

WOMEN IN ACTION

2/92

Isis

international



*Indigenous women:
Taking control of our lives*

Isis International - Manila Coordinators:
La Rainne Abad-Sarmiento, Marilee Karl and Lucia Pavia Ticzon.

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Dear readers,

*Our theme for this issue of **Women in Action** focuses on the struggle of indigenous women to take control of their lives. We feel that it is timely and relevant to examine where indigenous women are now, what changes have occurred in their status, with the forthcoming UN International Year of Indigenous Populations in 1993.*

The term indigenous does not constitute a homogenous cultural group nor does it denote distinct population categories. It includes racial and cultural communities. While indigenous people have often been considered a minority group, we recognize that one region's minority population is another region's majority.

We have tried to be comprehensive in our coverage. We have featured articles on indigenous women in India, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. We have looked at the Amerindians and blacks in North and in South America.

*At the same time, we recognize the limitations in scope. We have not been able to include indigenous groups in other regions. We would still like to feature them in a later issue of **Women in Action** and welcome contributions from women's groups in the areas we have not covered.*

For now, we hope that the experiences of indigenous women we have been able to include in this issue can serve as an inspiration to other indigenous women and to all other women who want to regain control of their lives.

The declaration of indigenous women during the First Continental Meeting of Indigenous Peoples in Quito, Ecuador is an important statement that sums up their primary desire to care for the earth and to live according to traditional values in order to restore balance and harmony among all peoples and with Mother Earth.

As we continue our efforts to transform and improve our magazine, we have kept our regular features on upcoming conferences. We are happy to report that Isis International is involved in the preparations for the 1994 women and media conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

Again, you may want to give us your feedback and send in your articles. We will be happy to publish them. You may also want to tell us what issues you want to be taken up in our magazine in the future.

Mabuhay! Long live!

Isis International Manila collective

On behalf of rural women

Dear friends,

Greetings!

We receive copies of **Women in Action**. Congratulations on behalf of rural women from the Rural Women's Liberation Movement for coming up with successful issues. We will use the articles in our meeting and also translate them into Tamil to be published in our magazine, **Magaleer Kural (Women's Voice)**. The articles are very interesting, particularly the problems of women in Asia.

Please continue sending us copies. Thank you and warm regards.

Sincerely yours,

Ms. Burnad Fatima N.
Society for Rural Education and
Development (SRED)
Kallaru, Perumuchi Village & Post
Arakkonam 631002 Tamil Nadu, India
Tel.: 04177-708

Ed. note: *We are always glad to learn that our readers read and use the articles we publish in **Women in Action**. We are especially happy that our magazine reaches more than just the English speaking community when it is translated in other languages. Please let us know if there are any specific themes that you would like us to feature in subsequent issues of the magazine.*

Indigenous group in South Pacific

Dear editor,

We recently learned of your publication, **Women in Action**. We are very interested in finding out where we can obtain copies for our library collection.

The Tonga Community Development Trust (TCDT) is an indigenous and non-governmental development organization in the island kingdom of Tonga. It works to promote the development of the most disadvantaged persons and areas of Tonga. It is active in promoting self-reliant local development, assisting in the identification, development, planning and implementation of rural and outer island village-based development projects. Many of its projects involve training women at the grassroots level. TCDT is now expanding its focus to environmental issues in the South Pacific region.

Thank you for your time and assistance. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Elise McLaughlin
Environmental Planner
TCDT
P.O. Box 519
Nuku'alofa, Tonga, South Pacific
Tel.: 23-478, 21-494
Fax: 24-04

Ed. note: *We have included you in our mailing list. You will be receiving copies of **Women in Action** soon.*

Author's request

Dear sisters,

I learned that you have included my book, "The Roots of Heaven" in **Women in Action**. I am interested in receiving a copy of this particular issue. At the same time, I would also like to request you to publish my change of address in your next issue of **Women in Action**.

After marriage, I left Calcutta and now live with my husband in one of the districts of West Bengal. I have completed a few interviews with indigenous midwives in the surrounding villages and am trying to work more closely with small women's groups and a welfare agency-cum-training center, the Elmhurst Institute of Community Studies which has been working in about 50 villages here over the last decade.

Please keep in touch and thank you for publishing my new address.

Sincerely yours,

Ariane Loering
Post Box No. 16294
Sarat Bose Rd. P.O.
Calcutta 700029
India

Ed. note: *We are sending you a copy of the issue you requested. We wish that we could have included the information that you have gathered about indigenous midwives in this issue of **Women in Action**, but would be interested in publishing it in the future.*

From the Cordillera region, Philippines

Dear friends,

Greetings from the Kadaclan Tribe of the Cordillera!

We are interested in receiving information about your organization and how it can help a women's organization like us. We publish the **Kadaclan News Organ** and are sending you a copy.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Grace Chungalan
Overall chairperson
Kadaclan Tribal Women
Revival Development
Barlig, Mountain Province
2623 Philippines

Ed. note: *We are sending you information about our organization and will include you in our exchange publications list.*

Polish environmental network

Dear friends,

Hello!

We got your address from The Women's Environmental Network.

Our organization is called the Ecological Activities Movement in Poland and our work includes producing, processing and distributing healthy food and popularizing healthy ways of life. Our aim is to connect ecology with actual economic activities in our country.

We have started a magazine focusing on the issue of ecology and other related environmental problems. We would like to write about this issue in relation to women's problems not only in Poland but also throughout the world. In our country, many political and economical problems affect women. We hope that writing about these problems will help raise the consciousness of those who are directly involved in politics.

We are looking for organizations which can help us gather articles and materials for publication in our magazine. Please send

us some information about your organization and refer us to other groups who can assist us in our publication.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Renata Kureil
Pro Eko Foundation
Zgierz 95-100
UL Sadoda 11A
Poland

Ed. note: *Welcome to our network! We are sending you information about our organization and our quarterly magazine, **Women in Action**. Our theme for the last quarter issue of 1991 was women and environment. In this issue, we have included a directory of addresses of groups working on women and environment. You may wish to get in touch with them directly. We are interested in receiving a copy of your publication and would be pleased to exchange materials with your group.*

Sacred Run 1992

Dear friends,

My name is Kimimila (Lakota for Butterfly) and I am writing to acquaint you with what promises to be an historic event scheduled for this summer and to ask for your support.

Sacred Run Turtle Island 1992 is a multicultural, international, spiritual, and environmental relay run following in the tradition of early Native American runners. Its purpose is to carry the message of the sacredness and interconnectedness of all things.

This summer marks the 14th yearly running of the event and I am honored and proud to be participating as a Runner. Two teams, a northern one, starting in Alaska's Bering Straight (my team) and a southern one, beginning in Tierra del Fuego, South America, will converge on the weekend of October 8-9 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, culminating in a week of native celebrations to honor the "Year of the Indigenous Peoples."

I need your support. I would be honored if you, as an individual or organization, could help sponsor me in this momentous undertaking. The Sacred Run Foundation, national sponsor of the event, asks each participant (Runner) to contribute \$1000 toward expenses for the four month run. In addition, I will need travel money, several pairs of good sturdy running shoes, and assorted camping equipment.

Any help, in the form of cash donations and/or goods would be greatly appreciated. Cash donations to Sacred Run Foundation,

Inc. on my behalf are tax-deductible. Endorsements for you or your company are also available.

I am an athlete and a prayer warrior. I am running to carry a message of respect for all nations and their traditional beliefs. I want the world to see the sacredness of our earth and all the creatures who share it. I want our leaders to understand that it is people and the environment that come first, not the military to whom we are forced to give a majority of our tax dollars. Brute force will not bring peace, it only brings a "cease fire" in the game of war. American Indian ethics and values are a valuable resource for the development of harmonious culture and an end to war. When people come to realize this, we will have our greatest potential for peace.

Preserve life, don't destroy it. That is the essence of my commitment. That is why I must run. That is why I am appealing to you for help and support. Nothing less than saving the earth is what this is about.

Thank you for your time and your commitment. I look forward to hearing from you soon. I am enclosing a poem that I wrote.

Toward peace and understanding,

Kimimila/Butterfly
77 California Street #9
Ashland, OR 97520 USA
Tel.: (503) 482-7647

Ed. note: We are commending your efforts and share your deep concern for all of us to value the earth. We are reprinting the poem you wrote on page 30. Good luck!

Sacred Run 1992

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Irula tribal women seek self-sufficiency

by Susan Benn



The Irula tribal people of Tamil Nadu, South India worked traditionally as snake and rat catchers and as medicinal plant experts. With the clearance of the scrub jungle and the creation of Forest Reserves, their livelihoods have vanished.

The Irula Tribal Woman's Welfare Association tree planting scheme in the deforested barren landscape of Chingleput is a strategic development project. Led by Vijayalakshmi, Irula women (often helped by their husbands and children) collect seeds, plant young trees and document medicinal and other properties of over 400 local forest plants. A grass hut houses the seedbank run by two 50-60 year old Irula widows with generations of wisdom to hand down; they also collect folk remedies from other Irula healers and midwives so they can be recorded for future study in clinical trials.

Seedlings, of a variety of trees used for fuel, fodder, fruit and shade, are grown and distributed to NGOs, schools and the Forestry Department, which persist in planting eucalyptus trees despite the damage they cause. Nearby a well established five year old plantation clearly demonstrates how careful manage-

ment can transform wasteland and improve the lives of the people inhabiting it. Excited school girls with armloads of free seedlings spend a day's outing bringing the environmental message to all corners of the state.

Vijayalakshmi now wants to extend the plantation to include a study center and a small nursery for the children of the plantation staff. She wants to make a survey of all the local sacred groves in ancient temple grounds, the only surviving examples of ancient woodland, and collect seeds there for raising. She is trying to raise money in India for a feasibility study to determine the potential for patenting and commercial production of products from some of these "listed" plants used for healing. Most of all she wants the Centre to provide a meeting place for the over 30 thousand landless and impoverished Irula in Chingleput, where they can regain a sense of pride and dignity in their tribal heritage and their special skills, and overcome the sense of inferiority impressed on them by their higher caste neighbors.

Irulas in the north of Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, live in the "rain shadow" forested mountains surrounding the wildlife sanctuary of Madumalai. The Forestry Department encourages wild elephants, bison and tigers to flourish there while tribal families who have lived in the forest for centuries struggle to find food, water and work. Erstwhile hunter-gatherers who lived in harmony with their environment, collecting medicinal herbs, dye plants, wild fruits and other forest





Photo by Susan Benn

products, they must now adapt to new rules. These prevent them from collecting even the dung from the bush cattle they tend for rich farmers who live in the next valley. The Irulas are constantly indebted to these cattle owners, with debts being passed on from parents to children. Many of the more remote villages in the forest have little chance of survival. The people are miserable, depressed, ill, malnourished and dressed in rags. The careworn faces of 40 year old women make them look 70 or 80. Even more horrifying was the life expectancy of 48 for most women.

Aside from tree planting, another project builds on skills in caring for animals. A women's livestock cooperative has been set up and members meet regularly to discuss ways of fodder growing, fencing, animal care, management and marketing. Women in all the villages involved are encouraged to form a women's sangham or council in each village to manage these self-help projects.

Chockenalli, a village of 45 Irula families, is the inspiring "show farm" of the project's first pilot year. A well has been dug, a pump installed and a storage tank with three taps built (thanks to support from Guernsey Overseas Aid Committee). The well produces enough water for cattle, irrigation and all domestic uses except in the dry season when clothes washing

is prohibited. An airy bamboo byre with a grass roof houses 15 cross-bred Jersey or Guernsey and local cows along with 13 calves. A fodder farm produces beans, napier, lucerne and maize; each day's harvest is then fed through a cutting machine by young women who look frail but keep the heavy turnwheel going round. Electric fences keep the elephants at bay. The cows are looked after by a team of 24 women, all of whom are owners or potential owners which gives them enormous pride and the chance to plan for the future. For the first time in their lives the women can count on earning a weekly cash income - 77 rupees this year and seeing their capital assets grow. The projects under the cooperative should be completely self-sufficient in five years' time.

About the author: Susan Benn is a London-based photographer who has donated her skills and time for three years to do a series of photographs and articles on various projects sponsored by Womankind (Worldwide).

Source: Food Matters Worldwide, April 1992, pp. 18-19. 38-40 Exchange St., Norwich NR2 1AX Norfolk, England. Tel.: 0603-761645. Fax: 0603-765434.



Women evolve empowering and liberating culture

by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

Cordillera women are faced with the task of bringing about an alternative culture, a culture of resistance and struggle, a culture which would liberate and empower them.

Igorot women face a triple burden of national, class and gender oppression. But they also have a history of fierce resistance against their colonizers and of a continuing struggle for self-determination. Unlike the rest of the Filipinos, the Igorots and the Moros were successful in resisting Spanish colonization. Because of this they were able to maintain their indigenous sociopolitical structures, traditions, and culture.

This indigenous culture which is a reflection of precolonial Filipino culture has some elements of egalitarianism and gender-sensitivity. Some examples of these are customary laws which heavily penalize men who slap or batter their wives, the continuing existence of indigenous priestesses, like the "manchahawak" of Kalinga, the important economic role of the women in subsistence food production, community participation in child-rearing, etc.

With the influence of American colonialism and Christianity,



many aspects of the culture were destroyed and overrun by a consumerist, market-oriented, individualistic, Christian chauvinist culture. However, some remnants of this indigenous culture remain today.

The culture of resistance and struggle lives among the Igorot women today. They want to adopt a culture which is liberating and empowering for women and to alter those aspects in indigenous culture which are oppressive to women. One negative aspect is the minimal participation of women in formal indigenous decision-making structures such as the "bodong" (peace pact) and the council of elders (male elders). Another is the practice of arranged marriages, dowry and bride price.

The homegrown patriarchy of tribal communities has been reinforced several times over by the colonizer's culture. The marginalization of the indigenous

women intensified with the erosion of subsistence economies by the colonizer's market economy. Waged work is considered productive in government accounting systems and women's subsistence work and domestic work are nonproductive. Thus even if Igorot women work from dusk to dawn in the fields they are not considered agriculturally productive.

Effects of colonization were evident not only in the economy but also in religion. The christian religion attacked and discredited the native or animist religion of indigenous people. Indigenous rituals, beliefs and priestesses were considered pagan or barbaric. The practice of trial marriages in which a couple can have premarital sex to ensure that they will have children, is considered immoral. Performing rituals before and after the planting seasons to ask for blessings from the gods, goddesses, and the 'anitos' is looked upon as superstition. Indigenous rituals performed during births, deaths, and marriages are considered pagan practices.

Ways of Empowering Women

Several ways of creating an alternative culture to empower women are:

1. Go back to one's roots. Learn about the grandmother's roles before the American colonization in the early 1900s. Compare and ex-

amine which aspects of traditional culture and of the culture brought in by missionaries and Western education and values are worth keeping.

2. Compile all the stories and experiences of women as education and reference material for coming up with strategies which will address specific women's issues.

3. Use traditional cultural practices such as composing songs and theater presentations during conferences and consultations. Instead of reporting the results of a workshop, women can compose songs and chants like "salidumays, dong-dong-ays" to explain workshop discussions.

4. Hold training leadership sessions exclusively for women. Most in-

igenous sociopolitical organizations are male-dominated. Training women gives them confidence in participating in decision making structures. Women invoke that traditional decision making processes are consensual. In order to be true to this tradition, women should play an active part in decision making processes.

5. Allow flexibility and changes in traditional cultural practices. Dances like the "pattong tadek, tuppaya, salibi, etc.," usually assign men to beat the gongs and women to dance. Interchange roles. Women can beat the gongs and men can dance.

6. Expand organizing work among the women and set up organizations oriented towards being feminist and nationalist.

7. Lead campaigns. Women's active participation empower and develop their leadership qualities. Campaigns bring out the potential of women as leaders, educators, and organizers.

8. Consciously practice nonsexist or gender fair child rearing. In traditional Igorot society, childrearing is seen as a community responsibility. Since women are in charge of subsistence farming, the men are usually left in the house to take care of the small kids. Set up childcare support systems which integrate indigenous childcare practice.

Conclusion

Small victories are building blocks to women's liberation. Women should continuously share their stories, victories, and pains. Their stories are a source of strength in the Cordillera women's search for an empowering culture.

About the author: Victoria Tauli-Corpuz is the executive director of the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center, Inc. (CWERC) which publishes Chaneg.

Source: Chaneg, Vol. 111, No. 1, Jan.-April 1992. CWERC, Inc., P.O. Box 7691, GARCOM Baguio City (752) DAPO 1300 Domestic Road, Pasay City, Philippines.





October 12 - International Day of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

From Tierra del Fuego, South America to Baffin Island, Canada, indigenous people remain a testimony to almost 500 years of resistance. We continue to speak out against the destruction of our communities. The struggle of indigenous people is a land struggle. So long as we have land, there will be corporate, military and industrial-state interest who seek to control our land and our lives. That is why, as long as the industrial-state continues its consumptive military domination, there will be a struggle and our resistance.

--Winona La Duke, Anishinabeg Nation, President of the Indigenous Women's Network

(Source: Sparerib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT England. Tel.: (071) 253 9792)

Finding ways to regain control of their lives

by Jeanne Becher

Erica Kyle, an aboriginal woman from Australia, has been a member of Program to Combat Racism (PCR) Commission since 1984.



She works with the Australian Council of Churches (ACC) as an advisor on aboriginal affairs, and is especially concerned with evaluating projects submitted by aboriginal groups. She is an outspoken woman, a mother and a grandmother, "committed and called by God to fight for justice for my people."

Erica was born and brought up on a State Government Reserve in Queensland -- Palm Island -- where her grandparents had been forcibly resettled in 1917. She remembers: "Our lives were regimented. The women had to line up for rations every week."

Aboriginal women have a particularly difficult problem to resolve, along with the men. Erica made it clear that the old tactics of allowing easy access to cheap alcohol and filling the jails with men who become violent with rage and frustration will not be tolerated by aboriginal women. But the problem is particularly acute. Cases of rape, murder, and suicide are too numerous to brush off as marginal occurrences. "There were times when my children and I could not sleep because of the screams of the women in the night" Erica said.

Erica decided that something had to be done. And it was clear that the government wasn't going to do it. Erica started out with a group of six women who shared their suffering and their anguish. Some of them had felt that they didn't want to go on living. They recognized that racism had destroyed many of the cohesive forces of the traditional society and that they would have to find ways to regain control of their lives and to reinstill a sense of self-worth among their men. They needed to provide examples.

The women set up a center which now employs five people who provide counseling and advisory services on such problems as housing, education and health. They also assist in setting up self-help projects. Erica helps the women apply for government grants by writing up project proposals which include the production of books that relate the history of the aboriginal people. The women also organize gatherings for story-telling and songs and dances; a way to revive the cultural memory of the people. Special efforts are made to revalorize the traditional role of men in aboriginal society and men are encouraged to join the center's activities.

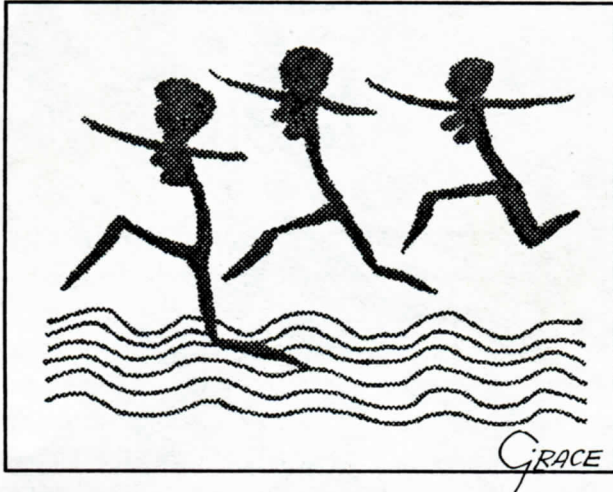
Erica and other activist women continue to work for the rights of aboriginal women and raise awareness on their situation.

*Source: Women in a Changing World, June 1987.
150 route de Ferney, 1211, Geneva 20 Switzerland.*



"We refuse to be token niggers in feminist groups"

by Lydia Graham



The struggle for

Aboriginal Land Rights is the struggle for equal rights and human dignity. Such is the struggle for women's rights in Australia.

The question of why feminists should support land rights is a question of basic justice, remembering also the treatment of aboriginal women during the last 200 years of white invasion of this country.

So the question is, how can white women support blacks? They also support aboriginal women because we were born with a double handicap in a predominantly white, male-run society; we were born both black women. We are doubly oppressed.

Aboriginals usually have little education after leaving school at an early age due to racist tensions formed through the racist white school system.

Aboriginal women can seldom get a job, or if they do they are exploited because they are black

women. Most of them can only look forward to being a married mother with hungry children.

There are many black women that run the communities that aboriginals are proud of. Black women will not join feminist groups to be token niggers. Black women can understand and may or may not support feminism. They will not be token blacks for any organization.

Aboriginal women are not only fighting for the sexual freedom that white women are fighting for. They are also struggling to survive.

They are aware of feminism but often it is only in the back of their heads. Aboriginal women have too many pressures of society upon them. They stand with their men for land rights. They have equal rights and an equal struggle.

Aboriginal women have suffered the full force of white invasion. They have had rape pushed upon them for the last 200 years. It

was common for women to be kidnapped from their tribes and sexually exploited.

Today it is still happening. If white man rapes a black woman there is a little chance he will be charged with the rape.

A leaflet put out at the conference in Canberra a few years ago by several aboriginal women stated:

If You Are Black And A Woman In Your Early Teens, Then You Have Probably Been Raped Once. If You Are Black And A Woman In Your Early Twenties, You Have Probably Been Raped 2 or 3 Times.

In many cases black women are raped by a policeman after he has arrested her for some minor or nonexistent offence. There is no one the women can turn to then.

Aboriginals want land: freehold title, sacred land, burial grounds. We want recognition of our aboriginality through maintaining our ties with the land. Governments continue to deny our very real ties with our land as an excuse to refuse land rights.

We are treated in life as second class citizens; knocked back from jobs while stereotyped rumors continue to circulate oppressing us more and more.

Education has long been used as a weapon against us. We must now use education to fight the white oppressors.

Nobody can combat racism in Australia better than a black person just as no one can combat sexism better than a woman.

We are both minority groups attempting to defend ourselves against the capitalist society which pushes us down and segregates us.

As feminists supporting the aboriginal struggle for land rights one must be aware of the Black struggle and understand the oppression everywhere among us; the oppression which has been forced on both aboriginal men and women.

Source: Girls' Own, Sydney Feminist Newspaper No. 12 August/September 1983, P.O. Box 188 Wentworth Building, Sydney University, 2006 Australia.

1993: "International Year of Indigenous Populations"

The world's indigenous people will be the focus of activity in 1993, the United Nations "International Year of Indigenous Populations."

Decreed by the U.N. General Assembly two years ago, the 1993 commemorative date is intended to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems facing indigenous people around the world, including human rights, environment, development, education and health.



Weaving on sacred ground

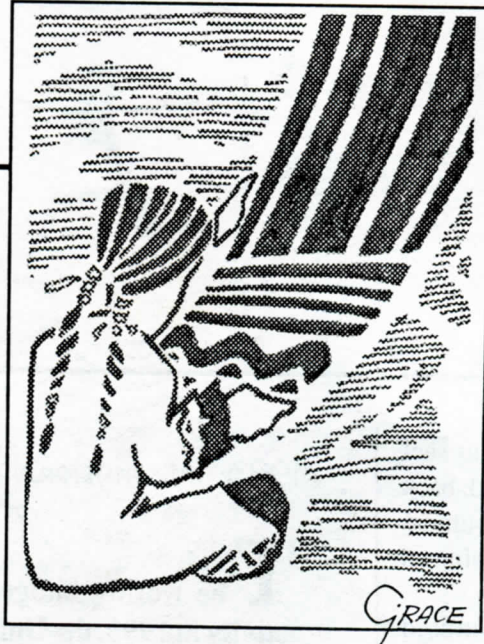
by
M. A. Gomez
with assistance from
Maria Limon

"In the beginning of time, when things were being created by the Great Spiritual Beings, rug weaving was created. Through our teaching we learn that in those times the only people were the insect people, and we learned to weave from a woman. The loom was created with its own sacred songs and prayers. How the loom is set up is very important. Each string is tied from the loom to the frame. The stick that is used to weave with as well as the wool, is sacred to the Dine people. Our way of life is our religion and our teaching."

In 1974, the federal government passed Public Law 93-531, authorizing the partitioning of the Dine-Hopi Joint Use Area (JUA), and the removal of 10,000 Dine people. This led to livestock confiscation, water diversion, fencing, a halt to road and education improvements, clearing of the land and threats to ceremonial grounds.

The lands to be cleared are in the center of the Black Mesa of the Colorado plateau in Arizona, known as Big Mountain. This area contains the largest deposits of energy and mineral resource in the world; it is also crucial to the global climatological balance. Public Law 93-531 was passed as the result of a 24-year campaign waged by special interest Mormon attorneys, some of whom were also on contract to Peabody Coal, the largest mineral extraction lease holder on the reservation.

The reason given by the federal government for the partitioning of the land was a so-called Hopi-Dine land dispute. The real dispute was and continues to be the one between traditional Indians who are opposed to land and mineral development to protect their sacred



and ceremonial lands and the tribal councils and outside forces that support intense mineral development.

Tribal councils were invented in 1923 by the US Department of Interior as 'Business Councils' that could sign mineral leases with US corporations. The Tribal Chairmen were also instituted by US law; they

are employees of the federal government. Traditional tribal leadership is distinct and does not recognize tribal councils.

For the traditional Navajo (Dine), land is at the center of life and religion instructed by their creator to remain on and care for their ancestral land through daily offerings, prayers and ceremonies; traditional Dine women believe it is their spiritual responsibility to protect this land for future generations. The women still carry on the old sacred ways, which are bound together with their weaving traditions. There is no separation between their religious and daily lives.

Livestock, especially sheep, are central to the Dine economy. They represent Dine livelihood, providing them with food, pelts for trade, as well as wool for weaving. No part of the animal is wasted. The Dine Nation was self sufficient before the US federal government intruded upon its sovereignty.

In 1984, the Weaving Project was organized to combat the abuses taking place in Joint Use Area and to build an economic basis by promoting self-sufficiency through the practice of traditional Dine art. The women have established a collective of over 85 traditional Dine weavers representing four generations of

weavers, from great grandmothers to young children, and several communities located in the Joint Use Area of northern Arizona including Big Mountain, Star Mountain, Teesto, Mosquito Springs, Cactus Valley, and Red Willow Springs. Over 2,000 weavings have been sold; 100 percent of the proceeds have gone to the families resisting relocation.

The work completed by the collective to date includes the rebuilding of Churro sheep herds, which are now an endangered species; the Survival School which serves students during the summer and includes classes on weaving, jewelry making, beadwork, pottery, hogan construction, and variety of other classes all taught by volunteers; and advocating for the protection of the mental and physical health of the elders.

One of the most important results has been in the encouragement of weavers to promote and support their traditional art and ceremonial ways at a time in which all is threatened. 200 volunteers around the country donate their time and expenses. Since its inception, weavers no longer have to sell their weavings at the trading post which would typically pay only 10 percent of the actual value; this has increased the weavers income by 90 percent. The Weaving Project has made a commitment with the weavers to support them for the long term efforts to resist forced removal and to support their Traditional Ceremonial Life.

By selling weavings, one directly supports the Dine women's resistance to forced relocation and genocide. The weaver receives 100 percent of the price that she asks for the weaving. With the consent of the weavers, the Weaving Project sometimes adds an optional 10 percent to cover expenses. By buying a weaving, one directly supports the Dine women in their efforts to stay on their ancestral lands and keep their culture alive.

It was in 1974 that I first gave a presentation on the relocation of the Dine. My son, Mekaya, was not even a year old then; I had to bounce him on my knee to keep him quiet. I did not think that in October 1991, I would again address a gathering at an exhibit for the Weaving Project with my son, who is now 17, sitting in the audience. As I spoke and looked out at my son, I realized the importance of this resistance work. It is critical to the continuity of life. The words of one elder came to mind.

"I am a resident of the so-called Hopi-partition land to relocate from my ancestral homeland. I have no intention of abandoning our sacred grounds. Here I know the burial sites, trees and landscape within our native language. My main concern is to preserve our homeland and livestock for our future generations. Therefore I cannot comply with the relocation law."

-- Dine Elder/weaver

Source: Alma de Mujer Center for Social Change, Austin, Texas, USA. Tel.: (512) 258-3880.

Alma de Mujer is a project of the Foundation for a Compassionate Society. Part of its work in 1992 is geared towards the effects of the colonization of the Americas on indigenous women. The above article was published in the Foundation newsletter.

The Foundation has sponsored a series of special events for 1992 including a European speaking tour of native american women, info packets sent to educational institutions, sponsorship of indigenous people's musical groups and an indigenous film, art and literature festival.

"Our voices must be heard."

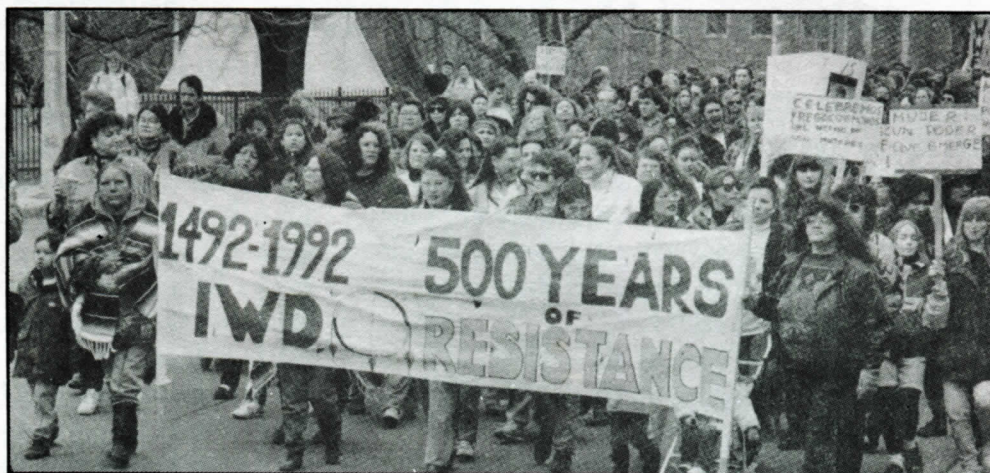
By The Native Women's Association of Canada

A boriginal women have been discriminated against on the basis of sex by governments of Canada for over 100 years. Their struggle to end the sexual discrimination began after the enactment of the Canadian Bill of Rights, and continues despite the advent of section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. With amendments to the Indian Act, aboriginal women were among the first women to benefit legislatively from the Charter.

Despite this, aboriginal women still have not achieved sexual equality. The struggle continues, and has expanded today to involve a recognition of aboriginal women's rights to represent themselves in the ongoing constitutional discussions.

The ongoing legal and political struggle by aboriginal women is not only against an insensitive federal government, it is also against the aboriginal male establishment created under the Indian Act. Some legal writers argue that it was the federal government alone, and not aboriginal governments, which discriminated against women. In fact, the aboriginal male governments and organizations were part of the wall of resistance encountered by aboriginal women in their struggle to end discrimination as they continue to ignore women's concerns and their rights.

Aboriginal women want to live within their communities, but they are excluded because there is no land and no housing. They have been shut out from



their communities because the governments do not wish to bear the costs of programs and services to which aboriginal women are entitled.

Aboriginal women live in the slums. Aboriginal children prostitute themselves in Canadian cities. Aboriginal women, young people and children are killing themselves with drug and alcohol abuse on Indian lands and in Canadian cities.

This tragic situation will not change without aboriginal women's involvement in negotiating and defining self-government and without their participation in the Constitutional discussions. So far, aboriginal men and male organizations have not represented women's interests, and they are not taking the initiative to ensure that women are represented.

Aboriginal women want to take their rightful place at the constitutional table. They want to reiterate that the majority of women they represent suffer under this continuing discrimination. When the women are relegated to living in cities instead of among their own peoples, that is discrimination. It is denial of their fundamental rights guaranteed in international instruments signed by Canada.

Some aboriginal women have said no to self-government. Some of them do not want more power, money and control in the hands of men in their communities. They do not have confidence in the men in power in their communities. They do not want the creation of aboriginal governments with white powers and white philosophies in their communities. They do not want the western hierarchical power structure which has been forced upon them. They do not want the Chieftains overlords which have been created by the Indian Act. Aboriginal women must be part of the constitutional negotiation process at all stages so that they can participate in the definition of the structures and powers of their governments, and end the discrimination.

There are also many important issues affecting native women living on reserves. They are living in chaos in their communities. They have a disproportionately high rate of child sexual abuse and incest. They encounter wife battering, gang rapes, suicides and substance abuse as elements of their daily lives. The development of programs, services, and policies for handling domestic violence has been placed in the hands of men, and this has not resulted in a reduction in this kind of violence. Another issue specific to women on reserves is the need for family and matrimonial property laws to provide substantive equality rights to women living in reserves.

After 400 years of colonization, aboriginal communities, aboriginal families and aboriginal structures have been devastated, and a change in the system must occur. Self-government in their communities can only take place with the support of aboriginal women. The male aboriginal leaders must realize that they cannot

negotiate self-government without the women, anymore than they can leave out the elders, the young people and the people living in urban centers.

Women are keepers of the culture. They want to raise healthy children. They want community decision making. They want consent powers. They want all people in the communities to decide upon their form of government. They want those aboriginal women who are still banished from their communities to have a vote, some land, and a house in their homeland, in the community in which they were born. Some Chiefs would still deny a place for aboriginal women and others wish they would simply go away until the men have settled this political business. Aboriginal women are not going to go away. Their male leaders must make a place for them at the bargaining table.

Native women must be fully involved in the negotiations on self-government. Their voices must be heard.

About the authors: The Native Women's Association of Canada was created in 1974 to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of aboriginal women. NWAC is the national representative of thirteen provincial and territorial organizations. It has always been NWAC's objective to provide a national voice for aboriginal women, and to address issues of importance to aboriginal women.

Source: Canadian Woman Studies. Spring 1992 (Volume 12, Number 3). pp. 14-17. 212 Founders College, York University 4700 Keele Street Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3 Canada.

Amerindian and black women: 500 years of neglect

by

*Adriana Gomez, Lezak Shallat, Carmen Torres
and Victor Toledo Llancaqueo*

Touches of bright color in the Latin American landscape, their children wrapped in ponchos at their breasts or upon their backs, the women of the Aymara, Quiche, Maya, Quechue, Kuna, Mapuche, Salasaca, Guarani, Garifuna, and myriad other native cultures reside in the villages, mountains and jungles of America, bearers of a millennial culture that refuses to die despite assimilation, a process particularly evident among the younger generations.

Traditional clothing and native languages are strong ties to history, badges of identity they wear with pride. And these visible signs contrast markedly with the current "modernization" that has swept the continent without, it often appears, bringing them any direct benefits.

Colorful, but Invisible

Despite the visible presence of indigenous and black women throughout the continent, we have insufficient knowledge about their lives. The earliest descriptions leave us with the impression that our ancestral mothers were largely ignored, except as an exotic or folkloric figure. Statistical information and research on the contemporary reality of indigenous and black



women is either non-existent or reduced to partial references within larger contexts. Health issues must often be extrapolated from the general picture, and are almost exclusively limited to reproductive factors, ignoring other aspects of equal importance.

But the presence of these racial and ethnic groups in Latin America is undeniable. Mexico, Ec-

uador, Peru, Guatemala and Bolivia have high indigenous populations among their peasantry. (In Bolivia and Guatemala, indigenous people account for more than half the national population.) Brazil, Columbia, Venezuela, Panama and Paraguay have significant tribal populations. Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile and Argentina also have indigenous minority populations.

Along with its indigenous and mestizo populations, the Central American isthmus is also home to a black minority, found from Belize to Panama. In Honduras, blacks make up 4.1 percent of the population; in Costa Rica, 3.8 percent; in Nicaragua, 3.1 percent, and in Guatemala, 1 percent. In the Caribbean, many nations have predominantly black populations. In South America, Columbia, Venezuela and the Guyanas have large black populations. In Brazil, blacks number approximately 8 million.



Voice of the past

Some 2,000 years ago, the women of this continent lived in agriculture-based matriarchal societies where the division of labor was based on the complementary nature of female and male tasks. As active farmers, women were the mainstay of economic production, not merely contributors. Women dominated such advanced technologies as weaving, metalwork and ceramics, giving them a prominent place in their communities, in addition to their role in reproduction and the transmission of cultural values.

In Andean culture and others, the prevailing concept of balance within the female-male duality was rooted in an indigenous world view that sees human beings coexisting in equilibrium with nature and other communities.

This way of life, however, began to disappear with the emergence of the Maya, Aztec and Inca empires, long before the Spanish conquest. Social stratification, the emergence of the State, and transition to a patriarchal order marked the beginning of the end of women's rights and the abrupt curtailment of their social roles. Women's lives became ever more restricted to the family circle and reproduction, and women's social predominance was gradually eclipsed.

In the Aztec culture, for example women were characterized by their devotion to the home, while men played a dynamic role outside it. And this indoctrination concerning gender roles began with one's entrance to the world.

Exploitation

The Conquest shook profoundly the native population of America. The demographic changes that resulted -- including, in some cases, extinction of

certain ethnic-linguistic groups, especially in Central America -- reveal the violence of the colonization

process.

The Spanish conquest brought with it such previously unknown diseases as smallpox, measles, typhus, yellow fever and malaria, and these took an enormous toll in indigenous health and survival. Just as fatal were the mass killings, enslavement and inhuman treatment that characterized this period.

Indigenous women were doubly vulnerable to the onslaught. On the one hand, they were caught up in the forced labor, forced migration and slavery systems implemented by the conquerors. This seriously damaged the cohesion of their communities, bringing greater poverty, diminished resources, famine, and infant and maternal malnutrition.

Contact with Catholic Church missions was also disastrous. The roundups that herded indigenous people into custody resulted in widespread death, and the forms in which evangelization was imposed were often just as violent. Contact between the sexes was strictly regulated and monogamy imposed, without regard to native traditions. The mission's "charges" were denied the possibility of controlling their own lives, destroying the social structure of their cultures and communities.

Incorporated by force into exploitative regimes and raped -- in both literal and economic terms -- indigenous women (and, later, mestizo women and black slaves) worked without recompense in miserable conditions on plantations and haciendas. It will never be known, writes Luis Vitale in *Historia y sociología de la mujer latinoamericana*, the degree to which these women contributed to the economic development of the New World.

The gradual assimilation of indigenous communities into fledgling Latin American nations that eventually won their political independence only aggravated the indigenous and black women's deteriorated social condition. Structural changes in the prevailing economic systems sparked massive migrations. Indigenous men were often forced to abandon their communities in search of sustenance. As a consequence of male emigration, women inherited the head-of-household mantle, devising a variety of strategies to ameliorate poverty and ensure the survival of their families.

Many indigenous women have stayed in rural areas, in valleys and highlands, the Altiplano and the tropical forests, working in agriculture and integrated in their communities. Their survival, however, is increasingly threatened by the over-exploitation of natural resources. Others, particularly those belonging to communities that have lost their lands and resources, have been forced to migrate and sell their labor in conditions of misery.

The Contemporary Debate

Today, as in the past, the fundamental demands of indigenous organizations focus on the end of historical domination and the restitution of the lost lands. To what degree do these demands involve women? Confronted by triple discrimination within national societies and their communities, do indigenous women share these demands, or do they place greater emphasis on feminist concerns? Is their attachment to traditional cultural values a result of educational and social isolation or a self-imposed defense mechanism?

Indigenous women appear to have postponed their gender-specific concerns for the more general de-



Photo by Vera Lentz

mands of their native communities. However, in countries like Mexico, Peru, Brazil and others, indigenous and black women have formed autonomous groups within their communities to ad-

vance gender demands in a parallel fashion.

Whatever their approach, indigenous women demand the restitution of expropriated lands and the end of the discrimination that has limited access to health, housing and educational services, with resulting high maternal and infant mortality rates, high fertility rates, elevated incidence of disease malnutrition, illiteracy, school dropout rates, etc.

And they raise their voices against the cultural violence that ignores the value of their own histories in order to impose other histories; against the political and physical violence that has pursued and exterminated their communities; and against the discrimination and isolation they have suffered for centuries.

At the same time, as women, they demand their rights within their own communities and a return to the egalitarian and complementary position they once held alongside men. Guardians of cultural traditions that refuse to die, they seek greater appreciation of this culture and greater forms of participation within national societies that have privileged men's participation over women's. They seek recognition of the specificity of their status as women, as members of racial and ethnic minorities and as workers.

The search for and re-encounter with their own identities requires both the liberation of their people and acknowledgment and appreciation of their gender.

Source: Women's Health Journal, 1/92. Isis Internacional, Casilla 2067, Correo Central, Santiago de Chile.

Mapuche women and traditional health

By Victor Toledo Llancaqueo

The importance of women in the development of Mapuche society has been recognized in relation to her role in the peasant economy and as the guardian of Mapuche culture.

Mapuche women play a key role in the health of their communities for the reasons cited above. The Mapuche medical systems, adapted to the physical characteristics of the community and its environs, has been a factor in Mapuche survival in the face of many mortal onslaughts throughout its history including the bacteriologist invasion brought by Spaniards in the 16th century,

In the Mapuche world view, health and sickness belong to the sacred world, to the struggle between the forces of good and evil. This is the principle behind Mapuche medicine, and experiences of health, sickness and healing are thus considered in relation to all aspects of daily life.

In health, women and female spirits occupy a key place in both the human sphere and the supernatural one. In daily life, Mapuche women possess extensive knowledge of the medicinal herbs that contain natural and positive supernatural energies (*ngelawen*). They possess broad botanical knowledge regarding types of plants, thermal waters, stones and animal organs.

This common knowledge, transmitted orally from mother to daughter over generations, is a key factor for every Mapuche family that must combat bad spirits with the positive ones found in nature.

Specialized and sacred knowledge resides in the person of the Machi, the feminine-masculine figure



who is the Mapuche Shaman. The Machi is a woman who is aided in rituals by a male translator. (When the Machi is a man, he has openly feminine characteristics.) This duality corresponds to the dual characteristics of *Ngenechen* (Dominator of men), the greatest Mapuche divinity. The Machi, who plays a mediating role between her people and the divine, ritually combats evil.

One of the most frequent forms in which evil is manifest in the Mapuche family is through illness. Disease is viewed beyond its natural causes as a sign of something greater and more anguishing whose interpretation and destruction require all family members and natural resources. The cause could be an intentionally evil act performed by someone who sought the help of a witch (*kalku*) or spirit (*wekufe*).

The resurgence of evil in the form of illness occurs when the soul and body are not harmoniously integrated, producing a drop in physical alertness that is filled by evil spirits. The supernatural cause of disease is the principal etiology (the story of the causes of disease) of Mapuche medicine. Its diagnosis relies upon a highly elaborated, semiology (system of identifying and interpreting disease) of magical and religious nature. The dreams of the sick person and her or his family are treated as an important symptom. These dreams (*peuma*) announce future events and misfortunes. An expert interpreter of dreams, the Machi also examines the sick person's urine, clothing (*pewutun*) and other signs.

With the diagnosis comes a proposed therapy, either herbal, in the case of natural illnesses, or ritual-magical-empirical, in the case of supernatural ones. The latter is shamanistic, and its principal rituals are the *ulutun* and the *datuun*. The *ulutun* is a simple

ceremony for minor diseases. The *datuun* is a complex and extensive ceremony for the treatment of serious diseases, in which the Machi, accompanied by helpers, dances, sings, beats the *kultrun* and goes into trance. This is the moment when her soul, aided by helpful spirits, combats the forces of evil. In these ceremonies, the Machi also makes use of a complete hierarchy of herbs (*lawen*). As the intermediary between humans, gods and ancestral spirits, the Machi focuses her therapeutic action in expelling evil spirits and replacing them with beneficent spirits. In this way, the patient recovers her or his psychic-physical equilibrium.

In the 1950s three factors contributed to the coexistence of medical systems that prevail today: increased presence of national health services; the economic and social crisis that sparked widespread emigration; and irreparable environmental changes.

The latter two factors are seen in the scarcity of food and exhaustion of natural resources. This forces the community into greater reliance on *huinca* (non-Mapuche) medicine, despite the fact that illness is still approached through traditional cultural parameters. The sick person now seeks both modern medical technology and the rituals-symbolic treatments of the Machi and her herbs. This feminine knowledge persists in both symbolic and prosaic ways. The 1960s saw isolated cases of explicit collaboration between these two medical systems in regional health services.

This coexistence, however, has experienced changes in the past 15 years that could have a negative effect on the Mapuche people. On the one hand, the official medical system is rapidly modernizing, bringing specialization, high technology and echoes of the same charges of alienation first heard in the 1970s in

the developed countries. Contrary to the World Health Organization's 1978 Alma Alta conference, which recommended the maximum possible use of popular knowledge in primary health care, Chile has experienced true "symbolic violence" against popular medicines. On the other hand, the Mapuche medical system faces challenges from the deterioration of the community's natural environs and increasing complexity in causes of death.

Today, the Mapuche community seeks *huinca* public health services and medical technology in greater numbers and with greater urgency. At the same time, community members feel that the evil spirits treatments are on the rise. This would appear to be a convenient form of coexistence, except for the fact that Mapuche are growing steadily more dependent on the public services that discredit traditional ones but are incapable of either meeting Mapuche health needs or halting environmental degradation.

The paradox is that the health problems that most affect the future development of the Mapuche affect its women, the guardians and teachers of traditional health knowledge. This "symbolic violence" and expropriation of health are specific gender concerns. New health programs for the Mapuche must not only foster adequate interaction between the two health systems but also rehabilitate existing cultural resources by including this traditional medicine and gender dimension.

Source: Women's Health Journal, 1/92. Isis Internacional, Casilla 2067, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile.

Immersing in traditional cultures

by Elizabeth Thomas

In the Kampung community of Merjosari in East Java there are a number of options which exist for women who are giving birth.

During my one-month stay in the community I talked with women who had given birth at the public hospital or at two private *bidan* (state-certified midwife) clinics which are located close to the community. Women may also visit the *pukesmas* (village government health clinics) for prenatal tetanus shots or postnatal health problems.

In addition, living within the community is a *dukun bayi*, a traditional midwife who in this case differs from the *bidan* in that she has chosen not to undergo state training and certification. Whereas a *bidan* might rely on western medicines -- pills and injections -- a *dukun bayi* relies on other forms of care including *jamu* (herbal medicine), bathing, and therapeutic massage. In addition, the *dukun bayi* is said to incorporate ritual and magic into her practice.

The *dukun bayi* in the community where I was is



Mbok Mi. Now in her late sixties, she has been a *dukun bayi* for twenty-five years and is now the only one in that community. While presently almost all women deliver at the *bidan* or at the hospital, every woman I spoke with had additionally received Mbok Mi's care for herself and her child. Mbok Mi's practice in the community extends far beyond assisting in the occasional delivery of a baby in the woman's home.

Probably the greatest portion of her time is spent in caring for babies after the birth. Mbok Mi visits a new mother and baby twice a day for thirty-six days. Each morning and afternoon she bathes and massages the baby. This routine has little variation. Mbok Mi also provides continuing care for babies and general care for the community.

Throughout Javanese culture there are many kinds of *dukun*; one of their main roles is to lead *selamatan*, rituals for safety and health which vary according to the occasion. Many people outside of the community with whom I spoke mentioned to me that *dukun bayi* lead the ritual *selamatan* for the baby on three occasions: at birth, when the umbilical stump falls off, and on the fortieth day of life.

When I came to the community I asked about *selamatan*. Whenever I asked, Mbok Mi and others affirmed that there are *selamatan* on these occasions. This ritual was explained by a pregnant woman who



Immersing in traditional cultures

said that there would be a *selamatan* but *sedikit-sedikit*, a little one. In a community where many are children born and money is limited, *selamatan* seems to be a very simple occasion attended only by the family.

In considering this practice, I searched for a medical distinction more satisfactory than East/West or traditional/modern. The first I believe is inaccurate nowadays as western medicine has fully pervaded the East and is practiced by and relied upon by many Asians. With regard to the second distinction, I am cautious of the assumptions often inherent in the term "traditional" - primitive, culturally laden, physiologically less effective, and the term "modern" - foolproof, the best available, practiced by dispassionate, educated people.

Instead I wish to make the distinction between medicine that is historically and presently of the community (intra-community) and that which is introduced from outside the community (extra-community). Intra-community health care in this case takes place in an informal system which is based upon the needs of individuals within the community -- needs both physical and economic.

A reflection of this is that Mbok Mi charges for her



care based upon her need for a living wage - her fee does not reflect charges for drug companies, clinic overhead, salaries for employees, or even substantial profit. Indeed, Mbok Mi is recognized to be one of the economically poorer members of the community - she lives in a dirt floor, bamboo-

walled house with one kerosene lamp and cooks her food over a wood fire. When she does not have a baby to care for she gathers wild growing greens from the rice fields and sells them at the market. She falls below the economic standard of the community she cares for.

The nature of Mbok Mi's practice and her location within the community enable her to serve a very important role in preventive care as well. During her twice daily visits to the mother and child Mbok Mi notices any small problem before it becomes a large one.

And, in a climate where cleanliness is one of the most important practical steps to the prevention of illness, Mbok Mi establishes the routine of twice daily bathing the baby, a practice which the mother continues.

In addition, the open nature of village life means that Mbok Mi can always be reached. In the event of a



Traditional midwifery and
community health care in East Java

problem a neighbor of Mbok Mi will always know where she is.

More and more it seems that women in the community take advantage of both intra- and extra-community health care. If they can afford it, women want to give birth at the *bidan's* clinic: one woman told me it was *terjamin*, more reliable, another said it was *cocok*, that it fit her needs.

Women I spoke with who gave birth at the hospital did so because they had a C-section or a tubal ligation following the birth. Unless there are complications or outstanding factors it is unusual for women to go to the hospital to deliver. Yet, wherever they deliver, all women still want Mbok Mi's care after the birth.

Even Mbok Mi incorporates some aspects of extra-community health care such as giving women vitamin E from the *puskesmas* or using the *bidan's* medicine on the baby's navel. One little girl told me, "If you don't have any money you have the baby with Mbok Mi."

Yet the motivation to use Mbok Mi is not solely economic, there are other factors such as trust and convenience. It seems to vary by instance - if a woman



has a sick child she may choose to visit Mbok Mi or she may go to the *puskesmas* or the *bidan*. I believe that most women would feel more comfortable expressing their needs to Mbok Mi and this too must influence their decision.

The best analysis of Mbok Mi's practice and role as a health care provider can

be seen by looking at her community. During my stay I was impressed by the general good health I saw around me -- most of the children were clean, bright-eyed and energetic.

A strong, experienced health care provider is an essential ingredient in the good health of a community. In Mbok Mi the community of Merjosari has a health care provider whom they trust and respect -- the results of such a relationship are apparent.

About the author: Elizabeth Thomas is a graduate student of International Policy at the University of Chicago, Illinois, USA. She served a six-week internship program with Isis International-Manila from January to February 1992. Her article is based on field work in Indonesia.



Maori women defend right to health

by Gloria Melencio

A glance at the status of Maori women's health in general will lead back to herstory where the fight for land and Maori sovereignty exist. New Zealand, a British territory, is home to both the Maori people and white immigrants they call *pakeha*. Maoris believe that the present health system is not beneficial to them, only to the British immigrants.

Maori women view their health both biologically and holistically. To them, the spiritual dimension of health is vital. Traditional Maori health care is based on the laws of *tapu*, a belief that there must be a balance in all aspects of life for one to be healthy.

According to Donna Awatere, a Maori feminist and activist, Maori women are not healthy. In a speech she delivered to the Women's Health Network National Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, Awatere disclosed that Maori women have the highest number of death rate anywhere in the world due to lung cancer, cancer of the lower intestine and heart disease.

"There has been a spiritual unrest," she laments. "Maori people are forced to live everyday by the rules of another culture," referring to the white immigrants.

The Maori population has been reduced to 40,000 during 100 years of British occupation, she claims. They have grown back to 300,000 now but this should have been their population in 1840, Awatere adds.

The British government has invaded the sanctity of their culture leading to so many imbalances. The traditional view of *tapu* was overridden by a system which gives immense power to doctors and little information to their patients.

More Maori women die of cervical cancer compared to non-Maori women partly because the latter do not go to male doctors for health check-ups. They find it embarrassing and uncomfortable.

There is little or no women's participation in decision-making policies about health medical poli-

cies and programs.

Awatere cites these figures:

☛ Based on 1975 statistics, the life expectancy of Maori

men is eight years less than white men. Maori women have 10 years less than white women.

☛ A Maori is one-and-a-half times more likely to die below age 25 than any white person. Above age 25, a Maori is two-and-a half times to three times more likely to die before age 65 than any white person.

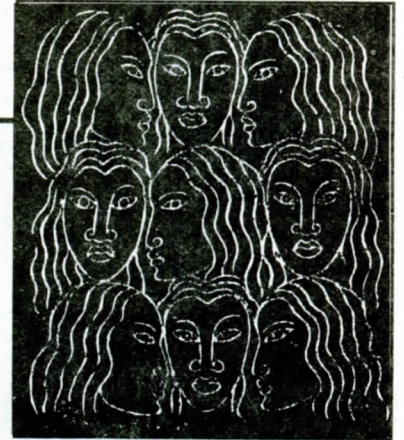
☛ Infant mortality figure of Maori babies is three times higher than that of white babies. Common causes of deaths are respiratory infections.

Maoris' poor economic conditions have not changed for years while the immigrants continue to live affluent lifestyles. Awatere believes that the Maori women's health conditions would improve if their socioeconomic status improves.

Maori women have organized themselves into organizations. Through the New Zealand's Health Network, they have worked towards change in the health system. They say that "The health system should realize that the Maori view of health is not European, so all aspects of training, treatment and research must change radically to ensure that Maori needs and views are respected and valued."

Maori women demand, among others, that doctors be taught about racism and sexism. A research center run by "Maori for Maori" is also being eyed.

About the author: Gloria Melencio is a project worker of Isis International Manila. She is currently part of the electronic networking project.



Design by Robyn Kahukiwa

Women's Institute fosters identity and culture

by

Michelle Decherellette, Natividad Zambrana and Katia Uriona

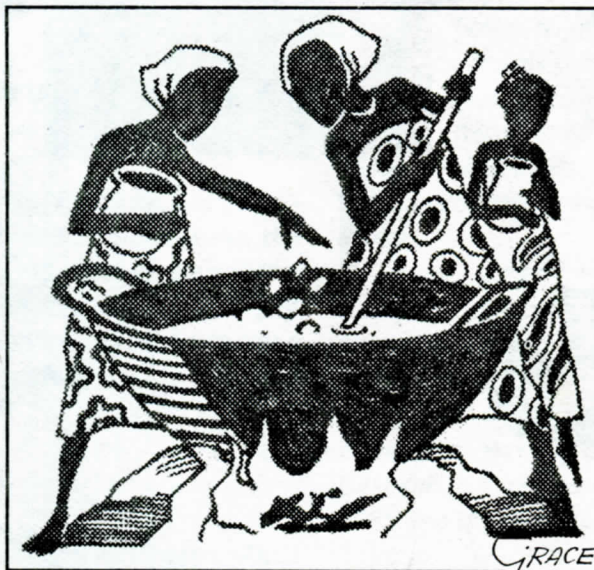
The Women's Training Institute, otherwise known as IFFI, its Bolivian acronym, supports women's initiatives in the *barríos populares* or shanty towns of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Founded in 1981 as a local alternative to food aid programs of some international donor organizations, IFFI works with the community by setting up popular kitchens. In addition to distributing food, it provides training programs, technical assistance and organizational support, and helps to launch projects designed to strengthen women's economic independence.

Indigenous people and women are overrepresented at the bottom of Bolivia's social and economic structure. IFFI, which functions as a collective, works with seven women's organizations in the shanty towns of Cochabamba where about 50 percent of the women have recently migrated from indigenous communities in rural areas or mining towns. These women are survivors in a society that penalizes them both for their gender and their ethnicity. They still wear their typical costumes and speak their own language. They maintain strong family bonds and usually return to their community during harvest time.

For five hundred years, indigenous people have struggled to maintain their identity within a society that denies their unique culture and spirituality. Indigenous women have lost much of their separate identity through migrating to cities and adapting to an alien culture. They continue to be confronted by the hard-

ship and violence of urban subcultures and ghettos. The city imposes a different language (Spanish), the alien value of individualism, and a highly structured class system on indigenous people. And their interests, opinions and beliefs are often ridiculed by urban dwellers.

IFFI's training programs help to rebuild and restore women's identity. This is a slow process because colonial values seem to have become rooted in their being. The hardest thing for indigenous women to overcome is their fear and lack of confidence. But they have a thirst for knowledge and they express the wish that the training had begun years ago. While the oldest ones feel it is too late for them, they participate for the sake of their children.



One speaks for many when she says: "I do not want my children to suffer as I do. I work endlessly to make life better for them."

About the authors: Michelle Decherellette, Natividad Zambrana and Katia Uriona have been working with IFFI since its inception.

Source: Match News, Vol. 15, No. 4, Spring 1992, Match International Centre, 1102-200 Elgin St., Ottawa, K2P 1L5 Canada, Tel. (613) 238-1312.

The Running Spirit

by
Kimimila



Kimimila -- athlete, prayer warrior and poetess bringing a universal message of peace and respect to all those people who care about the earth.

*I am a prayer warrior
I am a prayer runner*

*see the blood running
run for peace
see the Earth dying
run for life
see the people crying
run for hope
every step every stride
the life force
guides
my spirit glides
wind is at our side*

*reach higher
be an eagle flyer*

*take my hand
we'll free this land
it is easy to understand
earth is where we stand*

*together we share this sacred place
remember her beautiful face.*



Kura Rewiri Thorsen :

A spirituality rooted in the land



There is a spirituality which issues from our land. It is a spirituality which rises like the mist from the valleys. It is heard in the song of the tui and is seen in the unfolding fronds of the fern. It is a spirituality of the land, of Turangawaewae, of Aorangi and Parihaka. The guardians of this spirituality are the tangata whenua, the original inhabitants of the land. Through their myths and legends they have kept alive an understanding of the dignity and sense of human worth which lies at the heart of all true spiritual searching.

Mawhero whero Kakariki

In this painting I am depicting myself in red, which is a sacred color. Between my legs are patterns taken from the treasure box of the Ngapuhi. I feel, as a Maori artist, that I have a role to play as protector of things Maori, and also as an initiator of things to come. I use spirit forms because I do not think I could say what I am trying to by using people of today. I feel that to put actual human figures would be inadequate. I would not be able to capture the spirit of the people. I have had experiences of a strong spiritual presence in particular places which I have been unable to explain at the time. Only later, when seeking to know the history of that place I have discovered that it was a place of sorrow and suffering and death for Maori ancestors. With this knowledge comes an aware-

ness of the spiritual significance of that particular piece of land, and the acknowledging of this spiritual presence brings me peace. Nightmares which haunt me after my careless intrusion, turn to warm embracing feeling. In Maori tradition if you treat something sacred in a careless way then you suffer afterwards. I recognize the responsibility I

have, as an artist, to help Pakeha appreciate the Maori culture.

About the artist: Kura Rewiri Thorsen, a contemporary Maori artist whose work affirms the spiritual roots from which she comes, is a Ngapuhi from the Tai Tokerau area. She grew up near Waitangi. She received a scholarship to the Ilam School of Fine Arts in Christchurch, graduating in 1973. She taught art until 1985 and is presently working fulltime as an artist.

Source: *Accent*, July 1986, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 38-40. P.O. Box 8545, Symonds St., Auckland, New Zealand.

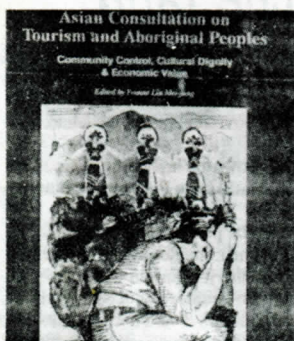


Resources

The Asian Consultation on Tourism and Aboriginal Peoples

Edited by: Yvonne Lin Mei-Jung

Reviewed by: Anna Borcello



The book is a collection of the papers presented at the Asian Consultation on Tourism and Aboriginal Peoples conference which was held in Taiwan in 1989.

The reports from Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Hawaii outline the destruction tourism has caused to Taiwan's aboriginals.

Recurrent themes emerge in the country reports, in particular the way aborigine's lack of land rights enables the government to develop tourism without consulting local people. The role of tourism as a development tool, and the question, 'development for whom?' is also raised.

The workshop reports examine the issues of community control, cultural dignity and economic value. The conclusions all point in the same direction: that for aboriginal people to benefit from tourism they need local control, cooperation and respect for their culture. Alternative tourism - small scale, locally controlled

and with an emphasis on cross cultural understanding - is the only way that aboriginal people will be able to benefit from the industry.

The appendix provides the reader with useful extra material, including two successful examples, by the Indian community in Lake Titicaca and Pueblo Indians of North America, to control tourism. The case studies prove that the key to success is indeed local control - which in the case of the Pueblo Indians includes the right to bar tourists from certain festivals.

The book is an excellent introduction to the problems facing aboriginal people. For those who wish to understand the aboriginal struggle, and for tourists who wish to reflect on the effects of visiting small communities, the book is an invaluable resource.

Published by Huadong Community Development Center, #7, Hsiang 87, Tie Hua Street, Taidong 95008 Taiwan.

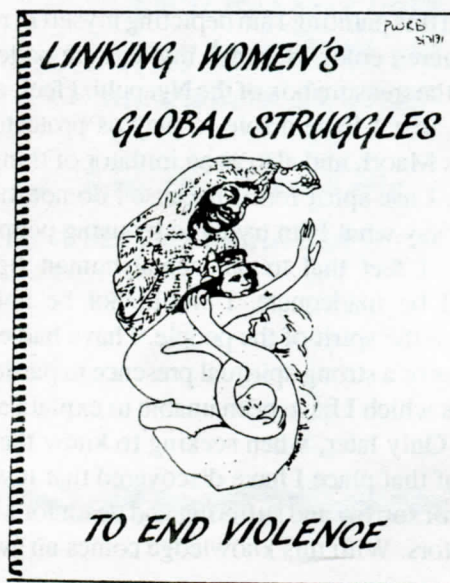
Source: *Contours*, March-June 1992, Vol. 5, No. 5/6, p.18. P.O. Box 24, Chorakhehua, Bangkok 10230, Thailand. Telefax: 662-510 7287.

Resource Kit:

Linking Women's Global Struggles to End Violence

Linking Women's Global Struggles to End Violence is a resource kit about Canadian, Aboriginal and Third World women coming together to share experiences, develop strategies and explore alternative solutions. For copies write to: Match International Centre 1102-200 Elgin St., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2P 1L5.

Source: *Women's News*, April 1992, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 11. SPC, B.P. D5 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia.

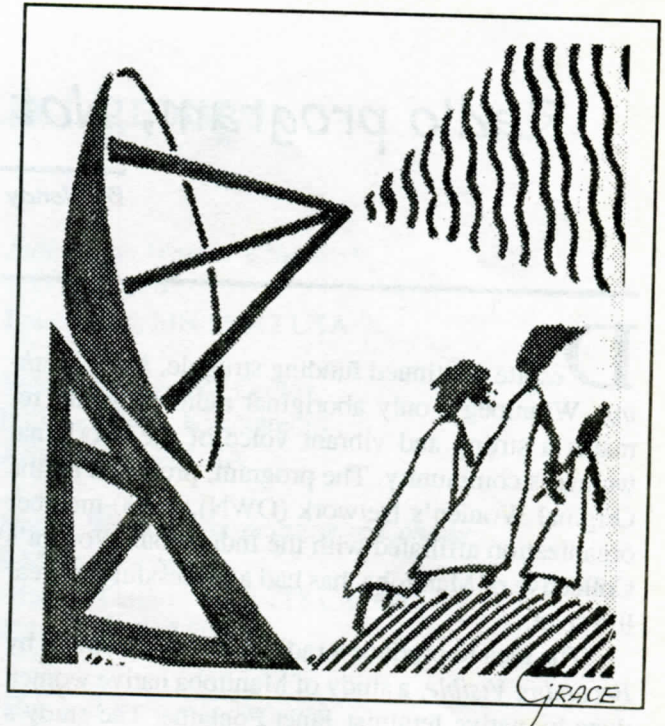


Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
500 Years of Resistance:
1492-1992

1992 marks the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas, an event celebrated by some as the "discovery" and "conquest" of the Americas by European civilization. The real celebration is that of 500 years of indigenous, black and popular resistance to the disastrous consequences of Columbus' arrival -- death, destruction and repression.

For more information, write or call:

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
c/o Red Rose Club
129 Seven Sisters Road
London N7 71G England
Tel.: 071 272 9619 Fax: 071 272 5476



Radio links women
north and south

Two indigenous groups, the Original Women's Network in North America, and the Confederation of Ecuadorean Indigenous Nationalities in South America have joined together to create a series of radio programs as part of the continental campaign "500 Years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance," a response by native people to 500 years of colonialism in the Americas. Production of 120 newscasts has begun.

Fifty percent of these will reflect the views of First Nation's Women of the Americas and will be sold to the Women's International News Gathering Service in the United States which has links with 140 non commercial radio stations in 40 countries and over a million listeners. The Network will also distribute completed newscasts to existing First Nation's radio stations and make cassettes available to grassroots and community groups.

Source: Match News, Vol. 15. No. 4, Spring 1992, p. 6. Match International Centre, 1102-200 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5 Canada. Tel. 613-238 1312.



Design by Paul Aston

Radio program, *Not Vanishing*, flourishes

By Wendy Gordon

Despite continued funding struggle, *Not Vanishing*, Winnipeg's only aboriginal radio program, remains a strong and vibrant voice of the aboriginal women's community. The program, produced by the Original Women's Network (OWN), a 400-member organization affiliated with the Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba, has had a successful two year life span.

The idea to produce a radio show was inspired by *Becoming Visible*, a study of Manitoba native women done by native feminist Janet Fontaine. The study's findings, that native women were not involved enough in the mainstream media, spawned the idea and enthusiasm for the women to get involved and do it themselves.

The radio program takes its name from the title of a book by native American writer Chrystos. Her book of poems entitled *Not Vanishing* was a response to the work of 20th century photographer who believed his photos of contemporary aboriginal life were the last impressions of a dying culture.

Not Vanishing was launched in March 1990, during the standoff at Oka, Quebec, when a live hook up with a Kanesatake radio station behind the barricades was arranged. The phone in talk show was so successful that they decided to continue.

Not Vanishing has gone on to produce an award winning documentary about native lesbians called *Spirit of Two Women*, which won writer Ivy Chaske the Ontario Canadian Human Rights Journalist award. They have created programs on spouse abuse, and are part of a larger coalition of women working against violence. The show also tackles poverty issues, and the



importance of native women reclaiming their status.

The Original Women's Network is an important vehicle for training aboriginal women in radio production. According to producer Sandy Funk, there's a myth that radio is a very technical industry. "Anyone can do it," she says.

Their hour-long show, aired weekly on CKJS, Winnipeg's multilingual radio station, relies on equipment from the Native Media Network. Coordinator Kathy Mallett said she is looking into purchasing some used radio equipment, and setting up a studio in the OWN offices to help facilitate the training of volunteers.

"We are not vanishing" says producer Sandy Funk. "We are here and getting stronger."

Source: *Match News*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Spring 1992, p. 5. *Match International Centre*, 1102-200 Elgin, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5 Canada. Tel.; 613-238 1312.



List of contact groups

INNABUYOG
c/o CWERC
P.O. Box 7691, GARCOM
Baguio City 752
Philippines

*Maori and Pacific Islands
Women's Health Collective*
30 Park Avenue Crafton
Auckland, New Zealand
Tel: 3764 506

Pacific Division of Te Tari Maori
1 Princess Street
Otahuhu, New Zealand
Tel: 276-9211

*The South and Meso-American Indian
Information Center (SAIIC)*
P.O. Box 28703
Oakland CA 94604, USA
Tel.: (0101) 212 9646370

Indigenous Women's Network
P.O. Box 174
Lake Elmo, MN 55042 USA

Weaving Resource Center
P.O. Box 865, Kykotsmovi
Arizona 86039 USA

Native Women's Association of Canada
9 Melrose Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1T8 Canada
Tel.: (613) 722 3033

Original Women's Network
356A Stella Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2W 2T9
Tel.: 9204) 5822383, Fax: (204) 5826468

Grumin
Rua de Quitanda, 185 sala 503 Centro
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil CEP 20091
Tel.: (204) 2931745

Women advocate for indigenous education

Grumin, an indigenous women's group in Brazil, was created eight years ago with the objective of encouraging and uniting indigenous women around the issue of education. Grumin has been working to facilitate consciousness-raising groups for Indian women, and strategize on ways to work together.

The group has been advocating for education that reflects the reality of the indigenous peoples in Brazil. It is committed to action on issues that affect women and children, and to strengthening knowledge of traditional customs, spirituality and indigenous culture within their families and communities.

Source: Match News, Vol. 15, No. 4, Spring 1992, p. 6. Match International Centre, 1102-200 Elgin, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5 Canada. Tel.: 613-238 1312.

Quito, Ecuador

We defend Mother Earth

The following is an excerpt from a statement issued by the Women's Commission at the "First Continental Meeting of Indigenous Peoples -- 500 Years of Indian Resistance" in Quito, Ecuador, July 1990.



Sparerib

1. As women we particularly identify with our Mother Earth. We recognize that the Earth is life. We must respect ourselves as women so identified. This Mother Earth is the only one that we have: we must respect her, care for her, love her. In every country people are destroying and violating our Mother Earth. She is dying, so we the people are dying. We take our responsibility seriously. We defend the Earth.

2. The invasion of a non-indigenous value system has

negatively changed the relationship between women and men in the home, and the role of women in our communities and nations. We have all been victims of this oppressive system, of western vices, of addictions, of the violence of a system that is anti-life...

We must reclaim our traditional values, our indigenous ways of organizing ourselves, of conducting ourselves as communities ... In order to reestablish

balance in our homes and in order to realize the self-determination and liberation of our oppressed peoples, women and men must participate equally in accordance with the traditional values of our indigenous nations.

3. The churches must respect our religion as we respect theirs. We have the right to practice our native beliefs, to have our sacred sites and our sacred objects. Instead of celebrating the

500 years in 1992, the churches should ask our forgiveness and observe our time of mourning and pain. We must have the right under law to our religious ceremonies according to our indigenous beliefs. We must protect our sacred sites and our sacred burial grounds.

4. Militarism is anti-life, anti-Earth, anti-women. Militarism is the destruction of our ancestral culture, the destruction of our way of thinking and acting. We stand against military recruitment which robs us of our sons and brothers and turns them into bullets in the hands of the oppressor. When they return to their homes, they no longer know how to live with respect and in community. We have the right to live in freedom, in peace, without military intervention, without war.

5. We recognize that in isolation, we cannot achieve the goals of our struggle. Within the oppressor's system we are alienated as indigenous nations, as women. We suffer from a lack of information. The mass media does not effectively communicate our needs and objectives. The mass media distorts and deletes our truth. For example, very few of us were aware of the indigenous uprising here in Ecuador prior to coming to this Gathering.

We conclude that it is necessary to establish an effective communication and support network and to coordinate among the indigenous wom-

en's organizations of the Americas.

6. We agree that as indigenous women of this hemisphere we will participate in a coordinated manner in the different activities opposed to the so-called discovery of America, declaring a Day of Mourning for Indigenous Peoples.

7. From here on, we will actively participate in the national and international tribunals, in order to guar-



Photo by Mary Addle Andrew

antee the representation of indigenous women. We no longer accept the intermediary role of intellectuals who use us as objects of folklore.

8. We are very concerned, and have discussed in detail in our commission, the lack of training, education and health resources for women... Here in this gathering we are laying out the basics.' The real work begins when we return to our organizations. We work together for our own development, one which reflects our values as well as our needs: organizational training, an end to illiteracy, eradication of addictions such as alcoholism and drug addiction, rescue and development of our traditional medicines without throwing away technology developed for the good of humanity, and rescue and development of our

own agricultural and nutritional systems.

9. To live according to our indigenous values is to assume responsibility for the well-being and the harmony of all, putting an end to poverty and inequality. We need all people, each person has their place, the old and the young. We must support the widows, the orphans, the single mothers, and the elders, as has been the way of our peoples.

10. As women and as indigenous people, we feel a connection to the

Earth. In order to bring closure to this gathering in balance with the Earth we must be here at her breast, where we have our sacred fire.

Source: Spare Rib, October 1991. pp. 36-37. 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT England. Tel.: (071) 253 9792; Fax: (071) 251 1773.



Amnesty International

Women's declaration at the Global Forum on environment

A healthy and sustainable environment for all

10 June 1992

WE, THE WOMEN AT THE GLOBAL FORUM, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3 to 14 June 1992

SPEAKING OUT on behalf of millions of women who experience daily such inequities as the violence of the environmental degradation, poverty, racism, misinformation, compulsory heterosexism, the exploitation of their work by not valuing their labor at all or unequally, and violence against their bodies;

CLAIMING the authority given us by those experiences and by our representation of more than 50 percent of the world's population and our special responsibility for the nurturance and continuance of life;

APPALLED by the failure of the governments of the world to either address the true causes of the planetary crisis or reach agreement on urgent actions necessary to save our planet;

EQUATING lack of political and individual will among world leaders with their lack of basic

moral and spiritual values, and an absence of responsibility towards the peoples they represent and future generations;

OUTRAGED that the UNCED agenda has ignored that some of the most critical factors contributing to people and environmental degradation are economic and military systems which use mechanisms such as debt, trade and aid, and military excesses such as nuclear testing, that exploit and misuse nature and people;

CONVINCED that the current consumerist, materialistic economic and cultural patterns set by the countries of the North are destructive and have bankrupted our peoples and planet, and opposed to any further pressures being placed on the countries of the South to adopt those patterns;

BELIEVING that a healthy and sustainable environment is contingent upon world peace, respect for human rights of all to survival, participatory democracy without fear of repression, the self determination of peoples at all levels and in their localities, value for the integ-

riety and autonomy of indigenous peoples, and the protection of all species;

PLEDGE OURSELVES to implement the Women's Action Agenda 21 adopted in Miami between 8 to 12 November 1991 on behalf of ourselves, our families, our communities and our planet, now and for the future.

APPEAL TO ALL PEOPLE to join in this call for profound and urgent transformation of the values that have brought us to this planetary crisis, and

CALL UPON THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT attending the Earth Summit being held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992 to commit themselves and their governments to a true implementation of the Women's Action Agenda 21 which was adopted by their officials without amendment on 6 June, including:

1. *The recognition of the centrality of women's roles, needs, values and wisdom to decision-making on the fate of the earth and the urgent*

need to involve women at all levels of policy-making, planning and implementation on an equal basis with men;

2. The adoption of a model of "sustainable development" based on sustainable livelihood for all people with full human rights including access to clean air and water, food, shelter, health, education, information, the enjoyment of civil liberties, and spiritual and cultural integrity;

3. Respect, long overdue, to the world's indigenous peoples, of their basic human rights including their rights to land and self determination, and for their vital wisdom and leadership in resisting the destruction of the Earth and its creatures and in creating a new life-affirming global reality;

3. The establishment of an alternative order of economic, social, cultural and political interaction based on gender balance, and equity and justice for all peoples, species and generations;

4. The acknowledgment, by their cancellation, that the so-called "debts" allegedly owed by countries of the South have been more than repaid by decades of slavery,

the inequitable prices paid for their labor and resources, the exorbitant interest charged, and the consequent impoverishment of their peoples and environment, and to ensuring that the benefits of such cancellation reach down to the people at the grassroots;

6. Ending the imposition by the World Bank-IMF on poor countries of all conditionalities and structural adjustment policies attached to loans and aid, except those which are founded on respect for peoples, especially women, and for the environment and abandoning anti-protectionist policies under consideration in the Uruguay round of GATT and similar negotiations where protectionist policies are genuinely necessary for the preservation of peoples and the environment;

7. The appreciation that a precondition to survival is the preservation of our natural heritage of biological diversity and that the harm that may be caused by genetic engineering of people, animals and plants and the release of genetically-manipulated organisms into the environment demands there be no further approval unless and until truly representational citizens' boards including women fully par-

ticipate in the process and that any resulting life forms or life form technology, should not be patentable;

8. The strict enforcement, guided by the precautionary principle, of obligations in national and international law for the protection of peoples, animals and the environment;

9. The immediate cessation of the militarization of space, the production and testing of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and the unjustifiable and unsafe generation, dumping and incineration of wastes whether toxic or non-toxic;

10. The adoption and implementation of codes of ethics respectful of all peoples, animals and environment, in scientific research and application;

11. The development of criteria for all technologies which insist that they be people and environment friendly, non-violent, appropriate to the culture and not tied to aid;

12. The empowerment of women by raising their economic, health, nutrition, education, and social status as their inalienable right, and in recognition that their empower-

ment is a prerequisite to healing and sustaining the environment;

13. The fostering of systems of information and exchange, both formal and informal, which adhere to principles of openness and inclusiveness, cultural diversity and integrity, and which are dedicated to the widest possible dissemination of information on environmental and developmental issues, including the effects of military, industrial, and agricultural by-products on health and environment, and to the promotion of harmony between all living systems and solidarity among peoples;

14. The condemnation of any attempt to deprive women of sexual preference, reproductive freedom or the knowledge and means necessary to exercise that freedom in accordance with principles of informed consent, the provision of comprehensive reproductive health care and family planning, including the right to pre and post natal care, safe and legal voluntary contraceptives and abortion, sex education, and information, the protection from racism and sexual exploitation of migrant women, the recognition of the existence of a global cancer epidemic which demands the removal from the envi-

ronment of carcinogenic substances, particularly those which have adverse effects on women and children, the systematic alerting and education of all to the danger of AIDS, the provision of programs that educate men on male methods of contraception and on their responsibilities, and the enhancement of efforts to eliminate occupational hazards in factories, offices and on farms; and

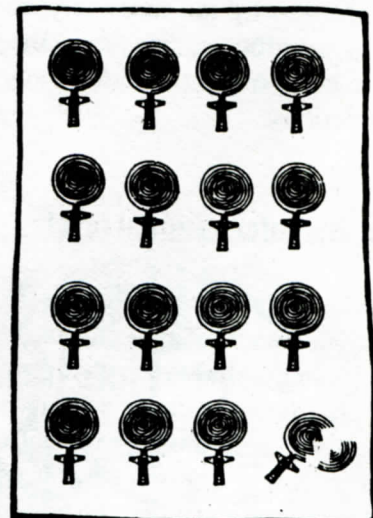
15. The adoption of forms of governance which are decentralized, and in which decision-making, including those on natural resource management are centered on people and communities both locally and generally.

This Declaration is a call to action initially mandated by women during panels and discussions at the sessions on Debt and Trade organized by DAWN at the Women's Tent on 5 June. Suggestions for a draft were taken on 6 June. The draft was amended and adopted by women at a special meeting to consider the draft on 10 June. It especially draws its inspiration from the Women's Action Agenda '21, DAWN's and also other women's views at the Global Forum.

About DAWN:

The DAWN network encompassing Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific was launched in 1984. It provides a forum for South women to formulate issues from a gender perspective, and provides a vehicle for influencing public policy.

For further information, contact Peggy Antrobus, DAWN General Coordinator, c/o WAND, UWI School of Continuing Studies, Pinelands, St. Michael, Barbados. Tel.: (809) 426-9288, 436-6312; Fax: (809) 427-4397.



IWTC

Weaving the future for Asian women

Declaration on trafficking in women

Women from thirteen Asian countries met in Seoul, Korea from December 11 to 13, 1991 to share their experiences and work out strategies to curb the alarming increase in the traffic in Asian women. Shocking forms of traffic in women have come to light in the various regions of Asia causing serious concern and demanding collective action worldwide.

The Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC) was formed to address this issue and to bring about a new understanding of women's human rights. The Conference on the Traffic in Women has been organized to understand and analyze the sexual exploitation of Asian women in various forms and to explore the different ways of stopping this inhuman trade.

Moved by the massive problems on trafficking in women, they have come out with the following resolutions:

On the international level

☉ To utilize existing United Nations structures and conventions in seeking solutions to this problem. Although there is a Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons, to broaden the concept of trafficking and reflect the present

realities and forms of trafficking, the concept of traffic in women would not be a restriction of traffic for the purpose of enforced prostitution but should be enlarged to include the purposes of all kinds of activities to which women can be forced such as domestic labor, clandestine employment, false adoptions and bogus marriages.

☉ A Special Woman Rapporteur on Traffic in Women with monitoring and research obligations from either Asian, African or Latin American country should immediately be appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights.

☉ Asian non-government organizations should actively participate in proceedings of the various UN channels like the meeting of the Working Group of Contemporary Forms of Slavery, the CEDAW, etc.

☉ Women's Groups should likewise push for the use of the Voluntary Fund for participation of groups in Sub-Committee on Contemporary Forms of Slavery: provide financial assistance for victims of trafficking to start a new life as well as financial assistance for legal expenses in cases of trafficking.

☉ An International Tribunal to try Cases on Trafficking in Asian Women should be held.

☉ The AWHRC should apply for a UN NGO Consultative Status to carry out its tasks more effectively in the international level.

☉ The AWHRC should seek the assistance of other UN NGO with consultative status like WILPF and World Council of Churches, Commission on International Affairs, IWRAW and others, for lobbying purposes.

At the regional level

☉ Bilateral consultations on specific issues should be held among concerned groups and governments, e.g. on the entertainer issue (Japan and the Philippines, Japan and Thailand, etc.); on kidnapped and trafficked and refugee women (Pakistan-Afghanistan, Pakistan-Bangladesh, etc.); on problems of domestic helpers (Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei).

☉ Joint actions between sending and receiving countries should be organized to dramatize and highlight common issues and cam-

paigns. Exchange of information especially in monitoring cases of trafficking across countries, comparison of legal, immigration and labor procedures, especially the sharing of successful legal precedents on trafficking cases.

- More effective coordination between women regional organizations and formations on this issue (AWHRC, APWLD, etc.).

On the national level

- In trying to curb abuses arising from the massive migration of women workers, adequate mechanisms should be set up to ensure adequate protection for their welfare without prejudicing their right to seek work abroad.

- There is need for closer coordination and information sharing on the operations of recruiting agencies and underworld syndicates.

- Intensification of campaigns in media on the issue of trafficking. Radio, TV, print and other media should be utilized to the maximum.

- Extensive grassroots organizing of women for education and empowerment should be undertaken by existing women's organizations.

- Education on laws affecting women written in popular language needs to be done to inform the women of their rights.

- Asian governments should be pressured to sign existing human rights conventions affecting women migrants and workers.

- Work for revision of laws within each Asian country to respond to trafficking issue; the prostituted woman, and trafficked woman should be entitled to the protection of the same laws and enjoy the same human rights as every other citizen; her background and past sexual history should not be taken into account in court proceedings.

- Pressure governments to stop sex tourism to Asian countries as a means of earning foreign exchange.

- Intensify campaigns to end military prostitution.

- Pressure governments to disseminate widespread information on AIDS prevention and ensure that in doing so, prostituted women with AIDS are not marginalized and blamed for the spread of AIDS.

For more information, contact:
AWHRC

120 V. Luna Extension Road
Sikatuna Village
Quezon City, Philippines
Telefax: (632) 922-0217; 999-437.

Source: *NWIN Flyer, WRRC, QCC*
P.O. Box 1976, 1159 Quezon City,
Philippines.



Match News

1st Asian Indigenous Women's Conference (AIWC)

24-30 January 1993
Teacher's Camp, Baguio City
Cordillera Region, Philippines

Theme: *Sharing Commonalities and Diversities, Forging Unity towards Indigenous Women's Empowerment*



Hosted by: Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center, Inc.

The main participants to this conference are indigenous women found in the Asian continent. This includes South East Asia, East Asia, and West and Central Asia. The country participants are: Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, (West Papua, East Timor), Burma, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, China, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Japan, and Taiwan. Some indigenous groups are: (Philippines) Igorots, Lumads, Batak, Dumagat, Mangyan, Aeta., etc; (Malaysia) Penan, Iban, Kenyah, Kayan, Kelabit, Dayaks, etc; (Thailand) Akha, Lisu, Tai-O, Mien, Karen, Hmong, etc; (Burma) Karen, Kachin, Chin, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Lahu, Pa-O, Palaung, Wa, etc; (Indonesia) Amungme, Dani, Ikagi, South Moluccas, Aceh, etc; and (India) Adivasi.

Some tribes are: Nagas, Mizo, Bodo, Deori, Rabha, Lalung, Kachari, Meche, etc; (Sri Lanka) Tamils, (Bangladesh) Chittagong Hill Tracts; (Taiwan) Amis, Tayal, Taroko, Saisiat, Tsao, Bumun, Paiwan, Rukai, Punuma, and Yami; Chinese National Minorities; Mongolians, Tibetans; (Vietnam) Bahnar, Jari, Rhade, Koho, etc; (Japan) Ainu, Okinawans. Indigenous women from other regions of the world can also participate.

For further information, write or fax to:
The Organizing Committee
1st AIWC

Foreign Mail:
P.O. Box 7691,
GARCOM-Baguio
(752) DAPO 1300
Domestic Road
Pasay City, Philippines

Local Mail:
No. 16 Loro Street
Dizon Subdivision
Baguio City
Philippines
Fax (63)-(74)-442-5205

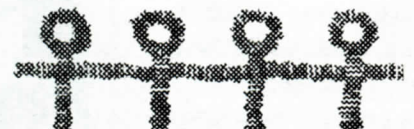
Discovering Women 1492-1992 - Counting 500 Years of Unwaged and Low Waged Work

13-15 November 1992
Argyle School, Tonbridge Street
London WC1 England

Time Off for Women 1992 marks 500 years since Europe began the colonization first of the Americas and the Caribbean, then of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. TO92 is therefore a unique opportunity for women to count five centuries of work resisting genocide, unwaged slavery, racism and imperialism, waged slavery and the devastation of our own health and environment.

The conference will bring together grassroots women from Third World and industrialized countries who are active in the international movement to count women's unwaged work.

Participants from Belgium, Canada, Greece, Guyana, India, Iceland, Italy, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Tlingit Nation, Trinidad, Uruguay, USA, and Wales.



Calendar of Events

1993 Conference on Women, Family, And Human Rights

United Nations
International Centre
Vienna, Austria
14-15 January 1993

Sponsored by the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the Women's Human Rights Convention)

The conference program will feature international panels of experts who will focus on various aspects of Convention Articles 9, 15 and 16 dealing with nationality, legal equality and marriage and family law.

For information, write or call to: IWRAP/WPPD, Humphrey Institute, 301 - 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN. 55455 USA. Fax: (USA) 612-625-6351.

5th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women

University of Costa Rica
San Jose, Costa Rica
22-26 February 1993

Held every three years, the congress aims to bring together scholars and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and areas of expertise, to share insights, experiences and research and to explore issues of importance to women throughout the world.

The theme of the 5th congress is Search, Participation and Change. It suggests the search for new alternatives as well as the importance of full participation at all levels in order to move towards a better society.

Contact: Prof. Mirta Gonzalez-Suarez, PRIEG - Escuela de Psicologia, Universidad de Costa Rica, Apdo. 2060, San Pedro, Costa Rica, Central America.

7th International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM)

13-17 September 1993
Makerere University
Kampala, Uganda

The objectives of the conference are:

- 1. strengthening the women's health movement in Africa;*
- 2. updating on issues of international concern regarding women's health;*
- 3. identifying local, regional and international strategies for action on women's health; and*
- 4. sharing and exchanging skills and experiences.*

Major conference themes include reproductive rights, global concerns for women's health, STDs, AIDS, social and economic factors affecting women's health.

For further information, contact Dr. Josephine Kasolo, coordinator, 7th IWHM, P.O. Box 1191, Kampala, Uganda. Tel.: 235 791.



Isis International co-organizes 1994 women and media conference in Bangkok, Thailand

by *Eliz Reyes-Martinez*

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) will co-sponsor with Isis International Manila and the International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC) in New York, a women and media conference titled "Women Empowering Communication." The conference will be held at the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) in Nonthaburi, Thailand from 12-19 February 1994.

Preparations for the conference are now taking place. After initial discussions with the co-organizers, the first planning committee meeting was held at the WACC office in London from 3-5 September 1992. Chairing the meeting was Teresita Hermano, Director for Communication Education of WACC. The co-organizers were represented by Marilee Karl and Elizabeth Martinez (Isis International Manila) and Vicki Semler of IWTC. Also invited to the meeting were: Marilyn Carr of UNIFEM; Margaret Gallagher, media consultant; Julienne Munyanesa of WACC Africa; Doris Hess, WACC consultant; and WACC staff Mary Luz Rivera and Ann Shakespeare.



Teresita Hermano

The discussion included substantive input on the four main conference themes: Women, Mass Media and Power; Women and Communication Alternatives, Women, Communication and Development; and Women, Communication and Sociocultural Identity. Specific subthemes on the four topics were finalized.

The committee agreed on the following conference objectives:

- to reassess media-related strategies adopted during the end of the Women's Decade in 1985, and plan new directions for the next decade;
- to stimulate ideas and resolutions related to women in communication to feed into the next UN Women's

Conference and the second WACC Congress, both to be held in 1995;

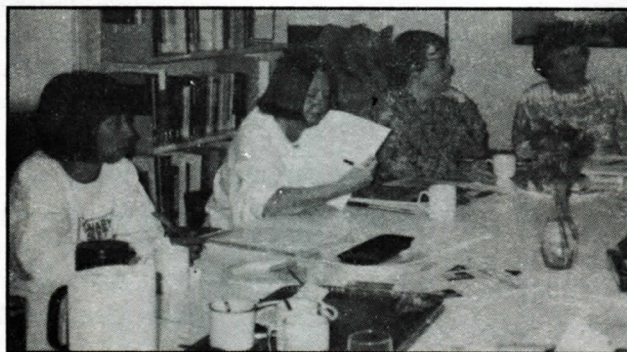
to bring together women working in communication groups, particularly active grassroots organizations and networks to share insights and learn from each other's experiences;

to highlight various critical areas related to the themes, in particular those which have not been sufficiently explored in studies and conferences on women and media;

to encourage and facilitate networking and solidarity among women's groups working in related fields;

to explore areas of research which have not been done on the themes.

In selecting participants, it was agreed that priority will be given to Third World Women who work with women's networks, feature services, newsletters and magazines, drama groups, radio or TV groups, film makers, collectives or similar groups dedicated to communication activities in support of the women's cause.



(Photo 1 to r: Eliz Martinez, Marilyn Carr, Marilee Karl, and Doris Hess)

Interested participants should write or call:

Teresita Hermano
WACC Director for Communication Education
3547 Kennington Lane
London, SE11 5QY England
Tel.: (01) 5829139
Fax: (01) 7350340.

Isis International is an international non-governmental women's organization providing information and communication services to women worldwide. Since 1974, Isis International has been working to promote women's empowerment through information, communication, networking and skills sharing.

Isis International Resource Center

Our Resource Center houses a unique collection of information and resource materials, most of it coming from women's groups, organizations and networks and from people's and development organizations. It documents the history and growth of the women's movement worldwide, its strengths and achievements, its problems and debates, and the many ways women are organizing.

The resource collection contains: over 830 women's periodicals; books, pamphlets, reports, bibliographies, directories; posters and other graphics by women; a Human Resources Data Base with 4000 names and addresses of women's groups and networks and of individuals and institutions supporting women's activities around the world.

The Resource Center offers: computerized library services for efficient and fast information access and retrieval. You may use these services by visiting the resource center or by writing for information on a specific issue; information packets on key issues; bibliographies and reading lists; training in computer literacy and use of new technologies; and training and assistance in setting up and organizing women's resource centers.

Isis International Publications

Women in Action is a quarterly magazine about women's experiences, ideas, organizing activities, resource materials, groups, meetings and conferences. It is a communication channel for women to share and network with each other, to learn how women are organizing and taking action. It gives women the space to tell their stories, define their issues and agendas, and learn how other women are organizing and taking action.

The Isis International book series focus on key issues that lead to women's empowerment. Each book brings together contributions from women around the world.

Health Networking

Because health is a key issue for women, Isis International's health networking program:

- promotes networking, consultations and meetings among women's health groups, organizations and networks;
- provides information and bibliographies on health issues from the Isis International special collection of resource materials on health;
- promotes regional and interregional health information campaigns;
- publishes an international **Women and Health Journal** with features and highlights of health research; interviews and discussions with women on their experiences, reflections and positions on women and health issues; sharing of women's experiences in organizing health groups and activities; resource listings; information on conferences and meetings; health campaign information.

Skills Sharing

Isis International provides opportunities for sharing information and communication skills through: internships, in-service training and worker exchanges with other women's groups, organizations and networks; training courses; organization of meetings and consultations; and technical assistance.

