

Tribal Round-up

Last Call for Freedom



There is no shortage of indigenous voices in the mainstream media calling for equal rights, human rights or legal representation. Indeed one could be forgiven for thinking that this is what every indigenous tribal person on the planet wants. Presented here are some voices from those less vociferous, those whose voices are usually drowned out by the 'conference dragons' and their media mouthpieces. This article tries where possible to present people's own words, unsullied by Sunday supplement hackery. Where mediation is unavoidable, it has been done by friends of the people concerned. Consequently, very little of what follows has the seal of approval of the professional classes, and one has to rely on the word of lesser mortals with no letters after their names. Some of the text is disjointed too, but I trust DoD readers have no need of literary devices and will be willing to make the effort.

When tribal people become assimilated and formulate their ideas and ways of organising into something similar to ours, they find their message becomes much more palatable to the Western mind, naturally. When the message fails to meet with the currently fashionable view of what is politically correct, those who rigidly refuse to change and be like us are persecuted by virtually everyone, even the 'aid' organisations who arrogantly assume that everyone wants 'development'.

Yes, there are still some people around who don't want our generous gifts of democracy and human rights because they come with a price: development. Apparently human rights don't include the right to be left alone without any outside interference. In the much acclaimed UN Declaration of Human Rights,

for example, is a clause which allows missionaries to go just about anywhere and interfere with anyone they want to. Nowhere does it suggest a right not to be missionised. Our culture believes that people should be able to live or visit wherever they choose. In some other cultures this is not the case. It isn't a question of who is right and who is wrong; we simply have no right to impose our world-view on other cultures, though this is what we have done throughout history.

I hope it will become clearer through the following articles that our cultural imperialism has not diminished one iota from the grand old days of empire. The early colonists genuinely believed that they were doing good work, bringing the right way to live to ignorant people. This attitude has merely been

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couched in a different language. After the corporate monster—along with its forward guard, the missionaries—rampages its way across the last remaining wild places in much the same way as the old imperialists did, an insidious second wave of troops—the aid agencies and do-gooders—sweep up the remnants of opposition. They ensure that no trace of the old ways is left, replacing human diversity with a monoculture.

The aid organisations are far more difficult to criticise than corporations. Like the old pioneers, they genuinely believe that they are superior to their victims. For example, in spite of the evidence that our agricultural systems are ludicrous (see DoD 7, p.40) they pompously parade around places they know nothing about, telling traditional farmers who have known the land for hundreds of generations that they are wrong and must farm differently. This is mostly based on a relatively few short years shut up in concrete buildings in Western cities reading books.

We are subjected to a barrage of requests to give money to agencies to help these 'poor people'. Experts pontificate at great length about how clever they are and how much the 'developing' economies need their help. Yet only rarely do we hear from the people themselves, and when we do it is usually a member of a specially cultivated elite group speaking, not one of the unfortunate 'beneficiaries' at the dry end of the gravy train. We only hear about those people when loads of them die from some crop disaster. And then what? More experts asking for more money. They have no shame!

There are other voices though. They rarely get to speak at the big conferences because nobody will pay for their tickets. They don't get big spreads in the *Guardian* because they don't say the right things. They speak strangely; they don't 'make sense'. Their demands are 'unrealistic': they don't want justice and representation, eco-tourism, fair trade or cultural exchange. Basically they just want us to fuck off back where we came from and leave them be. This doesn't make good copy, even in progressive papers.

In an activist world dominated by froth-spluttering denouncers of violence they dare to say the 'f' word (fight). It's fine to parade around in

quaint costumes demanding justice, or fly around the world saying the right keywords and making interesting presentations in expensive hotels in nice locations, but kidnap a few corrupt government officials, and maybe kill one or two and suddenly all your rich friends have disappeared (along with your money usually).

Some people, like the Zapatistas (p xxx), cleverly manage to escape this puritanism and fire our imaginations, but most have no voice, and no money for what they really want—weapons to defend themselves, for example. Many have gone already, their tribes' names listed somewhere in some dull book, and the rest of humanity may survive long enough and learn enough to lament their passing. Meantime, others are still alive and still fighting. They are wild humans, and they need people like us as allies because all the other potential allies have agendas they want to impose in return for help. They are fighting for freedom, not for rights within our culture. Since freedom doesn't exist in our culture then theirs is truly the same struggle as ours, for anything within our culture is slavery and domestication. Only in wildness can we be free.

Let's fight with those who still know what freedom is, against those who would destroy it, or want us to settle for less. Let's free ourselves once and for all from this miserable death-grip of industrial civilisation.



*Tourist guide exhibits circumcised Maasai.
Genital mutilation was introduced by missionaries.*



Akha: Sterilization and Blood Theft by Missionaries

Rumoured widely for many years, witnesses have now stepped forward who claim that the American Baptist Missionary Paul Lewis sterilized more than 20,000 Akha Hill Tribe women in Burma's Eastern Shan State alone. This was done secretly without the approval of the Burmese government by requiring the women to go into Thailand for the procedure and using people in the Church hierarchy to organize the movement of the trusting women, who had little education as to what the long-term effects on their lives would be. Although Burma is much maligned for human rights violations, the activities of Western organizations such as this are disregarded by the same agencies making human rights reports.

In addition, blood was stolen from these women for resale, taken during the sterilization procedure. More than 3,000 of the women have died. Many developed a weakened condition and lost weight. The pain related to the surgery did not subside and in the end they died. Now the children of many women have died and obviously they are unable to have more.

In Akha traditional culture, five people serve as the government in one village. This multiperson leadership system in villages was eliminated and replaced by single pastors who rule the villages with an iron fist, allowing no dissent or return to the traditional ways.

The following is severely condensed from the Akha response to the issues of how their language has been manipulated and how they were deceived over the sterilizations, which continue to this day. This was written by a number of Akha who fear for their safety should they make their names public. Threats have already been made by people involved with the Protestant missions. Send a donation to the Akha Heritage Foundation for the unedited text.

Of the seven ladies who had sterilization in our village, two passed away shortly after. They went to receive sterilization because they were poor. After being sterilized, since their poverty demands them not to stop their job, they had to face the new disease of feeling pain all the time. Later, they pass away. Those who survived, many are still suffering from various kinds of diseases and social abnormalities. Some became opium addicts, some became very thin and suffer from bleeding. To me it seems like a systematic way of killing our hill tribe, to annihilate us. Why I dare say like that? As they are experts in these fields, they know ahead for sure that those who underwent the operation would not be able to do hard labor in the rest of her life. Knowing it properly, they persuaded hill tribes women to undertake such an operation. Now I feel very bad for my suffering people. Whom shall I blame—my poor people or those so-called experts who jumped in with lots of money as if they were our benefactors?

Apart from giving money to each patient, [Lewis] also gave all the traveling expenses to them and 3,000 Baht to the agent for bringing the women in. It became a good income for them. Because of this it seemed that many women received only the good stories of what would follow after sterilization; nobody told them the bad side effects.

Especially in Thailand, due to the high levels of prostitution, under the name of safeguarding young women, boarding schools for girls sprout up. But

then the girls no longer feel to marry Akha men. So where will the Akha children come from and what will happen to our people and villages? They do not come back to the villages. In this way the Akha women are being taken away from the Akha world. That is why the present education being given by the missionaries should be closed down quickly, then we will be able to preserve ourselves.

Regarding religion, at the beginning it seemed to be very good. Later, it turned out to be division among the people. Some became Catholics, some Protestants, some still holding their ancestors offering while others became Buddhists. All these, they could not face to one another. Now we want to raise a question, how good is the Christianity then? If that is good enough, why there are so many groups, teaching about Jesus and yet fighting one another? First they divided our people now they are dividing our villages and families. We seem to be like a prey for them. Better not to have one of them than having all of them.

They seemed that they did not show any interest for our culture. Why? They just eager to build big churches in every village. We do not know why the missionaries are trying to throw away our culture so eagerly. Isn't there anything good about our culture? Why then are they making businesses by selling Akha head dresses and other things also? Making lots of money by writing about our people, culture customs and history? After all, to be able to write

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such things, from where do they get all these informations? Indeed, these are given by my people and they are still poor. What about those authors? They become rich and well known to the world for writing and knowing about us.

The missionaries quickly seized upon the killing of twins at birth in the Akha culture as a means to villify the whole culture and turn many Akha against anything and everything Akha. Divide us—conquer us? In every culture we can ever find in the world, some part of them will not be ‘up to the mark’ of modern society, some may seem to be with error. In the Old Testament there are human sacrifices, and cannibalism is still going on in some parts of Africa. In that way, our culture also sometimes seems to be cruel. Instead of understanding our culture, missionaries mock us. In those days people were waging war in our land all the time and migrating from one place to another. If the mother had to care for two or three at the same time, it would be very hard for the fami-

ly. They might have their own reasons for all of this. Today I would like to ask all those concerned about it: since killing is wrong indeed, why then abortion is going on all the time, especially in the US where all the missionaries come from? Abroad they are sterilizing ladies, this is also a strange thing for us here.

Due to those who exaggerated our culture in a mocking way, when they converted an Akha village to Christianity, they burnt our gates, ancestors shrines, swing [representing god’s creation of humans] etc. They also stopped us from doing traditional burying and naming. Now a newborn child will be named in the Christian way by a pastor, eliminating our ancient system by which we count our generations back. Now the children cannot do that. No more recitations, no dancing allowed. In fact all these things enabled Akha people to preserve their culture and language over 1500 years already. If these can keep us for such a long time as a group of people, we don’t think they would be very bad. That’s why we want to ask you, whether to keep them instead of condemning them and throwing them all away?

When the missionaries arrived, they formed an Akha elite, taking them away from the ordinary people, giving them the best education and best facilities in the world. That is why their small group could buy the latest cars one after another. They became very powerful. They could pinpoint anybody they want and start ordering what they like. Now these young leaders are replacing old missionaries. They think that they belong to the upper class; they don’t want to admit they came from the same people.

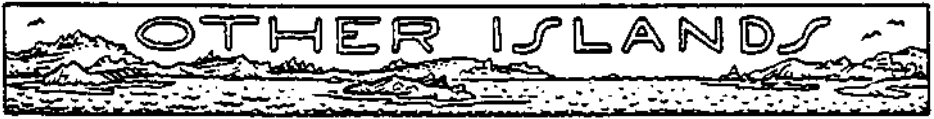
We have no proper leader, no country, no land to be able to claim as ours, no wealth, no education, numbers also very limited. To such a poor people why do they do that? It seems that they are having two faces; under the title of help they suppress us. To the world, they gained their reputations as benefactors of disappearing tribes. They built their reputations on us for many years. The way they behaved on us seemed as if we did not know about god before they arrived here. Why do missionaries think they are the only ones who can perceive god? If there is no good teachings among the Akhas, we are sure we cannot have survived ‘til this day.

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Mancee hunter-gatherer with gibbon



Hadzabe: East Africa's Last Hunting and Gathering Tribe

A while ago two people from the Non-Development Organisation FPCN (see contact pxxx) and one from FDN Germany, visited their friends the Hadzabe, around lake Eyasi, in northern Tanzania. The following is condensed from their account.

Our trip began from Arusha and headed north-west via Karatu, from where we left the road that circumnavigates the Ngorongoro Crater National Park and headed south west to Mongola.

At the southern end of Mongola were the first Hadzabe community we stayed with. In this place the traditional lifestyle of the Hadzabe can no longer continue due to the proximity of the neighbouring settlement. The area was traditionally a watering hole used by the Hadzabe. Now with the existence of expatriate settlers and the establishment of newly formed village councils, the Hadzabe are not even allowed to go to the watering hole, except when the village council and warden have arranged a party of tourists to watch them sing and perform. While a 20-strong tourist group pay 300,000TSh to the council for filming, only 10,000TSh would be paid to the total Hadzabe community.

The village has a 25-councillor-strong committee and not one Hadza. When asked about this, Gudo Mahiya, a respected Hadza spokesperson said "we are not interested in changing our culture to conform to the policy of the aggressors". He added that "even in Arusha there were 250 councillors, but the Hadzabe still have no representation, nor wish to have". He does want to go to Arusha to protest about the council here. When asked about the farming and cattle introduced by the settlers he said, "We do not want cattle, just wild animals to hunt and water that we can drink".

Is it right that a people should be driven to extinction just for not wanting to change and adopt the Western mentality of profit and greed-driven motives? Needless to say we continued refusing to pay the campsite fee for visiting and giving humanitarian aid to our friends. Even after the police were called by the campsite warden, the police couldn't believe why they had been called and laughed about it at the end with us. The protest was felt and noticed and FPCN International advises any visitors to the Malete spring to do likewise, until such time as the Hadzabe are allowed full access to the water.

Two of the occupying expatriate settlers, Ms Jeannette Hanby and David Bygott live on sacred Hadzabe ground in denial of the rights of the Hadzabe, claiming they have never inhabited the area despite it being the only spring for 20km. They

can be written to at S. L. P. 161, Karatu, Tanzania. They claim to be ecologists.

There are three situations that FPCN International was asked by this Hadza community to present to the international community;

Case 1: Enslaved Prostitution

Through the intermediaries—European priests and "sisters"—Sabina's sister Mele Abande and

Arabunna: No Nuclear Waste on Our Land

The Arabunna people, living in the area the Australian state calls Billa Kalina are fighting against a nuclear waste dump that is proposed for their homeland. The following is a short extract from their statement.

In the past we were forced to leave our lands by the killing mobs who massacred our countrymen, our mothers and our little children. The racist system forced our Old People to leave so a few of us would survive. You see our lands as remote just like your principle of law terra nullius. This is not an uninhabited wasteland for your waste. It is our home. We became refugees but always maintained contact with our country. That is only temporary and now we need to have our land back, so we can look after it the proper way and heal ourselves. We plan to go back there and take away the evil. We have to go back whether the land has been poisoned or not. We've got nowhere else to go. Our life exists with our land. It is our foundation. It is our past, present and future.

The time has come for all Australian people, if we are going to move forward, to do it without the Government... We need to get rid of the way these things are done. Destroy this evil government. Dissolve this Parliament, the Crown. Dissolve it completely, it doesn't fit in this land. Discard this artificial economy and legislation of cruel evil projects. Discard this culture of death and worship of war and greed. We have to maintain our old values that have been tried and tested over thousands of years.

Kevin Buzzacott, Aboriginal Elder and Spokesperson of the Arabunna People, to National Radioactive Waste Repository Project.

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The Batec, Negritos on the Malakka peninsula. Malays have stolen the Batecs' land and killed almost all of them. There are fewer than 800 left.

Salibogo's daughter along with many women have been tricked into prostitution by being taken to Arusha with the promise of work, only to find themselves enslaved in prostitution. FPCN proposes to act on the wishes of the Hadzabe and bring all the held Hadzabe women back to their homeland.

Case 2: Enforced Schooling

There have been times when the military has searched for Hadzabe children hiding in the bush to escape the duty of being schooled. Hadzabe girls often complain about being raped by the teachers in the Endamaga school. This happens even with the Hadzabe mothers. Later the Hadzabe girls are compelled into prostitution.

FPCN has previously been successful taking back some of these unlucky girls to their bushhomestead and families. But if caught again, these escapees have to fear severe corporal punishment. This kind of discipline is very common in these schools. When asked, all but a handful of the Hadzabe say that this schooling has a negative effect on them and is of no benefit.

Some Hadzabe have even been taken to colleges in Dar es Salaam. Currently they are all without jobs

and are now even more frustrated and irritated. They have been uprooted from their own society, and the new one is unable and unwilling to fulfill its promises. One really must try and not see it from our Western educated standpoint. For these people that are not even on the bottom rung of the surrounding social hierarchy, what use is learning English or reading Swahili or even mono agriculture for that matter? They already know everything they need to know to carry on living as they want to.

Case 3: Bad Religion

Many times white parsons tried to baptise the Hadzabe and to destroy their traditional beliefs and lifestyle. FPCN tells the Hadzabe that these missionaries are just business men who have often accumulated quite some wealth from their job. The hatred against these strangers grows among the Hadzabe. FPCN stands ready to sanction and assist with the burning out of churches on Hadzaland following a similiar successful explosion that occurred at Sanola [the church there was completely destroyed by local tribespeople].

After two days with them it was decided to visit the Hadzabe communities on the west side of the

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dried-out Lake Eyasi, circumnavigating the lake on the way. Approximately 40km down the eastern side we stopped to visit and give food to what appeared to be the least well-off community so far. This clan at Kambia ya Simba had the unenviable position of sharing a green and stagnant waterhole, some three hours walk from them, with the surrounding Barabaigs' cattle. Even one of our party, a journalist from Norway, found himself infested with worms after drinking from the source. It was clear to us all that most of the Hadza children had to permanently endure the same affliction.

Several hunting trips were made to ascertain the level of available game that these people largely depend on. The only recorded sighting in their region was a couple of dik dik (small dog-sized mammals) to feed a population of around 200. The result is that these people are solely dependent on the gathering of the three types of berries they are lucky enough to have around them.

After two abortive attempts to go south around Lake Eyasi and being forced back by rain, it was decided to visit important camps around the Sanola. On first impressions Sanola didn't appear to be as welcoming as the previous camps. That was explained later due to the work of anti-traditionalists like Bruce, a CUSO field worker, who had just the week before been hunting in the area with the district game warden from Embola.

We were also told that Momoya Muhidoti, the "camp site warden" at Chem Chem, had also been hunting with Arabs and Germans. It is also known by the inhabitants of Sanola that Bruce is responsible for the killing of the last Rhino in this area. A nice achievement for an 'aid' worker! During his visit the week before, Bruce had discussed with the Hadzabe how they had stopped all the white trophy hunting in the area. That is quite an accomplishment when you take into account that there really isn't any game left to hunt.

Sanola, once rich in wildlife, game and fresh water now has none. The displaced Barabaig herders with the expanding livestock numbers have completely taken over the water resources. The river, like Lake Eyasi is in the main dried out during the dry season. The Barabaig have erected small dams and water traps

for their livestock, creating the same polluted water, not fit for human consumption, as found at other camps. We asked and explained to the Barabaig that this cannot continue. It is feared though that more requests will be needed to persuade them to use only some of the available water holes. Methods of persuasion will be discussed, agreed upon and action taken. Barabaig settlers and cattle are not the only intruders; the Maassai are also bringing more and more cattle into the region as a result of their expulsion from the Ngorongoro Crater, to make way for a dollar-earning national park

The overall effect has been so devastating that the game the Hadzabe were dependant on have all but gone. Add to this the adverse effect of the few water holes, all infected by the cattle, and you are left with a worm-infested population dependant on berries for their moisture and nourishment. The net effects were clear in the blown up stomachs and infections suffered by the children.

In conclusion: it is the opinion of FPCN International that the biggest single detrimental effect that is dispossessing the Hadzabe of their livelihoods and homelands, is the western world's model of nation building, with its universally adopted legal system.



An Aeta hunter with a veeery long blowpipe



"We're Still Here and We Haven't Forgotten Anything"

The Kogi are a South American tribe who choose to cut themselves off from tourism and the rest of the Western invasion. They live in a remote mountain region. Some years ago they summoned author Alan Ereira and a BBC film crew to come and receive a message for us, the destructive 'younger brother'. In their stories, younger brother went off traveling, before understanding the world, and is now wrecking everything for the whole family.

They have people in the tribe, called 'Mamas', who resemble what anthropologists call shamans. Known before birth, these ones are born in a cave away from the village. They are raised by the other Mamas and never leave the cave before seven years of age. The outside world is described to them in stories, but they never actually see it. Their world consists of what they can conceive themselves. When they go outside and see the real world in all its complexity, they are overawed by it and have a direct knowledge of their own limitations compared to the whole. It's unlikely that this is something we in the West can appreciate. Here is their message to us. References to 'Mother Earth' may put off some people, but remember these are not hippy wannabees.

"We work to take care of the world. We respect the Mother Earth... We know that the land is our Mother Earth. If we plant an orange tree or any type of tree and then pull it up by the roots it will die. Digging out the earth's gold is the same thing. It could die. We've all heard many stories that the world is dying. Why is it dying? It is because they have robbed so many tombs. The world is like a person. Robbing tombs, stealing its gold, it will die. We don't take out the Earth's gold. We know that it is there but we do not take it. We know from our divinations that the advice of the Mother is not to take the gold. We know where it is but we decide only to make offerings to it.

"How is it that we are able to live? Without blood we cannot live and without bones we cannot walk. Here all the Mamas are in agreement about what it is we are going to say and how to speak. If I cut my foot off I cannot walk. When they (the

Younger Brothers) dig into the earth and take its gold it is the same thing....Gold has its own thought and it can speak. It is a living being. They must stop stealing it.

"If they take all the gold the world will end. The Mothers of the banana trees, of all the trees and of all the birds, they have all been stolen. They are cutting off the flesh of the Mother's body. They have taken everything. They have stolen the spirits of all things from the Mother. They are stealing the very spirit and thought of the Mother....

"It is the mountains that make the waters, the rivers and the clouds. If their trees are felled they will not produce any more water. We do not cut down the trees that grow by the rivers, we know that they protect the water. We do not cut down huge areas of forest like the Younger Brother does, we cut small clearings for our fields. The Mother told us not to cut down many trees so we cut very few, tiny patches.

"If the Younger Brother keeps cutting down all the trees, there will be fires because the sun will heat the earth....We are the Elder Brothers so we have to think clearly....

"Younger Brother, stop doing it. You have already taken so much. We need water to live. Without water we die of thirst. We need water to live. The Mother told us how to live properly and how to think well. We're still here and we haven't forgotten anything.

"The earth is decaying, it is losing its strength because they have taken away much petrol, coal, many minerals. Younger Brother thinks, 'Yes! Here I

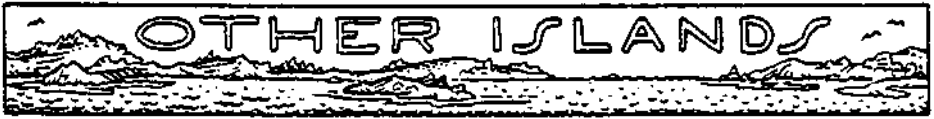
am! I know about the universe!' But this knowing is learning to destroy the world, to destroy everything, all humanity....

"The Mother is suffering. They have broken her teeth and taken out her eyes and ears. She vomits, she has diarrhea, she is ill.

"If we cut off our arms, we can't work, if we cut off our tongue we can't speak, if we cut off our legs, we can't walk. That is how it is with the Mother. The Mother is suffering. She has nothing.

"Does the Younger Brother understand what he has done? Does he?"





Dayak Resistance in Kalimantan

Our friends in Indonesian occupied territory are asking for help in the long-running conflict in East Kalimantan between the indigenous community of Benuaq Dayaks and the inter-nationally financed company, PT London Sumatra. LonSum has been clearing Benuaq forest lands to set up large-scale palm plantations. The local people's efforts to protect the land on which their livelihoods and culture depend have been met with violence and intimidation by the state.

The Dayak people traditionally grow rice, cultivate rattan and collect fruits, medicinal plants and honey. They also weave baskets and mats. They are being destroyed by logging, plantations and coal mining. The destruction of forests has brought widespread hardship. Opposition is met with threats and intimidation. The conflict has been going on since LonSum started operations in the Tanjung Isuy area in 1996. The company has violated the community's customary land, destroyed their food-growing gardens and desecrated Dayak burial sites.

The company initially said it only wanted a small amount of land for a seedling nursery but soon built a road and cleared large areas for plantations. The villagers made it clear that they refused to hand over their land. They'd also heard of the bad experiences of communities further south in Pasir, West Kalimantan and Sumatra, who lived in debt after giving up their land to become oil palm workers.

Several Dayak communities in the Tanjung Isuy area took direct action. For five months, villagers occupied one of LonSum's base camps in an attempt to get the company to address their demands.

November 1998

Sixty-four people representing nine villages in the Jempang and Muara Pahu sub-districts, went to LonSum Indonesia to present their demands for compensation of Rp250 billion (approx US\$25 million) for their land, crops and damage to their burial sites. The head of the company fled rather than hold discussions. The people occupied the company's offices for the next two weeks, preventing all operations and immobilising a number of vehicles. Meetings were held with local authorities, who ordered the people to leave the site and release the vehicles.

December 1998

As the head of LonSum refused to come back and hold negotiations, villagers took their demands to the offices of LonSum International at Muara Nayan on

Dec 2nd. Here too, the head of the company ran away so the people occupied the base camp. After ten days, the company did not respond so the people closed down its operations, seized some heavy equipment, including bulldozers and trucks, and set fire to part of the base camp. Two official buildings, a fertiliser store and some workers' accommodation were destroyed.

Around 30-40 people refused to leave the base until their demands were met by the company, but LonSum's representatives just told them to take their complaints to the head office in Medan. The local government offered to mediate between the two parties, but this was rejected by the Dayak. On Dec. 27th five military vehicles carrying 70 armed Mobile Brigade personnel (Brimob) came to the camp to arrest one of the protestors, but they were repelled.

January 1999

LonSum showed no signs of resuming negotiations, and villagers were intimidated by Brimob. Instead of addressing the villagers's claims, the authorities showed more interest in prosecuting them for damaging LonSum's property and holding the heavy equipment. Various people purporting to be from the police or military had been asking questions at a local NGO office and in and around the occupied base camp. Other base camps owned by LonSum and its contractors were reported to be under Mobile Brigade guard.

February 1999

The action continued as did the intimidation. Community leaders sent letters to the head of the armed forces, government ministers and the national commission for Human Rights (KomnasHAM) appealing for justice. A delegation of community and NGO representatives also went to KomnasHAM to represent the villagers' case. KomnasHAM issued a statement that the local government and security forces should be fair and not simply support the company.

April 1999

On April 24th, two villagers from Perigiq were stopped on the road by eight men in civilian clothes who handcuffed them and took them to PT Gelora Mahapala's base camp. They were then taken to the police station in Tenggara (the administrative centre for Kutai district), where they were roughly treated before being interrogated by police. Both have now been charged. (The original document only cites the reference numbers of the alleged offences.)



May 1999

Twenty-four fully armed Brimob personnel and six civilians armed with machetes attacked the Muara Nayan base camp at 6 am on May 7th. The local community was in the middle of a cultural ceremony, but the security forces scattered sacred artefacts all over the place and terrorised the people. The camp was cleared and many people fled to the forest. At mid-day, two NGO staff plus two locals who had

not heard about the raid came to discuss the issue of the two men who had been abducted from Perigiq. The security forces fired at them and forced them to go to the PTGelora Mahapala base where their non-uniformed captors told them they had been hired by the company. When the local head of police arrived, he arrested the two villagers and ordered the NGO people to leave the area by the next day. That evening the security forces raided the village of Perigiq, where again there was shooting and the terrified inhabitants ran off into the forest.

Since then there have been no more reports as NGO staff have been forbidden to go to the Jempang sub-district and villagers are too frightened to leave their homes. Some people are still missing, but many are hiding in the forest. There are rumours of more police raids, and the head of East Kalimantan's police has issued a 'shoot on sight' order if there are any further demonstrations. The Benuaq Dayak are extremely offended that their traditional ceremony was completely disrupted by the Moblie Brigade and paid thugs. The ceremony had been going on since February and was important to ensure the well being of the village of Muara Nayan.

The local police reported that they had 'freed' all the equipment held by the protestors occupying the base camp. Eight people have been arrested on charges of occupying, damaging and burning company property. On May 9th, the company resumed operations. On May 27th, The East Kalimantan Indigenous Dayaks Association (PDKT) met the police chief, LonSum representatives and staff from the local government of Kutai District. It was agreed to start the process of conflict resolution, though it remains to be seen what compromises will be expected by the Dayak.

Local people suspect that LonSum and its contractors have been allowed to operate illegally for the last three years due to corruption. In order to clear the land, any company is officially required to have a land use permit issued by the Minister for Forestry & Plantations and the Land Board. However, LonSum only has a letter giving 'permission in principle' from East Kalimantan's governor. The company has cleared 16,500 hectares. The commercially valuable timber is sold and the rest burned. It is likely that the local government benefits directly from LonSum's operations through shares and taxes. As yet, no legal action has been taken against the company. The local police have dropped a case against LonSum for contributing to the disastrous 1997/8 fires by illegal burning, 'due to lack of evidence'.

PT London Sumatra

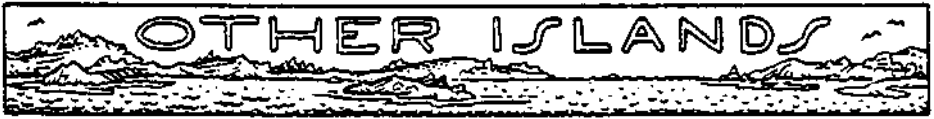
An Indonesian plantation company with its head office in Medan, North Sumatra, 'LonSum' as Indonesians call it, was founded 90 years ago as a British company. It later became a subsidiary of British palm oil traders Harrison and Crossfield, which sold out in the mid-1990's. It is now publicly listed on the Jakarta stock exchange. LonSum still has international connections through foreign purchasers of shares, loans, and supplies to Northern consumers (us!). Most exports of palm oil from Indonesia to the European Union go through Germany and the Netherlands.

LonSum now has 54,477 hectares of plantations, half of which are palm oil, in North Sumatra, Java and Sulawesi. It also has rubber, tea and cocoa plantations plus 15 processing factories. New estates are expected to expand the area under LonSum's control to 70,000 ha by 2000.

The company exports 60% of its production and so it hasn't suffered from the economic crisis when the government, encouraged by the IMF/World Bank is pushing exports. Foreign customers include Singapore Tong Teik Pte Ltd, Anglia Oils Ltd and Lewis & Peat. Its expansion last September into palm oil plantations in South Sumatra (98,750ha) and East Kalimantan (15,000ha) was financed by a \$122 million, five-year syndicated loan so the company does not have the short-term repayment problem of many of its rivals. International investors include the Dutch-based Rabobank. Unconfirmed reports cite the involvement of the UK-based Java Trust Fund.

In addition to the confrontation between LonSum and the communities in East Kalimantan over land, there have been similar conflicts in South Sumatra (Mambag, Musi Rawas) and North Sumatra (Pergulaan, Deli Serdang).

More detailed information on Rabobank and the London Sumatra is available from wakker@aidenviroment.antennae.nl



Basic Call to Consciousness

Extracted from *The Haudenosaunee Message to the Western World*

The Haudenosaunee, or the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, has existed on this land [now Mid-Atlantic states of US] since the beginning of human memory. Our culture is among the most ancient continuously existing cultures in the world.

Our essential message to the world is a basic call to consciousness. The destruction of the Native cultures and people is the same process which has destroyed and is destroying life on this planet. The technologies and social systems which have destroyed the animal and the plant life are also destroying the Native people. And the process is Western civilization...

The processes of colonialism and imperialism which have affected the Haudenosaunee are but a microcosm of the processes affecting the world. The system of reservations employed against our people is a microcosm of the system of exploitation used against the whole world. Since the time of Marco Polo, the West has been refining a process that has mystified the peoples of the Earth.

The majority of the world does not find its roots in Western culture or traditions. The majority of the world finds its roots in the Natural World, and it is the Natural World, and the traditions of the Natural World, which must prevail if we are to develop truly free and egalitarian societies.

It is necessary, at this time, that we begin a process of critical analysis of the West's historical processes, to seek out the actual nature of the roots of the exploitative and oppressive conditions which are forced upon humanity. At the same time, as we gain understanding of those processes, we must reinterpret that history to the people of the world.

It is the people of the West, ultimately, who are the most oppressed and exploited. They are burdened by the weight of centuries of racism, sexism, and ignorance which has rendered their people insensitive to the true nature of their lives.

We must all consciously and continuously challenge every model, every program, and every process that the West tries to force upon us. Paulo Friere wrote in his book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, that it is the nature of the oppressed to imitate the oppressor, and by such actions try to gain relief from the oppressive condition. We must learn to resist that response to oppression.

The people who are living on this planet need to break with the narrow concept of human liberation, and begin to see liberation as something which needs to be extended to the whole of the Natural World. What is needed is the liberation of all the things that support Life—the air, the waters, the trees.

We feel that the Native peoples of the Western hemisphere can continue to contribute to the survival potential of the human species. The majority of our peoples still live in accordance with the traditions which find their roots in the Earth. But the Native peoples have need of a forum in which our voice can be heard. And we need alliances with the other peoples of the world to assist in our struggle to regain and maintain our ancestral lands and to protect the Way of Life we follow.

The traditional Native peoples hold the key to the reversal of the processes in Western Civilization, which threaten unimaginable future suffering and destruction.





Batak: Murder and Forced Re-location on Palawan

Thomas Adona, a very respected elder of the Batak people in the remote Langogan valley on Palawan Island ('Philippines'), was brutally murdered on 23 April, 1999. He was killed by a Yantok Filipino, an intruder who wanted to harvest rattan, an important local commodity, without having consent from the local Batak people.

Adona was speared through one eye and through his head after having launched a renewed protest against the continuous discrimination against the people of his tribe by the Philipinos, whom the Batak call Christianos. He was assassinated in Mangapin, a camp where Batak people have been forcibly concentrated since several years ago by national and local government orders, an area which is now dominated by the Christianos. The restrictive orders to forcibly concentrate the Batak people were enacted by the Government of the Philippines and are not opposed by conservation organizations like the Haribon Foudation, the World Wide Fund for Nature and Friends of the Earth. The numerous development organizations operating in Palawan did not comment on the killing.



Adona always tried to live his traditional life as an independant hunter-gatherer within his whole clan. He was a part of the rainforest, and like the rainforest, he was killed brutally. Despite the many threats Adona and his people have received and despite the efforts of the government and other organizations to subdue and restrict the Batak, he will be a symbol for the loss of their culture and ingnite their resistance!

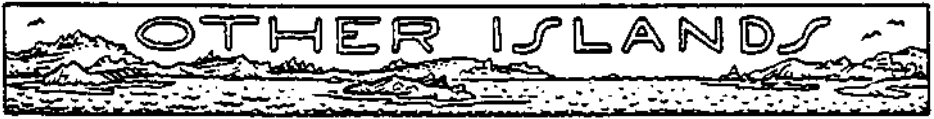
Like Buyon-og, another tribal Batak elder who died last year under unclear circumstances, Adona tried to preserve the traditional Batak life, culture and the forests. Despite all the peaceful efforts of the Batak people, the ancestral forests have been heavily degraded within the last few years by outside developers. Wild boars, formerly an important prey for the Batak, are extinct in many forests. These wild pigs have been massively poached by intruders with commercial interests, using firearms and grenades (pig bombs). In contrast, the Batak are not even allowed to gather plants in their own land. These products are essential in Batak barter trade, but official licences to collect them on the Batak ancestral lands are in the hands of powerful people in the cities, who employ Philipinos from the slums, like the murderer of Adona, to do the harvest.

All Batak are forced to be concentrated in camps, to go to church and to send their children to religious or state schools. There they are taught that the traditional life in the forest, as their parents and all their ancestors lived, has to be seen as bad, uncivilized and underdeveloped. Only a core group of traditional Batak still resists this terror.

Since last year, all the Batak have been under heavy terror from several aggressive missionaries. The adult male Batak and Tabauas (who live in association with the Batak) received a tattoo on their upper arms to show that they belong to a certain Christian sect. The tattoo bearers do not even know the meaning of these registrations on their skin.

Only nine Batak extended family-groups are left. They resist and continue to live independantly. Hartmut Heller of FPCN (see contacts) witnessed and testified to the indigenous people's caucus that these people are threatened almost daily by "officials" and intruding outsiders.

The Batak are on the edge of extinction. They are completely dominated by aggressive Christian missionaries. The NGOs who should be assisting them in their struggle are either doing nothing or assisting the genocide.



What You Can Do



Normally in this part of an article you get instructions on where to send money. Rarely is there anything else the Great Orgs want us rabble to do. Sometimes you can subscribe to a nice cheerful 'zine so you can see just how cool they are. But the money, or most of it, gets spent on offices and travel tickets, computers and consultants. In the real world, people need things to defend themselves with, like guns. Do you know anyone who does that? Well don't waste your money then. Spend it on beer, at least that way you aren't helping harmful experts to make even more problems. By taking strategic direct action here in the West we can force our organisations and corporations to listen to the people on their own terms, and show them that clever PR stunts like UN conferences and 'consultations' do not achieve the intended deception.

Here in the West is where the source of the problems lies. Although specific solidarity actions are very useful and can often make a big difference to the morale of the people being attacked by the spreading civilisation, sometimes it can be difficult to justify one particular target whose culpability is hidden behind a web of corporate hermeticism. And often when a target is obvious it is a long way from where you live. When this is the case, since the whole of industrial civilisation is interdependent, you can rest assured that any attack on any of its

agents will ultimately help. The downfall of Monsanto will not only achieve one of the immediate aims of those campaigning against GM crops, it will also help to weaken the corporate monster as a whole. The recent attack on financial centres was also very good in this context.

So just keep on doing what you are doing: trash offices, block streets, destroy dozers, bring down the animal exploitation industry (and thus industrial agriculture), protest peacefully or riot, whatever turns you on, just cause trouble wherever possible and most of all spread doubt in the minds of the great public faithful. Help to shatter their illusion. That illusion, called progress, is the thing upon which everything else is based. Until that changes, nothing else will.

Having said all that, it's apparent from the Hadzabe article that FPCN are different. Run and funded entirely by unpaid volunteers, their structure (or lack of it) is similar to our own, and they are free of all the usual caution and dishonesty seen in those who depend on the enemies of wild people for their livelihoods. There is no formal structure, but here is part of their 'mission statement': "FPCN is a NDO (Non-Development Organisation), a movement of groups and individuals, concerned with the survival of Tribal peoples and their cultures, in particular hunter-gatherers. These were the first and are the last

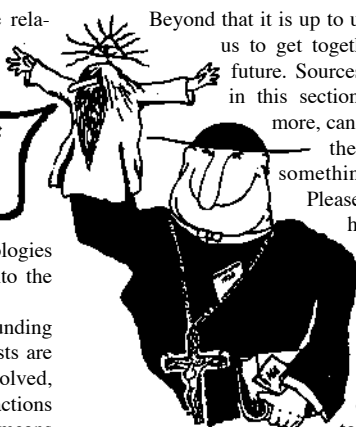
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societies on earth to have a non-exploitative relationship with the world. Our task is to help them preserve their unique cultures from

GO FORTH TO EVERY PART OF THE WORLD AND MAKE ALL NATIONS MY DISCIPLES

enforced assimilation, alien religions, the ideologies of 'progress' and 'growth' and absorption into the global economy."

The cozy development organisations and funding bodies hate FPCN, so in a way radical activists are the only hope. You won't find it easy to get involved, you won't get loads of junk-mail, or set-piece actions 'to go', but then it's a good thing because that means you are not being dictated to about what to do! Many of us become used to the idea that anyone calling for help should be 'organised', never thinking that perhaps we share that responsibility. FPCN isn't there to provide a service for us, it's there for us to get involved. The network exists and is run efficiently.



Beyond that it is up to us to use it to enable us to get together and discuss the future. Sources for all the articles in this section, along with loads more, can be got from (or via) them, if you send something to cover costs.

Please get involved and help to make this lone radical voice big enough to counteract the burgeoning indigenous 'aid' business. Just send a letter or email, you'll be in touch with a person,

not a bureaucracy. An sae will be useful.

Friends of Peoples Close to Nature (FPCN), 33 Gould Close, North Mymms, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. AL9 7EB. UK Tel/fax ~ + 44 (0) 1707 885 994
Website: <http://www.fpcn-global.org>
Email: Rains@fpcn-global.org

UN—United Against Whom?



Every year the United Nations makes itself feel good by allowing favoured groups of indigenous people to go to Geneva and have a conference. Representatives from people who should be treated as equals are relegated to a side-issue conference with no executive power whatsoever. This is the appallingly named United Nations Human Rights Commission Open-Ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on the Elaboration of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Delegates are allowed to wear badges saying things like 'express what you feel', yet this year, when they clapped in a presentation, the white European chairwoman told them to stop.

Run by white Westerners, it is clear that the UN conference is playing a game with indigenous people. For example, in the 1997 conference, Brazil and France used pathetically transparent devices to disrupt any attempt by delegates to arrive at a consensus on what their rights were. Article 44 says: "Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as diminishing or extinguishing existing or future rights indigenous peoples may have or acquire." Brazil requested that the 's' at the end of the word 'peoples' in the term 'indigenous peoples' be bracketed. France then joined in by saying that the whole

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word should be dropped and replaced with 'populations'. The Russian Federation and the United States of America then both asked to qualify the part of the article referring to the 'future rights' of 'indigenous peoples', thus effectively supporting the other efforts to block it.

If the UN is to be of any use at all, which is debatable, then indigenous peoples should have full seats in it. Anything else amounts to an affirmation of their inferior status. The following statement from the

rights... We have been told that as Indigenous Peoples we have no right on our earth, we only have rights as individuals—in other words as state's pupils.

When we can escape from this condescending relation, we find ourselves in a situation just as much disheartening. Actually we are condemned to be classified within the minorities deprived from their collective rights and political, cultural, historical identity. We ironically find ourselves on our own land



Banhlat Forest, Thailand. Former home of the Manee, who were forced to move to the hills

Federation of Native American Organisations of Guyana is a reply to attempts by nations to impose their laws and ways on other people.

"Though we live in our own land, that neither us nor our ancestors have ever left, we are facing to a legal system that is not ours. Still none of our Peoples remembers having ever renounced our own legal systems nor having allowed the European or colonial legislative power the care of to determine our rights.

"How can it be that we are suddenly subjected to laws established by a State created only a few centuries ago.

"These regimes' legal base inevitably depends on the principle that their laws are the only ones having competencies, that no other preceding legal structure ever existed or now exists, and that only a State can be source of authority. At their beginning these systems were based on the fact that the sovereign territory of the state was either unoccupied, or occupied by inhabitants that were so primitive that they were deprived of any type of social organization and therefore were unable to govern themselves. We would not be surprised then that a power established on such a specious base, if not denying our existence at least denying our competencies and our legal capability, is so little interested in recognizing our

within the same classification as the most recent immigrants. Our original ownership is not recognized.

"Our legal systems as well as our languages and our spiritual and cultural links that unite us to the land have disappeared for ever.

"Today, we are dispossessed peoples, with no other lands than the tiny little areas for our own usage, progressively the State has alienated us under its guardianship. Generally, as Indigenous Peoples, we are part of the most disadvantaged groups in the States we live in. And this is as true in developed countries as in under-developed or developing countries.

"This is why today we are facing the international community, and within the United Nations so we can elaborate with the world's governments international rights in favor of the Indigenous Peoples.

"In his speech at Palais de l'Elysée, Thursday 20 June 1996, the President of the French Republic considered that it was time to finally recognize Indigenous People's place, and to be fair with them because European civilization was for ever accountable for centuries of exploitation."

"He also recognized that the Indigenous Peoples had been able to preserve a very significant part of their heritage."