

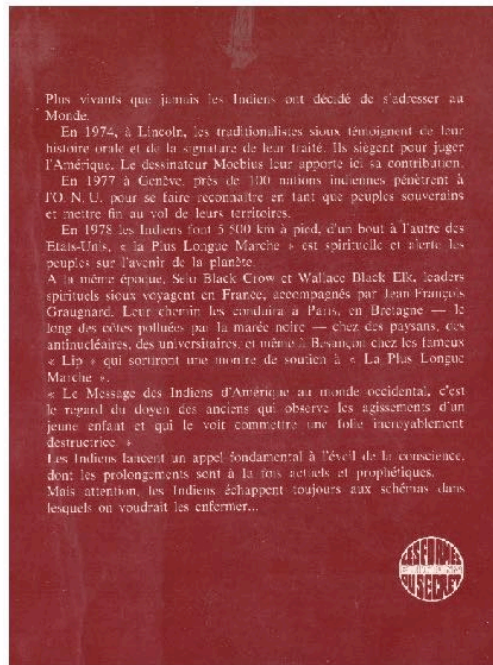
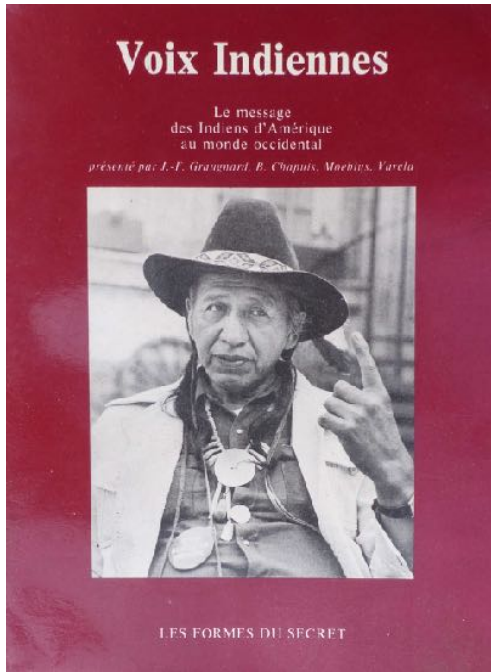
# INDIAN VOICES

## The message of the American Indians to the Western world.

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Chapter: For an awakening of Consciousness. Conference at the U.N. Geneva 1977.

French translation cover:



September 1977 United Nations Palace, Geneva. Indigenous delegates at the International Conference Against Discrimination against the indigenous populations of the Americas.

Three texts of the Council of the Six Indian Nations at the International Conference of Indian Nations in Geneva, in September 1977, at the invitation of the Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations.

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## THE HAU-DE-NO-SAU-NEE MESSAGE TO THE WESTERN WORLD

### Introduction

Not so long ago the Hau-de-no-sau-nee, or Six Nations, were a powerful people, occupying a vast territory from Vermont to Ohio, and today from Quebec to Tennessee. At the time of first white contact in the early 17th century, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee inhabited hundreds of towns and villages across this country.

Hau-de-no-sau-nee means the people who build: it is the exact name of the people of the Longhouse. According to the original story, before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans, there was a time when the forest peoples of North America experienced conflicts and wars. It was at this time that a man came to the land bringing words and plans for peace. We were to call him the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker.

The Peacemaker brought a message to the people: human beings must stop harassing each other. He declared that humans are capable of reason, that through this power of reason all men desire peace and that it was necessary to organize to make peace possible among the people who walk the earth. These were the first words that spoke of laws: laws were originally made to prevent the oppression of humans by other humans.

The Peacemaker traveled among the people, going from nation to nation, seeking those who would follow this path of peace, offering with it that of reason and power. He first stayed with the Ganienkehaga - the People of the Stone of Fire (Mohawks) - where he sought to talk to the most violent members to convey his message to them.

He traveled a long time among the Mohawks; then among the People of Standing Stone (Oneidas), the People of the Hills (Onondagas), the People of the Marsh (Cayugas) and the People of the Great Hills (Senecas). Subsequently, these five nations were the first to accept the peace offer. They met in council and there established the principles of what has been called the Gayaneshakgowa, or the Great Law of Peace.

The power of thought which emanates from this document is incomparable. It is almost impossible to imagine today the circumstances of its creation. But centuries ago, a people of the natural world met above a lake in the center of the then-pristine forest and there they held council. The principles that came out of it have not been equaled by any political document drawn up since: they released a law which recognized that the vertical hierarchy created conflicts and they organized their society in an eminently complex way in order to prevent the internal development of the hierarchy. .

They then examined their own history to look for things that create conflict between people. They saw, for example, that people sometimes fight over hunting grounds and they did a curious thing. They abolished the existence of these territories and guaranteed the safety of anyone who entered the country of the Six Nations. Then they instituted universal laws regulating the hunt, because the capture of game sometimes created conflicts. In the land of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee, all were free, all had the right to protection under what the Peacemaker called the Great Tree of Peace.

The basic principles of peace were about more than just the absence of conflict. An organized society which can protect its people against abuse and which, at the same time, strives to repress the hierarchy is a complex society. The people of the Longhouse sought to carry the principles of peace beyond the council fires, to every home in Hau-de-no-sau-nee country. The Great Law therefore established much more than a code of conduct: it is the foundation of today's clans. It is the principle of all customs: gathering, communicating on wampums, appointing leaders.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee taught their children from the cradle to participate in the culture. The ways of the people of the Longhouse have always been strongly spiritual in nature, and it is true that the mode of government, the economy, everything that belongs to the Hau-de-no-sau-nee has deep spiritual roots.

The following texts are the positions taken by the Hau-de-no-sau-nee at the International Conference of Indian Nations in Geneva, in September 1977, at the invitation of the Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations. These organizations had requested texts describing the conditions of oppression suffered by the indigenous peoples, written in three chapters, with the support of oral testimonies during the commissions. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee, the traditionalist council of the Six Nations in Onon-daga, sent three texts which constitute a rapid analysis of Western history and which ask that we become aware of the Sacred Web of Life In the universe.

It is probable. that this call will be both ignored and misunderstood for some time. But these texts constitute an absolutely unique document: it is a political declaration which denounces before a world institution the destruction of the Natural World and of the peoples of the Natural World where it sees the most obvious sign that human beings are in danger on this planet. . It is a call to awaken fundamental consciousness, a call that has its roots in the past but whose extensions are ultra-modern, even futuristic.

This statement is meant to show that humans today are picking on each other, outrage the planet they live on, and even harm themselves. It is a message, certainly the first ever transmitted to a world institution, which denounces in this destructive process the work of Western Civilization — considered as an entire way of life — and which measures the immense complexity that such statement implies.

What is being advanced here is very bold: it is nothing but a cosmogony of the industrialized world presented by the most powerful and politically independent surviving non-Western group in North America. In a sense, it's the modern world as seen by a Pleistocene man.

Scholars and lay readers alike should wonder what meaning, in the age of the neutron bomb, Watergate and the proliferation of atomic sites, can have of a statement by an Indian people of North America. But one can explain the relevance of such a statement today: most world traditions have a fairly recent origin. Islam is about 1,500 years old, the history of Christianity claims to go back 2,000 years, and Judaism is about 2,000 years older than Christianity.

But the Original Peoples can claim a tradition that goes back at least to the end of the Pleistocene and probably even further.

There is evidence of the presence of hominids on earth dating back at least two million years: these humans who looked a lot like us were spotted in the Northern Hemisphere as early as the second interglacial period. Those familiar with the beliefs of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee will agree that the customs of present-day original peoples, as proven by modern science, do not differ greatly from those practiced by ancient peoples 70,000 years ago. And besides, were a traditionalist Iroquois to pursue a career in the study of Pleistocene Man, he would realize that he already knows more about the older belief systems than the scholars of today. today.

Either way, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee position comes from a philosophy that views The People with roots that go back to a history that is tens of thousands of years old. It's a kind of geological perspective, which sees modern man as a newborn, occupying a very short time span in an incredibly long spectrum. It is the gaze of the dean of the elders who observes the actions of a young child and who sees him committing an incredibly destructive madness. It is, in a word, the declaration of ageless peoples whose history dates back to the beginning of time. And these peoples, this time, address a world whose existence dates back barely 500 years and perhaps in some cases, even less.

And this is, to our knowledge, the very first statement of its kind made by a Native nation. What follows is not the result of the research of psychologists, historians or anthropologists. These texts are the first authentic analyzes of the modern world ever recorded in writing by an official institution of a Native People.



The entrance of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee representatives to the Palace of the United Nations.

# SPIRITUALITY HIGHEST FORM OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

## **The message of the Ilau-de-no-sau-nee to the Western world**

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois Confederacy of Six Nations, have existed on this land since the beginning of human memory. Our culture is one of the oldest continuously existing cultures in the world. We still remember the first acts of human behavior. We remember the original instructions of the Creators of Life in this place which we call Etenoha, Mother Earth. We are the spiritual guardians of this place. We are the Ongwehonwe, the Real People.

In the beginning, we were told that human beings who walk the earth were provided with all the necessities of life. We were taught to love each other and show great respect to all beings on this Earth. We have been shown that our life exists with the life of the tree, that our well-being depends on the well-being of Plant Life, that we are close relatives of four-legged beings. For us, spiritual awareness is the highest form of politics.

Our policy is a Way of Life. We believe that all living things are spiritual beings. Spirits can express themselves as energy translated into matter. A blade of grass is a form of energy that manifests in matter: grass matter. The grass spirit is that invisible force that produces grass species, and it manifests itself to us as the real grass.

All things in the world are real, material things. Creation is a true, material phenomenon and it shows itself to us through reality. The spiritual universe then appears clearly to Man as the Creation, the Creation which sustains life. We believe that man is real, that he is a part of Creation and that his duty is to sustain Life in accordance with other beings. This is why we call ourselves Ongwehonwe: the Real People.

The original instructions direct that we who walk the earth show great respect, affection and gratitude to all spirits who create and sustain life. We salute and thank the many allies of our own existence: wheat, beans, gourds, the winds, the sun. When people cease to respect and appreciate all these many things, then all life will be destroyed and human life on this planet will come to an end.

Our roots go deep into the lands where we live. We have a great love for our country, because it is the place of our birth. The soil is rich with the bones of thousands of our generations. Each of us was created on these lands and it is our duty to take great care of them, because from these lands will spring future generations of Ongwehonwe. We tread the ground with great respect, for the earth is a very sacred place.

We are not a people who ask or demand anything from the Creators of Life, on the contrary we salute and thank the forces of Life for always being at work. Our understanding of our connection to all living things is profound. And to this day, the lands we still possess are filled with trees, animals, and all the other gifts of Creation. In these places we continue to receive our nourishment from Mother Earth.

We have seen that all the peoples of the Earth do not show the same type of respect for this world and for its beings. The Indo-European people who colonized our lands showed very little respect for the things that create and sustain life. We believe that these people have ceased to respect the world for a long time. Thousands of years ago, all the peoples of the world believed in the same Way of Life, that of harmony with the universe. All lived according to the Natural Ways.

About ten thousand years ago, peoples speaking the Indo-European languages lived in an area known today as the Steppes of Russia. At that time, they were a people of the Natural World who lived off the land. They had developed agriculture and it is said that they had begun to domesticate animals. We do not know if they were the first people in the world to practice the domestication of animals. It is likely that the nomads who lived by hunting and gathering in this region bought animals from agricultural peoples and adopted an economy based on herding and herding.

The raising and penning of animals marked a profound change in the relationship of humans with other forms of life. They sparked one of the real revolutions in human history. Before animal husbandry, humans depended on Nature for the reproductive forces of the animal world. With the advent of animal husbandry, humans began to assume functions that had always been those of animal spirits. Some time after this advent, history records the first appearance of the social organization called patriarchy.

The region between the Tigris and the Euphrates was, in ancient times, home to different peoples, most of whom spoke the Semitic language. The Semitic peoples were among the first in the world to develop irrigation techniques. This development led to the construction of the first towns and then cities. Water control, another form of spiritual life, marked a new way for man to acquire a technique that replaced a function of Nature.

Within these cultures a hierarchical social organization crystallized. Ancient civilizations spawned imperialism, in part because of the very nature of cities. Cities are obviously concentrations of population. But above all, these are places that must import from the surrounding regions all the material needs necessary for such a concentration. This means that the Natural World must be subjugated, emptied of its content and exploited in the interests of the city. To organize this process, the Semitic world very early developed codes of law. They also elaborated the idea of monotheism to serve as a model spiritual to their material and political organization.

Much of the history of the ancient world tells of battles between Indo-European and Semitic peoples. For several millennia, the two cultures clashed and intermingled. During the second millennium BC, some Indo-Europeans, specifically the Greeks, adopted the practice of building cities, thus engaging in the process they called Civilization.

The two cultures each developed techniques specific to their civilizations. Semitic peoples invented kilns that allowed the manufacture of pottery for trade and storage of surplus. These early furnaces then evolved to produce sufficient heat to melt metals, including copper, tin and bronze. The Indo-Europeans applied themselves to melting iron.

It was Rome which inherited these two cultures and which became the place where the final spiral took place. Rome is also the true birthplace of Christianity. The process that resulted in the culture of the West is historically and linguistically a Semitic/Indo-European culture, but it is commonly referred to as the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Christianity was absolutely essential to the development of this type of technology. Christianity proclaimed one God. It is a religion that imposed itself by excluding all other beliefs. The peoples inhabiting the European forests believed in the spirits of the forests, waters, hills and earth; Christianity attacked these beliefs and concretely despiritualized the European world. The Christian peoples, who possessed superior armament and needed to extend their domination, were able to militarily subjugate the tribal peoples of Europe.

The use of iron allowed the manufacture of tools capable of cutting down the forest, a source of charcoal used to make other tools. The recently deforested land was then plowed by the brand new iron plow which was, for the first time, pulled by horses. With this technique a smaller number of people could cultivate a larger area of land and many more people could effectively be displaced to become soldiers or landless peasants. The extension of this process ushered in the Feudal Age and subsequently made possible the development of new towns and the growth of trade. It also marked the beginning of the end of the European forest, although this destruction took a long time to be accomplished.

The definitive extension of the cities and the simultaneous development of the European states provoked an impulse of expansion and the search for new markets which pushed men like Columbus to cross the Atlantic. The improvement of sailing ships and navigation techniques made the European "discovery" of America inevitable.

The Americas offered Europeans a new and vast field of expansion and material exploitation. European civilization has a history that goes from rise to fall as its technologies reach their material and cultural limits. The Natural world, not being infinite, has always constituted a kind of internal contradiction to Western expansion.

The Europeans attacked every aspect of North America with unprecedented zeal. The Original peoples were destroyed without pity: they constituted an unassimilable element for the civilizations of the West. The forests provided materials for building larger ships, the land was untouched and fertile, providing new agricultural reserves, and some areas served as sources of slaves for victorious invaders. At the time of the industrial revolution, around the middle of the 19th century, America was already at the forefront in the field of extraction techniques.

The hardwood forests of the Northeast were not razed to make way for agricultural land: they were destroyed to produce the charcoal needed for forges and foundries. By the 1890s, the West had chosen coal, a fossil fuel, to produce energy necessary for all sorts of new machines that had been developed. During the first half of the 20th century, oil replaced coal as a source of energy.

Western culture has exploited and destroyed the Natural World in horrific ways. More than 140 species of birds and animals have been completely exterminated since the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, mainly because in the eyes of the invaders they had no use. Forests have been razed, waters polluted and Native peoples subjected to genocide. Vast herds of herbivores have been reduced to a mere handful of beasts, the bison are on the verge of extinction. Western technology and the peoples who applied it have been the most destructive forces imaginable in all of human history. None natural disaster has never destroyed as much as they have. Even the ice ages did not claim as many victims.

But just like hardwood forests, coal and oil are finite resources. As the second half of the 20th century progressed, the peoples of the West began to look for other forms of energy to give new impetus to their technology. Their eyes fell on atomic energy, a form of energy production whose by-products are the most harmful substances known to man.

The human species is today confronted with the very question of its survival. The way of life known as Western Civilization is heading down a path of death where its own culture has no viable answers. Faced with the reality of their own destructive capacity, they can only press forward into areas of even greater destruction efficient. The appearance of Plutonium on this planet is the clearest sign that our species is in danger. It is a signal that most Westerners have chosen to ignore.

The air is stale, the waters poisoned, the trees are dying and the animals are disappearing. We believe that even climate systems are changing. Our ancient knowledge warned us that these things would happen if Man interfered with Natural laws. When the last of the Natural Ways of Life will be gone, all hope of human survival will go with it. And our Way of Life is rapidly disappearing, a victim of the destructive process.

The other Hau-de-no-sau-nee statements set out our analysis of economic and legal repression. But the essence of our message to the world remains this fundamental call for awareness. The destruction of Native cultures and peoples is part of the same process that destroyed and continues to destroy life on this planet. The techniques and social systems that have destroyed animal and plant life are also destroying the Natural peoples. And this process is Western Civilization.

We know there are many people in the world who can quickly grasp the purpose of our message. But experience has taught us that there are few who want to seek a solution to move towards real change. But if there is to be a future for all beings on this planet, we have to start looking for the avenues of change.

The process of colonization and imperialism that has affected the Hau-de-no-sau-nee is only a microcosm of the process that is affecting the World. The reserve system used against our people is the microcosm of the operating system used against the entire world. Since the time of Marco Polo, the West has only refined a process that has mystified the peoples of Earth.

Most of the world does not have its roots in Western culture or traditions. Most of the world has its roots in the Natural World, and it is the Natural World, with its traditions, that must prevail if we are to develop truly free and egalitarian.

It is now necessary to begin a critical analysis of the historical processes of the West, to seek the real nature of the origin of the conditions of exploitation and oppression that humanity suffers. As we discern these processes, we will at the same time need to reinterpret this history for the peoples of the world. It is the peoples of the West, after all, who are the most oppressed and exploited. They are burdened by the centuries of racism, sexism and ignorance that have rendered these peoples insensitive to the true nature of their lives.

We must all consciously and continually question every model, every program, every process that the West tries to impose on us. In his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire writes that it is in the logic of the oppressed to imitate his oppressor and to seek through such reactions to alleviate the conditions of oppression. We must learn to resist this reaction to oppression.



The peoples who live on this planet need to put an end to the narrow concept of human liberation and begin to see that liberation is something that must be extended to the whole of the Natural World. What is needed is the release of all things that sustain Life - the air, the waters, the trees - all things that sustain the sacred web of Life.

We believe that Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere can continue to contribute to the survival potential of the human species. The majority of our peoples still live according to the traditions that are rooted in Mother Earth. But the Native peoples need a forum where our voice can be heard. And we need to ally with other peoples of the world who will help us in our struggle to recover and preserve our ancestral lands and protect our Way of Life.

We know this is a very difficult task. Many national states may feel threatened by the choice of protecting and liberating the peoples and cultures of the natural world: a progressive movement that must be integrated into people's political options. who seek to defend human dignity. But this option is becoming stronger and it represents a necessary strategy in the evolution of progressive thought.

Traditionalist Native peoples hold the key to reversing the spiral of Western Civilization that promises an untold future of suffering and destruction. Spirituality is the highest form of political consciousness. And we, Native Peoples of the Hemisphere West, let us be part of the still living holders of this type of consciousness in the World. We are here to deliver that message.

*David Menongye, Hopi de 103 ans (à gauche), Oren Lyons et Lee Lyons, leaders Iroquois avec le Maire de Genève.*



David Menongye, 103-year-old Hopi (left), Oren Lyons and Lyons, Iroquois leaders with the Mayor of Geneva.

## NEVERTHELESS WE CONTINUE TO EXIST

### **The legal history of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee**

Since the beginning of human time, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee have occupied the various territories we call our homelands. It was both a continuous and an organized occupation. We have long since delineated the borders of our country and have long retained the exclusive enjoyment of the regions between these borders: these territories have constituted the economic and cultural definition of our nation.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee are a people in their own right, with their own laws and customs, territories, economy and political organization. In short, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee, or Six Nations, meet all the conditions that define a nation.

Our political and social organization is one of the most complex still in force in the world. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee Council is also one of the oldest continuously functioning governments on this planet. Our society is one of the most complex in the world. Our political and social institutions have inspired some of the most essential political institutions and philosophies of the modern world.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee are governed by a constitution known in Europe as the Six Nations Constitution and which we call Gayanashakgowah, or the Great Law of Peace. It is the oldest document in the world still in force which has recognized these freedoms which Western democracies have recently claimed: freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the right of women to participate in government. The concept of separation of powers in government and the concept of checks and balances between governments goes back to our constitution. These are ideas that the white settlers learned from contact with the native peoples of North America, and in particular from contact with the Hau-de-no-sau-nee.

The philosophies of the socialist world, too, go back to some extent to European contact with the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. Lewis Henry Morgan wrote of the economic structure of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee which he characterized as both communist and primitive. Karl Marx used Morgan's observations for his model of a post-capitalist, classless society. The modern world has been greatly influenced by our existence.

It may seem strange that we are here today to affirm the obvious: we continue to exist. For countless centuries the fact of our existence was indisputable to all decent human beings, it still remains indisputable today. We have been around since time immemorial. We have always managed our own affairs from our territories, according to our own laws and customs. In accordance with these laws and customs, we have never willingly ceded our territories or our freedoms. Never in the history of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee have our people or our government sworn obedience to a European sovereign. It is in this simple fact that lies the origin of our repression as a people and the purpose of our journey here before the world community.

The problems posed by the recent "legal history" of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee began long before contact between Europeans and native peoples. This goes back, at least, to the rise of the system which in Europe is called feudalism: because the only law that the colonizing countries of Europe have ever recognized is feudal law, a fact which they concealed for centuries from their own people as well as to original peoples. This fact, however, remains the essential reality of the legal relations which exist between the original peoples and the Indo-European societies.

Feudal society in Europe appears to be the result of a number of conditions that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. It was based on a system in which the leaders of the warrior castes were strong enough to demand and extort subservience from the warriors. We raised administrative centers, usually castles, around which lived peasants who were usually protected from external aggression by their "lord", the ruler of the manor. It is probable that the appearance of new techniques created economies which made possible, and perhaps even inevitable, feudal society in Europe.

The feudal lord often held dictatorial power over his "subjects", especially the peasants. Military protection was necessary for them because of the permanent state of "dissension" between the different lords. The "peaceful people", the peasants, were caught in the crossfire. The earth, and all that it bore, animals, plants and people, were under the domination or authority of the feudal "lord". This lord demanded of the peasant his fidelity and a part of his crops as well as of his work. The feudal system must have been much more brutal and humiliating than many stories tell. Some feudal lords exercised what was called "the right to the first night", a custom which gave the lord a right over the peasant's wife.

It should be noted that before the appearance of feudalism most of the agricultural peoples of Europe constituted various types of tribes. Feudalism imposed the concept of sovereignty, dictatorial sovereigns who imposed their law by military force: this is what gave birth to the real European peasantry.

The crystallization of centralized executive power makes it possible to separate civilized societies from primitive societies. It does not matter whether such control sits in a feudal castle or in the administrative offices of the capitals of the national states. The appearance of the hierarchical state marks the transition from food producers in general to the more specific notion contained in the concept of peasantry. When the farmer becomes dependent and integrates into a society in which he is subject to the demands of people belonging, by definition, to a class other than his own, he becomes what should be called a peasant 1.

The condition of the European peasant in the Middle Ages was not enviable. Peasants have no rights except those guaranteed by their lord. They cannot own the land as a people. Only the sovereign holds it and possesses sovereignty. Peasants were often treated like property: they were bought, sold, inherited with the land. They were a people dispossessed of their freedom. At some point in history, the tribal peoples of Europe became peasants through a combination of forces, the most direct of which was military pressure.

A peasant is not a member of a real community of people. His society is incomplete without the town or city. It is trade with the city, therefore an economic relationship, which defines the first stages of the peasantry. As trade becomes more and more necessary, whatever the reasons, the tribal man is less and less tribal and more and more peasant. The process is neither immediate nor necessarily absolute, but it increases with the degree of dependence of the tribal man 2 .

1. Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants, Foundations of Modern Anthropology* Scires. England-Wood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966, p. 11. See C.S. Relshaw, *Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets, Modernization of Traditional Societies Series*, Englewood Cliffs. New Jersey, 1965, p53-54.

2. A.L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, New York, 1948. See Redfield, Margaret Park ed. ; *Human Nature and the Study of Society: The Papers of Robert Redfield*, Chicago, 1963, volume I, p. 287.

To a large extent, the process that made the people of Europe lose their freedom was economic in nature. Medieval castles were military forts and functioned as warehouses of sorts, but they also developed into trading centers and sometimes towns. In the early days of feudalism, the agricultural worker "sold" his freedom to ensure protection against military aggression. But increasingly, over the centuries, the main function of the medieval town became that of a trading hub. "It was the market, in one form or another, that broke up the very dense social ties of autarkic primitive communities by depriving them of a part of human acts and by plunging people into an increasingly economic activity. more independent of the rest of local life. The local traditional and moral world and the vast and impersonal world of the market are in principle distinct and opposed to each other...3"

The "discovery" of North America led to the transposition of medieval laws and customs from Europe to the Americas. Medieval Spanish law obviously differed in some respects from medieval French law, the two countries still differing in this respect from England, but knowledge of medieval Europe is essential to analyzing the legal history of Hau-de relations. -no-sau-nee and Europe, just like any analysis of the colonizing process. Medieval Europe represents the period when the increasing centralization of power was consolidated in the hands of ruling families (kings) who exercised it over vast territories, which is characteristic of the North American experience. It is also the period of the development and growth of European cities into centers of commerce and sources of political power. European laws, as they were applied in the Americas, were medieval laws.

"The Europeans used all sorts of means to impose their domination, armed combat was just one of them. European sovereignty had five principles for claiming legitimate jurisdiction over American territory and its people: papal gift, right of first discovery, continued occupation, deliberate self-subjugation of native peoples, and conquest. successfully led army. The colony was the means of transforming a formal claim into the effective reality of government, and it was "colonial" in both senses of that ambiguous word. The tightly-knit villages of the Europeans were colonies in the sense that they were branches or reproductions of their metropolises, and these villages wielded power over larger native populations in the clearest sense of the word colonialism.

From the beginning, the European invaders tried to make the Indians their subjects. When the Indian people resisted, as in the case of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee, the Europeans explained this resistance as an inaptitude for civilization. This inaptitude for civilization became the basis of the phenomenon known today in the West as racism.

The Europeans landed on the shores of the Americas and immediately appropriated them in the name of their sovereigns. They then tried, in particular the French and the Spaniards, to make Indians peasants. The English had already experienced the system of "enclosures" and therefore sent landless peasants to colonize North America, driven by a desperation rooted in their own history, they began by violently chasing the Indians from their land. .

The workings of European legal systems provided - and apparently still do not provide - for any recognition of the rights of peoples to land, other than those of dictators and rulers. When Europeans arrived in North America, they tried simply to make Indian leaders their vassals. When that failed, they resorted to other means. All the effort of the European powers consisted in trying to transform "... the Indian, member of an unassimilable caste, into member of a social class integrated into Euro-American institutions".

3. Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*, Chicago, 1956, p. 45-46.

4. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1976, p. 105.

The expropriation of the original peoples by the Europeans fills the bloodiest and most violent chapter of human history. There were acts committed by a people apparently deprived of conscience and rules of conduct. To this day, the United States and Canada refuse to recognize the existence of the legal governments of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee and other native nations: it is an extension of the policy of genocide which marked the process called colonialism. Faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, these two governments and the governments of Latin America deny the perpetration of genocide, both physical and cultural.

Their reasoning is openly medieval and racist: "...Civilization is that quality possessed by a people with a civil government, a civil government is a government of the European type; the Indians had no European type government, therefore the Indians were uncivilized. An uncivilized people lives in a fierce anarchy; therefore the Indians had absolutely no government. THEREFORE the Europeans could do no wrong in bringing government and civilization to these poor savages; on the contrary, they were fulfilling a noble mission. European Union applies a policy of "might makes right".

Colonialism is a process that is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is a policy that has long survived the medieval times in which it originated. Many Western institutions are actually the colonial institutions of Western culture. Churches, for example, act in much the same way as feudal lords. First of all, they identify the people whose loyalty they want to ensure in order to guarantee their expansion. They then send a group to carry out a "mission". If the group succeeds, they become, in effect, the rulers or spiritual dictators of those whose allegiance they have secured. It is even possible that this process of organized Christianity is older than that of political colonialism described here.

Modern multinationals proceed in a very comparable way. They locate a market or region that has the resources they want. Then they get status, or some other form of approval from a western government and they send what is nothing but a colonizing force into that area. If the penetration succeeds, the area becomes a kind of economic colony of the multinational. It is the local nationalist movements that oppose the greatest resistance to this type of penetration.

In North America, educational institutions operate according to the same colonial process. Under the aegis of a sovereign (the State or the Bureau of Indian Affairs), schools were set up to enter the original community. The aim of the operation is to integrate the original people into society as workers or consumers, the replica of the peasant in the Industrial Society. The sovereign does not recognize, and practically does not tolerate, any other form of institutional socialization of young people. As in the days of medieval castles, the sovereign demanded absolute subservience. With this singular legal system, the Western sovereign denies the existence of those whose allegiance he cannot obtain. Some become, according to this logic, illegitimate.

This concept of illegitimacy is then translated into official government policy. In the United States, the colonizer created two categories of original peoples: those who are federally recognized and those who are not. In recent years, the government has begun to practice a policy of non-recognition of an entity called "Urban Indians".

In Canada, there are four legal definitions of native people. They are divided between those who have civil status, those who do not, the half-breeds and those who have the right to vote. These two countries deliberately continue to speak of "Indians and Eskimos", as if the Eskimos were separate and not part of the native people of the western hemisphere.

5. Jennings, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

The United States and Canada practice blatant colonialism in everything that affects the political institutions of the original peoples. In 1924, Canada enacted a new Indian Act which legally imposed neo-colonialist "electoral system" governments on the territories of the original peoples. In the United States, the same goal was achieved with the passage, in 1934, of the Indian Reorganization Act (I.R.A.). These two laws made it possible to establish compulsory political colonies among the native people. These "electoral systems" owe their existence and fidelity to the United States and Canada, and not to the native peoples. They are, by definition, colonies that create political peasant classes. They are governments only insofar as an external social caste allows them. These are, in most of the territories of the original people, the only forms of government recognized by the colonizers.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee also suffered from various forms of colonialism by Western governments. Our first contact with a Western people took place in 1609, during a French military expedition, commanded by Samuel de Champlain, who murdered several Mohawks on the shore of the lake that now bears his name. Later, when the Dutch came, the first treaty we signed with a European power was that of the Two Rows where we clarified our position: we are a separate, free and sovereign people. The Dutch accepted this agreement.

But the European Nations have never respected this agreement. Many times France tried to conquer the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. England used every means possible, including coercion, threats and military force to extend her sovereignty over us. Each time, we resisted.

The United States entered into solemn treaties with the Hau-de-no-sau-nee, and each time they flouted, one after another, every article that guaranteed our rights as a nation. Separated. Only land surrender points, often fraudulently obtained, had any value in the eyes of the United States courts or governments.

The settlement mechanism of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee territory exists in legal fiction, in the Constitution of the United States. This document purports to give Congress the power to "regulate commerce with foreign nations, between the different states, and with the Indian tribes." Contrary to any principle of international law, Congress has extended this paragraph to an assertion of "full" power, imposing absolute authority over our territories. This assertion has constantly been brandished against our people: yet we have never accepted this dependence, nor been conquered militarily. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee are not vassals of any people: we are a free nation, and have never given up our rights as a free people.

Since its founding, the United States has reigned terror in the Hau-de-no-sau-nee territories. Colonial agents entered our country between 1784 and 1842 and returned to Washington with land cession treaties. These treaties had been fraudulently obtained from persons not authorized to cede our lands. The Six Nations Council, the only legitimate body authorized to make transactions, has never signed an agreement giving up our lands.

The United States occupied these lands under threats of war, although no facts justified such measures. When the Hau-de-no-sau-nee proved that the treaties were fraudulent, and therefore illegal, by any interpretation of the law, the courts of the United States retaliated by inventing the "Political Question Doctrine". Doctrine). This doctrine basically asserts that Congress cannot err and the courts cannot challenge its policy decisions; these same courts nevertheless regularly find, in other areas of the law, certain acts of Congress as unconstitutional.

Because the Hau-de-no-sau-nee refused to sell their land, the United States simply refused to recognize our government. On the other hand, they recognized these colonized individuals who had agreed to sell the land and whose loyalty was acquired in Washington. In 1848, the United States legalized an "election system" on Seneca lands, thus creating a colonial government over the largest territory we had left in what was called by the colonizers "New York State". .

Then followed a long list of actions by the United States to exterminate the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. These were treaties that completely dispossessed the Cayuga and Oneida nations of any customary prerogative over their ancestral lands. These were treaties like the one of 1797, which recognized the sale, by a few individuals, of Kanienkehaka territory, an area of 9 million acres for the sum of 1,000 dollars. These were, between 1821 and 1842, attempts to drive the Hau-de-no-sau-nee from the lands called "New York" by the settlers to present-day Wisconsin and Kansas. These attempts succeeded in emigrating part of our people to these regions. In 1851, they tried to drive the Senecas from their lands in Tonawanda.

In 1886, the Dawes Act attempted to parcel out the Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands, and was only partially successful. In 1924, the United States enacted the Citizenship Act, which wanted to give American citizenship to all Indians. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee vigorously rejected the idea that we could be American citizens. We are Hau-de-no-sau-nee citizens. But the feudal laws of colonizers were relentless.

Also in 1924, Canada militarily invaded our Grand River territories and imposed a colonial government there. He repeated this episode in 1934, on our lands of Thames River, community of the Oneida.

In 1948 and 1950, Congress passed laws giving New York State civil and criminal jurisdiction: the Hau-de-no-sau-nee had never given such legal power to Congress. In 1958, Congress enacted Public Law 88-533, the Kinzua Dam Act, which resulted in the flooding of nearly all habitable Seneca lands in the Allegheny, destroying native communities and cultures there. This law also affirmed the end of the Seneca nation, a process which would have put an end to the colonial government, and which would have better illustrated the reality of the denial of our existence.

In addition to these legal forms of colonization, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee suffered every other form of colonization imaginable. The churches, the school system, and all forms of Western penetration have made some of our people peasants, politically and culturally. An almost insurmountable psychological, economic and spiritual assault on Western colonial institutions perpetuated the persistent denial of our political existence.

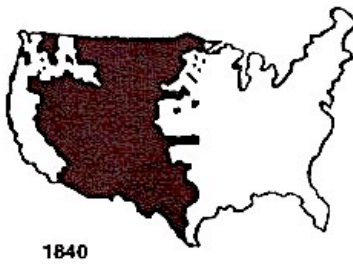
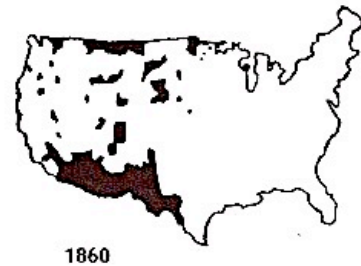
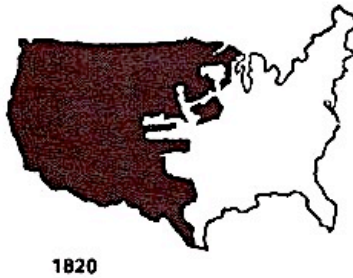
For more than three hundred years, our people have been subjected to a veritable state of siege. During all this time, we never gave up our struggle. Our strategies have necessarily changed. But our will and determination remain unchanged. Throughout these years, European historians have considered the positions of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee.

During the 1920s, one of our leaders, Deskaheh, came to this town seeking help for his people. At that time, the existing international body did not really represent the world community. Many nations and cultures were not recognized. Today, fifty years later, we have returned and our message remains the same.

Our ancestors carefully followed the rebirth of this international institution. In 1949, a delegation from Hau-de-no-sau-nee attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the United Nations building in New York. In 1974, our people went to Sweden, to participate in an international conference on environment and ecology. Through these events, we have taken note of the changes that have taken place within this institution.

Today, we are back in Geneva, Switzerland. For those of us who are present, and for all the others who stayed with us, we have assumed the mission of transmitting the fight of our people. Invested in them, we carry today the lives of thousands of past and future generations. It is in their name that we ask non-governmental organizations to join our fight to obtain all our rights and the protection of international laws and the World Community.

### Terres Indiennes





## A POLICY OF OPPRESSION IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY

### **Economic History of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee**

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee, people of the Longhouse, known to Europeans as the Six Iroquois Nations have inhabited their lands since time immemorial. Before the arrival of the Europeans, it is said that ours were a happy and prosperous people. Our lands provided abundantly for our needs. Our people led long, healthy and fruitful lives. Before the arrival of the Europeans, we were a people rich in the gifts of our country. All this time we lived in peace.

Before the arrival of the settlers, our people lived by hunting and gathering and practiced non-intensive agriculture. Our economy was a very healthy lifestyle and ours were completely healthy, among the best athletes in the world. Some, at that time, lived to be a hundred and twenty years old and more, and there were no runners as fast and enduring as ours.

We share a culture that we call OngweHonwekah. It refers to a Way of Life specific to the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. It is virtually impossible for us to specifically tell the economic history of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. As we will show, our economy, the way our people manage their resources, and the relationship between this management and the overall organization of our society, are totally linked processes. The distribution of food in our traditional society was carried out through institutions that cannot really be compared to the economic institutions of other societies. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee do not have specific economic institutions, just as we do not have distinct political institutions. What Europeans classify in this or that institution, rather fulfills among the Hau-de-no-sau-nee several different functions.

We were the people of a Great Forest. This forest was a source of wealth. There were huge supplies of wood, and an almost unimaginable variety and abundance of nuts, berries, roots, and plants. On top of that, the rivers abounded with fish, the forest and its meadows abounded with game. It was actually a kind of Utopia, a country where no one was hungry, where people lived happily and in good health.

Our traditions allowed us to ensure that our population did not grow to a number that would have hampered other forms of life. We had strict retention rules. Our culture is based on the principle of constantly thinking about the well-being of seven generations to come. Our belief in this principle acts as a brake on the development of practices that could cause suffering in the future. To this end, our people took only the number of animals necessary for their needs. Until the arrival of the colonists, there were never any massacres of animals.

We feel that many people will be confused when we say that we have a Way of Life and that our economy cannot be separated from the different aspects of our culture. Our economy is different from that of Western peoples. We believe that everything in this world was created by what the English language compels us to call "spirit beings", including the one we call "the Great Creator". All things in this world belong to the Grand Creator and the spirits of the world. We also believe that we should honor these beings in respect to the gift of life.

According to our customs, we have to give many ceremonies and festivals that can best be described as gifts. It is said that among our people, our leaders, whom the English persist in calling chiefs, are the poorest among us. According to the laws of our culture, our leaders are both political and spiritual leaders. They conduct many ceremonies which call for the distribution of great wealth. As spiritual and political leaders, they set an example of economic conduct. To become a political leader, one must become a spiritual leader, and to become a spiritual leader, one must be extraordinarily generous in material goods.

Our leaders are in fact leaders of categories of families, of clans. These family clans function as economic units in a Way of Life based on a mode of domestic production. Before the settlers came, we had our own means of production and distribution sufficient for everyone's needs. Otherwise, we could not have existed as a nation.

Our basic economic unit is the family. The means of distribution, apart from simple exchange, are a kind of spiritual tradition manifest in the functions of civic and religious leaders in a highly complex social, religious and governmental structure.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee do not know the concept of private property. This concept would be a contradiction for a people who think that the earth belongs to the Creator. Property is an idea that excludes some people from access to land or other means of subsistence. This idea would destroy our culture, where each individual must live in the service of the spiritual paths and of the people. This idea (ownership) would engender slavery. To accept the idea of property would be to accept leaders whose power would favor the exclusion of people from access to property, and they would no longer fulfill their role as leaders of our society and distributors of goods.

Before the arrival of the settlers, we were not aware of the notion of goods. All things, even those we made, belonged to the Creators of Life and were to be returned, ceremonially and in reality, to their possessors. Our people lead a simple life, unencumbered by the needs of unbridled material consumption. Their needs being limited, all the needs of the people were easily met. It is also true that our mode of distribution is a remarkably equitable process, in which everyone permanently shares all material wealth.

Our domestic mode of production has some culturally specific definitions. The economy of our people requires a community of people and does not intend to define an economy based on the self-sufficient family nucleus. Many modern economists believe that in most of the world the isolated family unit cannot produce enough to survive in a domestic mode of production. Anyway this particular mode of subsistence, according to our cultural definition, is not an economy at all.

Our society was rich and no one lacked anything. All had the right to food, clothing and shelter. All shared in the bounty of the spiritual ceremonies of the Natural World. No one had material power over anyone. No one could deny someone access to the things they needed. In all things, before the arrival of the settlers, our Way of Life was beautiful and rewarding.

The settlers arrived with their institutions and strategies to destroy the Way of Life of the people of the Longhouse. In 1609, Samuel de Champlain led a military expedition that attacked a group of Mohawks on the lake known today as "Lac Champlain". Champlain sought wealth and was particularly interested in trading beaver pelts with the Algonquins of this region. He demonstrated his firearms to them, showing them the power of guns for the first time.

Champlain and his new associates in this trade penetrated into Mohawk territory. This military detachment encountered a group of two hundred Mohawks. The first salvo killed three men, and the second created such confusion that the Mohawks retreated, leaving twelve men who were taken prisoner.

The period of war that followed this incident is known as the "Beaver Wars". The introduction of the beaver pelt trade inevitably triggered a long series of colonial wars. It caused the escalation of quarrels between neighboring peoples, in a struggle relentless for the survival in the forests of the native people of North America.

European penetration affected from the first contact every facet of the Indian Way of Life. The economy, culture, political and military affairs of the native people were totally altered. Nations learned that not having guns meant physical annihilation, that not having access to the hide trade meant not being able to buy guns.

The trade in beaver pelts and the relentlessness henceforth required introduced factors hitherto unknown to the native people. Trading meant that the roads on which goods were transported had to be protected. The only possible way was for the whole region to be in the hands of friends. Anyone likely to disrupt the trade routes had to be pacified or eliminated.

With the introduction of firearms, warfare became a deadly affair. It became even more so because the European strategy of economic penetration was to provoke wars between the Indian peoples and to extract wealth to be negotiated. Driven by necessity and to prevent its extermination, the people of the Longhouse traded in beavers. The pelts were used to buy more guns and goods that allowed more men to hunt beaver more effectively. The markets of France, Holland and England were hungry for "New World" goods.

Shortly after encountering Lake Champlain, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee began to trade with Holland, which had established posts along the Hudson River. Much of this trade was in firearms. French historians say that the people of the Longhouse were very skilled in the art of battle, and soon the Algonquin people were defeated. This defeat was favored because the French had not seriously kept their promise to help the Algonquins.

The need for European goods, and especially for firearms, became such that by 1640 the beaver was rare on the Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands. The tension arising from the new European borders continued to increase. War was also common between the different colonizers. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee were very aware of what was going on in the East. The Dutch, soon after their arrival, began a series of genocidal wars which ended in the annihilation of the Indians of the Lower Hudson River valley. In New England, the Pequot Nation was nearly wiped out by Puritan and English settlers.

The knowledge of these massacres greatly influenced the defense policy of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. To the east were the Dutch and the English, whose presence was needed as a source of firearms. There was, however, a constant threat of the borders moving westward into the Longhouse. In the North, there was the French colony which supplied weapons to the Indians of the West. France also threatened to impose its monopoly on the beaver trade, which was increasingly centered north and west of lakes Erie and Ontario.

France made several attempts to send missionaries, especially Jesuits, among the Hau-de-no-sau-nee Nations. These missions were the spearhead of European propaganda. Missionaries then, as now, were to carry more than the message of Christianity. They are a kind of ambassadors of their culture, separating individuals from families, families from villages, villages from nations, one by one. Some priests even commanded troops going into battle.

The missionaries persistently attacked the economic structures of the People of the Longhouse. They particularly fought pagan spiritual ceremonies, seeking thereby to end the practice of generosity and public feasts. Moreover, they sought to break the power of the clans by creating divisions which would split the people into family units.

European churches, in their colonial practice, played the same feudal role as economic institutions. For the natural people they are the most dangerous agents of destruction. They invariably seek to destroy the Indians' economic and spiritual ties to the forest, land and animals. They propagate ideas and techniques that enslave people to the system of exploitation that defines colonialism.

In 1704, the first Anglican missionaries sent from England arrived among the Mohawks of the Mohawk River. In 1710, a delegation of Mohawk leaders was invited to visit England. They brought back four bibles, a prayer book and a communion tray for the Anglican chapel, a gift from Queen Anne. But the missionaries trailed a very long train behind them. To house themselves, they needed a mission, to protect the mission, they needed a fort, and to spread the faith, they needed a school. The missionaries spread more than the word of God. The British Empire was rapidly penetrating the Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands and there were still many more to come.

The warlike kingdoms of Europe were constantly at war with each other. There were three wars during the 18th century alone between France and England: Queen Anne's War (1701 to 1713), King George's War (1744 to 1748) and the Franco-Indian War known in Europe under the name of "War of the Spanish Succession" (1754 to 1763). It is clear from the chronicles of the time that the People of the Longhouse remained neutral during these conflicts; although there were some assimilating individuals such as the Anglicized Mohawks who had been conscripted as British peasants among the colonizers' backers.

If France failed in its attempts at military penetration of the Longhouse territory, England had much more success in its social and religious colonization of the eastern part of our territory. William Johnson was an Irish emigrant who became famous for his influence on some Mohawks. As an agent of the Crown of England, he established an embassy serving as an operational base very close to Mohawk country. He took several Indian women as concubines, and he had several children, but he did not recognize any of them. He had the title of "British Superintendant of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department". He is fully recognized by European historians as a skilled manipulator of incidents allowing the frontier to advance. In today's context, Johnson would be an ambassador to a Third World country, simultaneously performing diplomatic, military, intelligence, and Third World aid operations.

During his tenure, he established an outpost from which immigrants could travel west to expand the colony. Mohawk lands along the Susquehannas and Mohawk rivers were increasingly conquered by English settlers, including Johnson himself. In the spring of 1765, the environment of the Longhouse, hitherto carefully preserved, was exposed to ignorant and destructive farmers who drove away the herds of deer.

There were so many conflicts with the established peasants that the Mohawks, who had so generously allowed them to share their land, thought of moving west, towards the Oneida territories, to find some peace there.

By the spring of 1765, many Mohawks had already emigrated and were living as refugees among other nations.

William Johnson was in the eyes of the King, a master in the art of public relations. On the one hand he apologized for the behavior of frontier settlers and begged the Mohawks to be patient, and on the other hand he encouraged settlers to settle on Mohawk lands. He was able to show himself to be the great defender of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee interests and by doing so encouraged the people of the Longhouse to seek a solution at the negotiating table where they ended up giving up land in exchange for a temporary peace.

Throughout this period, many other Indian peoples passed through our territories to find some respite from colonial aggression. Far to the south, in Carolina, the Tuscaroras faced imminent destruction. In their race to gain more land and economic advantages, British settlers used the same methods as in the North East. In 1713, the Tuscaroras, dispossessed, abandoned their native lands and sought protection among the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. They were not the only people to emigrate: Delawares, Tuteloes, Shawnees, and others fled to Iroquois lands in search of peace.

Peace, however, was not to take place. As the American Revolution approached, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee did their best to remain neutral. With the decline of France and the significant drop in trade, the bourgeoisie of the English colonies increasingly coveted the lands of the Longhouse. Our military power was still formidable and we were determined to remain neutral.

But England's policy was to involve the Hau-de-no-sau-nee in the war. To achieve this goal, they resorted to corruption, deceit, false propoganda and emotional appeal.

Despite everything, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee continued their policy of neutrality. Both settlers and "loyalists" entered our territory in search of mercenaries. The loyalist strategy was more successful. They were able to send some of our people to fight against the rebellious settlers.

The Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, contained no clause, at least in writing, concerning the Indian Nations that the Crown had solemnly promised to protect. The representatives of the People of the Longhouse therefore participated in an international meeting with the new federations called the United States of America, in September 1784. The United States demanded enormous cessions of territory, particularly to the Senecas. The warriors who had been delegated to this meeting ended up signing the treaty. They were not, however, allowed to hire the Hau-de-no-sau-nee without consulting them. For a time, the terms of the treaty were not known, as the United States would not give a copy of the document to the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. As many native peoples have learned the hard way, signing a treaty and ratifying it are two different things, both of which are necessary for the treaty to be valid. Although the United States Congress ratified the treaty, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee Legislative Council met at Buffalo Creek and repudiated the treaty.

For the United States anyway, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee ceased to exist from 1784, although the Longhouse continues to exist to this day. It is evident that all nations continue to participate in the Grand Council, the Legislative Body of the Six Nations Confederacy. No League nation has ever declared itself separated from the Confederacy. The Oneida, whose alleged allegiance to the United States is based on the existence of Oneida mercenaries, continue to send delegates to the Council, and the Tuscarora remain firmly committed to the League. The Onondagas, Senecas, Cayugas and Mohawks maintain their position within the League. Although the Hau-de-no-sau-nee were badly shaken by the expansion of the United States westward, then by the encirclement of their lands, and by the attempts to swallow up their people, despite this , the Six Nations Confederacy continues to operate. To tell the truth, it is getting stronger and stronger today.

By claiming that the Hau-de-no-sau-nee government no longer existed, the U.S.A. and England illegally seized Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands simply claiming that the lands belonged to them. Today, Canada, a former colony of England, has never signed a treaty concerning the lands of the St. Lawrence Valley. But the truth remains and continues to plague officials even today. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands are not and never have been part of the United States or Canada. For this reason, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee refuse to recognize a boundary drawn through their lands by a foreign people.

The policy of dispossession of the native peoples of North America, first by European kingdoms and later by colonial regimes, began with the very first contacts. This dispossession took different aspects: the so-called "just wars" were a strategy by which the Indians were considered to have offended the Crown, which justified their elimination by iron and fire. Then came the treaty period, during which the Indians were "induced" to sell their lands and migrate west. The Treaty period was in full swing at the beginning of the 19th century. Around 1815, the Governor of New York State was scrambling to drive all Indians out of the state "for their own good."

While the infamous Trail of Tears was deporting Southeast Indians to Oklahoma, the State of New York was plotting a treaty in 1838 to move the Hau-de-no-sau-nee who lived on lands he coveted. The Senecas were to be the main victims.

Like the policy of liquidation a century later, the policy of deportation was ultimately abandoned because of the outrage it aroused during the deportation of the Cheokees in 1832. During their deportation, thousands of Cherokee men, women, children and old people were subjected to conditions which led to their death by the cold, the privations and the lack of care.

In 1871, the United States Congress passed a law according to which no more treaties would be signed with the Indian Nations. The official policy of the United States towards the Indians was then oriented towards a new strategy. Congressional reports began to insist that the native peoples be assimilated into American society as quickly as possible. The sword and gun policy was simply beginning to become less popular for a growing percentage of the population of the United States. The main obstacle to this assimilation was, according to its most eloquent supporters, the unity of the Indian land. Indian land was owned in common and this was seen as an uncivilized and un-American practice. Assimilationists insisted that if each Indian family had its own farm, they could acquire "civilized" traits more quickly. Thus, the Dawes Act of 1886 ordered that the common land of the original peoples be parceled out, which resulted in the transfer of millions of acres into European hands.

There was consistent pressure in the New York State Legislature to "civilize" the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. To do this, any vestige of Iroquois nationality had to be destroyed. Such is the origin in the 19th century of the policy of "education" of the Indians aimed at making them culturally European. It was thought that when the Indian was well Europeanized, he would no longer be distinct or separate and that there would be no more indigenous people with their own customs and their own economy. At this stage, the Indian could be considered integrated into American or Canadian society.

The net advantage would be to get rid of the concept of Indian Nations once and for all and thus eliminate the claims of these nations to their lands. The Whipple Committee report to the New York legislature in 1888 was clear: "Exterminate the Tribe. »

In 1924, the Canadian government "abolished" the Hau-de-no-sau-nee government in the Grand River territory. The Oneida and Akwesasne territories were invaded and occupied by Canadian troops who were to establish a neo-colonial "system of elections" in the name of democracy. Also in 1924, the U.S.A. passed a law declaring all Indians citizens of the United States. The Citizenship Act of 1924 was an attempt to deny the existence of the Native Nations and their right to their lands. The denial of the existence of the Indian Nations is a means of legitimizing the claims of the settlers on these lands. This idea is favored by the establishment of non-Indian governments and makes it possible to satisfy the need of the colonist: to destroy any semblance of sovereignty. When the Indian Nation no longer exists in its original context, when it is less than a nation, then you can truly take your land.

With the destruction of any semblance of the original Indian Nations context, Canada and the United States can say that integration is complete. With this reasoning, the two governments undertook the realization of their "final solution to the Indian problem".

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee have vigorously opposed the citizenship law and still maintain that they are not citizens of Canada or the United States but are citizens of their own nation in the League. .

The Termination Acts\* of the 1950s simply declared that the Indian Nations no longer existed and appropriated their lands. These laws were so disastrous that they caused a kind of national scandal. Saint-Regis, the European name for Akwesasne, was one of our territories designated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) as "ready for integration".

The B.I.A. based its choice on the fact that many Mohawks had acquired some of the material conditions which made their community apparently similar to white communities. Yet Akwesasne was, and in fact remains, very different from the surrounding small towns.

The official policy of liquidation was abandoned around 1960. But this policy was only one means among others to put an end to it. The objective to be achieved is the economic exploitation of a people and its lands. The appropriation of lands, the negation and the destruction of the Indian Nations are concrete and undeniable elements of the process of colonization as it is applied to the Indian Peoples surrounded by a colonial State.

The means to achieve this are guns, disease, the falsification of history, the oppression of missionaries, the indoctrination of teachers, most often under the guise of law. In the 20th century, the seizure of land and the destruction of the Indian culture and economy forced the Indians to become workers, just as in the 19th century the same processes forced the peoples originating from Canada and the United States to the condition landless peasants.

The Hau-de-no-sau-nee have fulfilled every definition of an oppressed nation for more than three hundred and seventy-five years. They were the target of extermination raids from France, England and the United States. Its people were driven from their lands, impoverished and persecuted for their customs. They were victims of fraudulent dealings by three European governments who openly expressed their intention to exterminate the Hau-de-no-sau-nee.

Our children have learned to despise their ancestors, their culture, their religion and their traditional economy. Recently, the new fad, endorsed by the government, was to have bilingual and bicultural programs in schools. These programs are not a sincere attempt to reinvigorate the Hau-de-no-sau-nee culture, but rather a new integration ploy designed to gain acceptance of the mainstream culture.

Revisionist historians in the U.S.A. and England have covered the past with a web of lies. The national government and local governments of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee were suppressed and usurped by colonial authorities with the complicity of colonized Indians to carry out a policy of repression in the name of "democracy". Generation after generation, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee have seen the unity of their land, and therefore the basis of their economy, shrink under the expansionist schemes of the United States, Great Britain and the Canada.

The world learns from the propaganda organs of the colonial government that the Iroquois are simply "victims of civilization and progress." The truth is that they are victims of a conscious and persistent effort of destruction directed against them by European governments and their heirs in North America. The Hau-de-no-so-nee do not suffer fatal disease from natural causes, they are deliberately strangled to death by those who benefit from their death.

\* Verbatim, liquidation laws (N. d. T.).

Although treaties have often been bad deals for the Native Nations, the United States and Canada still prefer not to respect those that exist, because recognizing them would mean the restitution of a large part of the economic base and sovereignty of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. The treaties contain in power the survival and the independence of the original people. Non-compliance with treaties is essential to the objective that the United States and Canada have set themselves in granting each other rights intended for a single purpose: to sweep away any obstacle to the exploitation of the earth and its inhabitants.

European nations in the Western Hemisphere continue to wage war on the Hau-de-no-sau-nee. The weapons have changed somewhat, instead using Indian education programs, social workers, neo-colonialist Indian notables and racist laws. If these methods fail, the guns are always ready, as recent history has shown in Akwesasne and South Dakota (Wounded Knee).

The consequence of these different policies has been the destruction of the culture and hence the economy of the People of the Longhouse. The traditional economy has been largely replaced by the colonial economy which serves the interests of multinational corporations. The colonial economy consists of extracting materials and labor from the Iroquois people for the benefit of the colonists. The Christian religion, the school system, the colonial election systems, all work in the same direction.

Today we are an economically poor people. Few of us can take on the spiritual ceremonies that are the basis of our economy. The economy of money does not suit the real economy of our people. Few of us participate in the Domestic Mode of Production that defines our traditional economy. This is entirely due to the fact that the school systems of colonization as well as the more brutal and systematic attempts at deculturation have set up neo-colonial governments in our territories. On some Hau-de-no-sau-nee lands, the governments of Canada and the United States employ one-third of the available workers, thereby creating economic dependence on potential leaders of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee people and alienating the people of the Domestic Mode of Production. The traditional economy is under attack from all sides, everything else is an exploitative economy. Political oppression, social oppression, economic oppression all have the same face. They are the instruments of Genocide in North America.

The genocide is alive and well in Hau-de-no-sau-nee territory. Its technicians are in Washington, Ottawa and Albany, its agents control the schools, the churches and the offices of the colonial elected officials established on our territories. This oppression is done in broad daylight, but the Hau-de-no-sau-nee continue to meet in Council and the number of its members increases. The Hau-de-no-sau-nee, people of the Longhouse, have a long history yet to come. We have developed strategies to resist the effects of the economic conditions that are ours. But these strategies require that we strengthen our political and social institutions. This can only be accomplished on sufficient land within the old boundaries of our territories.

We live in a period in which we expect to see great changes in the economy of the colonizers. The imperialist powers of the world seem to meet with victorious resistance to their expansion in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world. We will soon see the end of an economy based on the supply of cheap oil, natural gas and other resources and this will change the face of the world very much.

For the moment there is more wealth, more commodities and facilities, more automatism than ever existed in the history of the human species. The World is experiencing an age of manufactured abundance. But the people have rarely been told the price in human lives and suffering that this abundance has cost each of us. Even the people of North America who apparently benefit from all this "advancement", seem to ignore the destruction they are undergoing. The Modern Age, with its consumer values, has profoundly altered the very structure of human society and the basic conditions of the Natural World.



The modern family is an institution in the grip of many tensions. The family in Western society has undergone great changes since the last century. As long as the westernization of the world continues, all peoples will encounter similar tensions and troubles.

We Hau-de-no-sau-nee have very clear choices for the future. One of the choices we faced was whether to integrate into Western civilization or to perpetuate the Way of Life that our ancestors bequeathed to us. We set out our analysis of the history of events that created the current conditions. We have chosen to remain Hau-de-no-sau-nee and, within our Way of Life, to chart a path of liberation for ourselves and future generations.

Our process of liberation is not limited to us as human beings, but includes other life forms that coexist with us and are oppressed like us. The liberation of the Natural World is undertaken under the most difficult conditions. The people who harass us seems intent on destroying itself along with all living things.

For the past four centuries, the Hau-de-no-sau-nee have had a great influence on the lives of millions of people. Theories of democracy and classless society have developed from interpretations that do not correspond to the true nature of these ideals. This Conference can be an opportunity to develop these concepts towards more real definitions.

On our lands, our people continue to fight and develop survival strategies. In Mohawk country, our people have reoccupied the land to revive our culture and our economy. This occupation, called Ganienkeh, has been going on successfully for more than three years. The Oneida people have been engaged in a legal battle for several years to recover the 265,000 acres stolen around 1700. The Cayugas have begun a struggle to regain the 100,000 acres taken around the same time as the Oneida lands. The Onondagas and the Tuscaroras constantly fight to obtain control over the education given to their children. The Seneca have been forced to fight to protect the last bits of their land that are still under traditional government: the lands of Tonawanda. Every day of our lives is a struggle against some form of intrusion by the State of New York, the government of the United States or Canada.

If we are to continue to survive, we need help from the international community. We need some outside support to bring stability to the situation of our people. We have learned too often that what is good law today can quickly become bad law. Canada and the United States have taught us that their legal systems are part of political machinery that oppresses our people.

We are nations in every sense of the word. We have not been able to obtain any semblance of justice in the courts of the United States or Canada and we suffer great legal injustices which have terrible economic and social consequences for our people. Most of our legal issues are about land, sovereignty over land: land is the foundation of our economy. We come here to seek our rights under international law.

Finally, we ask for economic assistance in the form of financial aid and technical assistance. We know that there are several international personalities here who have technical skills and who know that development must take place in the context of specific culture. Our case falls under the deliberations of the United Nations Decolonization Committee. We are engaged in a struggle to decolonize our lands and our lives, but we cannot accomplish this struggle alone and without help.

For centuries we have known that any individual action creates conditions and situations that affect the World. For centuries, we have been careful to avoid any action that did not offer a long-term prospect of promoting harmony and peace in the world. In this context, with our brothers and sisters in the Western Hemisphere, we have traveled here to talk about these important issues with the other members of the family of Man.