

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St John River

This publication produced monthly at Tobique, NB, Canada E7H 5K3



Ownership vs. Stewardship and Balance

Don't forget the Talking Circle, Sunday, May 17, 11 am at Nictau Lake

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Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native information for our readers. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more accurately when equipped with the right tools. Our aim is to provide the precise tools and the best information possible.

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OWNERSHIP vs RELATIONSHIP AND BALANCE

Writer, Charles Mann, author of the book, 1491, makes this observation, "Four centuries ago, the English didn't discover a New World – they created one." Mann is not being complimentary about the English colonists when he says this. The landscape we see here today is far different than it was 500 years ago.

If we look back at the Wolastoqiyik and their customs at the time of first contact, a much different world will be revealed. Most important of all, these people had a relationship with the natural world. They did not have any concept of owning land or animals, like the wolf, bear, moose, caribou, deer and beaver. They did not believe they had "dominion" over creation, as the Euro-Christians believed. This is a fundamental difference between the two peoples and two radically different and opposite cultures.

Jamestown colonist and city alderman, Robert Johnson, wrote in a sermon, Nova Britannia, published in 1609, "The land which we have searched out is a very good land, and if the Lord love us, he will bring our people to it, and give it to us for a possession ... for the honor of our King, and enlarging of his kingdom." Those sentiments were the mind-set of the English colonists. Johnson goes on to say that the Indians must be made to understand that the purpose of the English in coming here, "is to plant ourselves in their country: yet not to supplant and root them out, but to bring them from their base condition to a far better." Johnson's propaganda pamphlet compared Native Americans to "herds of deer in a forest." Of Christianizing the Indians and saving them from their pagan ways, he writes this in his sermon, ".... Consider well that great work of freeing the poor Indians from the devourer, a compassion that every good man would show unto a beast; their children when they come to be saved, will bless the day when first their fathers saw your faces." He threatened to deal with any of the Indians who resisted conversion to Anglicanism, as enemies of 'their' country. Did Johnson, or any colonist in those times, make any effort to understand the ways of the Indians? No. They placed themselves so far more 'civilized' and above the Indians that there could be nothing of value to be learned from them.

What the English colonists failed to appreciate was that there was a spiritual cooperation between the Indians and the wild animals that contributed peace, harmony and respect between one another. To the Wolastoqiyik animals had a free and independent existence. They could not be owned. The Wolastoqiyik entered into a relationship with the animals, just like other species of animals formed relationships and co-existed together. They learned to respect each other as they shared the same resources and territories. This relationship worked that all life in Wolastoq land might continue in balance. The system was sacred. The animals would offer themselves to the people, so that the people could live, a sacrifice of their lives for saving the lives of the people. Each time the life of an animal was taken, it was like a sacred gift, an offering in a spiritual way. There were celebrations of giving. There were traditional rules about how these animals were to be used, their furs and hides, their bones, their meat, and even their brains, claws, and hooves. Nothing was wasted. The animals supplied Wolastoqiyik with meat, clothing, tools and medicines.

In the European world animals were domesticated, the chickens, sheep, hogs and cattle did not have independent, free spirits. They were owned. They were captives. They depended on their owners for survival. The colonists would notch their ears or brand them on the flank, or mark them in some other way to identify them from another owner's livestock. These "owned" animals were kept confined within fences and pens most of the time, so that they would not wander into another colonist's property. If they were allowed to wander, or they escaped over a fence, or out of a pen, they could be identified by their markings. Whenever it suited the farmers, unrelated to the time of year, they would herd them and slaughter them.

Animals did escape, the cows, horses, pigs and chickens. They helped to spread deadly diseases such as cowpox, anthrax, brucellosis, leptospirosis, trichinosis, influenza and tuberculosis. Some diseases spread to deer and native wild turkeys. The pigs dug up the ground looking for roots and tubers. They, in effect, destroyed the tuckahoe tubers and sunroots (Jerusalem artichokes) that the Indians dug and ate, but which did not appeal to the colonists.

Conflicts arose between the Native people and these immigrants because of the huge differences in the two cultures. The Wolastoqiyik planted corn but didn't fence in their fields because they didn't own domestic animals. The roaming cattle and pigs of the colonists would trample and destroy the cornfields of the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet).

In the 1790's this happened at the location of a small Island in the St. John River (Inman's Island) near the Wolastoqiyik fortified village at Medoctec (Meductic). At low water times of the year the island became a peninsula, being accessible on foot by both man and beast. The Indians had planted corn there for generations (English captive, John Gyles, helped them plant corn in the 1680s). That island is now under the floodwaters of the Mactaquac hydroelectric dam.

On January 29, 1794 William Bell, Isaac Fletcher, and 15 other white settlers submitted a petition to the Surveyor General to deal with what they considered an Indian problem. The petition read as follows: "Since Inmans Island was surveyed, several Indians have gone on it, and without any authority from us, and much against our inclinations, have cleared a part of it. And no Indians have ever lived on it, except the time they were planting and gathering their corn. After planting they would make a bad fence, and all go away, and leave their crop exposed. And as on one side of the island there is no water in summer, the cattle and hogs cannot be prevented from going on said island, and whenever the Indians were there, the dogs would attack the cattle etc. And their dogs this fall, and at other times, have killed and wounded in this settlement sheep, cattle, and hogs, for which no satisfaction has been madeit will be much better for us and them, if they were further up the river, for then we should not lose any of our stock, and they could not get so much rum." The Indians, under pressure from the white settlers to abandon their village, did remove from Medoctec and went up river and settled on land below Woodstock. A few went to the Tobique, but apparently some decided to stay, because there were still some living at Medoctec in the 1830s.

In those years of colonial settlement, the forests were cleared and fenced in to pasture livestock and grow crops, and to mark the boundaries of the lands the farmers owned. The more settlers that came, the more animals and crops there were, and the more forests were cut. Add to this the timber industry for making masts for ships and lumber for homes and fences. The Wolastoqiyik lands that once supported many more of them than there were white settlers, were suddenly not large enough to contain the Europeans and their livestock. And so began the great colonial expansion further into the forests, destroying the entire Wolastoqiyik support system, making the land poorer and the colonists richer. This destroyed the entire Wolastoqiyik way of life. The environment they had lived in for over 10,000 years was destroyed within two or three generations. It was catastrophic. The land that was home to the eastern woodland caribou, wolverine, mountain lion, and timber wolf, was reshaped into a new environment. These animals were extirpated. The food chain was greatly altered. Black rats brought to the Americas as stowaways in the ships, soon multiplied and devoured the Indians' stores of corn. Apple trees and other fruit trees were imported, bringing small trees potted in containers of dirt, and in the dirt were earthworms and night crawlers. Honeybees were imported to make honey. The fruit trees, honeybees and earthworms were new to this land, having a great ecological impact on the balance of life here. The disruption to the

environment has continued to get worse. Synthetic fertilizers, and also antibiotics and other chemicals in animal manure, have poisoned the soils. There is no life, no balance, within the soil. Erosion of the soil in agricultural land is happening twenty to a hundred times faster than it takes to make soil. But the Euro-Christian does not see what is happening, because he has no relationship with the soil, the creatures and plants of Mother Earth, except to dominate and possess as assigned to him by his god.

This is why a white bureaucratic representative of the Crown could not understand that taking an Indian and putting him, or her, on a small piece of ground and giving them livestock to raise, will not likely succeed. The Indian has a closer and more spiritual relationship with Mother Earth than the white man. Owning animals does not fit into an Indian's way of life. In 1942, the Department of Indian Affairs tried to consolidate the smaller reserves and move the people into fewer, but larger reserves. Woodstock, Oromocto and Devon (St. Mary's) reserves were to be closed down and consolidated at Kingsclear reserve. Indian Affairs purchased a large farm and woodland back of the existing reserve, with the intention of enticing the people to move there from the other reserves and get into farming. The removals would be given plots of land, farm buildings, farming equipment and livestock.

To make a long and contentious story short, it did not work. There are no cattle farms, or hog and poultry buildings there today, and very few of the Wolastoqiyik on the smaller reserves chose to remove and go to Kingsclear to farm. Just like many other similar ventures that have been tried using white man's conventional methods and politics, they do not work, because the ways and traditions of the Indian are not understood nor appreciated by the white man.

In summary, the Euro-Christians who came to this land had no relationship of respect for the animals, forests and waters. They brought with them diseases like smallpox, typhoid and malaria. They cut down the forests, dammed the streams and rivers, and introduced domestic animals and mono-agriculture. They have poisoned the soils and waters forever with chemicals. They weakened and destroyed the health, the culture, and the sustaining environment of the people who were living here. In the end they broke their spirit. They just pushed them aside, and were totally ignorant of the rich culture and spiritual relationship with Mother Earth that these people had thrived in and enjoyed for thousands of years. This was done in just a few generations. Today, not only the Amerindian world, but the whole planet is feeling the impact of the Euro-Christian supremacist, dominant, possessive, all-consuming attitude that has infiltrated and infected most cultures. It has been projected that by 2050 there will be another three billion people added to this planet. We should be concerned because Mother Earth will correct this state of affairs and enforce the laws of relationship and balance amongst all living creatures. It won't be pleasant.

----- Nugeekadoonkut

MALISEET PRESS FOR RETURN OF "GRANDFATHER CANOE"

TJ

FREDERICTON - One of the world's oldest known birchbark canoes may soon be returning to the Maliseet Nation.

The 180-year-old canoe, currently on loan at the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John, has been in Irish hands for almost its entire existence and is scheduled to be sent back to Ireland in June.

But a group from St. Mary's First Nation, near Fredericton, has been pressing Irish officials to hand over the artifact, which is currently the property of the National University of Ireland Galway.

"This is the oldest canoe of our people," said G. Wayne Brooks, who has been leading the quest for repatriation. "It was built by our grandfathers, our ancestors."

The campaign to get back what the Maliseet call "Grandfather Atwiken-" or, Grandfather Canoe - is attracting increased attention. Last Saturday, the Irish Times, one of the country's leading national newspapers, ran a front-page story on the canoe, stating the university could be prepared to hand it over.

The university said in the statement it would meet the "competing claims for the canoe from museums interested in conservation and display, and from representatives of those whose ancestors built the canoe."

It also noted that "any decision in favour of the permanent repatriation of the canoe would require further approval at both national and (European Union) level."

The canoe was one of three that came into the possession of British Lieutenant-Governor Sir Howard Douglas, who arrived in New Brunswick in 1824.

It was passed on to Lieutenant Stepney St. George, who brought it back to Galway, where it was donated to the university in the middle of the 19th century.

Brooks said he learned of the canoe's existence only two years ago, when it was shipped to the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa to be refurbished. In 2008, it was brought to Saint John for exhibition on a year-long loan.

Brooks said the St. Mary's community is still working out where they would keep the canoe in the long term if it is handed over.

"We've made arrangements with the Saint John museum, and also been in contact with the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, to have it there until such time that we, as a community and a nation, can have our facility to house our ancestral artifacts and collections," he said.

Brooks began building traditional birch bark canoes with his son a few years ago. All the materials are hand-whittled and they use only hardwood pegs to keep the canoe safe, light and stable. So far Brooks has made six of the craft.

Building them and performing the ritual ceremonies that accompany the process is a way to remember his ancestors.

St. Mary's Chief Candice Paul says returning the canoe to the Maliseet would be a way for the nation to preserve its culture.

"We'd really like to appeal to the people of Ireland to be open to that possibility, to sit down and have that discussion," she said.

"We are people of the river, and what more would be the representation of the river than to have our canoe back?"

TWO NATIVE BUSINESSMEN OPEN GAS BAR / REPAIR SHOP IN MAINE

p.paul

FORT FAIRFIELD, ME -Two new entrepreneuring business partners, Dana (Francis) York and Glenn Mercerau, both of Micmac ancestry, reported that they have recently acquired a business location on Main Street in Fort Fairfield, ME where they will open and operate a gas station and a motor vehicle/motorcycle repair shop.

The immediate plans are to reopen a two-bay garage/gas station (formerly Citgo) that closed several months ago. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for a grand opening is scheduled around mid-May 2009. Exact date and time will be posted. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Dana York, 37, with 18 years experience in repairing motor vehicles of all makes and models said that he and Glenn Mersereau, a specialist in motorcycle repair, are teaming up to not only dispel and tear down the false and unfair notion that native businesses generally tend to falter and fail.

The partners feel strongly that this stereotypical attitude on native character is basically wrong and totally misleading. Both believe this negative characterization can be turned around within a given period as their business grows and prospers.

They, on the other hand, believe that with the wide mechanical skills and PR backgrounds they bring into the company, the business can only go one way, and that is up and up. Their main and optimum goal is to be recognized and accepted in the community as just another business on main street that is trying to make a go of it, and hopefully in time, to be seen in a positive agent and a contributing member of the community.

Name / Location / Tel. Number:

The business is called, York's Auto / Crippled Indian Vintage Motors, located on 320 Main Street, Fort Fairfield, ME The telephone number is 207-473-0096.

Business hours run from 8 am to 5 pm daily, including Saturdays.

Senior discount:

One policy that will always be maintained, - all senior citizens will get a discount.

UMPI GETS \$750K TO IMPROVE EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

Nellie Mae Education Foundation announce major Project Compass grant

Rachel Rice, 768-9447, Rachel rice@umpi.edu

PRESQUE ISLE – Officials with the University of Maine at Presque Isle and the New England Resource Center for Higher Education announced in a Friday morning press conference that the University has been awarded a major grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation that will allow it to develop and improve culturally responsive retention strategies for its Native American students.

The award allows the University to receive up to \$750,000 over the next four years to better serve its Native American student population as well as the region's Native American community. With 65 Native American students, the University of Maine at Presque Isle has the highest percentage of such students of all the University of Maine System campuses. The University is one of four universities in New England chosen to participate in Project Compass, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's multi-year initiative aimed at increasing the number of underrepresented populations graduating with four-year degrees. Project Compass is administered by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education.

UMPI will use its grant funding to develop strategies that assist Native American students in transitioning from the native community to the university community, as well as develop their life tools to help them achieve their goals within the dominant culture and their own. The proposal's key strategies are:

- Creation of a Native American Center staffed with a retention team;
- Data management and evidence development;
- Review of academic affairs and curriculum to offer more effective support to marginalized students; and
- Reconfiguration of the roles of student support and advising.

The project will be conducted under the University's Center for University Programs and be informed by a permanent Native American Advisory Board. The funding the University is receiving from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation is designated specifically for purposes that meet the objectives of this grant project.

"We couldn't be more pleased to be moving forward on this important project, which will greatly impact our teaching and mentoring work and really help to shape our students' future educational experiences," President Don Zillman said. "The particular focus of our Project

Compass work is Native American students, but the benefits from Project Compass will help us in all underserved communities. We are honored to be a New England leader in this effort." The other three Project Compass grant awardees are Lyndon State College in Vermont, Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts and Eastern Connecticut State University. "Project Compass is designed to respond to a critical national need, focusing on innovative practices in four state colleges and universities in New England. It is our hope that the leadership already exhibited at our four funded campuses will contribute to narrowing the achievement gaps for low-income students, students of color, and students who are first in their family to attend college," Glenn Gabbard, Associate Director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education and the Director of Project Compass, said. "UMPI's work is an excellent example of an institution that is willing to take a serious look at changing what it does for underserved students so that all students that it serves will benefit. The University of Maine at Presque Isle is a small state university located in the heart of northern Maine. Established in 1903 as a state teacher's school, UMPI now offers a wide range of liberal arts and professional programs and a balanced curriculum that promotes a strong foundation in the arts and sciences. As one of seven autonomous campuses within the University of Maine System, UMPI serves about 1,500 traditional and non-traditional students, about 70 percent of whom receive financial aid. The University is committed to close student, faculty and staff interaction in support of intellectual growth and personal development; diversities of culture, age and nationality among both students and staff; and public service that promotes the well-being of the people of Maine. For more info visit www.umpi.maine.edu

NATIVES GET NEW RIGHTS IN B.C. BILL

Times Colonist

The province plans to introduce a sweeping bill that would recognize the existence of First Nations as the original inhabitants of B.C., with their own laws, governments, territories and title to land.

Aboriginal Relations Minister Mike de Jong is expected to bring the Recognition and Reconciliation Act to the legislature this month. It gives First Nations the right to make decisions and share in revenues from their traditional land, so they would benefit from mining, forestry, fisheries and other economic development. It also envisions an aboriginal council working on equal footing with the provincial government.

"I think if we do this together, it will represent change on a seismic scale," said de Jong, in a speech yesterday to the First Nations Summit, meeting in Victoria.

Recognition of rights and title would mean that, during lawsuits, the federal and provincial governments could no longer use arguments that deny the existence of First Nations.

"This would recognize that aboriginal rights exist throughout the province without proof of claim," de Jong said. "You should not be required to stand in court and call evidence of your rich history and culture and centuries of presence in this part of the world."

That recognition should speed up treaties and court cases, saving millions of dollars for First Nations.

At the root of the planned legislation is an 1859 declaration by B.C. governor James Douglas that the province's lands were unoccupied and all land in B.C, and minerals beneath the land, belonged to the Crown.

"It's not true. It wasn't true and we need to change that," de Jong said. "I think that opportunity is now, but we have to do it together. We have to lock arms and agree that this is the time and place, and this is the measure we can take."

Summit chiefs yesterday followed the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and B.C. Assembly of First Nations and voted in favour of working toward the new legislation.

Chiefs will talk to the government about drafting details, said Ed John, grand chief of the First Nations Summit. After 150 years of repression, there is still skepticism about government's commitment, but most chiefs are optimistic, he said. "This means that First Nations should be able to benefit from resource development in their territory," he said.

The whole province was, at one time, Indian territory, so the sweep is provincewide, John said.

A discussion paper on the proposed legislation, circulated among chiefs of B.C.'s 203 First Nations last month, sets out broad concepts, with details still to be worked out. One contentious issue is a suggestion that First Nations be reconstituted with 30 indigenous governments -- instead of 203 -- based on history and geography.

Hupacasath Chief Judith Sayers questioned the need for reconstitution, but de Jong said legislation will not dictate how First Nations are configured.

About 150 years ago, Canada re-organized First Nations on an arbitrary basis, said de Jong, who admitted it would be easier to deal with 30 groups instead of 203. "The leadership has indicated a strong desire and preference for moving back to traditional alignments of approximately 30 indigenous nations that existed before contact," he said.

Guujaw, pres. of the Council of Haida Nation, said the bill represents a change of heart for govt. "It's a far cry from where we were when the notion was to exchange all our titles for treaties -- last week," he said.

Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said every government in Canada will look carefully at the B.C. bill. "I know the federal government will be under considerable pressure if this proposal \hat{e} makes it through the legislature," he said.

From a rocky start, Premier Campbell has evolved into one of the most supportive premiers in the country, Fontaine said. "He came to the realization that B.C. wasn't going to progress without First Peoples as an integral part," he said.

ESKASONI CAN LEGALLY EXILE DRUG DEALERS

CB Post

ESKASONI — Banishing drug dealers from First Nations communities isn't a violation of Charter of Rights and Freedoms, according to a criminal justice expert.

Michael C. Chettleburgh of Toronto, who runs his own criminal justice consulting business and often works in First Nations communities, said Eskasoni's decision to take away band privileges from drug dealers is not illegal — or even uncommon.

Eskasoni band officials are threatening to take away certain privileges from drug dealers in the community, including employment with the band, housing and any income coming from the fisheries, gaming and sale of tobacco.

"If a First Nation was to do this and there was to be a challenge, I'm pretty sure they would be successful in defending that challenge," said Chettleburgh, who lived in Coxheath for three years. "These things are provided to you really as a privilege rather than a right, so if you breach (community protocol), really you should be banished — period."

Chettleburgh said in certain nomadic tribes, members can be asked to leave shared lands for eight weeks. When that time is up, if they choose to be a productive citizen they can return; if not, members are told to not come back.

He said many First Nations communities in Canada are looking to banishment as a way of dealing with prolific criminals and said bands aren't responsible for providing for their outcast residents.

Still, they must follow the proper process.

“Even if they are (a) First Nation, they are still subject to the Criminal Code of Canada, including the rules of evidence and testament, all those things,” he noted.

Jaime Battiste, an adviser to the Eskasoni band, said people charged with drug trafficking will lose their privileges even before a court trial. He said a recent survey shows drug abuse is the top concern in the community.

“Based on that and based on some of the (suicide and drug-related) deaths we’ve had in the community, chief and council felt it was the right time to create a partnership with the RCMP to work together to see how we can start making a difference,” Battiste said.

Under the resolution, RCMP could supply the band with the names of anyone charged with drug trafficking. Band officials will then apply for a court order to remove the offender from band housing.

Battiste said people will lose privileges once charged. If charges are later dropped, the privileges will be reinstated.

“People who get their charges withdrawn will automatically get those privileges back,” he said. Band council is also considering a residency code that would apply to offences such as murder and pedophilia.

“What we’re saying is based on Mi’kmaq principles, with rights come responsibilities, and if you don’t maintain your responsibilities as Mi’kmaq, you lose those rights or privileges.” Chettleburgh said he doesn’t believe any band would banish someone without first holding some sort of hearing.

“I don’t think for a second they’re going to accept the word of the RCMP and then make orders based on that. That would be a very naive approach,” he said.

Battiste said the band doesn’t plan to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He also said a person’s privileges could be reinstated after they receive counselling and demonstrate good behaviour.

Eskasoni officials say prescription pill abuse is a problem on the reserve. The band has already instituted a court-approved policy that tests community fisherman for illegal drugs.

- epottie@cbpost.com

CHIEF ABEL BOSEM, CREE NATION, PERUSES INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

Indigenous Peoples' Rights A Speech given on Dec. 10, 1994 at the Kennedy Library, Boston MA

We like to think of the UN as a world government that is responsible for a kind of "universal sovereignty"--laws that transcend the jurisdictions of individual States, or perhaps, law that cannot be entrusted to the single responsibility of individual States.

In fact, if we examine the history of the UN, it is obvious that it was founded to establish and enforce a higher standard of ethical and moral behavior than individual States may practice. We all know that the establishment of the UN in San Francisco directly at the end of the Second World War, was in reaction to the horrors of the Nazi regime.

The founding principle of the UN is that States do not have ultimate sovereignty with regard to the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of their inhabitants; that this ultimate sovereignty is surrendered to the world body, and that although each State retains the responsibility to uphold and enforce human rights law, all States are subject to international oversight in this regard, and if necessary, international intervention.

The speeches that were made at the founding of the UN note that the need for the world to act in solidarity against Hitler's Germany was this same principle of world solidarity that was applied to the apartheid regime in South Africa, resulting in the very positive developments

that have occurred there recently. Of course there was no UN when Columbus landed in the so-called "New World," and from the look of things now, I would say that the Indians, the indigenous peoples of the Americas, could certainly have used a UN.

Many of you are familiar with the history of the indigenous peoples in the Americas, a succession of friendships and betrayals, treaties, and surrenders, ethnocide and genocide. It is unpleasant, and most Americans prefer not to dwell on it. The goal--to remove the indigenous peoples from the land--was largely accomplished; and it was all done "according to law," although presumably in violation of principles of international human rights law that we accept today as valid. To compound the injustice, it was also done in such a way to deny the indigenous peoples any means of redress to the international community. This, we might say, is old and unpleasant history, and we should move on. The problem is that we cannot, for the very simple reason that what we take to be past history, is not really over--it persists. It persists throughout this hemisphere, and in the remaining places in the world where indigenous peoples survive.

We like to think that the broken treaties, the extermination and all of those other things that happened in the past--are unfortunate, but over, beyond our control now, no longer our responsibility. The truth is that grave violations continue against the human rights of the world's indigenous peoples. Violations continue in the US, Canada, Guatemala, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, Indonesia, Burma--I could continue.

Most Americans and Canadians are unaware of the fact that indigenous peoples' rights continue to be abused. I should point out that although this abuse is widespread, the severity and extent of abuses against indigenous peoples varies considerably from country to country. In Guatemala, for example, those familiar with the experiences of my respected sister Rigoberta Menchu will realize that the abuse often consists of murder. In Canada and in the province of Quebec, where I am the chief of a Cree nation, the abuse has most often been dispossession and denial of individual freedoms. The question for you is: how can the international community help and how can you encourage the international community to help?

In principle, the objective of abuses against indigenous peoples has remained unchanged over the centuries. It is based on the principle that indigenous peoples are somehow inferior, should not be in possession of their lands, and have no right to govern themselves or look after their affairs. As a result, our lands were and are designated as terra nullius, empty, not occupied by people. What is still ignored or denied, is that we have our own societies, laws, values, culture and spirituality.

While this attitude and the concept of terra nullius might have been justifiable one or two hundred years ago, I have difficulty today condoning this practice in public law.

Our Cree people live in what is now the northern part of Quebec, a territory we have occupied continuously for at least 5000 years. This territory was allegedly "given" to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 by a European monarch who had never been in our land. It only became part of Canada in 1870, when it was named "Rupert's Land." In 1898 and 1912 it was divided among several Canadian provinces, including the province of Quebec. Quebec only began to exercise some limited authority in the territory in 1963.

Today, a provincial government that is in power in Quebec wants to secede from Canada. As Indians, this would probably be a matter in which we would not get involved, except for the fact that the Quebec separatists (as they are called) insist that when they leave Canada, they will take eleven territories of indigenous peoples with them.

You might imagine that we, the original peoples in this territory, would have a say in this matter, that we cannot be denied our nationality or our lands without our consent. But the separatists say that we indigenous peoples do not have the right to self-determination, that

our territory would be included in a Quebec republic with or w/o our consent; and right now they are passing legislation to accomplish their purpose.

This is a contemporary example of the principle of racial inferiority. The separatist leaders in Quebec insist that they have the right to break up Canada, but these same people insist that we have no right to remain in Canada, if that is our choice.

In Guatemala, the indigenous Mayan peoples comprise the majority of the inhabitants, yet they are systematically excluded from government; and when they try to organize they are murdered.

Therefore, what recourse, what means of redress do we indigenous peoples have? According to the law in both Canada and Guatemala, these are domestic issues only! In both cases indigenous peoples seeking remedies must address the domestic courts, and in effect seek relief from their own oppressors.

When an indigenous treaty is violated, when an indigenous territory is flooded to provide hydroelectricity, when an indigenous forest is clear-cut, when a military base is located on indigenous land, our people are forced to turn to authorities who have a vested interest in the outcome. We must pretend that they are purveyors of neutral and unbiased justice.

The two UN International Covenants protect "all peoples" from being denied "their own means of subsistence." When I study the history of our peoples, I note that our existence has been characterized essentially by the denial of our own means of subsistence. Is there a better way to describe what has happened to our peoples in five hundred years and still continues? My own people, the Ouje-Bougoumou Crees, have been forcefully relocated seven times between 1925 and 1975; and "relocated" is the polite way to describe what was done to us. The fact that these abuses have continued for so long is evidence that the domestic authorities are not effective guardians of our rights, and that the standards that are applied for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples are insufficient. I think this fact is fairly indisputable, yet where do we turn for help?

The obvious answer is the UN. In the UN, however, we face several problems. The UN is an organization of States, entrusted with the protection of universal human rights. But its personality as an organization, with each State protecting its own rights first and foremost, has prevented the UN from addressing certain large problems, such as the rights of indigenous peoples. This may be about to change.

In August 1994, a draft "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" was approved by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The declaration is the work of a committee of experts chaired by Dr. Erica Irene Daes, a Greek diplomat, and presently president of the UN Joint Inspection Unit.

The declaration recognizes that indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. It uses language similar to the two International Covenants to guarantee that the rights of indigenous peoples are afforded the same protections as all other peoples. It recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to control their own resources and territories. It recognizes their control over the environment. It acknowledges that their consent is required before development can take place that would affect their rights, their lands, their resources or their environment. It protects the cultural property of indigenous peoples. It recognizes indigenous law.

When you read this declaration, you will realize that it holds great potential for all of us. First, it brings indigenous peoples into purview of international law--it recognizes us as subjects of international law. Second, it extends the recognition of the existing international human rights instruments to our peoples. Third, it provides new international standards for the protection of our human rights.

A decade of effort went into the drafting of this new human rights instrument. The Grand Council of the Crees, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, the Four Directions Council and the International Indian Treaty Council are only five of the indigenous non-governmental organizations in consultative status to ECOSOC that have taken an active role.

Several States are represented in the debates, including Canada and the US. The expert members of the Sub-Commission have been assisted by academics, legal scholars and international officials representing intergovernmental organizations, treaty bodies and the ILO. Unfortunately, Canada and the US opposed recognition of our fundamental rights during discussions on the draft. Both countries fought against the inclusion of the right of self-determination; both opposed the right of consent. Neither Canada nor the US wanted to recognize the existence of the indigenous peoples as "peoples" under international law. Both countries take the position that aboriginals, Native Americans and indigenous peoples are domestic subjects, outside of the scope of international law.

In practice, this means that we are denied the protections of the International Covenants and other international instruments. The sad fact is that both Canada and the US have made common cause with countries such as Brazil, China, Indonesia, Iraq and the Philippines against the international recognition of our rights.

In 1993, we have a draft declaration which has survived ten years of debate in UN human rights bodies. It is a draft that contains many compromises regarding our rights. But it is the best we could hope to achieve within the UN system. It is clear that a declaration by the General Assembly based substantively on the present draft would advance the protection of the rights of the world's indigenous peoples to a considerable degree.

I will suggest what you can do to help. Understand that the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is still a "draft." It has been approved by expert bodies, but it has not entered the political process at the UN. A few countries, Canada in particular, have threatened to make substantial changes in the text as soon as they have the opportunity. Their changes are clear: eliminate the right of self-determination; eliminate the provisions which require States to obtain the consent of indigenous peoples to relocate indigenous communities or to conduct so-called "development" projects on indigenous lands. Eliminate the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own membership. Make indigenous law subject to and inferior to State law. Brazil, Canada and others are insistent that these changes will be made as soon as the Commission on Human Rights begins to consider the draft declaration in Feb. 1995 in Geneva.

The draft declaration has a long journey through many political levels at the UN. First, the Commission on Human Rights, then the Economic and Social Council, then the Third Committee of the General Assembly, and finally the General Assembly itself. At any of these levels it can be changed by diplomatic representatives of UN member States who receive instructions from their governments.

To date, the US and Canada have worked against our interests, while some States such as Denmark and Australia gradually have come to support the rights in the declaration. We believe that Canada and the US should support the recognition and confirmation of our rights; and we believe that the world's indigenous peoples need the protections that this declaration would give. While we understand that we are only talking about a declaration which would be non-binding, and not an enforceable convention, we consider this to be an important beginning.

There is some good news for the future. In 1989, the International Labor Office approved a revised Convention (No. 169) on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. In 1992 and 1993, the indigenous peoples made important interventions at the World Conference on

Human Rights in Vienna, and at the World Summit in Rio. 1993 was declared the International Year of Indigenous People. Rigoberta Menchu has founded the International Indigenous Initiative for Peace. On December 8 the UN declared the opening of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. There are now twelve recognized indigenous organizations with consultative status at the UN. We believe the UN is now ready to turn its attention to a problem which has been shamefully disregarded to the detriment of the universality of human rights law and the charter of the UN itself.

There is also powerful opposition to the recognition of our rights. Behind this opposition is fear. The States that have been erected upon our lands are powerful; but they are weakened by the atrocities of their history, and the illegitimacy of their origins. They have denied our rights and laws; and despite all of their power, they are unsettled by our claims.

We have made it clear that we are interested only in protecting our human rights--that we are not attempting to claim independence or to adjust the outcome of history. This must be understood. The indigenous peoples are asking for only one thing: protection of their rights under international law. The International Covenants make reference to internationally protected rights which pertain to "all peoples." We are seeking the obvious: we want to be included in the phrase "all peoples."

While it is hard for us to understand how we can be denied our status as peoples on any logical, intellectual or factual grounds, this is what certain UN member States are doing. Again, supposedly universal human rights standards are being subjected to the perceived "higher" interests of a State. We would point out that it is not in any State's interest to do this, and it is certainly not in the interest of the UN to subject the universality and indivisibility of human rights law to political interests.

We hope that the draft declaration is approved by the General Assembly without substantive change. We hope this will be followed by a binding international convention based on the same fundamental principles. Today, many indigenous peoples are endangered. We have waited years to have our rights addressed. Respect for our rights does not threaten existing States. But failure to protect our rights will have disastrous consequences for many indigenous peoples. We ask your assistance to achieve these goals.

- Thank you.

DAN'S CORNER -New Indian status cards in '09, or, a designed move for more Power and Control over Indians

For the benefit of those individuals who may not be aware of the number tattoos and the yellow Star of David which were the Nazis' means of exerting power and control over Jews, a brief explanation.

During the time that the Nazis were in control of the nation state of Germany they devised different ways to exert power and control over the hated Jews. Some of these were the ghetto concentration camp system, forced sterilization, forced reeducation of Jewish children, state sponsored propaganda against the hated and feared Jews, the forced wearing of a yellow Star of David on the outerwear of Jews and the forced tattooing of registry control numbers on the wrists of all Jews.

This brief explanation brings me to the topic of this essay... the INAC Indian status card that identifies all Indian people as INDIANS!! Not as Native, Aboriginal, First Nation, Canadian or as human beings.

No, our identity is forever frozen in the minds of the transplanted Europeans as the big fearsome hated INDIAN. As something to be feared, hated, changed, converted and controlled.

Back when the nation state of Canada was very young the government came up with an ingenious means of exerting power and control over INDIANS by creating the INDIAN reservation system.

The reservation system was put in place to accomplish two things: 1) to exert and maintain power and control over INDIANS and 2) the implementation of the Final Solution to the eurocanadian problem of INDIANS. Along with its INDIAN reservation system the Canadian government also had, for a number of years, an INDIAN pass system. Meaning that INDIANS were required by law to carry a government issued pass in order to leave or travel outside of the INDIAN reservation ghetto.

It is these government issued passes that are the origins of the present-day INAC INDIAN identification cards that all INDIANS must carry to show that they are in fact INDIAN.

This state run intrusion upon an identifiable group of people's lives, into their inherent right to their homeland, into their inherent right to all of those things which go into the making of a Canadian, an American, a Frenchman, a German, etc. goes against natural justice, the rule of law, our birthrights and our treaty rights.

What the people of Canada should ask themselves is: 1) what is the need for an Indian reservation system and why the need for the enactment of laws for only one segment of the Canadian society with that being the original owners of Skiginaweekeog, their homeland. And 2) think long and hard about an answer that includes words/sentiments which says that it is for the benefit of Indians, to protect us from eurocanadians.

One must remember that, but for the presence of eurocanadians within our homeland, there would in fact be no Indians, nor Indian reservations, nor Indian I.D. pass cards.

The vision of the WTCT is the same as The Ancestors. The protection, the preservation and passing-on of our homeland, our birthright, our identity and our Spiritual Teachings so that our People may live.

We are part of Sacred Creation, we refuse to be part of its destruction.

DEAN'S DEN..... I Had a Dream

Dream Themes of D.C. Butterfield

The land was rich, providing well
With fish in every stream
Sufficient game among the hills
Back then - I had a dream,
Full respect for our earth
All held in high esteem
We nurtured it, and it kept us
Back then - I had a dream.

There would always be enough for all
Or, that's the way it would seem
Taking the need, no more no less
Back then - I had a dream,
Til others came, with other ways
And greed their central theme

Despoil, ravish, maraud, and grab
Back then - I had a dream.

Industrialize, commercialize
I could hear the mountains scream
Always bigger, but never better
But still - I had a dream,
With tears in my eyes, I look to see
The results of prosperity's scheme
No amount of money will bring it back
And, I no longer have ... a dream!

Never Stop Dreaming

Distraction, abstraction, absence of mind
Bemusement, stargazing, inspiration to find
Or - quixotic hope, forever redeeming
Follow your heart - and never stop dreaming!
Have a nice day