



TREATY COUNCIL NEWS

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Treaty Council Before Human Rights Commission

The International Indian Treaty Council strongly urged the Human Rights Commission of the U.N. to take up the issue of American Indians held prisoner by the federal governments in the Americas. The Treaty Council presented an oral statement and a document detailing the racist policies of the U.S. and Canadian governments towards native people. Jimmie Durham of the U.N. office made the presentation at a session of the Human Rights Commission Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on August 17. Here is some of what he said in his oral statement:

"We, as American Indians, are urged to speak concerning the right to self-determination, because we are the original people of two entire continents in which this basic right is denied to us.

"The problems and struggles of Indian people in certain countries of Latin America are the most severe, and are now beginning to be addressed in the international community. We applaud those beginnings and urge more immediate action.

"But the rights of Indians in the U.S. have been a subject which has been almost completely ignored. Yet our condition in the U.S. is one of abject poverty.

"We, American Indians in the U.S. have had valid social and economic systems for untold thousands of years. Through treaties, the U.S. government has entered into legal guarantees that we will always have the right to an adequate land base and the right to practice our own social and economic systems without interference and without being excluded from the larger society.

"But, only consider the following facts: when Columbus first discovered the so-called New World, there were more than twelve million people living in what is now the U.S..

"Through treaties, we were guaranteed an adequate land base, yet today our land is being taken from us at the rate of 45,000 acres a year, and what land we have left is being destroyed by the large corporations in their search for cheap coal, petroleum and uranium.

"Under such conditions, self-determination is not possible." □

Over a thousand people came to a Night of Solidarity with Indian People on August 27 in San Francisco. The event was held in support of the U.N. Conference in Geneva, Switzerland to raise money to send delegates to Geneva. There were speakers involved in struggles around the world voicing support for American Indians and the U.N. Conference. Russell Means of the International Indian Treaty Council and Leonard Crow Dog, delegates to Geneva, spoke about why Indians are going to the U.N.

Many organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of people in Northern California alone, endorsed the U.N. Conference. Among them are Campuses United Against Apartheid; C.A.S.A.-General Brotherhood of Workers; the World Peace Council of Northern California; National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression; United Prisoners Union; Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy; San Francisco Women's Centers; the International Association of Filipino Patriots; and the Chilean Refugee Committees of San Francisco and San Jose and the Black Panther Party.

Meanwhile, Indian leaders from most countries in the Western Hemisphere have made final preparations this month for the U.N. Conference, which is the first occasion Indians have had to address the world community about human rights violations and genocide. The Conference takes place September 20-23, before the Non-governmental Organizations Special Committee on Human Rights, Sub-committee on Racism, Apartheid, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid at the U.N. World Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. □

SOLIDARITY WITH INDIAN PEOPLE



See portions of the document on page 4.

'ZANU Demands Sovereignty for Native American People'

Presently, the United States extends from "sea to shining sea" and when Indian people talk about sovereignty, people sometimes find the idea of Indian nationhood hard to believe. We think it's very realistic.

It wasn't very long ago that Europeans controlled all of the power in Africa. That isn't true now. What power that Europeans have is becoming less and less every day. The African people have shown that continental maps can be changed and Nations can be reborn and reclaimed through struggle. At the UN, Africans have helped us find our way around and given us valuable assistance. In particular, the Zimbabwe African National Union, presently fighting for its sovereignty in what the maps now say is Rhodesia, have stood with us time and again. Last year, they sent a representative to Greenwood, South Dakota for our Second Treaty Conference. They sent Prosper Takawira to deliver a statement at our Solidarity Benefit:

Comrades and Friends: on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe as a whole, ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Union, and the fighting elements of Zimbabwe, united under the patriotic front, wish to join you tonight in expressing our complete and total solidarity with the Native American people in their resolute struggle

against colonial and racist oppression.

When we began our movement for resistance, we asked ourselves a very fundamental question which all oppressed people when they begin to fight must ask themselves.

We asked ourselves if our struggle was unique, and if it was unique, in what way was it unique. We found out our struggle was unique in that it happened in the territorial boundary of Rhodesia. But we also found that our struggle was not unique in the sense that the oppression our people have suffered for the past ninety years under the hands of European colonialism was nothing new to the people of the world.

We found out many things. We looked at America. We learned about the reservations of the Native people. In our own homes, we have what are called reserves and protected villages which are nothing but concentration camps attempting to neutralize the people from fighting for what is just.

ZANU stands in complete solidarity with the International Indian Treaty Council in presenting the case of the Native American people to the United Nations. We know that for the first time in the history of the United Nations, the Native American people will have an opportunity to present their case against the colonial regime of the United States. Yes, a colon-

ial regime of the United States.

We think that the significance of the United Nations hearing is not that the United Nations is going to liberate the Native American people from this colonial oppression but we see it as an opportunity to address the rest of the world in exposing the best-kept secret in this whole world, that is, the United States is a colonial government. It is relatively the most successful colonial government. We know that the United States government can never offer the fighting people of southern Africa any solution because they are the biggest colonial government of all colonial governments.

In Zimbabwe, we have chosen the armed struggle, the national war of liberation, because of the particular conditions pertaining to our country. We urge the Native American people to be resilient, to be determined, to be resolute, because it is going to be a long struggle. We stand with the Native American people in their struggle against the imperialism of the United States. We think that by defeating colonialism and racism in southern Africa, we're not only helping ourselves but we're also helping lay a foundation for other people elsewhere who are struggling against the same form of oppression which is colonialism and racism.

ZANU demands sovereignty for the Native American people. □

TREATY COUNCIL: Three Years at the UN

Two centuries ago, when the sovereignty of our Nations was undisputed, there were full diplomatic relations between countries in Europe and several Indian Nations. In 1871 the United States said we were no longer nations, and told the rest of the world that we were Americans. Despite this, Indians have been trying to speak to the world about our situation. This century, the Hopi and the Iroquois have been leaders in attempting to speak to the international community about our colonized status in the U.S. In the 1920's the Iroquois sent a man named Deskaheh to Switzerland where the League of Nations was located, to get official recognition of the Six Nations. The Hopi and the Lakota have made attempts to gain entrance at the United Nations in the last several years. These attempts failed because the United States has a lot of power in the U.N. and they don't want the world to know about us, and because we didn't know enough about how the U.N. worked to be successful. Now this is changing.

At the First International Indian Treaty Conference, when the Treaty Council was founded, the people directed the Treaty Council to approach the United Nations not for just one Indian Nation, but

representing the people of the Nations that make up the Treaty Council.

In the fall of 1974, Keith DeMarrias, Paul Smith and Jimmie Durham opened an office across the street from the United Nations, and began to check out how things work at the U.N.

People with many years of experience, from colonized countries that won independence, told us that we could go before a U.N. committee anytime, but if we did that without the necessary background work to get support, we would lose badly. We learned that the African country of Guinea Bissau, which won independence in 1973, started organizing support from other countries and people in the 1950's. They spent many years talking with people around the U.N. before they ever tried to get official hearings before U.N. Committees. Their background work paid off, since the U.N. officially supported their struggle. We also found out that many other people from other parts of the world thought all Indians dead, or an invention of Hollywood. We realized that there would have to be a lot of educational work done about our struggle for people who might be sympathetic for them to actually support us. Another thing we

found out is how much power the United States has at the U.N. The U.S., in fact, controls most of the world economy and has the largest military force on the planet. It would be dangerous for some countries to recognize our treaties and our sovereignty because of the power the U.S. has over them. We learned to move slowly and cautiously.

The first step in the door of the United Nations is non-governmental organization status, or NGO status for short. It is also called consultative status. This is given to groups that give information to the United Nations about international issues the U.N. might have to take action on. We

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The International Indian Treaty Council was founded at the First International Indian Treaty Conference on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, co-sponsored by the Standing Rock Tribal Council and the American Indian Movement in June 1974. Four thousand delegates from 97 nations directed the Treaty Council to work for international recognition of the sovereignty of Indian Nations. The International Indian Treaty Council has consultative status in the United Nations with offices at 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017. Telephone: [212] 986-6000. The Treaty Council News is the official bulletin of the International Indian Treaty Council and is published by the American Indian Treaty Council Information Center, 870 Market St., San Francisco, CA. 94102. Telephone: [415] 434-4917. Staff for the Treaty Council News is Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, Jimmie Durham, Simon J. Ortiz, and Paul Smith.

'THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF DOUBLE TALK... They Call us Savages in my Hometown Too'

There's been a land struggle going on for the past nine years in the heart of San Francisco. Elderly Filipino and Chinese tenants of the International Hotel have been fighting for their homes. They've been fighting Four Seas, a multi-national corporation, and the courts which ordered their eviction. In that struggle, the tenants have been relocated just like we Indian people have been relocated but they are not defeated. To say that their struggle has been an inspiration is an understatement.

Wahat Tampao of the International Hotel Tenants Association said these words at the Treaty Council Benefit:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am really glad that I was invited to make a little speech, concerning the situation of the human rights.

It is true for how many generations, for how many years of history been going by, the Indian people have not been treated right. Why I say that is because there's been bad doubletalk concerning the land. In fact they promised the Sioux they would not kill the buffalo but still they kill the buffalo. There's a lot of doubletalk. The Indian gentleman [Russell Means] who made a speech here is telling the truth. I believe him. And I want you to believe him.

It has happened in so many states, different states where a lot of poor people have been evacuated, like what happened here in San Francisco. I'm not saying that I'm well to do and I'm not saying that I'm well enough to get by. I'm one of those poor people been evacuated, evicted at three o'clock early in the morning.

Do you think that's right for anyone right here to be thrown in the street without any place to go? That's what they're not supposed to do. In fact they done it to us, they do it. A couple weeks ago, those city officials turn to us and said, "Here's a package for you." When we see it has names of nine hotels. WE send somebody to investigate those nine hotels, to see how many are available. When the person come back he say two had no vacancies, three had only two rooms available and the rest were no good, not fit to live in. Is that a good package from the city? Telling you that this is a good place to live?

We are forty-five people who've been evicted from the International Hotel. They should know where to put us but they don't know where they're going to put us poor people so all they do is throw us right in the street. I say this many times when I make a lot of speeches: The city paid two hundred and fifty thousand to the Sheriff to evict the poor people who were living in the International Hotel. Where did they get the money? When we asked them for money they said they don't have no money. But when they evict the poor people they got money to give to the Sheriff.

That's similar to what they did to the Indian people. Double-talk. That's what they did to Sitting Bull. To Crazy Horse. Doubletalk. I want you to listen to the man who spoke to you a while ago. The Indians know what they are saying.

The court is the majority here in the city of San Francisco. That's why I begged to the Mayor. I even cried in front of him, telling him, "You are the Mayor of the city, you are the father of San Francisco and I am begging you as a son, crying in front of you as a son, to leave us a home to live." But you know what he says? "I got no power." What kind of power he want? I even say to him, "Shame of you, if you say you have no power, when you are the Mayor of San Francisco."

All I'm explaining to you is what they did to the red skin people before. Like what happened at Wounded Knee. I think you have read about it. All those FBI make a false statement and all the red skin people got the blame, not the FBI. That's why we should be alert.

I mention this human rights because you young generation now must be careful. Don't tell your children that the Indian is a savage. That's not right to tell your children. Tell your children how those people have been sacrificed and they been fighting for all their life, generation to generation, instead of telling them they are savages.

They call us savages in my home town too. In our place in the Philippines, we are also Igorot. Like the Indians. The Igorot in the Philippines have seven tribes. In fact, the whole mountain province, Bicol, is Igorot, but we got different tribes of people. Even though we don't cut somebody's neck they accuse us because we are Igorot. Little by little they have found out that we people from the mountain province are not doing those things. All over the Philippines, to tell you the truth, we used to eat dogs. But they say, "Them damn Igorot, they eat dog." And now all over the Philippines we can't even eat dog.

See, that's what they are trying to do to us.

They call themselves American but they don't know that the first American is the Indian! And we also in the Philippines, we are the first Filipino!

'Nothing is More Precious than Freedom and Independence'

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We would like to convey our warmest greeting of friendship and solidarity to our American Indian friends on this gathering tonight.

The American Indian people, for centuries, have suffered a barbaric and genocidal war of the United States imperialist, alienated even on their homeland. Being the victim of the same aggressive force, we deeply share the sorrow that you have born and unswervingly support your just struggle for justice, democracy and social progress. The struggle of the Vietnamese people for their just cause was long and arduous but how glorious the final victory was. This victory is of all progressive people and all oppressed people in the world.

"Nothing is more precious than freedom and independence." The victories of oppressed people in the world, from Asia to Africa to America is resounding this truth of our era. We are certain that your just cause will prevail.

Long live the friendship and solidarity of the Vietnamese people and the American people.

Just cause will triumph over evil cause.

Oppressed people of the world, united!

HỘI VIỆT KIỀU YÊU NƯỚC TẠI MỸ
Association of Vietnamese Patriots in the
United States

SAVE COSO SPRINGS OWENS VALLEY LAND STRUGGLE

The Treaty Council staff in San Francisco was invited to participate in a day long conference in Bishop, California August 20. The focus of the conference was Coso Hot Springs which is sacred land for many Indian peoples, including the Utes of Utah, the Paiutes and Shoshones of California and Nevada and the Yokuts of California.

Coso Hot Springs is located in the southern part of the Owens Valley, south of Bishop, California. Coso lies within the claimed area of the China Lake Naval Ordinance Station. Since the Naval weapons center was established, the sacred Hot Springs has been a restricted area.

Some 200 Indian people travelled hundreds of miles to the Bishop conference from California, Nevada, and Utah to express their firm resolve that Coso Hot Springs be returned to the people who have used it for health and ceremonies for centuries. Other people, like the Treaty Council staff and representatives from the Pit River Tribal Council and community leaders, went to express support for the return of Coso to its rightful owners. □

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applied for this status in 1974, and it took two and a half years of political maneuvering to have it granted. We now have official standing at the United Nations, and this is an important step towards eventual recognition by the U.N. of the sovereignty of Indian Nations.

In 1975 the Treaty Council sponsored a conference on international law for traditional Indian leaders in New York City. It was also International Women's Year, and Indian women representing the Treaty Council attended conferences in Mexico City and in Berlin, East Germany. Vernon Bellecourt went to Cuba for AIM and the Treaty Council to a meeting of liberation movements in solidarity with the nation of Puerto Rico. At all of these meetings, important contacts were made for the first time between Indians and other people fighting for independence.

Last year Jimmie Durham went to Peru for a conference of non-aligned countries. That meeting also helped us better understand what things are like for Indians in South and Central America. Peru is a country that is ninety percent Indian. He and Dace Means also went to the Second Congress of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party held in Puerto Rico.

The Treaty Council and AIM participated in the July 4th Coalition, which held a march of 50,000 people in Philadelphia on the Bicentennial of the U.S. That coalition was made up of many different groups, among them black, Chicano, Asian and white political organizations fighting for change. It was the first time most of them had ever heard from the Indian Movement firsthand. We consider our work with possible allies in the U.S. part of our international work, since although we are fighting a common enemy and want the support of the American people, we are sovereign nations and not part of the United States. The Puerto Rican Independence Movement, represented by the PSP, and the Indian Movement represented by the Treaty Council and AIM, were the leadership in that coalition. We got a telegram from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam congratulating our work in the July 4th Coalition.

That year we also were present at meetings the U.N. sponsored in Vancouver, and in Geneva which led to the U.N. Conference being held this September.

This year there have been several important international conferences the Treaty Council was part of. We built stronger relationships with Indians of Central America by attending a meeting they held in Panama, and got them involved in the U.N. Conference. In Argentina we were able to use our new NGO status by speaking at the United Nations Water Conference as official delegates. In April Jimmie Durham was in Warsaw,

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention
of Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Thirtieth session
Agenda item 12

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

The Question of the Human Rights of Persons
Subjected to Any Form of Detention or
Imprisonment

*Written statement submitted by the International Indian Treaty Council,
a non-governmental organization in category II consultative status*

The American Indians have suffered the loss of huge percentages of their populations, most of their land base, much of their cultural integrity, and their basic human rights.

Those forms of aggression and discrimination against Native American people have caused severe poverty and alienation. They have also caused just resistance on the part of the Native Americans.

Those two factors in turn (poverty and alienation, and resistance) have created a situation wherein unusually large numbers of American Indians find themselves imprisoned in the prisons of their oppressors.

There is a very real sense in which all of these indigenous people in prison can be considered political prisoners in almost every country of the hemisphere. In few cases are they tried by a jury of their peers or according to their own laws and customs.

Blatant racial discrimination is evident by statistics showing percentages of Indians in prisons compared to percentages of other races and nationalities, length of sentences compared to length of sentences of non-Indians, availability of parole and other standards.

The situation is unique in that it covers two whole continents and in that the United Nations has so far considered these problems at a minimum level. It seems appropriate that the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities begin to seriously consider the urgent problems of Indians in prisons.

This paper is concerned primarily with the situation of Native Americans in the United States and Canada because much information on prison conditions in other American countries is already available.

In the United States, American Indians make up less than one per cent of the population. Their over-all welfare is some five times lower than the United States standard. Poverty is so severe that more than 75 per cent of all Indians in that country suffer from malnutrition, unemployment is constant around 75 to 80 per cent, according to United States government reports.

The situation of American Indians in United States prisons constitutes obvious violations of the United Nations conventions on Human Rights, Genocide, Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights, and of the United Nations Charter itself. The situation represents the most thorough, intense, deliberate and ignored racism imaginable.

The United States and Canada know well of the situation and are doing nothing to alleviate it. Action must be taken at an international level.

The United States and Canada having freely entered into treaty agreements with the Indians and thereby recognizing the international status of Indians within their borders, may not claim that racism and denial of human rights against Indians is an "internal affair."

Poland for the World Peace Conference, and made some valuable contacts.

So that's what the international work has been since 1974. Mostly it has been the slow, necessary background work to get the support of other countries and movements. What our friends from Africa and Asia keep telling us is that we must move very carefully, and not expect too much too soon. It is only through a people's own efforts that they gain liberation and freedom, not by resolutions from the U.N. or decisions from the World

Court. The U.N. has no army to carry out its resolutions, and right now the U.S. is the single most powerful country in the U.N. If we can get some countries to support us then we can start dealing with the U.S. on a more equal basis. The international work is a very important part of the work we must do to win sovereignty, but it is not the most important. Without the people organized to maintain the sovereignty of the people, then we have nothing to talk about at the United Nations. □