority and the recognition that this disadvantage is related to the structural position of being indigenous. In the new movements, old characteristics and new dimensions blend. The common problems of being indigenous are experienced in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, in much the same way as they are in New Zealand, Australia, Scandinavia, and a great many other places. The common criteria of indigenous peoples are the same: numerical minority, non-dominance, i.e. no influence on the policy formulation of the respective nation-states, and a relationship to land that is not reflected in the regulations for land use as laid down by the nation-states. At a conference on indigenous peoples in Africa, hosted by IWGIA in Copenhagen in 1993, this was made clear:

Every one of the presentations made to the conference testified to the discriminatory treatment accorded indigenous people by the dominating populations in the countries... Indigenous identity was an experienced social reality whether consciously acknowledged and made part of public and political discourse or not. (Veber et al. 1993)

A combination of attitudes characterises this situation: on the whole a disparaging attitude from the majority, often combined with discrimination and/or stigmatisation, acted out in interaction even if not upheld in any formal laws or regulations. The premises for interaction are laid down by the majority, and the knowledge and competence of the indigenous people are not considered as qualifications either within the education system, working life, or in the political system.

The result is a familiar indigenous peoples' syndrome with social and geographic marginality accompanying a disproportionate frequency of social evils: poverty and powerlessness, school drop-out, alcoholism and violence, apathy and despair.

Negotiating their presence

The new wave of indigenous peoples' movements is based on a recognition of the common nature of these problems. In this situation, the staging of the *Miscast* exhibition served as a convenient backdrop for various groups to present themselves by commenting on - and criticising - the exhibition. For example, the Griqua National Conference criticised the lack of consultation with organisations before the exhibition and what they saw as a "dehumanised portrayal" of the Khoisan:

We welcome all attempts to help expose the genocidally devastating colonial impact on the Khoisan...but we are saddened that non-indigenous institutions persist in hijacking and exposing our past for their own absolution' said their representative, Mansell Upham. "Nothing is being done to actually address or redress the horrific historic imbalances that continue to exist and...we look forward to the day when non-indigenous institutions will actively and constructively assist in ending the marginalisation of the First Nations of Southern Africa.[2]

The !Hurikamma Cultural Movement also condemned the exhibition:

We are sick and tired of naked brown people being exposed to the curious glances ofrich whites in search of dinner-table conversation. At the exhibition we were exposed to yet another attempt to treat brown people as objects. The exhibition does nothing to oppose the forces which tried, and are still trying to conquer the Khoisan. Instead it is yet another symbol of our status as conquered people.

Other groups took a more accepting attitude. The Khoisan Representative Council (KRC), representing Namas, Korannas, and other San groups in the Northern Province, said that the exhibition might play an important role in the "awakening" of Khoisan nationalism.

"We may be endangered, but we are not yet extinct" said KRC representative Martin Engelbrecht.

Whites taught us to regard ourselves as inferior, to deny our Khoisan legacy, but we are claiming it back again. Because it will be impossible for the government to restore to all Khoisan people what they have lost, we believe the best way to resettle Khoisan descendants is to do so mentally - to restore to them a pride in their past.

A question of dignity

How does one restore "a pride in the past"? Is the best way to expose the humiliation? May the showing of the misdeeds of the past produce a sort of catharsis for those associated with the victims - looking at the evil and getting over it, or does this perpetuate an unequal relationship?

One of the devices of the exhibition was to cover the entire floor of one room with assorted pictures and texts. Paul de Wet, representing the Namas in the Richtersveld, RSA, spoke about the feelings of shame and humiliation that this aroused: "They stole my forefathers and put their faces on paper and now I have to walk on those faces on the floor."

Hunter Sixpence and Selinah Magu, both from Kuru Development Trust, reported on some of the mixed feelings among the Khwe visitors: "Although we are shocked and it is painful, we think it is good that people should see it. It strengthens our young people to stand up. This should never happen again". The opposite view was also expressed: "In the future, when children see a Bushman, they will think about us in this bad way that we have been displayed in this exhibition. This is a big insult to us."

As part of this wider debate - on the politics of culture - the Griquas are presently advocating a matter of consider-

able symbolic significance: they ask for the return of the remains of Saartjie Baartman. The unfortunate woman, endowed with a rather sizable protruding backside, was taken to Europe, exhibited naked in London and Paris, and died in 1815 from syphilis. The Musée de l'Homme keeps a plaster caste of her body (no longer on display) and some of her body parts, but has so far refused to return the remains. The return of Baartman's remains has become a rallying-point for the Griqua, who see the issue asemblematic of the subjugation and loss of identity suffered by the Khoisan people under colonialism. Of all the people in South Africa who are of Khoisan descent, the Griqua most strongly assert this identity and trace their ancestry back to pre-colonial times (Mail & Guardian 15 December 1995).

Facing the future

Bringing the organisations together for what was called a 'Public Forum' on the day after the official opening may have been a politically correct afterthought, but it was nevertheless a most valuable event. A panel of speakers had been invited to prepare statements, others spoke from the floor.

Kamana Phetso, of the Kuru Development Trust, Botswana, looked back to a decade of development efforts and forward to what needs to be done. Kuru has been running development programmes focusing on culture, history and art, in addition to pre-school traing programmes and agricultural programmes. The problems have been many, and they have been thoroughly analyzed: problems to develop leadership in the light of jealousy; the need to maintain transparency as the organisation has grown; alcoholism; and dependency because too much assistance has been provided for free. The plan now is to pursue development on two levels: to support community based development activities in settlements/villages in the district, and to transform Kuru into a peoples' development support organisation for all communities.

Kipi George, from the Caprivi Region, Namibia, presented the emerging Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA). This is being set up as a regional networking umbrella organisation with the objective of linking the San of all countries of the region, through their representative national organisations. On the need for such an organisation, Kipi George commented:

> *The government of our fathers had its office under a tree. That was the place where we discussed matters, made decisions and what others may call politics today. We continued discussion under such wonderful shade-tree-offices for too long. We did not take into consideration that other people, who had come to share our land, discussed and made decisions as well. Still today, our voices are not very loud and seldom heard. Without appropriate organisations,* he said, *we would mostly still discuss where there are only trees to listen to us.*

Other speakers presented local issues: Sophia Jacob from Aminus Corridor 17 in Namibia shared some experiences from a joint venture between a !Xo community and a tourism company, and a representative from the Kagga Kamma Private Game Reserve described this as a place where he and his people worked while still looking for land that could be their own. Reverend Mario Mahongo, representing the !Xu and Khwe, stressed theimportance of this meeting bringing so many groups together and the need "for the indigenous movements of southern Africa to address the whole question of colonialism and cultural dispossession". At the official opening held the day before, /'Angn!ao /'Un, charismatic chairman of the Nyae Nyae Farmers Co-operative of Namibia, gave the opening speech declaring "We do not want to be slaves again on our own land".

Speakers at the forum represented a range of organisations, from well established and registered trusts to nascent community based movements. It is in the very nature of the process reported on here that some of these organisations will disappear, and new ones will certainly appear. Lines of alliance are slowly forming, still shifting. The shared experience is increasingly established as a common ground. And as Sixpence concluded: "There must be a next exhibition that will show our STRUGGLE OF TODAY".

Going to Geneva

One group was not present in Cape Town, but very much so in the newspaper headlines at about the same time. John Hardbattle and Roy Sesana, of The First People of the Kalahari, brought the perceived threat of expulsion from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to the United Nations's Commission for Human Rights in Geneva. The case has been a latent issue in Botswana for many years, and concerns the alleged clash of interest between the remaining local inhabitants and the state's desire to promote mining and tourism in the Kalahari. The government argues along welfare lines, that facilities can not be provided to people living as scattered as in the Central Kalahari; while at the same time there is a very clear and well documented fear among many of the people living in the Reserve that the government will withdraw the few services provided, and eventually remove them altogether.

Taking the case to Geneva showed the close interrelationship between national issues and the international network. By going to Geneva, local organisations are benefitting from what their indigenous 'sisters and brothers' have achieved by persistent lobbying, in the form of international conventions (ILO) and declarations (UN).

The most immediate crisis surrounding the Central Kalahari Game Reserve now seems to be resolved. By the end of

May, the District Commissioner of Ghanzi gave assurances to ambassadors from Denmark, Norway, the USA and the British High Commissioner, that the Botswana authorities had no intention of forcibly removing any inhabitants from the Reserve, and that the basic necessities would continue to be provided both on and off the Reserve.

International support given to the First People of the Kalahari on this issue (in USA and Europe) has been overwhelming, but not unproblematic. The price organisations like theFirst People of the Kalahari have to pay by appealing to the international community is criticism locally for not following laid down procedures and trying to work through the regular political system. However, as all indigenous advocates know, this is a case of "Damned if you do and damned if you don't". Any democratic government, and that of Botswana is no exception, will ignore requests from small, controversial and marginal organisations with no recognised place within the political structure, as long as there are no political repercussions.

Prospects and problems

A claim of aboriginality is a contentious issue in any country, but especially so in Africa. The indigenous organisations in southern Africa are facing considerable internal and external problems. Internally, they are dispersed in six nations with the resulting problems of logistics across international boundaries, language borders, long distances to travel, little funds for transport, and most settlements beyond the reach of telephone. Having for centuries experienced the losing out in a struggle with an expanding nation-state, has left many individuals discouraged and demoralised. All organisations are in an early stage of evolution, where the need for contact and consolidation between the dispersed groups is the overriding concern. Once this process has gone a bit further, new internal divisions, advocating e.g. 'Pluralist' versus 'Integrationist' ideologies and strategies, (Paine 1991), will predictably come up.

The choice of strategies will depend much on how the most basic challenge for these organisations is handled: how to establish a new definition of the relationship to the nation-states in which they are citizens. The aim is to be recognised as legitimate representatives and partners in complementary negotiations. No government has willingly welcomed the establishment of indigenous organisations, which fit only uneasily into existing orderly systems; although most nations find, once such organisations are in place, that they make a vital contribution to the general democratic process. The basic needs are clear enough: recognised rights, access to and control over land, and the opportunity to make a fair living.

The reaction so far from the respective governments of southern Africa has been at best one of grudging acceptance - being permissive more than proactive.

Popular stereotypes about the Bushmen as "The Harmless People" seem to be an added obstacle to gaining recognition. When Griqua legal representative Mansell Upham uses legal jargon, or John Hardbattle hits the headlines of the *Washington Post*, they are equally blamed for not being authentic and typical. True, the 'appropriate' Bushman way of bringing forward an argument is by protracted talks with emphasis on consultation and consensus, no matter how long this might take; but, as Kipi George wryly observed, to arguein this manner easily leaves only the trees as listeners. The inevitable, ironic conclusion made by indigenous organisations worldwide is that, in order to defend the values inherent in one's own culture, one must be conversant in the language and culture of those in power. Irrespective of any rhetoric of equality, the onus is always on the minority to cross the divide, to adapt.

These kinds of problems, as they are now being encountered by indigenous organisations in southern Africa, are familiar from the perspective of western democracies, but with one noticeable difference. While the protracted struggle undertaken by the Saami, the Inuit and Indians, the Maori and Aborigines, goes back for many decades, the speed with which the political landscape in southern Africa is changing, is astounding. The problem for the emerging leaders now is not how to join the 'international jet set' of indigenous peoples, but how to transform those international linkages back to 'old fashioned' grass roots mobilisation. It has been a strength of the international movement all along that the process has worked both ways: local and national organisations have worked out an understanding in international fora, which in turn has provided moral and often also practical support in individual national cases. The challenge ahead is to keep the momentum from Cape Town, from Geneva, and bring it back to all those people that need so much to be given a voice, and to ensure that their voices be heard.

Notes

1. A note about terminology. All reputable works on the Bushmen include a discussion of which term is the most appropriate to use (Bushman, Khoisan, San, Basarwa), but so far this debate has tried to decide which has (the least) derogatory connotations according to the etymological and historical origin of the different terms. My position is that any term used to express negative attitudes to a group will take on a negative connotation. In this respect, none of the terms is better or worse than the other, and I use them all.

No single term of self-reference exists, but the Naro (Central Khoisan) word 'Khwe' or 'Kwe' (meaning person) is presently a very strong candidate for becoming such a unifying term. The choice of label is not irrelevant, but the debate will need to run its course before a consensus on these issues can be reached.

2. Quotes without references are taken from handouts given during the forum, and from my own fieldnotes.

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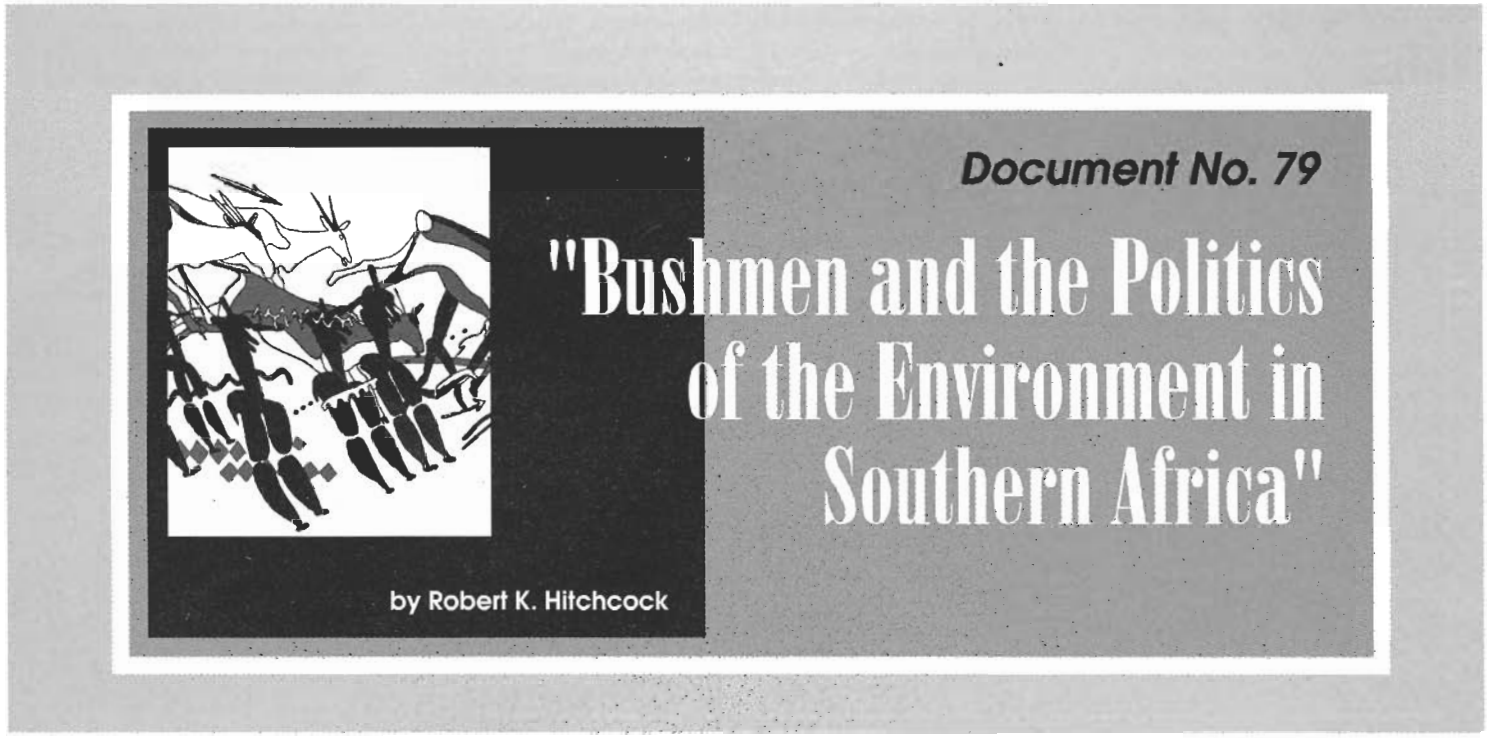
The Indigenous World 1995-96 ERRATA

IWGIA wants to draw attention to a very unfortunate error on page 189 of the latest edition of our yearbook, **The Indigenous World 1995-96.** In the very last paragraph of that page reference is made to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, followed by an acronym (NPMHR). The acronym should rightly be NSCN. We apologize for any inconvenience this mistake may have had, and want to stress that the NPMHR - which stands for Naga Peoples´ Movement for Human Rights `- has no relation whatsoever with the afore mentioned Council.



Obituary:

Komstha and John Hardbattle of the N/oakwe

Photo: Paul Weinberg

John Hardbattle

At the start of November 1996, Kgeikani Kweni (First Peoples of Kalahari), whose headquarters are in Botswana, lost two of its founding members: Komstha and John Hardbattle.

The passing away of these two prominent leaders is of great significance for this first indigenous political organisation of the Kalahari. Since its start in April 1992, the organisation has lost five of its founding members, leaving only Roy Sesana and Aron Johannes. At the board meeting last November, a new leadership was elected, with Roy Sesana becoming president. Aron Johannes continues as director of the awareness building programme.

Komstha, of the Tsaukwe, settled at the D'kar missionary station at the end of the 1970s and later became an important contributor to the creation of the Christian self-development fund, Kuru, in D'kar during the mid-eighties. In 1992, Komstha was part of a N/oakwe delegation invited to "Seminar of the Botswana Society" to discuss sustainable development in the Kalahari. While there, Komstha began his speech with the following words which are cited here as the words which mark the change in the Government of Botswana's policies as concerns the N/oakwe (the san): "Botswana has been moving forward for 26 years, but we, the N/oakwe, the red people, have gone backwards." He then continued stating that the N/oakwe should control their own resources, that they do not want to beg anymore. Please help us. They want space for themselves, to be able to help themselves. These words gave a boost to the organisations which had only just been created the week before.

At the beginning of 1992, Komstha went to see his nephew, John Hardbattle, and asked him to help te N/oakwe. He felt it was time that the red people gained a voice. John Hardbattle agreed and within only a few weeks the organisation achieved its goal: the invitation to the aforementioned seminar. Hardbattle acted as interpreter and translated the words of the N/oakwe to an English that was as impressive and moving as the original speech. Komstha was president of the board of Kgeikani Kweni when he passed away.

John Hardbattle's mother was N/oakwe and his father English. Although they all lived together on his father's ranch, John and his two sisters and one brother grew up with his N/oakwe grandmother, according to N/oakwe custom. John's father died during his childhood and the old order came to an end. The racist remarks of the whites penetrated the N/oakwe lands of the colonial Protectorate of Bechuanalandia. Aware of this, his father had arranged to send his children to England in order to provide them with the opportunity to be educated and have a free life. During his last years, his father bitterly fought for some of the N/oakwe land to be reserved for the town, but he died before he was able to achieve this. John inherited his strong sense of engagement for his people as much from his father as from his mother. This was seen when he returned to Botswana at the beginning of the 1970s to take control of the administration of his father's land. Around 1980, he participated in the creation of a craft production centre which has now become Gantsi Craft, an enterprise directed towards the viability of the N/oakwe through the production of crafts. Over the years it has become more and more successful.

The founding of Kgeikani Kweni (First Peoples of Kalahari) changed John Hardbattle's life. Since then he has dedicated himself to the task of helping the N/oakwe in their struggle for recognition as indigenous people and for the recognition of their rights. In the following years he made contact with other indigenous organisation and with the UN subcommittee on indigenous rights and advanced the possibility that the N/oakwe gain their own voice in the international community. He participated in and spoke at conferences andmeetings about human rights, both in Botswana and abroad. His education provided him with the opportunity to bridge the cultural gap between two culture: Western civilisation and the N/oakwe's culture. At the end of his life he was arduously fighting to obtain the recognition of his people through the creation of a national council which could act as negotiator with the Botswana Government in order to obtain territorial, cultural and religious rights for the N/oakwe. His last task was to try to safeguard the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, originally planned as a reserve area for the N/oakwe, for the people who live there and impede the 1986 governmental decision threatening to expel them. He passed away during this struggle. His loss is a great weight for the people because they are now without a leader who can combine the understanding of two very different cultures.

For us who knew him, he was not just a political leader, but also a storyteller and an eminent expert who was knowledgeable in all aspects of the N/oakwe culture. He was a warm and friendly person with an incurable sense of humour.

With the deaths of Komstha and John Katé Hardbattle, IWGIA has lost two invaluable friends and their collaboration in all efforts to recover indigenous peoples' rights and I have lost two close friends. The two N/oakwe leaders took the crucial steps to remove the cloak of invisibility which had been enshrouding the N/oakwe since Botswana's independence in 1966. Thanks to them, issues concerning the N/oakwe reached the forefront of Botswana's political agenda. Their efforts make it possible and of significance that others in Botswana come forward and support their interests. Hopefully, they will be successful.

Komstha passed away on 5 November 1996, at the age of 65.
John Hardbattle passed away on 12 November, at the age of 51. ❑

Focus on Hunter-Gatherers of Equatorial Africa

Human Rights and Development Challenges

by Diana Vinding and Espen Waehle

In Equatorial Africa there are a number of groups who are, or have been, somehow basing their subsistence on hunting and gathering. An international Colloquium in Leiden, October 1996 focused on the best known category of such hunter-gatherers: the so-called *Pygmies*. The event was organised by the Research School CNWS, School for Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden University and brought together some 50 persons, and 28 papers were presented (a publication is planned). Apart from four African researchers from Cameroon, the majority of the participants were European, Japanese and American researchers. Two *Twa* representatives who had been invited, were not able to attend possibly due to the present problems in the Great Lakes Region.

As a research conference, the papers ranged from detailed case studies of Pygmies settling in villages to musicological studies, language and infant care. Here we will focus on the papers and the discussions relating to human rights and development challenges in Equatorial Africa.

The Colloquium centred around Pygmies of Cameroon, and to a lesser extent Zaire, Gabon, Central African Republic, Uganda and Congo. The reason why Cameroon was in focus was probably due to the fact that the organisers were all engaged in a large research programme on environmental issues -*Tropenbosh*- financed by the Dutch Foreign Ministry, which involves the *Bakola* Pygmies in the south-western part of the country. The Bakola are the largest group (40,000). The other groups are the *Bangyeli* in the south east, the *Baka* in the south and the east, and the *Madzan* in the western central part totalling just over 30,000. The estimates of the total population of Pygmies in Central Africa ranges from 150,000 to 250,000. Such groups are found both in the rain forest and on the savannah in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, Zaire, Angola, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The regional bias of the Colloquium was commented upon, and the conclusion was that there is a definite need to broaden the scope to include all the groups in the area in future discussions. There is not only a need to broaden the regional perspective as such, but also to engage representatives of Pygmy communities and open up for their voice in the discussions.

In a presentation with a regional outlook, James Woodburn discussed two dimensions: the need to challenge local and national discrimination of the Pygmies and issues relating to land rights. He challenged researchers to present papers and opinions on current issues and on the future, not merely looking at the past! In the whole of Equatorial Africa we find both explicit negative stereotypes of the Pygmies, a range of examples of denial of rights and different modes of segregation between the Pygmies and other groups of the society. The reasons for discrimination may be found in factors such as: a) political weakness (there are as yet few organisations among these groups); b) they appear impoverished (which is not correct) and are as such linked to impoverished parts of the dominant society; c) they are linked with the bush and the forest and the wild animals and seen as threatening and d) as these groups are relatively unconstrained in their relations with others, they are seen as childlike and in need of paternal authority. Numerically and po-

litically they are weak, and yet seem to pose a threat to the more powerful groups of the society, possibly because they are seen as a mystical danger. Furthermore, the status of the so-called Pygmies is ambiguous, a range of positive relations to the neighbouring groups also occur. On the national level the Pygmies are viewed as embarrassingly backward sections of the population who need to be brought in line with the modernising nature of national society.

Woodburn also suggested that the notion of the hunter-gatherers as being the original inhabitants of the land (a view that is generally shared by the hunter-gatherers themselves as well as their neighbours) should be used in their struggle for land rights and other forms of self-determination. Dorothy Jackson of the World Rainforest Movement had a short intervention informing about some of the current threatening macro-developments about to take place in the region (logging operations, World Bank funded infrastructure projects, etc.) urging the participants of the Colloquium to provide information and collaborate with the WRM.

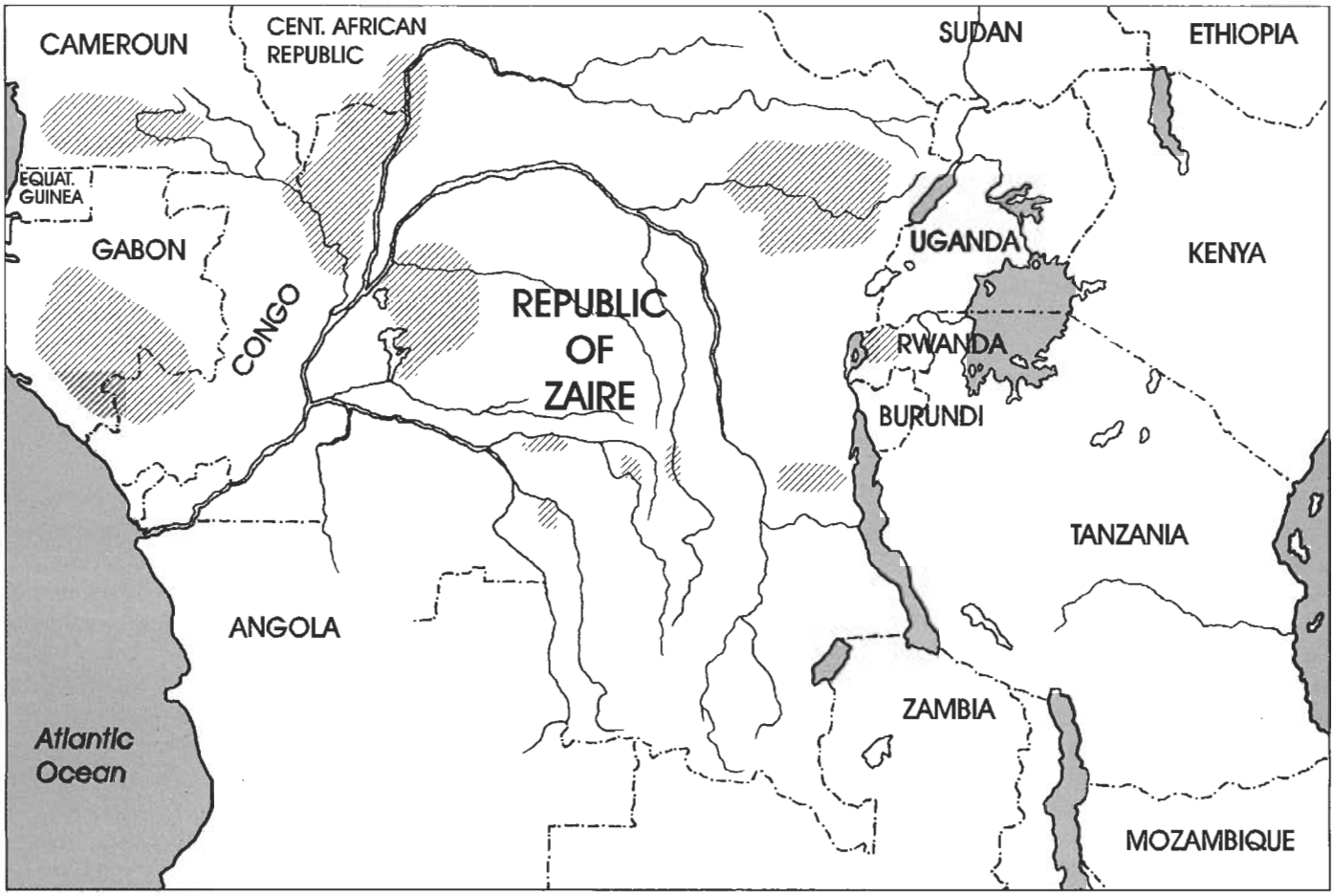
Shortly before the Colloquium, IWGIA and others published the French edition (English edition in 1995) on the fate of the Twa of Rwanda in the Rwandan holocaust of 1994 and the following crisis. The Twa people compose only some 0.2-0.4% of the total population of Rwanda, yet they suffered losses of a dramatic scale. The report on the Twa estimates that as many as 30% of the Twa died or were killed in the massacres following the 1994 war; in addition some 30% had to flee the country (some 14% or up to 1 million of the total population of Rwanda were killed, the majority of those killed being *Tutsi*). Espen Weahle used the two editions of the report by Jerome Lewis and Judy Knight of the World Rainforest Movement to launch a discussion on working with indigenous issues in Equatorial Africa. Since 1992, IWGIA has started a process of further involvement in indigenous affairs in Africa. Due to the specific historical and colonial/post-colonial situation in Africa, a debate on definitions and criteria has been initiated. World-wide indigenous peoples have insisted on the right to self-definition: indigenous peoples share a history based on an understanding of territory and identity. In other words 'indigenousness' is by now often regarded as a type of self consciousness or even political consciousness which comes about as groups have experienced invasion of their territories, plundering of resources, undermining of their culture and a devaluation of their political and legal systems. As more African organisations and groups apply the term indigenous peoples to themselves, they address an unfinished de-colonisation process which solved the problems of some groups at the expense of others. Such recent definitions contrast with earlier understandings entailing that indigenous was synonymous with first-comer or aboriginal. The first-comer definition has earlier implied that indigenous peoples in Africa, either were groups like the Bushmen and the Pygmies - or just about every group of African origin. In the first example, the issue of indigenousness was regarded to be marginal on the African scene, in the second example the relevance of the category vanished with national liberation.

The comments to a range of papers during the conference and a final panel debate brought out a number of interesting topics for discussion.

It was apparent that several participants were critical of many development NGOs, natural resource management projects, etc. considering that interventions only addressed the Pygmies and not their neighbouring farmers. This was partly related to a general romantic attitude to Pygmy populations, seeing them as isolated, pristine un-touched peoples of the rain forest (neither is correct, moreover many of the Pygmy groups live in a savannah environment). The most striking characteristic of the Central African hunter-gatherers is not necessarily that they subsist by some special means or that they represent the only true forest peoples, but that they are all involved in elaborate interrelations with their neighbours. These relationships to a varying degree consist of combinations of economic, political, religious and cultural exchanges. Complex interdependencies stand out as the hallmark of adaptation in the forests and savannah of Equatorial Africa. To drive a wedge between hunter-gatherers and their immediate neighbours by claiming some special status (like 'indigenousness', true forest guardians, etc.) for one at the expense of the other would be very detrimental to existing relationships. If, on the other hand the concept is linked to a dynamic assertion of rights within power relations, rather than a static description of categories, it was argued that the concept could become a powerful and dynamic tool.

The relative lack of organisations for self-development and promoting of rights was also discussed. In Rwanda, the ADBR and APB have now united as CAURWA and in Cameroon and Zaire a few initiatives have emerged. In the Colloquium, reference was made to CODE BABIK among the Bakola in Cameroon, which was founded less than a year ago and is supported in terms of capacity building by the SAILD/APE (Support Service to Grassroots initiatives of Development/ Pygmies' Self Promotion in their Environment), an Austrian funded NGO that is closing its operations by the end of 1996. Whether CODE BABIK will be sustainable by then is an open question.

Several participants mentioned the elusiveness of the Pygmies, the way they avoid confrontation, the egalitarian nature of their societies, etc., as explaining why it may be difficult for them to organise. One speaker, however, Maryvonne Bretin Winkelmolen from INADES-Formation Cameroon- maintained that it may have to do with the approach NGOs have taken hitherto. Her department, Research Support Training (RST), for example, has been successful in organising a self-diagnosis survey among the Pygmies, conducted by themselves. At a following "debriefing" meeting more than 100 Pygmies discussed for more than 5 hours the data gathered by the survey, expressing their views, hopes and needs. RST centres its activities on marginalised population groups of the tropical forests, mainly the Pygmies. Although INADES was founded by the Jesuits, it maintains a clear distinction between Mission and Development work - which according to Bretin Winkelmolen is far from being the case of the Catholic Church who sits heavily on a number of projects with the Pygmies.



Areas inhabited by the Pygmies

Most governments in the region seek to sedentarise hunter-gatherers and encourage them to take up agriculture. A study by Barry Hewlett demonstrates that the further the officials are from the hunter-gatherers, the more they view them as backward, etc. Hewlett' s study suggests that if officials had closer and more personal contact with the groups concerned, their views would tend to be less biased and of a more positive sort. We would add here that presentations by Cameroonian researchers, some of them having been Governmental officials, certainly supported Hewlett' s study.

An issue which was brought up several times by a young Cameroonian woman present in the audience was the moral responsibility of the researcher, stressing the fact that they used the Pygmies to make a living and promote their own career, without giving thought to the feelings and needs of the Pygmies. The response to her queries was somewhat elusive, possibly because some researchers seemed to have misunderstood the questions in the direction of to what extent they were paying for information from the Pygmies.

A point put forward was the importance of the forest environment: while several papers discussed the impact of sedentarisation processes among the Pygmies, very little was said about how the deforestation will affect the Pygmies and their immediate neighbours. The point being, that deforestation would possibly have a much deeper and more serious impact than sedentarisation has had so far.

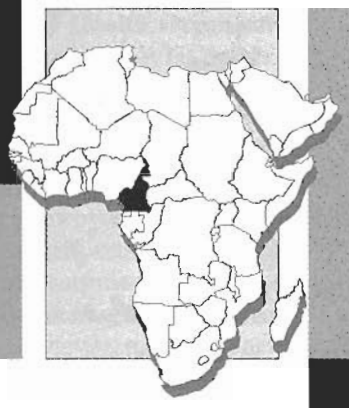
The apparent lack of information on current problems facing hunter-gatherer communities of Central Africa will hopefully be somewhat balanced by two forthcoming initiatives. Virginia Luling of Survival International in London informed about a forthcoming "Pygmy Dossier", due to appear early in 1997. The European Community Commission has requested a number of anthropologists from the Universit Libre de Bruxelles and the CNRS (Laboratoire des Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale, Paris) to write up a report on the present situation of indigenous populations living in the tropical rain forests of the Amazon Basin, Central Africa and South-East Asia. The so-called APFT initiative (Avenir des Peuples des Forêts Tropicales) is due to present a major report in 1997. The participants of the Colloquium also discussed networking, exchange of information, the establishment of web-sites, future conferences and contacts with emerging Central African organisations as possible avenues for follow-up

Note:

We thank Justin Kenrick for his contributions to the article.

Diana Vinding is a member of the international secretariat of IWGIA. Espen Waehle is a member of the international board of IWGIA. ❑

Cameroon



The Bakola Pygmies: subjected to integration and industrial forestry exploitation

by Tabapssi F. Timothée

The integration of the *Bakola* pygmies[1] and improvements in their living conditions appear to have been central concerns of the Cameroon state for many decades. The initiatives taken on their behalf[2] by the authorities since the end of the 1960s have, nevertheless, not produced the expected results. The state's authoritative management of forestry areas and the steady intensification of industrial forestry exploitation have negatively effected the Pygmies' way of life and complicated their situation, making it even more precarious and their future uncertain.

The Pygmies' way of life and sexual division of labour

All Pygmies, with a few exceptions, are dependent on the forest for their subsistence from hunting and gathering. The men hunt[3] while gathering is essentially a woman's activity. The women go every morning to the forest[4] to dig up tubers. They also gather snails, crayfish, termites, mushrooms, caterpillars and snakes which they put in deep baskets and carry on their shoulders supported with a strap across the forehead (A. Stamm 1993). They collect honey from the ground bees while the men collect the honey from honeycombs in the trees. The women build the huts from curved wood and drape large leaves on top for a roof.

The Pygmies use the wood for fires and to make mortars for preparing food.

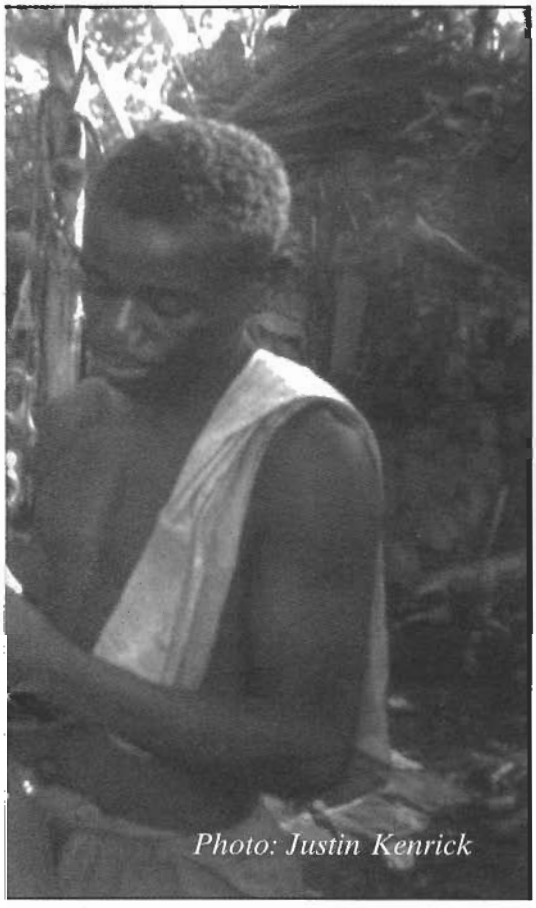


Photo: Justin Kenrick

They are increasingly using old utensils which they obtain from the Bantu people in the villages in exchange for hunted meat and other forest products (lianas for making sponges or toothbrushes, medicinal plants, etc.).

The Pygmies marry between clans. Although all members of the community are in principle equal, the chief, usually the oldest person, is the only authority they explicitly recognise. His social functions are varied: he distributes the collective work to be done, records the dates of marriages and is responsible for maintaining the values and norms which regulate social life. He guarantees the political, social and moral order and exercises a traditional, liberal type of power (Mbida 1995).

The Cameroon Pygmies: from integration to marginalisation

The breakdown of the authorities' efforts to integrate the Pygmies is related to the formers' authoritarian management of the forest and strategies and proposals with no concern for Pygmy socio-cultural values. Added to this authoritarian management is an abusive exploitation of resources which has caused irremediable harm to the ecosystem and accelerated the irreversible deterioration of the quality of life of the 'forest dwellers'. This situation is all the more deplorable because it contradicts the international legal norms and conditions with which the Cameroon government said it complies. For example, Principle 22 of the Declaration on the environment and development[5] recognises that:

> *The populations and autochthonous communities and other local collectivities play an important role in the management of the environment and its development according to their knowledge of the environment and their traditional practices. The states ought to recognise their identity, their culture and their interests, give them all the support necessary and allow them to participate effectively in the realisation of a lasting development.*

An authoritarian integration process and imperfect legislation

Although the objective of integrating the Pygmies might appear to be noble, it implies above all the need to always be aware that the Pygmies have a history, culture, social space and secular traditions which cannot be dismissed at the wave of a hand. They lived and continue to live primarily from hunting and gathering. Their natural environment, the forest, is the focus of their production and has influenced their socio-economic and cultural activities for thousands of years so that they are perfectly adapted to the ecology[6]. M. Tchagadic Jean[7], a Bakola Pygmy from the village of Ndtoua explains this:

> *The forest and the Pygmies are inseparable. The forest is the Pygmies first school and we could say that the Pygmies' knowledge is in the forest and always has been. So, why deny the people their forest, when it contains all they need to live.*

Unfortunately, the policies for socio-economic integration of the Pygmies provide no transition from a hunting-gathering economy to a productive economy, and from nomadism to a sedentary way of life. Furthermore, the Pygmies are not involved in any of the changes being made on their behalf, such as those mentioned by Jean Ngake, Leader of the Put Mikop Pygmies from Bella-Bas camp[8]:

> *I want to salute the initiative by SAILD/APE which has allowed us to take part in this debate over the exploitation of the forest, a debate with undeniable repercussions for the life and destiny of our people.*
>
> *I am also tempted to consider this initiative a novelty.* ***Because for the first time in the history of this country*** *[our emphasis] the Pygmies have been allowed the opportunity to really discuss the issues which affect them. I would like to believe that now that the revolution has begun it will not be stopped in its tracks.*

The state's interference and authoritarian management of the forest, which is considered national patrimony, can also be seen in the forestry legislation which is oriented to the logic of private accumulation and economic interests. In fact, since time immemorial, the Pygmies have been content to live with the basic right to the use of the forest and its exploitation, which they restrict to utilising the resources for their subsistence needs, and far removed from endangering the preservation and equilibrium of the ecosystem.

For this reason it grieves us that the forestry legislation does not take the Pygmies' particular situation into account, although private ownership of the land is permitted. In well-established legislation proof of ownership is through the use of the land, and so the peasant farmers

have a strong incentive to destroy the forest to extend their plantations[9]. They justify it because they are using it, while forestry legislation prohibits all forms of forest destruction. The gaps and contradictions in the legislation do not err in favour of the Pygmies, who as neither owners of the land or owners of the forest cannot enjoy full rights to their use. Often the concessions granted by the authorities seriously undermine their ancestral rights. As Pygmy leader, Jean Ngake, states:

The group which we belong to continues to be impregnated with a strong spirituality in spite of outside influences. The arrival of the SFIL[10] in the area on which our ancestors lived and which they have taken from us will bring terrible consequences:

- the SFIL settlement has led to the desecration of the tombs of our fathers. Today we do not know where they have put their remains;

- the felling of many trees in our forest has led to the progressive disappearance of honey, which had an important place in our diet;

- innumerable crops and fruit trees which had been left to us by our fathers have been destroyed.

We have had to start from scratch again in the places where we have been confined.[11]

The marginalisation of the Pygmies has been secured by the negative approach of the Cameroon legislators who consider Pygmy subsistence activities and reproduction as forms of exploitation and, above all, a legal basis for their claims. This is another example of the scant regard the government has for the legal agreements approved all too often in the heat and enthusiasm of diplomatic conferences when it is clear that, as happened again in Rio, the Cameroon government sets as its objective "recognition that the lands of the autochthonous peoples and their communities ought to be protected from activities which are not ecologically rational and are culturally inappropriate"[12].

The vandalism of the forest exploitation companies: ecological and socio-economic consequences

The abusive and subversive exploitation of the Cameroon forest is causing the degradation of the ecosystem and deteriorating conditions for the Pygmies whose way of life is oriented towards hunting and gathering. The international community's environmental protection lobby is now aware of the alarming rate of deforestation and the deterioration of Cameroon's biodiversity. This deforestation is due basically to a combination of three factors: high prices for some types of timber on the international market, and consequently, the good returns for the industry; the financial crisis and the weight of the foreign debt; and the complacency of certain authorities in the Cameroon administration and their collusion with national, and especially international, companies exploiting forest resources.

We believe that it is very important to emphasise that the majority of these companies exploiting forest resources do not have any regard for the sustainable exploitation and 75 per cent of the organisations involved in the forest industry in Cameroon are foreign, particularly European. Furthermore, there is no consideration given to the weight of the investments (in this field) which lead to a financial imbalance for the majority of national companies. Moreover, there are many national forestry companies which exist only in name[13].

This means that if the Cameroon forest was facing only agricultural activity, from the axe or the chainsaw of people gathering firewood and the Pygmies' hunting and gathering activities, the risks of degradation of the ecosystem or the rupturing of the ecological equilibrium, or even the long term threat to the survival of the planet, would be easily controlled.

On the contrary, it is the vandalism[14] of the forestry companies - seen in terms of the terrible ecological and socio-economic consequences as a 'crime' against humanity - which today more than ever ought to be the focus of attention of the international community. But worse than this, the industrial exploitation and destruction of the forest's biological and firewood potential is happening at the expense of the local peoples[15]. Bomba Célestin Modeste's words warrant particular attention:

In the Eastern Province, a third of the exploitation activity is concentrated in one single District, Mouloundou, to such an extent that more than 80 per cent of the forest area has already been granted for exploitation. This production is primarily oriented towards the foreign market and, far from meeting the interests of the local populations, it further reduces their possibilities for development. So, certain areas register a curious lack of wooden items although there is a large colony of companies involved in forest exploitation. In spite of the high number of saw mills in the Province, the rate of producing timber is on the margin of legal norms, because the exploiters respect the conditions of the market much more than the law. And as they are located in unaccessible areas, their activities remain outside of any control[16].

Because of the dispositions in Article 85 of Decree No. 95-531/PM of the 23rd of August 1995, which laid down the way in which the forest system be applied, the peoples living in nationally controlled forests could certainly claim some of the income from the sale of timber and especially from the timber felled. In accordance with Article 14 of Law No. 95-010 of the 1.7.95, which includes the law governing the Republic of Cameroon's budget for 1995-1996, 10 per cent of the total forest yield ought to be handed over to them, although there is nothing to suggest that these laws will be applied effectively. Furthermore, forest exploiters usually substitute the social facilities (schools, clinics, drinking water, etc.) traditionally envisaged in the agreements, with the distribution of a few kilos of fish, some litres of red wine, some sacks of rice or salt, together with some cartons of cigarettes.

Faced with the accelerated destruction of the natural habitat and the degradation of the fauna which is part of their patrimony, the Pygmies have no option but to make urgent calls for sustainable exploitation of the forest as one way of rescuing them from the morass in which they have been disgracefully kept for may decades. As Mrs. Silpen states[17]:

Given the current state of the forest in comparison with the state it was in when our fathers handed it over to us, we the Bayeli want it to be known that today we are the midst of huge desolation, we no longer recognise the forest,

Photo: Justin Kenrick

we no longer understand what is happening.

Our forests change from one day to the next. What future awaits our children?... The settlements destroy the forest, and the felling of tress prevents us from gathering honey to feed our children. The noise of their huge machines is causing the animals to flee far away. The trees falling into the rivers muddy the river beds. Some fruits are becoming scarce and we have to walk for a long time to find them. And the mushrooms we used to gather everywhere are gone. In short, our life is no long easy. We women are finding it very hard to feed our families. Nature no longer gives us anything and we are lost...

The most precious thing that people have in life are their children. However, our children have no future. Where will they find animals to hunt? The bark, the leaves and the fruits for curing and eating? We ask the government of this country not to forget us, to do something so that our lives, today and tomorrow, are not black like a starless night. Protect us, protect the forest[18].

Towards a forest resource management with consensus, responsibility and realism

The daily management of the forest resources brings a multitude of actors into play (states, forestry companies, peasant farmers, Pygmies, international organisations, NGOs, etc.) with often contradictory interests and attitudes. Our trip to the region in November 1996[19] and our interviews have allowed us to appreciate the extent of the divergence in points of view, as well as the complexity of relations between them.

In an interview, a head of WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) pointed out that since 1974 Cameroon legislation has recognised the local population's rights to customary use of the territories they effectively occupy, and that concerning the forest, the only problem he found was the drawing up of an action plan for the 'traditional' exploitation of the forest resources by the communities implicated (Bantu agro-hunters and Pigmy hunter-gatherers) and the WWF was ready to assist in the drafting. For a rational management of the fauna, the WWF envisaged, for example, the prohibition of hunting with firearms and a return to traditional hunting (bow and arrows).

Asked about this, the Pygmies said that to their knowledge there was no exploitation plan in existence which could serve them, while is it quite clear that they have never exploited the forest resources anarchically. Similarly, they confirmed that until recently they had hunted for subsistence and that intensive hunting with firearms was essentially something which the Bantu did. It was thanks

to tracks opened up by forest exploiters that the Bantu could massacre the fauna for commercial ends. Therefore, strong competition among the Bantu hunters and the lack of hunted meat due to high demand, had forced the Pygmies to hunt with guns today.

Over and above the many complaints by the 'people of the forest' against the authorities and forest exploiters who violated their rights[20], relations between the Bantu agro-hunters and the Pygmy hunter-gatherers are difficult and conflictive. The Bantu consider the forest, including the Pygmies who live there, as their property. The Pygmies are considered to be different - 'savage, dirty, lazy and thieves'. But from time to time they recognise that the Pygmies do them enormous services: "I have *my Pygmies* [our emphasis] and I give them everything - soap, clothes, fish, salt, cigarettes, etc... I educate them and in exchange they work on my cocoa plantation," an agro-hunter from the Bipindi said to us. They also recognise the supremacy of the Pygmies in matters of witchcraft and herbal healing.

For their part, the Pygmies are convinced that they are the legitimate owners of the forest. They are also worried about the arrogance and the superiority of their Bantu 'patrons' who exploit them unscrupulously and about the sexual allure the Bantu agro-hunters or the Bantu forest workers have on Pygmy women. When Pygmy women abandon their husbands or young men in the camps, they return to the communities with sexually transmitted diseases. This situation is made even more dramatic because they have no money and the medical facilities are cruelly deficient.

Nevertheless, they recognise that economically their 'Bantu patrons' are indispensable and vital and that their socio-economic situation affects them. A Pygmy in a camp not far from Akon II told us that:

When our Bantu patrons have money we are fine; they pay us regularly although not a lot; but now with the crisis, we have no idea how we are going to buy oil, salt or soap.

And so, while the intensified industrial exploitation of the forest has contributed enormously to the process of sedentarization of the Pygmy peoples (creating over the years an increasing shortage of the resources necessary for their survival), we have to recognise that their future has never depended so much as it dos now on the collective, rigorous and rational exploitation of the forest which is their original habitat. Jean Ngake, leader of the Bella-Bas Pygmies said it in this way:

I believe we have to wait for the future to be able to repair the errors of the past. This will take place through the space which they grant us in the decision making about action which is often dangerous for us.

Thus, the integration of the Pygmies is taking place primarily through an improvement in the conditions of the integration villages[21] in the different campsites. This improvement will not be possible without agricultural prices linked to a better circulation and commercialisation of products. Setting up infrastructure (schools, health clinics, running water, etc.) and the struggle against the deterioration of the infrastructure which already exists, seems to us to be equally imperative.

The sudden changes which our culture has experienced, said Jean Ngake, *will only bear fruit if we have a repertoire of different and competitive activities at our disposal.*

Notes

[1] The Bakola Pygmies live in the south-east of Cameroon where they live in a situation similar to that of the Baka Pygmies in the south and east of the country.

[2] J.F. Young (1995) notes that the world program 'Man and the Biosphere' includes the "the preservation of the lifestyle of the forest population and their environment". Also, the Pygmy Unit which he directs at the ex Human Science Institute ought to carry out research whose results to provide guidelines for a development project aimed at improving the conditions under which the Pygmies live, and preserves as much as possible their cultural identity.

[3] The use of guns is a recent phenomenon; the Pygmies make their own hunting weapons, a small bow made from a stripped branch curved in the fire and arrows with poisoned tips.

[4] While it is certain that the Pygmies in the camps practice agriculture for both subsistence and profit, gathering continues to be a dominant activity for the women, especially in the time between harvests.

[5] Adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Brazil in June 1992 in which Cameroon took a very active role.

[6] Paul Hengue, *Les pigmées Baka de l'Est-Cameroun* Development and Co-operation No. 6 Bonn, 1988.

[7] Communication at the Colloquium on Forest Exploitation in South Cameroon, Mbalmay, 20-24 November 1995.

[8] Communication at the Colloquium on Forest Exploitation in South Cameroon, Mbalmay, 20-24 November 1995.

[9] From this perspective, the burning of scrub with its obvious destruction appears to the peasant farmers as a form of land use.

[10] Industrial Forest Society of Lokoundje.

[11] Communication at the Colloquium on Forest Exploitation in South Cameroon, Mbalmay, 20-24 November 1995.

[12] See chapter 26 of Agenda 21, the plan on action adopted by the Rio Conference and consecrated to the *Recognition of the role of the autochthonous populations and of their communities.*

[13] We were informed last year of a Cameroon 'forest exploiter' who had given his concession to foreigners at a ridiculously low commission for each trunk, who closed the access to this concession when he wanted to ensure that the commission which he had received corresponde to the number of trees effectively felled and ready for export.

[14] It happens regularly that 30 to 50 per cent of the volume of trees felled because they are rare species are abandoned in the forest.

[15] Cf. Bomba Célestin, *Législation forestiere et protection des intérets des populations locales au Cameroun* Colloquium on Forest Exploitation in South Cameroon, Mbalmay, 20-24 November 1995. The study by Samuel-Alain Nguiffo Tene and Mary Fosi (1995) *Etude sur les criteres de la certification de bois tropical, réalisée dans la zone de Campo* Centre for Environment and Development, Yaoundé-Cameroon is very illustrative in this respect.

[16] Bomba Célestin Modeste, op. Cit.

[17] Bakola Pygmy from Ndtoua.

[18] Jean Silpen *Les femmes pygmées Bakola et la question de l'explotation forestiere industrielle.* Communication at the Colloquium on Forest Exploitation in South Cameroon, Mbalmay, 20-24 November 1995.

[19] We were with a team from the Dutch Television channel VPRO, which made a report on life in a village and in a town and on forest exploitation.

[20] Samuel-Alain Nguiffo Tene and Mary Fosi (1995) *Etude sur les criteres de la cerdification de bois tropical, réalisée dans la zone de Campo* Centre for Environment and Development, Yaoundé-Cameroon, p.8.

[21] The Pygmies would integrate better in the integration villages if they were not loci of poverty and misery. ❑

MISREPRESENTATION IN THE RAIN FOREST

by Stan Frankland

The anthropology of hunter-gatherers has been in the throes of a crisis for some time now: a crisis that reverberates loudly through each of its specific sub-genres. As Burch (1994: 452) has pointed out, one of the key areas in which the resultant tension manifests itself is in the validity of the conceptual categorizations that we utilize to define our field. In what is truly Weberian process, we have witnessed the ongoing redefinition of ideal types and, subsequently, their renaming. Due to the development of anthropological knowledge, societal changes through time and a greater awareness of the voice of the subject (Kelly 1995: xiv) the analytical concept of 'Pygmy' has been declared obsolete. Instead, it has been replaced by 'forest forager', a heavily qualified term that incorporates the realization of localized difference. In this way, holistic notions of inclusion are supplanted by more particularized forms of understanding, with a corresponding shrinkage of commonalities and growth in variability. So far so good. And very much in line with the happenings in mainstream anthropology.

However, in order to avoid the total fragmentation of the subject, certain theoretical tenets remain absolute. In the realm of those who were once 'Pygmies', the central foundation on which coherence was built remains the rainforest itself. Hewlett's recent article, "Cultural Diversity among African Pygmies" (1996: 215-244), is an excellent example of this remaking of the whole. In coming to the conclusion that there is no unified "Pygmy" culture across the African rainforest belt, Hewlett nevertheless outlines four basic characteristics that can generally be applied to 'tropical forest forager': a minimum period spent hunting and gathering; identification with and preference for forest life; complex relations with forest farmers; and, lastly, elephant hunting rituals (ibid 215). Of these, not one characteristic fully acknowledges possible influences beyond the confines of the canopy. There is some mention of roadside life, demographic encroachment and the proximity of urban areas, but mainly in reference to bushmeat markets and possible influences upon the selection of nets or bows for hunting. This theoretical focus on ecology here acts as a method of foreclosure, narrowing any concept of difference or, indeed, similarity, to a deep forest environment. Functionally, the rainforest becomes an island, an enclosed landscape. It is this centrality of the forest to anthropological representation that I wish to deal with in this paper, with particular reference to the Basua, of the Semliki valley, Western Uganda.

The Ugandan Basua present numerous conundrums to the study of forest foragers, not least their very identity. Through time, they have been called just about everything. The Uganda museum in Kampala refers to them as Mbuti as does a children's schoolbook (Nzita 1993: 4-5) currently in use in Uganda. Hallet (1973: 408) sees them as a dissolute group of Efe, as a part of the great Ituri complex. However, both regionally and in Langland's "Notes on the Geography of Ethnicity in Uganda" (N.D.), they are called Batwa. The negative inference of acculturation that this appellation carries raises the question: Are they Pygmies or Pygmoid? Or to frame it in a less pejorative fashion: Tropical rainforest forager or ... or what? How do we refer to those who do not match the revised categorizations that we have made particularly when the initial distinction was based on racial perceptions and the new is rooted in the environment?

The people themselves use the descriptive term Basua, and I shall follow them in so doing. It is possible, as Cavalli-Sforza (1986: 19) indicates, that Sua could be a phonetic variation of Twa. However, local oral history, both of the Sua and the neighbouring Amba, suggests that they came to Uganda from Zaire some time around 1920, co-opted to certain Amba clans so as to protect their crops, provide meat from the forest, enhance the status of clan and village, and to fight in inter-village feuds. Roscoe, perhaps the first legitimate ethnographer of Uganda, supports this approximate timing when he states, in his 1922 publication "The Soul of Central Africa", that he was "anxious to interview the dwarfs who have taken up their residence in that part of the country" (ibid 125). Bearing in mind the typical ethnographic demarcation of the Ituri Sua territory and the turmoil that the whole region has experienced since the arrival of Stanley (Grinker 1994), we must assume that the Sua who occupy the Semliki forest are not its original inhabitants. This move to

Becoming pygmoid?

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the eastern boundary of the rainforest, where it runs into the Ruwenzori foothills, may well problematize the duration of associations with place, the notion of essential location, but it has not prevented anthropolo
gists from interpreting the Sua as classically Mbuti.

Both Turnbull (1965: 291) and Grinker (1994: 125-128) incorporate the relationship between the Amba and the Sua into their own particular hypotheses of forest life. The fault in so doing for both authors lies in their uncritical reading of Winter's (1956) ethnography of the Amba, and highlights, once again, the problems caused by the use of the ethnographic present in comparative analysis. The initial difficulty emerges through the comparison of the Sua-Amba relationship with the theoretically closed systems of the Ituri forest dwellers. Winter himself wrote very little on the actual relationship, simply describing it as symbiotic, and, mistakenly so, as long standing. But elsewhere he clearly demonstrates that the Amba acted as middle men in an elaborate system of economic exchange that included Toro, Konjo and Butuku and crossed the international border into Zaire (1955: 16), thereby rendering boundaries purely arbitrary in geographic and ethnic terms (1956: 20). The role of the Sua as providers of forest produce in this open system, a system built on contact and movement, seriously questions their use as a means of comparison, especially when those comparisons restrict them to Turnbull's 'Two worlds of the African Pygmy' and Grinker's one world of isolation in the rainforest.

The second difficulty that arises from using Winter's depiction of the typical Sua is the admittedly backward looking nature of his ethnography. In this he establishes the village as the pivotal group within a traditional quasi-bigman structure that incorporates the Sua. Yet Winter admits, and I quote, that "these villages have lost their independence since they have been absorbed into a new and infinitely wider system through the advent of colonial administration" (ibid 14). Change is ignored, any sense of becoming hugely downplayed is reduced to a brief resume at the end of the book, in favour of an imagined condition of prior fixidity. When what was already an account of a speculative ethnographic past is used as the ethnographic present it becomes nothing more than the methodological dead end of the ethnographic permanent. In this sense, comparison creates nothing but an essentialized condition of being that cannot account for the fluidity of existence. If we are to learn anything of the Sua, then we must look to other sources.

In 1936, a road was built that connected the Semliki valley with the rest of Uganda, and with this, as happened in the Ituri forest at about the same time, came the tourists. And with the tourists came the publication of numerous texts recounting their adventures. From these we can discern a remarkably consistent response to the Sua that is wholly negative and in opposition to the anthropological representation. A clear dichotomy emerges based on notions of purity and pollution. For example, Elspeth Huxley wrote in 1948 (228) that "they have become very commercialized ... they'll crowd around the car demanding 'centis' and with the money they'll buy bhang". Here, the acquisition of money is perceived as destructive, the inevitable consequence of it being substance abuse. Yet anthropological sources reveal that marijuana has been popular in the Ituri for a considerable period. Schebesta mentions its widespread cultivation in the Dese forest and its consumption by both forager and farmers (1936: 248); both Turnbull (1965: 67) describes it as part of the Lese-Efe exchange system. It was and is commonplace to the whole region, and so can hardly be deemed as debasing. Instead its use as a marker of deviance by Huxley and, in 1992 (Crowther: 342), by the Lonely Planet Guide, tells us more about Western preconceptions of drugs based on notions of abuse and addiction than it does about acculturation.

It has become a popular truism in the studies of tourism that the touristic act itself destroys that which it desires, that it "injects the behaviour of a wasteful society in the midst of a society of want". (de Kadt in English 1986: 48) This arch conceit determines that change is equated solely with loss, that ways of life can only be detrimentally transformed, and that a peoples only response can be passive. In this way, tourism has replaced colonial commerce as the producer of Conradian 'horror'. The primitive is transmogrified into the ex-primitive existing within a

surreal form of post-modern society, a monstrous parody of our own lives.

This disappointment is self-evident on the page. Of his visit to the Semliki in 1960, Berger (111) wrote "the border type of pygmy has long since lost most of his originality, due to the close contact he has had with Europeans and the native tribes". While in 1993, Aebi (46) quotes an unnamed American anthropologist as saying "pygmies in Fort Portal (sic) are of no interest, they're degenerate and totally tame creatures". The forced entry into a cash economy that tourism is deemed to bring results in not only cultural degradation but the loss of an essential being. The Sua become pygmoid.

The dichotomy between purity and pollution becomes ever more apparent. On the one hand an anthropological aestheticization of traditional forest life, on the other a long-running catalogue of debasement. From this, we can derive the tacit implication that if a 'pygmy' is not living in the manner to which the Westener expects to find him it is because he has been contaminated by external forces to the extent that a pseudo genetic purity is compromised. As the passages I have referred to indicate, this notion of essence in contrast to degradation has been mapped onto the Ituri, so that the more remote, the deeper into the forest, then the purer the 'pygmy'. Consequently, those who inhabit the fringe, such as the Sua, are continually denigrated, perceived as no longer authentic. This has most definitely been relized by the television company that makes the Lonely Planet programme, shown on BBC 2 in Britain. Recently, I received a telephone call from one of the production team asking my advice on where to locate a band of 'pygmies' to take them hunting. I was unable to help, but a few days later we spoke again, and the person informed me that they had located a company who would take them three days downriver to a suitable group in the heart of the forest. You may think this point trivial, but this type of encounter will only increase. By the year 2000, tourism will be the world's largest industry and pre-eminent among the processes of globalization (Graburn 1995). Correlative to this growth is the increasing development of alternative tourisms, such as ethnic and eco-tourism, to the extent that few places now remain beyond its influence. It behoves the anthropologist to take this issue seriously. The forest offers no protection.

And yet it seems that the opposite has been happening. In a National Geographic article (1989: 667), Bailey writes that he chose the location for the Ituri Research Project preciselybecause, "after visiting nearly all the Pygmy populations in Central Africa" it "stood the least chance of undergoing dramatic change in the coming study years". Two questions can be asked of this approach. Firstly, what ethnographic tense are we in? And secondly, when does an ethnographer become a tourist if both are motivated by a quest for authenticity? In a similar vein, Duffy (1984) searches ever deeper into the forest in search of his romantic vision of an exoticized other, frozen intime and space. Perhaps this should be called Turnbull's syndrome?

Turnbull's influence cannot be overestimated. Bahuchet (1993) has vividly illustrated how the mythological creation of 'pygmy' found a host in the form of the forest forager, and this invention, albeit modified, continues to haunt us. With the publication of "The Forest People" (1961), Turnbull gained a virtual monopoly on how its shape would develop in both the academic and populist representations. Hewlett (1996: 215) points out that to most individuals, including anthropologists, Mbuti culture has become synonymous with African Pygmy culture. For some reason the methodological and interpretive doubts about Turnbull's work on the Ik have never been applied to his work on the Mbuti. So the image of the Ituri as a natural cathedral continues to be republished, filling the anthropological shelves in university bookstores. And Turnbull's injudicious use of the Rousseau-Hobbes dualism is continually unleashed onto an unwary public. Forest people versus mountain people: Eden versus Chaos; forest and village; freedom and constraint; health and disease; safe and hostile environments; spirituality and evil; aestheticization and debasement.

We can see the influence of this in Peterson's (1990) and Beauclerk's (1993) accounts of the impact of logging, gold mining, and other environmentally destructive forces onto forest forager life. As the forest is degraded so is the culture, reducing the societies themselves to the singular status of victim, capable only of reactive and not pro-active responses. We can also see Turnbull's hand in Agland's naturalizing homage to Baka life and its cinematic denial of an external world. And it is there again in the best selling popular music of Deep Forest and Baka Beyond, in which polyphonic singing is used as a method of inferring an exotic and timeless spirituality. Disruption in paradise can only be detrimental and this denies the possibility of evolving indigenous identities and the creation of new differences through innovation and adaption. The Sua can see Colin Turnbull's reflection in the expectation and reaction of the tourists they encounter. They come face to face with the invention of their idealized essence.

Paradoxically, the Mbuti, who have inspired the dream, may be the most comparable of forest foragers to the Sua. There has been a long history of tourism in the Epulu vicinity, although this remains largely opaque in Turnbull's books. In "Wayward Servants" (1965: 225), he describes the Mbuti as hunting tourists in the same way they hunt the villagers. Their response is thus defined as opportunistic, as contained within the foraging mode of thought. But it has proved to be

an exceedingly long hunting season. Ever since Putnam opened his hotel there has been a steady stream of tourists and of fim-makers (Putnam: 1955) to the region in search of the rare Okapi and the elusive 'Pygmy'. The process has barely been disrupted. So Kenge, Turnbull's star informant, has an extreme history of personal contact. First Putnam, then Turnbull, next the Harts (Matthiesen 1991), and now Justin Kenrick (1996). With whom is the often mentioned symbiosis now? The researcher becomes an ethnographic fact in his own right, directly influencing the range of choices available. Grinker (1994: 66) highlights a similar process among the Efe, with an array of researchers paying relatively large sums for assistance. Yet despite all this, there is not the distaste for contamination that was evident amongst the representations of the Sua. This can only be put down to a centre-edge distinction that where the forest reaches its extremities there is a corresponding decrease in existential impact upon the tourist, and upon the anthropologist.

The populist and ethnographic strands of representation are more entwined than we like to think. At their heart lies this dichotomy of purity and pollution, the idea that global processes lead only to a degenerate homogenization. However, by ignoring the flux of heterogeneous becoming and the (re-)vitalization of localized differences, the Sua can only be Pygmoid, ex-hunter-gatherers on their way to join the rural underclass. And while the rainforest itself remains the motivating influence behind representation, our understanding of the Sua, and indeed all other forest foragers and those who are presumed to have once lived that way, will remain one dimensional.

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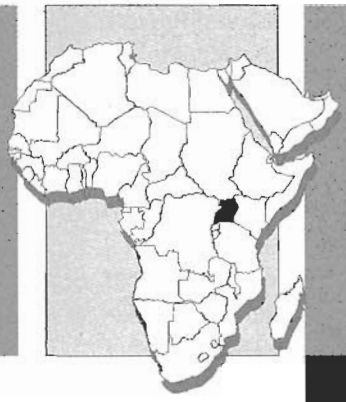
Uganda



Pygmies Abayanda of South Western Uganda

Reaching the End of the Road -and the Beginning

by Liz Wily - with assistance from Kabann Kabananukye

Forest people tend to pose a problem to governments and to conservationists alike. Frequently they have hunter-gatherer origins and appear to administrators and rural development workers to adapt poorly to modern conditions. Many are identifiable as impoverished, landless and demoralised minorities within more 'progressive' agricultural populations. For their part, conservationists, whilst marvelling at the forest knowledge and skills of forest peoples, generally consider their residence and use of forests to be antithetical to their prime concern to save dwindling natural forests.

This article looks at the situation of a small group of Pygmy forest people who have a long association with the three residual natural forests of South Western Uganda: Echuya, Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and Mgahinga. The last two have special conservation importance today as the home of up to half of the world's surviving gorilla population (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*). In addition, Bwindi represents a probable Pleistocene refugium, retaining plant species from possibly 20,000 years ago. Although both forests have been officially protected as Forest Reserves for more than fifty years, they have recently been re-gazetted as National Parks, enjoying maximum levels of protection (1991). In the process, Pygmy forest people who have long regarded the forests as their own, and the main source of food and income, have found themselves forcibly prevented from living in or using the forests. Already a tiny and impoverished minority in the area, this action has pushed the Abayanda Pygmies into the final throes of destitution and exploitation as they try to balance their place as squatters on the lands of others with the need to survive. However, it has also had the effect of crystallising their own and others' awareness of their long-evolving plight as a seriously disadvantaged minority, and one that has, intentionally or otherwise, been slowly but surely dispossessed. Seeds of resistance, and seeds of support, have been sown.

The Forests

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) represent hilly islands of respectively moist tropical and upland forest, of 321 and 34 square kilometres. They represent remnant forests on the eastern edge of a much greater forest that was probably 15 or more times the size, although separated by tracts of rich savannah in the lower altitudes. Bwindi Forest is considered by scientists to have survived throughout the great dry spell of 18,000 - 5,000 years ago, and which reduced much of the great central African forests to islands. Accordingly, it is rich in plant diversity. Mgahinga, on the slopes of several extinct volcanoes, is an obviously much younger natural forest, but important for its geography and fauna.

Both Bwindi and Mgahinga are managed today by Uganda National Parks, which has been receiving considerable assistance from the international community, including the American Government and the World Bank, towards improving its conservation and protection strategies. An important innovation promoted by these agencies has been the establishment of the *Mgahinga & Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust (MBIFCT)*, which came into formal existence in 1995. The Trust is designed to provide a sustainable flow of finance for research, park management and community development in the settled areas bordering the Parks, from interest accruing annually on a capital endowment provided by the Global Environment Facility established as a result of the Rio Conference. Not only is the Bwindi Trust one of the first such institutions in African conservation, it is unusual in that park-adjacent communities are represented on the Trust's Management Board.

These communities include up to 40,000 agricultural households or nearly one quarter of a million people, living in one of the most densely populated areas of East Africa, in some parts supporting 400 people per square kilometre. Despite extremely steep terrains, high soil fertility and the malaria-free altitude have been key factors in prompting steady in-migration until recent years. At this point, land shortage is acute and landlessness growing among the very poor. Local people are predominantly of the

Photo: Liz Willy

Bufumbira and Bakiga tribes, with Rwandan origins, their forefathers moving into modern southwestern Uganda one to two centuries ago. The indigenous forest dwelling population they found there, the Abayanda Pygmies, who they named from the outset as 'Batwa', like those left behind in Rwandese Forests, were scattered, each group using large but discreet tracts of forest and associated savannah. Today, these people exist as a tiny minority in the overall population, less than one percent of people living in the Forest-adjacent administrative 'Parishes'. Altogether, these Abayanda forest people (*sing:* Umuyanda), comprise less than two thousand people. They do however represent more than half of Uganda's total Pygmy population, most of whom live in association with other, usually much smaller Forests scattered mainly in the once fully-forested, western region of the country.

Despite the fact that they are so few, Abayanda Pygmies have come to present a 'problem' for Forest Park conservation. On the one hand, the Government of Uganda is increasingly aware that these people have depended upon sustained access to the resources of Bwindi and Mgahinga Forests for millennia, and were actually residing within those forests seasonally until recently. On the other, the strategies of natural forest management and protection pursued by the new Parks authority, and for which they receive strong international encouragement and support, rest upon the removal of forest inhabitants and the elimination of consumptive resource use. Accordingly, Abayanda, and some others, were evicted especially from Mgahinga, where settlement in recent decades had consolidated. Many were paid limited financial compensation, which, the Parks authority assumed, would end the matter. Boundaries were re-demarcated and intense policing against any entry initiated.

Forest use by local populations, including the 'Batwa', was virtually eliminated; this included once-profitable gold-mining, timber and other wood extraction and hunting of small animals, but most particularly, the exclusion of collection of poles and fibres, forest foods, medicine, and materials used in the area for weaving grain stores and baskets, a source of income for all tribes in the local community. As a matter of course additional non-consumptive forest uses of special importance to the indigenous Abayanda Pygmies, such as in the social and ritual sphere, were promptly constrained. Most of all, the practice of Abayanda to move and live within the forest for varying periods and purposes, effectively ended. Later, with the support of an international NGO, a minor amount of policed and highly controlled forest plant use has been reinstated, through the registration of a handful of local user groups. These represent a minuscule proportion of those from the local area who previously used the forest, and include only a handful of Abayanda in their midst. At this point in time, the vast majority of this profoundly forest dependent socio-economic group, have lost virtually all access to the Park Forests for socio-cultural, economic or other functions, and see themselves as having lost their 'homes'.

Officialdom and conservation development agencies in the area are not en-

tirely at ease with this situation. In addition, directives governing World Bank transfer of funds require attention to indigenous peoples and their rights. Accordingly, a study of the situation of this minority was commissioned and carried out by these authors, with a view to guiding the new Trust as to what action it could take to improve the situation. This article uses information obtained during that study which was undertaken during 1995.

The Forest People: Hunter-Gathering Abayanda Pygmies

Ethnically, Abayanda represent the most eastern range of Pygmoid Africans, consistent with the eastern edge of the great tropical rain forests of Africa. Pygmies, by various names, live today in nine states, and may number up to 300,000 persons. Without exception, the majority of each group live in close association with remnant forest or areas which were forested until recently (this century). Abayanda, like other Pygmies, are a hunter-gatherer forest people.

Abayanda Pygmies have a long history in south-west Uganda that may go back 50,000 or more years. Significant transformation in their history began only a century or so ago, with the arrival of cultivators and pastoralists from the west and south, and proceeded along a route that is all-too familiar in the modern history of African (and other) hunter-gatherers, and the hallmark of which is, considering their long and generally stable history over millennia, a short and steep decline from abundant resource access to landlessness, from socio-economic independence to beggarly dependence, from material 'poverty' into profound and demoralised impoverishment.

For the Abayanda, this transition began in the nineteenth century, as their territories were lost physically to clearance and cultivation, and politically, to incorporation into the northern kingdom of Rwanda of the late nineteenth century. In the process, Abayanda became the clients and servants of these settlers. In many respects, the relationship was mutually beneficial. The Abayanda provided poles, timber, meat, herbs and honey for the newcomers in return for access to the multitude of new goods and foods entering the area. They also served as mediators for the newcomers to the darker secrets of the forest, and in the process elements of their skills and knowledge entered the social ritual of the dominant society, a not unusual feature in modern hunter-gatherer agricultural relations. In the 1880-1920 period, Abayanda were particularly visible as warriors for their various masters and played a key role in the balance of power (and eventual establishment of international boundaries) among the various colonisers and colonised of southwestern Uganda.

Since the British colonial period (1912), the extent of resources left to the forest Abayanda, and the extent of their independence, has further declined. The establishment of Forest and Game Reserves in the 1920s and 1930s did, however, constrain if not entirely limit agricultural expansion and Abayanda continued to use these areas and regard them as still their own, until the recent upgrading of some of these Reserves as National Parks. At that point, a mere five years ago (1991), the movement of Abayanda from independence to dependent servitude was more or less complete.

Abayanda in the 1990s

A 1995 survey showed that Abayanda number a total of 1,771 persons in 403 households throughout the three Districts of southwestern Uganda. Around half live in association with Echuya Forest, and around half in the sphere of Bwindi and Mgahinga National Parks. Numerically, as observed above, they represent an insignificant group of less than one percent of the forest-local populations. Socio-spatially, they seem randomly and diversely scattered, with at least half of all households living in isolation as squatters on the land of others, far from other Abayanda. The remainder, however, live in groups of fifty or more persons, often taking advantage of land owned by churches or the government upon which to congregate. In two cases, relatives crowd on tiny plots actually owned by one Umuyanda family. In four other cases, a single large landowner 'employs' a number of Abayanda families. As discussed later, these settlement patterns conceal strong underlying social and spatial senses of community, linking any one Umuyanda household in very specific ways to another.

The modern Umuyanda household differs structurally from others in the area, or indeed to the national pattern; it is

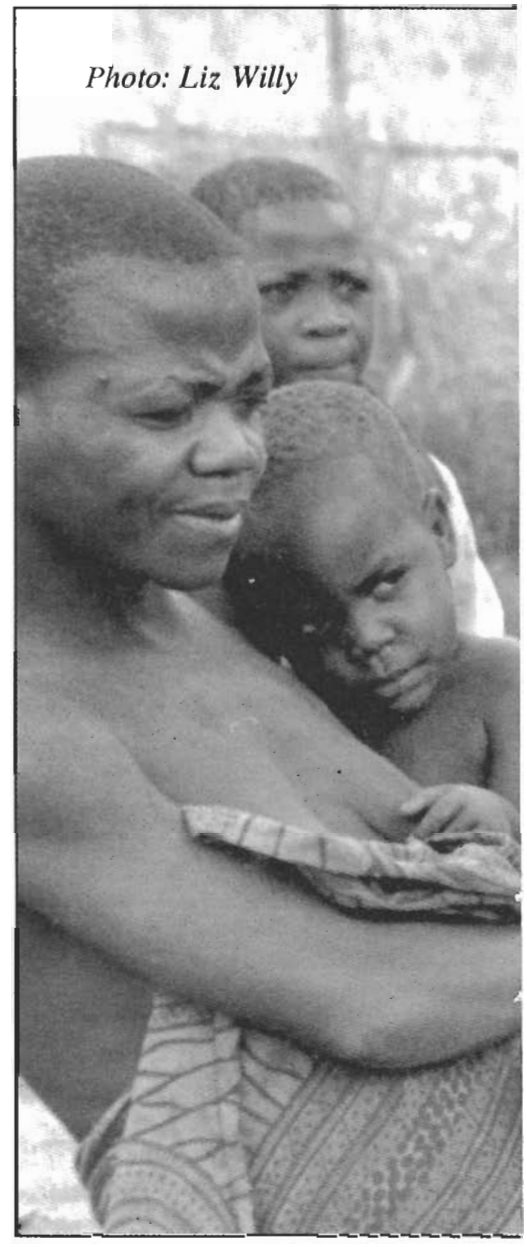


Photo: Liz Willy

generally significantly smaller in size, and there is less than half the proportion of female-headed households normally found in the area or more generally in modern African socio-economies. The proportion of household members of fifteen years of age and under are significantly fewer, and whilst Abayanda Pygmy women appear to have more live births than others in the local area, they suffer higher rates of infant mortality.

These last two factors suggest the total Abayanda population may be declining. National censuses over twenty years suggest as much, although these are notoriously inaccurate where the very poor or ethnic minorities are concerned. What is generally acknowledged by local government administrations is that the morbidity and mortality of Abayanda is strikingly high and out of proportion to their number. The recent loss of forest food and resources for generating small incomes has visibly plunged many Abayanda into further ill-health.

Landless and Poor

The majority of Abayanda are entirely landless (82 percent), living insecurely on land owned by private individuals (66 percent), by government (8 percent), or by churches (8 percent). Even that 18 percent who own their land, share a meagre 4.5 ha, or an average of 0.04 ha per household, hardly enough to feed a family for even half the year, and even less relevant to the survival of the numbers of households who squeeze themselves onto those small plots.

Ten percent of Abayanda households own a chicken or two, or a sheep, a goat, or perhaps a dog. No household owns cattle. At least half do not own a hoe, the most basic and ubiquitous tool in Africa. Those who farm for landowners have a fee for the loan of the owner's hoe, deducted from their payment. Payment is generally in the form of food. As the cost of living and the per capita dependence upon farmland have risen within the host community, the generosity of landlords has conversely declined. Abayanda report today that whilst ten years ago payment enabled a family to eat for several days, *'now it lasts one day, and we are hungry on the second day and have nothing to eat on the third and fourth day'*. Whilst most landlords permit their 'Batwa' Pygmies to cultivate tiny gardens for themselves, these are rarely more than a few metres across and make little contribution to survival. Housing is impermanent and poor, often comprising loose grass resting upon a circle of poles. Landlords do not generally provide housing and many discourage permanent construction by squatters. Knowing they may be evicted at any time, the squatters themselves concur.

In 1995, the authors found only three wage-employed Abayanda among a total of more than 500 adults. Around one third of other households, particularly those living in the vicinity of Echuya Forest, earn small amounts of cash through collecting and transporting crops, craft, building or other materials for others, or through providing dancing and singing entertainment for their 'owners'. This, some local people opine, will save the Abayanda.

They have always danced, sung and played their curious instruments for us, in the courts of our Kings and now for us. Even now they can dance and sing through the whole night until they are given food. Tourists could come and pay them with food as we do. This is how it should be. These people do not need land.

The Final Cut - Loss of Forest Resources

Until the closure of Bwindi and Mgahinga, these forests represented a major source of food, honey and goods with which to trade for food, for all those in their vicinity. Although Abayanda are understandably not forthcoming on the subject, it does seem that some continue illicitly, and at much risk of imprisonment, to furtively use more remote areas of the Forests, at least for the collection of the honey and wild vegetables that represent the ancient core of their diet. Some also hunt occasionally. Most of this access is occurring in regard to Echuya and Bwindi. The nature of Mgahinga Park and the level of boundary policing by Government-employed Guards there makes it extremely difficult for even Abayanda to enter the Park unnoticed. The frequency of all forest use, and the range of uses, has dramatically declined however. The use of Bwindi and Mgahinga for craft, building or other materials has virtually ceased.

In general, the loss of forest access for income and food has thrown Abayanda more definitively upon the mercy of their landlords, to whom they are also now less useful, as they are unable to provide the honey, wild meat, gold pannings, timber, poles or craft materials they once supplied. If in the past, the relationship between landlord and Umuyanda squatter had elements of mutual benefit, it has now moved more clearly into the mode of trapped clientage that is most accurately referred to as serfdom. Quite aside from the low regard in which they are held in the wider community, they endure considerable instability in their living places, they are without assets, means of production or employment, have declining access to opportunities to feed themselves or to earn small cash incomes, and have almost no control over the sale of their own labour. They have no representation and no common voice with which to challenge the status quo.

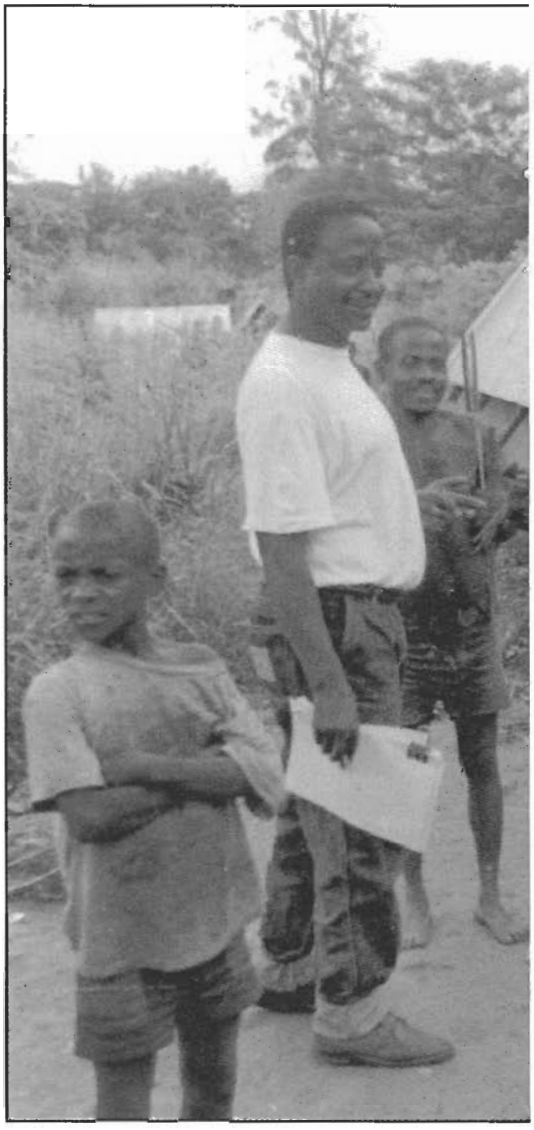


Photo: Liz Willy

An Excluded and Despised Minority

Redress of this situation is not easy. As times have become harder, land scarcer and the capacity of farmers to use workers less, the attitude to 'Batwa' has hardened from one of paternal tolerance of their 'backwardness' and strange ways, to one of outright contempt. Those Pygmies who try to em-better themselves are viewed suspiciously and occasions where Abayanda have sought redress of exploitation have raised the ire of the landowning community who have to date often seen themselves as the patrons of the helpless, ignorant and now ungrateful 'Batwa'.

Local government has paid little attention to the situation. For the most part, churches represent the only channel of assistance to Abayanda to date, and this is both recent and mainly confined to assisting Abayanda children to attend school. Nearly 90 percent of Abayanda children still do not attend school. Abayanda access and use of government health services is low, partly because of cost, but mainly because they are unwelcome in clinics, and are themselves doubtful of the advantages.

In four of 41 'settlements' where Abayanda Pygmies reside, they are represented on the village councils. Otherwise, Abayanda have no representation on most local or higher levels (Parish, District), and fear local leaders and police. Their experience of local courts is unsalutary. Fines are used liberally to keep Abayanda in order and in their place. Beatings and threats are common and seven murders which have taken place since 1990 remain 'unsolved'. The handful of Abayanda who own small plots themselves are as vulnerable as those without land but in a different way. Most of these plots were 'granted' during pre-colonial or colonial times and have been steadily decimated through encroachment by neighbours and more recently, as land pressure everywhere increases, through outright intimidation and theft. Complaints to local leaders yield no return and may exacerbate losses.

In many ways, Abayanda do not appear to do a great deal to help themselves. Arguably, they follow modes found frequently among dispossessed hunter-gatherers on the continent; they fear to leave the little security they have as squatters, 'invest' in patronage with submissive behaviour and 'accept' the exploitation, contempt and abuse meted out to them. Their own culture is not always helpful, resisting as it does individual prominence and instinctively operating continuing levelling mechanisms of material and food-sharing on the one hand, and fear of witchcraft, on the other, to keep differences and jealousy at bay. Again, these features are common to hunter-gatherers elsewhere.

Challenge and Change

The situation is, however, slowly changing, in mainly small ways. One or two Abayanda communities are beginning to work together for their joint economic advantage, hiring themselves out to farmers as a group in order to purchase hoes, and actively soliciting material and other help. After a long history which eschewed representation and leadership, several influential Abayanda are emerging in different parts of the region. The most prominent has begun to travel the wider area himself to meet with Abayanda, and to use every opportunity to make the forest people's plight known to officials and outsiders and to request assistance. Two prominent Pygmy herbalists, long at the beck and call of richer local people and leaders, are beginning to use their influence to a more social effect. The focus of requests is consistently upon the need for places to live and the right to use the forests. Several individuals, officials at district level, present themselves as sympathetic and constructive in regard to Abayanda conditions. By far the majority of local leaders and farmers interviewed by the authors in 1995 still made clear their contempt for Abayanda. The intensity of feeling expressed suggests that the plight of Abayanda has already become an 'issue' in the local area.

An important factor in these changes was the re-gazettement of Bwindi and Mgahinga as National Parks, the eviction of 'Batwa', among others, from these Forests, and the introduction of heavy policing regimes to exclude extractive utilization of any kind. In the first instance, local reaction has forced Park management to acknowledge the considerable utility of the forests to local communities, and in the process to become more consciously aware of the different levels of forest dependence among the different groups of society.

In the second instance, if the process of Park establishment has seriously undermined the basis of Abayanda survival and socio-culture, it has also served to politicise them. For, despite the fact that Abayanda have not been the legal owners of Bwindi, Mgahinga or Echuya for more than fifty years, they continued to consider those forests as (the last of) their ancestral lands. Although access declined steadily and in many regards has been illegal for many decades, it was not until Park establishment and their more effective exclusion that these forest people came to fully and to understand how thoroughly they had lost their lands and resources. As a result, Abayanda of the 1990s are more critically aware of the nature of their homelessness and poverty, than previously, and gradually and with much difficulty, more articulate in requesting help and even 'redress'.

The Way Forward

Modern administrators and development workers tend to dismiss the hunting and gathering origins of forest people as irrelevant to their current situation and especially to their future. Hunting and gathering is considered backward and impractical in a modern world, and such people are routinely urged to 'stop roaming about', to take up agriculture like those whom they live next to or among, and to assimilate into the dominant neighbouring society. A prime sphere of intervention in respect to such minorities is assistance to attend school, formal education being seen as a route to their liberation from the poverty and ignorance of their traditional way of life.

As social anthropologists and those who have worked closely with hunter-gatherers are only too well aware, the fact that the Abayanda Pygmies are of a hunter-gathering society is not, however, mere history but acutely relevant to their plight today, and to how it may be ameliorated. As described above, Abayanda have faced and responded to a changing world in ways that are common to hunter-gatherers elsewhere, enduring the same trends of dispossession and eventual destitution. Typically, only when all is lost, do hunter-gatherers fully comprehend the processes that have affected them, and begin to act upon them. The modern history of such indigenous peoples indicates that restoration of resource rights is without exception the core of their demands for assistance. Significant improvement in their situation is rarely achieved without this demand being met to some degree.

The nature and tenacity of hunter-gatherer society, even in the contemporary world, is often misunderstood. A main area of misunderstanding concerns the view of Abayanda and other hunter-gatherers as nomadic. Abayanda, like other hunter-gatherers on the continent, do move around, but only within the boundaries of defined resource areas, or 'territories'. Each band has its own territory, defined over millennia. These are often very large. Movement beyond these territories is normally for social reasons only, and limited to neighbouring territories. Traditionally, a sense of cohesion among more widely-scattered bands, and sometimes even knowledge about them, does not exist. The ethnic group is leaderless, as is each small band.

Socio-Spatial Continuity

These features, the authors found, are precisely the case in regard to modern-day Abayanda Pygmies. Although they are scattered today on several hundred farms belonging to other people, the general areas in which they live, and their linkages to other Abayanda in those areas is far from random. Not only have Abayanda not left the general area of their ancestors, each sub-group, or 'band' has, for the most part, remained within the very area which its forefathers considered to be their 'place', or territory [*umwanya waacu*, 'the place of ours']. The fundamental change has not been where Abayanda are today, nor in how they relate to each other, but in what has happened to their traditional areas. Those changes overlay and dominate but have neither destroyed nor invalidated a persistent socio-spatial form of hunter-gatherer distribution and social existence, in amongst the majority tribes of the area.

More specifically, the following deserve note. In the first instance, the displacement of Abayanda over the last 150 years has not led to their departure from their ancient lands and dispersal throughout the region, or even country. On the contrary, most Abayanda Pygmies are today clustered around the core residual Forests of Bwindi, Mgahinga and Echuya. Forty-three percent in fact live next to or within one kilometre of the forest edge. Only five settlements are more than ten kilometres from a forest.

Secondly, although the majority of Abayanda live on land belonging to private individuals or government, they are located there not because of the landowners but because those farms exist today within the ancient home areas of their forefathers. Related, the links among one squatter family to the next, from farm to farm, reflect a network of social cohesion that derives from a shared heritage as a community, and which exist today, no matter how scattered, as that same community. Entry of other Abayanda Pygmies into those areas is socio-culturally difficult. Thus, when one church offered a living place to Pygmies some years ago, it was puzzled to find so few arriving, and even fewer remaining. Those who did remain explained that others simply do not 'belong' to that area.

Through reviewing relationships, the authors found in 1995 that the total Abayanda Pygmy population of the area falls socio-spatially into around fifteen distinct communities, linked to fifteen areas. Eight of these are directly associated with Bwindi Forest. Although scattered in six locations including the local District town, those Abayanda who look to Mgahinga as their traditional home represent a single, inter-related group of close consanguinity. The consistent factor binding members of a community is shared origins in one social group (*amago*, or band) and one territory (*nahaacu*). Broader associations also accrue, resulting in the subdivision of the entire south-western area into around six 'greater territories', which serve right up until the present as social networks and marriage pools. In two instances, these greater territories extend beyond the international borders with Zaire and Rwanda. Abayanda both today and in the past, generally limit their movements to within these spheres.

The importance of these findings cannot be over-estimated, not least of all because they suggest quite definitively to interested government and non-Government agencies just how and where modern-day Abayanda living needs could and should be most satisfactorily met. In ideal circumstances, those agencies will see fit to assist Abayanda to acquire permanent lands within the context of their long-standing, conjoined social and physical community areas.

A Small Group but not a Small Problem

In summary, the modern 'Batwa' of South Western Uganda, or Abayanda as they know themselves and prefer to be known, represent a numerically insignificant proportion of the local population. Their situation is not insignificant, however. On the contrary, it raises issues that reach into the heart of the most prominent development initiative in the area, in which government and the international community is determined to conserve the indigenous forests and the flora and fauna within them. This is simply because the Abayanda Pygmies are not ordinary people in this regard, they are, a forest people. Their residence in the vicinity of Bwindi and Mgahinga (or the lower priority Echuya Forest) is not casual. They are there because those forests are integral to their ancestral lands, and to their existence up until the present. Even as the forest forcibly declines as a source of physical survival, their society is structured in fundamental ways upon the forest, upon its continued existence as forest, and continued access to it.

Attention to these issues is ultimately, inescapable. The number of people involved is minuscule, and the scale of the issue at this point manageable. This will not necessarily remain the case. Not only will Abayanda, like other Ugandans, probably double their population in coming decades, the issues run the risk of becoming 'problems', and even a *cause celebre*, if left untended. With each year it will become more complicated and expensive to resolve.

The way in which Abayanda needs are addressed is critical. Helping Abayanda children attend primary school, to benefit from health services, to get skill training, and so on, are helpful interventions and will over time doubtless be pursued by one agency or another. These measures do not address the core conditions of Abayanda landlessness and loss of forest access, however, and will therefore not be the interventions which make the difference, or which remove this small group of people out of a focus of concern.

It will be clear that the critical issues to be resolved lie firmly within the sphere of rights. Resolution lies first and foremost in helping Abayanda households find secure and lasting places to settle and farm. A second requirement is to gain agreement on the principles and practice of accessing certain areas, certain sites and certain resources of the National Parks, and Echuya Forest Reserve, for mainly non-consumptive use, and for a limited number of priority consumptive uses, on a sustainable basis. Abayanda themselves place the right to harvest honey, tubers and medicinal plants uppermost in this regard. The practical importance of this varies group to group, and may, over time, generally diminish. For all Abayanda Pygmies, recognition of the Forests as their ances-

tral lands and a continuing right to enter them freely for socio-ritual purposes is, in reality, non-negotiable.

In theory, the requirements of settlement and the requirements of forest access and use rights may be met in conjunction with each other, through the allocation of a limited number of peripheral areas of Park to the appropriate forest-adjacent Abayanda community. Appropriate tracts of unforested or degraded forest exist in many cases. In terms of speed, cost-effectiveness and simplicity of resolution, this is the most appropriate strategy. It will have the added advantage of providing a framework for the most appropriate and lasting settlement patterns, each sub-group of the Abayanda, residing in the vicinity of its preferred location and preferred social formation.

In practice, this strategy is unlikely to be acceptable to conservationists or the wider local community. The former, who place total protection of the environs of the gorilla population uppermost and secure much support to this end, would regard the allocation of even small plots on the edge of the forest as gross and dangerous encroachment. Just as powerfully, the wider local population as a whole would argue against what they regard as preferential treatment of the (despised) 'Batwa', whilst some of their own tribesmen are without land. Abayanda themselves are unlikely to immediately demand settlement rights to even peripheral areas of the Parks. Whilst they increasingly 'insist' upon restoration of certain forest use rights, many now indicate that they would accept settlement outside Park boundaries - if land can be found in appropriate areas, and in adequate amounts to enable them to live in their preferred group formations, and preferred traditional areas.

Given the closely settled nature of the Park-adjacent areas, and immobility in land transfer, achievement of this end is highly unlikely. Moreover, the smallness of Abayanda settlement needs (as distinct to more wide-ranging forest use) needs to be considered; even upon a basis of one acre per household, only 403 acres would be required, less than 0.2 percent of the total Park and Forest Reserve (Echuya) estate. This is a small cost to resolve the matter, and in a manner which genuinely responds to the need - and which in the modern world of increasingly vocal ethnic minority rights, is seen to respect the rights of forest people.

At the time of writing, May 1996, both government and Bwindi Trust are reviewing their options in regard to the small but thorny problem of the Abayanda Pygmies. These authors can only hope that the commitment to positive action is such that it will not be appropriated by anxiety that more privileged groups of the local society might not approve. To not challenge such attitudes will hold development agencies ransom to an unsatisfactory status quo, will perpetuate the 'problem' and may prompt its growth into an issue of human rights.

As importantly, conservationists need to look more closely at the guardianship role forest people may play in protecting valuable flora and fauna. Up until the present, the gorillas of Bwindi and Mgahinga remain under threat, a threat which peripherally resident Abayanda could do much to reduce, if charged with such responsibility in return for residential and sustainable use rights. Such strategies are no longer unusual in natural forest management regimes and indeed are showing much greater functional success than the traditional exclusion and policing strategies conventionally pursued. The more thorough involvement of Abayanda forest people in forest management is, in these authors' view, directly to the advantage of conservation. It will only occur in workable and sustainable ways, if those responsibilities are inextricably linked to recognition and exercise of defined rights.

For their own part, Abayanda themselves can no longer afford to await change passively. In the immediate future perhaps the most important need is for action which directly assists them to plan and articulate their own way forward in the detail required. Until they do so, they remain unfortunate pawns of modernity, without land, without cattle, without hoes, without education, without jobs, without access to forest or non-forest means of production and survival, without respect and without dignity, beggars or exploited labour on the farms of people who tend to despise them. This is not a basis upon which their future may be secured.

Selected Further Reading

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Obituary

Saruni Oitesoi ole Ngulay
Died 13 October 1996

The sudden death of Saruni ole Ngulay from a heart attack has robbed the Maasai of one of their most ardent advocates. As the founder and leader of the pan-Maa organisation, Inyuat e-Maa, he worked tirelessly for his people. It was his view that much needed development could be achieved without the destruction of their culture. He had many innovative ideas to achieve this that have influenced the way the Maasai see themselves and participate as citizens of the nation-state. He not only believed that Maasai culture has intrinsic value, but also that it should be a necessary and integral part of the development process. He argued that the integration of traditional institutions was essential to sustainable development, and this is reflected in Inyuat e-Maa's constitution in which a General Council of elected representatives from each traditional locality ensures that the organisation is run democratically and remains accountable to its members ie all Maa speakers.

Saruni was a friend of IIED and joined as a Pastoral Short Term Fellow in 1993. He was an accomplished researcher and has produced a definitive text on Maasai *Olng'eherr* rituals, and at the time of his death was writing up a study on Kisongo Maasai traditional land tenure arrangements. IIED was fortunate to be able to support him convene Inyuat e-Maa's Second Maa Conference on Environment and Sustainable Pastoral Development. As a fitting tribute to his endeavors IIED is committed to producing a report of that Conference, and ensuring that his other works are published in his honour. Our thoughts are with his family and friends who will miss him. ❑

Total disregard for the indigenous peoples in Paraguay

by Stephen W. Kidd

PARAGUAY

In May 1996, leaders of the Yesamatathla indigenous communities were summoned to the house of Mr Bischoff, a second generation German immigrant and *patron* of the *hacienda* where they worked and lived. They were ordered to leave the premises the same day. The fifty members of the community immediately obeyed the violent order of Mr Bischoff and, only carrying a few belongings, moved to Makthlawaiya, the nearest indigenous community, about twenty kilometres away. Those who were dismissed from their jobs received no indemnity and once they had left, their houses were destroyed by Mr Bischoff. They money ran out in only a few days and were reduced to depending on the good will of the inhabitants of Makthlawaiya, an already overpopulated community.

The Yesamatathla community forms part of the *Enxet* peoples, the original inhabitants of more than 70,000 kilometres of the Chaco region in western Paraguay. They have lived in the area for as long as they can remember. In accordance with Paraguayan legislation, the government should have granted the community a land title for the land where they live. Instead, they were expelled from their land as a reprisal for having attempted to obtain recognition of their territorial rights. They had initially applied for the land in 1991, and for five years the Paraguayan Government had not even so much as sent a technical mission to look at the land, a measure which they are required by law to carry out within the period of one month following the application for land title. The Government's inactivity convinced Mr Bischoff that if he were to act against the community, they would not be protected. To date, he has been proved correct; the community has not obtained permission to return to their land nor have they received any compensation for the difficulties they have suffered.

The Yesamatathla case is only one example of the Government's almost complete lack of support for indigenous peoples in Paraguay. Of the four million inhabitants in Paraguay, there are 70,000 indigenous peoples divided into 17 different ethnic groups. They constitute the lowest strata of society and, even though their land was invaded and their subsistence base severely reduced, they have been almost completely abandoned by the Government and have been forced to survive as a cheap and highly mobile workforce. The little help they have received comes from churches and other non-governmental organisations.

The Government's attitude is very surprising considering the legal framework which has supposedly been elaborated to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. It grants indigenous peoples the full right to land, health care, education, freedom from exploitation and the preservation and development of their cultures. It is considered to be one of the most admirable in all of Latin America. If it were to be implemented in an appropriate manner it would put the indigenous peoples in an enviable situation. Unfortunately, the reality of the Government's abandonment of the indigenous peoples stands in stark contrast.

The consequences of this abandonment and the concomitant exploitation can be observed in numerous varying aspects of life. As regards state of health, indigenous peoples are always lagging behind with respect to the general population, exhibiting much higher malnutrition and tuberculosis levels. Nevertheless, this si-

tuation is not reflected in the availability of health services. It is not uncommon for sick indigenous persons to travel vast distances in order to consult qualified medical personnel. Furthermore, there are many communities in which children have not been vaccinated for over 15 years. Services provided by non-governmental organisations are virtually the only - and generally inadequate - services available. The Government has established a clinic in the capital, Asuncion, in order to assist with more serious cases, but one look at the lavatories, inundated with faecal material, is sufficient indication of the deficient level of available help.

The population of Paraguay is also characterised by its high level of literacy, and while many *Mbyá* indigenous persons deny permission for the establishment of schools on their territory as they consider them to be a threat to their cultures, the majority of the other peoples feel that they are being actively denied access to an adequate education. Many communities are without schools, and in those in which the Government pays no more than a pittance to an indigenous teacher, the teachers, in general, have had no training, and no effort whatsoever has been made to develop bilingual and culturally appropriate educational programmes. It is Christians who are most interested in supporting indigenous schools, but this is done in general as a way to evangelise the children. A Mennonite mission, for example, which carries out activities among more than 15% of the indigenous population, dismissed one of their most progressive members because he had, among other things, published an indigenous myth in a school book.

The indigenous peoples are the country's most exploited group of workers. The majority of the few who are lucky enough to have work are paid much less than the legal minimum wage. Moreover, if they are unfairly fired, they have no possibilities of obtaining indemnity. The government makes no effort whatsoever to provide the necessary protection and, consequently, employers treat their workers as they wish. It is only the Enxet people who have seen some form of improvement: lawyers from the NGO Tierraviva have provided aid to some 80 Enxet workers who have taken legal action against their employers. Nevertheless, the court proceedings are so slow, sometimes more than two years, that many cases are still not resolved.

As a matter of course, the indigenous peoples receive no legal protection. Over the last two years there have been a number of attacks against indigenous persons which has resulted in injuries and deaths. No action has been taken against the Paraguayan perpetrators (that is to say, non-indigenous). For example, at the end of 1995 an Enxet was shot to death by a Paraguayan. In spite of the fact that the murder was witnessed by another Enxet, the police refused to arrest the guilty party and only took action after community leaders reported the events to the press. Unfortunately, the police arrested the Enxet witnesses, whom they tried to blame for the murder. The community received help from one of the Tierraviva lawyers and, after several months, the guilty party was finally arrested, only to be released a few days later. This is in marked contrast to the treatment given indigenous persons accused of crimes, often stealing cattle. In one case, in January 1996, two Enxet speaking persons were arrested for allegedly stealing four cows. The only evidence against them was the false declaration of another Enxet who had signed a statement after having been beaten by the police. In spite of their apparent innocence, they still had to spend six months in prison. In reality, they were lucky to be released. This was only the case because Tierraviva provided an attorney. There are many other indigenous persons who have been imprisoned for longer periods of time and who have still not been sentenced.

Nevertheless, the main problem facing the indigenous peoples is lack of access to their traditional land. The following chart presents the extremely small tracts of land held by the different indigenous peoples of the Chaco region at the end of 1995.

It varies from nothing for the *Maká* to a maximum of 4.5% for the *Ñandeva* and *Nivaklé,* and it is clear that the indigenous peoples have lost virtually all of their land. The little they possess was principally obtained by missions and NGOs and is less than adequate. This can be noted in the category "Hectares per family". Paraguayan law stipulates that the indigenous peoples of Chaco should have a minimum of 100 hectares per family even though it is widely known that this minimum amount is in fact not sufficient. Nevertheless, at the end of 1995 only 13 of the 53 indigenous communities in Chaco held more than the minimum. The majority are highly overpopulated and have insufficient resources to meet the indigenous peoples' basic subsistence needs. Instead, they function as work camps, providing cheap labour to farmers and ranchers in the area. Many other communities have no land at all, like Yesamatathla, and are at the mercy of landowners.

Before 1994, the Paraguayan Government totally ignored the issue of indigenous land and rejected budgeting resources to resolve the problem. In fact, at the beginning of 1995, President Was-

Indigenous People	Area of territory currently in possession (hectares)	Current holdning as a percentage of traditional territory	Hectares per family
Ayoreo	56.300	1,0%	97
Chamacoco	25.828	0,7%	78
Enxet	184.913	2,5%	34
Guarayo	32.696	N/A	65
Maká	605	0	2
Majuy	8.025	0,6%	47
Ñandeva	28.833	4,5%	65
Nivaklé	142.947	4,5%	47
Toba	8.373	1,0%	33

mosy publicly denied that indigenous peoples in Paraguay were interested in owning land. Nevertheless, since 1994 numerous indigenous groups, especially the Enxet, have more actively demanded their rights. They have become more expressive, frequently denouncing violations and abuses of their rights in the press. Finally, in October 1996, 400 Enxet and Nivaklé persons demonstrated in Asuncion and demanded that the government budget sufficient funds to purchase or expropriate the land which they were attempting to recover. At the same time, indigenous peoples have sought international support. Their principal worry has been a project of approximately US$ 15 million, proposed by the European Union. The purpose of the project is to encourage and support sustainable development in Chaco. The indigenous peoples lobbied in front of the European Union to try and persuade it to condition the aid to a preliminary favourable resolution of the issue of indigenous territory in Chaco. In spite of strong opposition on the part of the European Commission, this preliminary condition was finally imposed by several of the member governments, including Germany and Great Britain.

In 1996, faced with growing pressure on the part of indigenous peoples and afraid to lose a substantial donation, the Paraguayan Government budgeted US$ 15 million for the recovery of indigenous land claims. Even if the sum is inadequate, it at least represents a significant step forward and gives hope to many indigenous persons.

Unfortunately, its results were not the desired improvements. Although some tracts of land have been purchased - for example, 35,000 hectares for the Enxet people and 80,000 hectares for the *Ayoreo-totobiegosode* (the last independent forest people), - another series of important problems has arisen. In one case, the Enxet community of Siete Horizontes, which since 1982 had claimed the right to 18,000 hectares, was only granted 10,000 hectares of poor quality land; the landowner was allowed to retain the best land for himself and his cattle. This clearly demonstrates that the Government prioritises cows over indigenous people. In other parts, land was recovered which was never claimed by indigenous peoples; in order to defend this, the governmental agency INDI (Paraguayan Indigenous Institute) has tried to persuade different communities to settle there.

One immediate result is that there is less money for legitimate land claims. Even more disturbing is that the government has paid excessive prices for the land - as much as 100% over market price - and this has directly contributed to a substantial rise in all land prices, especially those in Chaco. Therefore, the resolution of the problem of indigenous peoples' land is becoming more and more difficult as the rising land prices means that it will be necessary to budget additional funds. This is not an unavoidable situation seeing that the Parliament, the organ which must approve the budget, is at present controlled by opposition parties. There is a fear that the opposition could again substantially reduce the budget for the purchase of indigenous peoples' territories based on the Government's misappropriation of state funds.

It is still not known who is benefitting from the inflated land prices. Paraguay is a notoriously corrupt country and it could be that government officials are pocketing huge sums. There is evidence of this in one case in eastern Paraguay where a 2,000 hectare lot was bought in the name of INDI by three men. 800 hectares of the land were later sold to INDI for 6 times the original price. Sources indicate that the three men were accompanied by the president of INDI. It would be interesting to know who remained in possession of the remaining land. There also exists a theory that suggest that profits from the land sales are being channelled to the sector of the Wasmosy presidency belonging to the ruling Colorado party, in order to support its electoral campaigns.

In a similar incident, at least two tracts of land already obtained by indigenous peoples - they were only awaiting the title-deeds - were sold by the Government without the indigenous peoples' consent and in spite of their opposition.

The misappropriation of INDI funds has been denounced by several NGOs and indigenous peoples, especially the Enxet. This has led to fears of reprisals against the Enxet. This appears to have been the case in the two communities Cora'í and Los Lapachos, whose land claims had almost been resolved at the end of 1995. Both INDI and the landowners had agreed on the price of the land, but the president of INDI refused thirty members of the Cora'í community began a sit-in in front of the Parliament, in August 1996, did INDI agree to the purchase of the 15,000 hectares in question. Nevertheless, the Los Lapachos situation is still not resolved. Many other land claims exist which need to be passed by Parliament in order to be expropriated, but INDI has so far denied support to the involved indigenous communities.

In eastern Paraguay, almost twenty indigenous communities are facing another serious problem. The small lots which have been titled in their name have been invaded by landless Paraguayan *campesinos* who frequently threaten the indigenous people and deforest their land, selling the valuable wood. The Government is notoriously slow to expel the *campesinos* from these communities who only leave the area when the forest resources are exhausted. The lethargy of the Government is in marked contrast to the swiftness with which *campesinos* are expelled from land belonging to the *latifundistas*.

As indigenous peoples only constitute as small portion of the national population, their electoral strength is minimal and it is subsequently extremely difficult for them to influence and change governmental policies. Therefore, it is essential that they receive significant outside support. In this respect, the European Union's preconditioning of sustainable development projects has been of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, it appears that the European Commission is still vacillating in its support, perhaps because some of its officials have close relations with the *latifundistas* whose lands are threatened by indigenous land claims and who are known for their mistreatment of indigenous people. Walter Simross, head of the Paraguayan section of the European Commission, has reinterpreted the precondition on the land accord, claiming that the project can continue as long as there are enough accessible territories to meet land claims. In other words, any territory could be granted to the indigenous peoples, and not necessarily the

The Enxet people from the Chaco Region in Paraguay Photo: Alejandro Parellada

particular territory they are laying claim to. Moreover, Simross made it clear that he does not believe that all land claims need to be resolved before the project can continue. In November 1995, the European Union and Paraguay signed a formal accord to begin the project. A major point of concern is that the conditions of the accord might have been shrouded in evolutionary ethnocentric terminology - such as having the goal of 'civilising' the indigenous peoples - and it is clear that the *latifundistas* have been able to shape the project for their own benefit and not the interests of the indigenous population.

Nevertheless, it is important that other countries seriously consider the issue of indigenous peoples' rights in Paraguay and insist that Paraguay observe its own laws and international accords which it has ratified, such as ILO Convention No. 169. Regarding this, Germany plays a special role as it is one of the principal financial backers of Paraguay. However, certain aspects of the German aid programme need to be questioned, especially the GTZ Experimental Agricultural Station in Central Chaco. In spite of its location in a predominantly indigenous area, it has exclusively focused its attention on Mennonite communities and *latifundistas*. Since its inauguration, more than US$ 12 million have been invested in the Experimental Station and there have been few positive results, with certainly no positive results for the indigenous population. To put it in perspective, the level of investment has been more than sufficient to resolve all existing land claims of the Enxet peoples: more than 180,000 hectares. In addition, GTZ has collaborated with the *latifundistas*, who are well known for their mistreatment of the indigenous population. For example, cattle experiments have been carried out on the Salazar establishment belonging to the North American Robert Eaton, who for over forty years has employed indigenous workers in near slavelike conditions. German aid to Paraguay should clearly be reoriented and, in addition, it is necessary to question if Germany should continue to invest in indigenous areas if the Paraguayan Government continues to reject resolving the fundamental problem of land access; perhaps all of the aid in indigenous areas should be conditioned to the improvement of the human rights situation. All the investments, in one form or another, make the indigenous peoples' land claims more difficult, especially by contributing to the increase in land prices.

Paraguay's negligence and abuse of its indigenous population is disgraceful. Although the existing body of laws on indigenous peoples' rights is impressive, it is clear that it has only been approved as a way to convince foreign governments that Paraguay is serious with respect to the improvement of the indigenous population's situation. The reality is quite different and it is to be hoped that foreign governments will not be easily deceived and that they will instead make the promotion of indigenous peoples' rights a top priority in their relations with Paraguay.

***Stephen Kidd** is a British anthropologist, member of the NGO Tierraviva.* ❑

BRAZIL

Government delays expulsion of goldminers

The joint police and armed forces operation to expel goldminers from the Yanomami reserve, promised for September, had still not begun at the end of November, in spite of reports from Funai, the government's Indian affairs agency. Describing the massive presence of goldminers in the area, in a report dated 26 November, the Yanomami Working Group (GTY) - set up by the government to organise the operation - listed the clandestine runways being used and estimated that between 1500 and 2000 *garimpeiros* are now in the Yanomami area, "With a strong possibility that this number has grown during the eight months when there have been no surveillance flights to inspect the area."

Although the six million dollars for the operation, due to last nine months, has now been authorised after intense pressure on President Cardoso, it has still not been passed on to the GTY and local shopkeepers are refusing to provide supplies until Funai's outstanding debts are paid in cash.

"The Yanomami bring news of planes and boats entering the area. At Hoxomi 6 garimpeiro (goldminer) planes landed on the Funai's runway. Some of them slept in the Funai house. The head of the post has been removed and the health posts moved, but the *garimpeiros* have spread throughout the area. There is news of a new clandestine runway at Uraricoera and yesterday morning two boats full of supplies passed by there", wrote an anthropologist in the area on 11 November.

Photo: Charles Vincent CEDI/CCPY 1990

The disastrous effects of the goldminers' presence were spelt out by Edgard Dias Magalhaes, an anthropologist who coordinates the Yanomami Health Programme for the FNS, a department of the Ministry of Health.

On 30 October, in a letter to Chief State Prosecutor, Osorio Barbosa Sobrinho stated that violence among the Yanomami is increasing because the *garimpeiros* supply them with arms and ammunition. Three more Yanomami have died of gunshot wounds since the list published in the last Update, bringing the total to 8, almost 10% of the 88 deaths in the period March-October.

Magalhaes said: "these facts indicate a process of auto-annihilation among a people who were beginning to see a slight population increase and a fragile equilibrium in their health situation." He fears that the garimpeiros are deliberately supplying weapons to bring about the social destabilisation and eventually the disappearance of the Yanomami, so as to open the way for those who want to get at the minerals.

And he further warns that "the survival of the Yanomami as a social group may not be guaranteed if factors that are destroying their health and social organization are maintained and increased."

Guns bring social upheaval to the Yanomami

An anthropologist explains the situation:

The Yanomami possess diverse levels of friendship and antagonism in relation to the other groups with whom they make contact, whether direct or indirect. Methods for resolving the antagonism normally range from talks at a family level to raids by warriors, passing through confrontation rituals, blows to the chest or duels with wooden staves. Rarely do these confrontations produce deaths, because of their low lethal potential. The warrior raids, although designed to bring about the death of the enemy, do not always achieve this because arrow wounds do not always kill. Also, the raid can be called off if an animal considered to be the alter ego of the enemy in question is killed.

If the alter ego is killed, there is the necessary "magic" consequence that the man linked to it will meet the same fate, without having to be physically hit. At other times, the death of the enemy can be achieved exclusively by shamanic means, where supernatural forces are used at a distance to debilitate or kill the enemy. In all these situations, when there is a belief in the death of the enemy, the killer submits to the necessary rituals to resist the threats from the soul of the murdered person.

These different mechanisms regulate the internal rivalries of Yanomami society. The introduction of firearms has produced drastic alterations. Trivial questions of relationship are resolved, if tempers rise, by shooting. Peace may be interrupted by the rash attitude of an immature youngster. The lethalness inherent in firearms results in a deadly situation.

Alliances to revenge the deaths are made and the men are mobilised to attack and defend. The entire village routine is altered: If an enemy attack is suspected, the house is abandoned and fortified shelters are built in a distant region; if they remain in the village, nobody leaves the house at night, the women's tasks in the vegetable gardens are carried out with an armed escort, nobody travels far, the normal exchange trips between villages are suspended. The nights are disturbed by the fear that each noise in the forest could be the enemy approaching. Productive activities, social interchanges, trading trips and trips to obtain medical help are all hampered.

Magalhaes spelt out the potential consequences for the health teams of this changing behaviour of the Yanomami produced by the new gun law: patients, fearful of leaving the place where they feel safe, will refuse to come to the health posts to continue their treatment; when communities are hiding in the forest, it will be difficult for the health teams to find them, because they conceal their whereabouts to avoid being discovered by the enemy.

They will not be able to remove serious cases for treatment because nobody will want to take the risk of travelling unaccompanied even to the city (where there are other unknown Yanomami, anyway). The health teams will be under pressure not to treat people from enemy groups, and if they do, they could be accused of being their allies...

The anthropologist asked the Chief Prosecutor for immediate steps to be taken, including the identification of those who are supplying ammunition to the Indians.

Babies die in Boa Vista Hospital

In October, the death of 38 babies in Roraima's only public Infant and Maternity Hospital caused a national scandal. At least 12 of the babies were Yanomami of Makuxi. Health Ministry investigators sent to Our Lady of Nazareth Hospital found an appalling lack of hygiene. Catholic nun Fiorenca Lindley, who cares for the indigenous babies, said babies arrived at the hospital sick, many with pneumonia, and then acquired a hospital infection.

Justice Minister visits Roraima

In October, Justice Minister Nelson Jobim spent two days in Roraima for meetings with Makuxi Indians, local politicians, businessmen, the bishop and a judge before deciding the limits of the demarcation of the Raposa/Serra de Sol area.

Although a Funai study based on historical and anthropological reports recommended "continuous" demarcation, including the ranches and towns that have sprung up inside the traditional Makuxi area, local ranchers and politicians want demarcation by "islands", leaving out these areas. The Minister promised to announce the final decision before Christmas.

Venezuelan energy for Roraima

Starting in 1999 the inhabitants of Boa Vista, the Roraima capital, will be using Venezuelan electricity from the Guri dam. Under an agreement signed by the Brazilian and Venezuelan governments, work on building the 800 km transmission line begins in 1997.

The deal should remove any need to build the Cotingo dam, projected by the state government for the Makuxi area.

Hunger Increases among Brazilian Indians

One third of Brazil's indigenous population are suffering from malnutrition, according to a 1994/5 report produced by CIMI. The report records a sharp rise from 17,000 in 1993 to 106,000 in 1995 and blames government abandonment. CIMI reported 75 Indians murdered and 276 murder attempts in the two years covered by the report. Forty six reserves, mostly in the Amazon region suffered new invasions and the report concluded that the Governmental Decree 1775, opening up the reserves to contestation, had encouraged invasions.
(Violence against the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil 1994/5 CIMI)

Amazon is priority for President's new defence policy

Under a new defence policy announced by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso on 7 November, the Amazon region has replaced Argentina and the southern frontiers as Brazil's top concern. Cardoso said he intends to increase the military presence on Amazon frontiers and make them "living" frontiers - meaning colonisation. He said today's threats come from international organised crime (drug cartels) and guerrilla bands in neighbouring countries. A previous attempt to people the Amazon frontiers, begun in 1988, by building military forts along them, Caiha Norte, was abandoned due to lack of funds. President Cardoso's new project seems remarkably similar.

The Yanomami want to learn

In the midst of all the bad news, the success of the education project shines out like a beacon of hope. The eagerness of the Yanomami, not only the young, but adults, men and women alike, to learn to read and write is tremendous. They realise that this is the key to the outside world, that learning to read and write their own language and Portuguese will make them less vulnerable, better able to defend themselves.

At the moment the project, funded by UNICEF, is confined to the Demini region, but the next stage will be to extend to Tootobi. A tentative eight year programme has been drawn up but new partners are needed to make it possible.

Source: CCPY, San Pablo. ❑

"East Timor was on the verge of becoming a forgotten conflict and we wanted to do our share to draw attention to it." With these words Francis Sejersted, President of the Nobel Prize Committee, announced that this year the Nobel Peace Prize would be awarded to Catholic bishop **Carlos Ximenes Belo** and political leader **José Ramos Horta** for their part in the struggle against Indonesian domination of East Timor, a former Portuguese colony in Asia and victim of one of the most brutal genocides in recent times.

José Ramos Horta was Minister of Foreign Relation of the short-lived Democratic Republic of East Timor which was crushed by the December 1975 Indonesian occupation of the territory. The following interview was conducted with Ramos Horta, currently living in exile in Sidney, Australia, by Brazilian journalists Américo Antunes, Beto Almeida and Romário Schettino.

EAST TIMOR

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Timorese people

An interview with 1996 Nobel Prize winner *José Ramos Horta*

What are the immediate repercussions of awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to you and Bishop Ximenes Belo? Could this bring an end to the cycle of violence in Timor?

No, it is not certain that the violence will cease, but at least the Timor question is once and for all reaching the world's newspaper, television and radio headlines. And there is not a single government, non-governmental organisation or media source in the world ignorant of the Timorese people's struggle. At the same time, it is also sensitising and influencing many of the world's governments' attitudes. Therefore, the impact is enormous, but on the other hand, as concerns a definitive solution, we are not under the illusion that a solution will be quick in coming. We will have to continue our struggle with great persistence, determination and creativity in order to achieve our goal of Indonesia changing its policies towards Timor.

Do you think that this Prize could aid the opposition to Indonesian rule and, in this sense, also help the Timor people's resistance in their struggle for self-determination?

I think the consequences are positive insofar as, on the one hand, it shows the Indonesian people that the democracy movement is worthwhile, that it is worthwhile to fight for democracy, justice, peace and liberty. The fighters and combatants for peace and freedom in Indonesia should also share the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Bishop Belo because it was symbolically awarded to the people of Timor as a whole. I prefer to say it like this, that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the people of East Timor and not to me personally.

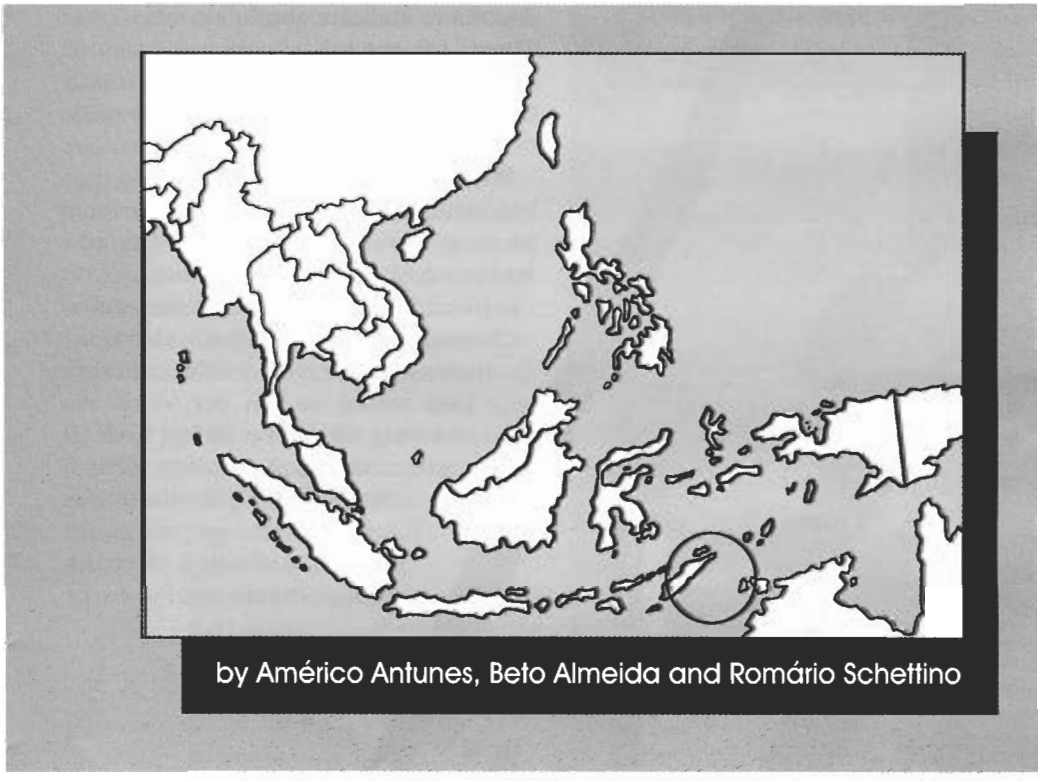
On the other hand, I'm certain that international media coverage will sensitise and influence public opinion in Indonesia. The Indonesian regime can no longer continue deceiving the Indonesian people and society that all is well in East Timor, that the Timorese people are content with the occupation. Therefore, the impact in Indonesia itself is very significant.

What is the role of Portuguese speaking countries in East Timor's independence struggle?

We can pose a very simple question: is the existence of another Portuguese speaking country of benefit or strategic interest to Brazil, Portugal or the Portu-

guese speaking African nations? That a people who have coexisted with Portugal for 500 years, who have their own identity, not die, not disappear?

Brazil, for example, has strong economic and trade relations with Indonesia. They have maintained official cooperation ties for many years and it thus important that Brazil use its influence as one of the leaders of the Southern bloc to discreetly and amiably pressure Indonesia to engage in a dialogue with the Timorese resistance, to release Xanan Gusmao and allow East Timor to be free and independent. Brazil must believe in the vision of a free and independent Timor. It must be seen as being in the interest of the Brazilian State and not just a moral obligation. Brazil and other Portuguese speaking nations should actively promote and support the realisation of our dream of a free and independent East Timor, the only Portuguese speaking country in the Far East, not only for moral, historical and cultural reasons, but reasons of State.



by Américo Antunes, Beto Almeida and Romário Schettino

In addition to the Portuguese speaking community, since the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize what other countries have been or could be influenced to take concrete action with respect to UN decisions favourable towards East Timor?

There are many countries, above all European and Asian, and others such as the United States which will be influenced. The American elections are dominated by the East Timor question, apparently because of the incident in which President Clinton would have received hundreds of thousand of dollars in contributions from an Indonesian millionaire. Presidential candidate Bob Dole has attacked Clinton for this with the result that in American newspapers East Timor has become an important issue for both Dole and President Clinton. There cannot be a single person in the United State who has not at least heard the word Timor, and in the future this is going to influence the position of the country.

Apart from this, it is also influencing the nations of the region such as the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. In Australia, for the first time in twenty-one years the Senate unanimously adopted a notion supporting the prize-giving and, of even greater importance, called on the Australian Government to support the Timorese people's right to self-determination.

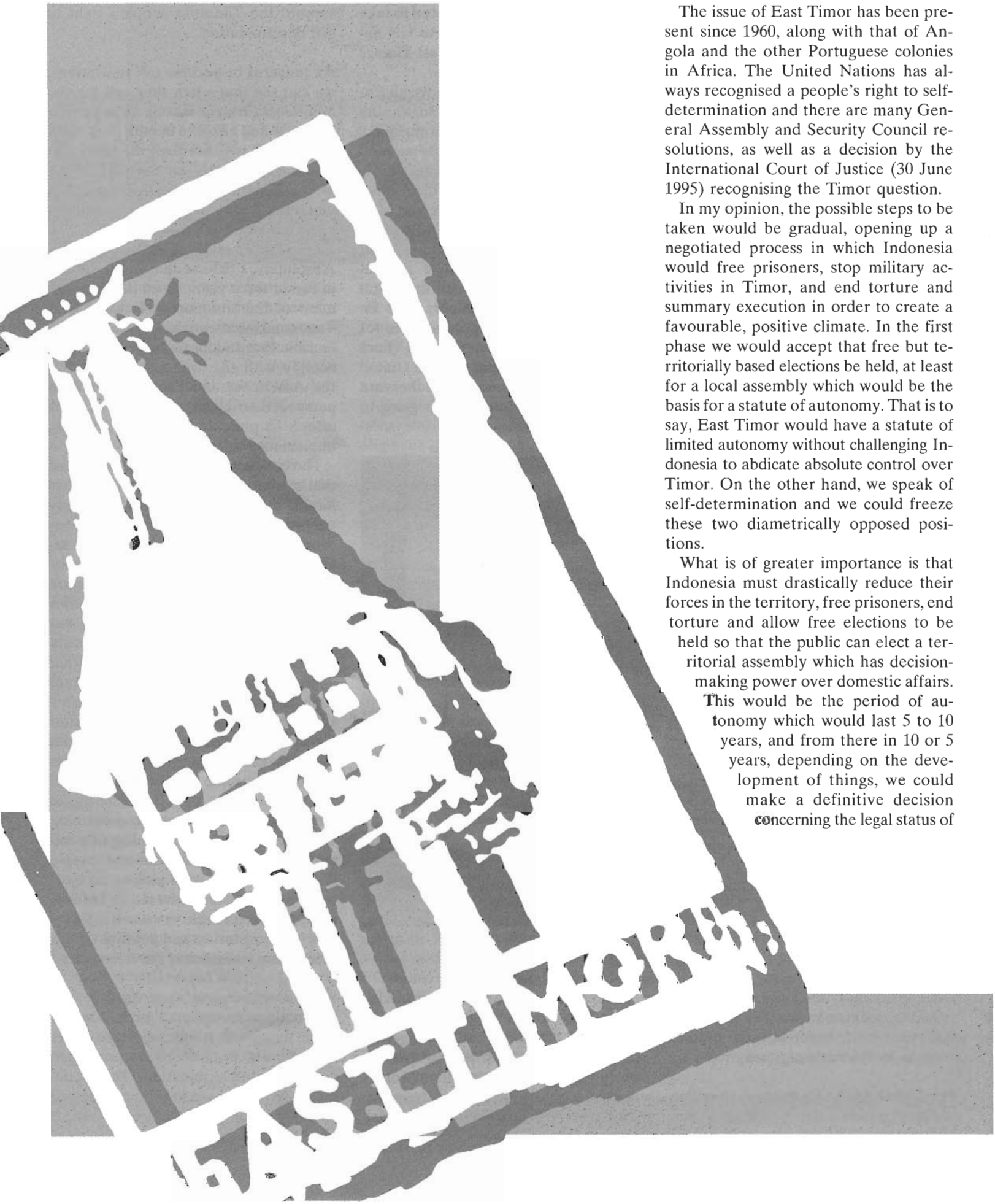
As concerns respect for UN resolutions, we can see that when they call for the bombing of Iraq or Bosnia there exists a concentrated effort to comply, but when East Timor is concerned, the same disposition to comply on the part of the international community is lacking. Do you think that it will now be possible to carry out these UN resolutions?

Absolutely. I believe that in the future, in two or three years, given the development of the situation in Indonesia, in Timor and internationally, it will be more feasible that Indonesia be compelled to comply with the UN resolutions, that the Americans and Europeans will be persuaded to be more serious in their efforts to press Indonesia to seriously implement the resolutions.

The conduct of the United States and that of almost all other Western nations has been one of extreme hypocrisy. They unleashed a total war against Iraq because of the invasion into Kuwait, a situation reminiscent of that of East Timor twenty years ago. They initiated action against Libya, Iran and other countries because of human rights violations, but in Timor, where the genocide twenty years ago was also violent, they did not apply sanctions and not only did they not support the UN resolutions, but they sold weapons to Indonesia as well: fighter planes, helicopters, tanks, torture devices, etc. This demonstrates that the West has exhibited extreme hypocrisy.

One of the UN resolutions concerning East Timor refers to the holding of a referendum so that the Timorese people themselves decide what path to take exclusive of remaining annexed to Indonesia. Could you provide us with an explanation of the historical and political significance of the realisation of this referendum?

Well, a referendum supervised by the international community, such as in Namibia and South Rhodesia, is one of the ways by which a colonised people can achieve self-determination. This is the means by which a colonised people can express their intentions, their desires for the future.



The issue of East Timor has been present since 1960, along with that of Angola and the other Portuguese colonies in Africa. The United Nations has always recognised a people's right to self-determination and there are many General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as a decision by the International Court of Justice (30 June 1995) recognising the Timor question.

In my opinion, the possible steps to be taken would be gradual, opening up a negotiated process in which Indonesia would free prisoners, stop military activities in Timor, and end torture and summary execution in order to create a favourable, positive climate. In the first phase we would accept that free but territorially based elections be held, at least for a local assembly which would be the basis for a statute of autonomy. That is to say, East Timor would have a statute of limited autonomy without challenging Indonesia to abdicate absolute control over Timor. On the other hand, we speak of self-determination and we could freeze these two diametrically opposed positions.

What is of greater importance is that Indonesia must drastically reduce their forces in the territory, free prisoners, end torture and allow free elections to be held so that the public can elect a territorial assembly which has decision-making power over domestic affairs. This would be the period of autonomy which would last 5 to 10 years, and from there in 10 or 5 years, depending on the development of things, we could make a definitive decision concerning the legal status of

the territory. Now who know what will happen in 5 or 10 years. The people could be satisfied with the new situation with Indonesia insofar as there is no more torture, military presence, etc. The people could find that it is worthwhile to continue to be connected to Indonesia. But on the other hand, in a few years Indonesia itself, with a new generation in power in Jakarta, will be much more sensitive and could accept an independent East Timor.

These proposals which I presented to the European Parliament in 1992 would serve to allow Indonesia to gradually leave Timor and create conditions in the land so that in a few years the Timorese people have the final world as to whether or not they want to remain with Indonesia. It is a very flexible and moderate proposal with which everyone will gain. It is not a proposal in which only Timor will gain and Indonesia lose.

What is your view of President Suharto's visit to Timor just after the awarding of the Nobel Prize? Does this gesture have any positive significance, perhaps leading to a possibility for dialogue, or is it nothing more than theatrics, a visit with no real concrete consequences?

President Suharto's visit to East Timor for the inauguration of a statue was planned months ago, almost a year and, therefore, had absolutely nothing to do with the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Bishop Belo and the people of Timor.

President Suharto visited Timor in order to inaugurate a 27 metre high statue with 27 steps. Now 27 goes with the idea that East Timor is Indonesia's twenty-seventh province. This is a provocation and an abuse, a shameless, intolerable manipulation of religion by politics. In addition to that, in order to further aggravate the situation, President Suharto barely shook the Bishop's hand and did not hold a working meeting with him.

The President of Indonesia's intention with the statue was to conquer the minds and hearts of the people of Timor. But if he had the erection of a statue dedicated to the Catholic population of Timor and subsequently the winning over of their sympathy as his objective, it was a completely misguided tactic. Instead of such an expensive statue that the people of Timor do not need - they have been Catholic for centuries and do not require a 27 metre statue to demonstrate their faith, other gestures less costly from an economic point of view could have been made: he could have announced the immediate release of all Timorese political prisoners. There are hundreds of them in East Timor and Indonesia. The freeing of Xanan Gusmao, the charismatic leader of the Timorese people who is imprisoned in Indonesia, could have been announced. The end of torture still performed throughout the land could have been announced. There are hundreds upon hundreds of torture victims. We have tens of Timorese in Portugal and Australia, each one of whom has been a torture victim. They have marks and scars on their body which can be clearly observed. He could have announced the end of summary executions, arbitrary detentions, etc. without making the statue. These concrete measures would have been enough to improve the situation in Timor and create a much more positive and healthy environment for a long term dialogue with Indonesia.

What message would you like to send to those who work for world solidarity with East Timor?

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Monsignor Ximenes Belo, head of the Timorese Church, and the Timorese people is also a deserving recognition of the international movement in solidarity with East Timor, a solidarity movement which has existed for over 20 years in various parts of the world. There have been tens, hundreds, thousands of people around the world who have always been with the Timorese throughout these years. Therefore, this Nobel Peace Prize is also a tribute to the humane solidarity which has been vital to East Timor's survival. If it had not been for that solidarity, the constant vigilance over the situation in East Timor over the years, East Timor would have been removed from the UN agenda and international consciousness.

Source: ALAI agencia latinoamericana de información.

*(*) **Américo Antunes** is president of the National Federation of Journalists; **Beto Almeida** is vice-president of the International Federation of Journalists; and **Romário Schettino** is director of Brasilia Radio Culture.* ❑

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

International Alliance for the Indigenous Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest and
The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

Introduction

The UN Human Rights Centre in Geneva is currently preparing a Secretary General's report on the UN agencies and their work with indigenous peoples. The request for the report arose from the 1995 Workshop on the establishment of a UN Permanent Forum held in Copenhagen, Denmark, which agreed that a study of existing UN involvement with indigenous peoples was a prerequisite for discussing the details of a Permanent Forum for indigenous peoples within the United Nations system.

In June 1996, the Human Rights Centre of the United Nations in Geneva requested the International Alliance for the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) to provide information indigenous peoples' perceptions of the UN agencies and bodies which affect them. The proposal was that the technical secretarial of the International Alliance and IWGIA would collect data during the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in July-August and provide a report which could be used by the Centre in its Secretary General's report.

The Alliance carried out the research at the Working Group with technical assistance from IWGIA. A questionnaire was formulated (Appendix 1), approved by the Human Rights Centre and distributed to participants at the meeting. The survey produced written and oral responses from individuals and delegations covering well over half of the total 232 indigenous participants at the meeting, reflecting their full geographical range and the breadth of their expertise on the respective UN agencies.

The research combines an assessment of indigenous awareness and experience of UN agencies with suggestions for improving the ways in which indigenous peoples and the United Nations can mutually contribute to the furtherance of common goals such as peace, development and the recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Methodology

The questionnaire was devised to combine both quantitative and qualitative date covering the following areas:

1. Ascertain the general awareness of the UN system. This took the form of identifying familiar agencies from a list of those which have some dealings with indigenous questions: CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity; CHR - Commission on Human Rights; CHR-WG - Intercessional, open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights; CSD - Commission on Sustainable Development; FAO - Food and Agriculture Organisation; ILO - International Labour Organisation; UNDP - United Nations Development Programme; UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; UNFPA - United Nations Fund for Population Activities; UNHCR - United Nations High Commission for Refugees; UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund; UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women; WHO - World Health Organisation;

WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organisation; and the World Bank.

2. Experiences resulting from dealings with the UN in general and with any of the above agencies in particular. This covered four areas: general meetings; meetings on indigenous issues; research policy planning and guidelines; and programmes and projects.

3. The interviewees were then asked what results had arisen from these contacts.

4. Suggestions for ways in which indigenous peoples' involvement in UN-agencies can be improved.

5. A general question on the participants' ideas about a Permanent Forum.

The team received seventy-three written responses to the questionnaire, some individually and some as delegations which makes the number of people covered by the survey over one hundred. Forty of those who responded in writing had previously attended the Working Group and had some direct experience of the UN system.

Furthermore, the team made fifteen lenthy in-depth interviews, in order to get detailed views from representatives about specific UN agencies and their ideas about future developments. These interviews were globally representative and related to most of the agencies on the list.

For the purposesof the survey, the responses from the representatives in the meeting were divided into the following regions:

North America and the Arctic:	15
Oceania	13
Asia	20
Africa	6
Latin America	19
Total	73

Not all participants wished to answer all of the questions with the same detail, while others chose to extend their information beyond the areas under discussion. Particularly noticeable in this regard were comments on the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The WGIP was not placed on the list of agencies and organs for recognition in the questionnaire because all were attending it; however many replies included useful comments on its work which are reflected in this report.

The material was initially analysed quantitatively in order to provide a general orientation of indigenous perspectives. However the team agreed that statistics on this sample would provide a false impression and so a broad framework was used when analysing the replies for this report. This was used proportionally according to the responses for each question:

70 - 73	everyone, practically everyone
50 - 70	most, a large majority
35 - 50	a large number, a majority
15 - 34	some, several, sizeable minority
1 - 15	a few

The details of the responses were the primary data which the team analysed. All of the responses and notes arising from each question were read through collectively and placed under sub-headings. The structure of the report therefore follows the framework of the questionnaire and the sub-headings which arose from the responses. The report will be sent to the Human Rights Centre in Geneva for use in the Secretary General's report, and will also be published in the IWGIA publication 'Indigenous Affairs'.

Awareness of the UN System

Few of the replies to the questionnaire demonstrated knowledge of all of the UN agencies on the list. Twenty replies, on the other hand, did not respond to this question, either because they did not know any or because they did not wish to answer the question. The fifty-three who did reply show a range of knowledge of different agencies:

a) Almost everyone who answered the question knew of the Commission on Human Rights (including the Working Group on Indigenous Populations); the ILO; UNESCO; the WHO (which was receiving a special focus at the Working Group); and the World Bank. All of these agencies received between 50 and 53 responses.

b) The next group covered those agencies which most knew: CBD, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF and UNHCR and clustered between 34 and 39 responses.

c) The third group were known by fewer participants: the Intercessional open-ended Working Group of the Human Rights Commission, the CSD and WIPO each received between 27 and 29 responses.

d) The two lowest bodies were those working with women UNFPA, UNIFEM which received 15 and 13 responses respectively.

Taking the survey as a whole, at least three-quarters of the respondents had some knowledge of the UN and several of its main agencies, both those which deal with indigenous peoples such as the CHR, the ILO and the World Bank as well as the more well-known agencies such as UNESCO or WHO. Several participants explained, however, that some agencies were only known for their general activities; for example, they knew UNICEF because of its Christmas cards, not because of its work on the Convention on the Eights of the Child which includes indigenous provisions.

In spite of this broad knowledge, only a few participants (13) knew all the areas of the UN system mentioned in the questionnaire. This demonstrates that the full range of initiatives taking place in the United Nations agencies concerning indigenous peoples is still little known.

A recurring theme which arose in most of the interviews and several questionnaire responses is that indigenous peoples were rarely approached by the UN or its agencies, but that they had to investigate the system themselves and make any initial contacts. Thus most indigenous awareness of the UN and its agencies is not, on the whole, the result of specific work by the UN but from initiatives by indigenous peoples themselves.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that most UN agencies are not effective at informing indigenous peoples about their existence, their general work and, in particular, their activities concerning indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Involvement in the UN and its Agencies

The survey next looked at the level of involvement between indigenous peo-

ples and the UN agencies listed in the questionnaire and, in certain cases, went more deeply into specific examples in order to illustrate common concerns. The same twenty participants did not answer the questions about the specific dealings with agencies as not applicable.

The fifty-three indigenous people who did respond distributed the nature of their relations according to four categories:

General meetings: 23
Meetings on indigenous peoples:..... 44
Participation in research, policy planning and guidelines:..... 19
Programme and projects:..... 30

The high figure for attending indigenous meetings can be explained because forty of those responding to the questionnaire had attended the WGIP previously. The general meetings referred mainly to the CBD and CSD and to the UN Conference on Environment, Human Rights and Women.

The programmes and projects were from agencies such as the ILO, UNHCR, WHO and UNDP. Although little detail was provided for the specific programmes and projects, INDISCO in the Philippines; the UNHCR programme for Laos refugees in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia; the WHO's programme in Latin America (OPS); and the UNDP programme in Kenya were mentioned.

The participation in research, policy planning and guidelines related primarily to drafting in the ILO Convention 169 and the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the CHR-WG. As participation in these meetings has been considerably more limited than at the WGIP, the number is comparatively low. However, this also infers that indigenous peoples are rarely involved with the UN in collaborative work on decision-making, research, policy planning and guidelines.

Results of Involvement with the UN

The fifty-three replies, including several detailed interviews, provide the total sample of indigenous peoples who had involvement with the UN. Although the question was framed in a neutral manner ('what were the results of the contacts?'), most of the replies framed their response in terms of an evaluation ranging from positive to negative.

Only four replies unequivocally saw the current UN system working positively for indigenous peoples. Specific aspects of the UN's work appeared positive in some of the replies including the importance of sharing information about the UN, the significance of participating in drafting international instruments and the importance of meetings for strengthening indigenous networks.

Several responses referred to specific positive experiences with particular agencies and UNDP, ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO were mentioned once each. In contrast, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was raised by the majority as a successful initiative and they also remarked on the significance of having indigenous participation in the Voluntary Fund.

Most of the replies, however, were mixed or negative. Fourteen responses were completely negative in all respects while others specified areas such as lack of information of poorly organised projects. There were a few mixed responses both of a general and specific nature which will be reflected in the analysis.

Criticisms covered several areas:

1. Information: Whereas some information is available at most meetings, the preparation and follow-up by UN agencies is poor. Often reports are not distributed to participants at meetings and they never hear of the results of their deliberations.

2. Participation: The open participation at the WGIP was welcomed by all who discussed the Working Group, and to a lesser extent the CBD and CSD; however these were considered exceptional in the UN context. Several people drew attention to the complicated and demeaning system of accreditation at the CHR-WG, while others referred to the dependency on NGOs with consultative status in order to participate at many UN meetings.

3. Consultation: Agencies were criticised for not consulting sufficiently with indigenous peoples and creating badly-formed action plans. Several references were made to the poor quality of staff members who are ignorant of, or even hostile to, indigenous peoples.

4. Communication: Many people complained that the UN and its agencies do not reach out to regions and indigenous local communities which means that the majority of indigenous peoples have no idea what is taking place internationally or even nationally.

Specific Relations with the UN and its Agencies

In the detailed interviews, comments were made on specific agencies and UN bodies.

1. CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity

Respondents criticised the minimal participation of indigenous peoples in the drafting of the Convention. A North American participant described the whole process as 'extremely frustrating'. Others commented that increased indigenous participation and preparatory meetings were being organised and their success was essential for this body to establish credibility. Information must be decentratilised to indigenous peoples.

2. CHR - Commission on Human Rights

Most of the criticisms of the CHR were directed at the Commission and Sub-commission because they have a participation procedure which is limited to NGOs with consultative status and makes indigenous peoples feel excluded from the meetings. Others felt frustrated that speeches and attendance too often become 'symbolic' activities which prevents the meetings from discussing complaints adequately. On the other hand, the Special Rapporteur on Burma, for example, had been open to listen to indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the staff at the Human Rights' Centre regularly answer letters, unlike several other agencies. The recent addition of an indigenous item on the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights was welcomed.

The WGIP was strongly supported by delegates for its open participation and successfully taking up initiatives raised specifically by indigenous peoples: the Treaty Study, the indigenous Day, Year and Decade and the Permanent Forum.

The WGIP is aware of indigenous peoples´ concerns, it provides indigenous peoples with the means to learn about key players in their lives and the position of governments. However, participants felt that the rules of the Working Group allow governments more time to speak while indigenous participants sometimes found the Working Group members intimidating, and were too frequently cut off during their speeches.

Several respondents had comments on the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Whereas his presence at the WGIP meeting was positive, there was concern that his report on the restructuring of the Human Rights Centre ignores the question of indigenous peoples, even though the WGIP is the largest meeting under the Commission on Human Rights. Only after an indigenous delegation went to the office to complain did the High Commissioner´s staff show some response.

3. CHR-WG - Intercessional, open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights

Although in practice all indigenous participants were able to attend the Intercessional Working Group, many felt that the process of accreditation was demeaning. Governments are able to to veto the participation of indigenous organisations which means that some can only attend under the auspices of an NGO with consultative status. However, in spite of the participation problems and the dominance of governments in the meeting, those who had attended commented on the receptivity of the Chair and saw his continuing fair approach as a key to its success.

4. CSD - Commission on Sustainable Development

'What was "unsaid" about UNCED was the indigenous Karioka meeting' said a North American representative. 'This meeting clearly established indigenous peoples' view of the relationship between environment and development; our view is opposed to that of powerful economic interests which treat "sustainable" and "development" as "oxymoronic". Participation at the CSD is more flexible than at the Commission on Human Rights, and indigenous peoples can make presentations and lobby; however, there is still a lack of information and dissemination of material which is overly oriented to Agenda 21. Furthermore, the work of the CSD is not locally oriented which is crucial in environmental issues.

5. FAO - Food and Agriculture Organisation

FAO has a very low appreciation of indigenous issues and too often indigenous questions are dissolved into the concerns of farmers. The FAO, governments and NGOs do not understand the complementary nature of indigenous and farmers´ rights.

6. ILO - International Labour Organisation

Although the ILO has the only Convention dealing with indigenous peoples, replies to the questionnaire considered that the participation of indigenous peoples in the revision of Convention 169 had been inadequate. Several mentioned that the structure of the organisation was very bureaucratic and that it is extremely difficult to get cases heard at the Committee on Standards. Whereas some felt that ratification was necessary in certain parts of the world, others felt that Convention 169 was too weak on indigenous rights issues. Indigenous representatives also sought information on the applicability for indigenous peoples of other Conventions.

Comments on ILO activities centred around the INDISCO programme in the Philippines. The project was meant to be two-sided, but the ILO agenda was inflexible and did not take into account the wishes of the local people. The ILO was seen to impose its own criteria too much in its programmes and not listen enough.

7. UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

Indigenous representatives considered that UNDP´s capacity building programmes could be effetcive, but they are dependent on local representatives and information about their availability only arises from chance encounters. Several participants commentd that they had written to UNDP several times without receiving a reply. There was concern in the Philippines about UNDP´s support for mining activities on indigenous lands and some argued that the organisation is not transparent enough. Indigenous participants from North America complained that UNDP does not work in developed countries and so by-passes indigenous peoples living in dire poverty in the North.

8. UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

A similar criticism of UNEP was that it does not talk sufficiently to indigenous peoples from the North. Local indigenous communities found gaining access to the small grants programme difficult and several participants complained at the recent indigenous consultation meeting in Geneva where UNEP tried to impose its own agenda and showed itself insensitive to indigenous peoples´ concerns.

9. UNESCO

A few comments were made that indigenous peoples programmes existed but were not known. UNESCO sponsors some meetings and was supported for nort approving the human genome project.

10. UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Whereas several indigenous people commented that the UNHCR had helpled them or people they had known as refugees, others felt that the government-controlled bureaucracy means that many indigenous refugees are ignored. An African participant complained at the arbitrary cancellation of a woman´s project with no explanation. However a serious accusation was raised from Laos refugees in South-east Asia where for several years the UNHCR has apparently been involved in extortion from indigenous people and promoting prostitution. This has taken place during the period when the refugees try to obtain papers to travel to the USA and many of them, particularly women, are in an extremely vulnerable position. When this case was taken to the higher bodies of the UN, the complaint was ignored.

11. UNICEF - United Nations Children´s Fund

Very few respondents were aware of UNICEF´s work with the Commission on the Rights of the Child and most

referred to some programme activities. These were too often designed and implemented according to government procedures rather than responding to local needs, and they also lacked follow-up.

12. WHO - World Health Organisation
In the early 1980s, the WHO did not have much interest in indigenous questions and several North American representatives said that they were ignored when they approached the organisation. More recently, however, there has been an opening in certain international meetings where indigenous medicine has been recognised as a significant factor in world health. However, much still needs to be done. The Pan-american Health Organisation received criticism for only being interested in western medicine and ignoring indigenous peoples.

13. WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organisation
This agency came under considerable criticism from indigenous peoples who have tried to make it understand the importance of protecting cultural property. WIPO only appeared interested in the Eurocentric western framework of property rights where knowledge is treated as a commodity for exchange.

14. World Bank
The World Bank occasionally encourages indigenous peoples to come to meetings in Washington and has provided space for some input into its operational directives on indigenous peoples. This was considered useful in terms of global definitional questions of indigenous peoples. However the participation was also seen by some as 'co-optation'.

Most of the concerns of indigenous peoples related to how World Bank projects affect indigenous peoples: 'they flush their toilets and it all comes out over our lands', said one response. Indigenous representatives from India were particularly critical of Bank projects in the hydroelectric, mining, thermal and migration sectors. Some Bank staff are pro-indigenous, but these are not in the majority. Indigenous campaigners commented that convincing the Bank to stop a harmful project is difficult - information is retained and guidelines are ignored. Dialogue takes place but rarely gets anywhere. They felt that the most effective approach against World Bank projects is open protest.

These specific comments about the UN agencies and bodies reinforce the general comments made earlier. In spite of some positive experiences, indigenous peoples generally experience a lack of information, of participation, of consultation and of communication. They consider that the international institutions are closed entities dominated by governments and unaccountable experts while they feel that their local needs are not addressed. The most positive experience for indigenous peoples has been the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Suggested Improvements

Almost all of the responses to the questionnaire made suggestions as to the way in which the UN, its agencies and organs can improve indigenous peoples' involvement in UN activities. The proposals covered five main areas:

1. Participation
Indigenous peoples want a more open access to the United Nations at all levels. This means a more straight-forward system of accreditation which does not always mean dependence on NGOs with consultative status. Indigenous peoples want to be fully consulted before agencies plan activities which concern them. They want to be involved in decision-making processes, to be recognised as peoples, and for indigenous representatives to be given the opportunity to contribute to the activities of the agencies as independent consultants and experts. Indigenous peoples should be included in all meetings, policy consultations, monitoring and implementation activities which affect them. More indigenous peoples should be employed within the UN, following the positive example of the Human Rights Centre, the ILO and the Secretariat for the CBD.

2. Information
The United Nations must make a special effort to ensure that documentation and information reaches indigenous peoples, particularly at the grass roots. Meetings should be held at a regional and local level, while national and local media should be informed of UN activities which affect indigenous peoples of the region. Agencies should make their guide-lines on indigenous affairs readily available to all indigenous peoples. Several respondents emphasised the importance of transparency in all UN activities.

3. Training
The UN should strengthen its activities to support the training and education of indigenous peoples in their areas of competence. This means arranging meetings, technical assistance and providing advisory support.

4. Outreach
Indigenous peoples are constantly trying to find out more about the UN and its agencies, but there is little afftempt to reach out to the regions and local levels of indigenous organisation. Regional and local consultations are necessary with the full participation of indigenous peoples.

5. Co-ordination
There are several areas where co-ordination has to be improved:

Indigenous Peoples
Indigenous peoples' networks need to be strengthened and UN support is needed to provide regular opportunities for meeting and discussion. These will facilitate indigenous processes for decision-making and empower their presence within the UN system to ensure their points of view and recommendations are treated seriously. Preparatory meetings were singled out as being particularly important.

Indigenous Peoples and Governments
There is a great need for indigenous peoples and governments to meet on a regular basis to discuss questions and decisions of national policy, planning and the implementation of UN activities and international provisions for indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Peoples and the UN
There needs to be greater co-ordination between UN agencies and indigenous peoples. This could take the form of regular meetings and indigenous desks in the respective agencies. Several respondents

suggested that UN agencies should have decentralised offices in each country which encourage access for indigenous peoples. Furthermore, indigenous peoples were concerned that in several agencies there were staff members who knew nothing about indigenous peoples and were consequently incompetent, ignorant and even hostile to indigenous concerns. The UN should be stringent in its employment of those working with indigenous peoples.

Co-ordination between UN agencies and bodies

The UN agencies are not co-ordinating their activities, and provide no coherent overall strategy for promoting the cause of indigenous peoples. Too often indigenous peoples as a whole and other agencies are ignorant of what different agencies are proposing.

A focal point within the UN system - possibly the Permanent Forum, was suggested as a way for different agencies working with indigenous questions to co-ordinate their activities with governments and indigenous peoples. This was one of the general questions in the questionnaire and was discussed in detail by all respondents.

Ideas on the Permanent Forum

Whereas respondents were clear that the idea of a Permanent Forum was no panacea for all the problems facing the relationship between indigenous peoples and the United Nations, it was considered by a substantial majority (52) as an essential means for solving many of the difficulties identified in the survey. Of all those questioned only two opposed the idea of a forum because they were sceptical that it would work, while fifteen were not opposed but wanted more information. It can be said that almost everyone in the survey considered the Permanent Forum worth pursuing but a significant number urged caution. Many of the respondents provided detailed ideas on the Permanent Forum which can be classified under several headings:

1. Position in the UN

Indigenous peoples who responded to the questionnaire want the forum placed as high as possible within the UN system. Opinions fell into two areas. Some favoured placing the forum directly under the General Assembly and an equal number considered a body under ECOSOC to be appropriate. No one suggested placing the forum lower than these levels.

2. Participation

Participation should be on the basis of open access for all indigenous peoples and the organisation of the forum should be based on the principle of freedom of speech. Those attending the forum should be knowledgeable on indigenous affairs, clearly representative of indigenous peoples and from all continents.

3. Structure

The responses considered that the structure could take two forms. The first suggestion was as an independent agency 'such as the UN centre against Apartheid'. Another option was that of a 'Commission on the Status of Indigenous Peoples'. The forum should consist of the indigenous participants who address the meeting and a smaller focal group of indigenous representatives, governments and maybe experts. Several respondents felt that the membership of this group should not be too big - maybe 12 persons. The Permanent Forum might be centred in one place (such as New York or Geneva) but it must have the means to provide regular regional meetings. There was a suggestion that a High Commissioner for Indigenous Peoples should be established.

4. Function

Responses emphasised that a forum should have a broad mandate covering not only human rights questions, but sustainable development, the environment, education, health, culture and any other matters pertaining to indigenous peoples. It would provide co-ordination between UN agencies and bodies and provide information and access to them.

5. Powers and Influence

The Permanent Forum was considered in the survey to need free speech, even if this means criticising governments; it should monitor the implementation of international instruments relating to indigenous peoples; it should carry out fact-finding missions, organise expert meetings, make decisions, and recommendations as well as plan and instigate discusstion on indigenous questions. Funding should come from the main UN budget. The Permanent Forum should really respond to the needs and desires of indigenous peoples.

6. Concerns

There was concern from almost all the participants that the Permanent Forum should not jeopardise the current Working Group on Indigenous Populations which performs a valuable work in the field of indigenous rights. The WGIP is a popular body which works well, and the forum should not be seen as an alternative body. Other concerns were that the forum would become a talking institution with no influence and that too many people would see it as a panacea for all ills. This could lead to a constriction on other initiatives for indigenous peoples at the UN. Several people felt that the ideas of the forum were still very vague and an indigenous process was needed to discuss options in more detail.

Several indigenous participants said that they welcomed the possibility of the second Workshop on the Permanent Forum in Chile but wanted to ensure that invitations would not be limited exclusively to NGOs with consultative status. Whereas some participants wanted the process for the forum to go quickly, others felt it should go at a measured pace, working in conjunction with indigenous processes of consultation and the development of the indigenous decade. The statement from the preparatory meeting on the Permanent Forum was mentioned by several participants as reflecting their views and this is included in the report (Appendix 2)

Conclusion

This survey has found that even though the United Nations agencies have activities relating to indigenous peoples, with a few notable exceptions, these initiatives are not co-ordinated, they are not reaching their targets, and consequently, with very few exceptions, they are not effective. The sample consisted of indigenous representatives who should know the UN system more than most because of their presence at the WGIP, yet the lack of information about the UN agen-

cies and their activities is particularly striking.

Throughout the questionnaires, indigenous peoples express their alienation from the UN system; they lack information, participation is restricted, and resources are severely limited. One particularly said sometimes we feel that 'we are banging our heads against a brick wall'. The most positive responsed from indigenous peoples were towards the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Voluntary Fund.

The Permanent Forum was considered by almost all of the participants as the best way forward to involving indigenous peoples in the UN and improving the effectiveness of its agencies in addressing indigenous issues. However, the forum was not seen by anyone as a panacea. The forum, if well established, will be able to achieve something, but UN bodies must also take seriously the criticisms arising from indigenous peoples, and begin to work transparently, in full participation with indigenous peoples to facilitate their contribution to aims of the UN Charter: peace, development and respect for human rights.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire on indigenous peoples and UN agencies

Agencies covered:

CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity
CHR - Commission on Human Rights
CHR-WG - Intercessional, open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights
CSD - Commission on Sustainable Development
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organisation
ILO - International Labour Organisation
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNEP - United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA - United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO - World Health Organisation
WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organisation
World Bank

Questions:

Do you want to be identified for the purpose of this questionnaire, if yes, how?

1. Have you heard of any of these agencies?

2. Have you had dealings with any of these agencies or do you know anyone who has been involved with these organs?

3. What dealings did you have with them?
a. general meetings
b. meetings on indigenous issues
c. research, policy planning and guidelines
d. programmes and projects

4. What were the results of these contacts?

5. How can the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in UN agencies be improved?

6. In the light of your experiences, what are your ideas about a Permanent F=orum?

7. Have you previously attended the UN-WGIP?

Appendix 2

Statement by the Indigenous Caucus which reached consensus at the Indigenous Peoples' Preparatory Meeting on Saturday 27 July 1996 at the World Council of Churches.

1. In resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly reiterates the establishment of a permanent forum for Indigenous Peoples to be one of the main objectives of the Decade. We welcome this commitment by the General Assembly, and expect to see more concrete results on this issue after the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

2. The permanent forum should NOT be a replacement for the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. This forum must have the necessary mandate and resources to meet these obligations.

3. The permanent forum should be provided at the highest level of the United Nations either at ECOSOC or the General Assembly.

4. The United Nations process for Indigenous Peoples is cumbersome and highly technical and currently operates to exclude Indigenous Peoples from the United Nations.

5. The permanent forum should be an open access to Indigenous Nations and Peoples. The indigenous caucus does not support exclusiveness and being inflexible, but rather inclusiveness and being flexible similar to that which is done at the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. This should also apply to any future workshops on the permanent forum that have been recommended by document E/CN.4/Sub 2/AC.4/1996/5.

6. In conclusion, we emphasize that it is also crucial that specialized agencies play an active part in the forum's deliberations, and that they report to the forum on their activities of special interest to Indigenous Peoples. ❑

THE 16th SAAMI CONFERENCE AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE BARENTS REGION CONFERENCE

A joint Saami convention, Arctic cooperation and representation in the regional "Barents Region cooperation" were some of the topics discussed at the 15-18 October 1996 conference in Murmansk in which Saami from Russia and Scandinavia met with other indigenous peoples from the Barents Sea region and Siberia. The framework for the event was the "16th Saami Conference" and the "Indigenous Peoples of the Barents Region Conference", held jointly for the first time.

Saami: A people in four countries

As a result of colonisation, the Saami people's land, Sápmi, has been divided among four nation-states: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. This has made it extremely difficult to carry out a joint Saami political policy. The Saami Council was founded by Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish Saami interest organisations in 1956 as a platform from which to strengthen the Saami community and work towards common goals. Today, the Saami Council has NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) status at the United Nations as well as at the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and takes part in a variety of international projects with numerous other indigenous peoples.

Over the years, the Saami Council has been concerned with a number of issues including legislation concerning the Saami language and laws, issues related to nourishment and rights, legislation concerned with reindeer herding, and environmental questions and education. For many years, the Saami Council has attempted to contact the approximately 2,000 Saami living on the Russian side of the Kola Peninsula. Thanks to "glasnost" and "perestroika", contact has finally been made and the Association of the Kola Saami (Associacija Kolskih Saamov) received full membership status in the Saami Council. The Saami Conference, held every four years, is the Saami people's top decision-making organ, and it is the Saami Council's member organisations which choose the delegates to attend the conference. It is a tradition that the conference is hosted by Saami from different nation-states on a rotating basis. The 16th Saami conference, held in Murmansk, was a historical event in that it was held in Russia for the first time ever.

Kola Peninsula Saami

The situation for Saami on the Kola Peninsula is markedly different from that of their Scandinavian counterparts. As a part of the former Soviet Union, they have their own history, characterised by collectivisation and the significant militarisation of the Kola Peninsula which took place both during and after WWII. Ecological studies have confirmed that there is a sustainable base for the Kola Saami's principal occupations: reindeer herding, hunting and fishing. Industry, including power plants, tourism and factories have polluted nature and in many areas displaced the Saami from the areas where they can practise their traditional occupations. The best Salmon rivers are now reserved for foreign tourists while profits from tourism do not benefit the Saami nor the local population. Moreover, reindeer herding needs to be developed in order to meet current demands. At present, there is a sort of partially state controlled reindeer herding industry and only limited private control. Kola Saami seek to develop traditional occupations including a fledgling handicraft industry. Only a limited portion of hunting and fishing products enter the

market economy, the majority are used to meet subsistence needs.

Arctic Cooperation

Leif Halonen, one of the conference's main speakers, set out the arctic cooperation. Environmental cooperation between the seven arctic countries: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the USA was stressed, the so-called AEPS-process (Artic Environmental Protection Strategy). The aim of environmental cooperation is to create a platform from which a joint plan of action to protect the arctic environment can be implemented. As a part of the AEPS-process, an indigenous peoples' office was established in Copenhagen at the instance of the Danish Government and the Greenland Home Rule Government. Leif Halonen stated that the purpose of the office was to provide a forum where the indigenous peoples from the entire circumpolar region could meet to work on furthering cooperation on arctic environmental matters.

On 19 September 1996, foreign ministers from the seven countries signed a declaration calling for the establishment of "The Arctic Council". In addition to a continuation of the AEPS-process, the Council will work towards sustainable development in the arctic region. This is to include economic and social development, improved health services and education, and attention to cultural issues. The indigenous population, for their part, are especially concerned with trade barriers existing between the arctic countries.

In addition to the nation-states, the ICC (organisation of Inuit people from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia), Saami Council and the Northern-Siberia and Far East indigenous peoples' organisation have received seats as permanent participants in the arctic council. Leif Halonen emphasised that "the status that indigenous peoples and the Saami Council have obtained in the Arctic Council is the highest status ever conferred on an indigenous peoples' organisation in the world."

On their own initiative, indigenous peoples in the northern circumpolar region created the Arctic Leaders Summit, which since 1991 has held two conferences. This forum has made it possible to plan joint strategies, especially as concerns the AEPS and Arctic Council.

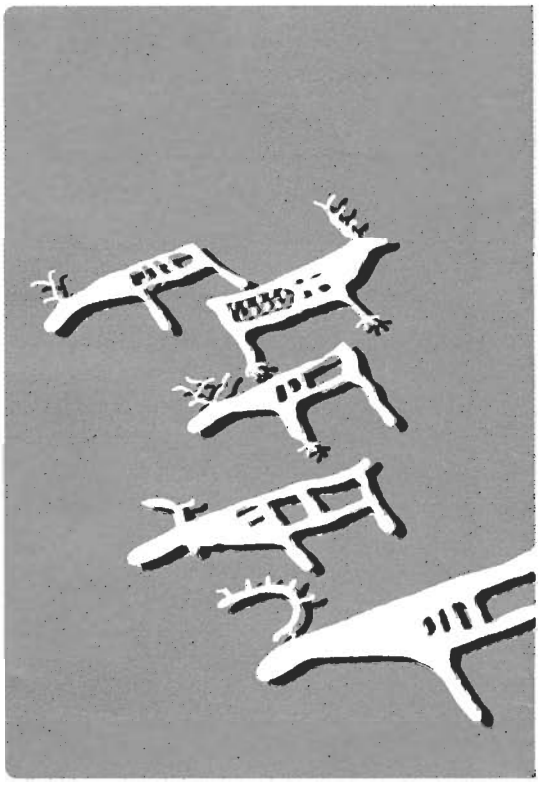
The Saami Convention

The Saami Council unanimously adopted a motion drawn up by the Saami Council's legal committee for a resolution on a Saami convention for all Saami people. The Saami live under four different legal systems. Therefore, it is important to harmonise the nation-states' legislation, just as there is also a need to coordinate the political treatment of issues which affect Saami in several countries. The Saami Convention must also guarantee certain basic norms. The manifold problems with cooperation, organisation and contacts across national borders would be helped by a joint Saami Convention. Finland, Sweden and Norway are already prepared to begin work on a Saami Convention. The Saami Conference exhorts the Nordic states to present the idea of a Saami Convention to Russian authorities. The Saami Conference urges the responsible authorities in Russia to take part in the work for a Saami Convention and that Saami in Russia be permitted to actively take part in the joint effort. It will be the Saami Council's task to instigate negotiations with state powers and achieve the Saami Convention's resolution. Lars-Nila Lasko, of the Saami Council's legal committee, stressed that this would probably be the Saami Council's most important task in the next working session.

The Murmansk Declaration

The Saami Conference adopted three resolutions. Through the years, Saami have resided alongside the salmon rivers in order to exploit this important resource along with a combination of other natural resources. Recently, authorities have passed laws which impede these permanent residents from gaining access to their traditional nourishment. In the resolution concerning salmon rivers, the Saami Conference maintains that ordinances for the Tana River and other salmon rivers should be elaborated so as to protect the cultural base and existence of the Saami population along the Tana River and other similar rivers in the Saami region. Therefore, the Saami Conference seeks the annulment of the convention between Norway and Finland governing the Tana watercourse so that new regulations can be developed.

The legal situation of Finnish Saami was markedly improved in 1995-96. The Finnish Constitution recognised the Saami as their country's indigenous people, with the right to preserve and develop their own language and culture. At the same time, they also made a new definition of who is Saami. This would make it possible for a large part of the Finnish population to register themselves as Saami and in this way undermine the few rights the Saami have attained. Therefore, the Saami Conference adopted a resolution which supports the proposal



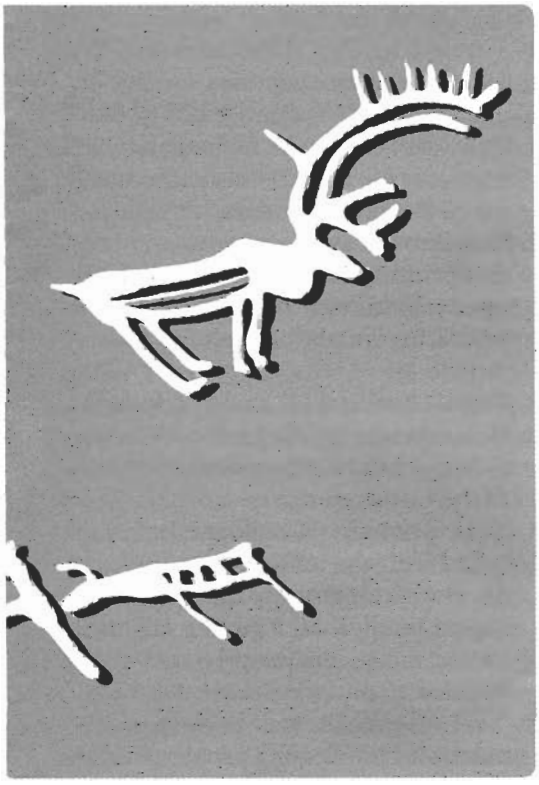
of the Finnish Saami Parliament which calls for a return to the previous legal definition of self-identification and language in order to determine who is Saami.

The Murmansk Declaration is a more general document which covers common problems for many Saami, regardless of where they live. Among other things, it calls for Saami self-determination to be accepted by the respective States in one form or another and that the Saami's right to possess the areas where they have traditionally lived be respected. The Saami's right to natural resources must be pro-

tected. In cases where the State holds the right to minerals, subsurface resources or other resources found in the region, no form of usufruct should be granted without first negotiating with the Saami.

The Future

When the Saami Council was founded, there was no popularly elected organ to represent the Saami people. Now, there exist popularly elected parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In the near future, these parliaments will establish their own forum in which they can discuss common Saami issues. More and more spheres of competency, which before had been the responsibility of the



Saami Council, will now fall to the Saami parliaments in the respective countries. What the future role of the Saami Council will be led naturally to a lively discussion. Everyone agreed that it was important to maintain the Saami Council as a Saami grassroots organisation or NGO.

A number of politicians from the Saami parliaments stressed the outstanding international work concerning indigenous peoples which Saami Council members have carried out over the years. The majority were of the opinion that the future work of the Saami Council should primarily centre on international work in the UN, South America, the Nordic countries and the Arctic. Generally speaking, it can be said that the strength of the Saami parliaments' members resides primarily in local issues, while the members of the Saami Council have an expertise in international work. At the same time, it should be stressed that these two organs: the popularly elected and the NGOs, daily use each other's human resources and expertise.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region

In 1993, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia formalised a joint multilateral cooperation to develop the northern zones through the establishment of the Barents region, and with that, the Barents Cooperation.

The Barents region consists of European zones which are intersected by or located to the north of the Arctic Circle. The region includes the counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark in Norway, Norbotten in Sweden, the county of Lappland in Finland and Arkhangelsk and Murmansk, as well as the republic of Carelia in Russia. For the Scandinavian countries, the Barents Cooperation is an important instrument to support the development of the Russian part of the area. There are many problems in the Russian zone including high unemployment, alcoholism, a rising suicide rate, a deficient infrastructure, industrial discharge in the air and water, contamination caused by oil and gas exploitation, and a constant fear of radioactive radiation from nuclear reactors and nuclear waste dumped in the Barents Sea and from the nuclear testing area in Novaja Zemla. The region has great potential as it is Europe's richest area in resources including extensive forests, fish, ore, minerals and gas. So far, the Barents Cooperation covers two indigenous peoples: the Saami and the *Nener*. For these peoples, the exploitation of natural resources has until now only created problems as traditional land and water areas have been affected.

The problem is that no Russian law exists which protects indigenous peoples or their primary occupations such as hunting, fishing and reindeer herding. President Yeltsin has elaborated a series of decrees and stipulations concerning the indigenous peoples of the north, but no mechanism exists to implement these decrees; instead, there are many ways to evade them. On the one hand, it was clear that development and protection of primary occupations was desired. On the other hand, others believed that indigenous peoples themselves should exploit the oil and gas. Yeremy Aipin, the president of the association of indigenous peoples, pointed out that so far indigenous peoples have not benefitted from the economic reforms. Problems in the northern zones of Russia are today unsurmountable. It would take an enormous amount of resources to improve living standards, fight pollution and expand health care, nutritional and educational sectors, etc. Aipin was of the opinion that indigenous peoples themselves could take part in this work by, among other things, active participation in the exploitation of gas and oil. Furthermore, he would like to see investment in the development of traditional activities, if possible through joint ventures with private investors or the Scandinavian States. As one of the priorities, he named a "development bank" for indigenous peoples in northern Russia. Such a bank could be Scandinavian, emphasised Aipin.

Nevertheless, the political aspect must not be forgotten. The indigenous people of the Barents region want to influence the political agenda, but until now have not had the opportunity. At present, indigenous peoples are represented in the Barents Cooperation by an "indigenous peoples' committee", which has an advisory function. The idea to create an "indigenous peoples council" was also raised in the context of the Barents Cooperation. It was recommended that the indigenous peoples council should, on certain occasions, have decision-making authority and that they should be consulted by other organs of the Barents Cooperation in cases concerning indigenous peoples' field of activity.

Both the Kola Saami and the Nener stressed that they are in desperate need of specialists, for example, they lack qualified individuals who can elaborate political and juridical programmes.

***Claus Oreskov** is member of the IWGIA National Group in Denmark* ❑

Statement from the Indigenous International

THIRD CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 4 - 15 November 1996

Intervention by Valerio Grefa, President of COICA

Madam President:
Thank you for this opportunity to address this August conference.
Representatives of the world's governments, indigenous brothers from different corners of the planet, brother representatives of other local communities, NGO friends.

We have come here on behalf of all the life in the forests but above all on behalf of those who are no longer: the beings of the waters, fertility, the harvests and abundant resources, the medicine. We have come in the name of the gods who maintain life in the forests, the rivers and lakes, but which have abandoned their world and where now the trees and plants have disappeared and will not return. We humans are a part of this Mother Earth. But it is being weakened and we could die with it. We have come on behalf of Life to end this centuries-long war which is trying to end our natural environment.

We are the people who have preserved, conserved and developed the biological biodiversity still found in abundance in our lands and territories. Collectively as peoples, we have guarded our valuable knowledge. We are the ones who have a spiritual relationship and interdependence with the diversity of forms of life in our lands and territories.

However, our knowledge, innovations and practices are being taken without our consent, and for commercial use. Our rights as peoples, including rights to self-determination, are not recognised. Our lands and territories are not respected. Although we have such a close relationship with the contents of the Convention we are not considered as legitimate parties to it.

My sister from Nepal, Stela Taman, will continue with the recommendations of the World's Indigenous Peoples to the Third Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Thank you Madam President.

Intervention by Stela Taman, from Nepal

We would like to share with you the following recommendations for the implementation of Article 8j:

1. That the Secretariat immediately implements the main points of the Indigenous Peoples' demands.
2. That through an open, transparent and democratic process, criteria are developed to guide national governments in legislating for the implementation of Article 8j.
3. That a funding mechanism be set up to facilitate the participation of indigenous peoples in all aspects of the work of the Convention.
4. That a process of dialogue be established with the indigenous peoples to develop alternatives to the present system of Intellectual Property Rights to protect indigenous peoples' knowledge systems.
5. That, above all, non-indigenous demands for intellectual property rights, for processes and products associated with indigenous peoples' knowledge and genetic resources be prohibited.
6. That a moratorium be called on bioprospecting and the collection of ethno-

Forum to the ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

botanical resources within indigenous peoples´territories, and that adequate mechanisms for the protections of indigenous knowledge are established.

7. That an Open Intersessional Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity be established in the context of the Convention, with full participation of indigenous peoples´ representatives.

Finally, Madam President, I would like to inform the distinguished members that the indigenous peoples have drawn up a document on Promotion and Protection of Knowledge Systems for the implementation of Article 8j. This document will be available from Wednesday 6th and will be presented to this Convention. Above all, we would like to invite the distinguished government delegates to a cultural event which will take place tomorrow afternoon at a time and place to be announced.

Thank you Madam President. ❑

SHORT NEWS SHORT NEWS

US government dumps the Hagahai patent

After months of indecision and confusing signals, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has finally put an end to its internationally-denounced patent on the human cell line of a Hagahai indigenous person from Papua New Guinea. "I hope this is the end of what is arguably the most offensive patent ever issued", says Alejandro Argumedo of the Canada-based Indigenous Peoples´ Biodiversity Network (IPBN).

While not yet officially announced, NIH filed paperwork to "disclaim" the patent at the US Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) on October 24, 1996. The NIH disclaimer forfeits all of the US Government´s "past and future rights in each every claim of United States Patent No. 5,397,696... thereby relinquishing all control over said patent."

"Three up, three down", says RAFI´s Executive Director Pat Mooney, referring to the trio of US Government patents and patent applications on indigenous peoples´ cell lines that RAFI has opposed. "With Panamanian indigenous people from the Guaymi General Congress, we successfully pressured the US to withdraw its first patent application for an indigenous person´s cells"; says Mooney. "Later, in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Government, RAFI suppressed another US government patents application for the cells of a citizen of that country."

"Once a patent is granted, it´s harder to get rid of", says RAFI´s Edward Hammond. "This made the job more difficult in the Hagahai case. Despite initial statements by the US Government that it had the informed consent of the Hagahai and approval of the Papua New Guinea Government for the patent, under a RAFI Freedom of Information Act petition NIH produced nothing to substantiate these claims." But NIH still stubbornly clung to the patent until charges of bio-colonialism from indigenous people, NGO´s, and foreign governments across the globe forced it to relent.

Even in disclaiming the patent, NIH has left unaddressed many of the numerous inconsistences and missteps that have dogged the US government since the beginning of the patent controversy in 1994. A backgrounder on the patent recently prepared by NIH "raises many more questions than the few it credibly answers", says Neth Dano of the South East Asia Regional Institute for Community Education (SEARICE) in the Philippines.

"We´ve been consistent, and right, all along while the US government has equivocated and contradicted itself", says Dano. "If, as the US State Department said, they patented the Hagahai 'for their benefit', why did the US not even bother to contact the Hagahai when it gave up the patent? Why does NIH blame a researcher in Papua New Guinea for the US Government´s own patent? The Papua New Guinea Institute for Medical Research has said that it followed NIH´s lead."

According to NIH, government notice of the patent disclaimer is slated to appear in the Patent and Trademark Office´s Official Gazette on December 10, which is also International Human Rights Day. While the PTO´s timing of the announcement appears to be coincidence, indigenous people and NGO´s find it poignant and ironic.

"There has been no greater affront to fundamental human rights by Western intellectual property systems than the Hagahai patent", says Argumedo. "The disclaimer is cause for celebration for indigenous people. At the same time it gives us all a chance to reflect on the immorality of industrialized countries allowing the commodification of human cells, genes, and other tissues."

Although the US Government´s strike-out on indigenous peoples´cell line patents is encouraging, the scope and number of patents on human tissues is dramatically expanding. Indigenous people, RAFI and other NGOs remain vigiliant and oppose other current and future moves to patent human tissues.

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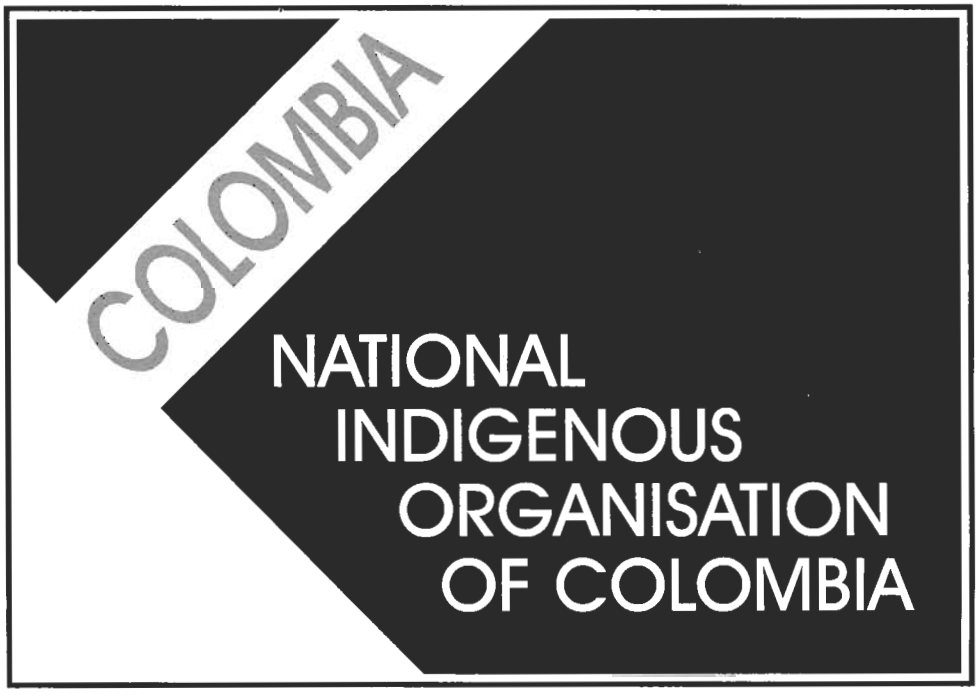
***RAFI** is an international non-governmental organisation headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario (Canada) with affiliate offices in Pittsboro, North Carolina (USA). **RAFI** is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable improvement of agricultural biodiversity, and to the socially responsible development of technologies useful to rural societies. **RAFI** is concerned about the loss of genetic diversity - especially in agriculture - and about the impact of intellectual property rights on agriculture and world food security.* ❑

SHORT NEWS SHORT NEWS



The indigenous peoples joined together at the ONIC, *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia), board of directors' meeting would like to express to the world, on the occasion of the holding of the Intergovernmental Sectional Forest Panel in our country:

That forests do not exist in the abstract because a forest has an owner and a spirit, and each tree, animal and plant of the forest are persons;

That the indigenous peoples of Colombia continue to preserve and defend the forests on our reservations and traditional territories. We do so not because the agrarian reform law demands that we fulfil an ecological obligation, but because it is the destiny that has always been shown to us by Sira, Buinaima, Serankua, Karagavi and our other guiding spirits.

That the country's politicians and businessmen are blind to the 14 million deforested hectares and the fate of indigenous peoples and other local communities who live in the forests; we are not taken into consideration when forest policies are designed. The total sacking of the land continues, stimulated by external market forces, and there are no plans to recover impoverished lands, with the result that the communities who live there are faced with a constant crisis;

That at present there is a detrimental strategy designed to increase the agricultural and grazing frontier area based on violence through paramilitary groups which leads to the forced displacement of *campesinos*, who lose their lands to powerful ranchers and landowners and are in turn forced to destroy forests and invade indigenous peoples' territory, producing new social and environmental conflicts. This leads to a repetition of the violence of the 1950s;

That international co-operation agencies believe that the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the Amazon region and the Pacific are well preserved thanks to the money they invest in private NGOs. But the Sierra and the rainforest are dying and the presence of NGOs continues to disturb community life;

That the international community should instead alter the world development model and pressure the Colombian Government to resolve the social causes which influence the destruction of forests and the invasion of our territories, such as State sponsored violence and the high concentration of land ownership in the interior of the country;

That everyone should know that it is not possible to work with a single understanding of the concept of forests because nature is wise and varied, and there exists a multiplicity of forest types: humid rainforests in the Amazon and Pacific, dry thorny, tropical forests in Guajira, *galería* and palm forests in the Eastern Plains, mangrove swamps along the coast and high moor forests in the mountains. Each one needs its own strategy;

That the drug policy of the United States and Europe, apart from being a new cudgel against developing nations, has become the principal destroyer of forests and waters due to the irrationality and violence directed towards the sowing of coca, marihuana and poppy, and the resulting military repression and use of pesticides;

That many of our communities have declared a suspension of timber felling in indigenous peoples' territories, but we have not received the necessary support to strengthen our traditional economies nor has the State helped to stop the destruction carried out by outsiders.

That the Government should respect the autonomy of indigenous peoples and collective ownership of our properties, especially in cases of superposition of Reservations with national parks;

SHORT NEWS SHORT NEWS

That the national Government and authorities have decided to open the Troyano, Pegaso and Unicornio wells in the Department (province) of Putumayo, which has suffered from a devastating forest and ethnic catastrophe due to 30 years of oil exploitation, in the last primary forests in the department, a territory used for hunting and which is of great cultural importance to indigenous peoples;

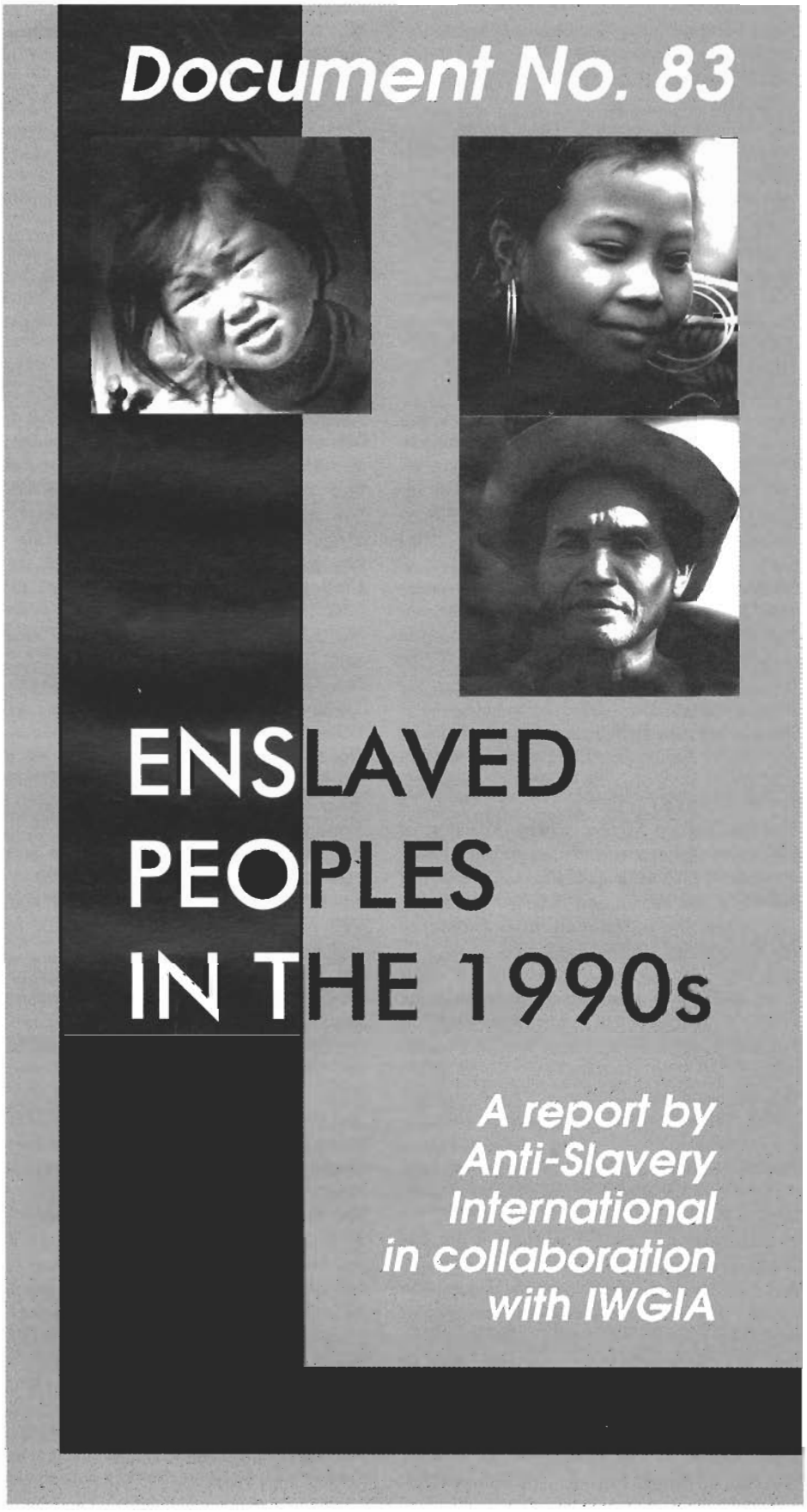
We seek special international solidarity so that the few legal norms and decisions which protect us are fulfilled such as the order in Law 160 (1994) that indigenous reservations located in the Amazon and Pacific forest reserves be fixed up within a period of three years, and that a fair price be paid for the improvements carried out by the communities established there. This legal deadline expires in August 1997 and the Government has not yet paid for a single improvement.

Finally, we emphatically call on all political forces and actors involved in the 40 year armed conflict in our country to not involve indigenous peoples' forests and territories in the war nor to station military bases there. Furthermore, we demand respect for our autonomy and our right not to be conscripted by any of the involved factions. Our continent has already been sufficiently bathed by 500 years of bloodshed.

For the record, we undersign this resolution in the municipality of Villeta, Cundinamarca, on the 7th of December 1996.

FOR UNITY, LAND, CULTURE AND AUTONOMY

Presented at the Intergovernmental Panel on Sectorial Forest in Leticia, Colombia, December 1996. ❑



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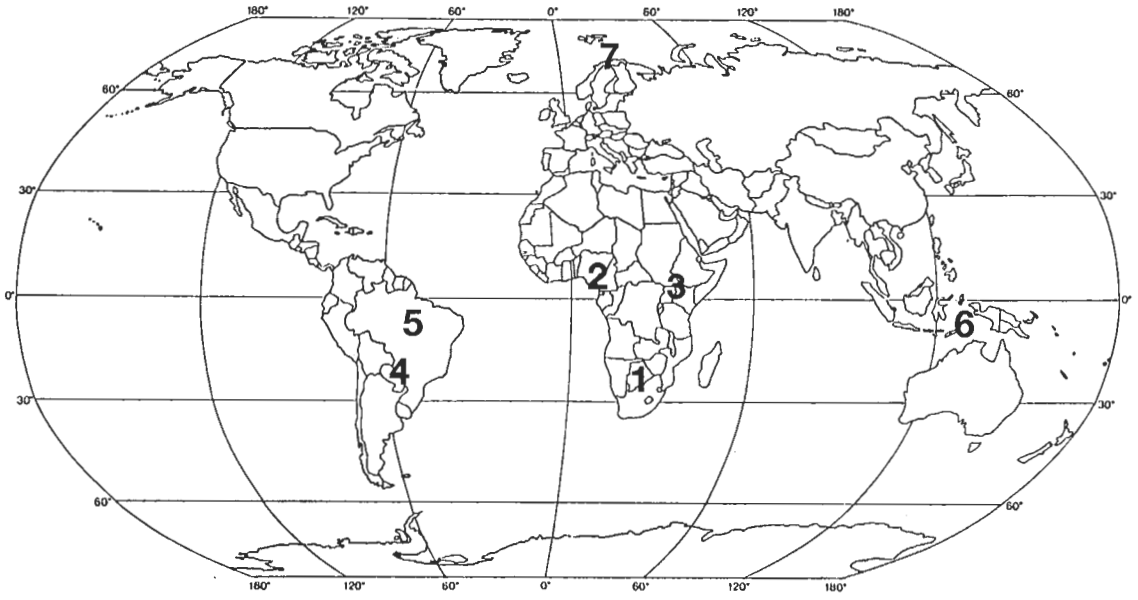

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